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**INDOOR LAYOUTS OF SPA CENTRES**

**ABSTRACT**

The growing interest of customers for SPA sector as well as its fast development permitted to bring constant innovations in this field. In that sense, this study aims at describing the current situation of SPA design in Turkey, by identifying the conceptual elements that influenced the design of SPA Centers' interior. Topic titles regarding the fact that how indoor layouts of SPA centres must be, were determined and indoor analyses were conducted. The subject in the examples selected within that scope, design criteria were probed in terms of functional necessity, technical necessity and aesthetic necessity concepts and qualitative and quantitative values.

**Keywords:** SPA Centers, Interior Design of SPA Centers, The Development of SPA Centers, Technical Requisites of Spa Centers, Esthetic Requisites of Spa Centers

**SPA MERKEZLERİNİN İÇ MEKAN BİÇİMLENİŞİ**

**ÖZET**

Bu çalışma; Türkiye'de SPA mimarisinin bugünkü durumunun belirlenmesini, SPA merkezlerinin iç mekan birimlerinin biçimlenmesine etki eden tasarım faktörlerinin tespit edilmesini amaçlamaktadır. SPA merkezlerinin iç mekan biçimlenişinin nasıl olmasına dair, konu başlıkları belirlenerek, iç mekan analizleri yapılmıştır. Bu kapsamda seçilen örneklerde konu; fonksiyonel gereksinim, teknik gereksinim ve estetik gereksinim kavramları açısından, nitel ve nicel değerler bakımından tasarım kriterleri irdelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** SPA Merkezleri, SPA Merkezlerinin İç Mekan Tasarımı, SPA Merkezlerinin Gelişimi, Spa Merkezlerinin Estetik Gereksinimleri, Spa Merkezlerinin Teknik Gereksinimleri

## 1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

People have been talking a lot about SPA lately, although many of them do not really seem to know the true meaning of this word. The term "SPA", which is associated with "water treatment", can also be designated by other terms such as "balneotherapy", "springwaters"...

Although in Turkey, we tend to associate health (and wellness) tourism with thermal tourism, SPA refers to a more specific branch of this same kind of tourism.

Even if "thermal tradition" is being part of our country's customs, SPA resorts in Turkey is not as developed as it can be in Germany for instance. However, our investors are willing to create new habits and improve the touristic potential of the country developing SPA Centers according to international standards. SPA Centers, which represent 1000 billion dollars' concerning world investments in tourism sector, is considered as being one of the most attractive touristic concept by many Turkish investors, although the development of this sector is still very recent in Turkey.

Even if Turkey is experiencing an accelerated development, SPA sector still represents a minor part of the demand in the country's touristic activity. This can be explained by the fact that the sector's advantages are not considered enough in our country. In that sense, SPA centers will grow in importance as a touristic alternative in Turkey' as long as this sector will improve the number of acknowledged consumers, and provide a good quality of built equipment and widening services

However, since SPA Centers have no real legal status in Turkey, this sector tends to grow without control. For this reason, a classification of SPA centers on a legal basis is required [2].

## 2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

The designers have to consider and study every detail which is to create the unique atmosphere of a SPA Center: the entrance, the music equipment, the lighting, nice smelling candles, the decoration...

The concept of SPA Centers, which is now developing quickly and spreading in many Resort Hostel Complexes, tends to allow the increasing development of specific layout standards and techniques converging to a constant improvement of the services.

This study represents a step further in the development of SPA design. In this context, this study helps to provide a scientific approach of the issue, as well as spreading it in order to conquer a wider audience.

This study also allows designers to have a better knowledge of the SPA design's current situation in Turkey, as well as it provides a report of the essential factors/elements, which determine the way designers make choices and solve problems related to SPA design.

## 3. THE SPA CONCEPT (SPA KAVRAMI)

Modern human being, evolving under continuous changes, wants to reach health services that globalization has to offer: modern preventive health care and active health treatments.

The concept of well being health does not only respond to physiological needs, but also concerns spiritual and socio-cultural aspects.

