



# Master's degree thesis

**IDR950 Sport Management**

**"Lower the Price, increase the visits"**

**A case study of user experience among senior clients  
in an indoor aquatic facility**

**Shang Fangfang**

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## **PREFACE**

This thesis is the final work of my two-year master programme in Molde University College. It has been a short but fruitful developing process, both theoretical and practical. During the fourth semester, I was fortunately involved in one-site investigation of local customer experiences in an indoor aquatic center. Qualitative research of interviews was made among senior users to perceive how people recognise Moldebadet in their community. It helps me more able to comprehend the Norwegian culture and offers me an opportunity to share knowledge that I have gained from the Master Science in Sport Management.

This thesis has been developed in the cooperation with Solenes Oskar, an expert in the sport related field of social, cultural, economic, youth and voluntarism. With his broad and profound experience and knowledge, I received excellent and efficient guidelines and directions, that leading me shed light on the thesis from perspective of user experience to contribute research during a hectic period.

The people responsible for the management in Moldebadet deserves more my gratitude. Data collection and interview arrangement could not be achieved without the help from staff of all departments. I also hope the reflection of this thesis can contribute to giving Moldebadet new perspectives.

There are also many more to thank among lectures, families and friends who have been helping me with data translation in the thesis, but also given me time and space to work with the topic.

Shang Fangfang, Molde, 2018.

## **ABSTRACT**

**Aim of the Study:** Recognise the various elements of affecting user experiences and exercise behaviors of the elderly through narrative investigation in an indoor aquatic center, aiming at optimising the senior customer satisfaction in Moldebadet and maximising the utility in sport recreational environment in Molde.

**Theoretical Background:** Grounded Theory is used in this thesis by allowing theories to emerge naturally from the gathered data and constantly to check the relevant literature in the field until theories appeared.

**Methodology:** A qualitative investigation of seven-user interview is conducted in a specific setting. The author goes beyond the service, facility and user-sided to exam how the indoor aquatic “product” (swimming pool) was “consumed” (experienced) by the elderly.

**Findings:** Multiple encounters to affect user experience in which the element of administration affecting experience plays an important role. Moldebadet provides the public with opportunities to be engaged in social and leisure activities, however, financial related access is often obstacles to keep individuals away from visiting, moreover, the frequency of family users who whether chose the facility as the first option is considerably influenced by the management of café.

**Value of the Study:** Considerate policies and prudent manners can be adjusted and implemented by recreational organisations from the funding of this thesis, building a well-being environment and reducing financial cost of the public healthcare in the region. In addition, this case study provides worthy new knowledge of the elements affecting the customer experience and satisfaction in the indoor aquatic facility.

**Keywords:** Senior, User Experience, Indoor Aquatic Center, Moldebadet

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Norwegian Health Directorate (NHD) in 2007 reported the recommendation for the public should take the high-intensity training of 75 minutes or moderate training of 150 minutes and the elderly ought to take part in strength-training exercise and three times each week (Nordby 2015). However, the majority people were not observed to respond the suggestion of the NHD, citizens who are under the age of 65, only 35% and 28% of the women and the men respectively engaged themselves into physical exercise (Nordby 2015).

As a pattern of intervention, parks and recreational facilities are approved to provide services and positive advantages for both communities and individuals nearby (Bedimo-Rung et al. 2005). A direct link between the swimming pool facilities and mental health improvement, showed the public was positively affected by the pool closure at a large extent of combating the sense of isolation and stress (Thomson et al. 2003). Swimming, had long been acknowledged to deliver substantial health benefits, helped insulin distribution, decreased body weight and lipid measures (Cox et al. 2010), provided a vary health of physical, social, and mental benefits for citizens (Anderson et al. 2014), was considered an ideal physical exercise for users who are aged, overweight, pregnant, or people with disability (Anderson et al. 2014).

Moldebadet is an indoor aquatic center and located in the heart of city, providing users various options for educational, physical, social and recreational activities, served the entire community with a purpose of delivering well-being and health. All users can be considered as customers or clients, Masayuki (2017) discovered that customer experience close to a concept of the experience economy, a good experience stimulates direct encounters such as purchase and consumption, indirect encounters such as media and social network. Understanding and improving the overall user experience is one of the most important subjects between facility managers and sport recreational organisations with a goal to deliver a high level of customer satisfaction (Leigh 2006).

The combination of the public health specialist and professionally organised recreation place, where users tend to seek for entertainment and leisure, may assist to boost in the development of physical activity (Anderson et al. 2014). Therefore, through this aquatic setting to investigate one-site research of user experiences through physical activities, may

help marketing programmes efficiently and effectively set in place when recreational organisations and sport associations drawing up any experiential marketing strategies.

## 1.1 Research Question

Although the large number of scholars have increasingly recognised the importance of user experience in study of sport management, the way also limits the comprehension of the overall user experience that involves various interactions between user factors and sport recreational associations (Masayuki 2017).

A research gap occurred in a recreational facility when searching the literature of that how user “experience” (consume) the “indoor aquatic center” (product) by the elderly user (customer). To explore possible results in detail of fulfilling this gap, research question to be replied is:

*What facts affect the experiences of the elderly user in an indoor aquatic center in Molde?*

## 1.2 Definition

- **Aquatic**

Activities that to do with water (Quan et al. 2015).

- **Aquatic Facility**

Water activities in a man-made body of facilities, using for sport, recreation or education (Aquatic and Recreational Facilities Code 2014).

- **Aquatic Center**

Contains swimming pools, spray pools, wading pools, wave pools, whirlpools, waterslides, spas and hot tubs, training-special use pools, and other non-natural water recreation areas together with buildings (Quan et al. 2015).

- **Public Aquatic Center**

It can be operated by a community, municipality, political subdivision, school, university, or a commercial establishment organisation, and it opens to the public with or without charging a fee (Aquatic and Recreational Facilities Code 2014).

- **Waterparks**

Hotels, resorts, theme parks and indoor/outdoor swimming pools are usually the part of the waterparks (Aquatic and Recreational Facilities Code 2014).

*Moldebadet* obtains one main training pool, a wading pool for babies, two waterslides for leisure, one Jacuzzi, one whirlpool, and one sauna in each changing-room; all facilities in place are providing the different group with diverse requirements and needs. Furthermore, Moldebadet is a municipal enterprise, public funding, owned by Molde municipality, is a member of the organisation of Badelandene that contains indoor aquatic facilities all over Norway. Thus, Moldebadet can be studied as:

An indoor, municipal-owned and managed, public community aquatic center.

### **1.3 Thesis Structure**

To explore the research question, this study provided readers with the necessary definition of aquatic terms and the background of Moldebadet and Badelandene.

Following by the user experience in sport recreational facilities in literature review while Grounded Theory was conducted as supporting the theory in this thesis, user experiences in recreational facilities, modern lifestyles and challenges were introduced.

Before the data was thoroughly analysed, the author demonstrated how interviewees were carefully selected to collect data thoroughly. One interview as an example to explain how all data was thematically segregated into each category. Moreover, reliability, validity and limitations were critically considered.

Next, the results of seven in-depth interviews were illustrated, both positive and negative elements were highlighted in six tables among frequent and non-frequent users. Five categories were emerged as the core outcomes of this study.

Before the conclusion was completed, discussion of service components, user experience and how organisation to balance profit and non-profit situation were discussed for the academic and organisational implications.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Moldebadet**

This investigation of user experiences of an indoor aquatic center in Molde is a part of research of the public health and well-being in the policy development in Molde municipality. Users of age above 60 were identified as a specific group to study by the management of Moldebadet, aiming to reinforce the senior users' satisfaction and optimise the utility in the recreational environment.

Interviews among seniors were applied to collect individual perspectives. Feedback was gathered from seven final interviewees, both regular and non-regular users. By the 5<sup>th</sup> April in 2018, the computer in the reception showed the total number of adult user accounted 1180 with multiple access tickets while 110 were over 60-year-old, the targeting group accounted for a tenth of the total number of visitors.

### **2.2 Badelandene**

Badelandene is an organization for the water parks in Norway and it aims to contribute to the development of cooperation through marketing, purchasing schemes, exchange of experience and creative input for activities and better operational concepts, contributing to increased competence and shared understanding of safety in Norwegian bathing and swimming facilities.

This thesis investigated the users' experience in Moldebadet, where users engaged various activities with different purposes in an indoor aquatic center, may also provide Badelandene with a perspective of the regional information towards the client requires and needs among the elderly in indoor aquatic facilities; actively policies thereby can be transferred in place to deliver healthy choices for the public in Norway.

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A summary of the sport management literature: the keyword of “user experience” combined with “recreational” and “aquatic” searching in SPORTDiscus with Full Text was applied in the three major journals in the field of sport management: Sport Management Review (SMR), Journal of Sport Management (JSM), and European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ).

Using “user experience” as the keyword, 313 articles were showed in the literature database in which only 1 article was related with “aquatic” topic, while 16 articles were available with the key word of “user experience” and “recreational”. Only 5.9% of the literature were published in the 1990s, 1980s and 1970s respectively, however, after the 2000s, the number of articles published on this topic has sharply increased, that more than half of the total number of articles have been released (82.3%).

#### **3.1 Grounded Theory**

To avoid preconceptions, it is prudent to apply a general area of study that allow theories to emerge naturally from the gathered data and constantly check the relevant literature in the field until all theories appeared. The process analysis of Grounded Theory examined the category relationships of arising information from the data collected (Corbin and Strauss 2008), interpreted a set of rigorous experience of participants from different perspectives in the research (Creswell 2003), and ideas are refined and revised in the light of the information gathered, as described in relation to the recursive approach (Veal and Darcy 2014). Thus, an approach of Grounded Theory was examined in this thesis by constantly analysing emerged points of user experiences in Moldebadet.

