

BELGRADE'S HANDBALL REVOLUTION: EVALUATING THE SUCCESS AND CITYWIDE CONSEQUENCES OF THE NEW BELGRADE SUMMER CUP 2018

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Abstract

Sport tourism is a growing industry that can benefit local communities, cities, and states. This paper examines the economic and social impacts of team handball tourism, focusing on the 2009 World Men's Handball Championship (WMHC09) in Split, Croatia. The findings suggest that WMHC09 had a positive impact on the local economy, with increased tourism revenue and job creation. The event also had a positive social impact, with improved community relations and increased pride in the city.

Keywords: Sport tourism, Team handball, Economic impact, Social impact

1. Introduction

Sport Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing special forms of tourism, which can contribute to the economic development of a) local communities, b) cities c) states (Coghlan & Filo, 2013; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis & Mules, 2000, Gibson, 2002). Sport tourism is not something new that happens in this century. If we look back at history we found out that people have engaged in sport related travel for centuries. However, it seems that the popularity of this form of travel has increased in the past ten years. We will find out of course various explanations. Maybe is positive the increased emphasis on health and fitness that increased the number of sports events by cities to attract tourists (Gibson, 1998). Many researches seems that international sports events have long serving as occasions for the advertisement of the host nation and city (Whitson & Macintosh, 1996).

Another thing is that investment in sporting infrastructure in small and big also cities was not only focus on getting involved the local community in sport, but was instead aimed at attracting tourists, encouraging not only the inward investment but also interested of changing the image of the city (Gratton, Shibli & Coleman, 2005). Team handball is very popular all over the world and especially in Europe. The popularity of this sport seems from the reason that in the Olympic Games in Rio (2016) it was the most popular sport after football in spectators and in tickets sells ("Rio 2016 – Handball most popular sport after football"). Recently, the 2009 World Men's Handball Championship (WMHC09) that organized in a small Croatian city, Split seems that the respondents perceived the social impacts from co-hosting WMHC09 as mostly positive (Pranić, Petrić & Cetinić, 2012).

Belgrade from 2016 starting organizes with great success the “New Belgrade Summer Cup”. This was a great opportunity, especially for the city of Belgrade, since Handball in Europe is very popular and so is Serbia. This year the tournament was taking place 26-28 June 2018. The event, “New Belgrade Summer Cup”, brought to Belgrade 65 teams with boys and 20 teams with girls, which competed for a 3-day event to win the title of the Champion of the tournament. The organizer awarded with prizes the most successful teams of the tournament which means teams placed on first, second and third position in each category. These teams received a prize – original cup with logo of “New Belgrade Summer Cup”. Teams placed on first, second and third position received medals. Awards to best players and coaches were also given. More specifically these were given to MVP player, to best goalkeeper, to best assist player and to best defender. Furthermore an award was given to best coach of the tournament. This top organization was held in 7 placements, all rent by the state sports facilities all over Belgrade. The teams they contest were split in 2002 to 2005 born for boys and for girls were split in 2002 and 2004 born categories. These athletes were contest in 7 different courts. The tournament games are played only in indoor halls with a playing court of 40m x 20 m. Facilities are framed by cafe-bars, dormitories, gyms, and parking. All the event was covered with live streaming technology.

2. Team Handball

Team handball is a very popular sport all over the world and especially in the European community. It was initially included into the Olympic Games' program during the Munich Games in 1972 (Seil, Rupp, Tempelhof, & Kohn, 1998; Pokrajac, 1989). The popularity of this sport seems from the reason that in the Olympic Games in Rio (2016) it was the most popular sport after football in spectators and in tickets sells. Moreover if someone consider the capacity of the fields of each sport (handball vs football) it was realized that handball was the dominant sport of these Olympic Games (“Rio 2016 – Handball most popular sport after football”). Nowadays Pokrajiac (2010), reported that this game become more faster, more interesting and with more attractive attacks. This means more goals than before in the games. The number of goals seems to be the key of the popularity of the sport and is the crucial factor of the quality of the modern handball.

More specifically it is a dynamic sport having a high degree of physical strain. Players of this game should have strength, speed, endurance, reaction speed and other physical abilities such as agility and flexibility (Wolf et al., 1974; Khosla, 1983). Furthermore the players while dribbling and throwing should display adequate coordination. The demands and the characteristics of this sport are the constant and intense contact with the opponents, movements around the playing field at high speed using great strength, a high number of jumps, throws, and forceful contact with the ball during the games and the training sessions (Backx, Beijer, Bol & Erich, 1991; Wolf et al., 1974).