This evolving health paradigm permitted the emergence of the SPA concept. SPA concept, is the name of the water therapies used since the roman period until today.

SPA Centers are likely to reach everyone's concern: married-single-families, young-old people, no matter their cultural and social background. The accelerated rate due to today's working and living conditions, SPA Centers provide the opportunity to relax and spend time away from the stress that damages body and soul.

The variety of SPA offers corresponding to various different life styles and opportunities, plays an important role in the development of the concept of wellness and well-being, SPA Centers being able to provide services matching to everyone's needs [12].

In our country, most SPA Centers are located in luxury resort hotels and other luxury shops. However, SPA Centers tend to open in developing cities as "Day SPA", providing daily SPA services, at more reasonable prices. SPA resorts also provide "SPA holidays". Our country should follow with great interest the evolution of SPA Industry [1].

#### 4. THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE INTERIOR DESIGN OF SPA (SPA MERKEZLERİNİN İÇ MEKAN BİRİMLERİNİN BİÇİMLENMESİNE ETKİ EDEN FAKTÖRLERİN SAPTANMASI)

In order to identify the elements that determine the interior design of SPA Centers, it seems relevant to evoke the technical and esthetical criteria that SPA Centers have to consider [2].

##### 4.1. Detailed Review of Spa Centers' Activities and Premises for Users (Spa Merkezlerinin Kullanıcı Eylemleri ve Eylem Alanları Açısından İncelenmesi ve Birimlerinin Belirlenmesi)

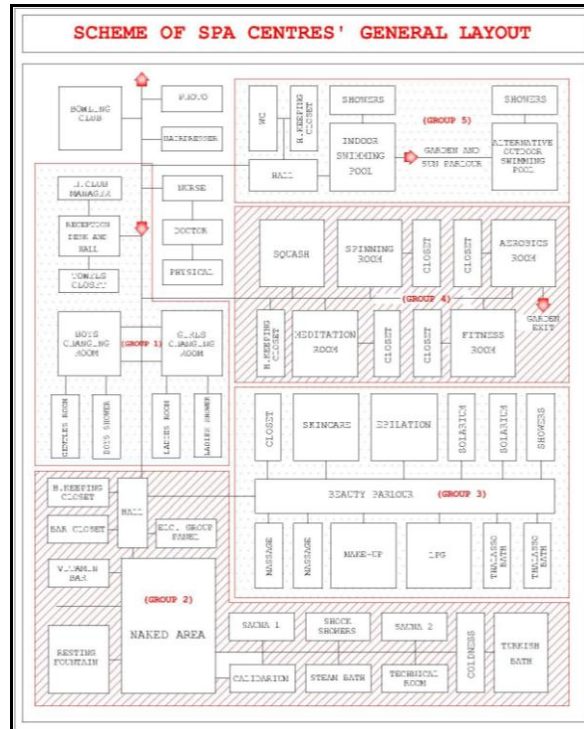


Figure 1. Scheme of SPA centers' general layout [3]  
(Şekil 1. SPA merkezlerinin genel yerleşim şeması [3])

As Tugay mentioned, we can divide SPA Centers into 5 groups (Figure 1). With this approach, each group is detailed separately [3]. On the other hand, each group can be used independently from one another. Tugay (2004), thanks to independant pathways. The halls and corridors can be therefore connected to one another (Table 1).

Table 1. Layout and connexion of the different rooms in SPA centers  
(Tablo 1. SPA merkezlerinde mekansal ilişki şeması)

Layout and Connexion of the Different Rooms in Spa Centers (Scheme)	
1.Group premisses (Entrance)	SPA Center's Manager's office, Reception desk, Clean towels closet, Changing rooms, Facilities and Shower
2.Group premisses (Wet rooms)	Turkish bath and cold room, Saunas, Steam Room, High pressure Showers, Tepidarium, Calidarium, Vitamin bar and its storage room, Relaxation room.
3.Group premisses (Beauty Center)	Beauty center's rooms, Thalasso baths, Showers, Massage rooms, Solarium
4.Group premisses (Sport Center)	Fitness Center, Spinning room, Aerobic room and storage room, Meditation room
5.Group premisses	Indoor swimming-pools