#### **3.2 User Experience**

User experience was considered as personal, appearing only in the present mind of individual who was engaged in physical, emotional, intellectual or spiritual stage (Masayuki

2017), and from a psychological perspective, the complexity of user experiences can be disintegrated into the aspect of usability, aesthetics, emotions, pleasure (Francesco and Cascini 2014). Users receive a high lively, reliable and credible knowledge about products (Lüthje 2004) and as no two individuals can have the same experience (Masayuki 2017). Similarly, each user perceives his or her unique experiences, feedbacks of user experiences value the further development of Moldebadet for decision-makers.

- Sport recreational facility

Masayuki (2017) cited that user experience in sport was defined as cognitive, affective, social, and physical reactions of sport users with a sport organization, its products, and other consumers into direct and indirect encounters (Christopher and Schwager 2007, Dhruv et al. 2009, Verhoef et al. 2009, Lemon et al. 2016). Employ a site-based manner focusing on a specific environment where users interact, broaden upon any aspects of user experiences which they felt important, so that public health professionals and administrative experts able to evaluate recreational programs in sport facility. Combining the public health specialist with professionally organised recreation place, in which users tend to seek for entertainment and leisure, may assist to boost in the development of physical activity (Anderson et al. 2014).

- Aquatic facility

Not only an aquatic facility where to express fun and enjoyment can meet social and mental health needs (Thomson et al. 2003), but also activities in the facility have been illustrated to provide moderate or intense physical activity that is beneficial to health (Seward and Walker 2007). Indoor aquatic activities suit all groups regardless of the weather, temperature conditions, it is vital to understand how people recognise Moldebadet of promoting the local well-being in their communities.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Case Study**

A case study relates an individual example as a case of the phenomenon with a goal to understand the phenomenon by discussing one or more single examples in depth and it involves a range of qualitative and quantitative methods (Skinner et al. 2014). As Veal & Veal and Darcy (2014) explained that the case study means is used for ‘exploratory’ studies to theory development. Considering this study is a centralised environment of an aquatic center, an investigation of a case study set in this specific setting of Moldebadet.

### **4.2 Research Approach**

A qualitative method of face-to-face interview is utilised in this thesis to gain a deep understanding of customer experience in detail in Moldebadet. Since various theories can be developed and a certain phenomenon can be identified in descriptive research (Veal and Darcy 2014), this thesis can be also recognised as explanatory in nature of case study. A deductive approach is applied because the analysis of Grounded Theory granted respondents to share particularly personal interests which may emerge some important issues (Mills et al. 2006).

Narrative analysis refers to a variety of distinct methods to collect data, such as biography, autobiography, life history, oral history, auto-ethnography, life narrative and story-telling (Corbin and Strauss 2008). A narrative inquiry measure allowed investigation to integrate the lives and experiences of each individual and helped the individuals to provide their experiences and information with abundant examples (Creswell 2003). Data gathering, hypothesis formulation and the identification of concepts is a two-way, evolving process (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Thus, Narrative statements of senior users in Moldebadet where applied in ‘story telling’ help to collect data in a thorough manner.



### 4.3 Participant Selection

The previous research from Bénédicte et al. (2001) offers us information about the type of swimmers in the swimming pool, that there were four main models of practice among swimmers considering their behaviour: training; improving technique; keeping fit and relaxing. Regular participation in physical activity has been demonstrated to be beneficial for the healthy development of individuals (Nelson et al. 2007). In general, regular participants who often have a deeper level of understanding towards to the indoor aquatic facilities while non-frequent users can provide a new perspective, the author carefully selected five regular and two non-regular senior users who engaged various activities, factors of gender and age were taken into consideration.

Observation is conducted when targeting interviewees who with an age above 60-year. The process of interview experienced two sectors: the informal sector is to gather client information in general, identify groups and understand behaviour of users in the facility; and seven in-depth interviews of senior clients are conducted in the formal section. During the informal sector, visitors were interviewed by the swimming pool, in the pool, the inside café area, at the reception resting area and the parking lot, after a period of preparation and discussion with author's supervisor, seven final interviews were achieved.

Three of regular users frequently joining in the wellness group class training; a couple visit facility for relaxation rather than exercising; participation of a male client with a main purpose of social with friends. Two non-regular senior users were captured during the Easter holiday when they accompanied their child or grandchildren in Moldebadet, some non-regulars visit Moldebadet once a month or once more than a month, others may only show up once a year in the facility, it is essential to gather the feedback from this group so that adjustments and improvements can be made by Moldebadet to encourage them visit often. Introduction of interviewees was presented in table 1:

**Table 1: Introduction of Interviewees**

Interviewee	Gender/Age/ Status/ Interview Duration	Visit Frequency	Purpose
Tom	Male / 60 / Employed / 60mins	Regular, 3 times / week	Training, Wellness class, Social
Ole	Male / 75 / Retired / 60mins	Regular, 1-2 times / week	Relaxation, Social
Lisa	Female / 70 / Retired / 60mins	Regular, 2-3 times / week	Exercise, Wellness class, Social
Ben	Male / 75 / Retired / 60mins	Regular, 1-2 times / week	Exercise, Wellness class, Social
Peter&Merry	M&F / 60-65 / Self-employed / 25mins	Regular, 1 time / week	Relaxation, Leisure
Per	Male / 60 / Employed / 20mins	Non-regular, 1-2 times / month	Exercise, Leisure
Martti	Female / 70 / Retired / 20mins	Non-regular, 1 time / year	Relaxation

Tom, a 60-year-old working man comes to the pool 3 times/week for training and joining group training; Ole, male, 75-year-old, main purposes are relaxation and social with friend; another 75-year-old male, Ben, often shows up 1-2 times/week for training and often joining group training; Lisa, a 70-year-old woman, visits facility 2-3 times/week for exercising and love the wellness group class; Peter and Merry are self-employed, visits Moldebadet once a week; Per and his 19-year-old son come along to the pool once or twice monthly; Martti, only steps in the aquatic center once a year when her grandchildren visited.

## 4.4 Data Collection

A site-based method of Face-to-face interview had been taken place in Moldebadet both in the café area and at the reception resting area. Seven in-depth interviews were conducted with targeted groups of both regular and non-regular users, while explained the data by using Grounded Theory approach and constantly systematic comparison. This practice offers a valuable chance to inform both individual and environmental elements that affect user behavior between the elderly, and moreover, various background among the aged client of participating in an indoor aquatic center assisted to user experience solidify aspects of that were not discussed in previous studies, but now to broaden on supplementary viewpoints.

For the non-regular users, the author started with an explanation of the project purpose and a request for their participation, while for the regular users, interviews were arranged in advance with an explanation for an interview duration of one hour. All participants provided a brief introduction about the purpose of the membership or participation in Moldebadet. Duration of each interview was conducted from 20 to 60 minutes. Guiding topics of interview were taken whenever necessarily to remind participants provided targeted responses to the specific question. All interviews were electronically recorded and the content was subsequently transcribed. Either respondents in the research selected an area in Moldebadet to engage in their interview, or the interview was conducted at the place where they were.

The methodology acknowledged the author to critically evaluate experiences of each senior user in Moldebadet and for the users to broaden upon any aspects of their experiences that they felt important. Researcher used purposeful sampling techniques, by choosing specifically respondents from both regular and non-regular participants who represented the elderly group. Eight questions framed to participants are introduced in the interview that is designed for maximum of 60 minutes (see Appendix 1).

The first-six question asked to describe the image of Moldebadet, or “an ideal experience”, a story about “a memorable experience” both in Moldebadet and other aquatic facilities, then interviewees were questioned what they would do if “could no longer use Moldebadet” or “change anything about Moldebadet”. Next, a map of aquatic physical facility was provided

before the last question brought. Users were given approximately 5 minutes to walk around in Moldebadet while undertaking this mission before returning to the interview site for any further discussion. At the end of the interview, all respondents were provided a marked map of aquatic items about the aquatic facility usage that they that they spent most time on. Accomplishing by the last question: “describe what you have drawn and why” with some probes, such as parking lot, changing room, weather.

## **4.5 Data Analysis**

The goal is to deliver a series of emerging thematic categories from the interview data which are related. Given the method of Grounded Theory, data was analysed applying a constant comparison approach of data, the interpretation of the data and categories (Mills et al., 2006). The analysis of the data included a flexible, descriptive and selective content measures that was employed from Grounded Theory.

Seven in-depth interviews were applied with current elderly clients of an indoor aquatic center of Moldebadet. The combination of face-to-face interview data collection and constant comparative analysis with a Grounded Theory method allowed the author to assemble descriptive data from individual participants regarding their experiences at the indoor aquatic center, and to classify and compare all data in an efficient and effective way.

Firstly, interview transcripts of seven senior customers were analysed over a set of systemic analysis based on the Grounded Theory approach. A narrative-based instrument is applied as an investigation strategy through aimed the user experience of current elderly members in Moldebadet.

Next, the analysis included careful and repeated readings of the transcribed interviews by researcher to fragment every interview into thematic categories in a line-by-line pattern. The thematic categories initially were precise and verbatim in nature, steadily grounding the developed themes in the data. Similar categories were integrated to build broader clusters, after the initial process of the fragmenting, leading into the creation of more entire of emergent subject categories.

The author further analysed the emergent themes of each interviewee, created an overall group of larger thematic elements indicating the summation of all data. All categories were related to the participant experience in Moldebadet with a purpose to explore all users' experiences that they valued differently and facilities they engaged mostly. The categories indicated a general interpretation of the data conducted over a collaborative analysis process. During the process, the author remained considerate of the context of individuation that constitutes of experience provided by the key informants who participated in the interview research.

