

Budapest Business School
Faculty of Commerce, Catering
and Tourism

**The situation of the Hagymatikum of Makó on the Hungarian
spa market, possible ways of attracting more visitors there**

Consultant:

Nagy Irén
Guest Lecturer

Besse Boglárka Annamária
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Name of the Student: Besse Boglárka Annamária

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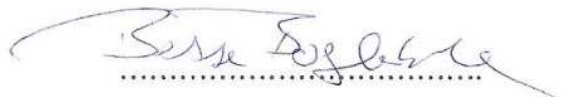
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Nagy L
Academic Supervisor

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Tourism and Hotel Management at the Budapest Business School has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution. This dissertation and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my original research; it is my work in design and in execution and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged. I understand that my dissertation may be made available to the public.

Budapest, 30th November 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Berni Foglár", written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Signature

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1 Introduction

1.1 Topic Selection

When I started my studies at Budapest Business School, I had a general interest in the tourism and hospitality industry, and had no specific plans about my future career. As I progressed in my studies, my interest turned towards health and wellness tourism. Hungary is a country with an old tradition of spas, and I was more and more eager to explore this mysterious and magnificent world. The fact that I come from Gyula, a spa town with long traditions was one more reason that supported my interest in the motivations of the guests who visit the spas, and the forms of treatments and activities they can choose from at their destination.

In December of 2012, I was in Mezőhegyes with my partner, and among other towns we visited Makó as well. As the Hagymatikum had been inaugurated only nearly a year ago, we decided to see the building from outside and the hall as well. I was rather surprised how empty it was: there was nobody lining at the reception to buy tickets, and the gift shop that would sell locally produced gourmet products and souvenirs did not operate anymore, even though the new bath was operating for only 11 months. I was astonished as although it was winter, the novelty of a spa, the forthcoming Christmas and the impressive building of Imre Makovecz should have been enough to attract more visitors even in that phase of the year.

Two years later I recalled this memory and decided to study the history of the thermal water of Makó and the challenges that the new spa had to face in the first years. The city has an ideal location as it is close to the Romanian and Serbian borders, and the spa, designed by Imre Makovecz, is spectacular, so the circumstances are ideal to manage a successful spa in Makó.

1.2 Hypothesis

The popularity of the Hagymatikum of Makó can be increased by proper actions in order to attract more visitors.

1.3 Aim of the Dissertation

The aim of this paper is to examine the possible causes of the low number of the visitors after the new spa was opened, and to propose methods how to improve these figures.

1.4 Objectives

1. To introduce the history of the thermal water of Makó.
2. To describe the plans and the project of the Hagymatikum of Makó.
3. To find out details about the initial hardships of the Hagymatikum and the actions done so far to solve them.
4. To make a research via the Internet in order to find out what services and facilities would make the Hagymatikum more attractive to potential future visitors.
5. To propose further methods how to improve the Hagymatikum and to highlight their future positive impact on the region.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised in the following way.

The first part deals with the history of thermal water in Makó. I will introduce the construction works and the reconstructions thorough the decades.

The second section of this paper will examine the construction of the Hagymatikum and the problems that arose during the works.

In the third part of the dissertation the situation of the Hagymatikum after having been opened in January 2012 will be examined. The spa had to face serious problems in the first months, which I will introduce in my dissertation, together with the actions done to solve these problems.

The next session deals with the research that was executed with the aim of revealing what customers expect from a spa. My intention with this survey was to obtain first-hand information from a wide range of people about their expectations regarding a spa like the Hagymatikum.

In the final part of my dissertation I will propose some further ways that can make the Hagymatikum better known and more popular in the region. The basis of my findings is given by the results of the primary and secondary research that I have done.

The summary at the end of the paper will review the most important points and findings of the dissertation once again.

1.6 Summary

This thesis is to introduce the history of the thermal water and spa of Makó, their effect on the life of local residents. It is intended to search for the reasons of the initial hardships of the beautifully designed Hagymatikum of Makó, to show what has already been done to solve them, and to find methods that can further enhance its development and success.

2 Literature review

2.1 Basic Concepts

Before introducing the history of the thermal water of Makó, I feel it essential to describe some basic concepts to enhance the understanding of the dissertation.

Mineral water is any water occurring in nature that has a dissolved mineral content exceeding 1000 mg/litre, or one litre contains at least as much of the different elements as prescribed. We can speak about cold and hot mineral water, the latter is known as thermal mineral water. In Hungary there are 228 mineral waters acknowledged by OTH (Hungarian Chief Medical Office).

Thermal water is any water in nature that bursts to the surface with a temperature exceeding 30°C.

Healing water is a mineral or thermal water with such physical and chemical properties that bear a healing effect, and this was proven by medical experiments.

Spa is any bath where acknowledged thermal water exists, and provides medical services.

Thermal water with alkali hydrogen-carbonate, also known as alkali water, has a dissolved mineral content exceeding 1000 mg/litre, and one litre should contain at least 200 mg sodium ions. This type of water can be found in the mineral water springs of Bükkszék, Gyula, Balf, Parád, Makó and Szeged.

Therapeutic mud is usually mixed with thermal water and used in the form of mud-pack. It has two basic forms, organic and inorganic therapeutic mud, and they are often combined as well. In Hungary we can find certified natural therapeutic mud: in Makó, In Alsópáhok, in Hajdúszoboszló, az Tizzasüly and in Hévíz.

Balneotherapy is any therapy that is carried out with thermal water and therapeutic mud. (Bede, 2014)

The following paragraphs will introduce the first years of the thermal water in Makó, and the construction of the first bath building in the settlement.

2.2 Thermal Water and Spa in Makó – the First Years

The first drillings in Makó were made in 1956 in the yard of the district council hall, which was the town hall at that time. The water containing alkali hydrogen-carbonate came from a depth of 993 metres, and had a temperature of 41°C. (Halász, 2011)

According to the customs of the time, 3 pools were constructed first: a 50-metre swimming pool, which was a rarity already at that time with its 3-metre depth, a children's pool and a thermal pool. (Spa, 2013)

The construction of the bath over the pools started in 1961, the plans of the construction were amended several times in the meantime. The final establishment, opened in 1963, included a wading pool, a thermal pool with benches and a 50-metre beach pool. The flat roof of the new building served as a sunbathing terrace, and the clock of the tower became the symbol of the spa. (Halász, 2011)

The main focus in the bath was still on bathing, and for this reason there were 12 bathing pools that served local people with a comfortable bathing opportunity. There was a common changing room with wardrobes and sanitary facilities as well. (Old Mako, 2015)

The residents of Makó discovered that the mud on the shores of the Maros eased their arthralgia once they slushed it on their skins. The tests initiated by Dr. István Batka rheumatologist proved that the mud had a good composition and an exceptional ability to transmit heat. As its healing effect was also revealed, it was qualified a therapeutic mud in 1961.

After the qualification of the Maros mud the bath gradually shifted towards therapeutic treatments, however, until the 1980s it primarily functioned as a bathing facility. (Spa, 2013)

As we can see from the above paragraphs, the bath have been playing an important role in the lives of the local residents for several decades. The public works in Hungary were gradually introduced in Hungarian households from the mid-1960s onwards, the spa was important for local residents not only as a leisure facility where they could socialise, but a place for bathing as well.

In 1982, the bathing pools were replaced by a medical department. The mineral water was classified as thermal water in 1988. (Old Mako, 2015)

According to the official leaflet of the spa (2015) the thermal water of Makó has curative effects for the following health problems:

- joint and vertebral column diseases
- soft tissues rheumatism
- chronic inflammation of joints
- inflammation of the nerves, neuralgic pain, nerve paralysis
- atrophied muscles treatment.

In 1990 the range of medical treatments were extended, mud therapy and different electric therapies became available as well. In 1991 the bath was qualified as a Regional Spa. This means that local residents and the citizens of the neighbouring villages could use the medical treatments of the spa with a referral of the general practitioner on a reduced price. (Old Mako, 2015)

By the end of the 1980s, beginning of the 1990s the nearly 30-year-old pools became outworn, and it often happened that they were not able to function perfectly. The city council realized this problem on time, and they used the examples of the spas of Gyula and Sárvár to implement renovations. (Spa, 2013)

The development of the spa remained constant: a complex bathtub was installed in 1993, thus the medical services became even more diverse: Effervescent bath treatment, electric bath treatment, whirlpool bath and underwater jet massage. From 1995 underwater remedial exercises were available, and they also started to organise therapeutic swimming classes for groups of children under 18 years.

In 1994 the beach pool was transformed into an infinity pool with a water rotation system, and it was covered for the winter season so that the guests could use it in the winter as well. (Old Mako, 2015)

The above data show us that the city council put a great effort in the constant modernisation of the establishment. Although the spa was mainly used by local and regional residents, but the town leadership found it essential to provide them services and medical treatments of a wide range.

The following paragraphs will introduce the emerge of the idea and plans of the new spa of Makó.

2.3 A Wish for a New Spa

According to the several impact studies that were done on behalf of the local government of Makó, tourism could be one possible economic stimulus of the town. They commissioned Imre Makovecz in 1998 to plan the modernization of the spa. The plans included a wellness area besides of the therapeutic department.

In 1999 the local government organized consultations in two rounds, both with experts and local residents.

In 2001, the local government applied for the spa development proposal of the Széchenyi Plan with a complex development plan of Imre Makovecz. It included the construction of the wellness department, with a total cost of 600 million forints. The application was rejected.

However, the local government continuously developed the spa in the following years as well. A modern adventure pool, designed by Imre Makovecz was opened in 2002. (Makói Hírek, 2008)

It contained a wave bath, wild water and hydro-massage. One year later an open-air slide was opened with an infinity pool. (Spa, 2013)

Although several developments were accomplished on the bath in the 2000s, the problem of seasonality deriving from the lack of indoor pools had not yet been solved. By 2007 a new building was opened, including a new, gradually deepening 25-metre indoor educational pool, a sitting pool and a children's pool, together with an open-air adventure children's pool and a baby pool. A 33-metre open-air educational pool was also opened for the children who could already swim. The reason behind the design of this building was to satisfy the needs of local residents and to create a place for their children here they can securely learn to swim. (Spa, 2013)

An Art Nouveau style house was demolished for this project, even though several local residents and architects expressed their disapproval, arguing that the town would lose a significant cultural heritage. (Delmagyar 1, 2005)

A new well was also drained within the framework of the project of 2007. The water is 62°C hot, and it comes from a depth of 1386 metres. (Bede, 2014)

As we can see from the above paragraphs, experts considered that tourism could have positive impact on the economy of the settlement. Beside the studies that were carried out, the positive example of other settlements in the region such as Gyula

and Orosháza must have also been bases of this idea. Although the application for the funds was rejected, the council felt it important to further develop the spa.

