



SPORT MEDIJI I BIZNIS

NAUČNI ČASOPIS

VOL 10 №1

BEOGRAD, 2024

ISSN 2956-0780

**Fakultet za sport, Univerzitet „Union - Nikola Tesla“, Beograd
Faculty of Sport, University „ Union - Nikola Tesla“, Belgrade**

SPORT MEDIJI I BIZNIS

naučni časopis iz oblasti sporta, medija i biznisa

SPORT MEDIA AND BUSINESS

Scientific Journal in the Field of Sport, Media and Business

Glavni i odgovorni urednik/Editor-in-Chief

Prof. dr Dejan Dašić

***SPORT MEDIJI I BIZNIS*, naučni časopis iz oblasti sporta, medija i biznisa**
SPORT MEDIA AND BUSINESS, Scientific Journal in the Field of Sport, Media and Business

ISSN 2956-0780

Izlazi: dva puta godišnje/ published: twice a year

Izdavač/Published by

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Faculty of Sport, University „Union - Nikola Tesla“, Belgrade

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www.fzs.edu.rs

Štampa/Printed by

RIS, Beograd Broj/Volume X No1(2024)

Tiraž/Circulation 100

www.smb.edu.rs

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Original scientific paper

UDK: 338.48-52(497.11)
796.9

Received: 11.2.2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58984/smb2401007j>

Accepted: 20.4.2024

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THE FACTORS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN SKI TOURISM ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Saša Jovanović ¹, Goran Đoković ², Mirjana Gilić ³

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to provide an insight into the current models of service quality in ski tourism with a practical implication on the example of the Republic of Serbia. Nowadays, ski tourism has evolved into an important segment of the winter tourism industry in Europe. Its development was encouraged by the popularisation of skiing as a sport, as well as the growth of the number of people who ski professionally or recreationally. The studies from relevant publishers have been dealt with the concept of travellers' motivation in ski tourism from different point of views such as, the aspect of sustainable development in tourism, quality management, marketing strategy and customer satisfaction. When defining the research scope, it was noted that service quality represents an important driver of motivation in sports tourism. However, there is a certain research gap in exploring the factors that affect the service quality in winter sports, and in particular models and instruments that could provide their better understanding. In accordance with this statement, the research question in the study was to analyse the main determinants of service quality in ski tourism in the Republic of Serbia and to compare their relevance among the respondents belonging to different countries of origin and gender. The theoretical research presented in this paper was based on the application of a systematic literature review that has included relevant studies dealing with the concept of service quality in winter sport tourism. In addition, empirical research was conducted to address the research question in finding the factors that influence the service quality in ski tourism. The research was based on a sample of 208 skiers who visited the Republic of Serbia during the winter seasons in years 2023 and 2024. In the analysis and interpretation of the data, descriptive statistics, compare means and factor analysis were used.

Keywords: service quality, ski tourism, winter sports, quality management, sports tourism

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Introduction

The subject of this article deals with the research of service quality in ski tourism and the main factors that affect tourist satisfaction in ski destinations. Ski tourism has evolved into an important segment of the winter tourism industry attracting around 350 million skier visits annually (Steiger et al. 2019). Its development was encouraged by the popularisation of skiing as a sport, as well as the growth of the number of people who ski professionally or recreationally. One of the reasons for the popularization of this type of tourism is that skiing, which was once an elite sport, has now become more accessible to the wider population, which has had a positive effect on the growth of the ski tourism market.

Bieger et al. (2002) define the tourist destination of winter sports as the geographical, economic, and social unit, consisting of organisations, companies, activities and infrastructure, having as a goal to enable the satisfaction of specific needs of winter sports tourists. The most popular ski destination in the world are the Alps, with the so called “Big Four” ski countries that are situated in this region: Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and France. According to Statista (2023) around 37 percent of all ski resorts worldwide are in Alpine countries.

Literature review has recognised certain studies dealing with the concept of ski tourism from different aspects such as tourist motivation to travel, ski tourism sustainability and climate change (Prettenthaler et al., 2022), marketing strategies or ski tourism infrastructure. In addition, in some studies the concept of quality in ski tourism was examined from a perspective of seasonal employment in the sector (Ismert & Petrick, 2004). However, there is a certain research gap in exploring the determinants of service quality in winter sports. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to provide an insight into the current models of service quality in ski tourism with a practical implication on the example of the Republic of Serbia. The research question in the study was to analyse the main determinants of service quality in ski tourism in the Republic of Serbia and to compare their relevance among the respondents belonging to different countries of origin and gender.

Literature review

The modern concept of quality emphasises the customer as the only authoritative factor for the assessment of service quality (Djokovic & Celik, 2021). In accordance with this approach, the paper analyses the determinants of service quality in winter tourism from the perspective of tourist perception. Tsitskari, Tsiotras & Tsiotras (2006) define the concept of service quality in sport as a multi-dimensional structure that depends on a

socio - cultural context of a country and the type of service sector. The same conclusions were reached by Shang, Luo & Kong (2022) who stated that ski tourism is affected by multi-aspect factors. In addition, Thwaites & Chadwick (2013) indicated that service quality is the basis for differentiation on the sport tourism market and the development of competitive advantage. Another perspective of service quality in winter tourism was provided by Hallmann et al. (2015) who emphasised that the quality of accommodation, hotel staff, information management, destination policy and planning represent important indicators related to the quality standard of tourism product.

In exploring the concept of service quality in ski tourism, this paper was focused on the segment of recreational ski tourists, which has certain specificities. Theodorakis et al. (2009) in their study conducted a segmentation of recreational ski tourists according to motives, dividing them into four categories: beginners, lovers, naturalists, and tourists with multiple interests. Among the four categories of ski tourists, the authors have identified significant differences both in terms of loyalty and participation in the activities. The category of ski lovers had statistically higher results in engagement in activities compared to the remaining three groups of tourists.

Hudson & Shephard (1998) were among the first researchers who measured 10 factors of service quality at ski tourism destinations within focus groups and in-depth interviews in Switzerland. One year later, Weiermair and Fuchs (1999) conducted a study on a large sample of 1.822 tourists in Austria and Italy, demonstrating service quality indicators for ski resorts, which involved ski slopes, accommodation, restaurants, lift ticket service, employee service, and tour operator services. However, some authors used SERVQUAL model in measuring the quality of service in ski tourism. For instance, Weiermair and Fuchs (2000) have successfully applied this model for exploring tourists' judgments regarding service quality in alpine tourism.

Furthermore, Dickson and Faulks (2007) have analysed customer satisfaction in ski areas, showing that significant factors, which affect ski tourist decisions are safety and snow quality, the variety of tracks and space outside of tracks, but also other factors that are not directly related to skiing. These factors include shops, restaurants, and the possibility to participate in other recreational activities. In a study that was conducted in Alpine ski resorts, Faullant, Matzler & Füller (2008) have demonstrated that satisfaction and image rating affect the tourist's loyalty. Similar, Ferrand & Vecchiattini (2002) indicated how ski resort image, ski and non-ski service attributes impact customer satisfaction. In addition, Miragaia et al. (2016) were dealing with the satisfaction of ski tourists in ski destinations regarding the following determinants: capacities and equipment, characteristics of ski tracks, type of service in ski destination, restaurants, accommodation, and social activities, as well as the accessibility to a ski destination. Similar study was conducted by

Chua et al. (2015) who analysed the relations between “physical environmental stimuli (i.e., layout accessibility, aesthetics, cleanliness, and other visitors), perceived quality of physical environment, excitement, and behavioural intentions in ski resort”. Moreover, Xiao, Yaping & Yanqin (2022) have explored ski tourism experience from the perspective of perceived value that includes four dimensions: facility value, perceived price, safety value and service value.

A significant insight into the research of ski tourism was made by Alexandris et al. (2006) who measured the service quality in skiing resorts using Brady and Cronin's three-dimensional service quality model (physical environment quality, interaction quality, outcome quality). The starting point in their study was the fact that services are intangible which brings attentions to other aspects of satisfaction such as social interactions with the staff and hospitality, the quality of physical servicescape regarding natural environment, the ski tracks, landscape and the so called outcome quality which is related to tourist experience. The same model was used in different surveys that included 345 visitors (Kyle et al., 2010) and 129 visitors (Barlas, Mantis & Koustelios, 2010) in Greek ski centres. Their questionnaires consisted of 15 items that related to: facility quality (e.g., “ski slopes are well maintained”), interaction quality (e.g., “employees are friendly”), and outcome quality. The cited studies have also pointed out the service quality dimensions that affect word-of-mouth communication. In addition, significant contribution in studying ski tourism was made by Joppe, Eliot & Durand (2013) who investigated different segments in ski tourism market including skiers, snowboarders, and ski travellers according to “service considerations such as quality, entertainment, variety and lifestyle characteristics”. Another research provided by Konstantinidis et al. (2018) has pointed out the entertainment factors as important aspect of ski tourism that influence the travellers' choices. In recent studies, Oralhan, Oralhan & Kirdök (2022) analysed the criteria that affects the tourists' choice of ski resorts in Turkey based on the following factors: “facility amenities, price, accessibility, accommodation, alternative tourism, and visitors' rating score”.

The survey presented in this paper has included an analysis of different determinants (variables) of service quality in ski tourism which were successfully tested in practice and presented in cited literature. Having in mind the comprehensiveness of studies, they were used as a role model in designing the questionnaire for this research. However, the survey was additionally enriched with two service quality determinants referring to servicescape and nature.

Methods and sample

The theoretical research presented in this paper was based on the application of a systematic literature review that has included relevant studies dealing with the concept of service quality in winter sport tourism. Empirical research was conducted to address the research question in finding the factors that influence the service quality in ski tourism. The survey has included a sample of 208 (N=208) recreational skiers who visited the Republic of Serbia during the winter seasons in 2023 and 2024. The questionnaire was designed in accordance with the models presented in the literature review and included 18 statements (variables) referring to specific determinants of service quality in ski tourism. The variables were examined in the form of closed questions using a Likert scale with the following values: 1 = disagree; 2 = slightly disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = slightly agree; 5= agree. In the processing and interpretation of the data, methods of factor analysis and compared means were applied.

Table 1 represents the sample structure by gender. Respondents were equally represented in the sample (N=208), with a slight majority of the male population (51,9%).

Table 1: The sample structure by gender

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	108	51.9	51.9	51.9
	Female	100	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

The age distribution of the sample (table 2) is dominated by the respondents belonged to the 36-45 age category (62.5%) followed by the 47 -56 (15,4%), 57-65 (12%) and 20-35 (10.1%) age groups.

Table 2: The age categories of respondents

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-35	21	10.1	10.1	10.1
	36-46	130	62.5	62.5	72.6
	47-56	32	15.4	15.4	88.0
	57-65	25	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

In relation to the country of residence, the respondents were from the following countries: Serbia (54.3%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (19.7%), Russia (9.1%), Montenegro (9.6%), North Macedonia (3.8%), Croatia (3.4%). Detailed data on this variable are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' countries of residence

		Country of residence			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Serbia	113	54.3	54.3	54.3
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	41	19.7	19.7	74.0
	N.Macedonia	8	3.8	3.8	77.9
	Montenegro	20	9.6	9.6	87.5
	Russia	19	9.1	9.1	96.6
	Croatia	7	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

Research results

The respondents have ranked the importance of 18 variables that affect their perception of service quality in ski tourism. The variables have included different aspects such as facilities of ski resorts, snow conditions and ski tracks, additional services including shops and restaurants, accommodation, social life, landscape, and nature. To reduce the number of variables for further exploration, the method of factor analysis was applied at the beginning of this research.

