

APPLYING MARKETING MANAGEMENT IN WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A LOCATION FOR HEALTH TOURISM

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Abstract:

With the development of the tourism industry worldwide, there is a need for proper and sustainable management of the specialized types of tourism. One of the most developed specialized types of tourism is health tourism. According to the tourist zoning in Bulgaria, we distinguish regions with basic and extended specialization in the field of health tourism. In each one of them, certain locations could be identified and developed. Another important aspect is related to the values and policies of the modern world, which highlight the equal opportunities, and equality of all members of society and its individual groups, including female entrepreneurs.

In this paper, the authors strive to disclose opportunities for applying marketing management in starting and managing a business in the field of health tourism by women entrepreneurs, based on good examples drawn from practice aiming to develop a health tourism location.

Keywords: health tourism, marketing, marketing mix, marketing management, women's entrepreneurship, spa center, demand management, certification, aspects of marketing management, wellness center, spa and wellness tourism

Introduction

The object of this study are health tourism sites, the **subject** of analysis are the aspects of marketing management. **The aim** of the study is to find opportunities for applying marketing management in women's entrepreneurship in health tourism centers. **The thesis** is that, through the implementation of marketing management, female entrepreneurs could help in developing a health tourism location. We will go over all the aspects of the marketing management and the marketing mix and all type of health tourism.

The purpose of the study is attained by researching and proving basic **tasks** such as analysis of the marketing management essence; study of the possibilities for marketing management application on projects in health tourism industry with the aim of developing a health tourism location and best practices case study on a successfully launched health tourism business founded and managed by a female entrepreneur.

1. Essence and specifics of marketing management

In order to analyse the aspects of the marketing management and how to apply them in women`s entrepreneurship, we should examine in the first place the definitions of marketing and marketing management.

Rakadhziyska (1994) stated that marketing in its essence contains a social, planning and management process in an organization's activities aimed at meeting the needs and necessities of consumers by creating, offering and sharing valuable products and services on different markets.

Kotler (2009) found that **marketing management** allows you to achieve the goals of the organization through full orientation to the consumer and satisfaction of his desires and needs. The American Marketing Association provides the following definition of marketing management: "Marketing management is the process of planning and implementing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of goods, services and ideas for exchanges with certain groups that meet customer and organization objectives."

Adhering to this definition, Tsonev (2017) summarized that marketing management is a process that:

- includes analysis, planning, implementation of plans and control;
- covers products, services and ideas;
- is based on the notion of sharing.

Marketing management is examined by Tsonev and Basmadzhieva (2016) in **three directions**:

1. Business management - implies that the organization is considered an open system and when making decisions both the internal capabilities of the organization and the requirements of the external environment are taken into account, that is, the organization is focused on the market and is ready to constantly meet its requirements.

2. Functions management - formed as a result of changes in the views of governing bodies, which underpin the principle "from production needs to market needs". Marketing takes part in the solution of production issues, stimulates the introduction of innovative ideas and technologies, and ensures the supply of a competitive product. Together with finance, marketing ensures optimal allocation of the organization's resources to obtain the desired profit. Marketing also addresses the issues related to contemporary product distribution in order to meet the needs and make a profit.

The mechanism for performing marketing functions is based on the development of a marketing system as part of an organization's management system, which includes:

- organization;
- planning (development of plans);
- information;
- control;

3. Demand management - is provided through strategic and operational solutions for specific target market segments formed based on the use of a complex of means: product, price, distribution and promotion.

