



State of the art and evaluation of the wellness and spa management in Bulgaria

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Spa philosophy dates back to ancient Rome. Known to this day, Roman baths appeared throughout the whole empire and eventually evolved into centers for recreation and entertainment, similar to the modern spa resorts. During the last decade the spa and wellness industry (SPA – health through water; Wellness – a pleasant experience) has taken up a major part of the personal schedules of contemporary man. The umbrella term 'spa tourism' is currently used in this country to denote several similar forms of tourism: balneotourism, spa and wellness. It is a widely spread belief that balneotourism is characterized mainly by effective treatment and rehabilitation carried out under medical control while spa and wellness are associated with procedures for granting relaxation and comfort to the body and the soul, using various natural resources such as mineral water, essential oils, therapeutic mud, volcanic stones, etc. The quality of the services in spa and wellness centers directly impacts the health, functional activity, work capacity and self-confidence of people. On a European level SPA and WELLNESS methodologies contribute to "... improving the quality of life of European citizens ..." ("Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Citizens", EC, 2007).

There are 25 Spa destinations in Bulgaria which comprise hydromineral sources and complexes for accommodation and relaxation. The largest number of hotels is in Velingrad, followed by

Hisarya, Devin and Sandanski. In every specialized spa centre there are professionals – doctors, dermatologists, and rehabilitators who can recommend the best treatment to the customer depending on their health condition.

The success of a tourist destination is impossible without well qualified and ambitious staff who keep an eye on innovations and their implementation. Besides, in line with the trend of growth in the tourist industry, respectively the increased interest in spa tourism, the biggest challenge is the adequate parallel development of human resources which underpin the design and development of the tourism product that is offered. The systematic need for staff development in the field of the so called spa tourism requires a focus on:

- Specialized training;
- Using own and external training programmes;
- Investing in staff development and staff motivation programmes;
- Using the best practices in the field of education and staff development.

In this context, the present study is aimed at identifying the training needs and demand for specific skills for the different specialists offering spa and wellness services.

1. Purpose of the study:

The study is aimed at examining the condition and identifying the specific training needs of staff in spa and wellness centers.

2. Rationale of the study

The realization of the purpose of the study required the collection, examination and processing of carefully targeted information. To achieve that it is necessary to determine:

- 1) which information can be defined as necessary for the purposes of the study (by means of designing an appropriate questionnaire);
- 2) where this information can be obtained (by using an appropriate sample or range of respondents); and
- 3) how this information can be obtained (by employing a suitable technique for collecting and processing data).

All these elements can be combined by means of planning and conducting a survey among employees from various tourist sites offering spa



and wellness services.

3. Designing a questionnaire and conducting a survey

Given the research goal, we can define as necessary the information which provides answers to the following questions:

- What kind of specialists work in establishments offering spa and wellness services?
- What skills and competencies do people providing spa and wellness services need to possess?
- What means for professional development and growth do people providing spa and wellness services use?
- Which are the topics that people providing spa and wellness services would like to find out more about?
- What is the attitude of people providing spa and wellness services to the opportunities for developing their personal competencies through participation in specialized training courses in management and administration of spa and wellness centers?

An appropriate format of questionnaire has been designed to obtain this information.

3.1. Nature of the questions

There are 26 questions altogether which are organized as follows:

- Questions relating to the profile of the respondent – questions 1, 2, 3, 23, 24, 25, 26. We are interested in three main variables – years of experience in the field of spa and wellness services; availability of management functions and responsibilities; level of education (degree) and specialty.
- Questions revealing to what the respondents think about the skills and competencies necessary for the quality performance of their duties – questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. The answers to these questions outline the profile of the employee of spa and wellness centers.
- Questions relating to the attitude of the respondents to the development of their personal competencies – questions 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. We are interested in how the respondents rate their level of knowledge and what their attitude to maintaining and enhancing this level is.
- Questions revealing the respondents' actual need for new knowledge – questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

These questions help us to specify the problem areas in which the respondents would like to broaden their general knowledge and their expectations about the effect of further training.

3.2. Type and format of the questionnaire

The questionnaire comprises mainly closed-end questions, i.e. questions with a limited number of answers to choose from. The respondents select the answer that most closely reflects their vision and personal judgment. This type of questionnaires allows for the quick and efficient collection of information from a large number of respondents. This ensures the mass and representative character of the study, as well as the efficiency of data aggregation and analysis.

The questions included in the questionnaire are of several major types:

- Questions listing degrees of agreement: they determine the level of agreement with the given statements. The possible levels of agreement are: Strongly disagree, Somewhat disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat agree, Strongly agree. There is an option for no answer when the respondent does not have an opinion.
- Questions with an option for a choice – the given options are qualitative variables. They belong to two categories: with a finite list of choices (such as years of experience, age, level of education) and an option for additional information for clarification (e.g. the issue of training for new staff – when none of the listed options corresponds to the approach used in the training of recruits, the respondent can choose the option “other” and fill in the name of the used approach).
- Open-ended questions – the respondents can freely express their opinion in writing.

3.3. Conducting the survey

Addressees of the survey are people providing spa and wellness services. The study was conducted in the most popular spa destinations in Bulgaria - Hissar, Velinograd, Sandanski, Bansko, and Bourgas region.

The survey was conducted by distributing the questionnaire electronically to the e-mail boxes of people working in the field of spa and wellness services and by visiting spa and wellness centers.



4. Direct results of the survey and an analysis of responses

The questionnaire was completed by 52 respondents working in tourist places offering spa and wellness services. 38% of them work in spa hotels, and 15% in spa centers (Fig. 1). *In other words, more than half of the respondents are familiar with the specificities of spa tourism and probably have an idea of what skills and competencies are required from employees who work in the spa and wellness tourism in order to meet the customers' requirements.*

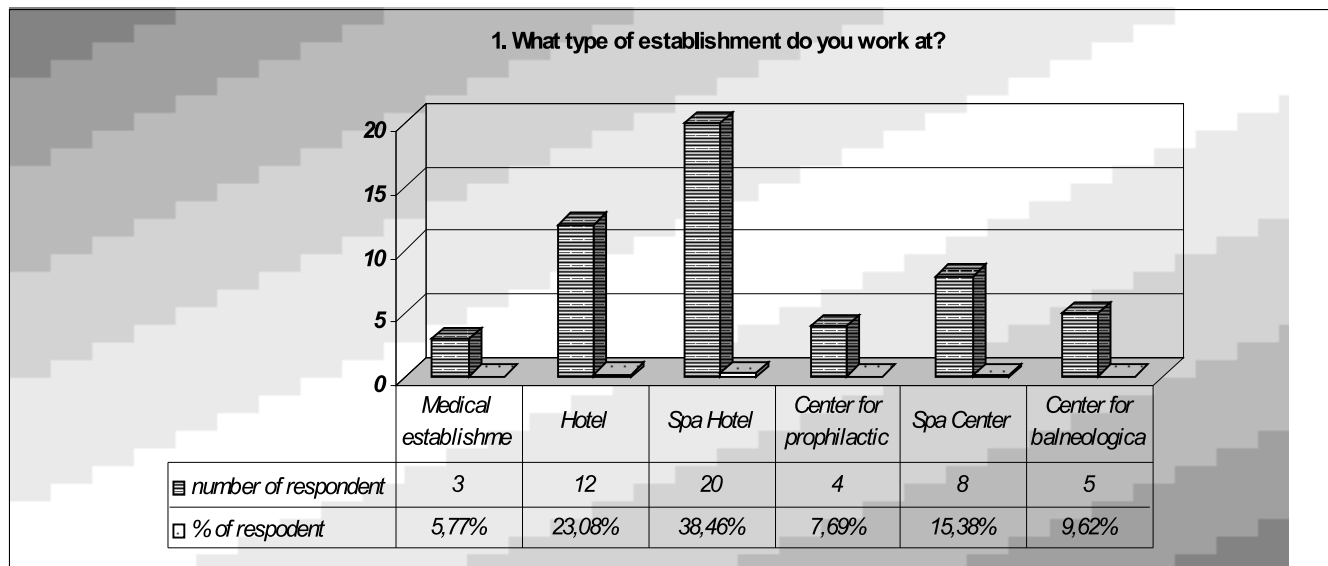


Fig. 1 Distribution by type of establishment in which they work

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Before proceeding to the overview and analysis of the responses, we will look at the profile of the respondents which is outlined by the years of experience in spa and wellness services, availability of management functions and responsibilities, degree and specialty.

The distribution of respondents in the sample *based on their experience* in the field of spa and wellness services is presented in **fig. 2**.