One example of analysing the description of user experience from a respondent interview summarised as following in the table 2:

Name: Lisa

Sex: Female

Age: 70-year-old

Type: Regular user

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup>, March, 2018

Interview duration: 60-minute

Location: Café area

**Table 2: Example of Analysing the Description of User Experience**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Positive Key Elements</b>	<b>Negative Key Elements</b>
<b>Physical Structure of Facilities</b>	<p>I have been Kristiansund may year ago during the holiday... with my grandchildren, now I'm getting used to this, I like to go swimming here.</p> <p>The first thing I think is the changing room: clean.</p> <p>My grandchildren, they like here so we come here.</p> <p>I like the wellness pool because it's warmer.</p>	<p>I know some people they come to here, they park at Rema 1000: here is often full and you have to pay.</p>
<b>Activities in The Aquatic Facility</b>	<p>I started with the water aerobics... as soon as I heard about it, so at least 5 years.</p> <p>Good exercise with instructor...</p> <p>Some people they have a coffee at outside when they finished the shower, I see many do that.</p> <p>I often go to the main pool to swim for 1000-meter after changing room. Then we go to the Jacuzzi before we go to the class. Sometimes I stay in the sauna, then shower.</p> <p>With my grandchildren we go to the whirling pool, they are at different place when they are here.</p>	<p>I didn't go there because if I pay but I couldn't come on that day, I don't like that.</p> <p>(Cold pool class) It stopped...50kr for each person every time.</p> <p>It wouldn't be too many people there, so there will be a room for me to swim.</p>
<b>Administration Affecting Experience</b>	<p>I think it would be better that people could have some food with them or drinks.</p> <p>... sit here (café), clean out by themselves (after eat), (menu) should be very cheap, simple, like snakes.</p> <p>I am happy when I can do what I like to do, swim, and drink my tea, and something to eat, sitting here, after the class...</p>	<p>... we are very hungry... actually I don't think you are allowed to eat! I don't come to here (café) and sit if I don't buy anything myself.</p> <p>... if people only come to here once a month with the whole family, then it's very expensive.</p> <p>... you have to pay quite a lot of money to come in here-if children want something to eat...</p> <p>... there is a sign in the changing room, there are a lot! Then suddenly I saw it: 'you are not allowed to bring own food', I don't think people even read it, many people don't.</p>
<b>Social Factors</b>	<p>I sit there (near to the window), getting to know them-two (people), after I came to here, I didn't know them before, so I made friends here!</p> <p>After the class, we often sit there, have some tea and a little bit thing to eat.</p> <p>I managed to bring one friend here.</p>	<p>But especially girls, when they are 13, 14, 15,16, they don't show naked, almost nobody, even the sign shows 'show naked', they don't.</p> <p>Perhaps many don't like to go there (café area) with the swimming suits.</p>

## 4.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are critical considered in this thesis. Validity is defined as “to what extent the information presented in the study truly reflects the phenomena (Veal and Darcy 2014)”. The data on the number of regular users who have attended in Moldebadet at least once over the last month, the frequency which is a general type of measurement used in sport research (Veal and Darcy 2014), those users engaged in a wide range of physical activities during the visiting period of 2-hour every time in the facility. For the non-regular user, the author made daily interviews with a dozen of clients in Moldebadet during the Easter holiday and in weekends, with a strong intention of capturing the most genuine information. Eventually, interviews of two non-regular users with different visiting frequency were chosen in this study, gender and age were also considered.

Veal & Darcy (2014) described that reliability is “to what extent the research finding would be the same if the research were either repeated in the different time or with different sample of subjects”. It is highly possible that although all interviewees in Moldebadet were asked the identical question, data may produce different results in terms of interview location, individual backgrounds, physical environment, social circumstances and so on. When it comes to the design of interview questions, all questions are constructed in a neutral and open way. It is worth noting that eight open questions in the interview are modified in a cautious manner after thorough discussions with author’s supervisor when the draft data was collected, technique and method of conducting interviews are improved by the author.

## 4.7 Limitations

- **Language barrier**

As the research was conducted in a Norwegian circumstance, the language barrier sometimes became a problem for both parties when interviews were made by English. Mother language is general better than the second language to express an accurate information to each other, especially when describing personal sensations in details. However, five of seven respondents were successfully answered all interview questions in

English, and two interviews were made in Norwegian in which lifeguards who are native-speakers helped the author with all translation.

- **Cultural difference**

The reason that seven interviews were finally chosen as the body of research after conducting dozens of interview in Moldebadet, is the user had become like to share more information with author when the author started to teach wellness group class for senior and special groups in Moldebadet as an instructor.

- **Senior group**

Indoor water facility usually requires the time investment, attention devotion (Herbert et al., 2010). The invitation to participate must meet a certain level of important matters by the issue at stake and the expectation that joining will make a discrepancy (Herbert et al., 2010). The expectation and satisfaction therefore depends on which group of participation that is offered. Since the study of user experience in Moldebadet is investigated among senior participants, recreational behaviours in the aquatic facility might involve some alternative opinions from other groups. Besides different backgrounds, various purposes of entering the facility, granted unique experience for each user, they may encounter all sorts of external factors which lead to different moods, habits and characteristics, because an experience can be broad as the sensorial, the symbolic, the temporal, and the meaningful through individual senses of physical and cognitive levels, with a product, a service, or an event (Donald and Page 2016).



## 5. RESULTS

The experience of users was different from participant to participant in the indoor aquatic center, separate clusters showed up under a few distinctly defined segments that appeared from the data of seven in-depth interviews. Interviewees may express their opinions in different means which were involved with those categories, while the author bear in mind constantly that the important factors when examining how the indoor aquatic facility was experienced as a public product in a society.

Previous research of user experience in the outdoor swimming pool by Anderson et al. (2014) showed that aspects leading to a positive and a negative experience regarding to physical structure of facilities, activities in the aquatic facility, administration affecting experience and weather conditions. This thesis examined those categories in a Norwegian base, furthermore, the result also pointed the significance of an indoor aquatic center could be recognised as a place of social interactions, finding (table 3) showed that the experience of participants collected around five basic categories:

- (1) Physical structure of facilities
- (2) Activities in the aquatic facility
- (3) Administration affecting experience
- (4) Social factors
- (5) Weather conditions

**Table 3: Results from Selected Respondents —  
Thematic Categories of User Experiences**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Aspects Leading To A Positive Experience</b>	<b>Aspects Leading To A Negative Experience</b>
<b>(1) Physical Structure of Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For adults: various choices</li> <li>• For children: fun combinations</li> <li>• Better facilities in neighbourhood</li> <li>• Cleanliness: in the pool, changing room, bathroom</li> <li>• Locker system: easy to access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking area: limited area with high parking fee for frequent users</li> <li>• Athletic training is confined in 25-meter pool</li> <li>• Lack of facilities: outdoor Jacuzzi, washing machine, waving pool, steaming pool, more waterslides</li> <li>• Chlorinated issue</li> </ul>
<b>(2) Activities in the Aquatic Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic training</li> <li>• General exercising</li> <li>• Leisure and relaxation</li> <li>• Wellness group class training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crowded conditions: in holidays and bad weather</li> <li>• Noise</li> <li>• Showering with swimming suits in youth</li> </ul>
<b>(3) Administration Affecting Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generous operation hours in a year</li> <li>• Security: constantly available lifeguards</li> <li>• Employees: happy and deliver good service</li> <li>• Wellness class availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price to access</li> <li>• Café area: price and service</li> <li>• Perceived lack of information: wellness class cancellation, facilities usage from training groups</li> <li>• Management on young users</li> <li>• Short operation hours in holidays</li> </ul>
<b>(4) Social Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family recreational time</li> <li>• Friends meeting</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Quality lifestyle &amp; well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privacy</li> </ul>
<b>(5) Weather Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad weather: more visitors, especially for the occasional users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good weather: less visitors</li> </ul>

Before to elaborate five categories that leading to an experience in both positive and negative aspect from collected data, some key information of each interviewee was shaped in table 4, displayed as follows:

**Table 4: Key Information of Each Interviewee**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Visit Duration</b>	<b>Favourite Area</b>	<b>Wish to Change</b>	<b>Statement Highlight</b>
Tom	1-2 hours	Training pool, Wellness pool, Jacuzzi	“Two wellness classes in the day time”	“I’m feeling well, 2 hours of wellness”
Ole	1-2 hours	Jacuzzi	“It should be the same price everyday”	“For me to be here, it’s the life quality”
Lisa	1-2 hours	Training pool, Wellness pool, Jacuzzi, Seats next to windows	“Allow to bring some food”	“I’m happy when I can do what I like to do”
Ben	1-2 hours	Training pool, Wellness pool, Jacuzzi	“Young people should shower them properly”	“It’s a good thing, I can swim 1000m without any problem”
Peter & Merry	Around 3 hours	Training pool, Diving platform, Café	“Café should be cheap to afford”	“We would like to stay here and relax more”
Per (with a 19-year-old son)	Around 4 hours	Diving platform, Waterslides, Jacuzzi	“It designed for a bit small children”	“Jacuzzi is very good experience”
Martti (with grandchildren)	Stay until close	None of aquatic facilities	“Opening hours should be longer (in holidays)”	“It’s a shame to wear swimming suit”

The more frequent visiting of Moladebadet among users, the less staying time they spend in the aquatic center. Jacuzzi as recognised a welcome facility for users who experienced aquatic facilities; well-being and wellness were emerged as a priority to enter Moldebadet, furthermore, with social interactions.