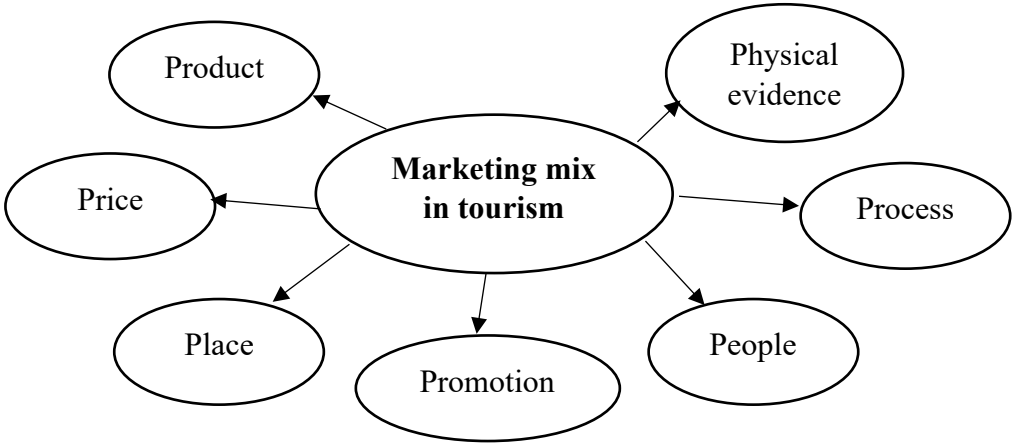
The decoding of the needs for tourism explains the general level of demand generated in different countries but doesn't explain the individual choice of tourism products and services made by different kinds of people. Within the limitations set by the external environment factors, tourist marketing needs to understand how the psychological processes influence people's choice between various holiday destinations and particular types of tourism. This knowledge has influenced all decisions of the marketing process that are to follow, including the decisions on the marketing mix. Doganov (1998) stated that marketing mix is an aggregate of elements, means and methods used to implement a marketing strategy. These elements, means and methods are controlled by the organization that offers services. There are no differing viewpoints on the common definition while in terms of marketing mix elements the discussion remains open.

The classic scheme of the **marketing mix** was created by Prof. Jerome McCarthy who generalized it in four groups (4Ps): **product, price, place, and promotion**, dubbed ‘the four policies’ in Bulgarian literature. Other popular classification of the marketing mix identifies the following basic contents: product policy, pricing policy, brand policy, communications policy, market channels, service policy and after market activities, company logistics.

We could say that the classic marketing mix comprises 4 basic elements – as the 4Ps: product (product policy), price (pricing policy), distribution (distribution policy), and promotion (communication policy). With some alterations, these are used in tourism marketing as well. There are other variable factors in the field of services which the company can use to influence the demand for its product. The four factors that comprise the marketing mix of commodity marketing should be expanded to seven for the field of services and they are:

- People – participants (employees and clients);
- Physical evidence – physical environment (buildings, uniform, etc.);
- Process – procedures and actions for delivering the services.

Figure 1: Marketing mix in tourism



Source: Author systematization

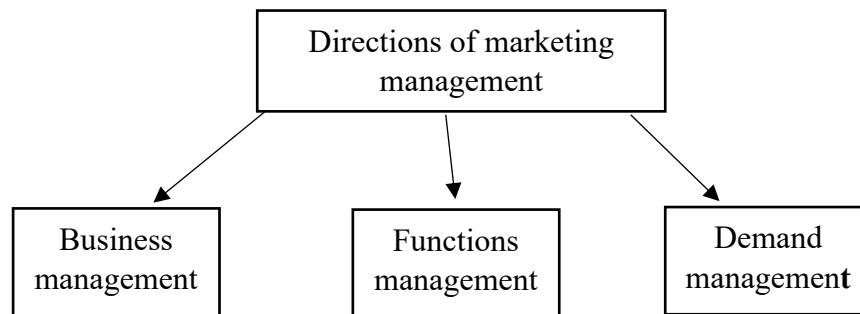
Understanding of the consumer needs underlies the marketing concept. There is no doubt that without a clear understanding of who the clients are and why they prefer a certain thing, the marketing activities would be ineffective.

According to last studies by Tsonev (2015) marketing management is based on the **principles of:**

- strategic planning;
- management of the investment portfolio;
- marketing evaluation of the response to the implemented decisions on the basis of the first two principles.

The directions are systematized in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Directions of the marketing management



Source: Author systematization

Lapshin (2014) stated that **the benefits of marketing management** are in the ability to align the structure of demand with the structure of supply, by forming the required range of tourism products, pursuing a flexible pricing policy and creating an effective sales promotion system.

Sirakova (2013) found that marketing management is also based on the **structure of marketing**, which is a specific combination of its components in order to achieve the goals set and satisfy the target market. The structure of marketing comprises everything an organization can do to influence the demand for its product based on its goals. A sign of well-established and functioning marketing is when all its elements are developed in a coherent and complex way, because only in this way can they be used as effective marketing management tools. It is up to the management bodies to address the issue of selecting the most appropriate marketing elements, determining how to use them, specifying their scope, time and place of application. In this way, variant combinations are prepared, which, within the framework of a certain strategy, contribute to a successful marketing policy.