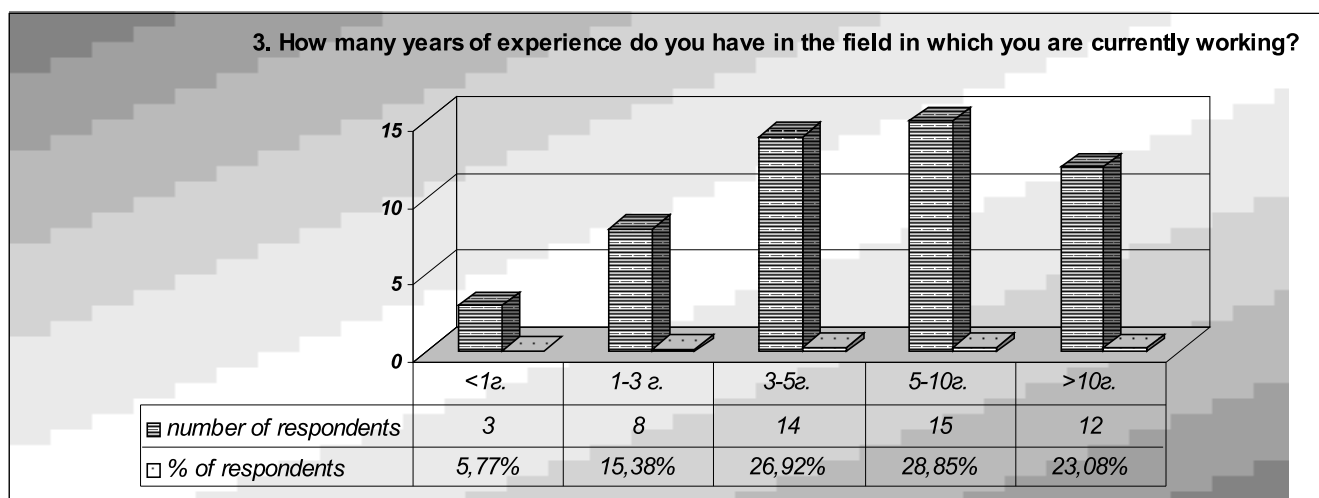


Fig. 2 Distribution by years of experience



The distribution of respondents by years of experience demonstrates the following:

- The smallest proportion is that of participants with experience of up to 3 years (21%). It is followed by the proportion of respondents with experience in the field of spa and wellness tourism of over 10 years (23%).

- More than half of the respondents have between 3 and 10 years of experience. (29% of the respondents have between 5 and 10 years of experience, and 27% - between 3 and 5 years).

On the basis of this data it can be concluded that the respondents comprise a representative group which has the expertise necessary for this study.

Alongside the length of experience in spa and wellness services, the presence of **management experience** is important for defining the profile of the sample. This criterion is important for the subject of study as the training of employees in spa and wellness services largely depends on the attitude of people with management functions and on their skills and abilities. **Fig. 3** shows that the

sample consists mainly of respondents with management functions.

39 of the 52 respondents (75% of the sample) have management functions (General Manager, Director, Head of Hospital, Head of Medical Establishment). Their assessment of the level of competence and skills of staff offering spa and wellness services is a prerequisite for more or less intensive search of opportunities to expand their employees' professional knowledge.

Three respondents (6%) are owners of establishments offering spa and wellness services and their attitude towards the competencies and qualifications of their staff is in correlation with their aspiration for developing a competitive business.

19% of the respondents have indicated that their job position as that of an administrator or a rehabilitator. The lack of management experience does not prevent them from expressing their attitude to the opportunities for developing their individual competencies.

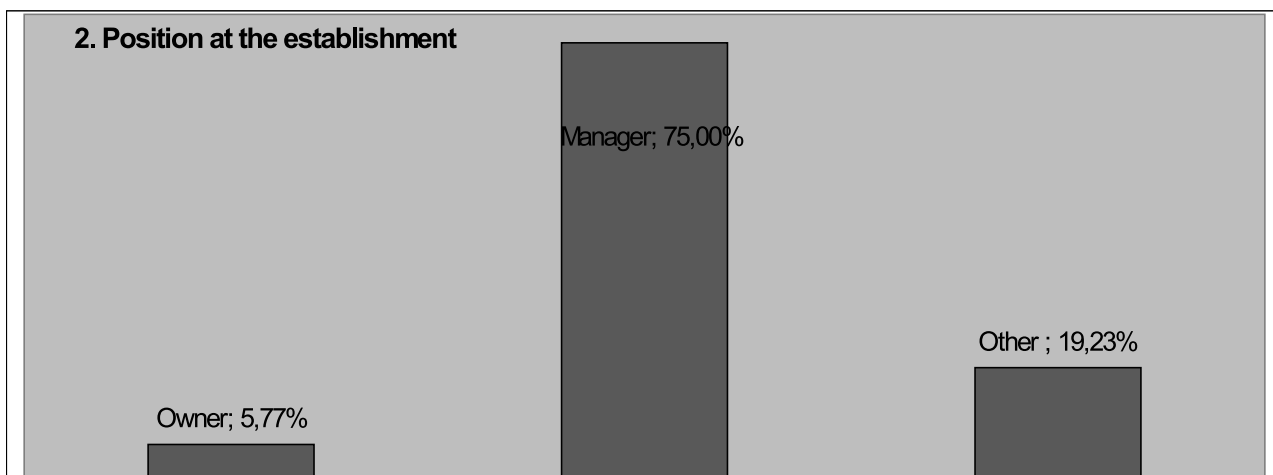


Fig. 3 Distribution of respondents by job position

The distribution of respondents by **level of education (degree) and specialty** is shown in fig. 4 and fig. 5.

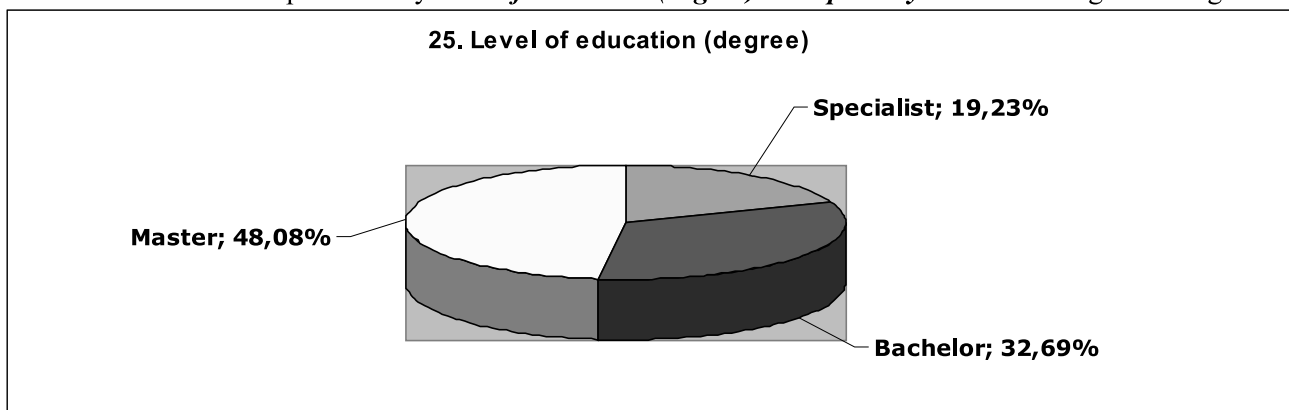


Fig. 4. Distribution of respondents by level of education (degree)

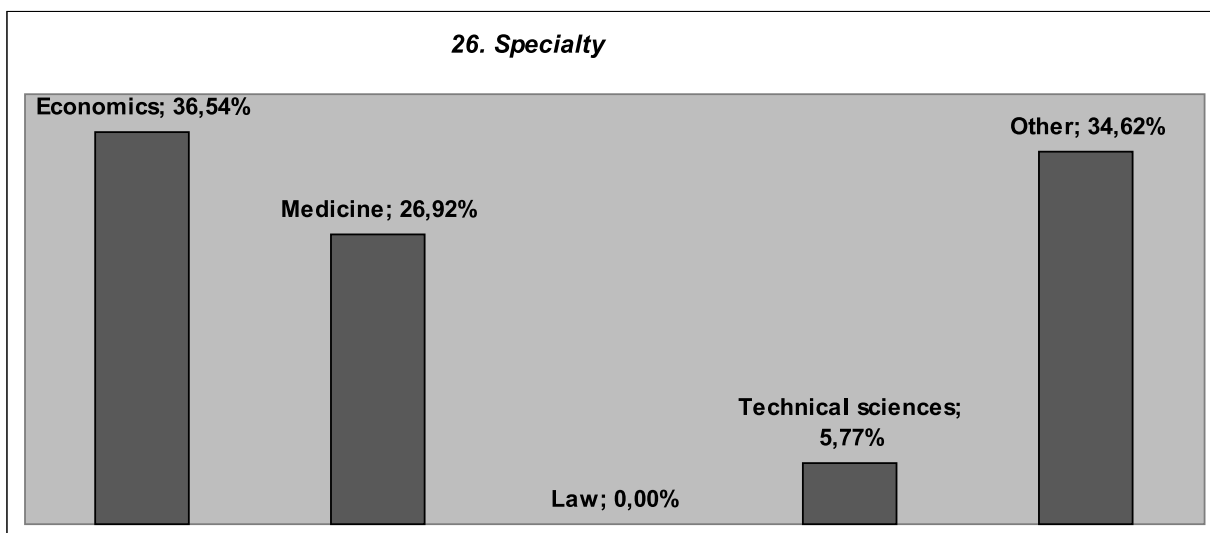


Fig. 5. Distribution of respondents by specialty

The information displayed on these graphs demonstrates the following:

- The lowest proportion is that of respondents with a technical specialty (6%). The largest number of respondents from the sample are specialists in economics (19 of 52 respondents) or other specialty – rehabilitator, kinezitherapist, masseur, physiotherapist (18 of 52 respondents). Two of the respondents have indicated that they have two majors - economics and medicine. Taking into account the fact that 14 of the respondents have indicated that they have a degree in medicine, it can be concluded that over 60% of the participants in the survey have medical knowledge (anatomy of the human body, psychology, etc.). Given the specificity of spa and wellness services, we can say that they are provided by people who have the theoretical background and professional qualification to take care of human health.

- Almost half of the respondents have a master's degree (48%), while only 19% of all respondents (52) have a specialist's degree.

In order to fully define the profile of the respondents in the sample, we will add their distribution by *gender and age*.