However, we can also see the first signs of disapproval of the local residents for the demolition of a building that was considered a monument carrying important cultural and architectural value. Although this dissatisfaction is not against the project of the Hagymatikum yet, but it already represents the attitude of the city council towards the feelings and opinion of the local residents regarding the issue of the spa construction. This nonchalant attitude would be a typical characteristic of this issue in the future years regarding this project as well.

The following paragraphs introduce the second, successful application for a fund financing the new spa of Makó, and the start of the construction works.

2.4 The Idea of a New Spa Returns

In 2007 the leaders of the town organised a health tourism conference, the main conclusion of which was the fact that future development of the spa was necessary for the development of the town. The therapeutic mud of the Maros gives Makó an extraordinary opportunity to be an extraordinary spa town of the Southern Great Plain. However, besides the further development of the spa, the construction of spa hotels and apartments was also necessary, and this required private capital as well. (Szabó 1, 2007)

The need for the further development of the spa was also supported by the fact that the number of visitors in the Spa of Makó nearly doubled in 2007 compared to the previous year, and roughly every second visitor was a Romanian guest. The reason behind this phenomenon was the accession of Romania to the European Union. The Romanians consider the spa of Makó cleaner and the water warmer than in Arad. (Szabó 2, 23rd July 2007)

For this reason, the city council decided to build a new spa. Imre Makovecz was commissioned with preparing the plans of the building again, and Imre Vörös was responsible for the plans of the medical department, an adventure pool area of at least 400 square meters, a family area and a sauna world, and the extension of the wellness department. (Illyés 1, 2007)

The local government of Makó applied for a fund of the European Union in February 2008. The estimated total costs were around 3.5 billion forints, and the government applied for a fund of 1.75 billion forints. The local government planned to issue bonds to cover the rest of the money. (Makói Hírek, 2008)

According to the plans of Imre Makovecz, the new building, constituting about 10 thousand square metres, and possessing a unique appearance, would include therapeutic and wellness departments, and a special area for families as well in Marczibányi Square. The local government expected the project to have a positive impact on the economy of Makó. The original plans indicated that the project would be finished in 2010. (Makói Hírek, 2008)

The most critical point of the plan was the abolishment of the 50-metre pool, where junior swimming contests were often organised. Local residents collected signatures against this part of the plan, but the plans were not amended. (Szabó 3, 2007)

The plans of the new spa eventuated several debates in the city council as well. The representatives questioned the necessity of such a huge investment, wondered the reality of the payback of the investment, and expressed their opinion about the cramped establishment. They also argued that the huge risk of the loan that would be needed for the investment proves that a smaller investment would be more realistic, by keeping the original image of the building. Nevertheless, the concept was accepted. (Illyés 2, 2007)

2.5 The Construction of the New Spa

The plans of Imre Makovecz achieved a great recognition at the end of March 2008 in the committee that evaluated the plans for the new spa of Makó. The unusual shapes and concept of the building complex was highly appreciated even by Sándor Fegyvernek, the chief architect of Hungary at that time. The designer, the chief architect of Makó and the chief architect of Hungary agreed that this project could give Makó an opportunity to change its situation of a small town on the periphery of the country. The application for the European Union fund was handed in, and there was a positive expectation regarding the evaluation of the plans. (Illyés 3, 2008)

In the first days of July 2008 the city council of Makó decided on signing a contract with the Raiffeisen Bank to issue bonds in the value of 2.5 billion forints, 1.75 billion of which they intended to use for the development of the new spa. (Illyés 4, 2008)

2.5.1 Financial Hardships

In September 2008 the project received the approval of the committee of the Regional Operative Program, however, according to their opinion 3.2 billion forints should be enough for the construction of the new spa. The town leaders were yet positive about the result, and did not intend to modify the original plans because they expected the economic recession to be on their side. The construction was planned to start in the first months of 2009, and last for one year. (Bakos 1, 2008)

However, the constructing companies that gave quotations for the tender would have prepared the spa complex for much more money: Szeviép quoted 5 billion 750 million forints, KÉSZ 5 billion 498 million forints, and ZÁÉV 4 billion 987 million forints. This news generated hot debates in the city council, as the family corner had already been removed from the plans, which would have attracted families with small children. Construction companies explained that the costs could be reduced if they had more time for the construction. Experts said that the reason behind the enormous difference between the anticipated costs and the quotations was a wrong pre-calculation. (Bakos 2, 2009)

As a result of the discrepancy in the expected and real costs, the procurement was pronounced unsuccessful, and the city council announced in March 2009 that the construction works could not start according to the original plans. The mayor of the town listed several possible reasons of the discrepancy, for example the change in the exchange rate of the euro and the forint. He highlighted that before submitting the tender they created the pre-calculation of the project and received quotations with 2.6 billion and 3.2 billion forints as well. He suspected that the construction companies may have quoted a larger final amount than necessary. (Bakos 3, 13th March 2009)

In April 2009 the city council announced that the project would be realized in spite of the hardships, but the plans had to be modified because no more money could be raised for the spa. Imre Makovecz would amend the plans so that the area of

the new spa would decrease by 2500 square meters and the costs by 1.4 billion forints. During the amendment of the plans they removed such elements that could be added later in the future. The 25-metre indoor swimming pool and the outdoor adventure pool would not be built. The new procurement would be announced in the second part of May, the result would be announced in June, and the building would start in September and October. (Bakos 4, 2009)

2.5.2 The Construction Starts

The revised project was handed in on 13 August, 2009, and it was accepted and supported by the committees of Hungary and Brussels alike. The estimated total costs were 3.6 billion forints, and the European Union financed 50% of the investment. KEVIÉP Constructing and Trading Ltd. won the tender for the construction, and they planned to finish the project during the summer of 2011. (Delmagyar 2, 2009)

KEVIÉP Ltd. had previously constructed several important sport, cultural and public facilities, for example the Fónix Multifunctional Event Hall, the indoor sports pool and the Kölcsey Conference Hall of Debrecen, and the Municipal Sports Arena of Dabas. (Miklóssy, 2011)

The new plan included a sauna world in the basement level, three adventure pools and a family area on the ground level, a wellness area, a beauty centre, and a medical department with two indoor and one outdoor thermal pools and medical treatment rooms. The family area included a baby pool, a slide and a nursery operating in the building of the spa. On the first floor they also planned to construct a multifunctional loft with a relaxing room and a silence room. (Delmagyar 2, 2009)

The working area was handed over to the constructing company on 19th November 2009. The old building was demolished, but the educational pool built in 2007 could be used during the construction works as well. (Delmagyar 3, 2009)

In the first days of January 2010 works went beyond the borders of the site. There were traffic restrictions, and the construction caused much noise and dust, but the mayor of the town turned the attention of the local residents on the fact that not only a beautiful spa is being constructed, but once it would be ready, the value of the surrounding houses would increase significantly. The city council organized regular

civil forums to inform the residents of Makó about the newest developments about the spa, where they could also have questions about the project. (Szabó 4, 2010)

In June 2010 some pumps had to be applied due to the high ground-water and the heavy rains of the previous days. Such delays were considered when the deadline was set, so the constructing company stuck to the expected deadline. A mock-up of the future spa was exhibited in the lobby of the town hall. (Delmagyar 4, 2010)

2.5.3 Debates and Investigations

The debates went on about the enormous investment – some people argued that due to the several new and renovated spas in Hungary and Romania, the investment of the Hagymatikum would not return the budget of the city. Others stated that Romanians would still be happy to come to Makó, as visiting Hungary would remain a status symbol, those who could afford it would come anyway.

The increased number of visitors at the educational pool resulted in the blockage of the drains at the showers, partly due to the large number of visitors, and because of the therapeutic mud that was used by the medical department. (Delmagyar 4, 2010)

On 14 September 2010 the daily newspaper *Délvilág* published an article about a possible violation of law. Two economists of the opposing political party, Tamás Weszely and Tamás Bakos stated that the local government disbursed the money for the investment to Makói Fürdőfejlesztő Ltd, the investing company in the form of interest-free loan, which is against the European Union regulations. (Bakos 5, 2010)

The local government transferred the down payment of the project to its own company in the form of interest-free loan. However, the leaders of the Regional Development Agency of the Southern Great Plain also drew the attention to the fact that the report of the European Committee clearly states: this financing form is inappropriate. The additional interest costs would have increased the operating costs of the spa by an annual 300 million forints. (SzegeDMA, 2010)

The Regional Development Agency of the Southern Great Plain drew the attention of the city council to this miscarriage in a letter, writing that the company obtained unfair economic benefits by this transaction. The paper pointed out that such

an action could even result in the suspension of the construction until the verification of the issue, as the European Union could withhold the fund in case of a law violation.

According to the city council the transaction was legal as they acted in accordance with the contract previously approved and signed. (Bakos 5, 2010)

The mayor of Makó, Péter Buzás responded to the charges by highlighting that Mrs József Mágori, the local representative of the opposing political party had been perfectly informed about the financial transaction as a member of the committee responsible for the project, and he stated that the action was a political action against his personality. As the plan had been prepared in cooperation with the different supervisory bodies, every part of it was correct. The letter indeed existed, and the mayor ensured the media and the parties concerned that they would find a solution as soon as possible. The constructing company would continue working on the project undisturbed, and 20% of the building was ready, as previously timed. (Bakos 6, 2010)

Ágnes Molnár, the state secretary for development and coordination visited Makó, and she declared at the press conference that according to the result of the investigation, which detected irregularities, the Ministry of National Development would stop transferring the European Union fund to the city council. Péter Buzás maintained the opinion that everything had been carried out in a lawful way, and the construction would not stop.

Molnár also described that there were several other problematic EU-funded projects in Hungary, and that the funds would be transferred as soon as the discrepancies would end. The problematic point was still the interest-free loan from the city council to the constructing company. The mayor replied that the experts agreed that this was a legal transaction. They did not receive official notice that they should stop the works on the site, so they would continue the construction. (Delmagyar 5, 2010)

The opposing political party initiated an irregularity investigation, but the construction works were not stopped. The investigation found that the construction of the spa was not against the laws and regulations, so the disbursement of the fund restarted. (Sipos, 2015)

2.5.4 Celebrating the Progress

On 5 May 2011 there was a celebration in the spa, the reason of which was the fact that the construction reached the highest point of the building. 60-65% of the premises were ready, and in the fore coming period less visible works would be carried out, such as electric gearing and sheathing works. 150-160 people worked on the building, which was the highest structural architecture investment of the town. Mr. Kovacsics highlighted that once ready, the spa would be a Hungaricum, and as such beautiful spa had not been built in the previous 10 years in Hungary, this single fact would attract 4-500 thousand visitors annually. The spa was expected to be finished in the autumn of 2011. (Szabó 5, 2011)

By this time it became clear that this project became one of the controversial ones ever carried out in the region. Local residents protested against the 50-metre pool, experts questioned the necessity of such an enormous investment, and the project fell prey to political fights as well. The local government was determined to carry out the investment, in spite of all the objections and barriers, because they truly believed that once it would be ready, the spa would change the lives of the local residents and Makó.