At the same time, marketing management is a **purposeful activity** related to the process of providing sustainable competitive advantages for tourism organizations in the market, which includes **elements**, classified by Tsonev (2015) as follows:

- analysis of the environment;
- situational analysis, market forecasts and potential opportunities for organizations;
- developing goals and behavioral strategies;
- planning marketing goals and tactics for the behavior of organizations in the specific situation;
- developing a marketing mix plan and its implementation;
- organization, management and control over the implementation of marketing activities;
- evaluation of marketing results.

The third direction of marketing management already mentioned is necessarily applicable in connection with exploring the possibilities for starting a business in a health tourism location.

Elements of marketing management should be used as an algorithm for starting a business in the field of health tourism.

2. Health tourism - theoretical concepts

According to Smith and Puczo (2014) health tourism is a specialized type of tourism where the usual tourist activities are related to the active pursuit of health improvement. Scientific literature is replete with terms that fall within this definition, including medical tourism, balneology or spa tourism.

The general term is health tourism, although often used as synonyms are medical, balneo tourism, wellness or spa tourism, which is wrong and could lead to confusion in theory and practice. All the terms used as synonyms are in fact a subdivision of health tourism and we will get familiar with them with their common features and specifics in the exposition of this study.

Tsonev and Basmadzhieva (2017) stated that the terms “restorative” or “curative” tourism, including fitness and wellness, are an echo of the relatively new trends in health tourism. The main idea of this innovative trend is to improve the physical condition of the client (tourist) and his health, which is not necessarily related to the use of natural healing resources.

The products offered in this type of tourist activity are not mass and unified. There is a possibility for their individualization according to the needs of each tourist.

The main and leading type of health tourism is spa and wellness tourism. There are many definitions of recreation, wellness and spa and here we will list the unified ones:

- Recreation - there are several basic definitions. On the one hand, it represents the growing demand for sports and active lifestyle, as a counter balance to the harmful influences and the increasing amount of stress in the way of life of modern societies. This trend focuses mainly on the recovery of body and mind, which leads to a better intellectual and mental state and the opportunity for a better work process. On the other hand, recreation is related to the adventurous and leisure activities of people in their free time, so that they can proceed refreshed and with new strength to the daily activities. Recreational tourism is a type of health tourism, which is characterized by the impact of tourist services on consumer decision-making for the prevention of health problems.

- Wellness – according to Monroe (2016) wellness is a state of health in which the body, mind and soul are in harmony. Its key elements are self-responsibility, fitness/beauty treatments, healthy diet, relaxation, meditation, intellectual activities, placing a strong emphasis on environmental protection and social relations. Apart from the differences in motivation, wellness tourism differs significantly from health tourism, and the most characteristic distinction is related to the fact that in wellness, the services are used by guests of their own free will and these activities are not funded by social security.

- Spa – Cohen and Bodeker (2008) stated that the concept of spa is strongly associated with wellness as all health tourism facilities offer relaxation, rejuvenation and refreshment, which makes a person healthier and more balanced. Their key characteristic is the desire to provide a state of wellness by meeting physical, intellectual and emotional needs. The term “spa” is ambiguous and cannot be precisely defined. The interpretation of its nature and content can be completely different, and its perception varies in different parts of the world. In the west and central European countries (mainly in German-speaking countries and Central Europe) it is used in connection with the use of thermal waters and baths offering mainly medical services,

while in the USA it includes services offering emotional and / or mental refreshment, even if no thermal water will be used.

As already mentioned, the concept of “health tourism” should not be confused with the concept of “medical tourism”, whose main focus is on surgical interventions. Health tourism also means caring for the body and soul through procedures that make people feel good - massages, herbal treatment and exfoliation, training, water baths, diets. Health tourism also includes diagnostic tests to identify possible health problems, rehabilitation courses including physical and psychological counseling, as well as programs to relieve stress, to change the diet, to reduce injuries due to physical exertion and even to improve sexual life. Health tourism is a general concept that includes types of tourism related to prevention, treatment or rehabilitation.

Currently, the different types of health tourism are playing a huge role and have an increasing share of world tourism, and this is also affecting the economies of some countries. In the last decade, health tourism has seen a dynamic development, mainly in the field of wellness tourism, both nationally and internationally. Leading global trends such as increasing individualization, demographic transformations, changes in the social role of women (including in business and entrepreneurship), the spirituality, the assessment of a healthy lifestyle have created a social origin in the demand for wellness services and products. Csirmaz (2015) stated that according to experts from various scientific fields, the wellness market, due to the social transformations and the good economic well-being of the sector, is likely to become one of the fastest growing tourism and economic sectors in the world, which make it good field for the women entrepreneurship.

