Sports Spectators Tourism Reason When Attending Major Sporting Events: Euro Basket 2013, Koper, Slovenia

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Abstract

Sport tourism includes both tourists who travel for the purpose of participating or observing competitive sports, and those active in leisure or adventure activities. This paper will examine the main reasons of sporting event spectators to visit Municipality of Koper, Slovenia through surveying those attending a major sporting event EuroBasket 2013. We have achieved this by gathering quantitative data via 326 questionnaires from international and domestic sport event tourism spectators who attended EuroBasket 2013 event in Municipality of Koper, Slovenia from 4th – 9th of September 2013. On the basis of the results of the survey it was found out that the reasons to visit the destination during the organization of EuroBasket 2013 are influenced by the country of residence of spectators and the age of respondents. The main results found from the study were that older tourist and those coming from non-neighbouring countries are more likely to visit the country organising a major event than younger tourists coming from neighbouring countries. The results of the research will somehow help regional and national tourism planners and event organizers when organizing future development of sporting events and the strategic planning of tourism products for different segments of sport event tourists in the region.

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Introduction

“Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing market segments in the tourism industry and is receiving increased attention for its social, environmental, and economic impacts upon destinations” (Hritz and Ross, 2010: 1). Sport

tourism includes travel in order to participate in an active or passive sport orientated vacation where the dominant reasons for travel are connected to sport activity, visit or active participation of sporting event and reasons connected to nostalgia in sport (Gammon and

Ramshaw, 2012; Standeven and DeKnop, 1999). In recent years sport tourism with the total share of +10% of the international tourism market, accounting approximately 600 billion dollars per annum, became a significant part of the global tourism industry (World Sport Destination Expo, 2010). People having more time for leisure activities, disposable income, cheap travel options and especially the global interest in sporting events are the main reasons for the growth of the sport tourism sector in over the last ten years (World Sport Destination Expo, 2010). Sports tourism activities refers to both the direct and indirect tourism benefits related to a consumer who travels to watch and/or to participate in sports-related activities or events (Uran Maravić, Bednarik and Lesjak, 2015). Attending sporting events either as athlete (active) or spectator (watching) has a long tradition dating back at least to the first Olympics in 776 BC (Matheson, 2006). In contemporary society with hundreds of millions of sport spectators worldwide sporting events became also a very important tool and opportunity for more leisure activity (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2012). Nowadays organized sport generates strategical planning of events which can evolve from local to international in attractiveness thus becoming an important generator in attracting tourist's arrivals for destinations (Getz, 2012; Lesjak, Podovšovnik Axelsson and Uran Maravić, 2014). Since organized events are taking place every day, either in the tourist season or beyond, it is clear that the event industry has experienced phenomenal growth over the past decade in terms of number, diversity and popularity of events. Sport spectators are an important part of the tourism industry, especially outside the main tourism season. In addition, they enhance the profile of the host destination and place it on the global tourism map (Berčič *et al.*, 2010; Goeldner and Ritchies, 2006).

Municipality of Koper is the economic center of the Slovenian Istria region and a meeting point of nautical, seaside and sports tourism. Koper is categorized as a small town by global standards and it is not very often hosting international major sporting events (SURS, 2013). Besides hosting smaller international sport events, Koper was a host of the group stages of European Handball Championship for

men in year 2004. In year 2013, organization of 1st round group matches of EuroBasket 2013 in Koper offered great opportunity for better tourism results with increased media promotion, higher numbers in tourism flows and therefore opportunity for economic growth.

EuroBasket (previously the European Basketball Championship) is the basketball competition contested biennially by the men's national teams under the organization of FIBA Europe. (www.fibaeurope.com). In a total of 19 days, from 4th till 22nd of September 2013, the 38th European Basketball Championship (EuroBasket 2013) with twenty four basketball teams participating was hosted by four destinations in Slovenia: Koper, Celje, Ljubljana and Jesenice. With over 55.000 international spectators, 20.000 overnight stays by officials (teams, judges, FIBA and FIBA Europe personnel), 1.100 volunteers, 1.300 accredited media representatives from over 40 countries and broadcast of basketball games in more than 167 countries around the world, it is clear that the organization of EuroBasket 2013 was the biggest sporting event in the history of the Republic Slovenia (KZS, 2013). According to the final report of Basketball Federation of Slovenia (KZS, 2013), the total number of international tourists who visited Slovenia with the main reason of attending the EuroBasket 2013 was 31,480. The sport event spectators spent 180 EUR on average/per day (KZS, 2013). Visitors of the basketball games mostly came in company of friends (on average in groups with 6, 4 persons). Average visitor stay whose main reason was attending EuroBasket 2013 in Slovenia was 5,7 days which is almost 3 days more than on average stay other tourists stay in Slovenia which is 2,87 days per tourist. (SORS, 2013) The total expenditure of national and international sport event spectators of EuroBasket 2013 event was estimated at 37 million Euros. Based on the cost benefit analysis the direct financial benefit for Slovenia was 32.3 million Euros where direct costs were 8.6 million Euros and short-term net benefit country-wide 23.7 million Euros (KZS, 2013; Ivašković, 2014).