2.5.5 Challenging Plans, Creative Solutions

The diverse forms and materials demanded unique node formations. As the plans did not always include the solutions for all details of the building, the constructors were in constant contact with the designer company. During the implementation of the works, subcontractors and suppliers were selected from among the most reliable and qualified partners of KEVIÉP Ltd. and previous subcontractors of Makona Ltd., thus ensuring the expected quality of the final establishment. As the building would be exposed to an extensive load of steam and temperature, a great emphasis was placed on the protection of the built--in materials and structures. The protection of the concrete structures and wooden elements is ensured by a special coating, and the modern ventilating and heating systems controlled by the stabile operation of a building surveillance system. (Miklóssy, 2011)

2.5.6 The Fire

In the afternoon of 22 August 2011 a fire broke out in the dome of the spa over the adventure pool, and one-third of its area was destroyed. It took one hour for the firefighters to stop the flames. Due to the insulation of the dome, the interior of the building remained intact. The leaders of the constructing company were optimistic, they hoped that the inauguration ceremony would take place at around Christmas. (Szabó 6, 2011)

According to the investigation the fire was a result of a fatal accident. As it was extinguished quickly and professionally, the damage was only a couple of million forints, and the delay would be only about 10 days. In order to minimize the delay, the workers worked overtime, and additional workers were employed. (Szabó 7, 2011)

Imre Makovecz died on 27 September 2011, so he could not see one of his greatest works completed. His works highly contribute to the townscape of Makó. (Delmagyar 6, 2011)

2.5.7 Opening the Spa

The construction works were finished in the first days of January 2012. After the test operation of the establishment, the technical acceptance of the complex took place. The staff of the spa was given time to become familiar with the novelties. Open days were organized on 17 and 18 of January to introduce the building to the interested public. (Delmagyar 7, 2012)

3000 people visited the Hagymatikum before the inauguration ceremony. The guided tours were fully booked well in advance. The city council organized a gala session in the conference hall of Hotel Korona to express their gratitude to the participants of the project to their role in the construction. (Bakos 7, 2012)

The opening ceremony of the Hagymatikum was organized in the square in front of the spa, on 20 January 2012. The establishment employed 100 people, but the civil council expected it to create 400-600 new workplaces in the near future due to the possible new tourism-related facilities of the town. Local residents were encouraged to build guesthouses, restaurants and other related facilities, and to

welcome the visitors in a friendly way, to contribute to the living of their children and grandchildren.

Gergely Horváth, the general manager of the Hungarian Tourism Plc. ensured the audience that they would inform the tourists about the newly built spa, and encourage them to come and visit it, however, it depends on the local residents whether they make them a returning guest or not. Horváth highlighted that the Hagymatikum is a unique spa as it offers facilities to all generations, and this is the factor that distinguishes it from other similar establishments. (Bakos 8, 2012)

During the construction works 10 000 m³ of concrete, 800 tons of reinforcing steel, 450 m³ of laminated wood support, 1500 m³ of wood and nearly 3000 m² of glass were built into the buildings. (Miklóssy, 2011)

2.6 The Building of the Spa

The exterior of the building is partly composed of ‘classical’ motives of Makovecz: the dual domes of the pavilion and the mail building resemble the Stephaneum of Piliscsaba, the composition of the main entrance are similar to that of the theatre of Lendva. The presence of slate on the rooftop of the complex reminds the spectator of the Church of the Holy Spirit of Paks. The roof of the indoor adventure pools, including 29 smaller and 1 larger dome, together with the glass dome with the finial, are intended to symbolize the water bursting out from the ground. (Kovács, 2012)

The enormous entrance hall is covered by a large dome. The restaurant and the children’s corner are located under similar, but smaller wooden domes. The thermal water pool is covered by a leaf-shaped structure. We can witness the most spectacular view in the area of central thermal pool: in the middle stands a pillar with the height of several storeys, and ornamented by leaves. (Kovács, 2012)

Originally this pillar would have served as a huge fountain. However, as it would have resulted in the deformation of the wooden roofing, the air circulation system is hidden within the pillar. (Földes, 2012)

The pillars in the corridors and the surrounding pools resembling white trees hold a gallery, and continue in pillars ornamented by human heads. The building

reminds the spectator of the churches designed by Makovecz in the last two decades, with a symbol of a spring in the centre. (Kovács, 2012)

The side-domes resemble the Turkish baths, and the majority of the light arrives from above and not from the sides, which provides an extraordinary ambiance and characteristic appearance to the spa. (Makovecz, 2011)

In the following section I would like to introduce the present facilities and services offered in the Hagymatikum nowadays.

Pools

At present we can find the following pools in the spa complex of Makó:

4 pools serve medical purposes with thermal water:

- Medical gymnastic pool: depth: 1.2-1.3-meters, water temperature: 32°C
- Medicinal weight pool: depth: 1.2-2.2 meters, water temperature: 35°C
- Chess pool: depth: 0.95 meter, water temperature: 37°C
- Sitting thermal pool: depth: 0.95 meter, water temperature: 37°C (Bede, 2014)

The rest of the pools can satisfy the needs of all age groups:

- 33-metre-long swimming pool: outdoor training pool for swimmers
- Adventure pool: indoor pool with swirling stream
- Cave pool: indoor pool with an artificially created cave
- Outdoor adventure pool: with springs and jets
- Outdoor baby pool
- Outdoor splashing pool: designed for children
- Relax pool: a pool in the wellness area
- Sherwood pool: indoor children's pool with many developing tasks
- Slide pool: outdoor landing pool for the 75-metre-long slide
- Toddlers' pool: indoor pool for the smallest guests
- Well pool: The pool closest to the sauna world where one can cool him- or herself after the sauna (Hagymatikum, 2015)

Sauna World

On the basement level of the spa there is a Sauna World with 9 saunas (Hagymatikum, 2015):

- Aroma sauna
- Flood of light sauna

- Herbal sauna
- Infra sauna
- Kelo sauna
- Makó sauna
- Steam cabin
- Intim sauna
- Great Plain Sauna

Medical Services

‘Services provided by the medical section (Hagymatikum, 2015)

- Pool baths
- Medicinal massage
- Mud treatment
- Medicinal weight bath
- Underwater medical gymnastics
- Medical gymnastics on land (recommended for children and adults)
- Underwater jet massage
- Hydrocarbonated bath
- Therapeutic group swimming, recommended for those under 18 years
- Electro-therapeutic treatments
- A complete treatment’

The medical services can also be used with social insurance referral, in this case the treatments cost only a couple of hundred Hungarian forints. (Szántó, 2012)

Wellness Services

Wellness Massage Types

There are several wellness massages that the guests can choose from:

- Swedish massage
- Herbal massage
- Aroma massage
- Lava rock massage
- Pampering “Sissi” massage
- Coffee massage
- Dead Sea salt skin regeneration massage
- Tibetan therapeutic honey massage
- Chocolate massage

- Bioptron treatment (Hagymatikum, 2015)

Wellness Baths

The following Wellness Baths are available in the Hagymatikum now:

- Mud tub therapy
- Dead Sea salt bath
- Dead Sea salt bath enhanced with aroma oils
- Refreshing aroma bath (sensual stroking /cicka /relaxa)
- Parajd salt bath (sulphur-iodine/ herbal / aloe vera)
- Cleopatra bath
- Red wine bath (Hagymatikum, 2015)

2.7 Summary

In the prior sections I have introduced the history of the thermal water and the spa of Makó, and the adventurous construction of the Hagymatikum, the new spa of the town. Several debates and hardships accompanied the implementation of the project, and some steps of the construction made the local residents dissatisfied with the huge investment.

In the following section, I will introduce the research methods that I have conducted to reveal the initial hardships of the town, the steps that the management has done so far to solve these problems, and the opinion of the visitors and local residents about the Hagymatikum.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

I have done an extensive research in order to obtain as much information on the topic as possible. I used several research methods that are introduced in the following chapters.

3.2 Secondary Research

Secondary research is the summary, comparison and/or deduction of existing research. (Crouch, Houdsen, 2003)

Secondary research is often used in the first phase of research to reveal the existing and required data. In some cases only secondary data are used.

The most important issue in secondary research is the full and correct citation of the original sources, which might be earlier research reports, different printed contents and different statistics.

Literature Search

I have visited the Szabó Ervin Library of Budapest and the Tourism Library of the Budapest Business School to find books related to the spas of Hungary and especially to the thermal water and spa of Makó. I have also visited the Somogyi Károly Municipal and County Library of Szeged to search for newspaper articles about the construction of the new spa. The Internet was searched for some missing data, but a great emphasis was put on using as much written literature as possible during the research procedure.

Literature Review

The literature for the literature review was based on content analysis of different spa literature. The content was thoroughly examined and then selected based on the fact whether they contained relevant information or not. During the literature review I tried to introduce the history of the thermal water of Makó, and the importance of the question of the new spa in the life of the residents of the city. It has

generated great emotions and sometimes sharp conflicts among the leadership of the town and the local people.

3.3 Primary Research Methods

Primary research can be defined as first-hand information collected in the form of observation, in-depth interview, survey, etc. This information collecting method is especially useful when few literature exists in connection with a given issue, either because it is a recent topic or one that is not extensively investigated. (Driscoll, 2011)

Surveys include two basic types of questions. Closed-ended questions enable the answerers to respond to the questions by electing from among a number of given options. Their main advantage is that the results are quick and easy to evaluate. However, due to the limited and fixed number of possible responds, the evaluator of the survey might not reflect the true opinion of the responder.

Open-ended questions give the respondents the freedom of expressing their opinion with their own words, as there are no predetermined answers. The main advantage of these questions is that they reflect the exact thoughts of the answerers. On the other hand, the evaluation of the answers is time-consuming, and it is difficult to group and analyse the answers. (Sincero, 2015)

Observation is a widespread method of collecting primary data. Its two basic types are participant observation and unobtrusive observation. In case of participant observation 'a researcher may interact with participants and become part of their community'. (Driscoll, 2011, p. 160)

On the contrary, when conducting unobtrusive observation, the researcher does not interact with the participants, but rather note down their actions.