Having in mind the data demonstrated in table 4 showing that KMO=0.748 is greater than 0.6, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant ($p=0.000$), the factor analysis was considered justified in this study.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.749
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3108.259
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Com- po- nent	Total Variance Explained						Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	5.609	31.163	31.163	5.609	31.163	31.163	4.112
2	3.781	21.006	52.170	3.781	21.006	52.170	4.316
3	1.896	10.531	62.701	1.896	10.531	62.701	2.753
4	1.563	8.682	71.383	1.563	8.682	71.383	3.281
5	1.088	6.045	77.428	1.088	6.045	77.428	1.327
6	.925	5.139	82.567				
7	.687	3.816	86.383				
8	.588	3.267	89.650				
9	.385	2.140	91.790				
10	.367	2.040	93.829				
11	.271	1.506	95.336				
12	.203	1.129	96.465				
13	.167	.929	97.394				
14	.132	.736	98.129				
15	.121	.674	98.803				
16	.096	.533	99.336				
17	.067	.373	99.709				
18	.052	.291	100.000				

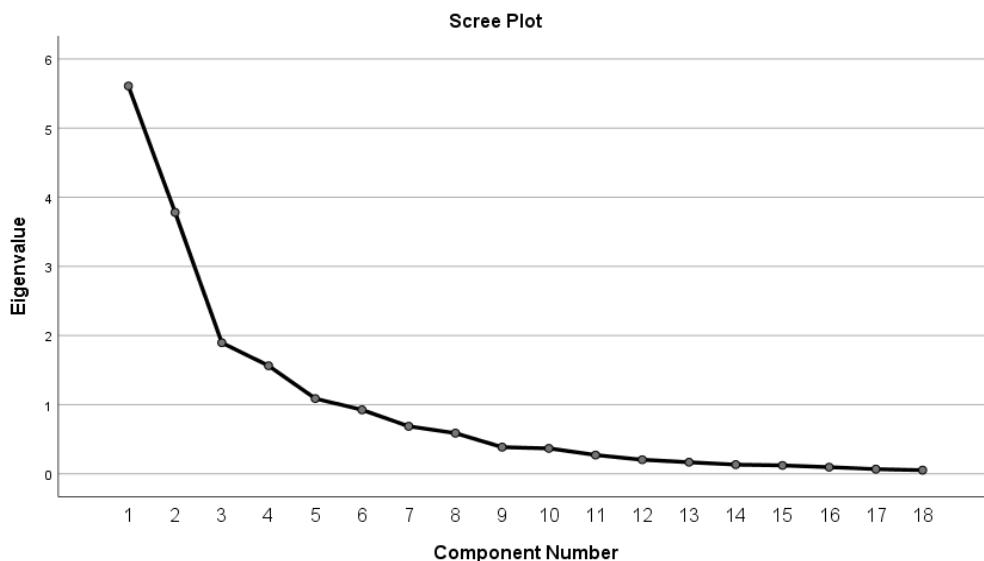
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

The table of Total Variance Explained (table 4) indicated five factors that have eigenvalues higher than 1. Together they account more than 77% of the variability in the original variables. In addition, the Eigenvalues and component numbers are demonstrated on a Scree Plot in figure 1.

Figure 1: Scree Plot



Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

Table 6: Component Matrix

	Component Matrix ^a				
	1	2	3	4	5
Diversity of ski tracks	.832		.366		
Accommodation prices	.820	.360			
Lift maintenance and functioning	.812			-.440	
Restaurants prices	-.772			-.429	
Quality of the slopes	.756				
Facilities quality	.668	-.564			
Meeting different people	-.651	-.357			
Supermarkets and shops	.649		.500	.398	
Nightlife	.615	.556	-.325		
Competence of the employees and hospitality	.453		.404		
Restaurant quality		.862	-.329		
State of equipment	-.342	-.802			
Snow conditions		.755	.470		
Parking		.548	.421	-.306	

Accommodation quality	.419		-.708	.328	
Health and safety services	-.415	.561		.593	
Nature					.779
Landscape		.331		.402	.406

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 5 components extracted.

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

According to the findings presented in table Component Matrix the variables were grouped within 5 factors. The first factor was highly associated with the following determinants: diversity of ski tracks, the quality of slopes, lift maintaining and functioning, the prices of accommodation and restaurants, facility quality, meeting different people and nightlife. Within the second factor the variables such as restaurant quality, state of equipment, parking and snow conditions were recognised as the most dominant. The third factor was associated with supermarket and shops and accommodation quality, while the fourth factor has the highest association with health and safety services. The fifth factor was related to nature and landscape.

Further research was conducted to compare the respondents' answers regarding the variables that were highly associated with the first factor. The data presented in table 7 demonstrate the compared means in variables between the ski tourists from different countries of residence. When interpreting the data it should be noted that higher representation of domestic tourists (54.3%) was represented in the sample, The highest mean values in answers were registered for variables "diversity of ski tracks" (Total M=4.89), "facilities quality" (Total M=3.93) and "quality of the slopes" (Total M=3.53).

For variable "lift maintenance and functioning" the highest mean was recorded among the respondents from Serbia (M=3.08, SD=0.73) in comparison with the lowest mean value among the respondents from North Macedonia (M=2.25, SD=0.46). Diversity of ski tracks was recognised as the most important determinant, with the highest mean values between the tourists from Bosnia and Herzegovina (M=4.97, SD=15), Montenegro (M=4.95, SD=0.22), Serbia (M=4.94, SD=0.22) and Russia (M=4.84, SD=0.37). Furthermore, respondents from Montenegro had the highest means for variables "quality of the slopes" (M=3.75, SD= 0.55) and "nightlife" (M=3.7, SD=0.73). Ski tourists from North Macedonia had highest mean values for variables "restaurants prices" (M=4.5, SD=0.92) and "meeting different people" (M=4, SD=0), while respondents from Serbia highly appreciated "facilities quality" (M=4.12, SD=0.66) as a determinant of service quality in ski tourism. The findings presented in table 7 are statistically significant according to ANOVA table ($p=0.00$) for selected variables.

Table 7: Compared Means regarding the country of residence

Country of residence		Lift mainte- nance and func- tioning	Report					
			Diversity of ski tracks	Quality of the slopes	Restau- rants prices	Night-life	Meeting different people	Facilities quality
Serbia	Mean	3.0885	4.9469	3.6814	3.0619	2.7345	3.5752	4.1239
	N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
	Std. Deviation	.73869	.22523	1.06289	.65850	1.00905	.51418	.66992
Bosnia and Herzogo- vina	Mean	2.9756	4.9756	3.4878	3.4878	2.9512	3.0244	3.6829
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
	Std. Deviation	.15617	.15617	.55326	.92526	.31235	.15617	.47112
N.Mace- donia	Mean	2.2500	4.2500	2.2500	4.5000	1.5000	4.0000	2.7500
	N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Std. Deviation	.46291	.46291	.46291	.92582	.92582	.00000	1.03510
Monte- negro	Mean	2.9500	4.9500	3.7500	2.4500	3.7000	3.0500	3.8500
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Deviation	.22361	.22361	.55012	.94451	.73270	.22361	.36635
Russia	Mean	3.2632	4.8421	3.4211	3.3158	2.4737	3.1579	4.2105
	N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
	Std. Deviation	.73349	.37463	.76853	1.05686	.90483	.37463	.63060
Croatia	Mean	2.2857	4.2857	2.5714	4.1429	1.8571	3.7143	3.1429
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Std. Deviation	.48795	.48795	.97590	1.46385	1.46385	.48795	1.06904
Total	Mean	3.0096	4.8942	3.5337	3.2019	2.7692	3.3990	3.9327
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208
	Std. Deviation	.64449	.30828	.94732	.92083	.98521	.50063	.71916

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

Table 8: ANOVA table regarding countries of residence

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lift maintenance and functioning * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	10.327	5	2.065	5.515	.000
	Within Groups		75.653	202	.375		
	Total		85.981	207			
Diversity of ski tracks * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	6.611	5	1.322	20.448	.000
	Within Groups		13.062	202	.065		
	Total		19.673	207			
Quality of the slopes * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	23.394	5	4.679	5.821	.000
	Within Groups		162.371	202	.804		
	Total		185.764	207			
Restaurants prices * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	36.797	5	7.359	10.716	.000
	Within Groups		138.723	202	.687		
	Total		175.519	207			
Nightlife * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	39.191	5	7.838	9.790	.000
	Within Groups		161.732	202	.801		
	Total		200.923	207			
Meeting different people * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	16.389	5	3.278	18.655	.000
	Within Groups		35.491	202	.176		
	Total		51.880	207			
Facilities quality * Country of residence	Between Groups	(Combined)	23.849	5	4.770	11.579	.000
	Within Groups		83.209	202	.412		
	Total		107.058	207			

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

The analysis of ski tourist decisions related to countries of residence was also considered to be important aspect in a study based on a panel data covering 28 Austrian ski resorts conducted by Falk (2010). Furthermore, Tjørve et al. (2018) indicated the correlation between the country of respondent's residence and repeated tourist visits of winter destinations. The comparison between the respondents' countries of

residence was also provided by Praet et al. (2015) who explored the perceptions among international ski visitors in Japan.

To address the Research Question in this study an additional analysis between the respondents' gender was performed. Compared means among the respondents' gender (table 9) have showed higher mean values in male answers related to variables "lift maintenance and functioning" ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.21$), "diversity of ski tracks" ($M=5$, $SD=0.92$), "nightlife" ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.42$) in compare to female respondents with higher means referring to "restaurants prices" ($M=3.46$, $SD=0.84$), "meeting different people" ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.48$) and "facilities quality" ($M=4.05$, $SD=0.94$). However, the differences in answers regarding "lift maintenance and functioning" and "quality of the slopes" were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$), while other findings match the values of statistical significance ($p<0.05$), which is demonstrated in ANOVA table 10.

Table 9: Compared means between the gender

Gender		Report						
		Lift maintenance and functioning	Diversity of ski tracks	Quality of the slopes	Restaurants prices	Nightlife	Meeting different people	Facilities quality
male	Mean	3.0463	5.0000	3.5370	2.9630	3.3148	3.1944	3.8241
	N	108	108	108	108	108	108	108
	Std. Deviation	.21111	.00000	.50095	.92651	.46661	.42047	.38253
female	Mean	2.9700	4.7800	3.5300	3.4600	2.1800	3.6200	4.0500
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Std. Deviation	.90403	.41633	1.26695	.84591	1.05773	.48783	.94682
Total	Mean	3.0096	4.8942	3.5337	3.2019	2.7692	3.3990	3.9327
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208
	Std. Deviation	.64449	.30828	.94732	.92083	.98521	.50063	.71916

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

Table 10: ANOVA table regarding respondents' gender

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lift maintenance and functioning * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	.302	1	.302	.727	.395
	Within Groups		85.679	206	.416		
	Total		85.981	207			
Diversity of ski tracks * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.513	1	2.513	30.169	.000
	Within Groups		17.160	206	.083		
	Total		19.673	207			
Quality of the slopes * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	.003	1	.003	.003	.957
	Within Groups		185.762	206	.902		
	Total		185.764	207			
Restaurants prices * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	12.827	1	12.827	16.242	.000
	Within Groups		162.692	206	.790		
	Total		175.519	207			
Nightlife * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	66.867	1	66.867	102.752	.000
	Within Groups		134.056	206	.651		
	Total		200.923	207			
Meeting different people * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	9.403	1	9.403	45.603	.000
	Within Groups		42.477	206	.206		
	Total		51.880	207			
Facilities quality * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.650	1	2.650	5.229	.023
	Within Groups		104.407	206	.507		
	Total		107.058	207			

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

These findings can be compared with the studies conducted by Glaes (2009), Pomfret & Doran (2015), which have also confirmed that gender presents an important variable in ski tourism. A significant contribution in studying the gender perspective of ski tourism was made by Williams & Lattey (1994) who recognised the importance of female skiers as tourists and their decisions in developing marketing strategies. Furthermore, Konu et

al. (2011) have also analysed the gender perspective of ski destination choice on the sample of Finnish ski resort customers. In exploring the outdoor recreational tourism in Sweeden, Godtman et al. (2020) have identified the existence of gender inequality. Additionally, Mirehie & Gibson (2020) indicated three dimensions in female skiers that affect their travel decisions such as resort amenities and activities, snow-sport conditions and quality, and price.