Small countries such as Slovenia are not in position to host many important international major sporting events. With the organization of

EuroBasket 2013 Slovenia had the opportunity to benefit mainly from development of sport, promotional, economic, social and tourism sectors. Apart from the mentioned, there is also the fact that the EuroBasket 2013 was the biggest sporting event in the year 2013 since neither Olympic Games nor FIFA World Cup was organized that year.

The focus of the paper will be to investigate the main reasons of sport event spectators to visit Municipality of Koper, Slovenia, during the EuroBasket 2013 event and to find out how their socio-demographic characteristic influenced these reasons. This study, therefore, enables the launch of an important research field of sports tourism events for a specific host destination.

Literature review

Getz (2008: 404) describes the events as a “unique, remarkable occurrence of various types, shapes and sizes in a given time and space, which in the tourism sector applies to the most interesting and fastest growing area of research”. The events are classified according to scope, size, location, content and importance (Getz and Page, 2015; Getz, 2012). For Goldblatt (2007) events are exclusive celebrations organized at particular location and moment in time to meet specific needs of the customers. With many events happening every day it is important to understand the categorization of the events. Getz (2005) proposed the typology of planned events with eight different types: (1) cultural celebrations, (2) political and state, (3) arts and entertainment, (4) business and trade, (5) educational and scientific, (6) sport competition, (7) recreational, and (8) private events. Organization of different types of events could mean unique competitive advantage and reason for strategic development of tourism for destinations or even countries. Due to the rapid globalization of the markets and new ways of communication the events industry became indispensable player in the global tourism industry (Allen *et al.*, 2002). Tourism events industry by carrying out the various types and categories of events nowadays therefore plays an important role since it provides not only higher numbers of tourists' arrivals but also the possibility of a

successful business on the global tourism market. Tourism events are therefore important tool for tourism destinations for different reasons (Getz and Page, 2015). They attract tourist and generate economic benefits, develop infrastructure and other services and create a brand image for the destination (Getz, 2008; Getz, 2012). For the last twenty years event tourism has been presented as the fastest growing sector of sport tourism and leisure travel (Chalip and McGuirty, 2004).

Sporting events are one of the most widely studied areas of sports tourism (Chalip, 2001; Getz and Page, 2015) and present the largest component of event tourism sector (Chalip and Leyns, 2002). Sport event tourism is strongly connected to sport tourism field but on the other hand also overlaps with another important field of enquiry called event tourism (Getz, 2008). Weed (2009) described sport event tourism as a scope where tourism, sport and events needs to play together. The field of sport event tourism has been more often connected to event tourism rather than sport tourism (Alexandris and Kaplanidou, 2014). For Getz (2003) sporting events are major component of sport tourism which have significant economic impacts and help to increase tourist numbers. Therefore we can claim that sport event tourism is nowadays internationally recognized as a substantial and highly desirable niche market connecting many sectors of tourism and leisure industry. The typology of sport tourism events based on the Getz portfolio pyramid approach to event tourism measures the value of the sporting or other events in the destination (Getz, 2005). The highest value with highest tourism demand is presented by mega sporting event. Mega sporting events are having limited duration, dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance (Roche, 2000; Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). Nowadays, mega sport event tourism is a booming business where events such as the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, Super Bowl, etc. attracting millions of international spectators, are leading the way. Manzenreiter (2015) claims that the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup represents supernovas of global sport industry in terms of size, spectatorship, market value and media reach. Mega sporting events by way

of their size and significance are those that yield extraordinary high levels of tourism, prestige, attract large audiences of both onsite spectators and media coverage followers (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). They also cause high volume of economic, social and environmental impacts for the host community, region and country, set the new trends in planning of infrastructure and attract a large number of international tourists (Getz, 2008; Chalip, 2007; Baumann and Matheson, 2013; Mills and Rosentraub, 2012). Kasimati (2003) within her research pointed out that newly constructed event facilities and infrastructure, urban revival, enhanced international reputation, increased tourism activities, improved public welfare, additional employment, and increased investments are some of the potential benefits for the host destination when hosting mega sporting events (for example summer Olympic Games). Organization of mega sporting event on the other hand causes many negative impacts which are seen as high construction costs of sporting venues and related other investments, in particular in transport infrastructure; temporary congestion and traffic problems; displacement of other tourists due to the event; and underutilized elite sporting facilities after the mega sport event called "white elephants" which are of little use or no use of the local population (Kasimati, 2003). Similar reach as mega sporting events has "hallmark events" which are described as "events that possesses significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality, or publicity, that the event provides the host venue, community, or destination with a competitive advantage" (Getz, 2005, p.16; Getz and Page, 2015). Nowadays especially in Europe many slightly smaller sporting events such as the European football championships, the Commonwealth Games and European Basketball championship (EuroBasket) also play important role of sport event tourism industry. The small scale sporting events (local and regional), occupying the lower levels of the portfolio pyramid, are problematic from a tourism perspective and sometimes difficult to be conceptualized (Getz, 2008). They mainly attract local residents, local and regional fans and potentially some tourists from same or neighbor countries (Herstein and Berger,

2013). Small scale sporting events could be season league competitions, annual regional marathons and cycling events and other small sport tournaments mostly organized by unprofessional local associations or small or medium sized companies.