Hundreds of resorts and rehabilitation centers focused on the field of health tourism offer their visitors specialized beauty and fitness services with advanced programs to improve health. The only purpose of these resorts and centers is to make their guests feel happier, healthier, in better shape and more relaxed.

Although spa tourism has been known since ancient times, it is only one of the units of health tourism. Along with the spa treatments at the heart of health tourism are yoga, massages, ultrasound, mud, acupuncture and hypnotherapy. Concentrating them in one place offers a combined and effective treatment for a wide range of diseases. All the necessary services are within the resort, which allows “patients” to relax and focus on themselves. Valuable natural resources in the field of health tourism are hydro thermal waters and bioclimate treatment.

Mud treatment, which is a division of spa tourism, is a particularly popular and demanded procedure during a health tourism vacation. It is primarily used to prevent inflammatory processes by certain illnesses. Mud has an overall effect on the body's functions and systems. It improves blood circulation, restores chemical balance and removes poisons from the body.

In order to more precisely distinguish the types of health tourism and the use of unified terminology, based on officially accepted and market-imposed definitions worldwide, a classification of the main types of tourism and their subtypes adapted to the realities in Bulgaria has been developed. Like any classification, this classification is conditional. It is based on three key criteria - the motivation for taking the trip, the type of tourism activity and the environment for practicing it. It is based on the Concept for the Tourist Zoning of Bulgaria from 2015, which is one of the leading normative documents that we use in this paper. According to it, health tourism is classified into three types – spa and wellness, balneology and medical tourism.

Table 1: Types of health tourism in Bulgaria

Type	Definition
Spa and Wellness Tourism	Associated with body and soul comfort procedures based on various natural resources and products (mineral water, essential oils, healing mud, wine, chocolate, etc.).
Balneo tourism	Associated with effective treatment and rehabilitation under medical control, through mineral water, healing mud and others.
Medical Tourism	The main purpose of the trip and the improvement of health through medical intervention

Source: Author systematization, adapted according to the Concept for tourist zoning of Bulgaria

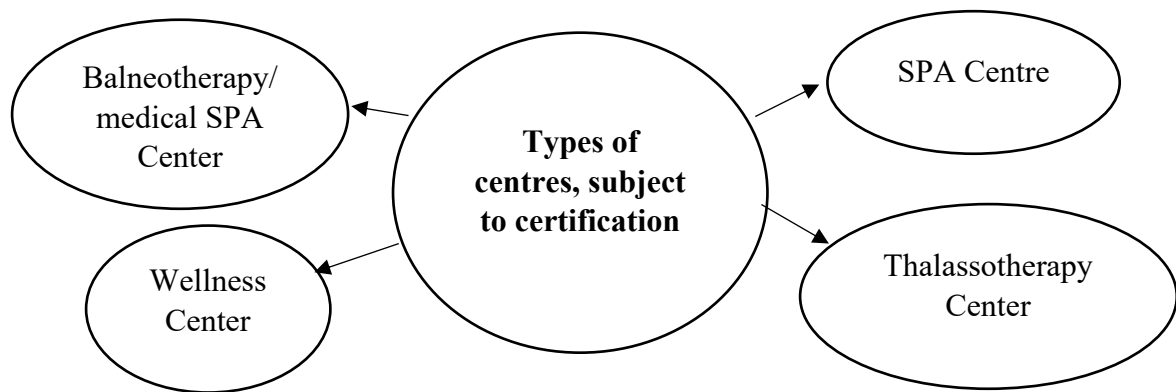
3. Possibilities for application of marketing management in women`s entrepreneurship in health tourism sites. A case study in Bulgaria

In the European Union’s policy, tourism is an important sector of the economy that supports economic growth and employment. The challenge for the Union is to strengthen and improve the sustainable development of tourism in order to ensure long-term competitiveness of the industry. Yaneva (2019) stated that sustainable development aims to realize the constraints and opportunities of existing tourism resources.