Conclusion

The paper provides an insight into the most significant scientific approaches and models that deal with the quality of services in ski tourism. Based on the literature review, it was indicated that important determinants of service quality in winter tourism relate to three aspects: physical environment quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality. The cited models and theoretical approaches were used as an example in designing the questionnaire that was applied in this study and consisted of 18 variables relating to different aspects of service quality in ski tourism. The findings of empirical research that was conducted on a sample of recreational skiers (N=208) in winter destinations in the Republic of Serbia indicated the existence of five different factor that affect the perception of service quality in ski tourism. The first factor was associated with the highest number of variables such as the diversity of ski tracks, the quality of slopes, lift maintaining and functioning, the prices of accommodation and restaurants, facility quality, meeting different people and nightlife. In accordance with this findings, further research was focused on exploring the identified variables among the respondents' gender and countries of residence. The highest mean values in respondent answers were registered for variables "diversity of ski tracks" (M=4.89), "facilities quality" (M=3.93) and "quality of the slopes" (M=3.53). Diversity of ski tracks was recognised as the most important determinant, with the highest mean values between the tourists from Bosnia and Herzegovina (M=4.97, SD=15), Montenegro (M=4.95, SD=0.22), Serbia (M=4.94, SD=0.22) and Russia (M=4.84, SD=0.37), which was statistically significant ($p=0.00$). Compared means among the respondents' gender have demonstrated higher mean values in male answers related to variables "lift maintenance and functioning" (M=3.04, SD=0.21), "diversity of ski tracks" (M=5, SD=0.92), "nightlife" (M=3.31, SD=0.42) in compare to female respondents with higher means referring to "restaurants prices" (M=3.46, SD=0.84), "meeting different people" (M=3.62, SD=0.48) and "facilities quality" (M=4.05, SD=0.94). The differences in answers regarding "lift maintenance and functioning" and "quality of the slopes" were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$), while other findings match the values of statistical significance ($p<0.05$).

The results presented in this article provide additional insight into the conceptualization of service quality in ski tourism and indicate the importance of its measurement. Furthermore, the empirical study conducted in the Republic of Serbia contributes to the clarification of the practical analysis of service quality determinants in ski tourism from the perspective of tourist gender and country of residence. However, certain limitations of this research should be emphasised, which relate to the significantly larger share of domestic tourists in the sample, as well as the fact that the respondents (except Russia) were from the same region, which indicates the existence of cultural and social similarities in quality perception.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Djokovic, G. Investigation: J. S., Dj. G., Theoretical framework: G. M., Data curation: J. S., Resources: J. S., Gilic, M., Writing – original draft: Dj. G., J. S., Writing – review& editing: J. S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Review Article

UDK: 338.487:659.1

316.472.4:004.738.1

316.77

Received: 16.2.2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58984/smb2401025z>

Accepted: 22.4.2024

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THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN CREATING THE IMAGE OF A TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract: The issue of image, personal, organizational, brand, destination, is one of the most important issues that attracts the attention of the social, business and scientific public. This paper draws attention to the need for a comprehensive treatment of the image, the mechanisms of its formation, and especially to the difficulties of considering the image phenomenon in isolation, separated from its basis - identity. Numerous studies of the image of tourist destinations in the past decades, mostly of an empirical nature, remain on the surface of this phenomenon. Their results do not contribute to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, primarily due to the absence of an appropriate conceptualization and theoretical framework. Regarding the image of the destination, the most important thing is, of course, its end result, but the analysis of the image phenomenon, the separation of one into its constituent factors, different, opposite and contradictory, reveals levers whose shaping and use can influence the end result - the image. The role of mass media in this process, especially in the digital era, is very significant, but not decisive.

Keywords: Media, image, identity, brand, marketing, tourist destination

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, at the time of the fiercest market competition, issues of image and current reputation are in the increased focus of attention of modern man, the public, the world of business and politics. Their attitude towards you also depends on how people perceive you - what they think of you, how they treat you, whether and how they do business with you, whether they vote for you.

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If you leave the impression of a serious, credible, cultured and modern man with your speech, demeanor, manners, clothing, activities and overall culture, there is a great chance that you will be included in the circle of people who are accepted and respected, with whom you like to hang out, do business, spend free time...

Concern for one's image, however, is not a newly formed concern of the third millennium, but can be traced deep into the past. Forming a positive self-image was a practical concern, the successful results of which facilitated the administration of rulers and the business of merchants. What others think of us, how they see us, is a significant determinant of our social, economic, cultural or political position, but also a determinant of our behavior.

The need to gain the affection of others, which could only be obtained if they saw us in a positive light, almost started to develop with the development of personal identity and can be classified in the category of basic psychological needs. The moment we became aware of ourselves as a being separate from others, we began to make sure that the other saw us positively, as a friend, because their attitude towards us depended on that. That caring, that activity of building one's own image used the media and techniques that were available to the era in question and did not end with interpersonal or group interaction.

As a working *definition of image*, we will accept, due to its wide applicability, Philip Kotler's definition: "An image is a set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has, which are related to a certain object. People's attitudes and activities towards a certain object are largely conditioned by the object's image" (Kotler 2001).

Today, however, the significantly older, deeper and more comprehensive definition of image given by W. H. Reynolds in 1965 is often overlooked: image is "mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions; it comes into being through a creative process in which these selected impressions are elaborated, embellished, and ordered." (Reynolds 1965, 69). Reynolds makes a distinction here between a mental construct and its basis; our construct is a simplified image, and emphasizes the active and creative role of the consumer: he (the consumer) selects only certain ones from the mass ("flood") of impressions and elaborates them through a process that has creative characteristics; he embellish them and puts them in a certain order. We can take this distinction as equivalent to the difference between belief and fact, what people believe about a person or institution (reputation) and what the person or institution and person really are (their character).

Therefore, as valuable, because it points to the distinction between image and reality, we cite the definition of the world's most respected marketing institution -

AMA, the American Marketing Association: "Image is the consumer perception of a product, institution, brand, business or person, which may or may not correspond with reality" (<https://marketing-dictionary.org/i/image/>)

By *media* in this paper we mean mass media, means of impersonal, mass communication, and due to the absence of disputes about the definition, we will accept the Collins dictionary definition as the working one: "Mass media - means of communication that reach a large number of people in a short time, such as television, newspapers, magazines and the radio." (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/mass-media>)

This paper is of a theoretical nature, and was created on the basis of insight into relevant sources and especially the author's practical experience in introducing the *Montenegro Wild Beauty* brand to the international tourist market. The aim of this paper is to point out the complexity of the formation of the image of tourist destinations, the need to consider the image in connection with other phenomena (the essence of the matter is their connection), to realistically situate the position of the mass media in this process and to indicate the innovations in the image formation process brought about by the digital interaction of consumers.

How does one form an image?

The decisive power of the mass media in image creation is almost commonplace in mass knowledge today. Often, continuous and positive presence of a person, organization or community in the media, either in *news* communications - through news, reports, reportages, guest appearances in the studio, etc., or in *market* communications - through ads, spots, billboards - opinion is - forms favorable and positive image of a person, company, organization, community. According to the opinions of this type, the power of the media is unlimited: "He who holds power and authority, who controls the public media, who has privileged access to information and who knows persuasive techniques, he can convince anyone to *think, believe and do anything*. He can say: 'I took it upon myself to set your head right'" (Thomas Aquinas)" (Šušnjić, 2014)

Without disputing the persuasive power of the media in the field of politics, especially not the media culture that they form and which, through the reduction of the ability for abstract thinking, generally leaves undesirable traces on the intellectual abilities of a large part of humanity, we must note that the phenomenon of forming and changing attitudes and opinions and creating impressions cannot be reduced to the manipulative power of the media, mediators, but necessarily includes at least

two more parties - the one who "convinces" (subject - person, organization, community) and the "convinced" (object - citizen, consumer, voter).

Focusing on the presence and intensity of presence in the media, and the character of the media presentation (positively), focusing on the use of the media, the said opinion nevertheless almost completely abstracts the essential *qualitative characteristics of the subject*, the object, that is, the reality about which ideas, beliefs and impressions are formed.

The formula for achieving a successful image, an image that is not short-lived, does not lie - as history shows - in the mass media and communications, but in the object or subject of the image, not in the media evaluation and distribution of positive impressions, but in the object of evaluation - in high or socially desirable values that brings a person, a product, a brand, an organization, a place or a destination about which impressions are formed. We find this in the (positive) experience gained in interaction with the subject/object and which is determined by the qualities of the subject itself (person, product, organization, community). "That it is principally deeds which create public perceptions, not words and pictures" (Anholt 2010. p. 9). We must also not ignore Socrates who claims: "The way to gain a good reputation, is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear" (<https://www.forbes.com/quotes/8710/>)

This shifting of the focus from the media, the intermediary, to the object, which, on the other hand, is also the subject, will be discussed later through the question of the role of the media in creating the image of a tourist destination.

Definition of image by W.H. Reynolds and the American Marketing Association, through an indication of a possible discrepancy between perception and perceived reality, indicates the impossibility of considering the concept of image in isolation, without insight into its basis, without analyzing the object of perception.

The *object of perception*, as we have already stated, can be a person, product, brand, company, organization, destination, community, nation... And each of these objects of perception is a subject in its own domain. An individual acquires an appropriate education and culture, sets his life goals, creates and practices an appropriate way of speaking and behaving, develops his visual identity and style. A company and organization build a strategy and structure to achieve their goals, form and practice the appropriate culture and behavior, create an appropriate value proposition, design and communications that match that supply.

Both the individual and the organization - through the aforementioned elements - form their identity through which they want to be recognized and through which they enable other people to describe them, to remember them and relate to them.

The unique set of associations we strive to create is the essence of the identity creation process in the business sector.

On the other hand, identity is a key element of an individual's personality, but also of every brand. It provides both man and brand with direction, purpose and meaning (Aaker 1996). Identity, however, is not given, but set task, we shape it through a long and painstaking process, "we constantly review and modify it, because identity is not a state but a process" (Golubović 1999). The philosopher Furio Ceruti compares the process of identity formation to a wall: the construction of identity "necessarily must build a wall that will separate one's own property from the other's, which will thus become someone else's... An open identity, an identity without a wall, contradicts itself. It recognizes itself only in that it differs from the other, that is, in what the wall symbolizes". (Cerutti 2009) Or, to put it another way, "the 'I' consists precisely in distinguishing it from the other" (Ricoeur, according to Golubović 1999).

The principle of difference therefore appears as one of the most important determinants of identity.

Identity can be defined as a set of characteristics, attributes by which a person or organization is presented, positioned and differentiated - visually, verbally, by activity, behavior and it represents the foundation of the image. It is the ability to preserve the internal identity and continuity of the subject. Unlike identity, however, image is in the mind, in the head of the audience (Melewar 2008, 9-11).