## 5.1 Physical Structure of Facilities

This section discusses the aspects leading to positive and negative experiences among participants in the physical structure of facilities. All interviewees in the survey discussed the features of indoor water facilities when describing the user experiences. Reviews were usually related to the feature of parking area, reception, changing room, showering area, sauna room, café area and aquatic facilities: a 25-meter training pool, a wellness pool, a whirling pool, a baby pool, two waterslides, three diving platforms, one Jacuzzi. Experiences between similarity and difference from the category of physical structure of facility within all users were summarised in table 5:

**Table 5: Physical Structure of Facilities**

<b>User Type</b>	<b>Similarity Experiences</b>		<b>Difference Experiences</b>	
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Regular</b>	Cleanliness Jacuzzi For children For adult	Parking area	Wellness class Lock system Better facilities Generous opening hours in a year	Lack of facility 25-meter pool Chlorinated issue
<b>Non-regular</b>	Cleanliness For children		Security Jacuzzi	Lack of facility Short operation hours in holidays

### **5.1.1 Aspects leading to a positive experience in the physical structure of facilities**

Users frequently referenced the availability of all aquatic facilities in terms of the amount of time, space and activities they had engaged. Positive elements such as (1) For adults: various choices, (2) For children: fun combinations, (3) Better facilities: in neighbourhood, (4) Cleanliness: in all area and (5) Locker system: provide an easy access for visitors.

#### **5.1.1.1 For adults: various choices**

The perception from interview comments that the wellness pool, whirling pool and Jacuzzi with warm water were largely available of for health supported by visitors:

*... we have a big training pool for swimmers, warm water for people who are in need, and for children. Here has everything I expected!*

The wellness pool and Jacuzzi as commented a rehabilitate area with illness, especially for the aged users:

*Doctor said that swimming-for my sickness, it's the best, because you used the whole body (to exercise), cold water first and warm water later.*

*The warm water is good for the body, I like it... especially the Jacuzzi, I think that's very good for the body to relax.*

*There's a water column for back and neck message in the whirling pool, I use it a lot and like it very much... The water column in the whirling pool, the Jacuzzi and the wellness pool are my favourite.*

*I like the wellness pool because it's warmer, I didn't like that cold water very much... I think most people as my age, they like a bit warm water.*

### **5.1.1.2 For children: fun combinations**

The facility plays a multiple function role for the society, different activity options and perceive the sense of joy for all participants, when comes to children:

*I came here with three grand-children, they are everywhere to have fun!*

*I think it's good to see my son exercise and have fun, you know. Playing in the water is also good for the health and good for the body...*

### **5.1.1.3 Better facilities: in neighbourhood**

Feedbacks to availability of the various pool options for different ages reinforced the important role that the joy for children and relaxation for adults created the positive recreational experience of all users at this facility, particularly in comparison with other similar community facilities in the neighbourhood, users statement of their experience towards an indoor water park in Molde was illustrated as:

*... when I was in Kristiansund, I use the pool there; when I was in Trondheim, I use the Pirbadet, it's a huge public pool, 50-meter long; I often go the pool at different places, and I like here best! Because the construction, the lights... Moldebadet has very large windows, the sunshine can go through and I feel very well. The roof isn't high, but I like the colour, mixed feelings are good.*

*It's very nice here, I have nothing to say about the facility... it's brand new.*

Two users drew a comparison with the old indoor pool about 10-year ago in Molde when they described,

*Before this open, there was another swimming place, and they had the morning swim in the early morning at 7:00, once a week, I went there about 20 years ago...*

*This place was built at 2010, before it was a bad pool, a little pool not like this, it was open a few hours in a day, and closed in the summer and closed on Sunday, so*

*it was nothing...So when this place was built, I live 10-minute walking, then Yes! I must come! I am very satisfied about it...*

On the other hand, a non-regular user reported during the interview, clear in its opposition:

*They (grandchildren) also love the swimming pool in Ålesund, the price is not so expensive, 60kr in the weekend...*

#### **5.1.1.4 Cleanliness: in the pool, changing room, bathroom**

Cleanliness was recognised as the first image appear in the mind if entering an indoor swimming facility by some interviewees:

*... the first thing I think is...the changing room is clean-that's important, you can take a warm shower before you come in...*

#### **5.1.1.5 Locker system: easy to access**

The easy access design of locker facility was highlighted by a swimming enthusiast who often visiting different pools:

*I like the locker system here, this is the best I've ever seen, better than Trondheim, better than Kristinsund, better than Tosalet (in Spain), because there isn't any key you need to take, no interfere around your wrists, and easy to access easy to leave, it's clever-made, all working perfectly, a very good system.*

### **5.1.2 Aspects leading to a negative experience in the physical structure of facilities**

Users usually perceived negative experience from the limited availability of some facilities such as: (1) Parking area: limited space with high parking fee for frequent users, (2) 25-meter pool confined athletic training, (3) Lack of facilities: outdoor Jacuzzi, washing machine, waving pool, steaming pool, and (4) Chlorinated issue.

### **5.1.2.1 Parking area: limited space with high parking fee for frequent users**

The perceptions of some users regarding a lack of the parking lot which often led to less than optimal experiences at the indoor swimming facility. Here is the description of user experiences from three participants:

*The parking, there often isn't enough parking place, even 12:00 at the day, very few spot to park; if I couldn't find any place, I had to park at the Rema 1000, and don't say anything you know; I was late 10-minute for the class, because of parking!*

*I think some people park at the shopping area, save money, 30- 50kr every time every day.*

### **5.1.2.2 25-meter pool: confined athletic training**

*... the main training pool is a bit shorter for swimmer-it should be built for 50-meter at the beginning... for the competition club in Molde, would be much better to have 50-meter.*

### **5.1.2.3 Lack of facilities: outdoor Jacuzzi, washing machine, waving pool, steaming pool**

Participants suggested several facilities missing in the aquatic facility in which why they found certain items interesting, besides relevance to their current creational seeking goals. Congruence with personal interests and previous experience were two key elements. Content properties including outdoor Jacuzzi, washing machine for swimming suits, waving pool, steaming pool and more waterslides. The descriptions from four selected interviewees about missing facilities in the pool as follows:

*I miss one thing...when I finish the bath, I would like to wash my swimming suits... Sometimes it smells you know, it needs to be washed by the clean water, the drinking water, in Tosalet I was surprised, you can put your swimming suits into a small washing machine, takes 20-second to wash it and dry it! Like 'wu...', done! Such a big convenient ...So I really miss this item!*



*I understand it costs a lot, they can't do it, because in Kristiansund, there are two Jacuzzis, one is outside, you can sit outside with the rain, storm and snow! It's amazing! It's very popular in Kristiansund! That's my wish.*

*There is a steaming pool in Kristiansund, hot temperature, very popular. I would like to add this facility here.*

*...big fun for my son! He is a big boy now, so maybe more training or exercise in the water... waving pool will be really awesome, suitable for big boys...*

*If had small children, I might ask for more waterslides...*

#### **5.1.2.4 Chlorinated issue**

An inevitable factor of swimming pool water in determining participation may not be the absolute challenge for all users, but rather the relative consequence binding this reason:

*I think some people might think there are some chlorine in the water, perhaps it's stronger. Not everyone likes it, especially for the sensitive skins.*

*Because the chlorine water, you know, it was added into all swimming pools to clean the bacteria, but sometimes it smells you know...*

## **5.2 Activities in Aquatic Facilities**

When inquired about ideal or memorable experiences at the water park, user reactions uniformly described cases of physical exercise where they had engaged in one-site setting. A few forms of physical activities most largely mentioned by the chosen participants comprised training, general exercising, relaxation, social with friends, family activity that all experiences related straightly to the action of approaching to this community aquatic facility. The solid bond between the facility itself and the enjoyable activities where users had occupied in the indoor swimming pool indicated a strong positive intension related with public recreation. The experience of similarity and difference among all participants from the category of activities in aquatic facilities were organised in table 6:

**Table 6: Activities in the Aquatic Facility**

User Type	Similarity Experiences		Difference Experiences	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
<b>Regular</b>	General exercising Leisure & relaxation Social	Noise	Athletic training Wellness training	Crowded conditions Showering with swimming suits in youth
<b>Non-regular</b>	Leisure & relaxation	Noise Crowded conditions	General exercising	

### **5.2.1 Aspects leading to a positive experience in user activities in the aquatic facility**

Bénédicte et al. (2001) explained that a category of swimmers into three types: the “Ascetic” that users have serious attitude towards the physical training and fitness, make self-assessed exercise programmes; the “Sensitives” who are seeking for a different way of joy in the water and they are attentive to the sensations of bodies: freedom, recreation and well-being; the “Sociables” who search for relationships to get the benefit from the presence of others for discussions or even flirting rather than spending time to do the exercise in the water. Based on this category of swimmers, four types of activities were held in the aquatic facilities among visitors: (1) Athletic training, (2) General exercising, (3) Leisure and relaxation, and (4) Group training.

#### **5.2.1.1 Athletic training**

*I became a regular user about 5 years ago, then I only did swimming, 5 times a week... for the lungs training...*

### 5.2.1.2 General exercising

*I started to come since I had retired, I wanted to do something that I could regular to go to, not in the evening, but in the day time... When I'm 75-year-old, still can swim 1000 meter without any problem every time I come here, this is a good feeling!*

### 5.2.1.3 Leisure and relaxation

All users valued relaxation as leisure and escape way from their daily routine in water park and activities related to leisure and relaxation were largely referenced by participants as reasons to come to this aquatic facility:

*The most important thing is that I can have a good time for 2 hours, I always think about it... I'm feeling well, 2 hours of wellness.*

*I like the warm water, it's good for my feet because my feet are not good, warm temperature can help me with better health feet. My husband likes diving, from the one-meter stage... when my husband is in the training pool I go to the wellness pool.*

*I used the training pool, then go to the water pool, then Jacuzzi, then sometimes sit here for a coffee, then sauna, and then shower... Jacuzzi, I like there for relax, a little bit massage.*

Jacuzzi was mentioned a few times when users were questioned about a memorable experience in the facility, some indicated a preference to spend time with friends in this facility. One participant noted, "sitting in the Jacuzzi, that's the memorable time for me. Jacuzzi is a very good corner" and another responded, and another described, "Jacuzzi, I like there for relaxing, and a little bit massage... I normally meet and talk with friend there," One users also mentioned the massage, "Jacuzzi is a good experience, we can be lazy, relax and enjoy the massage."