The focus of this paper will be on the major sporting events. Roche (2000) describes major sporting events as commercial events that have a high international impact, attracting many visitors and consequently introducing new popular tourist destination. For Horne and Manzenreiter (2006) a major sporting event is a global experience which causes increased media support to the organizers and consequently the local communities where major sporting events are being held and therefore provides opportunities for significant financial returns. Major sport events usually have positive impact on the host regions with tourism incomes, increasing visitor expenditure, media attention, infrastructural development which potentially leads to the destination's capacity and attractiveness (Dolles & Söderman, 2008). The sports-related major tourism events which have shown a rapid growth in recent years are also becoming an increasingly important promotor of host destination tourism (Zhou, 2010). They are attracting global audiences, improving the international place branding, forming tourism promotion, influencing the destination competitiveness, overcoming seasonality and if sustainably organized creating a lasting legacy for the countries (Fourie and Santana-Gallego, 2011; Getz and Page, 2015). The phenomenon of major sporting events in the area of social science research is relatively new, but over the last 20 years major sporting events are getting a lot of the academic attention (Antoniou, 2011). Host countries benefit when organizing major sporting events with attracting crowds of sporting events visitors, having an impact on public finances and building new or renewing sports infrastructure. Based on the facts and figures major sporting events presents an enormous potential for tourism development, media exposure, increase promotional visibility and finally economic benefits to the host country (Bowdin *et al.*, 2006; Chalip, 2007; Green, 2007). The organization of major sporting events is also becoming a very

popular component of a countries sport tourism promotion and an important generator of sports tourists, which contribute significantly to the tourism and economic development of host destinations. Obviously different sport events attracting high numbers of sport spectators are playing a key role in the growth of the global event industry (Dickson and Arcodia, 2010; Getz, 2008).

Sport tourists differ from other types of tourists, being described as individuals or a group of people who passively (spectators) or actively participate in competitive or recreational sport while travelling or staying in places outside their usual environment (Gammon and Robinson, 1997). Nogawa, Yamguchi and Hagi (1996: 47) in Gibson (1998) describes sport tourists as a "temporary visitors staying in the event area at least 24 hours with primary purpose to participate in a sports event, with the destination visited being a secondary attraction". They have divided the sport tourists as: (1) event participants, as individuals whose primary purpose in travelling is to take part in an organised sport event; (2) event spectators whose primary purpose is to watch an organised sport event; and (3) sport lovers who travel to take part in "self-organised" sports.

People attend events for different reasons. The reasons are usually the combination of generic (escapism) reasons (socializing, learning something new, get away from everyday routine life, entertainment) and specific reasons which more depend on place of event or event itself (Getz, 2008). Spectators together with athletes and organizers co-create sporting events and therefore play fundamental role with substantial revenues in the sport events industry (Chappelet, 2013). Heckhausen (1980) and Strauß and Jurgensen (1998) define a sports spectator as a person who observes the sporting activity without actively taking part and who thus primarily satisfies personal motives and has to expend corresponding resources to do so. Sport spectators could be also those individuals who "actively witness a sporting event in person or through some form of media (radio, television, etc.)" (Wann *et al.*, 2001: 2). The study of The Business of Sport Tourism in year 2009 revealed that the sport event spectators are high-spending and passionate

customers. They also travel to destinations that are easy to get to, with great accommodation, fine restaurants and entertainment which also stimulate other tourism activities (The Business of Sport Tourism, 2009).

Spectatorship of different sizes of sporting events has emerged as an important aspect in tourism over the last few decades (Tichaawa and Bob, 2016). Sport fans are also ready to pay high prices of sport event tickets to gain emotions of highly memorable sport event experiences (Emery, Kerr and Crabtree, 2013). There is a wide discussion in the scholarly literature to understand what drives people to attend sporting events (Dale *et al.*, 2005; Laverie and Arnett, 2000; Bodet and Bernache-Assollant, 2012). It is important to understand the reasons of sporting event spectators' for attending sporting events in order to understand their perceptions. Sport fans, especially those travelling to attend mega sporting events focus not only to the even itself but generally seek for mix of support tourism facilities (hotels, restaurants, bars) and tourism attractions. These elements deeply influence on their decision to travel for sporting events (Walmsley, 2008; Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2007). Taks *et al.* (2009) found out that sport fans attending Pan American Junior Championships, Canada in 2005 who participated in tourism activities during the event gained the tourism information prior coming to the event. The research results showed also that sport fans will return to the host destination in the future and recommend it to friends and relatives (Taks *et al.*, 2009)

There are many factors such as motivation, time allowance, interest, destination image, previous experiences, personal factors, and financial conditions important for travelling and attending sporting events (Getz and Page, 2015). The reasons for attending sporting events are also much connected with individual demographic characteristics such as gender, age, residence, and social and economic background. Reasons for attending sporting events can be also linked to self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic, aesthetics, group affiliation and family, achievement, drama, knowledge, social interaction and physical skills (Bodet, 2015; Trail *et al.*, 2003)