As was already mentioned, health tourism is a specialized type of sustainable tourism in which the usual tourist activities are associated with an active pursuit of improving people’s health. (Smith and Puczko, 2014)

According to the regulations in Bulgaria, there are four types of centers, subject to certification, in the field of health tourism, shown in Figure 3, which represent sites for health tourism:

Figure 3: Types of centres, subject to certification, in the field of health tourism



Source: Author systematization

The products offered in this type of tourist activity are not mass and unified. There is an opportunity to tailor them to the needs of each tourist.

Laws on Tourism in Bulgaria provide the following definitions for the centers mentioned above:

- A balneotherapy/medical SPA is an independent or a built-in facility in an accommodation center located in an urban or resort environment where therapeutic procedures based on natural healing factors (mineral water and / or healing mud) are applied. The center offers a variety of therapeutic programs, which are carried out in specially equipped offices, halls and rooms intended for diagnostics, treatment, rehabilitation and prophylaxis. The Center is a medical establishment within the meaning of the Medical Institutions Act.

- A SPA Center is an independent or a built-in facility in an accommodation center located in an urban or resort environment, which uses a variety of procedures, programs and rituals, including the use of water - mineral, spring and other permitted by law, and/or healing mud and/or seawater and/or other natural factors, by applying classical and non-traditional methods of action, aimed at reducing stress, relaxation and psychophysical recovery, as well as aimed at the beauty of the human body. The SPA area has a minimum of indoor and / or outdoor pool and spa capsule, while the beauty area has a minimum of two hydro massage rooms, Turkish bath or steam room, sauna or infrared cabin, relaxation room.

- A Wellness Center is an independent or a built-in facility in an accommodation center located in an urban or a resort environment, which offers a variety of recreational and cosmetic beauty treatments, programs and stress reducing rituals, as well as holistic approaches to achieve physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, professional and social well-being of the individual. The use of water and natural factors in the center is optional.

- A Thalassotherapy Center means an independent or a built-in facility in an accommodation center located in an urban or resort area near the seafront offering programs and rituals involving the use of seawater and / or natural derived products, and/or firth mud, through classical and non-traditional therapeutic methods of influence, aimed at restoring psycho-emotional and physical health, as well as aimed at the beauty of the human body, which are carried out in specially equipped studios, halls and facilities. The medical activity is managed by a doctor with an acquired specialty in physical and rehabilitation medicine.

In each of the mentioned and regulated health tourism sites, women entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and qualification could invest to start their own business, which would also help in the development of a health tourism locations. To this end, the third direction of marketing management should be used first when starting such a business, namely **Demand Management** and identify which of the four types of centers (spa, wellness, balneology or thalassotherapy) is in the highest demand from potential users.

Of the four types of certifiable centers, we could identify the spa and wellness centers as the most demanded on the territory of the country and presenting the opportunity to start a successful business in urban and resort environment.

In the next stage of starting a business, the **elements of marketing management** should be applied as follows:

- Analysis of the environment – Krasteva (2013) found that at this stage the marketing environment should be reviewed and analyzed which includes the participants in the market processes and social structures with which a business organization interacts. It is divided

into micro- and macro-environments. The microeconomic marketing environment in the services sector, which includes tourism, covers consumers and competitors in the face of other countries offering similar services, providers of various types of services, marketing intermediaries and target audiences. Macroeconomic marketing environment, from the point of view of tourism in Bulgaria, includes geographical, demographic, socio-economic, political and legal factors, as well as lifestyle, religion, culture and technologies and their degree of development in the country.

- Situational analysis, market forecasts and potential opportunities for organizations - at this stage a market analysis should be made in the specific region or location, to consider the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities that are offered in order to reach the next stage, namely:

- Development of behavioral goals and strategies - this is a key point in starting any business. Every female entrepreneur must set precise goals that she wants to achieve when opening a specific center as well as a clear long-term strategy.

- Planning of marketing objectives and tactics behavior of organizations in the specific situation - after clarifying the long-term strategy the tactics to achieve it in different situations should be defined.

- Developing a plan for the marketing mix and its implementation - the next step is to identify the products/services that will be offered at the center, to determine the price after performing a good comparative analysis of the market and maximizing good value-quality ratio, determine distribution channels (will travel agencies or direct sales be used), as well as communication channels (good online positioning or adherence to traditional advertising methods).

- Organization, management and control for the implementation of marketing activities - this stage is the essence of the business development and especially during the first 1 to 3 years should be implemented strict monitoring of the implementation of goals and objectives of the organization.