#### **5.2.1.4 Wellness training**

*I like here is that the water gymnastics-that's the new for me, I like that training way, that's the good experience and good fun...*

*...it's good training for my age... moving your muscle, but don't using running, cycling... that's a comfort way to exercise and good health for the body...*

*... good exercise with instructor...it's good training for my age to have exercise in the warm water.*

On the other hand, group wellness training does not necessarily attract the attention of leisure users and occasional visitors, when asked whether join the group training class, one leisure user noted, “no, I don't like it, I prefer to relax in the water,” while another leisure user and occasional user answered, “I don't know about this class.”

#### **5.2.2 Aspects leading to a negative experience in user activities in the aquatic facility**

Participants usually referenced that the crowded condition and noise negatively impacted their experience, especially during holidays, the hygiene problem related with improper shower in youth had become a concern among elderly users but insufficient regulation was provided by the management, perception of interviewees was segmented into three categories: (1) Crowded conditions: in holidays and bad weather, (2) Noise, and (3) Showering with swimming suits in youth.

##### **5.2.2.1 Crowded conditions: in holidays and bad weather**

*One week in September and one week in February I don't come here, you know why?... It's called winter holiday, one week off, so the kids...especially the bad weather, they go here. It's hundreds!*

*We come to the pool for relaxing, if it's too crowded or too noisy then that's not relaxing.*

*Because I can be here in the day time, it's not crowded during that period, I like it, and I know it becomes a bit crowded later in the afternoon. That's also one of the reasons that I like here best, but not everyone can be here at that time.*

#### **5.2.2.2 Noise**

*Because it's the school's off, it was filled with children, noise! So, that week, I don't go... The noise...So I take one-week off!*

#### **5.2.2.3 Showering with swimming suits in youth**

Frequent users in this thesis demonstrated a strong awareness of their tendency towards the water quality of swimming pools, as one user noted, "I spend a lot of time in the showering area, it's good for the pool, it's good for me". And another participant quoted, "taking a proper shower is good for the water and for everyone". Since the cleanliness plays an essential role to delivery positive user experience in the physical structure of facilities through interviewees, the improper shower in youth caused hygiene problem in the public water pointed out by participants:

*A young girl, they are a little bit shy, when you are old as me, I don't think people care. But especially girls, when they are 13, 14, 15, 16, they don't shower naked, almost nobody, even the sign shows 'show naked', they don't.*

*It was one thing that is really frustrating, about young people don't shower them properly like we do. Taking a proper shower is good for the water and for everyone. They don't take off clothes when showering, it's not a good habit. Students are from schools, often don't do it, if they are showering with clothes, then they don't use soap! It's not a principal, but it's about the quality of the water, that's related the health for all swimmers.*

### 5.3 Administration Affecting Experience

Evidence showed that financial related access are often obstacles to keep individuals away from joining in the swimming pool, moreover, the management of service and price in café considerably influenced the frequency of family users to choose the water park as the first option of leisure activity. Administration affecting both positive and negative experience from regular and non-regular users were gathered in table 7:

**Table 7 Administration Affecting Experience**

User Type	Similarity Experiences		Difference Experiences	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
<b>Regular</b>	Security Employees	Price to access Café: price	Wellness calss availability Generous operation hours in a year	Café: service Perceived lack of information Management on young users
<b>Non-regular</b>	Security	Price to access	Employees	Perceived lack of information Short operation hours in holidays

#### 5.3.1 Aspects leading to user positive experience in administration affecting experience

Three positive factors were referred by participants in the aquatic facility: (1) Generous operation hours in a year, (2) Security: constantly available lifeguards, (3) Employees: happy and deliver good service, and (4) Wellness class availability.

##### 5.3.1.1 Generous operation hours in a year

Interviewees who mentioned that the large number of users were encouraged to attend in the water park due to the long opening hours of availability during the year:

*... what surprised me is that—we can stay here for the all day! People don't know Moldebadet I think, they don't know they can be there for the whole day, not everybody knows that, from the opening time to the closing time.*

However, one occasional user mentioned that it would be better of the facility to operate longer opening hours in holidays, “the opening hours, should be longer than usual, not shorted, we only come here once a year, want stay here a little longer, either open earlier or close later.” and another leisure mentioned, “extension of opening hours: more early opening days for swimmers.”

#### **5.3.1.2 Security: constantly available lifeguards**

The constantly availability of lifeguards created a sense of security for all users, especially for adults who brought their children to the pool. The working attitude of social and helpful created a friendly atmosphere for all visitors.

*They are available and walking around, that's good.*

*They (lifeguards) often clean the floor in the changing room and showering area, they are very nice.*

#### **5.3.1.3 Employees: happy and deliver good service**

*All staff are happy, they are not stress, they are not in a hurry...*

*... good social relationships here... the staff, they are all very nice.*

#### **5.3.1.4 Wellness class availability**

When asked to describe a memorable experience that users had in the water facility, the wellness group class was recognised as a good arrangement from the administration by frequent users who often participating training class:

*... perhaps it was the first time I had the gymnastic class in the water. People asked me to go, but too many women in the class, I'm not afraid of women, so I went! I was the first man in the class! No one was there before. It's good for me, it's good training for my age to have exercise in the warm water... Moving your muscle, but don't using running, cycling and swimming. That's a comfortable way to exercise and good health for the body. If women are in the class, that's a 'plus'.*

*... the thing I like here is that the water gymnastics-that's the new for me, I like that training way, that's the good experience and good fun; I could never join because of the time, I work during that time. So, when there the class started available at the day time 12:00, I had the chance to come!*

*I joined the gymnastics class since they started, about 5 or 6 year ago, then I started as soon as I heard about it, so at least 5 years I think...*

Notably, group class of water gymnastics was held in the cold water with a depth of 2-meter pool for all users, it was not popular at that time, the description of different comments from user experiences can be summarised as the sense of comfort of hot water temperature and the depth caused little controlling to movements.

*I like better in the shallow pool, maybe that's more usual, more usual to do moves...I can use more force!! you were hang in the 2-meter water, in the deep water, it was a bit urgent, had to move all the time to keep floating, but, that's not as heavy as exercising in the shallow pool... I think this is better for me... There is nothing to do with the temperature, it's about the controlling, you have more control in the shallow pool to exercise.*

*I like the wellness pool because it's warmer, I didn't like that cold water very much... It's ok (the depth), but not warm enough.*

A further discussion of incentive factors of user attendance in wellness class in relevance to the class schedule, class price, and training content between senior groups, as participants described:



*I don't know if Moldebadet could have one more class in the day time! Twice in the week, there is one class in the evening, but I have to work, not able to do it. 20kr (for the wellness group training), that's no problem, it's very cheap if you compare with the Spa in the upstairs. You pay much more than this. It's the cheapest way but good still good exercising way. Warm water is a good option.*

### **5.3.2 Aspects leading to user negative experience in administration affecting experience**

When participants were questioned that what they would do if they can change anything about Moldebadet, seven interviewees all pointed out the cost to get the access in the aquatic facility had increased dramatically during the last a few years that family members were demotivated to visit the pool frequently for leisure activities, comments demonstrate into one point: drop the entrance fee in order to increase the attendance. The factor of price discrimination in certain groups and in holidays largely reduced the overall satisfaction of participants, and the price and service was offered in café caused further financial burden for adults to concern, especially when with the attendance of children. The participants in this survey brought up three main suggestions affected by the management in which negatively influenced individual user experiences at the indoor water park: (1) Price to access, (2) Café, (3) Perceived lack of information, (4) Management on young users, and (5) Short operation hours in holidays.

#### **5.3.2.1 Price to access**

Financial burden confined the engagement of family users was emphasised many times, seeking the leisure sport in this indoor swimming pool had become very cautious decision for a family to consider:

*Every year you have a little one (increase), that's acceptable, but suddenly this year, it became a lot! If the price goes up, up, up! Then people will go down, go down and go down... Many people want to come to here I think, people have never been here-I talked to, they said 'it is a very expensive I heard!', so that's the rumor in town... So, I think-down the price, and up with people! (laughing) That's my advice.*

- **For family**

*I talked to a family man: for the weekend, it's more expensive here. He was here maybe with his wife and his two kids, very expensive! He said 'if it lows the price, more people will come'-the same with everyone here! Sometime, I come here on Sunday with kids, it costs 500kr, that's a lot of money for a family.*

*But I think people who are living around here, they can't come very often with families, because that will be expensive. I heard many people said that...*

- **For non-regular user**

*I didn't buy the membership for a year, because it costs too much if I couldn't come here often.*

*...if people only come to here once a month with the whole family, then it's very expensive...*

However, grandparent showed the willingness of paying the cost in the water park for their grandchildren when children visiting as the purchase was seldom behaviour.

*When they come to here (with grandchildren), I pay. That's once a year, so I don't mind!*

Most participants answered that they were able to purchase the entrance fee due to the frequency of visitation, and some users understood the situation of the overall number of customers as one user described, "they don't have the money because there isn't a lot of people to come, that was not good", nevertheless, the feedback showed the low-level satisfaction of current entrance fee with the price discrimination:

*I think to get more people to use it, they must do something different... It should be the same price every day... Not more money in the weekend! Every day: the same. It should be for the retired man and for the children, 50% off not 30%, that's all the same in the Norwegian society... should have 50% here, lots of people will come!*

### 5.3.2.2 Café

Comments from interviewees revealed a lack of adequate consideration given to certain types of services at the aquatic activities, rules of entry barriers of food, charge for water and over-priced menu in café were noted by participants, although some users noted, “we would like to stay here to eat something and relax more.”