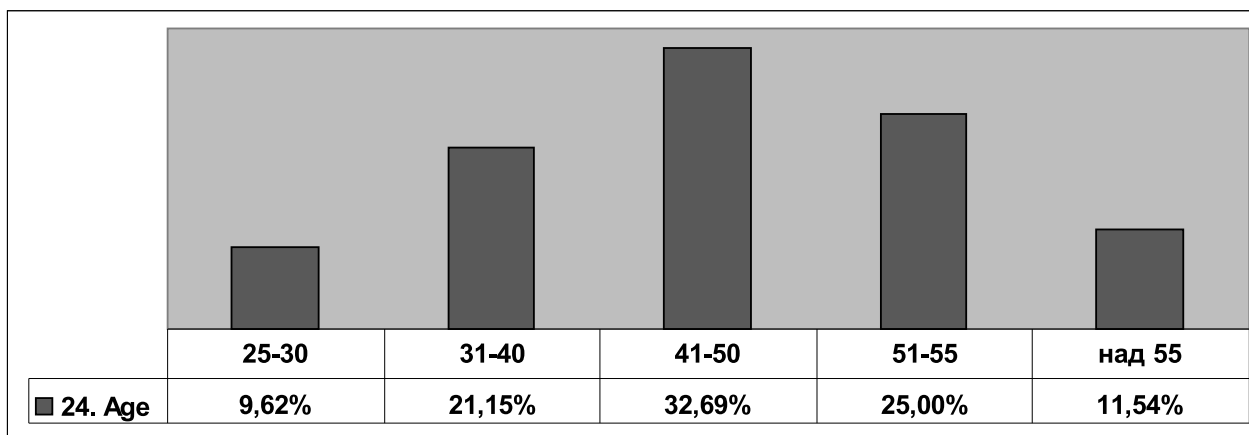


Fig. 6. Distribution of respondents by age

As fig. 6 shows the average age of the participants in the survey is 41-50 years (33%). The proportion of respondents aged up to 40 years is 31% and those aged over 50 are 37% (*a quarter of the respondents are between 51 and 55 years old, and the proportion of the respondents over 55 is 12%*). This relatively even distribution of respondents is a prerequisite for continuity between the different age groups.

The distribution of respondents by gender, depicted in Fig. 7, shows that almost 60% (31) of all respondents are men. Given that 75% of the respondents are managers of establishments offering spa and wellness services, it can be concluded that spa tourism in Bulgaria is managed by men.



23. Gender

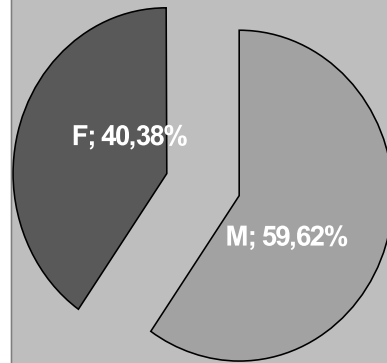


Fig . 7. Distribution of respondents by gender

Looking at the total group of respondents (52) regardless of their age and gender, it is evident that the group consists mainly of managers of spa hotels with 3 to 10 years of experience in tourism, with master's degrees from programs in economics or spa and wellness tourism.

We can assume that this distribution is reliable and suitable for the purposes of the analysis.

4.2 Attitude of the respondents to the skills and competencies necessary for quality performance of their duties

Prior to identifying the training needs of employees in spa and wellness tourism, it is necessary to identify the current state of their qualifications and competencies.

For this purpose, the respondents have been distributed by:

- Degree of satisfaction with their expectations for the competencies and training of staff (survey question 4);
- Methods of assessment of job candidates for spa and wellness centers (survey question 6);
- Training of new staff (survey question 9); and
- Major problems with employees at spa and wellness centers (survey question 10).

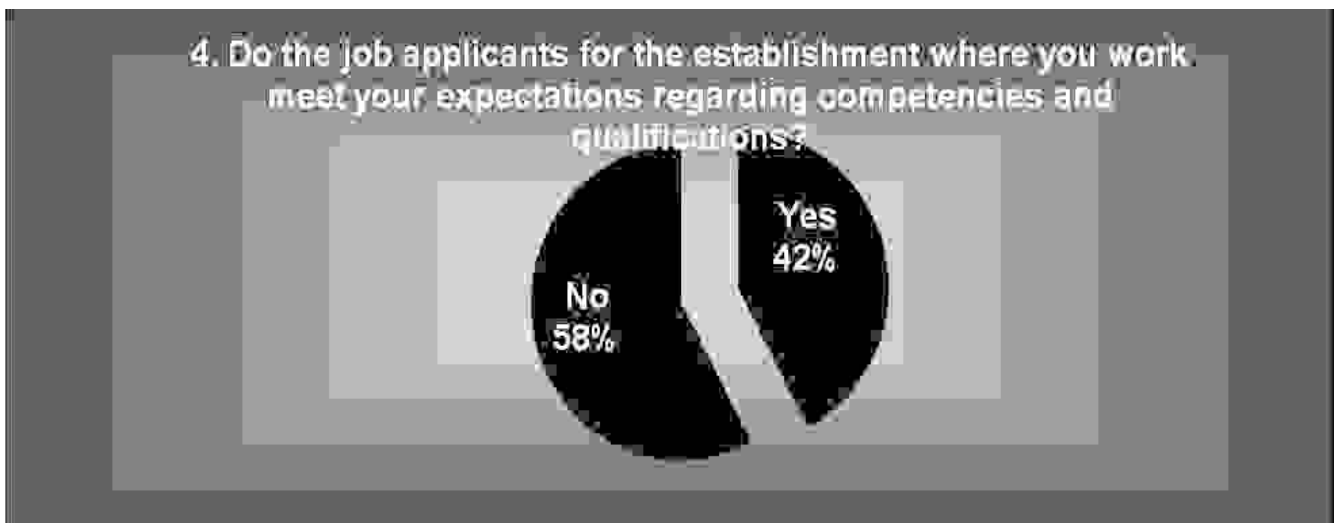


Fig. 8. Distribution of respondents by their expectations for the level of competencies of staff

According to the respondents the job applicants for the establishments where they work **do not meet their expectations for the level of qualification and competencies. (58%)**. (See. **fig.8**). This gives us grounds to assume that the dissatisfied respondents would likely be prepared to take advantage of various opportunities for training and staff development. This does not mean that the respondents who are satisfied (42%) are reluctant to invest in raising the qualifications of their employees.



The skills of the approved and hired job applicants are assessed both practically and theoretically. **Fig. 9** shows that 63% of the respondents prefer to assess job applicants both practically and theoretically while only 10% of them hire job applicants without any assessment (only on the basis of submitted documents for their qualifications and competencies in a particular field). A sizeable number of the respondents (21%) assess only the practical skills of job applicants.

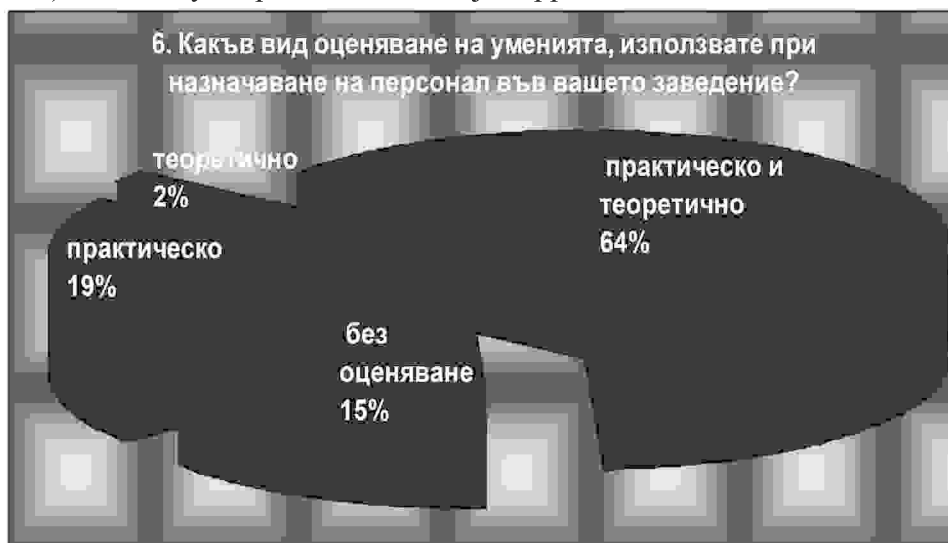


Fig. 9. Distribution of respondents by method of assessment of skills of job applicants

New employees at spa and wellness centers are prepared to carry out their duties by undergoing specific training. Each respondent has been offered a list of popular methods for practical training of new employees, with an option to add more to it. **Fig. 10** shows that the most preferred method of training is "on-site introduction of the new employee to the nature of the job carried out by a member of staff" (58%). The next preferred method is "theoretical and practical training" (27%), and 15% of the respondents have indicated that newly hired employees undergo only some practical training. The least applied methods are "training recruits at another institution with a similar profile and experience in the field", training newly hired employees in "theoretical" and "specialized program". Only 5.77% of the respondents have declared that they use these methods. 10% of the respondents train their newly hired employees at specialized qualification centers.