The Manager's office, belonging to the 1.Group, has to be located on the entrance hall. In the first place, it is necessary to establish a direct connexion between the Manager's office and Reception Desk. Reception desk has to be located on the entrance hall (Figure 2). Reception desk must be design following standard dimensions. There must be shelves placed under the Reception desk and behind, where the users can find clean towels and waistclothes. Before getting to facilities, shower room and changing room (1.group), users must pass through "naked area", which is to say, the part composed of the Sauna, the Steam room, the Turkish Baths, the tepidarium and the calidarium (2.Group), and the Beauty Center (3.Group). However, it is important to be able to reach 4. And 5. Group premisses through independant pathways.

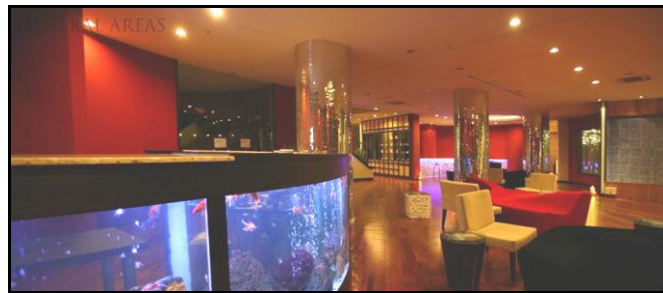


Figure 2. Reception desk in a SPA center [16]  
(Şekil 2. SPA merkezinde resepsiyon birimi [16])

Turkish Baths belong to the 2.Group premisses (Figure 3). The use of "Turkish baths" term, corresponds to the classic design of Turkish bath, following the layout of the traditionnal turkish baths and using the traditionnally used materials. A central piece made out

of marble is placed at the very heart of the Turkish bath [13]. The cold room of the Turkish baths are designed in specific dimensions, the Saunas can also be used as relaxation rooms. The Steam room's must contain at least 8 users. The use of ready-made polyester steam baths might represent an interesting option. The use of high pressure showers rather than under water showers is recommended in the saunas, for obvious sanitary reasons. The "Tepidarium-Caldarium", which is an original care based on the principle of having one foot in a cold tub and the other in a hot tub, can be placed on a corner of the naked area. Ideally located in a niche and composed of six tubs, this room must contain minimum 3 users. In order to create an atmosphere of well-being, the room is enriched with various plants. For sanitary reason, the Vitamin bar is only allowed to provide drinking services. The Vitamin bar must be able to provide services to 5% of the SPA Center's total amount of users as well as it must offer chairs and benches for half of the occupants of this room, providing a space of 0,75 m per person [3]. The common areas of the Sauna, the Steam room, the Turkish baths, and the tepidarium-caldarium must be designed so as to provide a relaxation room containing long-chairs at the users' disposal. The room should, if possible, provide direct access to the garden.



Figure 3. Turkish baths in a SPA center [17]  
(Şekil 3. SPA merkezinde Türk hamamı [17])

The massage room, belonging to the 3.Group premisses, is the most important room (Figure 4). Since this room is likely to bring important incomes and the time spent per person being particularly long, it is recommended to design at least to massage rooms [3]. The Solarium room must contain at least one shower. It is recommended to set a Beauty Center providing specific cares (such as weight loss cares, beauty/ esthetic cares, thalatermy...) based upon studies aiming at offering wider services, since the demand is likely to be rather important in this field. Thalassotherapy baths, is a system consisting in combining jacuzzis and the use of natural sea materials such as seaweeds. It is recommended to choose carefully the thalassotherapy system which is to be used as well as the services provided.