The research results of Ridinger and Funk (2006) on college basketball spectators showed both gender commonalities and differences were found. Greenwell, Fink and Pastore (2002) found that age, household income and family size influenced the ice hockey spectator's perceptions of their sport-service experience. Major sport events are always a good opportunity to socialize with family and friends (Fink, Trail and Anderson, 2002; Wann, Waddill and Dunham, 2004). Kahle and Riley (2004) note that group interaction is the main reason for better overall experience of the sporting events spectators. In some cases sport event tourists spend less on other tourism activities than average travellers. They are attending events with the primarily reason to see the sporting event. Leibold and van Zyl (1994) discovered that sport enthusiasts attending the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 generated very little revenue on activities such as dining and sightseeing. In recent 2012 Olympic Games in London, UK more than 590,000 overseas tourists said that their main reason for visiting the UK was related to the London Olympic Games. Most of the overseas tourists came from North America or Europe. It is estimated that they have spent over £1, 1 billion in UK during their stay. The average amount of money spent by London Olympic Games 2012 visitors was £1,290 per person, which is almost twice as much as the average £650 spent by other visitors (Office for National Statistic, 2012).

Due to lack of empirical research on the effects of sport event spectators' socio-demographic and travel characteristics this study will focus on the reasons to visit the country organizing a major sporting event. Having this in mind, it is an important task for the tourism organizations to have enough information about the sport event spectators to be able to develop tailor made tourism products. Tailor made tourism products could have the positive influence on the sport event spectators' reasons to not only be part of the sporting event but also visit offered tourism attractions and other organized tourism activities in the host destination. It is therefore important also to have the information about socio-demographic characteristics of sport event spectators.

Major sporting events could be an important part of the tourism industry, especially in the shoulder season. They also play a massive factor in decision-making for arrivals of tourists to the destination. In addition, they enable the destination to develop the profile and place it in the global tourism map (Berčič *et al.*, 2010; Goeldner and Ritchies, 2006). This study will focus on sport event spectators who attended the biggest sporting event in the history of Slovenia - EuroBasket 2013.

Methodology

Using the quantitative method of an interview survey with structured questions, the survey was conducted in the municipality of Koper on sport tourists attending EuroBasket 2013. A person was suitable for the interview if he/she spent at least one night in Slovenia during the event. The survey was anonymous – respondents did not need to provide any personal data, such as name, telephone number, email or home address. The study was approved by the Faculty of Tourism Studies at the University of Primorska, Slovenia. The study is part of the doctoral dissertation of the author.

The field research was performed by previously properly trained master degree students of the University of Primorska, Faculty of Tourism Studies Turistica who were trained and familiar with the content, method and purpose of research.

The survey was pre-tested on a small sample of 50 sport tourist in a period before EuroBasket 2013 when Slovenia played friendly matches against Italy and Monte Negro in Municipality of Koper. The intention was to ensure the understanding of questions presented in the survey. After the pilot testing, the final questionnaire was modified and adapted with minor changes.

The target population were sport event tourists attending the EuroBasket 2013 tournament in Koper. In spite of the awareness of the importance of representativeness in the research, convenience sampling was used as a method. The interviews were conducted during the sporting event at three different locations in the Municipality of Koper, the busiest city street

(promenade), fan zones where sport tourist were concentrated after the games and the area outside the sport arena Bonifika where all the games were played. Every fifth tourist was interviewed in the afternoon from 3 – 9 pm when the basketball games were scheduled. In total 334 valid answers were received.

The data was statistically processed and analysed with the statistical package IBM SPSS PASW (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). We have used the descriptive statistics to describe the distribution of variables and their indicators and regression analysis, to test research hypotheses.

According to the theoretical background presented in the introduction the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents influence the sport event spectators' reasons to visit Municipality of Koper, Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 and their reason to choose attending the event EuroBasket 2013 as their main vacation in year 2013.
2. Travel companions influenced the sport event spectators' reasons to visit Municipality of Koper, Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 and their reason to choose attending the event EuroBasket 2013 as their main vacation in year 2013.
3. The organisation of additional tourism trips influenced the sport event spectators' reasons to visit Municipality of Koper, Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 and their reason to choose attending the event EuroBasket 2013 as their main vacation in year 2013.
4. There is a connection between the sport event spectators' reasons to visit Municipality of Koper, Slovenia during the EuroBasket 2013 event and their reason to choose attending it as their main vacation in year 2013.

Results

First, the demographic characteristics and the trip characteristics are presented (see Table 1).

The results presented in the Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were male (76.8 %), while 23.2% of them were women. We have omitted 0.6% of respondents from the further statistical analysis since they did not

report their gender. The 1.8% of respondents did not report their educational level. They were omitted from further statistical analysis. Most of respondents had a college or a BA degree (57.6%), followed by those with elementary, vocational or high school degree (26.8%) and by those with the postgraduate degree (15.5%). When reporting the country of residence the respondents were given a list of all the possible countries with basketball teams participating at EuroBasket 2013 in Koper. Those countries were Italy, Russia, Turkey, Greece, Finland and Sweden. Slovenia was also listed among the possible answers. We also gave the respondents the list other countries, in the answer "other". 6.3% of respondents did not report their country of residence or were from other countries. They were omitted from further statistical analysis. The 40.6% of respondents were from Finland, 26.2% from Italy, 15.3% from Sweden, 5.4% from Slovenia, while there were fewer respondents from Russia (4.8%), Turkey (4.8%) and Greece (2.9%). For further statistical analysis 3 dichotomous variables were created (for Finland, Italy and Sweden; the other countries having a number of cases being too small), where the value 1 was meaning the respondent has residency in that country, while the value 0 meaning the respondent has not residency in that country.