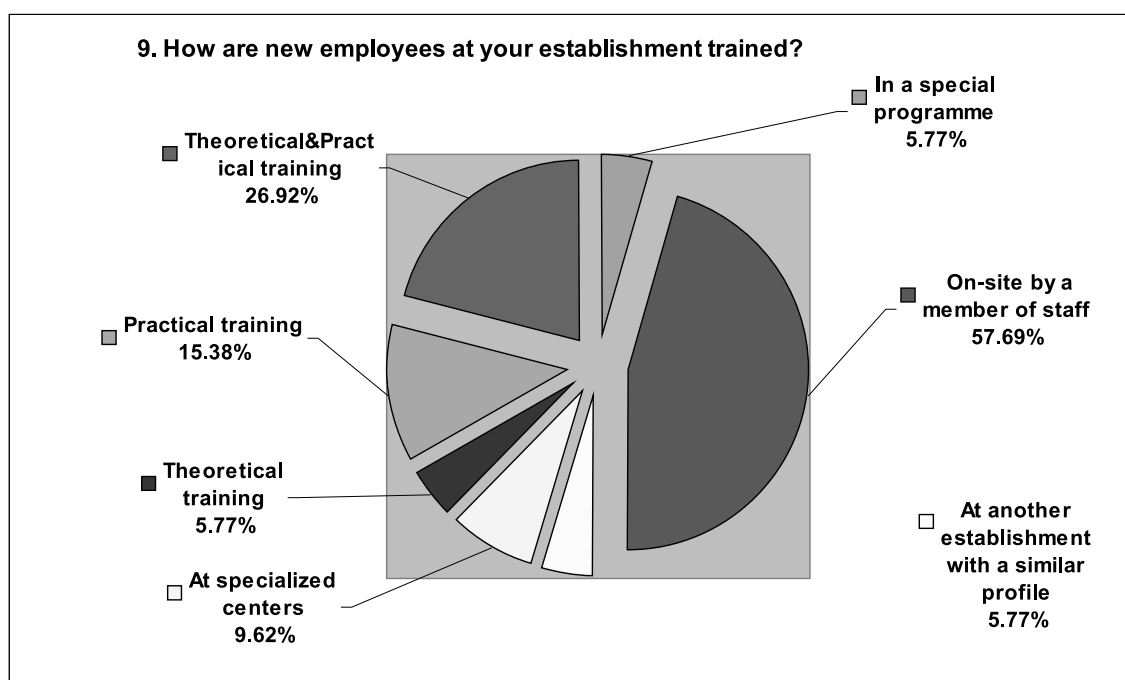


Fig. 10. Distribution of respondents by method of training of new staff



Question 10 urges the respondents to declare *the most common problems they have with their staff*. Once again the respondents are offered a list of possible answers. As **fig. 11** shows, 37% of the respondents have declared that the most common problems are associated with "a lack of specialized training centers" and "low quality of work." Next come (according to 34% of the respondents) problems which stem from the employees' "low work motivation", and for 27% of the respondents the problems are caused by a "lack of specialized training programs". For this question the respondents could also identify "other problems" with their employees which are not included in the preliminary list. We should not neglect the fact that 15% of the respondents have declared that they have no problems with their employees.

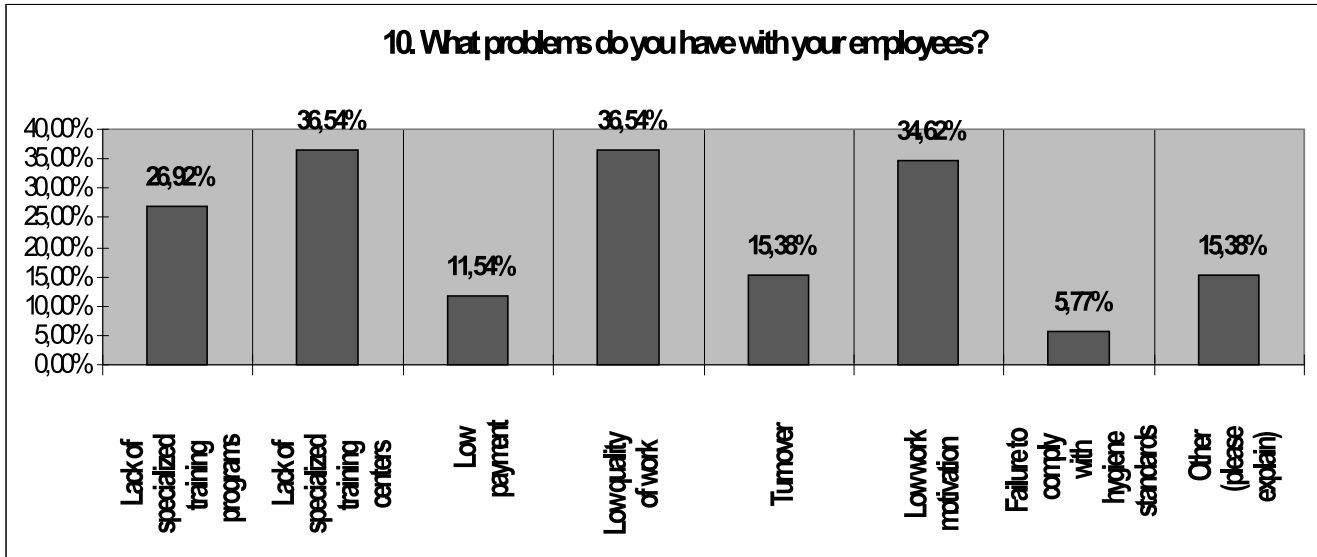


Fig. 11. Distribution of respondents by the problems they have with their employees

To form a complete **profile of the employee at the spa and wellness centers**, respondents have described in writing the most often missing qualities in new employees and their views on the most important competencies and skills required of the employees at the spa and wellness centers.

- Survey question № 5 urges the respondents to identify the most frequently missing qualities in new employees.

Table 1

Most frequently missing qualities in new employees*

№	Qualities	Number of Respondents
1	Practical and theoretical experience - 20 -2	20
2	Desire for work - 4-1	4
3	Patience to learn – 1-3	1
4	Motivation – 6-1	6
5	Industry (precision, good attitude to their professional duties) – 14-3	14
6	Cannot take responsibility – 8-3	8
7	Cannot prioritize – 1-3	1
8	Language skills – 4 -2	4
9	Ambition – 3-1	3
10	Professional skills – 7 -2	7
11	Working with clients – 7-3	7
12	Problems when working in a team, propriety – 8 -3	8
13	Communication problems -4 -3	4
14	Creativity, initiative -9 -1	9
15	Organizational skills -1 -3	1

* the qualities are presented as they have been identified by the respondents



The answers are summarized in **table 1** and subsequently grouped in the following way:

- *Regarding the job applicant's inner conviction for work* – According to the respondents, the new employees have no real desire for work, perceive the work process only as a source of income, are not sufficiently motivated, have no ambition for self-improvement, do not demonstrate initiative, and there is no creativity in the performance of their assigned tasks.

- *Regarding the job applicant's knowledge* – According to the respondents, the theoretical and practical training of job applicant is not good, they cannot apply theory to practice, the theoretical knowledge they have is very superficial, and most of them have no foreign language skills.

- *Regarding the personal qualities of the job applicant* – According to the respondents, the job applicants have no drive, ambition or patience to learn and develop their professional skills; they are not accurate in performing their professional duties; cannot prioritize tasks or manage their working time; do not want to take responsibilities; find it difficult to communicate with clients and colleagues; and they are not always able to establish rapport with their co-workers.

Fig. 12 shows the structure of the distribution of respondents' answers to question №5 as they have responded. The largest share (88%) belongs to qualities from the third group, followed by knowledge and skills of new employees (60%). The smallest share belongs to missing qualities regarding the motivation of the staff (42%). The following conclusion can be drawn: the respondents require most of all appropriate personal qualities from the new employees. Knowledge is a prerequisite for turning an individual into a good specialist but it can be accumulated and expanded. Provided that the individual has a desire for self-perfection, s/he can continue to acquire knowledge. It stands to reason that the new employees miss most of all qualities associated with motivation because the formation of an inner conviction for the need to perform well one's professional duties is a process. The mechanism of this process depends on the working conditions in which the employee performs his/her duties, as well as on the way the manager impacts his/her employees. In the context of the purpose of this study, creating opportunities for expanding the knowledge of employees at spa and wellness centers will help to overcome many of the problems caused by the lack of some qualities and knowledge in new employees, and will also provide opportunities for them to reconsider their behavior at work.

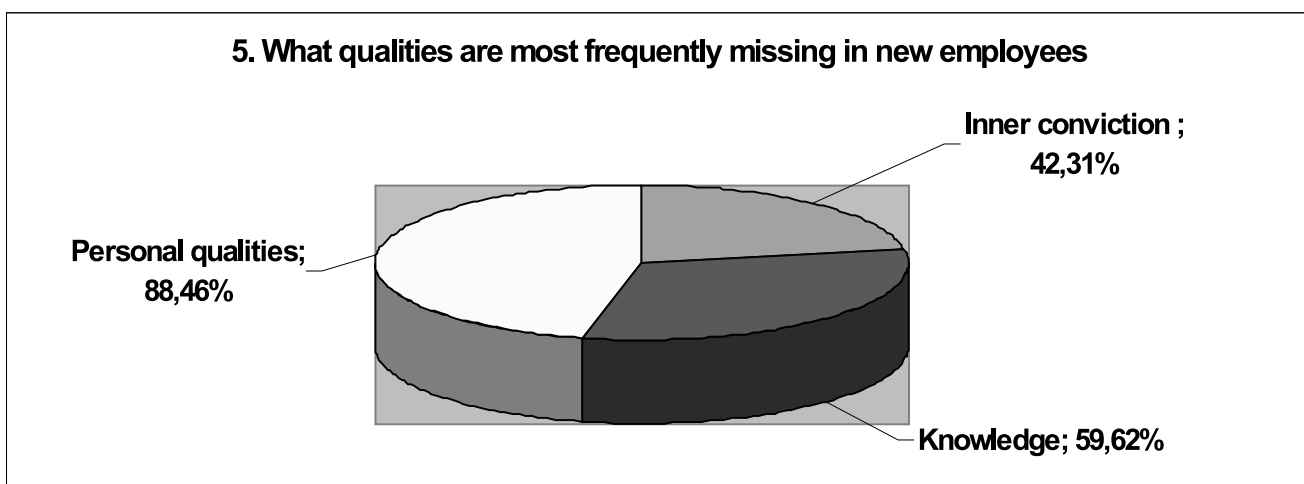


Fig.12 Distribution of respondents by their opinion about the qualities of new employees

Question № 7 and question № 8 from the questionnaire urge the respondents to identify three skills and competencies that the employees at spa and wellness centers should possess in order to provide quality services and perform well their professional duties.