The difference between image and reputation should be emphasized here. While image reflects recent experiences, beliefs, feelings, knowledge, associations and impressions about a person, product, company, reputation represents a perception formed over a long period of time and results from the reflection of historically accumulated impressions and experiences (Melewar 2008, 13). Image, despite its "stickiness", can change relatively quickly, reputation, however, requires a consistent image over a long period of time and can be marked by a permanent perception.

Identity and activities on the formation, nurturing and maintenance of identity, specific values by which we are individualized, by which we are different, are those fundamental activities that in the long term contribute the most to image creation and represent its basis.

In the world of economics, brand identity is defined as "a unique set of brand associations that brand strategists aspire to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members. Brand identity should help establish a relationship between

the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits". (Aaker 1996, 68). By breaking down brand identity into twelve dimensions organized into four perspectives, Aaker formed a deeper understanding of brand identity and brand building.

In order to better understand the mechanism of image formation, it is necessary to understand the four key aspects of identity mentioned by Aker: product, organizational, personal and symbolic. With (A) the product-related associations include (1) product scope, its connection with the product class, (2) product attributes (offering something extra or better than others), (3) quality and relationship with value, (4) functional benefits, (4) associations with occasions in which the product is used, (5) associations with users and (6) links with the country of origin.

(B) The organizational aspect of the brand focuses on organizational attributes rather than product attributes ie services. These attributes (customer focus, care for the environment, commitment to technology, local orientation, etc.) are more durable and resistant to competition than product ones and can include emotional and self-expressive benefits such as admiration, respect and liking.

(C) An identity that considers the brand as a person is richer and more interesting than one based on product attributes. A brand can look competent, impressive, youthful, intellectual, formal, classy, trustworthy, etc. In this way, space can be formed for the brand to become a tool through which the consumer, the user expresses his personality (self-expressive benefit) and the basis for forming a relationship between the brand and the user. *Apple* computer users have always perceived this brand as a sign of top professionalism and creativity and through it communicated and expressed an image of them.

(D) A brand is also a symbol, and a strong symbol provides cohesion and structure to an identity and enables easy recognition and recall. Its absence can be a serious handicap. Anything that represents a brand can be a symbol: programs, a slogan, a visual metaphor, a character, a logo, a color, a musical note, a gesture, packaging or a unique pricing policy. Three types of symbols are most prominent: visual images, metaphors, and brand heritage.

By completing the formation of these four groups of brand identity components (product, organizational, personal and symbolic), the brand identity should provide a value proposition to the customer - a statement about the functional, emotional and symbolic benefits provided by the brand.

This projecting of the goals that the brand should achieve is also a key difference between IDENTITY AND IMAGE: identity is active and looks to the future; it outlines

how the brand wants to be perceived. Image is passive and looks to the past; it shows how the brand has been perceived (until) now. The value proposition that is actively communicated to the target audience represents the brand's position and is part of the brand's identity.

Image in tourism

In the field of tourism, image has an incomparably greater importance than in other areas of economy and society. Most tourism products are services rather than physical goods and can usually compete only through image. In the world of services, to which tourism belongs, what is bought is intangible and therefore risky, inseparable, variable, perishable and easily substitutable. (Ratković et al. 2023)

Intangible - unlike a physical product, you cannot see, taste, feel, hear or smell a service before you buy it. The consequence of intangibility is the increased risk in deciding on a tourist purchase. Before boarding the plane, the passenger only has a ticket and a promise, and when he leaves the hotel he can only show the receipt. Therefore, in order to reduce the uncertainty and risk caused by the intangibility of the service, the customer looks for signs and tangible evidence of quality that will provide him with information and confidence in the service.

Inseparability - the service is provided and received (used) at the same time. Both employees and guests are part of the product, which is why managers manage both employees and consumers.

Variability - the quality of services depends on who, when and where provide them, so they are highly variable. The service is created and consumed simultaneously, which limits the possibility of quality control. Perishability - the service cannot be stored to be sold later during a period of high demand. "A 100-room hotel that only sells 60 rooms on particular night cannot inventory the 40 unsold rooms sell 140 rooms next night. Revenue lost from not selling the unsold 40 rooms is gone forever" (Kotler et al. 1999, 43-44.).

This intangibility of the destination, the impossibility of trial or testing before purchase, brings the question of the importance of the destination's image to a "red-heat". That is why destinations are differentiated through the creation of brands, through the construction of a competitive identity, what makes the destination distinctive and unforgettable. "The image that the product creates in consumer awareness, how the product is *positioned*, however, for the ultimate success of the

destination is more important than its actual characteristics" (Morgan at. al. 2002, 12, underlined by V.Z.).

The image differentiates one destination from another and today it plays a crucial role in choosing a destination. "What, for instance, is the difference between hiking in Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Crete or Montenegro; or between sailing in Greece, Turkey or Croatia? And, when all other actors such as hiking terrain, offshore wind conditions for sailing and visitor facilities are equal, the answer usually lies somewhere in the potential visitor's perception the destination and its emotional appeal. (UNWTO 2009, 52)

However, image formation is not a simple, one-sided, or one-way process that can be successfully implemented using the mass media. It (formation) is intricately intertwined with the destination selection process whose starting point is the totality of all possible destinations - (1) *initial opportunity set*. (Goodall 1991, 58-77.) This initial set is - through discarding those that are not considered because they are not known and the elimination of other destinations that are not available due to money, time, etc. - quickly turns into (2) *realizable opportunity set*. Since this set is almost always too large, it is reduced to (3) *consideration set*. If this set is still large, additional evaluation is undertaken and the number of destinations is reduced to (4) *choice set*. In this phase, the attributes of each destination are evaluated separately and the destination is evaluated against the expected benefits, which determines the destination's potential for satisfaction. After evaluating the attributes of each destination, (5) *decision set* is formed (*evoked set* by other authors). The size of this decision set is small and usually consists of three or four destinations. The final evaluation of the destinations that are in the *decision set* results in the final selection of the destination.

According to this model, the image of the destination becomes an important component of the selection as soon as the individual makes the decision to travel. Only destinations of which the decision maker is aware (*awareness*) can be included in the *opportunity set*, which assumes that the image of the destination exists in the mind of the decision maker. As more and more destinations are eliminated through the evaluation process, only those destinations that have a strong image for the type of activity that the decision-maker chooses remain for further selection. Thus, the image of the destination can be seen as a "pull" factor, and understanding the mechanism of image formation is crucial for developing the attraction potential of the destination.

Numerous studies indicate that the main forces of image formation are stimulus (informative) and personal factors (Baloglu and McCleary 1999, Beerli and Martin 2004). Stimulus factors include external stimuli, different amount and type of

information sources, which forms the secondary image, and the previous experience of visiting the destination - the primary image. (Phelps 1986). Personal factors include social and psychological factors of the percipient (motivation, socio-demographic characteristics, above all age and education and vacation experience).

The destination image is formed through three different and hierarchically connected structural components: cognitive, affective and conative and plays a key role in the destination selection process. (Gartner 1993, 191-215). Cognitive image represents the understanding of the product in an intellectual way and is derived from facts, and due to the impossibility of trying out the tourist product beforehand, the tourist image is often based more on perception than reality. But as consumer behavior research shows, perception is reality. '*If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences*' – Thomas' theorem (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_theorem). According to other sources, S. Pike, S. Page 2014, p. 215: "*What is defined or perceived by people is real in its consequences*")

The affective component of the image refers to the motives that an individual has for selecting a destination. Motives determine what we want to get, the expected benefits from the object that we consider in the selection process and thus influence its evaluation. This component is activated in the *choice set* phase, the evaluation stage of destination selection, when the attributes of each destination are evaluated separately (after the *consideration set* phase is completed).

The conative component is analogous to behavior because it is the action component. The connection with the previous two components is direct and depends on the image developed during the cognitive and evaluated during the affective phase.

Cognitive image, on the other hand, is formed in different ways. The mental construct formed under the influence of the destination, its marketing efforts, through induced agents, produces an induced image, and the destination image is created organically, from sources that are not directly related to the destination and over which the destination has no control (newspaper articles, books, documentary programs, films, schooling, family and friends, and other unbiased sources) represents an organic image. (Gunn 1972).

Gartner sets the process of image formation as a continuum along which there are separate formative agents (informational sources or stimulus factors in Baloglu and McCleary 1999) that act independently or in some combination to form an image unique to an individual. Here it is worth mentioning the agents in question, without their elaboration:

1. Overt induced I - direct attempts to form an appropriate image, through traditional forms of advertising, TV, radio, billboards, brochures, etc. The person receiving the message clearly identifies the sender of the message.
2. Overt induced II formative image agents include information obtained from tour operators and other organizations that have an interest in the process of making tourist decisions.
3. Covert induced I - use of recognizable spokespeople, celebrities.
4. Covert induced II - the person being influenced is not aware that the promoters of the destination are involved in the development of the projected image. Most often through familiarization trips for tourism journalists.
5. Autonomous agents consist of independently produced newspaper articles, documentaries, feature films, etc., and there are two basic agents: (1) newspapers and (2) popular culture that portrays people and places through films, documentaries, and *non-news* TV programs. Both agents have high credibility and market penetration.
6. Unsolicited organic agents mean information from unsolicited individuals who have either visited a destination or believe they know it.
7. Solicited organic agents - when the destination in the selection process becomes part of the *consideration set*, then information is sought from knowledgeable, well-informed sources, usually friends and relatives. This stage of seeking information is often called *word of mouth*.
8. Organic - At the end of the continuum is the organic formation of the image and it consists of information about the destination acquired through the visit. It has the most credibility because it is based on personal experience.

The selection of an appropriate mix of image-forming agents depends on a number of factors: the amount of money available, the characteristics of the target market, demographic characteristics, timing, the type of image projected and the type of product.

At all stages of the destination selection process, image helps determine which destinations remain for further evaluation and which are eliminated from further consideration, so the image formation process is intertwined with the destination selection process.

The knowledge of formative agents and hierarchical components does not seem to be sufficient for understanding the destination image. The key components of destination image elaborated by Echtner and Ritchie (Echtner and Ritchie 1991 and 1993)

are missing. Destination image, according to the authors, should be viewed through two main components, those that are based on (1) attributes and those that are (2) holistic. Drawing on Martineau's research in retailing (Martineau 1958), the authors state that each of these components contains functional, tangible and psychological or more abstract characteristics. Functional are those that are directly visible or measurable, while psychological characteristics (friendship, atmosphere) cannot be directly measured. Both, however, play a critical role in image formation.

The perception of individual product attributes as well as the total, holistic impression can be based on the functional or psychological characteristics of the product. By crossing these components, we get the perception of individual functional attributes, the perception of individual psychological attributes, the functional holistic image and the psychological holistic image.

The dimensions of the destination image do not end with the 4 mentioned dimensions, because the image can be based on common, general (functional and psychological) features, but also on unique characteristics, events, feelings or aura.

At one end of this continuum is the image, which is made up of characteristics on the basis of which all destinations are usually evaluated and compared, common functional ones, such as price level, type of accommodation, natural attractions and environment, transport infrastructure, climate, etc., and common psychological characteristics such as friendship, security, familiarity, etc.

At the other end of the continuum, the image of a destination can include unique features and events (functional features) or aura (psychological features). Examples of unique features and events are numerous: Brazil is associated with the Amazon and Carnival in Rio, Paris with the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe, Rome with the Colosseum and the Vatican, the Bavarian village of Oberammergau with the Passion Play, Valencia with La Tomatina. A unique aura is more difficult to build, but a number of destinations differ in their special atmosphere. Around Paris floats the aura of the city of romance, around Nepal an aura of mysticism, around the Vatican of the holy place.