Buchheit, Laursen, Kuhnle, Ruch, Renaud & Ahmaidi (2009), reported that the game because of its complex requires players also to adopt well developed aerobic and anaerobic capacities. The great successes in a sport depend to a large extent on the level of morphological characteristics and motor skills (Bota 1984; Hosek & Pavlin 1983). The performance in team handball is up to athletes' morphological characteristics. Moreover in team handball there are different playing positions which conduce to the total performance. Each position has its specific demands and its characteristics. These

lead team handball players to have or to adapt specific motor abilities and morphological characteristics in each position. Consequently in high level games, players have differences in body mass and in body high at four different playing positions (goalkeeper, pivot players, wingers and backcourt players) (Ghermanescu, 1989). The positive outcome of a team handball game apart from athletes' physical abilities, depends on high technical, tactical, psycho-kinetic characteristics as well as on the accumulated knowledge and experience of the players (Bayios, 2000). Athletic performance depends on the great degree of expression-effect of motor skills, which occurs after the action of the influence of coaching procedures (Matveev, 1977).

Maximizing sports performance, which is assumption for a positive outcome, depends to a large extent on the level of all these above features and characteristics. Consequently team handball seems to require all the above mentioned factors. Also it is well understanding that team handball is a complex and difficult game for someone who want to play this sport in a high level. Apart from all these above mentioned characteristics there is one important fact which doesn't depend on training or on coaching procedure. This is cleverness and is the most important characteristic for someone who wants to play this sport in outstanding.

3. Event

Belgrade is the capital and largest city of Serbia. It is located at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, where the Pannonia Plain meets the Balkans. Its name translates to "White city". It is one of the most interesting cities in Europe where socialist blocks are squeezed between art nouveau masterpieces. With nice parks, local culture, food and night life. Grandiose coffee houses and smoky dives all find rightful place along Knez Mihailova, a lively pedestrian boulevard flanked by historical buildings, all the way to the ancient Kalemegdan Citadel, the crown of the city. Deeper in Belgrade's bowels are museums guarding the cultural, religious and military heritage of the country.

At the area of New Belgrade Handball Club "Novi Beograd" has organized summer International handball tournament "New Belgrade Summer Cup". The tournament took place from June 26 - 28 of June for boys and girls in categories: U16, U15, U14, U13 for boys and U16, U14 for girls. In total of 65 teams for boys and 20 teams for girls. When the event began in 2016 there were only 25 teams (20 for boys and 5 for girls) and in 2017 there were 66 teams (44 boys and 22 girls). Each team had maximum of 20 players (all of them have been reported to the local police departments as prescribed by their law). Security team was all over the place of the event with very discreet presence. Medical staff was present in every hall in case of emergency or to treat minor injuries. In case of an injury that requires hospitalization, the participants were responsible themselves for the costs of the treatment or hospitalization charges ("New Belgrade Summer Cup 26 -28 June 2018").

The athletes (boys and girls) were coming with at least one coach, one official escort from the team and many parents. The parents' couldn't be counted because they lived in other places than the indicated accommodation of the event. Hosted teams from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Israel, Greece, Hungary and Slovenia were participated at this Summer Cup. They all had the possibility and the chance to win the trophy ("New Belgrade Summer Cup 26 -28 June 2018").

4. Sports Tourism

Sport is an important activity in tourism and tourism is a fundamental feature of sport. This may mean that sport and tourism sometimes have an interrelated relationship (Hinch&Higham, 2001). Athletic tourism can be defined in many different ways, but most of its definitions are largely determined by the society in which it is formulated (Epitropoulos, 2002). There is a wide spread opinion that sport events can act as a catalyst for economic development and urban regeneration (Wilson, 2006).

Gibson (1998) divides sports tourism into three major categories. The first category includes watching a sporting event. The second refers to the tourists visit to a particular sports monument. Finally, the third category involves active participation. Thus, athletic tourism is characterized as an integrated tourist experience where sports are at the center of the process. Sports tourism is therefore considered to be recreational-oriented travel that leads people to temporarily move away from their permanent residence to engage in physical activities or just watch them. It seems clearly that the athletic event must satisfy in total such the athletes as and the audience.

In the last decade interest in sports tourism has increased significantly, both in the sports industry and in the tourism industry (Standeven, & De Knop, 1999). Sports Tourism is one of the world's fastest-growing special forms of tourism, which can contribute to the economic development not only of local communities and cities but also and to states (Coghlan& Filo, 2013; Dwyer et al., 2000, Gibson, 2002). Athletic tourism is an economic, social and cultural phenomenon created by the unique interaction of activity, people and location (Bull & Weed, 2012). Sports events are one of the fastest growing forms of athletic tourism, both internationally and also in Serbia. In particular, sports tourism can have multiple economic, social and environmental benefits (Coghlan & Filo, 2013; Gibson, 2002).