Table 2 presents a summary of the experts' opinions of the competencies required from an employee at a spa and wellness center. As it can be seen in table 2 and **fig. 13**, according to the respondents the



competent service provided for the client at a spa and wellness center depends most of all on the theoretical training of the employee (65% of respondents). Secondly, 29% of the respondents indicate that the employee should have developed practical competencies. The same is the share of respondents who have indicated the need for a professional qualification. Almost the same importance is given to foreign language skills (27%). Furthermore, meeting the needs of the client of a spa and wellness center requires from the employee to be competent in handling equipment (17%); to be familiar with the specificities of working in a spa and wellness center (8%); to keep up with innovation in the industry (10%); to have good knowledge of psychology and medicine (12% total).

Table 2

Competencies that an employee at a SPA and Wellness center should possess*

<i>№</i>	<i>Competencies</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>
1	<i>Theoretical training (to give a diagnosis)</i>	34
2	<i>Practical training (internships, specializations, practical application of theoretical knowledge)</i>	15
3	<i>Knowledge of foreign languages</i>	14
4	<i>Keeping up with innovation</i>	5
5	<i>Professional qualification (evidence from certificates, diplomas, etc.)</i>	15
6	<i>Good medical knowledge (anatomy and physiology of the human body)</i>	4
7	<i>Knowledge of psychology</i>	2
8	<i>Practical skills for handling equipment</i>	9
9	<i>Knows the specificities of working at a spa center</i>	4

* The names of the competencies are as they have been identified by the respondents

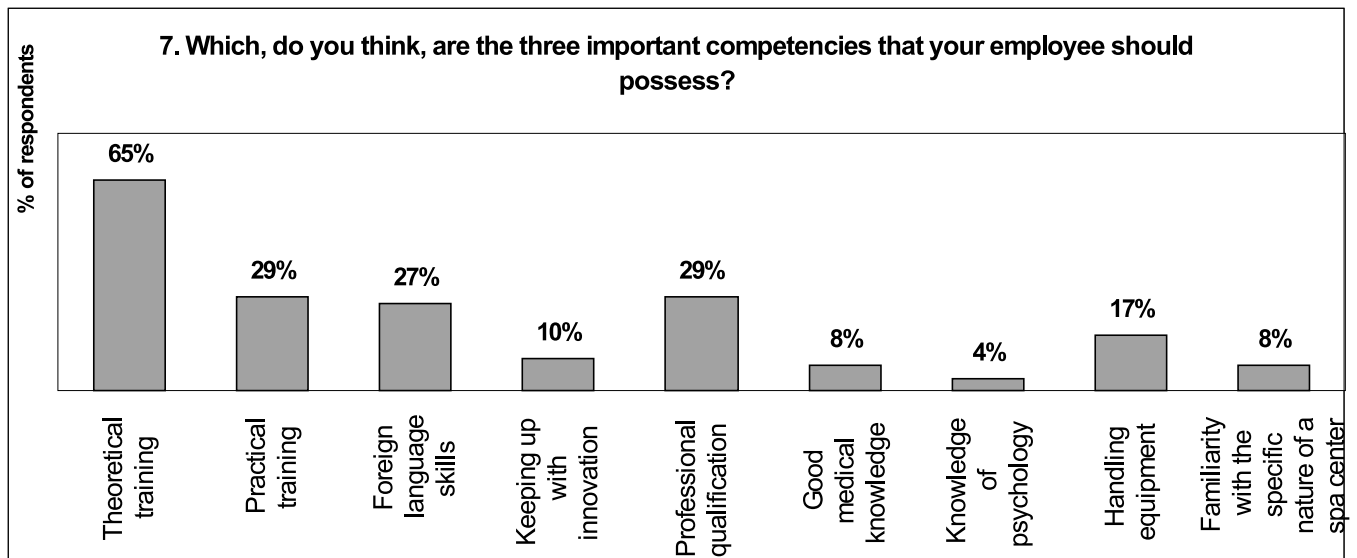


Fig.13 Distribution of respondents by their opinion about the necessary competencies



Table 3 presents a summary of respondents' answers regarding the skills that an employee at a Spa and Wellness center should possess.

Table 3

Skills that an employee at a Spa and Wellness center should possess*			
№	SKILLS	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	2	3	4
			3K./52*100
1	Politeness	16	31%
1	Communicativeness	22	42%
1	Teamwork, solidarity	29	56%
1	Working with clients	17	33%
2	Assessment of the situation and the problem -1	1	0,2%
2	Precise assessment of what a particular client wants -1	1	0,2%
2	Skills to perform tasks in a professional manner -3	3	0,6%
2	Competencies - 5	5	10%
2	Professional knowledge and skills in the field -8	8	15%
2	The skill to offer the hotel services taking into account what the client wants and needs, the skill to diagnose, to analyze, etc.	14	27%
3	Hard-working	3	0,6%
3	Appearance	1	0,2%
3	Dexterity, speed, creativity	1	0,2%
3	Willingness to improve qualification (ambitiousness)	1	0,2%
3	Resourcefulness	1	0,2%
3	Foreign languages	3	0,6%
3	Motivation to work	1	0,2%
3	Patience and propriety	2	0,4%
3	Well-organized	2	0,4%
3	Diligence	4	0,8%
3	Responsible (accuracy and integrity in performing official duties)	14	27%
3	Enterprise	7	13%
3	Making the right decision	3	0,6%
3	Experience	4	0,8%

*** The names of the skills are as they have been identified by the respondents**

Three groups of skills have been identified:

- Skills to work well with people

The first group comprises skills that the employee needs in order to work well with people. Given that spa and wellness services are provided by people and are designed for people and are consumed upon receipt, the ability to work well with people is a must for every employee at spa and wellness centers. The responses of the respondents indicate that this is a collective skill composed of Courtesy (31% of respondents), Communicativeness (42% of respondents), Team responsibility, Solidarity (56% of respondents), Ability to work well with clients (33% of respondents).

- Skills to meet the requirements of the clients

The second group comprises skills such as: Accurate assessment of the wishes of a client, Professional performance of tasks, Professional competence and ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practice, Skills to analyze clients' claims, Skills to correctly diagnose the condition of the client and to recommend the most appropriate spa or wellness service. Possession of these skills is a prerequisite for



increasing the level of customer satisfaction with spa and wellness services. The largest proportion (27%) of respondents have indicated the need for the Skill to offer the hotel services taking into account what the client wants and needs, to diagnose, analyze, etc.

- Professional skills and personal qualities

The third group comprises skills which would appear on a person's profile such as: Diligence, Hard-working, Responsible (accuracy and integrity in performing official duties), Enterprise, Experience, Making the right decision, Patience and propriety, Well-organized, Zeal to work, Foreign language skills, Resourcefulness, Willingness to improve qualification (ambitiousness), Self-improvement, Dexterity, Speed, Creativity, Appearance. Possession of these skills would help any employee to perform accurately their duties and in way in which both the client and the provider of spa and wellness services would be satisfied. The end result will impact the image of the spa and wellness center and will create conditions for increased competitiveness. In this group the largest proportion of respondents (27%) have indicated that accuracy and integrity in performing official duties are necessary skills for employees in spa and wellness centers.

4.3 Attitude of respondents to the development of individual competencies

A person's attitude to his/her own professional development and the acknowledged need for self-realization in a particular job is a motivating factor for seeking various opportunities for acquiring the desired level of competence. This is why the present survey contains questions to assess the attitude of respondents to maintaining and increasing the level of their professional knowledge and skills.

The survey which has been conducted (see **fig. 14**) shows that 48% of respondents are familiar with some of the most popular standards, management models and practices in the operation of spa and wellness centers, 33% of them know well most of them, but a significant percentage of the respondents do not know well the management models, standards and good practices in the field in which they work (19%). This finding confirms the hypothesis of the need for specialized training of professionals working in the field of spa and wellness services.

This study has researched the respondents' preferred method of professional development and advancement of knowledge (question 12, See **fig. 15**).