The problems of research and understanding of the destination image are multifaceted. In a review of 262 studies of destination image, published between 1972 and 2007, Pike (Pike 2002 and 2007) indicates that almost half of the studies (129) investigated destination image in isolation, without reference to competing places; that only a few studies were not limited to the conceptualization of image in terms of a list of common attributes, but also investigated holistic impressions; that only 37 researches took into account the travel context (consumers look for different attributes and benefits in different contexts and therefore prefer different destina-

ons for different situations, for example *business, conference or holiday trip*); that most studies focused on cognitive attributes, and that only 6 out of 142 studies showed an explicit interest in affective image, etc.

There is no doubt that the customer buys a holiday exclusively on the basis of symbolic expectations initially created by communication through words, images, sounds... The experience of a holiday is literally constructed in the imagination through the communication of content and values, only partly through mass media, and the creation of mental images becomes strategic business of tourism producers.

However, the fact that a number of destinations, despite the successfully created mental images widely mediated by the mass media and other communication channels, failed to take a more serious position on the world tourist market and to create a favorable and attractive image, indicates that there are some forces that represent an obstruction for the openly and covertly induced agents of image formation, i.e. effective commercial use of mass media in tourist communications.

The media, of course, play an important role in mediating the tourist reality and forming an initial favorable image, but other factors affect the final success, and exposure to them is often more significant than the images created by communications.

The customer buys the promise of a vacation formed by communications (overtly and covertly induced, autonomous, unsolicited and solicited organic agents) without experiencing the product itself, and after the end of the annual vacation, i.e. after the consumption of the product the customer summarizes his impressions and compares them with the promises and expectations, i.e. the projected image by the destination. The vacation experience, the experience with the destination (and also with the product, organization, community, person), comparing promises and expectations with the experience, becomes the key, crucial factor that confirms, strengthens, weakens or destroys the previously formed image. This final impression is what Hankinson calls a complex image, which is the result of "the interaction of the actual experience of visiting the destination with the previously held images" and is the final stage of the continuum that starts with the organic image, goes to the induced one (destination marketing programs aimed at strengthening or changing the existing organic image) and ends with complex image. (Hankinson 2004, 7).

A significant change into the process of forming a destination image is brought about by the entry into the digital era, the turning point of which is the emergence of the possibility of digitally mediated consumer interaction of Internet users, based on the development of Web 2.0. This development of interaction challenged the hierarchical structure of information in which information is broadcast from a few centers

to the masses of recipients and significantly reduced the social power of the mass media in the field of tourism (UNWTO 2009). Now Internet users and recipients of information gain the power to create content, and the development of social media opens up a completely new space in the creation of a destination image. A number of tourist and general social networks (Tripadvisor, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) are changing the way of gaining information and forming opinions about the destination. Those who until then were in a position to only receive information from official sources, begin to create and distribute it, to comment on official, induced information and to independently create informative content. The same means the strengthening of organic versus induced agents in the process of image formation. People increasingly rely on the opinions of others (consumers) and communicate directly, without the need to rely on business intermediaries or official sources, which, among other things, significantly accelerates the formation of impressions about the destination. The possibility of exchanging photos, video content and creating personal stories about destinations contributes to the same.

The key characteristic of social media is the creation of content by users, *user-generated content* that is not created by a professional team of creators/journalists, which characterizes mass media. Already a huge number of content creators and an enormous amount of information that is produced every minute creates communication anarchy and permanently creates a dilemma for all users and consumers regarding the question which source to trust and how to select information from the mass of ungraded information.

The other, often neglected dimension of interactivity refers to the possibility of forming a clear and vivid image of the destination without direct experience with it. Access to multimedia, numerous video contents posted on social networks, official destination sites or company commercial sites and live web video cameras that show the destination in real time enable a virtual visit and a virtual experience of the destination. The creation of virtual tours and their mediation to digital users can significantly contribute to improving the image of each destination. (Govers and Go 2003)

Marketing of tourist destinations, it is important to point out, very rarely starts from scratch. Destinations with a long political history, rich cultural heritage and art scene, strong economy, famous people and export brands, etc. they usually have a strong positive organic image. On the other hand, a long history of economic decline and poverty, political turbulence or cultural backwardness of a country can result in a negative organic image, and such an image cannot be changed by marketing communications alone: "Changing a negative organic image requires a change in the destination product itself" (Hankinson, 12).

That is why (1) the organic image, formed by long-term exposure to information and impressions about the destination, through education, books, films, culture, daily information about the country that is a tourist destination and (2) the experience of the visit, interaction with the destination are the key forces on which depends a strong positive image of the tourist destination.

The image of a place, therefore, in addition to the created media communications and the experience of the visit, is influenced by numerous other factors, which are not under the control of those who manage the place, and they are positive and negative, contemporary and historical:

- newspaper articles,
- movies and books,
- works of art,
- cultural events,
- fashion and design,
- spoken communication (*viva voce*),
- wars and significant historical events (seen in the emitting country),
- export products and services,
- jewels of architecture,
- exceptional natural beauty,
- religion,
- diplomacy,
- government policy,
- international sports triumphs,
- character of national cuisine,
- language and folklore,
- iconic leaders,
- movie and rock stars,
- historical figures, inventors, etc.

Certainly, citizens and potential guests are introduced to the largest number of image-creating factors listed here through mass media. About wars, crime, corruption, sports successes, cultural and artistic achievements, natural beauty, diplomacy, films and film stars, architecture and other things, citizens of foreign countries get to know through the process of education and (their own) domiciled media, but the media do not play an active role here, they do not form value attitudes under the influence and control of the identity bearers. It is more the transmission and distribution of informative content - of course through the optics of that country, which is not free from prejudices and stereotypes - the mediation of what is, the reality of

a country. Especially, because the bearer of the identity is in a completely different, distant country and without real opportunities to control the media in the country where the content is transmitted. Therefore, the influence of the mass media in creating the image of a place or destination in the international framework encounters objective limits set by the nature of tourism and the international order.

Attitudes about the omnipotence of the media in creating an image, on the one hand, find their basis in the character of contemporary culture, which precisely thanks to the commercial existence of the mass media has acquired the character of a mass culture whose basic feature is the homogenization of the cultural product. In order to be a profitable product, it must be standardized and acceptable to the majority of the audience. This commercial need for cost-effective production forces producers to establish the lowest common denominator in content creation, and it corresponds to the recipient of the lowest elementary education. "In search of a means of communication, more universal and simpler than the poorest language, mass culture often turns to the image. Outside of film and television, where it is a natural element, the image competes with words in the press as well." (Kloskovska 1985, 262).

"If once the word was a mediator between people, now it becomes an image, so the whole culture is increasingly understood as the production, exchange, reproduction and consumption of images, which means that the perception and understanding of reality descends to a lower spiritual level, which leads to uniformity, homogenization". (Šušnjić 2014, 406)

The second point of support for the position regarding the omnipotence of the media may be found in mass culture, but in the segment of media culture that, through an industrial process, artificially creates fame through the media. This rapid creation of media stars and celebrities, mostly personalities from the world of entertainment and sports, who are "famous for being famous", with the separation of fame and achievements and the suppression of those persons who were famous for great deeds, is possible to form the impression that the same it can be done so easily with the same techniques with products, organizations, communities, places and destinations.

Here, however, we are talking about the continuous "interest of the media industry to continuously produce new media personalities, whose fame is of an ephemeral character" (Vukadinović 2013, p. 19). The approach that can be achieved with people, the overnight formation of fame and fame on the local or domestic market, is difficult to achieve with products, brands, organizations and destinations on the international market.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of image creation will increasingly attract the attention of the audience as well as professional, business and scientific public. Since with technological and market development, products and services have become more numerous and more similar in their characteristics, and as it is more and more difficult to create products that are physically different, the processes of occupying a place on the market and market competition will turn more and more to people's mind. Brands, not products, have already become the main weapon of market competition and the stars of market communications.

Achieving success in such circumstances is not easy. No matter how much access to the media and its intensive use seems to be the solution to the problem, history shows that the customer, guest, citizen, is not dull and is not ready for "unconditional obedience". Talking positively about yourself and bragging about your qualities every day will not bring success. Talking about oneself, as communication experts warn, is actually the least effective and most expensive method. Mass media, especially in highly developed western markets which are also the most important tourist target markets, are very expensive, breaking through media congestion (*saliency*) and the flood of commercial information is extremely difficult, and the degree of credibility of market communications is usually relatively low. The customer is aware that the information is paid for and highly controlled.

That is why it is important to understand that people's perception of a certain place is formed depending on what is happening in that country, the products of that country, what others say about that country and, lastly, on the way a certain country talks about itself.

Although mass media is an important channel of communication of what a certain brand, place, destination or country is doing, image and reputation are not built by mass media and communications, nor can it be changed by them. The destination must be intriguing, inspiring, innovative, dynamic, full of events and must show internal quality (by which it satisfies the needs of its users), the interaction between the destination and the user must meet expectations, so that the promised becomes and is realized and continuously creates high satisfaction of users, consumers, in order to they could eventually form strong positive impressions. "The way to gain a good reputation, is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear".

The analysis presented in this overview article has its limitations, which arise primarily from the fact that it represents a theoretical research, an overview of the conceptual framework in which the role of the mass media in the formation of the image of

tourist destinations is realized. Future qualitative empirical research in the form of case studies of the role of the mass media in creating the image of specific tourist destinations will make a significant contribution to the illumination of this issue.

Based on the overall analysis, it can be concluded that the aim of this paper has been fulfilled. The complex, multifaceted, relative and dynamic nature of the image has been presented, the need to consider it in connection with other phenomena has been confirmed, as well as the realistically situated position of the mass media in the process of formation and the new position of the consumer, i.e. visitors in the communication brought about by the digital era and social media.

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Zolak, V. (2024). The role of the media in creating the image of a tourist destination, *Sport media and business*, 10(1) 25-44.

Review Article

UDK: 796.07:316.77

796.01:159.9

Received: 05.2.2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58984/smb2401045z>

Accepted: 12.3.2024

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COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COACH AND ATHLETE

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Abstract: The coach and athlete relationship is interaction in which the thoughts, feelings and behavior of the coach and athlete are causally linked. The quality of the relationship between coach and athlete affects the achievement and psychological well-being of athlete. It is desirable that the relationship between coaches and athletes is based on respect, understanding, acceptance, tolerance and cooperation. The quality of the relationship between coach and athlete affects interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes through communication. Communication is a process that depends on its participants. It implies a circular process of influence. The athlete's behavior affects the coach's behavior, and the coach's behavior in turn affects the athlete's behavior. The article presents guidelines for improving communication and constructively resolving conflicts between coaches and players.

Keywords: communication, conflicts, coach-athlete relationship

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Introduction

Sport is a significant factor in personality development (Zubić, 2023). Sports activities can help in building a positive self-image (Mitrović, et al., 2013), good work habits, developing communication skills (Nenadić, et al., 2021) and emotional competence (Zubić, Todorović, Mitić, 2013). Numerous authors agree that coach-athlete relationship is a significant factor in overall development of athlete (Horn, 2008, Davis, Jovett, 2014). The coach-athlete relationship can be defined as an interaction in which the coach's and athlete's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are causally related and change over time (Jowett, Lavallee, 2007). Mutual respect and effective communication between coach and athlete are important aspects of their successful relationship (Gillet, Vallerand, Amoura, Baldes, 2010; Poczwadowski, Barott, Henschen, 2002; Shipherd, Wakefield, Stokowski, Filho, 2019).