As it is hard to gather all the required information from observation, interviews and surveys often have to be applied as well. Although these data are rather 'self-reported' than 'first-hand' data, they are good ways to collect primary data.

Surveys should be used if one wishes to examine a trend or pattern in a group's opinion, experience, etc. They can be used to collect few information from several people, hoping to make general conclusions.

Interviews are used to gather detailed, in-depth information from a limited number of people, for example in case of asking an expert about his or her opinion. (Driscoll, 2011)

3.3.1 Secondary Data Research

Originally an interview was planned with the current executive manager of the Hagymatikum, but I received neither a date for an appointment with her, nor the necessary answers for my questions via e-mail.

For this reason I had to collect information about the problems and their possible causes via Internet.

I have also found the results of a survey that was conducted by the Hagymatikum among 900 randomly selected guests during the summer of 2012. I have decided to shortly summarize the published data, as they can serve as a basis of comparison with the results of my own study.

3.3.2 Primary Data Research

I have decided to conduct an on-line questionnaire to reveal the opinion of the people who have already visited the Hagymatikum, and to investigate the possible causes why others have not visited the spa yet.

I have chosen Facebook as the main ‘distribution channel’ of the link of the survey, as my mother was born in Magyarcsanak, and some of my relatives still live in the region, and have several local friends who can tell their reliable opinion about the spa. Obviously I was eager to hear other opinions as well.

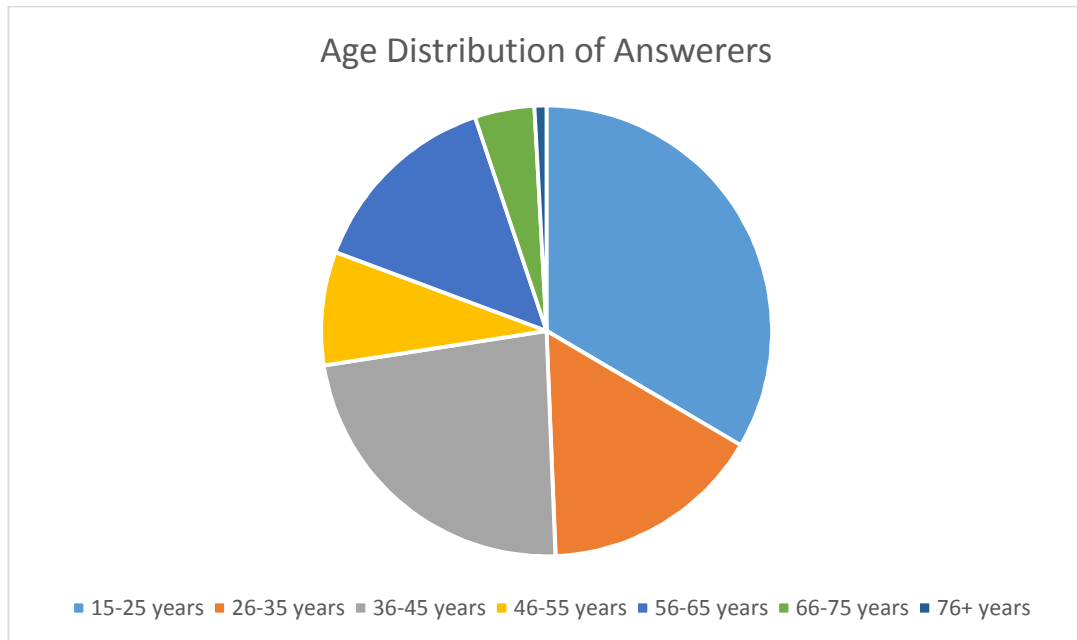
The main reason why I chose to conduct a survey was to reach as many potential respondents as possible. I wanted to receive the unbiased opinion of the answerers, and in case of an anonym survey people tend to express their opinion more freely, as they know that their names remain hidden.

I have tried to limit the number of questions to the really necessary ones in order to enable people with limited time to fill it in as well. For this reason the majority of the questions were closed-ended questions. I have also created closed-ended questions with the option of an individual open-ended answer as a last option, because

I wanted to give the opportunity to the responders to give their own answers in case it was not listed among the possibilities. My survey contained only one open-ended question, referring to the possible amendments that the responders would carry out in the spa, as I did not want to influence the answers by suggesting any possible answers.

The survey consisted of 4 parts, depending on the answers that the responders gave. The two questions referring to the age and gender of the answerers were asked from everybody, but afterwards different questions appeared depending on whether they had already been to the Hagymatikum or not. And those answerers who had not visited the spa yet received different questions depending on their answer to the question referring to their intention on visiting the Hagymatikum in the future.

Chart 1 Age Distribution of Answerers



Based on the Author's Research

The survey was filled in by 233 people, 57 men and 176 women. The above chart shows the age distribution of the answerers. Although the number of those aged between 15 and 25 years is dominant, the other age groups are also represented.

I have also visited the spa myself to be able to form an opinion about the Hagymatikum, and to conduct some personal observation.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

3.4.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is analyzing data with the help of statistics and mathematical techniques. The aim of this type of research is to create and use mathematical models and theories that belong to a process. These data are always expressed in terms of numerical forms, for example statistics, percentage, etc. The results of the given sample should reflect unbiased proportions of the entire population. (Given, 2008)

3.4.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research focuses on a smaller group of target audience in order to reveal the reasons behind their behavior. It uses in-depth methods to find descriptive information for a couple of questions that can help building a hypothesis or find a solution for a problem. (QRCA, 2015)

3.4.3 The Author's Research

As my dissertation focuses on the possible ways of increasing the reputation and the number of visitors of the Hagymatikum, it can be considered as a qualitative research rather than a quantitative one. Although some statistics are introduced in the next chapter of the paper, they cannot be perceived as representative because of the low number of answerers and the high proportion of local residents among them. On the other hand, the main focus was on the answerers' recommendations on the improvement of the facility, and for this objective the number of answerers was high enough.

4 Research Analysis and Results

4.1 Introduction

Financial problems appeared shortly after opening the new spa in Makó. It could bring profit only in the summer months, and the local government had to subsidize the Hagymatikum with enormous amounts of money. In October 2012, the managing director of the spa resigned.

In the following chapter I will introduce the results of my research on the history of the Hagymatikum after it opened, how these problems were intended to be solved, and what other steps could possibly make the spa more profitable.

4.2 Hagymatikum: the First Months of Operation

4.2.1 The First Months of Operation

The management of the Hagymatikum put a great emphasis on the proper information boards, this was the reason why all the important information was available in Romanian and Serbian as well as in Hungarian and English. As the number of Romanian guests had been significant in the previous spa as well (at weekends 50% or even 70% of the guests were Romanians), the management felt it important to make them feel comfortable. The number of Serbian visitors was also significant.

In order to favour the Romanian guests even more, the management of the Hagymatikum sent 15 of its employees to a 4-month Romanian language course. As the general manager of the spa said, lifeguards, cashiers and therapeutic masseurs were sent to language courses. The financial background of the education was supported by a cross-border European Union tender that was intended to help 3 Hungarian and 2 Romanian spa towns in boosting their tourism industries. (Szabó 7, 2012)

In April 2012 Delmagyar.hu reported that several Romanian sites (especially those for the residents of Arad) wrote detailed articles about the Hagymatikum, saying that it started a new era in the life of Makó. Some journalists discovered similarities between the works of the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, others suggested that this is the way how Romanian settlement could also improve their facilities. Many of them

highlighted the wide range of services offered in the spa, and a large number of photos were attached to the articles as well. (Major 1, 2012)

Children under the age of 18 could participate on therapeutic swimming classes in the spa, and as the costs were covered by the social insurance, their parents did not have to pay for it. (Delmagyar 8, 2012)

According to the comment of one reader on the article, those children who could not swim yet were taught to swim as well, and in many cases there was a great improvement in the children's state and health due to the therapeutic swimming classes.

The local government announced in the last days of February 2012 that the city council decided on paying the deductible part of the medical treatments to the Hagymatikum directly. With this decision the city council intended to encourage local residents to avail themselves of the medical treatments. The National Health Insurance Fund of Hungary covered 85% of the price of the medical treatments of the spa. Although the local government of Makó had covered the remaining 15% previously as well, the guests had to pay it to the spa and they could reclaim the money later. However, this procedure often lasted for several months, and it might have discouraged many people. (Szabó 8, 2012)

According to the article of Szabó (Szabó 9, 2012) Valentine's Day was celebrated in the Hagymatikum with special decoration and programmes: the building was decorated with pink and red balloons, strips and tiny hearts, random dates, funny weddings, erotic infusions in the saunas, special cocktails and a disco with DJs around the adventure pools. Although the spa was not full, elderly and younger people were chatting besides and inside the indoor pools.

According to the comments of the article, local residents were disappointed that they could not use their Makó Card to enter the spa during the event, and as a result, they celebrated Valentine's Day elsewhere.

By the end of May 2012 much of the landscaping was finished, and the outdoor areas of the spa were also opened. From the 25th May the slide and the adventure pool started to operate, and four sports fields were planned to open as well. A huge sand box was built for the small children, and the Kelo sauna was built from 300-year-old Finnish trees and 15 million forints. (Szabó 10, 2012)

In the last days of May a 250-forint wardrobe surcharge was introduced in the Hagymatikum for the summer months. The reason for this was the low number of

wardrobes: the management of the spa expected 2-4 thousand visitors daily, and there were only 1133 wardrobes in the changing rooms. As they experienced that several people did not use the wardrobes during the summer, they decided to solve the problem of the low number of wardrobes this way. People with season tickets and those who arrive to medical treatments did not have to pay for the wardrobes during the summer, either. (Major 2, 2012)

4.2.2 Summer: the Months of Profitability

During the summer months the number of visitors and the income of the spa was satisfactory, and there was an increased interest in the medical services as well. Compared to the figures of the previous year, the number of the visitors and the income also grew significantly, and the leaders of the spa hoped that the expectations about the annual visitors would be realised. (Szabó 11, 2012)

In the first weekend of July four sports fields were opened that could be used free of charge all summer long. In July and the first part of August 2012, several programmes were organised in the Hagymatikum, called Minimax Kid Beach. During these weeks sports events, a circus, natural history-related programmes and a beach party were organised. (Delmagyar 9, 2012)

The Kid Beach was a real success, several thousands of visitors tried the games and programmes organised by the spa. 24 animators ensured the well-being of the children. For the adult visitors football competitions, bikini shows and beauty consultations were organised. (Szabó 12, 2012)

Thematic night swimming programmes were also available during the summer months in the Hagymatikum, with discounted entrance tickets and massage fees, and special sauna sittings. These were mainly visited by younger people, but some elderly guests also tried the programmes. (Delmagyar 10, 2012)

The Hagymatikum accepted SZÉP Cards (Széchenyi Relaxing Cards) from the time the new element of the cafeteria system was introduced, and it seemed to be a popular method of payment: 15-20% of the guests used their SZÉP Card instead of cash payment. In the spa the visitors could use the card for buying their entrance tickets and consumption in the restaurant. Although the Hagymatikum had some expenses

with the transactions, according to the general manager of the spa, they still profited from them. (Németh, 2012)

4.2.3 Financial Hardships and Debates

In September 2012 Imre Kovacsics, the managing director of the Hagymatikum announced that the spa struggled with serious financial hardships. The 40-million operating expenses were covered by the income only during the summer months (realizing a 58-million income in July, and a 52-million income in August), the income of the previous months did not cover the expenses.