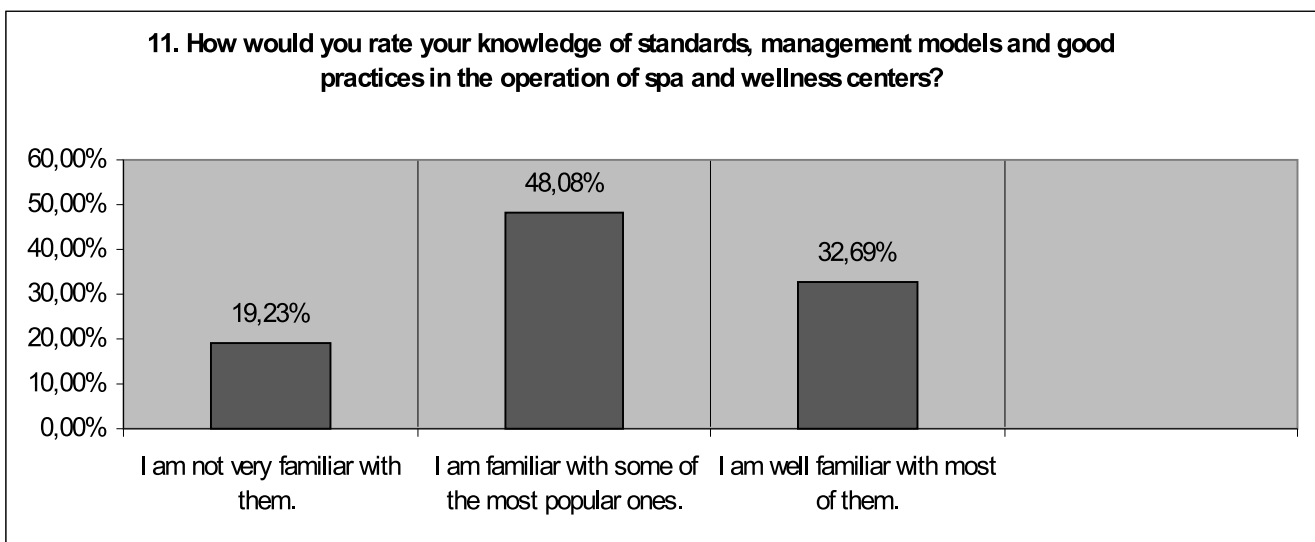


Fig. 14. Distribution of respondents by level of knowledge in the field in which they work

It turns out that the respondents prefer reading professional literature (30%) and using online sources – blogs, specialized media, etc. (27%) as alternative ways for acquiring knowledge. 28% of all respondents have declared that they prefer to learn by attending lectures, seminars and specialized courses. Individual training – with a mentor and advisor (5% of respondents) and electronic and online training (9% of respondents) are among the least preferred means for professional development and expanding knowledge.

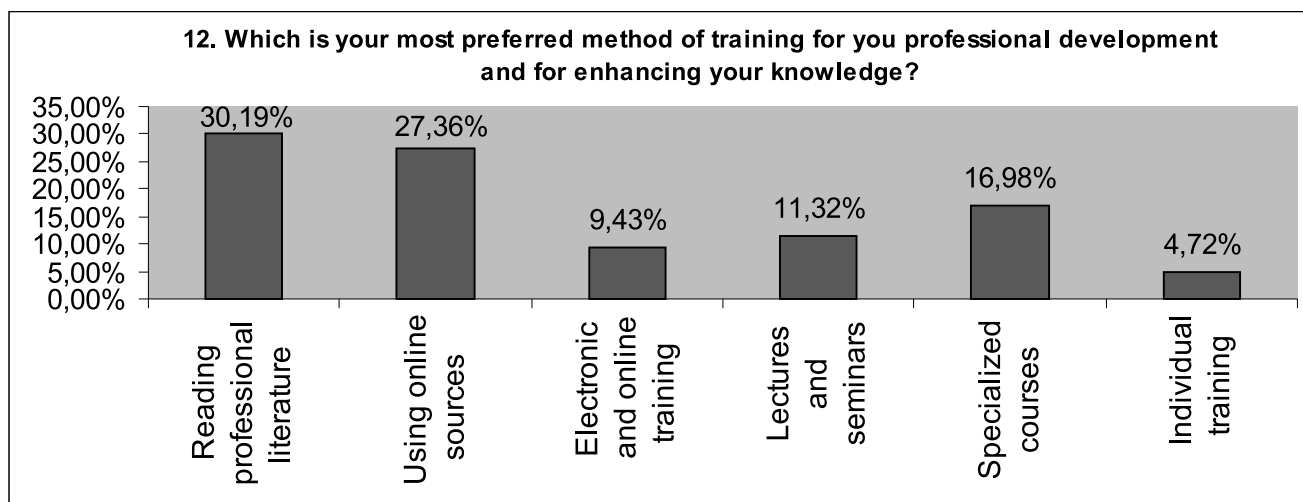


Fig. 15. Distribution of respondents by preferred method of training

A summary of the responses to question 13 (See **fig. 16**) shows that the respondents participate in training related to the management and administration of spa and wellness centers, when these opportunities are recommended by somebody else, by colleagues, etc. (56%). A considerable number of respondents (37%) keep an eye out for such opportunities and are regularly involved in trainings for improving their qualification.

Only 8% of respondents are not interested in opportunities for improving their qualification. The high percentage of respondents (total 93%) participating in training shows that there is a demand for options to improve the qualifications of employees and there are many opportunities to realize that.



Fig. 16. Distribution of respondents by participation in training courses

The training courses attended by respondents are on the following lines (**fig. 17**):

- Highly specialized – 56 % of respondents.
- Medicine – 23% of respondents
- Human resource management – 23% of respondents
- General management – 25% от респондентите
- Economics – 4% of respondents.

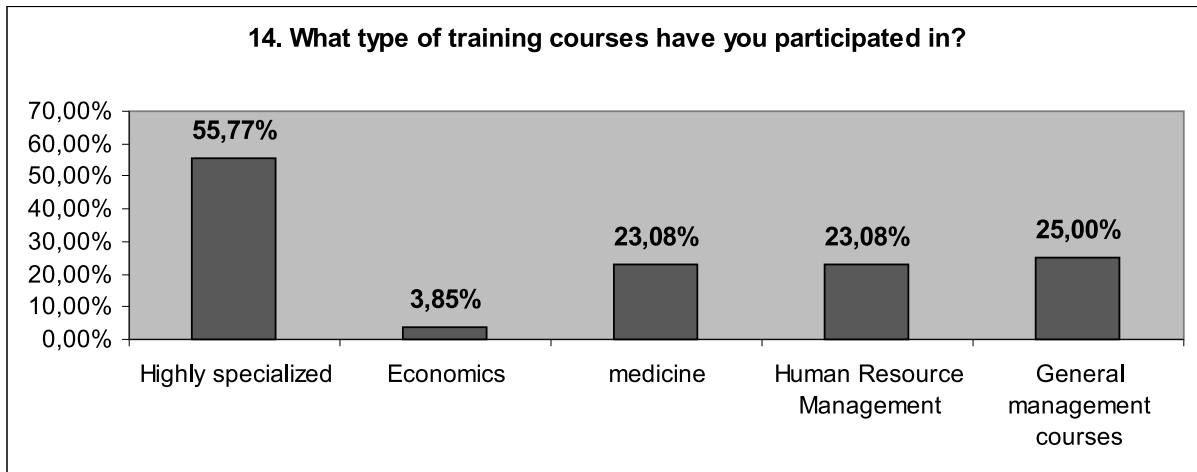


Fig. 17. Distribution of respondents by type of training in which they have participated

The frequency and duration of training courses attended by respondents shows a tendency to invest time in further training for professional development and expanding knowledge. **Fig. 18** shows that half of the respondents have attended courses lasting up to 3 weeks. A considerable proportion of the respondents (40%) have attended courses lasting from 1 to 3 months. A good indicator is the fact that 54% of respondents attend various training courses once a year and 8% attend training courses twice a year (See **fig. 19**). The disturbing fact is, however, that 19% of respondents state that they have not been involved in any form of training in the last five years. The same proportion of respondents has been trained once in three years. The present study is not intended to identify and research the reasons why staff at spa and wellness centers participate or not in further training courses. Therefore, this fact cannot be commented.

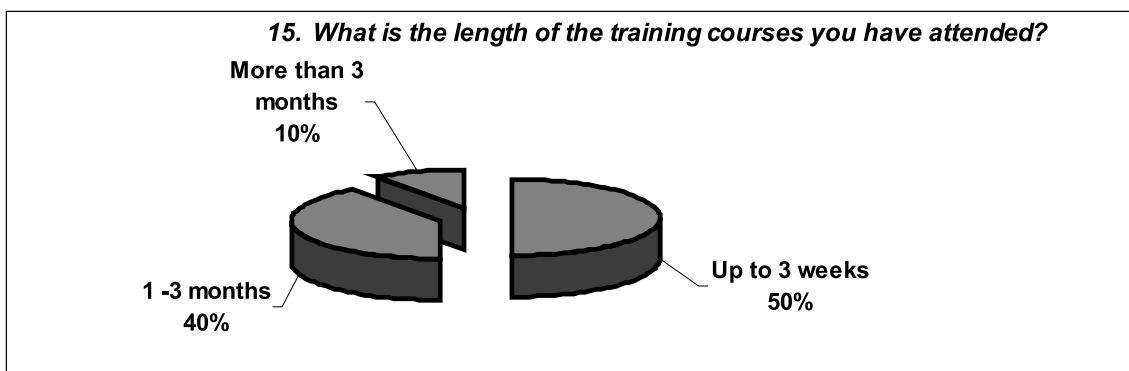


Fig. 18. Distribution of respondents by length of training in which they have participated