The subject of this paper is a comprehensive presentation about topic of relationship and communication between coaches and athletes. The aim of this paper is to describe importance and elements of relationship and communication between coach and athlete, as well as recommendations for more effective communication. The first part of the paper highlights great importance of relationship and communication between coach and athlete and presents a number of studies that confirm this. The paper also explains factors of coach-athlete relationship, types and process of communication, the model of communication strategies, recommendations for effective communication and difficulties in communication. A special part of the paper, which refers to conflicts in communication between coaches and athletes, describes a model for understanding conflicts and recommendations for their management.

Relationship between coach and athlete

Over the past two decades, the quality and functions of the coach-athlete relationship have been studied (Jowett, Meek, 2000). A significant contribution to this topic was made within the 3+1C model (Jowett, 2007). In this model, the coach-athlete relationship is represented as a social situation through the model. Namely, there are three plus one factors of the coach-athlete relationship:

1. The closeness of the coach and the athlete (an emotional connection reflected in trust and respect),
2. commitment (motivation to maintain closeness)
3. complementarity (responsiveness and cooperation) i

4. co-orientation (refers first to the athlete's perception of the coach and then the coach's perception of the athlete). Co-orientation contains two perspectives: the direct perspective reflects how the athlete/coach feels, thinks and behaves towards the other party (e.g. "I trust my coach/athlete"), while the meta perspective reflects how the athlete or coach perceives others thinks, feels and behaves (eg 'My coach/athlete trusts me').

The coach-athlete relationship is the essence of the entire coaching job (Jowett, 2017). Research has shown that the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is related to athlete performance and satisfaction with their relationship (Lorimer, Jowett, 2009; Davis, Jowett, 2014), athlete motivation (Adie, Jowett, 2010; Felton, Jowett, 2013), team cohesion (Jowett, Chaundy, 2004), collective efficiency (Hampson, Jowett, 2014), indicators of well-being (Felton, Jowett, 2013). On the other hand, studies have established a connection between a bad coach-athlete relationship and conflict between them (Wachsmuth, Jowett, Harwood, 2018), antisocial behavior of athletes (Rutten et al., 2007; Rutten et al., 2008) and athlete burnout (Isoard-Gautheur, Trouilloud, Gustafsson, Guillet-Descas, 2016; Davis, et al., 2018). An important factor that determines the quality of the coach-athlete relationship is the athlete's personality traits (Aşçi, Keleşek, Altıntaş, 2015).

Communication between coach and athlete

Interpersonal communication is a key factor in the quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2007). Communication is a mechanism that transfers the effects of the quality of the coach-athlete relationship to interpersonal (eg, relationship satisfaction) and intrapersonal outcomes (eg, sports satisfaction, motivation, sports performance) (Jowett, 2007; Lorimer, Jowett, 2014). Communication refers to the exchange of messages that transfer competences, knowledge and skills.

There is a difference between verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication takes place through words used to convey messages, and non-verbal communication takes place in parallel with verbal communication. Non-verbal communication does not convey messages, but it contains information. It contains behaviors that can be conscious and unconscious, intentional and unintentional, more or less automatic. Namely, non-verbal messages are information that we convey with conscious or unconscious gestures, body movements or facial expressions (Morris, 1998). Non-verbal communication consists of (Rot, 2002): paralinguistic (speech intonation, color, volume and pitch of voice), proxemic (personal space that exists between two interlocutors), haptic (frequency and type of touch that people

exchange) and kinesthetic signs (body movements) or faces: body position, gestures, facial expressions).

This type of communication is important in transmitting and receiving information. Usually, people are unaware of their non-verbal cues. Psychologist Albert Mehrabian (Mehrabian, 1981) studied the importance of non-verbal communication. Namely, he established that 55% of the speaker's impression is determined by his body language, 38% by intonation, and only 7% by the content of what is said.

Communication is the basic tool through which coaches show athletes skills, convey significant information about technique and tactics, and provide feedback on the success of their performances. Communication is a significant source of satisfaction, but often dissatisfaction of coaches and athletes. It is the starting point for developing a good, stable, supportive relationship between coaches and athletes because it shows mutual attention, care, respect and trust. The origin, maintenance, development, changes, but also the termination of the relationship between coach and athlete, take place through communication.

The communication process contains basic steps. First, a person decides to send a message to someone. Then, the sender converts (encodes) their thoughts into a message. Third, a verbal or non-verbal message is channeled to the recipient. Then, the receiver interprets (decodes) the message. Finally, the receiver deciphers the message based on the content and emotions it conveys and responds internally (Weinberg, Gould, 2020).

Communication is a process that depends on both parties. Namely, the athlete's behavior affects the coach's behavior, and then the coach's behavior in turn affects the athlete's behavior. And so a circular process of influence is created. In order for the message conveyed through communication to be properly understood, it needs to be adapted to the age, personality traits, way of expression and abilities of the athlete. Also, if the coach sends the same message to two athletes, they will interpret that message in their own way.

The COMPASS model (Rhind, Jowett, 2012) brings together communication strategies that coaches and athletes use to maintain a relationship in a certain state. This COMPASS model (Rhind, Jowett, 2012) contains seven key communication strategies:

1. Conflict management reflects the efforts of coaches and athletes to identify, discuss, resolve and monitor potential areas of disagreement;
2. Openness includes efforts to communicate openly and clearly;

3. Motivation emphasizes the efforts of both coach and athlete to develop a partnership that is rewarding for both parties and provides reasons for each member to stay in the relationship;
4. Preventative emphasizes efforts to discuss expectations, rules, roles and consequences if they are not met;
5. Advice is defined as giving one's opinions on problems encountered by the coach or the athlete, as well as giving and receiving feedback in a positive and open way. Advice consists of three themes: sport communication, reward feedback and constructive feedback.
6. Support is reflected in the fact that coaches and athletes help each other in difficult and challenging times; and
7. Social networks reflect communication strategies that create opportunities to develop strong relationships with significant others (eg parents, friends, club management, managers).

Coach-athlete communication is a complex, dynamic process that depends on context (Lyle, 2005; Jones, Turner, 2006; Nash, Collins, 2006). In particular, communication between coach and athlete can be educational, emotional, verbal or non-verbal and can be influenced by circumstances of the situation such as winning or losing and whether it takes place during training or competition. There are two key situations for coach-athlete communication, defeat in competition and making mistakes during training (Sagar, Jowett, 2012). In these situations, athletes had a positive perception of communication when coach provided analysis and constructive and corrective feedback on their performance. And athletes had a negative perception when the coach showed hostile reactions.

Studies conducted on successful Olympic athletes have found that trust, friendship between coaches and players, and constructive feedback are factors that positively influence athlete performance (Greenleaf, Gould, Dieffenbach, 2001). Lack of trust between them and disrespect are factors that negatively affect the coach-athlete relationship, as well as the athlete's subjective well-being (Blanchard, Amiot, Perreault, Vallerand, Provencher, 2009, Burke, 2001, Jowett, 2003).

Effective communication

Effective communication is key to a positive relationship between two people. Effective verbal communication involves the characteristics of sender and receiver of the message. Characteristics related to sender of the message include the way the message is formulated.

It is recommended that messages should be directly expressed and formulated in the "I" format ("me", "my" instead of "you"). Also, messages should be complete, specific, clear and consistent, directly spoken and coordinated with non-verbal communication. Messages should not contain hidden meaning, but should authentically express attitudes, perceptions, needs and feelings. It is important that there is a distinction between fact on one hand and perception and experience on the other. The message should be adapted to person to whom it is intended, so that he can fully understand and accept it and so that its purpose is clearly conveyed. Key points in communication are emphasized and highlighted by repetition. The communication skills of the sender of the message are essential. Martens (Martenes, 2004) lists the following eight communication skills of successful coaches: communicating with credibility, positive approach, providing messages with sufficient information, consistency, listening skills, non-verbal communication, instructional communication and applying the principle of reinforcement.

Characteristics related to recipient of a message include the skill of active listening. Active listening is one of the key elements of successful communication. The goal of active listening is for listener to understand what the sender wanted to say, as well as for sender to know that his message was correctly understood or at least that an other party tried to understand it. Active listening includes feedback from the listener on how he interpreted the message. A listener is interested in the content of the message and the feelings of sender. Active listening improves communication because speaker feels heard, accepted and given appropriate feedback.

Recommendations for effective communication between coach and athlete:

1. The messages sent by the coach should be clear, concise without unnecessary details, accurate and true, complete and complete, kind, constructive, that is, positive while avoiding unconstructive criticism and negativity.
2. The exchange of views and suggestions between the coach and the athlete should be constant, especially when designing training programs. This leads to better mutual understanding, greater appreciation, and enrichment of knowledge about sports and training.
3. A way to improve communication (especially in a group or team) is to organize team meetings. These meetings should be scheduled regularly (you should not wait for a problem to happen and then make an appointment), focus on the difficulties in the team and provide a constructive assessment of the situation. Before each meeting, the coach should set rules of behavior and communication for that occasion. The proposed rules include the following:

- a) Everyone in the team should be open to the opinions of others regardless of how much they disagree with them (ie team members should not be defensive or hostile towards a different opinion than theirs).
 - b) Team members should be constructive, not destructive (eg behavior is criticized, not the person).
 - c) Everything discussed in the meeting stays there (ie the information is confidential).
 - d) Everyone should have the opportunity to speak.
 - e) Each team member should have at least one positive thing to say about everyone else.
4. Conversations with the athlete must not take form of threats, punishments, blackmail, or aggressive behavior. A coach with authority can have a great influence on the psychological state of an athlete through suggestive actions. The conversation should take the form of a suggestive tone with a benevolent, calm, but confident and convincing voice and content. Also, conversation should have a soothing effect on athlete, increase his self-confidence, security and faith in success.
5. The conversation about the reasons for success and failure should have a constructive and evaluative character. This kind of conversation should not contain fault-finding, blaming, finger-pointing, and giving reasons for justification. Reasons for poor performance should be sought among those causes that are solely under the athlete's control. Therefore, it is necessary to review whether enough effort and work was invested, whether the trainings were inadequate for developing functional and physical abilities, etc.
6. In order for athlete to progress in his performance, in situations where he makes mistakes, it is necessary for the coach to give constructive negative feedback or criticism. Many people perceive criticism as a threat to their self-esteem and focus their attention on defense rather than on the content of the message. It is important that a message be delivered with the positive intention of improving the athlete, and not with the aim of belittling and denying. Constructive criticism can be expressed through the assertive "sandwich approach" technique, which contains three elements:
- a) a positive statement about a person or his behavior,
 - b) a clear future-oriented instruction on how to implement a certain element and
 - c) praising a person or his behavior.
7. Developing empathy can improve team communication (Beauchamp, MacLachlan, Lothian, 2005). Empathy is developed by teaching athletes to approach interactions from another person's point of view, including through role-

playing exercises. The exercise is based on the fact that athlete assumes the roles and perspectives of others in a hypothetical scenario and thus gains an insight into the viewpoint of others. For example, a player puts himself in situations where his performance is critical (ie, he doesn't want to let his teammates down) or where he feels pressure from a coach (ie, the athlete is benched if he doesn't play well enough). This exercise can help athlete to more empathetically observe what their teammates are going through. In this way, communication and understanding of what a other person is experiencing is improved.