In the period from January to August, the total income was 244 million forints, while the costs amounted to 320 million forints, which was equal to a 75-million forint loss for the spa.

As a result, the opening hours were modified, on the weekdays the spa opened only at noon instead of 8 o'clock in the morning. The number of employees was decreased by 50 people, and the number of managers was decreased to three. The general manager offered the city council that he would not accept his salary in case he not make the spa profitable until the end of the year. The local government accepted the rationalizing plan, and decided on a 45-million forint increase in the capital as well. (Termalonline 1, 2012)

However, the cost-saving actions did not bring the expected results. As the mayor of Makó commented the general manager would have needed a wonder to operate the Hagymatikum in a profitable way, and in this situation the knowledge and experience was not enough. At that moment the future of the spa was unknown, the possibility of closing it for the winter months was also mentioned. (Termalonline 2, 2012)

Kovacsics did not view his resignation as a personal failure, as the spa remained unprofitable in spite of his efforts. He also expressed that as long as people would not have more money in their pockets, no profit could be expected. The whole industry was fighting with this problem, but the situation of Makó was extremely hard as it did not have enough accommodation to attract tourists. (Szabó 13, 2012)

Nándor Nagy, the managing director of the Communal Non-Profit Ltd. was appointed to be the new leader of the spa. (Termalonline 2, 2012)

As the mayor of the town explained, their aim with the change of the leaders was to reconsider their marketing strategy in order to attract a much higher number of visitors in the future. Their aim was to make Makó a spa town.

Nándor Nagy said that he considered the increase of the number of visitors his primary goal. Due to the proximity of the triple borders, they relied on Serbian and Romanian guests as well. They also planned to start a cooperation with local enterprises in order to create packages that can be attractive to those guests who arrive from farther as well. The banks of the Maros, the nearby adventure park and the 'Tree crown' (a walkway among the trees) could all provide active holiday programmes for those interested.

Mágori, the parliament representative of Makó announced that they would turn the attention of the State Audit Office of Hungary on the case of the Hagymatikum, and ask them to investigate whether the constructing and operating procedures of the spa were regular. She said that it is important to know who is responsible for the situation, and highlighted that the preliminary reports counted with 500-600 thousand visitors annually, and the predicted income would have covered not only the operating expenses, but the interest costs of the loan taken for the investment as well.

The politician also highlighted that there were at least 5 or 6 spas operated in the Southern Great Plain that were easily accessible from Makó, and their entrance fees were all much below the prices of the Hagymatikum. (Szabó 13, 2012)

Political debates were constant about the enormous investment, and it was always the mayor and Kovacsics who were found guilty for the inappropriate operation. Mágori highlighted that the management should consider the disposable income of the local residents when they determine the prices, and the visitors should also be properly informed if a pool is not operating before they purchase the tickets. (Bakos 9, 2012)

The local residents were outraged that the city council had to support the Hagymatikum by a further 80 million forints, as it had already received 52 million forints at the beginning. The mayor of the town reminded everyone that they had to spend approximately 100 million forints annually on the previous spa as well.

According to industrial experts the unprofitability of the Hagymatikum could be predicted, as during the redesigning process the water surface became too small in order to adapt to the financial framework. (Delmagyar 11, 2012)

In December 2012 the city council discussed that based on the examples of Gyula and Hévíz, they should not expect the Hagymatikum to be profitable from the very first moment. In Gyula 50 years had to pass until the spa became successful, but before the change of the regime it had been a state enterprise, and it did not necessarily have to make profit.

Today in Hungary only 5 or 6 spas operate in a profitable way, the most successful one is the spa of Hévíz, and there are many spas, also famous ones that generate losses.

According to the opinion of Cséfan, who had been the director/manager of the Castle Bath of Gyula for 10 years, Kovacsics was not such a good leader as he was said to be. For a short period of time Kovacsics also led the Castle Bath of Gyula, and under his leadership a sauna park was built in the spa without permission, and thus it had to be demolished later.

Cséfan considered the project of the Hagymatikum a mistake, and advised the city council of Makó not to expect the spa to be profitable in the near future. (Bakos 10, 2012)

4.2.4 Marketing and Recognition

In November 2012 a study tour was organized for several journalists within the framework of the Hungarian and Romanian Cooperation Programme. They visited the spas of Makó, Orosháza, Gyula, Buziásfürdő and Menyháza. The aim was to increase the number of visitors and guest nights of the towns by common marketing plan, partnership and development. (Delmagyar 12, 2012)

The Hagymatikum was awarded by the Foundation for Constructors' Masterworks as the best sports and health establishment built in 2012. The jury appreciated the quality of the construction and the functionality of the building. The outstanding cooperation of the principal, the designer and the constructing company was also taken into consideration, as well as the fact that this was the last great architectural work of Imre Makovecz. (Delmagyar 13, 2012)

4.3 The Second Year of Operation

On the occasion of the first birthday of the Hagymatikum, every visitor could enter the spa at a 50% discounted price. They have also invited a clown with balloons, a magician, and prepared sandwiches and a cake to celebrate the event.

Gábor Nagy, the marketing manager of the spa informed the media the future plans of the spa: they wished to prepare more packages and events for the families, and they wanted to increase the number of the visitors in the medical department. (Szabó 14, 2013)

4.3.1 Financial Plans

In 2013 the planned subsidy of the Hagymatikum from the local government was 170 million forints. The mayor of Makó highlighted that the spa was still the flagship of tourism, the new industry of the town. Buzás highlighted that although the planning of the Hagymatikum started before the economic crisis, they would have carried out a similar project if they had known about the crisis as well. The only difference would have been the form of loan they had applied for to invest.

According to Nándor Nagy, the managing director of the spa, the financial goals were moderate. They calculated with a 470-million forint annual budget, which would be composed of a 300-million forint income and the 170-million forint subsidy from the local government. They decreased the expenses by 40 million forints by lowering the energy and marketing costs. They relied on the same number of visitors as in the previous year, but they wished to increase the clients of the medical department by 10 thousand people. The entrance fees were not increased, and they planned to create several packages, some of which with a cashback guarantee in case the guests would not feel satisfied with the services received.

Gábor Nagy, the marketing manager said that they wanted to achieve that local residents feel the Hagymatikum their own spa. For this aim they have created an advisory body from the regular guests and those with season tickets, and asked for their ideas and remarks in order to improve the services and premises of the Hagymatikum. (Szabó 15, 2013)

4.3.2 Changes in 2013

Nándor Nagy, the managing director of the Hagymatikum resigned on 1st April 2013 as the leader of the Hagymatikum and the Communal Non-Profit Ltd. to work in his family business. (Szabó 16, 2013)

Beáta Scheitzner was appointed to be the new managing director of the spa. She was an experienced professional, as she had worked in Belgium as a sales manager of a department store, and, after returning home to Makó, she had been the leader of the Tourinform Office of Makó for two years. Later she led a company specialised in tourism and urban marketing, and opened a fast food restaurant.

She was willing to continue what her predecessor started, and that she would spend her whole day in the spa. She was eager to experience all fields of work within the establishment in order to fully understand its operation. She promised the employees to organize trainings if necessary, and she wished to create close cooperation with touristic service providers. She wanted to achieve that all the 13 thousand Makó Card owners would be regular guests of the Hagymatikum, and she wanted to improve the sales approach in the spa. (Szabó 17, 2013)

From 16th September 2013, two spa doctors were practicing alternately in the spa of Makó, from 1 pm until 7 pm every weekday. This service could be utilized by those who already had a documentation about their illness, even without a referral of the general practitioner. The spa was planning to extend this service if there was a need. The consulting room was equipped with the most modern equipment, it cost 1 million forints, and was financed by the own budget of the Hagymatikum.

The local and regional residents could not only use the medical services of the spa free of charge, but those who arrived from the neighbouring villages received a travel allowance as well. (Szabó 18, 2013)

In the second half of September 2013 the Hagymatikum was classified as a national spa, which meant that not only local and regional residents were entitled to use the medical treatments with the financial help of the Social Insurance, but all the residents of Hungary. What is more, foreign visitors could also visit the spa on the advice of their doctors, and the social insurance companies of their home countries could cover the expenses.

As a result of the increased interest towards the spa, two more masseurs were hired in the Hagymatikum, and the number of the visitors in October increased by 30% compared to October 2012. Beáta Scheitzner and Péter Buzás visited Osterhofen, the sister town of Makó to see if there was local interest in the spa of Makó. They experienced that the services provided by the spa of Makó met the requirements of the potential German guests.

The Human Resource Committee of the Hungarian Spa Association spent its 2-day external meeting in Makó. All the 10 people were satisfied with the Hagymatikum, and they gave useful pieces of advice on managing the spa in an even more successful way. (Szabó 19, 2013)

4.3.3 Investigation and Criticism from the State Audit Office of Hungary

The State Audit Office of Hungary investigated the management of the local government in the period of 1st January 2007 and 31st December 2011. According to the summary of the investigation the assets of the local government increased by 30.7% as a result of investments and renovations. The State Audit Office found that the management activities were executed in accordance with the legal regulations.

However, the report criticized the construction of the Hagymatikum, as the hazards of the investment during decision-making were not evaluated correctly. The local infrastructural facilities, the distribution of the clientele, the purchasing power, the number and distance of the nearby spas, the return and timing of the investment were improperly assessed. Gyógyfürdő Ltd., the company established for the operation of the Hagymatikum was unprofitable during the examined period. (Bakos 11, 2013)

4.4 The third Year of Operation

In the New Year the management did not increase the entrance fees to the spa, but extended the number of available services. Scheitzner, the managing director of the Hagymatikum expressed her positive expectations that the tendency of the increasing number of visitors and the increasing revenues of the past year would

remain constant. The local government planned to subsidize the Hagymatikum by only 140 million forints.