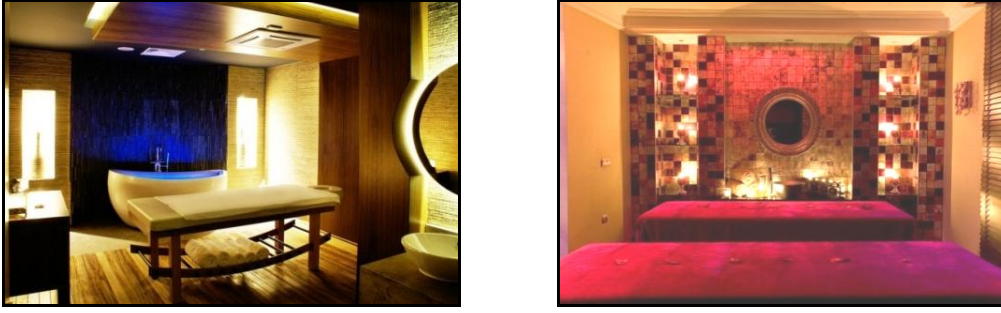


Figure 4. Massage rooms in SPA centers [18 and 19]  
(Şekil 4. SPA merkezinde masaj odaları [18 ve 19])

The Fitness Center, belonging to the 4.Group premisses, is the most important of the group. It must be disposed in a way as to be exposed to daylight. The Fitness Center's walls must be covered by 2,20 m-long mirrors and 0,90 m-high chromium handrail. Spinning is a sport combining bicycle and gymnastics exercises. It is recommended to provide at least 6 bicycles -ideally 12 - at the disposal of the users and one bicycle for the training instructor. The training instructor's bicycle must be placed on a 20 cm high platform [3]. A room dedicated to aerobics is located in all the establishments providing full-year services. 4 square meters of spare room must be designed and put at the disposal of the users [3]. The Meditation room must be covered with laminate floor, linoeum or any other material of this type. Foam carpets must be put at the user's disposal for the exercises (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Rooms dedicated to aerobics and meditation in a SPA center  
[20 and 21]  
(Şekil 5. SPA merkezinde aerobik salonu ve meditasyon salonu  
[20 ve 21])

The 5.Group premisses is the group designating indoor swimming-pools. These premisses must provide 2m<sup>2</sup> space per user in the swimming-pool and 2,5m<sup>2</sup> per user on the platform surrounding it [3]. It is recommended to provided an specific window system, so as to provide direct access to the garden in summer (Figure 6). Indoor swimming-pool must have glass windows on the sides, a glass-ceiling is recommended if possible so as to benefit from a better exposure to day-light. If the indoor swimming-pool does not provide direct access to the garden, it is recommended to decorate the platform with plants.



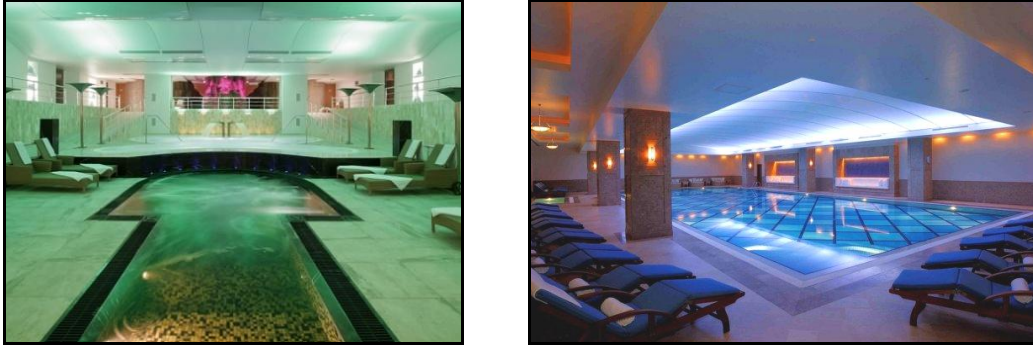


Figure 6. Indoor swimming-pools in a SPA center [22 and 20]  
(Şekil 6. SPA merkezinde kapalı yüzme havuzu [22 ve 20])

#### 4.2. Review of Spa Centers' Technical Requisites (Spa Merkezlerinin Teknik Gereksinimler Açısından İncelenmesi)

When we proceed to the organisation of the user's activities in the SPA Center, the main goal is to create a specific atmosphere so as to provide a sensation of wellness and well-being to the users [4]. Technical requisites need to be achieved in order to gather all the conditions which will create the perfect atmosphere for relaxation and well-being.