Effective communication requires skills and investment of all participants. Unfortunately, certain difficulties can arise in communication due to non-acceptance of responsibility and lack of trust. Often people do not see that they themselves bear part of the responsibility for the effectiveness of communication. That is why one of the key reasons for problems in communication is the attitude that the other party is ineffective, and not the person himself. Another common reason is a lack of mutual trust. The most common communication difficulties related to the sender are ambiguous and mutually contradictory messages. And the most common difficulties related to the recipient of message are misinterpreted messages and not listening.

Conflicts in sport

Conflicts are inevitable because coaches spend a lot of time with athletes both during the training process and during competition period when athletes are additionally exposed to stress. Timely reaction and adequate response to conflict can greatly contribute to improvement of coach-athlete relationship as well as sports results.

A three-component model for understanding interpersonal conflict in sport provides a framework for understanding and resolving conflict in sport (Wachsmuth et al., 2017). According to this model, conflict represents a situation in which people perceive that they have a disagreement about values, needs, opinions or goals, which is manifested through negative cognitive, affective and behavioral reactions. This implies that the conflict is more than a disagreement between two parties. It includes emotional reactions such as anger, rage, frustration. The model itself includes three main components:

1. Antecedents or determinants of conflict. It includes intrapersonal factors (e.g., self-esteem, ego vs. task orientation), interpersonal factors (e.g., poor communication patterns such as avoidance versus open discussion of di-

- fficult issues), and external factors (e.g., a coach from another culture who does not know how to recognize exactly the emotional states of athletes).
2. The nature of a conflict itself. It includes the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral content of conflict, as well as its descriptive characteristics (eg, duration, frequency, and intensity).
 3. Consequences of interpersonal conflicts. It includes intrapersonal outcomes (eg, lost self-confidence), interpersonal outcomes (eg, poor team cohesion), and performance outcomes (eg, reduced individual and team performance).

Understanding the causes of conflict (component 1) and the nature of conflict (component 2) can help athlete or coach develop conflict management strategies to resolve conflicts or prevent them from occurring. For example, ice dance partners who are increasingly frustrated by differences in their learning styles (component 1) have two options. They can schedule a meeting to discuss the problem and clarify their differences, or they can postpone the meeting. A possible outcome of postponing the meeting is continued frustration (component 2) that leads to arguments during training, leaving the ice, escalation of negative feelings and interruptions in training (component 3). As conflicts develop over time, becoming more frequent or intense (component 2), parties involved should make additional efforts to manage the conflict. This can be successful or unsuccessful. For example, parties may seek mediation from their coach or stop talking altogether. Understanding the process of interpersonal conflicts as a dynamic process involving multiple stages and influencing factors can help us better manage them when they arise or even prevent them in the first place.

Coach-athlete conflicts lead to reduced team cohesion, increased levels of competitive anxiety and other negative emotional outcomes (Partridge, Knapp. 2016), reduced athlete performance (Jowett, Cramer, 2010; Leo, González-PonceSánchez-Miguel, Ivarsson, García-Calvo , 2015).

In study (Mellalieu, Shearer, Shearer, 2013) were examined strategies used to resolve conflicts in sports. The most used strategy is to withdraw. And second used strategy is to resolve a conflict independently or with the help of others. Also, the literature indicates that conflict avoidance is a common strategy among athletes who have an unconstructive relationship with a coach (Gearity, Murray, 2011; Tamminen, Holt, Neeliy 2013). One of the reasons why athletes avoid conflicts is the perception of greater power of coaches in this dyad (O'Malley et al., 2017; Gearity, Metzger, 2017).

Guidelines and recommendations for preventing and managing conflict in the context of sports are (Wachsmuth, Jowett, Harwood, 2017): a coach should foster an

open door policy, set common goals with athletes, develop team cohesion, establish common expectations, detect conflicts in the early stages to prevent their escalation, and provides structured meetings with neutral facilitators to mediate the conflict.

The following are the assumptions on which constructive conflict resolution rests (Gerstein, Reagan, 1986):

1. All needs are legitimate, important and should be respected. When all needs are considered equally important, a focus becomes meeting all needs instead of meeting a needs of one party.
2. There are enough resources to meet all needs. The human potential for creating new ideas and resources has no limits. By working together, people can reach a constructive solution that satisfies both parties.
3. In every individual lies untapped power and capacity. Each person in conflict knows what they need. Coaches should not impose solutions based on their own ideas about what is wrong with the athlete. Imposing solutions without recognizing individual needs will create frustrated and dissatisfied athletes. Therefore, conflict participants should be encouraged to offer solutions to problems.
4. Process is as important as content because it provides direction and focus. A process is a flow of feelings, thoughts and events. Many times the listener gets caught up in the specifics of the content (and often rehearses the attack) while missing important cues and information about what is going on with a person communicating.
5. Dealing with a situation is different from solving a problem. Coping with a situation focuses on the symptom, and solving a particular problem on the cause. For example, punishing someone for persistent tardiness may alleviate the problem, but the causes of the tardiness still remain unresolved.
6. Everyone is right from their own perspective. It is important to see the situation from the other person's perspective. In conflicts, people spend a lot of time defending their point of view. There are always two sides to every story, and people need to be willing to listen to the other side.
7. Solutions and decisions are temporary states of equilibrium and are not absolute or timeless. Circumstances may change and therefore solutions may need to be modified and renegotiated to keep up with changing times. Many times it is important to establish a balance in the relationship, so it is important that the participants in the conflict be flexible and change as needed.

Conclusion

The coach-athlete relationship implies an interaction in which the thoughts, feelings and behavior of coach and athlete are causally connected. And a quality of the coach-athlete relationship is related to the athlete's success and psychological well-being. The origin, maintenance, development, changes, but also termination of a relationship between coach and athlete, take place through communication. It is desirable that a relationship between coach and athlete is based on respect, understanding, acceptance, tolerance and cooperation. The quality of coach-athlete relationship affects interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes (eg satisfaction with team relationships, motivation, sports performance) through communication. Through communication, coaches demonstrate skills to athletes, convey significant information about technique and tactics, and provide feedback on their performances. Communication is key to developing a good, stable, supportive relationship between coaches and athletes because it demonstrates mutual attention, care, respect and trust. Coach-athlete communication is a complex, dynamic process that depends on the context. Namely, the communication between coach and athlete can be educational, emotional, verbal or non-verbal and can be influenced by the circumstances of the situation such as victory or defeat and whether it takes place during training or competition. Trust, friendship between coach and player, and constructive feedback are factors that positively influence athlete performance.

Conflicts are inevitable in the coach-athlete dyad due to unequal distribution of power, time spent together, pressures and stress. Coach-athlete conflicts lead to decreased team cohesion, increased levels of competitive anxiety, and decreased athlete performance. The most used strategy in the communication between the coach and the athlete is withdrawal, and then resolving the conflict independently or with the help of others. Research has shown that communication skills can be improved. This paper provides guidelines and advice on how to improve communication between coaches and athletes.

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Review Article

UDK: 725.85.012.8

Received: 02.2.2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58984/smb2401061k>

Accepted: 20.4.2024

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THE ANALYSIS OF FURNISHING AND DESIGNING OF DIAGNOSTIC CENTERS WITHIN SPORTS OBJECTS¹

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Abstract: The increasing development of mankind can be seen in the progress in the design of sports facilities which must satisfy certain high standards of construction and equipment and which need to offer a maximum number of services in their environment in order to meet the needs of customers. One of the major positive influences on users includes opening diagnostic centers within sports objects which must be furnished properly and functionally. When furnishing and designing the interior, it is necessary to pay attention to the choice of colours, floor materials, lighting, and most importantly – the equipment that will be used in the premises of the center. They can be separated into zones: medical rooms, laboratory, and diagnostics and training area. Each of these zones has different requirements for equipment with special attention to the privacy of the patients being tested, their safety and keeping the space clean.

Key words: sports objects, diagnostic centers, interior design, furnishing the interior

¹ This work is part of a scientific research within the project “Defining and Verification of the Laws of Complex Movement under Conditions of Maximum Muscle Stress”, number 160/22 from 06/21/2022 at the Faculty of Sports, University "Union - Nikola Tesla", Belgrade. Project duration: from July 2022 to the end of 2026.

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Introduction

One of the most fundamental preconditions for implementing sports activities and their professional monitoring is the existence of the appropriate sports facility. It is impossible to organize any individual or group activities without the adequate sports facilities and additional facilities as an essential resource. All of the above enables fulfilling the sports potential, that is, achieving sports results as the main goal in sports. It is not enough only to have the appropriate number of the facilities, but also to have the objects which meet the prescribed conditions (in terms of dimensions and safety, sanitary-hygienic conditions, fire protection conditions, installation and technical conditions, etc.) in order to conduct sports activities in them (Krsmanović Veličković, 2021).

Kaminsky (2013) states that physical fitness is a set of characteristics of an individual, the level of which is directly related to taking part in some kind of physical activity and that quality training process is of utmost importance for physical fitness. Instruments and certain equipment can be used to determine abilities, but these kinds of monitoring and measuring must be conducted extremely precisely. In order to declare a training process successful, it is necessary to include diagnosis, prognosis, training program and control, so it is vital to use methods and measuring instruments used to measure and control the dominant anthropological characteristics, according to Čopić (2020). In the modern era, it is required to systematically monitor the relevant indicators of body composition several times a year, in some cases even up to two times a week, whereas it used to be done once to twice a year.

Besides employing qualified staff which will deal with the training process and examinations, there is also the staff that will do some other tasks, such as maintaining the diagnostic center. The potentially increased flow of people through the space calls for zoning the space very well and determining functional units properly. The medical section where consultations and examinations will take place must be a separate unit, then there is the section for therapies, the section for measuring instruments and exercise, changing rooms with toilets, and waiting rooms as needed, etc. If there is need for a waiting room, its dimensions are determined according to the number and frequency of the surrounding rooms, as well as the professional orientation of the engaged doctor. There should certainly be a reception area at the entrance to the center, as well as toilets and changing rooms for storing personal belongings.

Interior Furnishing and Design

Functional diagnostics has advanced and with each day it brings more precise and better results, consequently it requires new technologies and adapting the space to its needs, too. Functionality plays a great role in furnishing and designing the interior spaces that serve the purpose of these centers.

It is necessary to fulfill a whole range of factors in order to give any space a feeling of warmth and comfort, and certainly one of these factors are the colours that will be used in the space in project. We could call colours the “forces” that affect a man in a certain psychological way and they can cause feelings of pleasure or discomfort, i.e. they can trigger more active or passive feelings. The impact of colours on human psyche can be indirect (physiological impact, they visually narrow or widen the space) or direct (manifested in impulses coming from so-called warm (yellow, red, green) or cold (blue, purple) colours), and the size of the space is very important for the choice of colours.

A good choice of floor covering affects the overall impression about the space, maintenance costs and the value of the space itself. The floor is a constructional part of the building which bears the greatest load and at the beginning of the construction it is always necessary to determine how insulation and sealing will be done, and all that in accordance with the general purpose of the space.

Lighting is very important in a space, it can be a sort of decoration and it can be categorized as: narrow beam, medium beam and wide beam lighting, but also as symmetrical and asymmetrical lighting. For interior lighting, incandescent light bulbs (warm white light, no flickering) or discharge lamps (requiring two devices – a ballast and a starter, with high light efficiency) are most commonly used. Direct symmetrical lighting, as well as indirect lighting is most commonly used in diagnostic centers.