They were also planning to organize several entertaining programs, because all the 30 such programs organized the previous year had been really successful. (Szabó 20, 2014)

In the spring of 2014 the management of the spa contracted with some German touristic companies in order to attract as many German guests as possible. This was announced on a City Council meeting, together with the plans of Scheitzner on reducing the amount of the necessary subsidy below 100 million forints. (Bakos 12, 2014)

The Hagymatikum received the second prize from the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI) in 2014. The Prix d'Excellence Awards have been organized since 1992, and the spa of Makó was awarded second in resort category.

FIABCI operates in 60 countries, and has been organizing the Prix d'Excellence Awards to call attention to the top rated real estate developments operating for at least one year. The spa of Makó was allowed to participate in the international competition due to its results in the domestic competition in the previous year. (Bakos 13, 2014)

In the first days of June 2014 two new open-air slides, one for the families and a kamikaze slide were opened in the Hagymatikum. Both of them were constructed besides the landing pool of the already-existing 'anaconda slide', as this landing pool had originally been planned for three slides.

The two new slides cost 14.4 million forints altogether. The investment was financed from the budget of the town, and it could be realized because of the lower subsidy needs of the spa.

New services were also introduced: on Tuesdays and Thursdays aqua fitness classes were organized from 6 pm, and land-based physiotherapy was also available. New types of massages were introduced: people could choose from coffee massage, chocolate massage, honey massage and herbal massage as well. (Delmagyar 14, 2014)

On 12th September 2014 Hotel Glorius, the first 4-star hotel of Makó opened with 37 rooms and capacity for 74 people. The original building had been built in 1926, and was bought by a subsidiary of the Hódmezővásárhely-based Bodrogi Bau in 2012. During the reconstruction and inner design of the building the constructors tried to summon the atmosphere of the Art Deco style of the 1920s. The total costs of

the investment were nearly 700 million forints, the project received funds from the European Union and the Hungarian government as well. There is a honeymoon suite and a president suite as well as a restaurant with a capacity of 100 people and a café. 50 cars can be parked in the car park of the hotel, and a conference room also took place in the establishment, its capacity is 50 seats. The entrance of the hotel is close to the Hagymatikum, but fitness and wellness facilities are available for the guests on-site as well.

Upon its opening the hotel offered packages with half board, and it included an entrance ticket to the Hagymatikum as well. (Turizmusonline, 2014)

In the meantime, several apartments and guesthouses were opened in the town. The first three ones opened in 2012, then another four in 2013, and Bástya Hotel was renovated in 2013 as well. In 2014 six other apartments and guesthouses entered the competition for the guests, and 7 further establishments in 2015. All of them are special and represent a different style, range of services and price level for a different segment of the market. (Booking, 2015)

According to the guest statistics and a relatively new trend, the typical guests of the Hagymatikum besides foreigners are Hungarian retired people who spend their time with travelling to try different spas of a region or Hungary.

This attitude seems to become a trend, and the much debated issue of building one more spa in the Southern Great Plain seems to be solved: several visitors come from Transdanubia to try as many spas in the region as possible: besides the Hagymatikum they can visit the spa of Szeged, Mórahalom, Orosháza or Gyula as well, and the dream of the town leaders seems to be coming true: to achieve that guests spend more than one night in the region. (Bakos 14, 2014)

4.5 The Most Important Events in 2015

In February 2015 the city council voted a 50-million forint aid for the Hagymatikum after a hot debate about the finances. The management of the spa originally required 70 million forints, but György Hadik, a representative of the settlement proposed that the business plan of the establishment should have been redesigned so that 50 million forints would be enough from the local government. He argued that in the previous year 95 million forints were supplied and 20 million were

lent for the Hagymatikum from the town, the slides were built on the costs of the town and the spa received 5 million forints through a foundation as well.

Czirbus, the vice mayor of Makó recommended that Scheitzner to pay premium to the employees only if the spa generates profit, referring to the extra salary that the workers received in the previous year.

The figures of the previous years' subsidies were as follows: in 2012 the spa received 70 million forints, in 2013 176 million forints, and in 2014 95 million forints. (Makohirado, 2015)

In April 2015 the Hagymatikum was awarded with a second prize in a competition published by Hungarian Swimming Pool Technological Association and the Hungarian Spa Association. The participating facilities had to be built after 2010, and the applications had to be secured with a motto.

The professional jury awarded the second price to the Hagymatikum in the category of public spa, the material included the adventure pool area designed by Imre Makovecz, and the detailed technical and aesthetic description of the adventure pools. (Delmagyar 15, 2015)

In the first days of October 2015 the Hagymatikum was awarded fifth in an online voting by termalfurdo.hu in the category of upcoming spas. 170 thousand participants voted for their favourite establishments. In three categories nearly 200 Hungarian spas participated. (Delmagyar 16, 2015)

The first prize of this category of the competition, called The Upcoming Spa of the Year was awarded to the Cserkeszölő Bath and Medical Centre, the second prize was gained by the Demjéni Thermal Valley in Demjén. The Jonathermál Medical and Adventure Bath was elected the third best upcoming spa in Kiskunmajsa, and the Berekfürdői Thermal and Beach Bath was chosen the fourth spa. The Hagymatikum received a higher rank than the spas of Mórahalom, Bogács, Tamási, Tiszakécske and Komárom, which can be considered as a real success of the establishment. (Azevfurdoje, 2015)

These prizes and awards help the Hagymatikum of Makó to become better known and attract more visitors. Several people highly rely on the results of such competitions when deciding on their destination.

4.6 Research Among the Visitors

A survey was carried out in 2012 and the results of which were published in an article on Delmagyar.hu on 26th September 2012, and showed the opinion of 900 randomly selected visitors of the Hagymatikum in July and August of 2012 about the spa and the town of Makó. In the following paragraphs I would like to summarize these results of this survey in order to introduce the opinion of the visitors about the newly opened spa of the Southern Great Plain. (Delmagyar 17, 2012)

4.6.1 The results of the Survey

75% of the visitors were Hungarians. 42% of them were local residents, 25% of them arrived from other settlements of Csongrád county, 11% travelled to Makó from Budapest, and the remaining 21% from other parts of Hungary. The majority of the foreign visitors arrived from Romania, and the spa seemed to be outstandingly popular among the residents of Arad, who constituted 46% of the total foreign guests.

According to the survey the spa was mainly visited by people with higher degree of education: 84% of them had at least maturity exam, and 43% had a college or university degree.

In terms of the marital status of the respondents, the Hagymatikum seemed to be successful in making the spa popular among families: 66% of the guests had children, and 62% of these people had two or more children.

The results also highlighted that the 'good reputation' of the spa was mainly forwarded by the word of mouth, and the visitors are happy to return to the town: the majority, 60% of the non-resident guests had already been to the town before. 41% of them heard about the Hagymatikum from a friend, and 31% of them read about it on the Internet. 83% of the answerers arrived by car, and nearly all of them could find Makó easily.

The guests of the spa were willing to visit other sights and monuments of Makó as well: half of them visited the adventure coast also, and 32% of the answerers went to the museum as well.

88% of the answerers found the Hagymatikum good or really good, and rated the establishment elegant, attractive, child and family-friendly on a scale ranging from 1 to 5.

The beauty and cleanliness of Makó received an outstanding good result, as well as the hospitality of the local residents. However, 72% of the answerers proposed some possible amendments in the spa: 32% of them missed the 50-metre pool, and 26% of them considered the services overpriced.

4.7 Primary Research

After reading the outline of the survey made in 2012, I have found it a little one-sided, so I decided to create my own, up-to-date survey to see and analyse the results, and to compare them to the results of the one I have found: to see whether the opinion of the visitors changed or not, whether there are any further remarks, etc. In the following paragraphs, I would like to show and analyse the results.

The main way of surveying was sharing the questionnaire on Facebook.

The questionnaire was filled in by 233 people. Although this sample is not representative, but conclusions could be drawn from the answers as well.

4.7.1 Introducing and Analysing the Results

75% of the answerers have already been to the Hagymatikum. 77.7% of them liked the spa very much, or felt positive about it, 9.7% of them could not decide whether they felt positive or negative about the spa. 12.6% of them did not like the spa at all, or did not really like it.

This means that the majority of the visitors had a positive impression about the Hagymatikum, but in my opinion a really successful spa should increase the number of those guests who are really satisfied with their services.

Those who felt negative about the spa, mainly criticized the high prices, the standards of the establishment, the limited number of the adventure pools and that they were all similar to each other which made the spa boring. A respondent criticized the young summertime seasonal workers as he had found them rude and impudent.

80% of those who have been to the Hagymatikum knew about it because they were local residents, and a further 10% also had local or regional origins, relatives or studied in Makó previously. 5 answerers mentioned touristic newspapers as their source of information about the Hagymatikum, 7 read about it on online forums, and 8 answerers saw advertisements on it. 12 people arrived following the advice of their friends. Multiple answers could be given to this question.

From the above data we can conclude that the marketing of the spa could be more intensive. I have also received verbal and written feedback that many people have never heard about this spa.

67% of those who have visited the spa would be happy if a 50-metre pool was built in the Hagymatikum. This partly shows the need of local residents who lack the opportunity of swimming in the spa, as many of them would be regular guests of the establishment for this reason. 38% of the 175 people who have already been to the spa would welcome some indoor slides, as at present there are slides only besides the outdoor pools. 31.5% of the answerers would visit the spa during events organized during the weekends, for example live concerts and festivals.

42% of those 175 people who visited the spa highlighted that they loved the helpful staff, 68% of them loved the unique building, 22.3% of them chose the Sauna World as a memorable part of the Hagymatikum, and 10% were especially satisfied with the quality of the services. This shows that the quality of the services definitely need some improvement.

85.7% of those who visited the Hagymatikum would return to the spa, which is a relatively good ratio, but in my opinion the spa should make efforts to decrease the number of visitors who would not return. These visitors mainly criticized the number of pools and claimed that the existing ones look the same, and complained about the lack of a reasonably sized swimming pool. One answerer mentioned the careless personnel who did not pay enough attention to the offenders, and a mother claimed that her children repeatedly received illnesses after visiting the spa, and she blamed the inappropriate hygienic conditions as a main reason for the illness.

88% of the 175 people would recommend the spa to others to visit. This number is higher than the number of those who would return themselves, and one person reasoned this discrepancy as well: he wrote that although he would not return to the spa, in his opinion everybody should see once in their lives the beautiful construction designed by Imre Makovecz.

Some of those who have not been to the Hagymatikum and do not plan to visit in the future either, answered that they would rather choose another spa in the region where the price and value ratio is better. Mainly the residents of Budapest answered that it was too far from their home, which may indicate that the region should be made more attractive for them by more attractions.