It can enhance the tourist visibility of a country, while at the same time it can contribute to the development of Alternative Forms of Tourism. By involving the local community in the organization, it contributes to the development of the region thus bringing many economic benefits to the local community. It is recognized that the sports-mega events are significant consequences for the host cities, and great media coverage that they will attract (Horne, 2007). In a recent study that examines the impact of sport in both neighbor countries Croatia and Serbia found out that sport plays a very important role at various levels in both societies. It seems after all that Serbia has a very important role and a good tradition in several sports and athletes (Simic-Banovic, Jurcic&Petronijevic, 2017).

5. The Present Study

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the success of the event as far as the athletic track is concerned, as well as the recreational and tourism impact it has left on athletes and mission escorts. The aim was to evaluate the "New Belgrade Summer Cup" which took place in 2018 in Belgrade. The coaches, the parents and the escorts of the missions were asked if they have been satisfied with the benefits of the stadiums, of the games, of the hotels and generally of the whole event. It was examined the generally impression that Belgrade has left to them and whether a positive image of the city was created abroad. The present study also examined the impact of service quality on the image of a city, namely Belgrade and the economic impact of the organization on the city.

6. Method

The sample of the survey was eighty seven (N = 87) coaches, parents and escorts of the missions that they took part in the tournament. Questionnaires responded anonymously and collected at the end of the tournament and evaluated the organization's services, the image taken of the Belgrade and the money they spent while staying in the city. The questionnaire was an adaptation from the Tzetis, Alexandris & Kapsampeli (2014) small-scale service quality survey questionnaire.

7. Results

From the results it is showed that the majority of the people who responded the questionnaire was men (72.4%). The respondents were from 20 to 70 years old and the mean of the age was 40.8. The results of the research have shown that coaches, parents and escorts of the missions that they took part in the tournament, have been generally satisfied by the organization. Accessibility for the stadiums of the tournament satisfied the 79.3% of the respondents and 85.1% for the hotels. Also the transportations were easy for 78.1% of the people. More specifically Table 1 shows the accessibility in general.

Table1. Accessibility

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility	%	%	%	%	%
The stadiums of the tournament were easily accessible	3.4	6.9	10.3	48.3	31
Transportations to the stadium were easy	8	6.9	6.9	44.8	33.3
The Hotel that I stayed was easily accessible		4.6	10.3	41.4	43.7

Also, 89.7% of respondents considered the staff friendly and 90.8% polite and knowledgeable. In particular Table 2 shows the responses of coaches, parents and escorts about the personnel.

Table2. Personnel

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Personnel	%	%	%	%	%
The Personnel of the tournament was polite		2.3	6.9	35.6	55.2
The Personnel of the tournament was knowledgeable		3.4	5.7	44.8	46
The Personnel of the tournament was friendly	1.1	2.3	6.9	36.8	52.9

Still the condition of the stadiums seemed that satisfied the 86.5% of the respondents. Table 3 shows the answers for the stadiums.

Table 3. Stadium

Parameter	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Stadium	%	%	%	%	%	
The stadiums were in good condition	1.1	3.4	6.9	42.5	46	
The stadiums were good	1.1	3.4	6.9	48.3	40.2	
The stadiums were easy to use	1.1	2.3	13.8	44.8	37.9	

As far as social activities are concerned, the majority was satisfied, since 74.7% found them interesting, and

73.6% well organized and entertaining. Table 4 shows the responses about the socials.

Table 4. Socials

Parameter	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Socials	%	%	%	%	%	
The socials / associative activities were interesting	2.3	3.4	19.5	46	28.7	
The socials / associative activities were well organized	2.3	2.3	21.9	41.4	32.2	
The social / associative activities were fun	2.3	3.4	20.7	48.3	25.3	

Furthermore the feedback that we took from the sample of the study as regards the competition was recording as it seems in table 5.

Table 5. Competition

Parameter	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
Competition	%	%	%	%	%	
The teams were strong	1.2	1.2	14.1`	45.9	37.6	
The games were competitive	1.2	4.7	5.9	52.9	35.3	
The competition of tournament was in a good level	1.2	1.2	4.7	50.6	42.4	

The sample of the study was also generally very satisfied of the tournament in a percentage of 84.8%. In the Table 6 you can see specified the satisfaction of the attenders of the tournament.

Table 6. Tournament

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Tournament	%	%	%	%	%
The tournament was well scheduled		5.9	8.2	37.6	48.2
The schedule was kept		2.4	10.6	40	47.1
The schedule run smoothly	2.4		5.9	48.2	43.5
The tournament was Fun	1.2		7.1	42.4	49.4
The tournament was Interesting	1.2	1.2	8.2	38.8	50.6
The tournament was Relaxing	1.2	2.4	17.6	42.4	36.5
The tournament gave me the chance to socialize	1.2	2.4	12.9	49.4	34.1

As regarding the satisfaction totally 89.4% were satisfied with their decision to attend this sport event, because 89.5% believe that was a good tournament and finally 90.6% have the intention to come again in Belgrade in the future if a tournament like that takes place again.