These conditions are related to the quality of the services provided: constant hot water in the premisses related to water treatment and bath, evacuation system for dirty waters, resolution of problems related to air conditioning, control of the temperature of the different pools, the control of the proper lighting for each room...

SPA centers' equipments used in premisses related to water treatment: showers, restrooms and sinks used in areas dedicated to personal hygien, will have to be resistant to misuse, eco-friendly, in good state, easy to use and to fix, respecting the safety norms, and there must always be spare components to fix rapidly the equipment (sinks, batteries, piping...) in case of damage. The airconditionning, the ventilation system, the right temperature of the pools, and constant hot water are essential requisites in order to create the perfect atmosphere the users came to look for [14]. These details are to be taken seriously, since it will ensure the perfect temperature of the pools and the different rooms, preventing damp patches. SPA centers must provide the proper lighting at any circumstances, ensuring the user healthy conditions and confort during their stay [5]. Concerning the lighting of the premisses, it is recommended to always privilege the use of day-light, which can be completed by artificial lighting when necessary.

Concerning the lighting in SPA Centers, in order to ensure the best visual conditions, it is necessary to consider the layout of the different rooms according to essential lighting principles and the building's design. The elements which determine the intensity of the lighting are: the ceiling, the flooring, the walls and the curtains disposed on the windows. Those elements have a great effect on the inner surface of the room. That is why the ceiling must be painted white, the walls painted in light colours as well as the curtains so as to allow a maximum exposure to day-light. Many activities are to take place simultaneously in each room of the SPA Center. In order for the user to enjoy the different services provided in optimum

conditions, the different elements composing the equipment and the premisses must be exposed to proper and sufficient lighting. The lighting equipment must be selected according to the design concept (Figure 7) and atmosphere corresponding to SPA centers' spirit, so as to ensure to the user the best lighting conditions while using the equipment [6].



Figure 7. Lighting of SPA center [16]  
(Şekil 7. SPA merkezinde aydınlatma [16])

The main entrance, that is to say the 1.Group premisses, the 4. Group premisses and the 5.Group premisses must be submitted to general lighting system. In the location of the main entrance, it is necessary to dispose undirect lighting, in order to create a warm. In the Vitamin bar, large spot lights must be disposed on the ceiling, so as to expose the fridges. Local lighting is to be used for the Reception desk, the area of the Vitamin bar, the relaxation rooms and cupboards belonging to massage rooms, the personal hygien rooms and the mirrors located in the bathrooms of the SPA Centers.

#### **4.3. Review of Requisites Concerning Esthetic and Beauty Services of Spa Centers (Spa Merkezlerinin Estetik Gereksinmeler Açısından İncelenmesi)**

The requisites concerning beauty and esthetic cares offered in SPA Centers represent a question of great importance in terms of design. The colour, aspect, texture and material are design elements which need to be conceived and considered altogether in order to obtain a certain harmony in the final result of the rooms' esthetical aspect [7]. According to Bayazıt, Aksoylu, Çıracı, Dener (1987), the design elements and the layout are essential since they must respond to the user's, physiological and social expectations who give great importance to his image. Therefore, the environment of the user will have a significant effect on his emotional state [8]. In the conception of the interior design of the rooms, it is necessary to distinguish the function of the different components of the design. A structure is composed of various elements, each of them having its own function. These different functions are distinguished from one another by different colours. Most of the time, this difference becomes obvious using materials of natural colours [9]. It is recommended to use colours that will not damage the general harmony and unity of the SPA Centers.

It is important not to neglect this question since using too many different colours in a same room can have undesired effect and create



confusion [9]. It is recommended to use light and bright colours, creating a warm atmosphere effect in the rooms orientated northwards. As for room located southwards, it is necessary to use cold and darker colours, in order to bring some sort of refreshing effect to the room [10].