4.7.2 Guests' Recommendation to Improve the Spa

My last question for those who had already been to the Hagymatikum referred to their opinion on how the spa could be improved. Several useful recommendations were made, and if some of them were implemented, most probably more local, Hungarian and foreign guests could be attracted, and they would be more satisfied with the facility.

The pools and slides received the highest number of criticism. Families with small children wrote that there are not enough slides in the Children's world. Several people mentioned that the number of 'big' slides is not enough, either, and bigger ones should be built also. Moreover, at present the slides operate alternately, one slide at a time, and there are often breaks when they stop working as well. One answerer found the landing pool of the outdoor slides too small.

One main problem with the pools for the visitors was, mainly for local residents, the lack of a proper, deep swimming pool, as the existing ones are mainly used by families and the elderly generation. Many people play in the pools, and jump into them from the sides, thus swimming is not possible at present. The lack of the outdoor 50-metre swimming pool was mentioned in this section also. Others remarked that all the pools are similar, so the spa is rather boring, and more adventure pools should be built, and they should be more interesting. The number of hangers for bags and towels was also criticized around the pools, as in the summer season it is difficult to find an empty hanger.

Some elderly guests had problems with the swirl in the adventure pool, as they did not expect to be swept away, and they could not hold on and exit the swirl area.

Families with children also mentioned that the family wellness has still not been built, as it had been eliminated from the original plans of Makovecz.

Another great field of criticism is the prices. Several answerers wrote that the price-per-value ratio was not optimal, especially in the winter season when the outdoor pools were not operating. One person who arrived in the pool with her foreign friends wrote that her friends had found the pricing system very complicated and complex that should be simplified. One answerer suggested that if the retired people and the residents of the region would receive more discounts and more favourable prices, then more Hungarians would visit the facility.

Table 1

The basic entrance fees for the Hagymatikum are the following

Wellness	All week long
Combined (valid for the thermal, adventure and training pool)	Price
Adult admission	2200,-HUF
Adult admission with locker	2400,-HUF
Concessionary admission*	1700,-HUF
Concessionary admission with locker*	1900,-HUF
Family admission all day (2 adults + 1 child under 14 years)	5000,-HUF
Family admission all day (2 adults + 1 child under 14 years) with locker	5400,-HUF
Every additional child (1 child under 14 years, it is free under the age of 3.) without locker	1000,-HUF
Sauna admission (with valid ticket)	800,-HUF
Adult combined ticket after 16.00	1800,-HUF
Concessionary combined ticket after 16.00 (pensioners, students, children)	1500,-HUF

Source: Hagymatikum, 2015

The dressing rooms received some criticism, also. Visitors complain about the fact that it was hard to find their wardrobes due to the inappropriate boards. Sometimes family members or friends arriving together receive wardrobes in different parts of the spa, and it takes several minutes to find them. In wintertime the wardrobes and the changing cabins were found to be too small, especially by families arriving with children. On days when there is a high number of visitors the number of wardrobes is not enough. This was the reason why they ask money for using the wardrobes during the summer, but this was also one piece of criticism, so maybe the solution would be to extend the size of the changing room and supply more wardrobes.

Although nearly half of those answerers who had been to the Hagymatikum mentioned the helpful staff as one positive characteristic during their stay, some other answers criticized the attitude of some staff members. One of them mentioned that the

young summer workers were really impudent, and some other comments also mentioned that the attitude and behaviour of the personnel needed some improvement, and that they should have behaved in a kinder and more helpful way. Some remarks also mentioned that the pool guards did not notice the offending guests.

Some complaints were made on the medical department as well. One answerer indicated that it was not utilized enough, by which she might referred to the fact that the employees received their wages for the idle hours as well. Two people mentioned that the medical department should be open during the weekends as well, or at least the visitors should be able to make their appointments at the reception. One of them suggested that during the peak season two people could work at the reception as well.

The answerers mainly criticized the Sauna Sittings in the Sauna World. One of them advised that during busy days more sittings should be organized, and not only in one sauna. Another idea was to do some sittings in the steam cabin as well, because they exist in several other spa facilities. One person complained that there were few Sauna Masters working in the department, and one lady found the Sauna sitting fee an exaggeration, as those who wished to use the Sauna World had to pay an extra fee already.

Some other remarks include the maze-like nature of the building, and that due to the lack of the appropriate information boards it is easy to get lost. In the children's world the flooring was proven to be quite slippery, because one mother complained that her 1.5-year-old daughter had fallen and beaten her head.

Some of those who had participated in a thematic night programme complained that the spa should stay open for longer, as the pools had to be vacated 20 minutes prior to midnight.

The more regular cleaning of the more hidden parts of the building was also criticized, as there was dust on the wooden elements of the roofing, and some spider webs in the corners of the rooms.

Two of the answerers highlighted that during the hot summer days there is not enough shadow in the outdoor area, which probably could be solved by planting more trees or installing more beach umbrellas.

Some really good ideas were written about the possible programme opportunities. One answerer proposed that the management of the spa should organize more programmes to the children as they would attract the parents of the children as

well, so it would generate a high income for the spa. One man wrote that probably they would visit the spa more often if live music programmes would be organized more often. Another idea was that matches could be projected so that people could watch them from the outdoor pools.

4.8 Comparison of the Results of the Two Surveys

Although I have examined the Hagymatikum from a different aspect than the creators of the previous survey, we can find some overlapping between the two questionnaires.

From among the answerers of the earlier questionnaire, 88% of the visitors had a good or really good opinion about the establishment. From among my answerers, only 77.7% of those answerers who have visited the spa had a good or really good opinion – which is a 10% decrease in the positive attitude. We might consider what caused this decrease?

The other common field of the two surveys was the source of information about the Hagymatikum. As for the questionnaire conducted in 201, 60% of the non-resident guests had already been to the town before, 41% of the answerers heard about the spa from a friend of theirs, and 31% read about the Hagymatikum on the Internet. According to the results of my survey, 80% of those who have been to the Hagymatikum were local residents, and a further 10% also had local or regional origins or connections. Only 5 answerers mentioned touristic newspapers as their source of information, and 15 of them gained data from the Internet. 12 people arrived following the advice of their friends. Although the results of my questionnaire suggest that my survey was filled in mainly by local residents, but also shows that the Hagymatikum is not well-known among the residents of Hungary.

4.9 Personal Observation

In October 2015 I have visited the Hagymatikum in order to be able to add my personal experience and opinion to the dissertation as well. As it was autumn, the outdoor pools were closed, so we could only use the indoor pools, and we have paid the entrance fee to the Sauna World as well.

My general impression about the spa was absolutely positive. Upon entering the entrance hall of the building, we could find several informative brochures about the Hagymatikum, Hotel Glorius, and several sights and facilities of Makó and of the region, in Hungarian as well as in English and Romanian. The receptionist was really helpful. Although it was not highlighted on the price list but we did not have to pay for the wardrobes, as it is valid only during the summer months. However, I have found the prices slightly too high, as the two of us paid 4800 forints for the tickets, and as the outdoor area was closed, the general admission fee covers basically the two indoor thermal water pools, the educational pool and the resting areas only.

The changing area definitely needs to be changed in my opinion as it is a real challenge to find one's wardrobe in it. As far as I was concerned I could not observe any logic in the numbering of the wardrobes, and once we returned from the pool area, we had to find our cabinets again, and it took another several minutes to do so.

The positive feature of the changing area is the fact that it is coeducational, and only the shower area is separated for the genders. I always find it annoying when we need to select our clothes due to the fact that we need to go to separate changing rooms.

The adventure pool-area is amazing and really impressive. The building itself is unique, and the two pools are enjoyable. As it was a Thursday, early afternoon, there were hardly any visitors, and the pools were not overcrowded. Both pools are filled with thermal water, so it was really pleasant to go into the water. The cave pool was really romantic, and I really enjoyed the swirling stream as well.

However, I missed the indoor slides. I had visited a couple of other spas before the Hagymatikum, and all of them had indoor slides which I really enjoyed to try. Although the construction of the building is not ideal for installing indoor slides, I might consider a solution for this problem if I was a manager of the Hagymatikum.

In the Sauna World 5 saunas operated out of the 9. As we found out later, Thursday was the day when the lowest number of saunas were switched on during the low season. The lady at the reception of the Sauna World was extremely helpful, she described all the operating saunas, and informed us that there would be a Sauna sitting from 3 o'clock, and we would not have to pay for it either, only subscribe on a list.

We have also tried the restaurant of the Hagymatikum. It is a moderately priced, fast-food type of restaurant with a relatively wide selection of food. The main reason behind choosing this type of restaurant must have been the aim of attracting

many visitors. The quality of food was acceptable, however, the cashier did not know that one of us ordered the daily offer, thus we nearly ended up paying more than necessary. In my opinion it would be useful to introduce a program that can record the daily offers, thus the guests of the restaurant do not feel fooled.

Upon departure I also had troubles with the hair dryers. One of them was damaged, and all of them blew cold air except for one which, however, was in a height of 2 meters.

Although I had a positive general impression of the spa, I believe that it is very important to concentrate on the small details as well if the management of the Hagymatikum wants to make the spa a competitive and really successful one.

4.10 Summary

The Hagymatikum of Makó faced a crisis 8 months after it had been opened in January 2012. The main reason was that after the successful summer months it started to generate huge losses that could not be overcome by dismissals and the shortening of the opening hours either.

After the change of the managing director the situation slowly started to improve. Several programmes were organized to attract visitors and to decrease the seasonality. After about half a year the managing director resigned again, and a third, experienced and qualified lady received the position.

The building was awarded by several prizes and small developments took place also. Journalists from Romania and Serbia were invited to familiarize with the establishment and to introduce it to their nation.

A 4-star hotel and several guesthouses were built to be able to accommodate the expected increased number of visitors.

In 2013 the Hagymatikum became a National Spa, which meant that a much higher number of visitors could arrive for medical treatments financed by the Social Insurance.

However, according to the results of my online survey, there are many fields where the Hagymatikum could improve in order to be more attractive to local residents and Hungarian and foreign visitors, and to generate as many returning guests as possible.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In the following section I would like to propose some possible ways how the management of the Hagymatikum could increase the number of their visitors and thus increase their revenue as well. My conclusions and proposals will include marketing actions as well as possible programme opportunities, pricing method amendments and possible construction works to invest into.

5.2 Conclusions of Analysed Results

From the results of the questionnaire we can draw the conclusion that although the Hagymatikum is an impressive spa with a wide range of services and a relatively high number of pools, the management definitely needs to reconsider some policies and marketing activities in order to achieve better guest satisfaction and become better known in Hungary as well as abroad.