While measuring the economic status of respondents we decided to use a 5-point scale where respondents reported their perception of their economic status, 1 meaning a lot below average and 5 meaning a lot above average. The 4.8% of respondents did not report their economic status. They were omitted from further statistical analysis. Half of respondents (50.9%) reported their economic status being as average, 23% reported their economic status being as above average, 12.6% reported their economic status being as below average, 9.4% reported their economic status being as a lot above average and 4.1% of them reported their economic status being a lot below average.

The 1.9% of respondents did not report their age so we have omitted them from further statistical analysis. The results presented in the Table 1 shows that the average age of respondents was 34.42 years. Standard

Table1: Demographic characteristic of the sample.

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	255	76.8
Female	77	23.2
Educational level		
Elementary school. vocational school. high school	88	26.8
College. BA degree	189	57.6
Postgraduate studies	51	15.5
Country of residence		
Italy	82	26.2
Russia	15	4.8
Turkey	15	4.8
Greece	9	2.9
Finland	127	40.6
Sweden	48	15.3
Slovenia	17	5.4
Economic status		
A lot below average	13	4.1
Below average	40	12.6
Average	162	50.9
Above average	73	23.0
A lot above average	9	9.4
Age		
Mean	34.42	
Std. Deviation	10.200	
Skewness	0.700	
Std. Error of Skewness	0.135	
Kurtosis	0.290	
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.269	
Minimum	15	
Maximum	72	
Travel companion at the event		
Alone	10	3.1
With the partner	56	17.1
With family and children	46	14.1
With friends	193	59.0
With co-workers / business partners	16	4.9
With a group of supporters	23	7.0
Organisation of further tourism trips		
By themselves	236	86.4
With travel agency	37	13.5

deviation is 10.2 years. The youngest respondent was aged 15 years and the oldest respondent was aged 72 years. Skewness (0.7) and kurtosis (0.29) show a distribution being close to the normal distribution of the variable.

More than half (59%) of respondents came to the event with friends. The 17.1% of respondents came to the event with the partner, 14.1% with family and children, 7% with a group of supporters, 4.9% with co-workers or business partners and 3.1% came

alone. For further statistical analysis 3 dichotomous variables were created (for those who came with the partner, with family and children or with friends; the other categories were too small to include in further statistical analysis).

The 18.3% of respondents did not answer the question. They were omitted from further statistical analysis. The results presented in the Table 1 shows that 86.4% of respondents organised further excursion by themselves,

while 13.5% of them let the travel agency organise further tourism trips during their stay.

In Table 2 the main reason to visit Slovenia is presented.

The 2.4 % of respondents did not answer the question; they were omitted from further statistical analysis. When asking about their main reason to visit Slovenia 58.3 % of respondents reported their main reason was to visit the sport event EuroBasket 2013, 13.2 % of them said their main reason to visit Slovenia was entertainment, party and a new experience, 12.9 % of them reported their main visit to Slovenia being support the national basketball team. The other reasons to visit Slovenia were less important for them. A new, dichotomous, variable was created for further statistical analysis. Those respondents that reported their main reason to visit Slovenia was attending EuroBasket 2013 or supporting their national basketball team (61.2 % of all respondents) were treated as one group, while respondents who came to Slovenia during the event for other reasons (38.8 % of them) were treated as another group.

In the following, the emphasis was put on the attendance at the event EuroBasket 2013 was the main vacation in year 2013 for

respondents. The frequencies of the answers are presented in Table 3.

The 1.8% of respondents did not answer the question and they were excluded from further statistical analysis. As it can be seen from Table 3 62.8% of respondents stated that attending the event EuroBasket 2013 was not their main vacation in year 2013, while for 37.2% of respondents attending EuroBasket 2013 was their main vacation in year 2013.

In the following the research hypothesis were tested. In order to do so, logistic regression was used (ENTER method was selected). In the first regression model the dependent variable was attending EuroBasket 2013 being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event. The independent variables in the regression model were age, gender, country of residence (3 dichotomous variables), economic status of the respondent, the travel companion during the trip (3 dichotomous variables) and the organisation of further tourism trips during the stay.

The regression model was statistically significant at the 0,05 level ($\chi^2 = 21,638$, $p = 0.027$), indicating the appropriateness of the included variables in the regression model. The included independent variables explained 12.9

Table 2. EuroBasket 2013 being the main reason to visit Slovenia.

The main reason to visit Slovenia		Frequency	%
rest, relaxation		29	8.9
entertainment, party, experience		43	13.2
wellness, wellbeing		5	1.5
visit to relatives, friends, acquaintances		5	1.5
visit of sport event EuroBasket 2013		190	58.3
business or education		8	2.5
support of national basketball team		42	12.9
Sport activity		1	0.3
Other:		5	1.5
Total		326	100.0

Table 3. EuroBasket 2013 being the main vacation in year 2013.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	122	36.5	37.2
	No	206	61.7	62.8
	Total	328	98.2	100.0
Missing		6	1.8	
Total		334	100.0	

% of the total variance of the regression model (Nagelkerke R square = 0.129).