- **Price**

*... the café, should be cheap to afford, but it's not cheap here. It is expensive to spend 30 to buy a cup of coffee like this one, I think 20 is good, or no more than 25.*

*... should be something very cheap, simple, easy, like snacks, it shouldn't be more expensive that it is, some people think it's too expensive to come to here, to swimming... It's about the price...*

- **Service**

*The first thing I don't understand is, if you stay here for a long time, you get thirsty, can we have something to drink? They said: 'no, no, no way!' Why?! 'the money'! many people here they asked the same thing, we are thirsty, we want to drink... People have some trouble, I think, it's not the best shop in the world here...*

*... we came here before 11 o'clock, then it's about 1 o'clock, we are very hungry. I don't think you are allowed to eat... there is a sign in the changing room, there are a lot... then suddenly I saw it- 'you are not allowed to bring own food'...*

- **Business**

*... (Café) maybe it's a vocational business for the Molebadet.*

*In the weekend, I see some people here, but not Monday to Friday... I don't know if this café is successful?*

The feedback from frequent users demonstrated that the few visitation of customers in café during weekdays, one participant proved this factor noting, “I know him (café manager), he

worked in the town before he started here, the previous man stopped it and he started it. He has to pay to the Moldebadet, he must have enough money to pay it...”

When one regular user who referred to the usage of café, suggested that some snakes with cheap price that would be more suitable for the facility setting. In addition, if the management in the aquatic center allowed visitors to bring their food and provide an area to eat in café area, would encourage attendance by large number of participants:

*... if they (children) want to stay here, maybe 4 hours, then they are hungry you know... if the children want something to eat, so... it is expensive to come to here, so many don't do it often... If they want more people to come to here, they I think they could bring their food if they like, sit here (café area), clean out by themselves (afterwards)... I think it will be smart.*

### **5.3.2.3 Perceived lack of information**

The statement of users in regarding to the lack of available or efficient information was noted as an obstacle to engage themselves in the aquatic facility, such as the cancellation of group training class or facilities were sometimes occupied by the training groups. Two users suggested the preference of being informed by receiving message through phone as little interest of checking Facebook just before visiting the facility.

- **Wellness class cancellation**

*I was disappointed when the group was cancelled but no information that I received. The information is not easy to get... we have a group for the class, should not be difficult to send a group message.*

- **Facilities usage from training groups**

*It becomes crowded when the swimming competition was held, but they need to do it, if the news can post in the homepage or by message would be much better. I prefer news from the homepage, few people looking Facebook before coming here, message is the best way.*

### 5.3.2.4 Management on young users

*... the office, they knew it, and they had been told! So, I think this attitude should be changed—it's a job between parents, teachers and Moldebadet, who come here often to tell them in advance. I was talking with teacher once, should teach students about soap, but teachers walked away. I tried to communicate, and nothing has been changed, I couldn't do much about this. The responsibly should be shared, parents should show their children how to take a proper shower, if a mother came with her girl, mother showed with swimming suit, the girl will follow; learning by doing. Teachers should remind students when each time they are training here.*

## 5.4 Social Factors

To users in this thesis, the aquatic center was often seen as much more than just a human-constructed facility where certain physical activities took place; rather as a social area in their sense of community. Experiences between similarity and difference from the category of physical structure of facility within all users were summarised in table 8:

**Table 8 Social Factors**

User Type	Similarity Experiences		Difference Experiences	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
<b>Regular</b>	Friends meeting Quality lifestyle & well-being		Family recreational time Sense of community	Privacy
<b>Non-regular</b>	Family reational time			Privacy

### **5.4.1 Aspects leading to user positive experience in social factors**

The recreational atmosphere offered as a relaxing way to visitors who often participant in the aquatic facility for social interactions: (1) Family recreational time, (2) Friends meeting, (3) Quality lifestyle and (4) Sense of community.

#### **5.4.1.1 Family recreational time**

Activities that users engaged in at the aquatic facility usually were associated with the interaction among family members. The facility was widely recognised as a place that motivated public to engage in aquatic activities:

*I don't come to a swimming pool myself, only when grandchildren came, I came...*

*With my grandchildren, we go to the whirling pool, they are at different places when they are here...*

#### **5.4.1.2 Friends meeting**

The description of user experiences showed that in many situations, besides intending to achieve an outstanding performance or being competitive, people may go swimming just to hang out with friends:

*I sit there (near to the window area), getting to know them two after I came to here, I didn't know them before, so I made friends here.*

*... swimming, exercising, meeting people you know, good social relationships here, people I know who was but know better now... meeting people you know, especially ladies, many women here...*

*... it's more like a small, social thing, meet people here... I stay in the Jacuzzi with friends, two or three friends I made here, taking with them in the Jacuzzi, solving all problems, that's very interesting...*

*If I meet some friends here, tell jokes, and take a coffee, it's very relax to sit here and take a coffee... It's alright to come to here, sometimes, to drink a coffee and meet friends.*

### 5.4.1.3 Quality lifestyle & well-being

*For me to be here, it's the life quality! I could pay more if I must.*

*I'm 75-year-old, still can swim 1000 meter without any problem every time I come here, this is a good feeling!*

*I am happy when I can do what I like to do, swim, and drink my tea, and something to eat, sitting here, after the class...*

### 5.4.1.4 Sense of community

The significance that users set on the social interaction of visiting to the facility demonstrated that its presence in the public society served an important role in the recreational and leisure options for all participants. At the same time, it supported them to conduct various healthy physical activities in a moderate manner that they may not otherwise have been able to do in the community.

*My other friends where I live, they do other things, they walk a lot, I have managed to get some persons to come to here.*

*I tried to talk to other men, come and exercise, it's very good, but I don't know why, they never came, it's kind of thing that they don't really know the benefits they can get from the training.*

## 5.4.2 Aspects leading to user negative experience in social factors

- Privacy

*Ai...I don't go swim here... it's shame to wear swimming suit like that... just like being naked, not for me...*

*... some people they have a coffee at outside when they finished the shower, I see many do that, yes. Perhaps many don't like to go here (inside café) with the swimming suit.*

## 5.5 Weather Conditions

Non-frequent interviewees talked about that the weather situation affected the frequency of visiting at the aquatic facility, due to the research facility studied was at indoor, negative weather factors tended to attract users to the facility, at the meanwhile good weather conditions were responsible for keeping users from using the facility. For instance, people chose to visit the indoor swimming pool when the outside was raining or snowing; if the weather condition was sunny, people often do outdoor activities. Overall, the weather influenced on the participation from non-frequency of visiting the facility exceeded the frequent users. Information was collected in table 9:

**Table 9 Weather Conditions**

User Type	Similarity Experiences		Difference Experiences	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
<b>Regular</b>			Bad weather: more visitors	Good weather: less visitors
<b>Non-regular</b>	Bad weather: more visitors	Good weather: less visitors		



## **6. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **6.1 Service Components**

Service components have been taken as a set of analysis for evaluating customer satisfaction (Wu et al. 2006). There are three service components: the core service; a unit of promoting services; a unit of supporting services (Grönroos 2000). Service components can be identified a boundary line between activities of production and consumption that consumers and supplier implement together (Antonella et al. 2007). For instance, the hospitality and restaurant services are the core service component in a travelling resort, where reception services are the promoting service component, and entertainment is the supporting service component (Grönroos 2000). Similarly, an indoor aquatic center, the recreational and leisure service of aquatic facilities is the core service component; the reception service, safeguard service and café are the promoting service component; and the wellness training class is the supporting service component.

#### **6.1.1 Core service component**

As a core service component, indoor aquatic facilities of Moldebadet provide a fun, safe and neutral environment for communication and interaction for visitors. It creates opportunities for family members to play together and users gathering with their friends or neighbours to strength the relationship. Although interviewees agreed on that Moldebadet was a better aquatic facility compared with others in neighborhood, lack of facilities were brought out when the discussion in aspects leading to a negative experience in the physical structure of facilities, such as outdoor Jacuzzi, washing machine, waving pool, steaming pool. Frequent users enhanced more demand and desires from the physical facility, that can help further facility development for decision markers as Lütthje (2004) quoted that understanding required systematically analyse about the existing problems in all creative solving processes, can help to conceive solutions and to test these solutions in practice (Weisberg 1986). Lütthje (2004) also quoted that users have the chance to exploit their abilities, to have fun and to know how to gain satisfaction during the development process in the light of motivational psychology of the human resources approach (Bolman and Deal 1984), nevertheless, satisfaction of those users may decline over time although the product attributes and provided benefit remain relatively stable in the existing market (Spreng et al. 1996).

- **Landmark facility**

A big picture emerged when feedbacks indicated to a lack of adequate consideration given to certain types of facilities central to aquatic activities for vary variety of groups, for intance, for aquatic physical activities of adolescents, travelers and tourists. Moldebadet serves the entire community by providing local citizens an opportunity to get closer to indoor exercises and aquatic activities. Further development of physical structure of Moldebadet ought to in the long-term municipal plan. Sports facilities have some similar characteristics in terms of offices and other commercial buildings, but the unique of them are the nature, such as the usage patterns of participant, ownership and comfort requirements (Gian & Arnesano, 2014), therefore, landmark facility of developing Moldebadet might be a premise. For instance, as a port city, Molde supports several cruise companies, cooperation cruise companies such as Hurtigruten could keep the guest of visiting Moldebadet in a daily constant number. With various outdoor programmes, “Moldebadet Festival” could be organsied as an annual festival to represent Molde besides Jazz Festival and regardless weather conditions through a year. Opportunities can be endless by then.