From the verbal feedback and from the answers of the questionnaires it was clear to me that several Hungarian people have never heard about the Hagymatikum. This means that better marketing strategies are needed in order to make the spa better known in Hungary. Foreign promotion might also help to attract more visitors not only from Romania and Serbia, but other European and non-European countries.

However, due to the several debates, inappropriate pricing policy and high number of foreign visitors, the local residents do not visit the Hagymatikum as often as it could be expected. Many of them complained in the questionnaire that the losses generated by the spa are financed from the taxes that are collected from them, but they are not regular guests because the establishment lacks those pools and services that would make it attractive to them. Furthermore, they find the entrance fee too high for regular visitation. The lack of attractive programmes during the weekends also keeps away local residents.

The number of pools is criticized in several comments and remarks. This means that the possibility of building some more pools should be considered after consulting with locals and visitors about their opinion and preferences.

5.3 Recommendations for the Improvement of the Spa

5.3.1 Marketing

In order to become better-known in Hungary, an extensive promotional campaign would be necessary, especially in the spring season, when people decide on their summer holiday destinations. Several news should be published on turizmus.com and in the daily newspaper *Turizmus Panoráma Bulletin*. Articles on the programmes and events, and advertisements with the available services and promotional offers should appear in the tourism-related magazines. GoogleAds is an expensive, but very effective way of advertising, as the ads appear on the screens of those who are interested in the spas of the Southern Great Plain, or generally in the region.

Probably the best way of advertising abroad is participating in travel fairs: they are visited by several people who are searching for new destinations and favourable offers. Although the participation can be rather costly, if the spas of Southern Great Plain join forces to rent a common stand, it might be worth the investment in the long run.

FITUR, the International Tourism Trade Fair of Madrid, for example, was the meeting point for 9419 exhibitors from 165 countries or regions, 125084 trade participants and 97467 visitors from the general public in 2015. What is more, 7398 journalists of 60 countries were also present to report about this event after returning home. Service providers can meet each other to agree on new packages, but at the weekend the fair is open to the public as well. In the exhibition area of the trade fair exhibitors' stands are set thematically, and health and wellness-related companies have their own hall, where they can promote health tourism and the different destinations. (Ifema, 2015))

Reisemesse is organized in Dresden every year, and it also has a health, wellness and spa travel section. It is especially organized for the public, and due to the long and close relationship between the German and Hungarian tourism industries, I believe that the German market can be a huge one for the Hagymatikum.

5.3.2 Pricing

The pricing is an important, but very sensitive element of a company's business plan. Much criticism was formulated by the answerers of the questionnaire related to the high prices. However, the costs must also be considered in case the pricing is changed.

My recommendation regarding the price derives from my own experience related to our visit to the spa. As the outdoor pools did not operate, I found the entrance fee too high, mainly if I also consider that the price is the same in the summer, when all the outdoor pools can be used as well. Although the heating costs make the operation of the building more expensive in winter than during the summer, lower prices would probably attract more visitors to the Hagymatikum, and thus more revenue would be generated. So my first recommendation is to differentiate the summer and winter seasons by changing the prices, or by composing attractive packages, for example including the sauna tickets in the entrance fee.

5.3.3 New Investments

From the answers of the local residents it is clear that they miss a 50-metre pool where they can swim without being disturbed by those who use the spa for relaxation. In my opinion the management should request plans and the construction for a pool where swimming contests could also be organized, because it would also increase the revenues of the spa, and the people's awareness of the Hagymatikum as well.

A creative solution would also be necessary to install at least one or two indoor slides, together with another indoor pool, because the variety of the pools and facilities during the winter season is relatively poor. Although such an instalment is hard to be fit in the present conception, but continuous improvement is necessary also in order to remain interesting for those who have already been to the spa of Makó.

5.3.4 Accommodation Development

Although one hotel and several guesthouses were built, and the existing hotel was renovated since the new spa was opened, and there is a motel and a camping on the border of Makó as well, my opinion is that the town lacks a spa hotel that is directly connected to the Hagymatikum. Such related accommodation can be attractive to many guests, as they can enter the spa as the guests of the hotel, and those visitors who arrive in Makó to visit the spa might also be interested in staying in such a hotel.

As Hotel Glorius is only a couple of meters away from the Hagymatikum, it might be worth to connect it somehow with the spa, so that the hotel guests would not have to exit the hotel building to reach the bath.

5.4 Reflection and Evaluation of the Author's Research Methodology

During the research project I was intent on finding appropriate information on my chosen topic from a wide range of sources. I have visited three libraries and read several articles in tourism journals and on the Internet. I have prepared an online survey which was filled in by 233 responders, and supplied crucial information to my dissertation. I have also visited the Hagymatikum in order to obtain a personal impression about the establishment. Although my effort to organise an interview with the general manager of the Hagymatikum, I hope that I could frame up the first years of the operation of the spa, and the hardships the management had to face.

The hypothesis that I have stated in the first section of the dissertation is the following: 'The popularity of the Hagymatikum of Makó can be increased by proper actions in order to attract more visitors.' Through the different researches I have been searching for proper information to support my hypothesis. Considering the results of the research and the proposed possible ways of attracting more visitors to the Hagymatikum, we can state that the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the dissertation has proven to be true.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

As this paper mainly focuses on the history, project and guest opinion of the spa of Makó, and few words are spoken on other spas of the region, it would be interesting to investigate the situation of the other important spas of the region. A researcher might want to reveal the facilities and services that make each spa successful in order to help other spas become more competitive and successful by introducing these fields of activity and strategies as well.

5.6 Summary

The topic of my dissertation was the introduction of the thermal water and the spa of Makó.

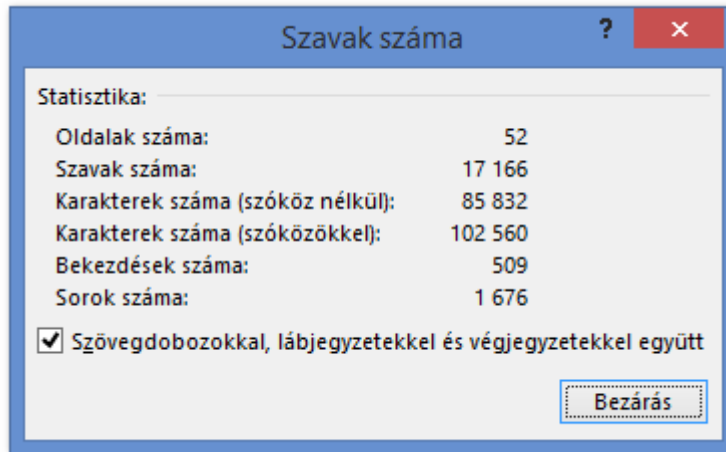
In the first chapter I have summarized the history of the thermal water and the spa of Makó and the steps of the construction of the Hagymatikum.

After a short research methodology overview, I have reviewed the hardships following the opening of the establishment, and the efforts already done to overcome these problems.

In the following session I have introduced the results of an earlier and a fresh survey and proposed some possible steps that could make the Hagymatikum even more successful, and proposed some further possible research possibilities on the topic.

Appendix

Word-page statistics:



Statistika:	
Oldalak száma:	52
Szavak száma:	17 166
Karakterek száma (szóköz nélkül):	85 832
Karakterek száma (szóközökkel):	102 560
Bekezdések száma:	509
Sorok száma:	1 676

Szövegdobozokkal, lábjegyzetekkel és végjegyzetekkel együtt

Bezárás

The Questions of the Survey:

*Kötelező kérdés/Compulsory question

5/1. oldal /Page 1 of 5

Nem/Gender*

- Nő/Female
- Férfi/Male

Életkor/Age*

- 15-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 76+

Járt már a Makói Hagymatikumban?/Have you ever been to the Hagymatikum?*

- Igen/Yes
- Nem/No

A következő oldal után: 1 / After the following page: 1

5/2. oldal/Page 2 of 5

Honnan hallott a Hagymatikumról?/How did you know about the Hagymatikum?*

Egyszerre több válasz is megjelölhető/Multiple answers can be given to the question

- Hirdetésből/From an advertisement
- Helyi lakos vagyok/I am a local resident
- Rokonok laknak a környéken, így tudtam róla/Some of my relatives are local residents and I heard about the spa from them
- Ismerősök ajánlották, akik már jártak ott/My friends had been to there and they recommended it to me
- Internetes fórumon olvastam róla/I had read about it on an online forum
- Turisztikai folyóiratban olvastam róla/I had read about it in a touristic journal
- Egyéb/Other:

Mi az általános véleménye a fürdőről?/What is your general opinion on the Spa?*

- Nagyon tetszett/I liked it very much
- Tetszett/I liked it
- Nem tudom eldönteni/I cannot decide
- Nem igazán tetszett/I did not really like it
- Egyáltalán nem tetszett/I did not like it at all

Milyen szolgáltatásokat, medencéket látna még szívesen a fürdőben?/What services and/or pools would you be happy to see in the Spa?

Egyszerre több válasz is megjelölhető/ Multiple answers can be given to the question

- 50 méteres medence/50-metre pool
- Hétvégi rendezvények (koncertek, stb.)/Programmes during the weekend (concerts, etc.)
- Csúszdák a beltéri medencében/Slides in the indoor pool
- Egyéb/Other:

Mi az, ami kifejezetten tetszett önnek a fürdőben?/What did you especially like in the Spa?

Egyszerre több válasz is megjelölhető/Multiple answers can be given to the question

- A kedves személyzet/The kind personnel
- A különleges épület/The special building
- A Szaunavilág/The Sauna World
- A szolgáltatások színvonala/The quality of the services
- Egyéb/Other:

Mi az, amin esetleg változtatna, ami kevésbé tetszett?/What would you possibly change, that you disliked?

Visszatérne máskor is a fürdőbe?/Would you return to the Spa?*

- Igen/Yes
- Nem/No

Ajánlaná másoknak is a fürdőt?/Would you recommend the Spa to other people?*

- Igen/Yes
- Nem/No

A következő oldal után: 2 / After the following page: 2

5/3. oldal/Page 3 of 5

Tervezi, hogy a közeljövőben felkeresi a Hagymatikumot?/Are you planning to visit the Hagymatikum in the near future?*

- Igen/Yes
- Nem/No

A következő oldal után: 3 / After the following page: 3

5/4. oldal/Page 4 of 5

Miért nem?/Why not?*

Egyszerre több válasz is megjelölhető/Multiple answers can be given to the question

- Nem szoktam fürdőbe járni/I never go to spas
- A környéken más fürdőbe járok inkább/I visit other spas in the region
- Túl magasnak tartom a belépőjegy-árat/The entrance fees are too high for me
- Egyéb/Other:

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