In Table 4 the results of the logistic regression are presented. Statistical significant differences (at the 0.05 level) are marked as bolded in the table.

From Table 4 it is evident that there are two independent variables (age and being from Italy) having a statistically significant influence at the 0.05 level on the main reason to visit Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 being attending the event or supporting the national basketball team. The other independent variables have no statistically significant influence at the 0.05 level on the main reason attending the EuroBasket 2013 event or supporting the national basketball team.

In the Table 5 the averages for attending EuroBasket 2013 and supporting the national basketball team being the main reasons to visit Slovenia during the event are presented according to the age of respondents.

The results presented in the Table 5 shows that the average age of those for whom attending EuroBasket 2013 event and supporting the national basketball team was the main reasons to visit Slovenia during the event were older (35.36 years) compared to those whom EuroBasket 2013 event and supporting the national basketball team was not the main reasons to visit Slovenia during the event (32.37 years).

In the following we were also interested in cross-tabulating the frequencies of respondents

Table 4. Regression model (dependent variable = attending EuroBasket 2013 being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event).

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Gender	-0.060	0.387	0.024	1	0.876	0.942
	Age	0.036	0.019	3.745	1	0.053	1.037
	Italy	-0.900	0.424	4.514	1	0.034	0.407
	Finland	0.069	0.413	0.028	1	0.868	1.071
	Sweden	0.964	0.600	2.584	1	0.108	2.623
	Educational level	0.146	0.264	0.305	1	0.581	1.157
	Economic status	-0.196	0.194	1.021	1	0.312	0.822
	With the partner	0.567	0.532	1.136	1	0.286	1.764
	With family and children	0.933	0.588	2.518	1	0.113	2.541
	With friends	0.691	0.412	2.811	1	0.094	1.996
	organisation	-0.154	0.461	0.112	1	0.738	0.857
	Constant	-0.334	1.353	0.061	1	0.805	0.716

Table 5. Attending EuroBasket 2013 and supporting the national basketball team being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event – by age.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
No	32.37	91	8.110	18	61
Yes	35.36	229	10.829	15	72
Total	34.51	320	10.208	15	72

Table 6. Attending EuroBasket 2013 and supporting the national basketball team being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event – by country of residence (Italy versus other countries).

		No	Yes	Total
Italy	No	<i>Count</i>	53	185
		<i>%</i>	22.3%	77.7%
	Yes	<i>Count</i>	34	45
		<i>%</i>	43.0%	57.0%
Total	Count	87	230	317
	%	27,4%	72.6%	100.0%

who came to visit Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 to attend the event or support the national basketball team and of those who did not come to Slovenia for the mentioned reasons, according to their country of residence being Italy or not. The results are presented in Table 6.

The results from Table 6 indicates that for less Italians (57% of them) attending EuroBasket 2013 and supporting the national basketball team was the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event, compared to respondents that were not from Italy (77.7% of them came to visit Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 to attend the event or to support their national basketball team).

In the second regression model the dependent variable was attending EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013 for respondents. The regression model was statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\chi^2 = 15.617$, $p = 0.048$), indicating the appropriateness of the included variables in the regression model. The included independent variables explained 8%

of the total variance of the regression model (Nagelkerke R square = 0.08).

In Table 7 the results of the logistic regression are presented. Statistical significant differences (at the 0.05 level) are marked as bolded in the table.

The results presented in the Table 7 indicates two independent variables (coming to the event EuroBasket 2013 with family and children, $p = 0.019$; or with friends. $p = 0.014$) being statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The other independent variables have no statistically significant influence at the 0.05 level on the main reason attending the EuroBasket 2013 event or supporting the national basketball team.

In Table 8 we have cross-tabulated attending EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013 by the travel company being family and children.

From Table 8 there can be seen that among respondents who answered that coming to the

Table 7. Regression model (dependent variable = attending EuroBasket 2013 being the main vacation in year 2013).

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Gender	-0.139	0.349	0.160	1	0.690	0.870
	Age	0.010	0.016	0.423	1	0.515	1.010
	Italy	0.708	0.419	2.861	1	0.091	2.030
	Finland	0.335	0.368	0.829	1	0.362	1.398
	Sweden	0.318	0.467	0.465	1	0.495	1.375
	Educational level	0.247	0.237	1.090	1	0.296	1.280
	Economic status	0.043	0.223	0.037	1	0.847	1.044
	With the partner	-0.143	0.495	0.084	1	0.773	0.867
	With family and children	-1.236	0.525	5.541	1	0.019	0.291
	With friends	-1.003	0.408	6.053	1	0.014	0.367
	organisation	-0.233	0.406	0.329	1	0.566	0.792
	Constant	0.266	1.175	0.051	1	0.821	1.304

Table 8. Attending EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013 by coming to the event with family and children.