Table 7. Satisfaction

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfaction	%	%	%	%	%
In totally I am satisfied with my decision to attend the tournament	1.2	2.4	7.1`	36.5	52.9
In Total it was a good Tournament		2.4	8.2	42.4	47.1
I would attend such a tournament if it takes places in Belgrade again in the future.	1.2	2.4	5.9	44.7	45.9

Also, the majority of respondents, 78.1%, were satisfied of the hotels as they found them clean, modern, with good services and facilities. In Table 8 seems the satisfaction of the sample and its preference about the hotels.

Table 8. Hotels

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Hotels	%	%	%	%	%
My Hotel was Clean		7	9.9	43.7	39.4
My Hotel was Modern	2.8	2.8	21.1	35.2	38
My Hotel had good Services		1.4	19.7	36.6	42.3

My Hotel had good Facilities 5.6 16.9 35.2 42.3

Moreover the hotel staff seemed to have gained the impression since 84.5% said it was friendly, 83.1% polite and 85.9% helpful. Table 9 shows the choices of the coaches, parents and escorts about the personnel of the hotels.

Table 9. The Personnel of the Hotels

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
The Personnel of the Hotels	%	%	%	%	%
The Personnel of my Hotel was helpful		2.8	11.3	33.8	52.1
The Personnel of my hotel was polite	1.4	2.8	12.7	25.4	57.7
The Personnel of my hotel was friendly		4.2	11.3	31	53.5

The cost of living, in general, buying, staying, food and having fun seem cheap to the sample, as 84.6% of them seemed to be economical. In Table 10 seem the responses about the cost.

Table 10. Cost

Parameter	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
Cost	%	%	%	%	%
The cost of shopping in Belgrade was affordable		1.3	21.8	41	35.9
The cost of Hotel was affordable		1.3	11.5	56.4	30.8
The cost of entertaining in the city was affordable		1.3	11.5	48.7	38.5
The cost of Eating in the city was affordable		1.3	11.5	39.7	47.4

The amenities of the city of Belgrade seemed that satisfied parents, escorts and coaches as 84.5% were satisfied by the city restaurants, 82.1% by city tourist information and 79.7% found that the entertaining opportunities were various. However, it is important that 87.4% felt safety in the city, 83.7% believe that Belgrade is a city with strong culture and 89.9% with friendly people. After all the majority of parents and escorts, as well as coaches had a positive impact and a good image of the city of Belgrade with a percentage of 87.3%.

In conclusion 90.3% of the coaches of the teams, parents of the kids and escorts of the missions, will visit the city of Belgrade again and 92.7% will attend the tournament if organized again. The majority of the respondents 91.5% will encourage their friends to visit Belgrade and also a percentage of 90.2% will say good things about the city of Belgrade. After all, the participants had left a good amount of money at Belgrade, as the survey had shown.

8. Discussion

The survey conducted in the majority of coaches, parents and escorts of the missions, and showed some very interesting facts, both for their satisfaction with the organization and for the services. It also showed the overall image of the city of Belgrade. This research seems to have been a successful athletic event, which left the majority of coaches, parents and escorts from foreign countries very satisfied. The level of the tournament was very high and the competition was really good.

The facilities and the fields were in good condition and all the hotels seems that have satisfactory amenities. People with their friendliness and courtesy both in the organization and in the hotels seemed to have won the best impressions. The current survey showed that the majority of coaches as parents and escorts of the missions were very satisfied in all sectors of the tournament.

Finally the event succeeds in promoting the city very well to the participants, who had a very positive opinion about the city of Belgrade. This is very important for the cities. Cities are increasingly using cultural events in many ways so to improve their image. It is important for their development to attract visitors and investment (Richards & Wilson, 2004). This is not something new, because cities always want to increase their economies, so in that way they have long used many events such as sporting events (Getz, 1991). Recent studies of city and tourism marketing have pointed that the use of events has been very successful to promote places and major cities in particular (Robertson and Guerrier, 1998; Schuster, 2001; Waitt, 2003). Therefore, sports events should not focus only on the sporting event but also on the best promotion and advertising of the host city.

9. Conclusion

Athletic tourism clearly focuses on the type, the quality and the proper organization of a sporting event. But besides the main product that is the sporting event, it is the supporter, which is the satisfaction of athletes and of all participants from the image of the city and of the social events. In conclusion, the current survey showed that this specific tournament was very successful in all terms of the sporting element, which welcomed participants from foreign countries.

It seems clearly that was also a very good advertising of Belgrade, which made happy the people who visited it. It also appeared that social activities satisfy the participants, which may affect them positive in their future involvement. That means that the people who joined this tournament, they will be happy to join again or visit again the city of Belgrade. Athletic events should therefore not only focus on the sporting event, but also on social activities, as well as on a better promotion and advertising of the city and the country in general.

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