- The last stage is about evaluating the results of the marketing activity - tactical or strategic.

The above algorithm should be used by every female entrepreneur when starting a health tourism business. With the right choice of region and market, any new health tourism site would help the overall development of the destination as a health tourism location. In this study, at the last stage, we would like to give a successful example of women's entrepreneurship in the field of health tourism for the Sofia region, which is a tourist area with an expanded specialization in the field of health tourism.

According to last studies of Pandzherova and Krastev (Panddzherova, A., Krastev, D., 2019) national surveys in Bulgaria indicate that women entrepreneurs are running businesses that are in the services sector, including commerce and tourism. One of the most popular types of health tourism in Bulgaria is spa and wellness tourism. In addition to the numerous hotels throughout the country, the capital has also numerous urban spa and wellness centers, which are a good opportunity to start a business for women entrepreneurs due to high demand.

A successful example is the Demetra SPA Center, which is founded and wholly managed by a successful female entrepreneur with industry knowledge and qualifications.

The history of the SPA Center began in 2000, when one of the leading cosmetics in the country, Didi Stoilova, founded STUDIODIDI. Today the center has a team of professionals that work with products from some of the most famous professional brands. The entrepreneur successfully applies marketing management in all aspects, using all the elements. She

analyzes not only the local market but also established markets in the industry as France, Spain and Italy, where she attended several training and specializations following leading trends and adapting them to the current state in Bulgaria.

In 2004, Didi Stoilova made a new step in her professional development, creating the professional cosmetics school DEMETRA 27. It trains up professionals in the fields of cosmetics, hairdressing, manicure, pedicure, makeup, spa and wellness. Thus, she is also investing in human resources management, with the aim of implementing both hers and other women entrepreneurs' projects, which would help to develop the Sofia region as a health tourism destination.

In 2011, after long planning of the project goals, strategy and tactical tasks, Didi Stoilova created the Demetra Relax SPA Center - a project over 4 floors of 790 sq.m in the center of Sofia. Its clients can enjoy the various procedures and programs offered: Turkish bath, Finnish sauna, mini jacuzzi, steam bath with relax area, pearl bath, solarium, dance hall, a hairdresser offering also manicure and pedicure procedures. Eight beauty parlors offer Studiodidi's branded cosmetic therapies. Cabinet for two with mini jacuzzi, an individual cabinet for 4-5 ladies for a different spa day, which makes Spa Maiden Parties a trademark of the spa. From the rich assortment on the spa's website, we find a well-planned product and pricing policy and a good value for money from reviews on social networks and the web.

After analyzing the communication and distribution policies of the spa, we find that the entrepreneur relies on a strong media presence, profiles on all social networks, as well as various discounts and promotions for holidays, regular clients and special occasions.

As a result of the well-managed marketing of the spa center and the owner's entrepreneurial flair, the spa has been repeatedly awarded in various categories by numerous local and non-tourism rankings, including DAY SPA of the Year (2014), Best Spa Center (2015), Best Bulgarian Brand (2016), Best Cellulite Therapy.

The biggest proof of the marketing management success in this example is that in 2015 the owner won first place in the most prestigious Bulgarian ranking competition for women entrepreneurs - Mrs. "Lady of the Year", wherein the Best Spa Center category prize was awarded to Demetra SPA in the person of Dimitrina Pomakova.

There are numbers of examples worldwide of successful women entrepreneurs in different industries, but the example cited in this study is proof that health tourism is a viable destination for starting a business in Bulgaria. If other women entrepreneurs learn from the example of Demetra SPA, which is the most successful SPA Center for the Sofia region and the country, according to a number of charts, this would contribute to the overall development of Sofia as a location for health tourism.

Conclusion

Finally, as a result of this study **conclusions** can be drawn regarding the application of marketing management in women's entrepreneurship in order to develop a health tourism location:

1. Of the three marketing management directions, the most applicable in the tourism sector in Bulgaria is **Demand Management**.
2. In Bulgaria, four types of centres in the field of tourism are subject to certification - SPA, wellness, balneological and thalassic-therapeutic, which we would rate as the most demanded after **SPAs and wellness centers**.
3. Based on the successful case study, we can conclude that in Bulgaria there are opportunities for the **development of women's entrepreneurship in the field of health tourism**,

and by successfully implementing all elements of marketing management, this would help the overall development of health tourism locations.

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