		With family and children		
		No	Yes	Total
Yes	Count	97	23	120
	% within	35.1%	50.0%	37.3%
No	Count	179	23	202
	% within	64.9%	50.0%	62.7%
Total	Count	276	46	322
	% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

event EuroBasket 2013 with family and children there were more (50 % among those who came with family and children) of them answering that attending the event EuroBasket 2013 was their main vacation in year 2013 comparing to those (35.1 % among those who did not come to the event with family and children) who did not come to the event with family and children. Among respondents who answered that they have not come to the event with family and children there were more (64.9 % among those did not come to the event with family and children) respondents stating that coming to the event EuroBasket 2013 was not their main vacation in year 2013 compared to those (50 % of those did come to the event with family and children) who came to the event with family and children.

In Table 9 we have cross-tabulated attending EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013 by the travel company being their friends.

From Table 9 there can be seen that among those respondents who came to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends there are more of them (39.4 % among those who came to the

event EuroBasket 2013 with friends) who answered attending the event EuroBasket 2013 was their main vacation in year 2013 comparing to those (34.3 % of those who did not come to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends) who answered not coming to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends. Among those who did not come to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends there are more of them (65.7 % among those who did not come to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends) who answered attending the event EuroBasket 2013 was not their main vacation in year 2013 comparing to those (60.6 % of those who came to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends) who answered coming to the event EuroBasket 2013 with friends.

In the last part of the study we focused on the connection between the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event EuroBasket 2013 and the reason to choose attending the event EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013. The hypothesis was tested using McNemar test. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 9. *Attending EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013 by coming to the event with their friends.*

		With friends		
		No	Yes	Total
Yes	Count	46	74	120
	% within	34.3%	39.4%	37.3%
No	Count	88	114	202
	% within	65.7%	60.6%	62.7%
Total	Count	134	188	322
	% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10. *Attending EuroBasket 2013 as the main vacation in year 2013 by attending EuroBasket 2013 and supporting the national basketball team as the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event.*

			Main reason		
			No	Yes	Total
Main vacation	No	Count	67	135	202
		% within main vacation	33.2%	66.8%	100.0%
		% within main reason	73.6%	58.7%	62.9%
	Yes	Count	24	95	119
		% within main vacation	20.2%	79.8%	100.0%
		% within main reason	26.4%	41.3%	37.1%
	Total	Count	91	230	321
		% within main vacation	28,3%	71.7%	100.0%
		% within main reason	100,0%	100.0%	100.0%

We obtained 321 valid answers to both questions. The McNemara test showed statistically significant ($p \approx 0.000$) differences at the 0.05 level. Thus, we can conclude there is a connection between attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper and supporting the national basketball team being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event and between attending the event as the main vacation for respondents in year 2013.

There were more (41.3 % among respondents who answered that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team was the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event) respondents who stated that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013 compared to those who stated that this was not their main reason to visit Slovenia during the event (26.4 % among those who answered that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team was not the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event). There were more (73.6 % among respondents who answered that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team was not the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event) respondents who stated that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was not their main vacation in year 2013 compared to those who stated that this was their main reason to visit Slovenia during the event (58.7 % among those who answered that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team was the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event).

More of the respondents (79.8% among those who answered attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013) answered that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting their national basketball team was the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event compared to those who answered attending the event was not their main vacation in year 2013 (66.8% among those who answered attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was not their main vacation in year 2013). More of the respondents (33.2% among those who answered attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was not their main vacation in year 2013) answered that attending

EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting their national basketball team was not the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event compared to those who answered attending the event was not their main vacation in year 2013 (20.2% among those who answered attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013).

Discussion

Sport event spectators attracted by the major sporting events play an important role in bringing revenues to local businesses (e.g., tourism attractions, restaurants and accommodation sector) and significantly increasing the number of tourist arrivals, therefore they need to be investigated. The knowledge of characteristics of the sport tourists spectators also enable tourism organizations to be more effective when identifying the target market and developing strategic plans to attract and offer other tourism products for sport tourists spectators when being at the particular destination.

According to the theoretical background three research hypotheses were tested: the reasons to attend EuroBasket 2013 were influenced by demographic characteristics of respondents, their travel companions during the trip and the organisation of additional trips during their vacation. In order to test the research hypotheses a survey among spectators of the event EuroBasket 2013 in the Municipality of Koper (Slovenia) was conducted. The sample frame was constituted by those spectators who spent at least one night at the destination during the event. The survey was conducted on-site. In total, 334 valid answers were obtained.

Most of the respondents were male, with college or BA degree, coming from Finland or Italy or Sweden, having an average income and being aged on average 34 years. Regarding the organisation of the trip, most of them reported coming with family and children, with friends or with the partner. The vast majority of them organised further trips at the event by themselves (not by a travel agency). More than 60 % of respondents answered their main reasons to visit Slovenia during the event were to attend the event EuroBasket 2013 in

Koper or to support their national basketball team. About one third of respondents answered attending the event EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013.

For testing the research hypotheses the binary logistic regression analysis was used. Furthermore two different regression analyses were used. In the first one the dependent variable was the main reason of attending the event EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team as the main reason to visit Slovenia during the EuroBasket 2013 event was used. In the second one the dependent variable was attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper as the main vacation of respondents in year 2013. In both regression analyses the independent variables were age, gender, perception of economic status, educational level, country of origin, travel companions at the trip and organisation of further trips during the vacation. In both cases the regression models were statistically significant at the 0.05 level, showing that appropriate independent variables were chosen in the model.