The colour is indeed one of the most important elements in interior design. The feel is one of the esthetical principles which determines the conception of the interior design of the room (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Use of color in the SPA center [23]  
(Şekil 8. SPA merkezinde renk kullanımı [23])

It is necessary to consider the materials that are to be used, together with other design elements such as colours, shapes and textures. It is necessary to insist on the variety and particularity of the materials and textures used in the interior design of the SPA Center's rooms. Ceramic for the flooring, carpets, the paint used for the ceiling and the walls, the wall paper, earthenware elements, wooden elements used for the equipments and textile determine the variety of the materials and textures.... In order to create a certain harmony and coherence in the interior design of the room, it is necessary to consider the shape, the material, the texture and the colours altogether.



Figure 9. Use of color in the SPA center [16]  
(Şekil 9. SPA merkezinde renk kullanımı [16])

It is necessary to choose specific materials according to the specific function of the room during the conception of design in order

to distinguish each room's specific function: the materials for the flooring, the ceiling, the wall, the furnitures and other equipments (Figure 9).

All the material used in the SPA Centers must be resistant to users' manipulations. Concerning the maintenance of the equipments, it is necessary to use material that are easy and fast to clean and which does not retain dust and dirt, and ensuring good hygienic conditions. Paint is the most recommended material for wall covering because it is long-lasting, clean and easy to maintain. Wall paper, wall textiles and wall covers containing plastic elements present as much advantages as disadvantages in terms of use. This kind of material are resistant and easy to clean, as well as it give to the room a certain visual harmony considering esthetical aspects. Concerning the 2.Group rooms of the SPA Center, it is recommended to use easy-to-clean and resistant earthware elements.

## 5. CONCLUSION (SONUÇ)

We analyzed in this study the current situation of SPA concept in Turkey. We realised that before this concept was known in our country, the waters called "thermo- mineral waters" were employed with similar purposes.

Even if Turkey is experiencing an accelerated development, SPA sector still represents a minor part of the demand in the country's touristic activity. This can be explained by the fact that the sector's benefits not considered enough in our country. In that sense, SPA centers will grow in importance as a touristic alternative in Turkey' as long as this sector will improve the number of acknowledged consumers, and provide the quality of built equipment and widening services.

However, since SPA Centers have no real legal status in Turkey, this sector tends to grow without control. For this reason, a classification of SPA centers on a legal basis is required.

The SPA Centers which developed with no real control concerning the legal standards can be improved and reformed following generally accepted standards, by elaborating a new strategy aiming at bringing modifications and improvements to previously built SPA complexes. We can give a few advices in that sense:

- The halls and corridors connecting the different rooms of the SPA Centers must correspond to specific standards in terms of comfort, for the users.
- SPA centers must fill essential prerequisites in order to ensure physical and mental stability for the users.
- SPA centers' design and layout must ensure user's privacy and intimacy.
- SPA centers' design must consider the general atmosphere and environment as well as the cultural norms, and take certain parameters into account: architectural design, music and other specific issues of the kind.
- SPA centers must provide certain comfort standards to users: hot water, clean premisses, airconditionning and ventilation system in perfect state.
- SPA centers' must provide sufficient and convenient lighting for the users to enjoy their activities in the best conditions.
- SPA centers' architectural design must provide all the convenient equipment and design elements for each room according to its function, ensuring certain harmony and unity

regarding the rooms and furniture's layout, in order to create an atmosphere of well-being.

- The colours used in SPA Centers' must not damage the unity and coherence of the rooms.
- The variety of materials and coverings used in SPA centers must fit to the general function and atmosphere of each room.
- SPA centers' concept, the services provided, the number and type of users as well as the demand are elements of significant relevance in terms interior design.

All these listed factors might contribute to prevent the development of establishments that would not respect the elementary prerequisites of a spa Center, until legal measures are taken to ensure a better control concerning this issue. The designer have an important role to play in that sense.

#### **NOT (NOTICE)**

Bu makale, 28-30 Eylül 2011 tarihleri arasında Elazığ Fırat Üniversitesinde "International Participated Construction Congress" IPCC11'de sözlü sunum olarak sunulmuştur.

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