### **6.1.2 Promoting service component**

The promoting service component contains reception service, lifeguard availability and café in the service components, communication encounters are involved. From the concept of multiple encounters by sport users (Lemke et at. 2010), the communication encounter includes relationship-building proposals and communications that are performed so that build a user-corporate tie. From the view of communication encounters, whether user proposals were adopted by administration may determine user experience overall.

For instance, as “cleanliness” in Moldebadet was positively recognsied the first image of entering by interviewees, youth showering with swimming suit would affect water quality in the pool largely caused attention of frequent users, especially one user expressed the dissatisfaction by noting, “the office, they knew it, and they had been told... I tried to communicate, and nothing has been changed, I couldn’t do much about this” This sense of frustration about how communication is exchanged between management and participants when users accessed the facility could lead to increased levels of dissatisfaction with how

the service of aquatic facilities was operated. In turn, that frustration can jeopardize attendance and participation at the facility.

It is worth mentioning that, regular swimmers can be considered as “lead users” or “market initiators”. Hippel (1986) defined the ‘lead users’ who have requirements to predict the market trend and conceive rich benefits from receiving a solution of fulfilling needs. The lead users, as the earliest adopters demonstrate key models and good communicators to the later users (Foxall and Bhate 1993). One frequent user explained the reason why taking a proper shower before entering the pool, “I read an article, that is better to do proper wash at the start, a proper shower before swimming, and only clean water after the swimming, no soap, just water. So, I spend a lot of time in the showering area, it’s good for the pool, it’s good for me. It says the chlorine mixed soap, that can make the body smell”. The feedback may provide administration with fine guiding instructions for the certain groups of showering properly to keep a better health aquatic conditions for others and oneself.

Anderson et al. (2014) explained that the role of administration in the implementation of administrative guidelines at recreational facilities can serve to significantly impact the user experience. Thus, how management put the administrative policy in place will determine the individual user experiences and her/his recreational experience affected the level of satisfaction. As one of the most important thematic categories, café and information delivery that affecting users experience may deserves more attention from the aquatic administration.

- **Café**

*...even if it's not allowed to (bring own food), I do too!*

Café, as a part of the Moldebadet, plays an important role for users to relax or social, it located at a sunny and cozy area with good privacy space, feedbacks from frequent users that, “won’t sit if not buying”, made the area eventually became a “vocational business” or “vocational sitting place”. Considering the regulation of keeping indoor clean environment in aquatic center, it would not be a bad idea that shared by one interviewee: “allow people to bring food, provide a place (café) to eat, and clean up afterwards”, or “café sells some simple food with reasonable price”.

Ever since the total cost of one-day visiting the aquatic center had become a financial issue for ordinary families to think, purchase food and drinks in café had largely increased the budget of family attendance, accordingly, the decision of visiting the aquatic facility to do leisure activities among family members turned into a seldom, occasionally option, a monthly participation or even less. The overall cost of visiting in this water center potentially could lead to narrowed usage by certain user groups, as well as declined the level of satisfaction of regular participants.

- **Information delivery**

*(Mobile phone) Message is the best way.*

Not only because the opportunity for the elderly or migrants of having Internet access would be lower if an online forum would have been the main entry channel, but also online communication cannot create the climate and feeling of mutual understanding, which emerged when the groups were visiting each other's paperboards (Kubicek et al. 2010). The basic approach was not only to invite people to come to meeting but rather to meet them where they regularly were, if possible.

### **6.1.3 Supporting service component**

Assume that a successful product usually meets its needs in a particularly innovative or unexpected way, Francesco and Cascini (2014) have found that more than two-thirds of successful products have better interactive actions with users than others with innovative features. "Interactive actions" might be a reason of the popularity of wellness group class among users to support one of the service component. There are significant benefits to be gained from aquatic aerobics of activities, such as increase flexibility and cardiovascular, most importantly, users can spend time with friends and instructors in an enjoyable way.

The Hedonic Theory of Motivation (HTM) explains that if people derive a sense of joy from the physical activity they participant in, they would continuously repeat the engagement of this activity in the long-term (Diener et al. 2006). General exercising related to wellness group activities was perceived as a popular training method for senior group in which only available on the certain day, and this group class had become an incentive of attendance in

the aquatic facility. Consequently, several aquatic programmes can be implemented, such as snorkeling, diving and water aerobics for different groups, with a concept of more entertainment oriented to add in the water features. Other activities of practicing in the indoor facility, for instance, coffee hours, special events, with an intention of bringing new participants. Sport agencies also provide a set of complementary communications and services in the encounters with a purpose of rewarding for the variable quality of core sports products (Smith and Stewart 2010).

## **6.2 User Experiences**

Masayuki (2017) quoted that user experiences in sport can be segregated into three sections (Gupta and Zeithaml 2006): (1) how users interact with sport marketing; (2) what sport users think; and (3) what sport users feel and do. Lemke et al. (2010) mentioned that three categories formed user experiences: multiple encounters, user experience quality, and brand image; the quality of satisfactory experience appears when users highly assess the performing experiences of those three categories. Users may receive various sense of achievements from those three categories in an indoor environment, simultaneously, the rich experience of users is unique and superb at the similar way, but they are not ubiquitous in the daily routine (Francesco and Cascini 2014). Thus, what user think about reputation and how well they feel they have been treated by the staff or whether they like indoor aquatic center are both personalised individualised experience in nature.

Aquatic activities that users engaged themselves into Moldebadet are usage encounters combined with communication encounter between users, users and employees in the indoor setting. The social encounter is a user's interaction with other users when undertaking in individual sport consumption activities (Lemke et al. 2010). Social encounters seemed to be positive elements when describing the memorable experience in Moldebadet among users. Activities such as friends meeting after the wellness class, chatting in Jacuzzi, and friendly lifeguards expressed a sense of security in the facility were recognised by both frequent and non-frequent interviewees. Moreover, social interactions revolved around the overall atmosphere created at the aquatic facility in the local community of Molde. An element for potential users of attending in the water center is the "Word of Mouth", from friend perceptions as motivators for coming to the facility.

- **Customer satisfaction**

Researchers have paid the large number of attention to customer satisfaction (Oliver 1999), it has been argued that satisfaction cut down the expense of future transactions, as recurring clients become more skilled and that allows organisations to decrease the spending to sustain them with interacting (Spreng et al. 1996). When users entered Moldebadet, social and communication encounters from the supporting service component strengthened relationships between users, thereby this service component naturally enlarged an element of contributing to customer satisfaction. According to Masayuki (2017), two dimensions used in the sport context to reflect customer satisfaction: core product satisfaction and service satisfaction that are including sport encounter, service encounter, social encounter and communication encounter.

- **Brand image**

*For me to be here, it's the life quality.*

Activities of engaging in various aquatic facilities are facts of users participating in Moldebadet, in other words, the physical structure facility belongs to core service component, and that represented the brand image of Moldebadet. Masayuki (2017) summarised that a brand experience was described as internal sensations, feelings, and cognitions from individuals, and behavioral responses of users inspire a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications and when referring "user experiences", the word "experience" implied users' behavioral responses, that represented valued offerings to marketing activities.

### **6.3 Profit or Non-profit**

Municipal recreational facilities are developed and designed to encourage use by members of the community, so it becomes important for park and recreation department to understand the community it serves (Seward and Walker 2007). As Moldebadet was defined at the beginning of this study: an indoor, public-funding, municipal-owned and managed, community aquatic center, it provides citizens in Molde for educational, physical, social and recreational activities, served the entire community. Since serving local taxpayers with

recreational purposes stressed the characteristic of this facility, enter fee, supposed to be affordable for ordinary families rather than a financial burden to endure over the local community in Molde.

When participants in the thesis referred to the price of entrance fee at the aquatic facility, they implied a desire to protect community towards the public welfare. Feedback showed users worried how the price discrimination would negatively affect that sense of community citizens. “Price is too expensive” such comments may end up with dropping the overall satisfaction take the net of experiences encountered by current users into consideration in Moldebadet, and price related access possibly exclude a significant number of family visitors as one user saying, “I would like to bring children often to the pool like once a week instead of once a month.” Even though some critical perspectives revealed aspects of administration leading to negative experiences did not necessarily prevent current users from participating in physical activities in the aquatic center, but, the possibility of continuous increasing in price discrimination could lead to decreased usage by certain groups of visitors, as well as decreased the overall satisfaction of regular users of the facility. The implication of the paradoxical balance between the frequency of user attendance and the payment of admission fee towards to frequent uses indicated that: the price here... has not affected me, yet.

On the other hand, administration budget is not endless. Aquatic facilities need to be equipped with water treatment processes that provide continuous disinfection (Quan et al. 2015), operation cost, hire professionals, marketing programs, and the older facility tends to require more cost for maintenance. Thus, municipal support is a need for the aquatic center of Moldebadet to be successful. In addition, public facilities tend to be administered by public employees and operate at a deficit subsidised by taxpayer dollars (Goldsmith, 2008). To get new users, an affordable enter ticket is a key, as Pucillo et al. (2014) addressed that a snowboard should just be affordable for customers instead of showing an exciting sense of challenge to people, and regardless of the weather, snow conditions, individual skills, designs and materials. To achieve a swimming grass-root culture in refer to the reputation of cross-country skiing with the outstanding performance at the international stage, it would be crucial for the local municipal provides more financially support for this indoor aquatic center.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis was to identify user experiences through the usability of aquatic facilities among senior users that how clients “consume” (experience) the “product” (indoor aquatic center). Following by the research question:

*What facts affect the experiences of the elderly user in an indoor aquatic center in Molde?*

The necessary aquatic terms and some background of Moldbadet and Badelandene were provided in the introduction of this thesis.