In the first case, only two independent variables had a statistically significant effect on the fact that the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event was to attend EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or to support their national basketball team: age and being from Italy. Those who reported attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting their national basketball team was the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event were older compared to those who came to visit Slovenia during the event for other reasons. For more Italians attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting their national basketball team was not the main reason to come to visit Slovenia during the event compared to respondents coming from other countries. In this case the results show we can just partially accept the first hypothesis, saying that demographic characteristics of respondents influence the attendance at the event EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event. Just age and country of residence showed a statistically significant effect, while gender, educational level and the perception of the

economic status have not shown any statistical effect. The other two hypotheses, stating that travel companions during the trip and organisation of further trips during the vacation, have not shown a statistically significant effect on the attendance at the event EuroBasket 2013 event in Municipality of Koper or supporting the national basketball team being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event. Thus, we cannot neither accept or neither reject the second and the third hypothesis.

In the second case, only two independent variables showed a statistically significant effect on attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper being the main vacation in year 2013 for respondents: coming to the vacation with family and children and coming to the vacation with friends. More respondents who came to the vacation with family and children reported that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013 comparing to those respondents who did not come to the event with family and children. More respondents who came to the vacation with friends reported that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013 comparing to those respondents who did not come to the event with friends. In this case we can accept the second hypothesis, stating that travel companions influence the reason of the main vacation. The other two hypotheses, saying that demographic characteristics of respondents and organisation of further trips during the vacation cannot be neither accepted neither rejected since no statistically significant effects were found in the study.

We have also tested the hypothesis that attending EuroBasket 2013 in Koper or supporting the national basketball team being the main reason to visit Slovenia during the event and attending the event as the main vacation for respondents in year 2013 are connected among them. The statistical analysis showed the connection being statistically significant. We can accept the research hypothesis. Respondents who answered their main reason to come to visit Slovenia during EuroBasket 2013 in Koper was attending the event or supporting the national basketball team answered also that attending EuroBasket

2013 in Koper was their main vacation in year 2013.

Finally, this study enables destination tourism suppliers to take into account and be prepared for future organization of similar major sporting events to customize the tourist offer for different reasons and segments of sport tourist's spectators. There are several reasons for attending sporting events. Based on previous research (Dale *et al.*, 2005; Laverie and Arnett, 2000) the reasons are connected with individual demographic characteristics such as gender (Ridinger and Funk, 2006) age, residence, and social and economic background (Greenwell, Fink and Pastore, 2002) of sport event spectators.

The study showed that beside other reasons some of the personal characteristics (such as the age of the tourist and the country of residence) have an important effect on the main reason to visit major sporting event. Thus, the organisers of major events have to take into account these conclusions in order to effectively organise a major sporting event. Especially the fact that the main reason for spectators not coming from neighbouring countries was predominately attending major sporting EuroBasket 2013 has important implications on the tourism sector. When organising a major sporting event the organiser of such an event will have to cooperate with the local tourist companies and prepare an adequate touristic offer for the spectators of such an event. If the spectators are more likely to come from not-neighbouring countries (as it was shown from the results in this study) the tourism sector have to prepare a tourism package offer (including accommodation, food, transportation, organisation of additional trips and events etc) for those tourists. Doing that tourist might stay longer at the host destination and spend more money on other tourism activities or eventually return in years after the event was organized.

Conclusions

A clean hotel room with soft bed and good breakfast is not enough anymore for modern tourists. They require specific individual products that are different and somehow unique (Weiermair, 2003). Tourism today

means adventure and experiences. These characteristics are especially true for sport event tourism industry where participation in major sports events can provide tourists with extraordinary adventures and experiences. Sport tourists differ from tourists with other reasons of travelling (Slak Valek, Jurak and Bednarik, 2008), being described as individuals or a group of people who passively (spectators) or actively participate in competitive or recreational sport while travelling or staying in places outside their usual environment (Gammon and Robinson, 1997).

The presented study on spectators of EuroBasket 2013 has a dual purpose: firstly, covering an under-researched field of study on the reasons of spectators attending a major sporting events in Slovenia, and secondly the study offers the "snapshot" of sport tourists' characteristics and reasons for attending the major sporting event EuroBasket 2013, which enables tourism organizations to develop tourism products for specific target groups. The results of this study on sport tourist's spectators of EuroBasket 2013 showed that tourism product providers should segment the market on the basis of the different reasons of spectators visiting Slovenia and pay attention on some of demographic variables, such as the country of residence and the age of tourists. The study showed that attending a major event (in this case EuroBasket 2013) as the main reason to visit a country is more likely to be done by older tourists and those who do not come from neighbouring countries. The study also showed that those who attend as spectators a sport event as their main vacation are more likely not to come to the event with family and children or with friends.

The presented study has also some limitations. First, obtaining the data was quite a difficult task since respondents were busy watching the match so it was possible to collect the data just before and after the game. We suggest collecting the data in such cases with another data collection technique. Second, since the regression models showed a low percentage of the explained overall variance, we suggest including other independent variables in the regression model in order to obtain a higher level of the explained variance. Third, we would

suggest including other questions in the survey in order to get a deeper insight of the research phenomenon.

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