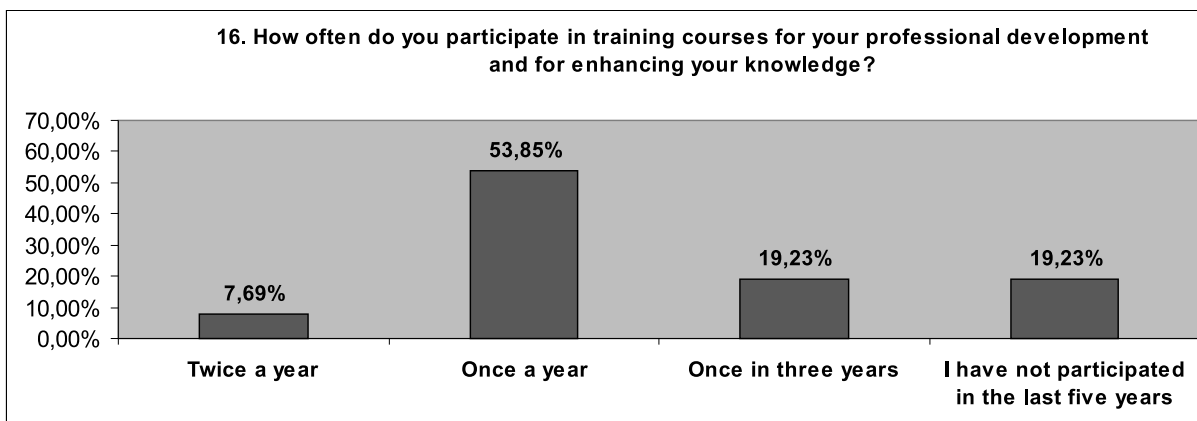


Fig. 19. Distribution of respondents by frequency of participation in training



Setting aside the rate of participation of respondents in courses to expand their knowledge and increase their qualification, we can note the positive fact that 84% of them give a positive answer to the question about the practical relevance of what they learn during the training. **Fig. 20** shows that only 16% of respondents have indicated that they do not see the practical relevance of what they have learned. The reasons for this answer have not been researched but it can be assumed that the respondents' expectations for the knowledge to be gained from the training course they have selected have not been met.

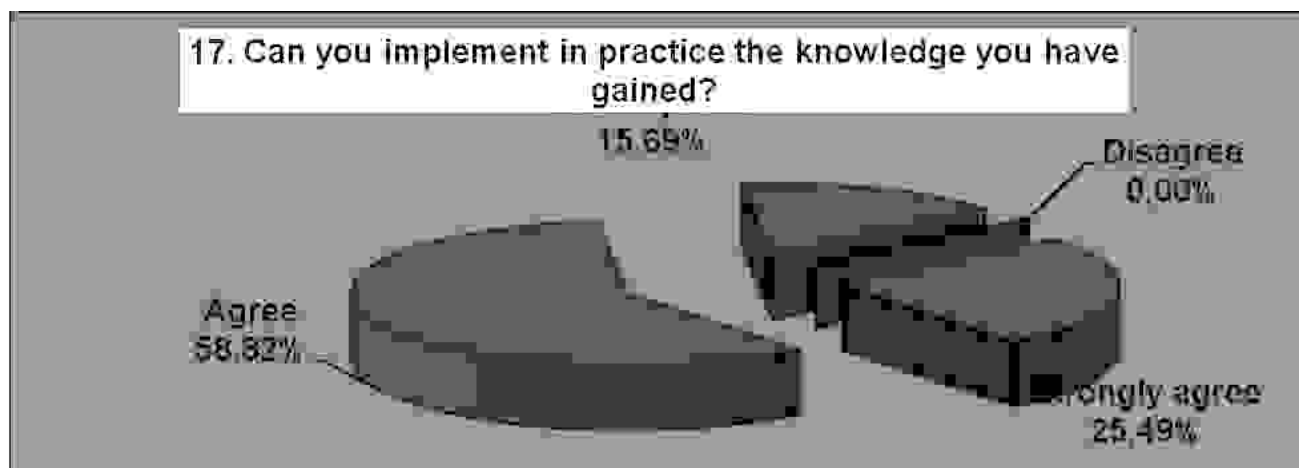


Fig. 20. Distribution of respondents by practical utility of training courses

The summary of results from the answers to questions 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 allows us to conclude that the participants in the present survey are professionals in their field, they are familiar with the most popular standards, management models and good practices in the work at spa and wellness centers and have a positive attitude towards maintaining and enhancing their individual competencies and qualifications. This allows us to focus our attention in the study on establishing the specific needs for new knowledge of people working in the field of spa and wellness services.

4.4 Specific needs of respondents for new knowledge

To determine the specific need for new knowledge, the participants in the survey have been asked to indicate the topic areas in which they would like to receive more in-depth knowledge in order to resolve more easily the problems arising in the course of performing their duties (question № 20). **Fig. 21** provides a summary of their views. It can be seen that, first of all, the respondents (31% of them) seek knowledge especially in the field of innovation and implementation of innovative technologies in spa and wellness services. Secondly, 29% of respondents would like to learn about the management of human resources, and 13 percent have specified that they have a problem with staff motivation and would like to get training in this topic area. The same proportion (13%) of respondents would like to improve their general knowledge of marketing and advertising of spa and wellness services. 15% of respondents have indicated that their problems stem from a lack of foreign language skills and they would like to attend language courses. Other topics that the respondents would like to learn more about are in the field of specialized courses for people providing spa and wellness services (10%), management and working with clients (8% each), work organization and PR strategies (4% each). 2% of respondents would like to receive training in writing project proposals funded by European programs aimed at improving the functioning of spa and wellness centers.



20. What are the topic areas, relating to the problems you encounter when performing your duties, in which you would like to enhance your general knowledge?

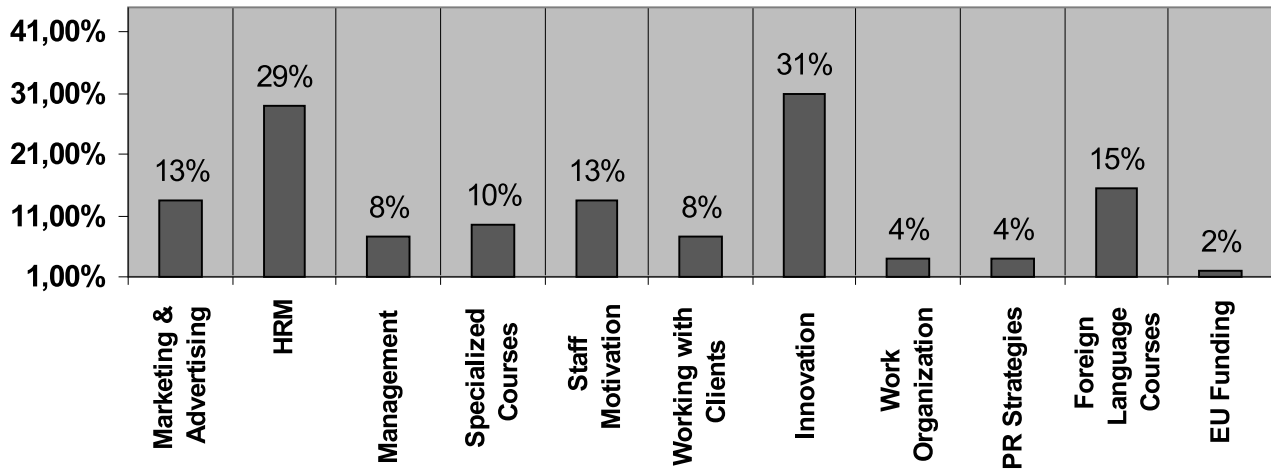


Fig. 21. Distribution of respondents by topic areas in which they want to expand their knowledge

The answers to question 21 allow for specifying the training courses which the respondents would like to attend.

21. Which of the following training courses would you like to attend in order to develop your personal competencies in management and administration of spa centers?

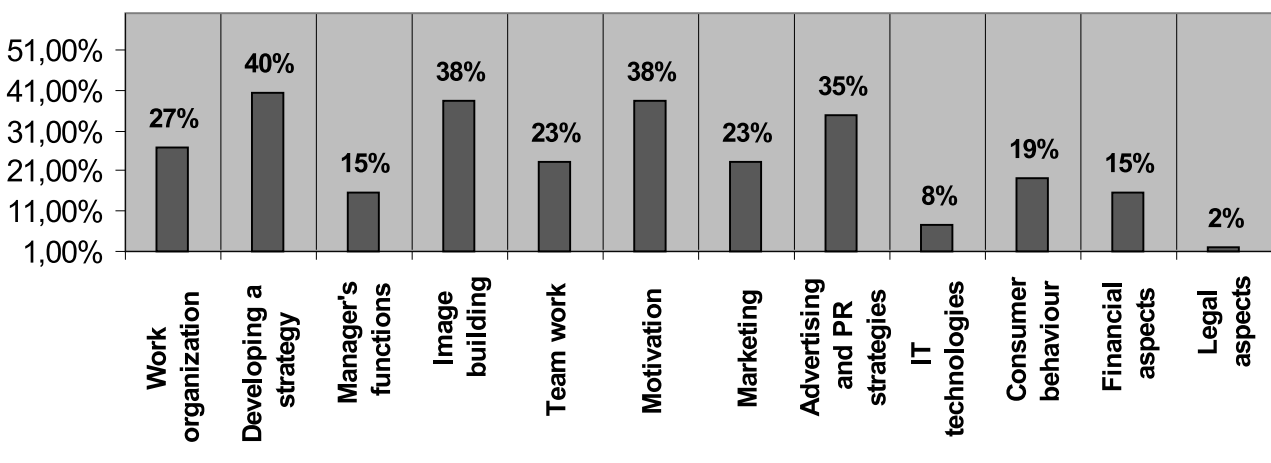


Fig. 22. Distribution of respondents by training courses they would like to attend

Fig. 22 shows the following distribution of respondents:

- 40% would like to attend courses explaining how to develop a strategy for advancing spa and wellness centers.
- 38% are interested in the process and approaches to building the image of spa and wellness centers, and the same proportion of respondents would like gain knowledge about staff motivation.



- **35%** would like to attend courses in advertising and PR strategies regarding spa and wellness centers.