In literature review, user experience in sport recreational facilities was discussed and Grounded Theory as the umbrella of the thesis theory was examined through the whole study.

Before the result of five categories that leading to a positive and negative experience were analysed in detail from a case study, research approach, participant selection and data collection were explained. In addition, limitations, reliability and validity were critically revealed.

Collected data of the user experiences in this thesis associated with specific aquatic setting joined into five thematic categories and all interviewees pointed the meaning in more than one category, although interviewees activities engaged in Moldebadet varied across each other.

Research went beyond the service, facility and participant-sided to exam how the indoor aquatic “product” (swimming pool) was “consumed” (experienced) by the elderly. The experience of participants collected around five thematic categories:

- (1) Physical structure of facilities
- (2) Activities in the aquatic facility
- (3) Administration affecting experience
- (4) Social factors
- (5) Weather conditions.



The indoor aquatic center in Molde provides the public with opportunities to be engaged in social and leisure activities, however, financial related access often keeps individuals away from engaging in Moldebadet, moreover, service and price in café considerably influenced the frequency of family users to choose the water park as the first option of leisure activity. As the only indoor aquatic facility in Molde, it plays a double-edge sword role – capture more local clients or possibly push them away to other aquatic facilities in neighbourhood.

This thesis can provide an insight information of the aquatic center that in which means would affect senior users a positive and negative experience from various factors of the facility. It helps the administration of Moldebadet to be able to fullfil senior users' needs, avoid negative incentives, better anticipation for the further facility development in which impacts on the local well-being. Moreover, other aquatic organisations can benefit on how to engage in appropriate regulations of delivering positive elements while avoid negative aspects. However, there is still a lot of facts to broaden, for instance, further studies can be investigated on the same case study but other cities in Norway, valuable information can be assembled to make comparison.

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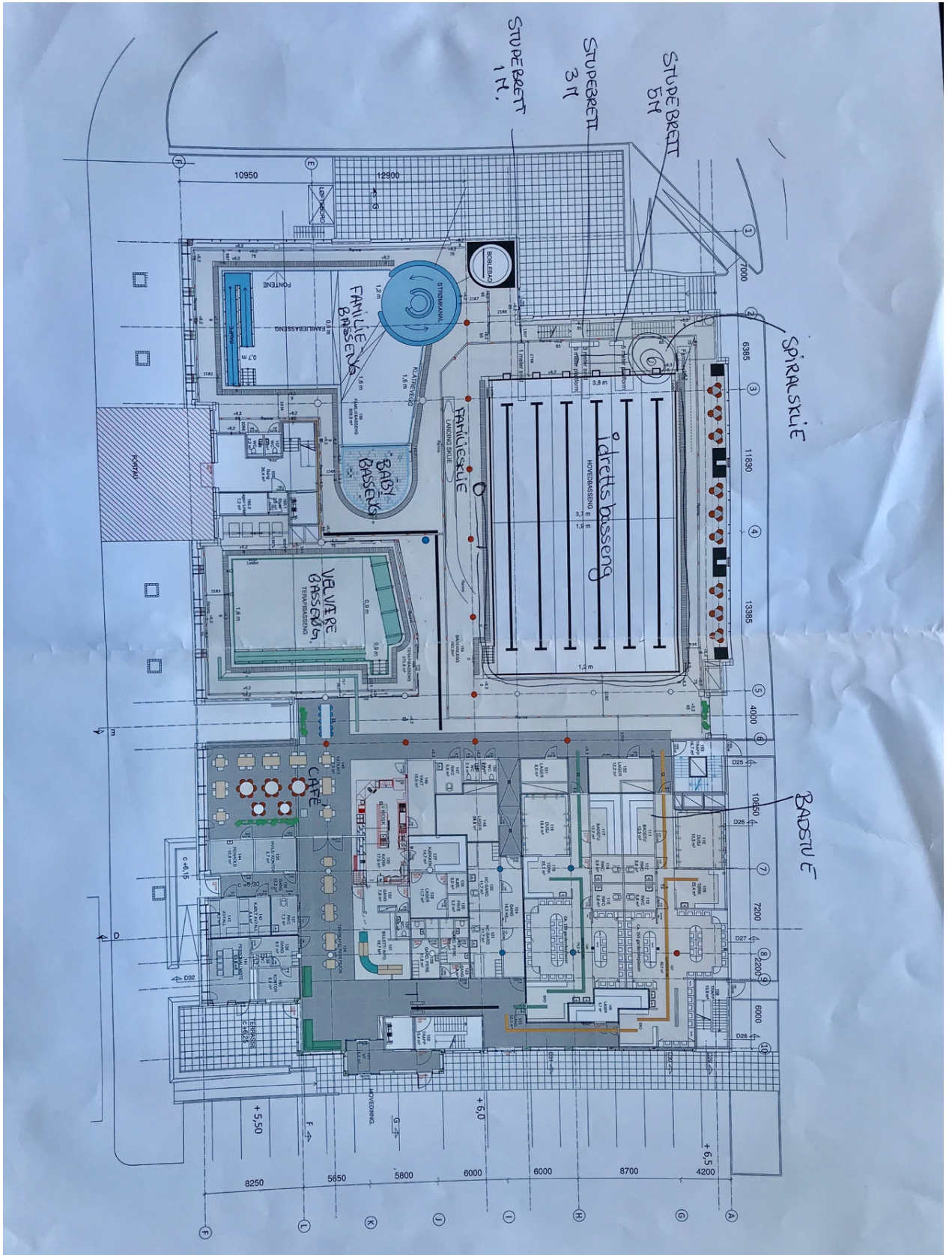
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## **APPENDIX 1: Interview Question Examples**

- Assuming you just arrive in Moldebadet, describe what could be your ideal experience. (Probes: weather, staff, time of day, time of season, surroundings, etc.)
  - Tell me a story about a memorable experience you have had since you were a member in Moldebadet.
  - Can you describe an experience that you have had in other indoor swimming pools?
  - What comes first in your mind when you are thinking about using the indoor swimming pool?
  - What would you do if you could no longer use Moldebadet?
  - What would you do if you could change anything about Moldebadet?
- Provide respondents with map of Moldebadet facilities:
- Using this map of the indoor pool and facility layout, take a few minutes and draw anything you normally would like to spend time on. Feel free to walk around and take the time if it will help you to make decisions.
- Once the map has returned:
- Describe what you have drawn. Why did you mention these subjects? (probes: parking lot, changing room, showering area, sauna, Jacuzzi, wellness pool, baby pool)

# APPENDIX 2: A Map of the physical facility of Moldebadet



## APPENDIX 3: ”Badelandene-hvem skal det tilrettelegges for og hvordan?” (Mette Mossige - Prologue AS - April 2017)”



Seven different profiles were classified in the research of “Compare with stable personality traits of user behaviours, market should focus on situational variables (Foxall & Bhate, 1993). Furthermore, a great amount of study has showed that personality traits that might be useful to value user experiences into different categories (Goldsmith & Hofacker, 1991). One of the profile from a retired female, Petra, the profile of Petra Retiree was described as below:

### Petra Pensjonist

**Livsstil:** Er en pensjonert kunsthistoriker og er gift med mannen Arne. Hun ser på seg selv som en aktiv senior som har mye ”på gang”. Ukas høydepunkt er å treffe sin faste venninnegjeng på det lokale badet. Hun er en trofast bruker. Har litt aldersplager og synes der er godt å få trene i varmt basseng.

**Erfaringer:** Har vært i svømmehaller i utlandet, særlig i Sverige. Liker spesielt godt de stedene der det er en rolig atmosfære, få folk og god plass. Skal ikke så mye til for at hun blir begeistret når ting fungerer bra, men har høye standarder og krav.

**Utfordringer:** Har mye vondt i hoften. Synes ofte folk er i veien i svømmebanen, og synes en svømmehall full av skolebarn er et mareritt. Blir irritert når hun ikke synes hun har fått god nok informasjon om gyldighet på billetter og klippekort. Synes det kan være klarere kommunisert når det skal være arrangementer og har opplevd at dette har vært for slapt fra svømmehallens side. Mener av og til litt i overkant mye om andre gjester og de ansatte, men gjør litt ”som hun selv vil” i forhold til reglene selv.

**Funksjonelle behov:** Frie svømmebaner er et sterkt behov. Trenger velværebasseng (varmebasseng) og elsker boblebad. Vil ha tydelig informasjon rundt når de ulike fasilitetene og bassengene er ledige og ikke. Vångymtimer hver uke er ønskelig. Trenger en badstue og en garderobe med rolig atmosfære. Opptatt av hygiene og renhold. Ønsker å spise sen frokost med svømmevenninnene i en koselig svømmecafé med godt utvalg. En tekopp og kakebit før de drar hjem er ”et must”. Ønsker pensjonistvennlige priser.

**Emosjonelle behov:** Det er viktig at stedet er et trygt og godt sted der man gjenkjennes og kan slå av en prat med personalet. Vil gjerne at stedet har tid og legger tilrette for hennes behov, dette deles så med omgangskretsen (jungeltelegraf). Ønsker generelt ro i hele anlegget. Viktig med et hyggelig treffsted for å tilfredsstille det sosiale. Opptatt av at folk behandler hverandre med respekt, både ansatte og besøkende. Hun vil gjerne at vaktene ”sjekker” at hun har det bra og gir henne litt oppmerksomhet. Generelt engstelig for å falle og slå seg.

**Drømmer:** Utebasseng er et sterkt ønske og gjerne et basseng kun for svømming, både ute og inne. En avsatt tid der det er ”skoleklassefri-garanti” hadde vært fantastisk og for å sikre en rolig morgen- og formiddagsstund. Fysioterapi og andre behandlinger hadde også vært supert.