- **27%** would like to enhance their knowledge about work organization at spa and wellness centers.

- **23%** would like to attend a course dealing with the issues regarding team building at spa and wellness centers. The same proportion of respondents would like to attend a course in marketing of spa services.

- **19%** would like to enhance their competence for managing consumer behavior of users of spa and wellness services.

- **15%** are interested in courses dealing with the functions of managers of spa and wellness centers. The same proportion of respondents would like to attend a course for enhancing their competence in financial management of spa and wellness centers.

- **8%** would like to be trained in the implementation of information technologies (multimedia technologies) in the management of spa and wellness centers.

- **2%** would like to attend a course in „Legal aspects of spa and wellness centers” in order to enhance their competence in the management and administration of such centers.

The conclusion that can be drawn based on responses to questions 20 and 21 is that the training needs are in the field of general management of spa and wellness centers. The topics that need to be explained in order to enhance the individual competence of employees are:

- **Innovation in spa and wellness services;**

- **Development of strategies for advancing spa and wellness centers;**

- **Organization of the spa and wellness centers, including implementation of IT technologies;**

- **Human Resource Management, including staff motivation and team building;**

- **Marketing of spa and wellness services, including development of marketing, advertising and PR strategies, studying consumer behavior, customer services, image building.**

In conclusion, we will summarize the respondents' views regarding the questions about how often, in what areas and what kind of impact there will be after a possible training of staff at spa and wellness centers.

As shown in **fig. 23**, more than half (56%) of the participants in the survey, state that training of management and administrative staff should be held once a year. 39% of respondents even indicate that such training should be held twice a year. This means that the participants in the study appreciate the need for enhancing individual competencies. In view of the fact that *the total group of respondents (52), regardless of their gender or age, consists mainly of managers of spa hotels with experience in tourism from 3 to 10 years, with master's degrees, trained in economics or other specific to spa and wellness tourism specialties*, it can be assumed that the above statement is for them a prerequisite for effective management of spa and wellness centers, creating conditions for a competitive business. This has been confirmed by the opinion of 73% of the respondents, namely that training will have a positive impact on the reputation of the spa and wellness center where they work. (See **Fig. 24**). Regarding the venue of training courses, almost half of the respondents (48%) think that the training should be specialized and should focus of the problems of management and administration of spa and wellness centers (See **Fig. 25**). In other words, additional training in general management, general marketing, etc. would have a smaller effect on enhancing the individual professional competencies of specialists working at spa and wellness centers. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that second is the proportion of respondents indicating that an appropriate venue for training courses is the spa and wellness center itself.

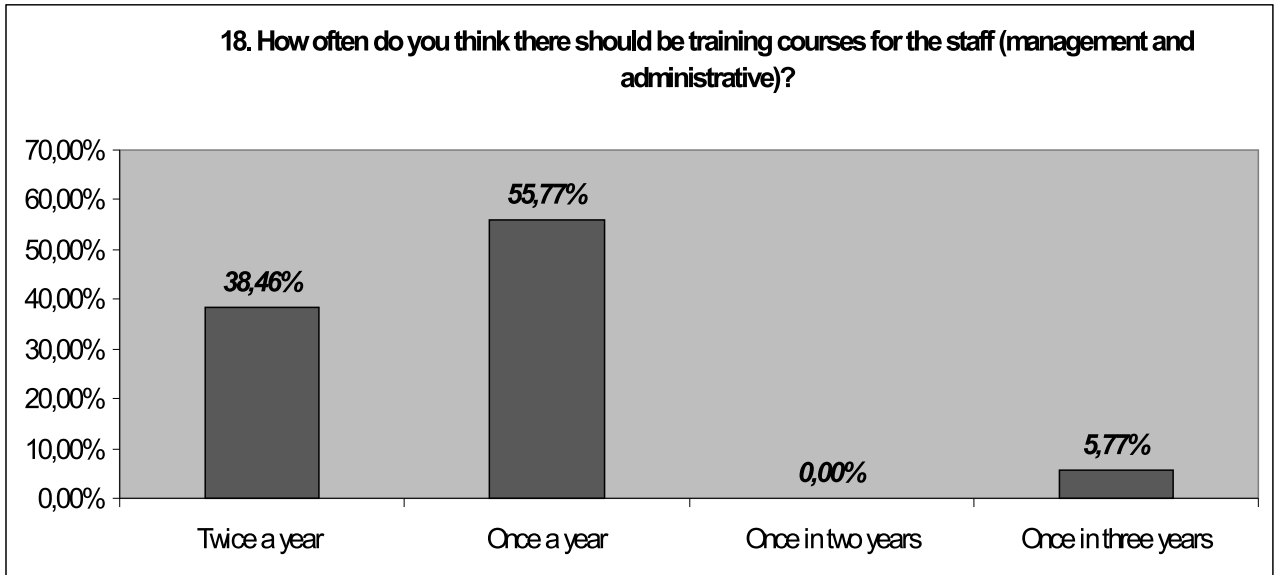


Fig. 23. Distribution of respondents by opinion about frequency of staff training

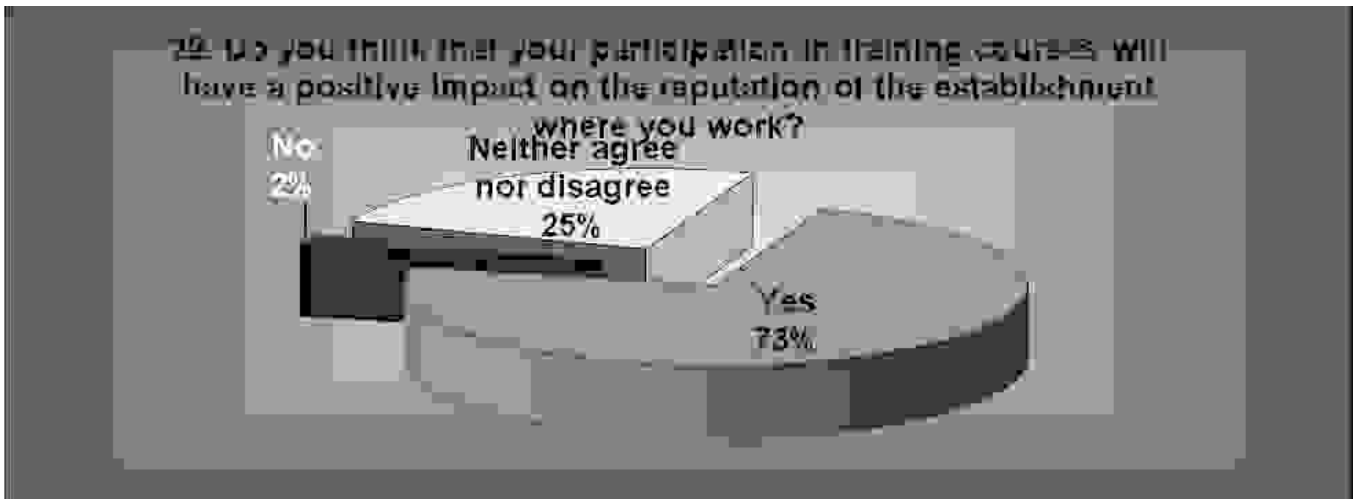


Fig. 24. Distribution of respondents by expectations about the impact of training on the reputation of the establishment for which they work

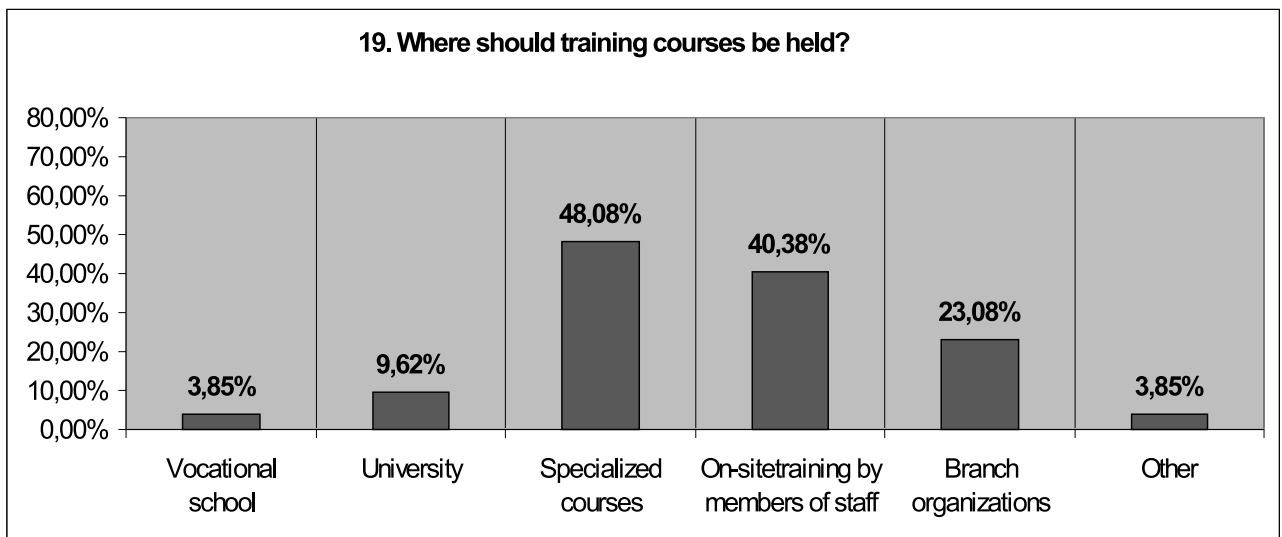


Fig. 25. Distribution of respondents by their opinion about the venue of training