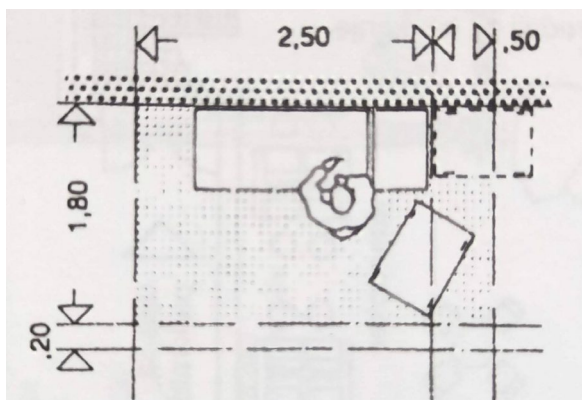
Medical Section within a Diagnostic Center

When designing an interior, it is most popular to arrange separate offices, such as those for general practitioners and certain specialists. The main problems that interior designers encounter when arranging such spaces are: insufficient waiting room space in front of the office, simple and minimalist design, inadequate space for setting up an office (e.g. on the first floor of someone’s house, etc.)... That is why a structural change is crucial to carefully design every corner and to give purpose to each piece of furniture and equipment.

The examination area should have at least six square meters, it should be optically and acoustically closed, and its purpose is to have anamneses, counseling, result analysis, therapy plans and protocols conducted in it. These spaces are designed differently depending on whether the patients can stand or need lying down, because the minimum equipment in them is a rotating chair or a patient bed, an instrument table and a desk, and a chair for the doctor, too. The bigger the spaces are, the more their design is determined by the necessary professionally specific instruments, equipment, the necessary radius of movement for the staff, but also the need for a screen behind which the patients can change clothes.

Figure 2 shows the appearance of the examination space for lying patients which should have at least six square meters, an examination table and a chair, and if possible, a side table for placing certain instruments. It is always advised that these spaces have a screen behind which patients can change clothes.

Figure 2: The appearance of the examination area for lying patients



Source: Noffert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 558.

Laboratory within the Diagnostic Center

The spaces designated for laboratories mainly serve for the analysis of blood, urine and stool samples of athletes. In modern diagnostic centers today, they are mandatory, whereas earlier it was not the case. In order to diagnose certain conditions more easily and maintain practicality in work with athletes, they have become a

necessary condition for the operation of diagnostic centers. These spaces are usually big with working surfaces flexibly distributed and they include standing workstations for employees. Special rooms alongside laboratories may include: staffrooms, washing and drainage areas, disinfection rooms, cold rooms, etc. All spaces serving these needs need to have certain ceiling height (the minimum of three meters), natural and artificial light, ventilation, but they also need to form zones with different purposes and technical qualities. Typically, the buildings that will have a laboratory in them must be built with attention to horizontal water installations, and installation floors for technical facilities are located in the basement or attic. Obviously, reinforced concrete skeleton is something necessary when building such objects, as well as the floor covering which must be waterproof and chemical-resistant, it must not have joints and great care must be taken with electrical conductors which need to be installed according to the safest standards.

Laboratories can be divided according to their use into educational laboratories which are very simply equipped, and research laboratories which are smaller in dimensions, but have special equipment (measuring instruments, etc.). When we take their field of work into consideration, laboratories can be divided into: chemical and biological laboratories with built-in equipment (such as desks) and physical laboratories. The former have a high level of air exchange, while the latter have a lower level of it.

On Figure 3 we can see the minimum space required for an electrocardiogram, which would be around 6.5 square meters because the room must contain a bed for the examinee, as well as a chair and a table with the instrument for the doctor performing the examination. Figure 4 depicts the minimum space of the room in which blood samples are taken and which should be around six square meters. In that room, there must be tables for equipment and samples, a rotating chair for the laboratory assistant and a separate armchair for the examinee to sit while their blood is being drawn. Such armchairs usually have the option to expand the leg rest and to recline to a lying position, too.

Figure 3: Room for ECG

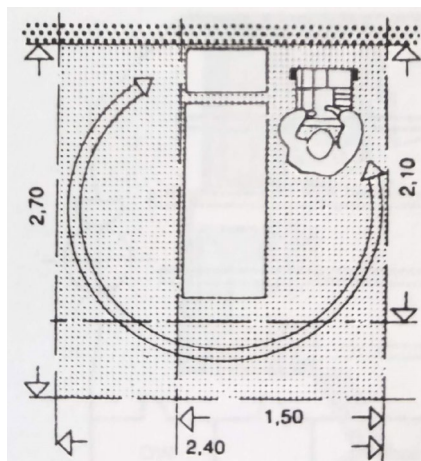
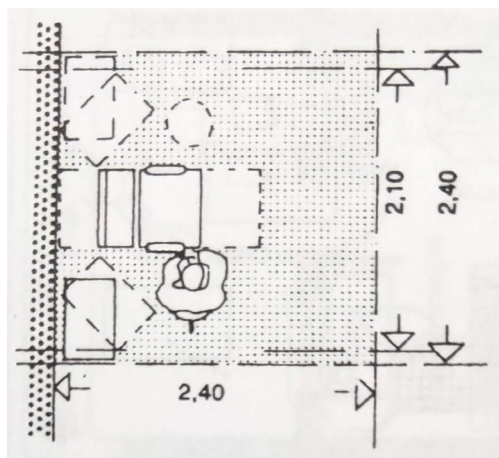


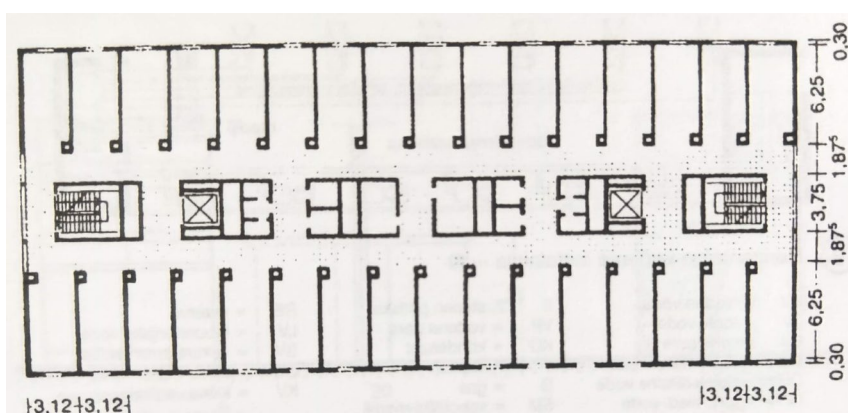
Figure 4: Room for taking blood samples



Source: Nofjert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 558.

If the plan and purpose of a diagnostic center includes an adaptable multi-purpose laboratory, it needs to be constructed according to certain standards which are legally and architecturally prescribed. In Figure 5 we can see an example of a typical layout of such an adaptable multi-purpose laboratory, the area of which should be over 20 square meters.

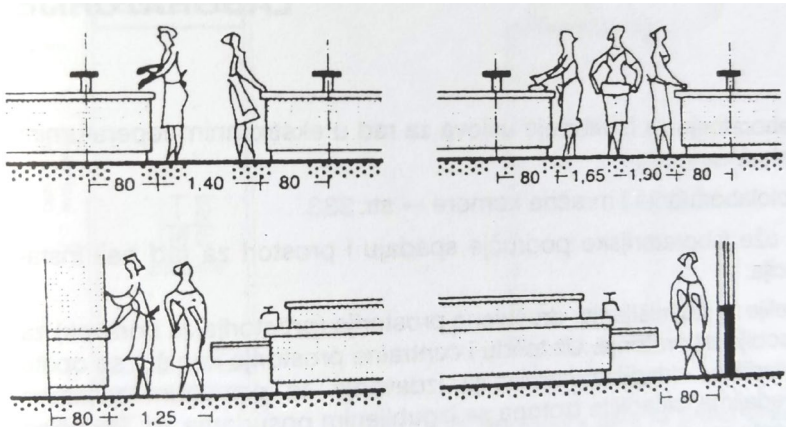
Figure 5: Multi-pupose laboratory



Source: Nofjert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 336.

Figure 6 illustrates the minimum width of the passages beside workstations in laboratory conditions and it is 140 centimeters for two people (if each person works at their own table) and 355 centimeters for three people (if two people work at the table and the third one passes between them).

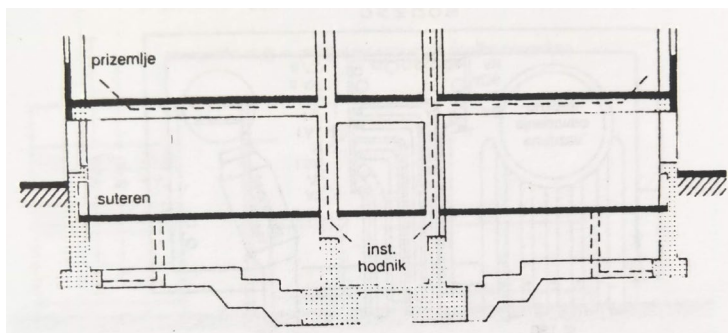
Figure 6: Passage between workstations



Source: Nojfert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 333.

Figure 7 shows the so-called cross-section of the laboratory with an appropriately positioned corridor where we can see the ground floor, basement and utility corridor for specific needs.

Figure 7: Cross-section of the laboratory with a representation of the ground floor and basement



Source: Nojfert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 336.

Diagnostics and Training Area of the Diagnostic Center

The essence of sports diagnostics is the use of special procedures and tools necessary for the proper control of an athlete's training process. This refers to the assessment of an athlete's body's reaction to training stimuli, i.e. measuring training effects (the current effect (acute responses)), and the accumulation of multiple trainings, e.g. the long-term effect (chronic responses). Comprehensive measurements require a combination of methods that will ensure an assessment of the level of individual motor abilities and it is all performed without disrupting motor structures (Travis S.K., 2020). To sum up, comprehensive measurements can reliably diagnose the body's metabolic, motor and technical potential.

Scientists dealing with computer sciences and engineers working with biomechanics, physiologists, engineers, sports psychologists and coaches, are involved in interdisciplinary development systems, so coaches and athletes are offered innovative and most efficient support when identifying and analyzing a patient's results (an examinee or an athlete). A different set of sensors and devices used in diagnostic centers can be integrated into sports equipment or even attached to athletes. Computers collect and present the recorded data and other systems use telemetry methods for transmitting the gathered data to reception stations which, then, process them and present them adequately. Portable devices not restricted to laboratory conditions are especially useful in sports like rowing, table tennis and biathlon, concludes Vasa (2006). All the programs have so far given good results and the conclusion is that they function well when used. The users are able to understand the presented information, and measuring devices do not limit movement in any way. Real-time feedback is obtained fast and at the same time biomechanic data specific to certain sports are collected and analyzed. Special attention is paid to the design of the presentation component of the system, with the greatest focus on its modernization. (Mackala, Michalik, Makaruk, 2023).

Here are some approaches that can be used in testing: symmetry and functional asymmetry, dynamic module of motor skills, measuring muscle strength, measuring peak strength, peak power and lactate concentration, the kinematics of running, as well as measuring muscle and tendon stiffness and flexibility (Roberts, 2016). Thanks to more precise and faster sampling nowadays, it is becoming easier to collect data during static measurements, dynamic monitoring, movement and performance. These tests are a huge load on an examinee's body, so several conditions must be met in order to conduct such an examination in a laboratory. It is important that the examinee is willing to participate in the examination, that they are as healthy as they can be and that they wear light sportswear. Proper load tests provide the most

accurate data on a person's current condition. These tests are appropriate for precise demonstration of the examinee's physiological parameters (heart rate, blood pressure, ECG, etc.), together with measuring the aerobic or relative aerobic capacity and physical performances of an examinee. Load test really requires excellent performances by an examinee and that can be achieved by activating at least 50% of total muscle mass during exercise. The actions monitored are running, bicycle riding and rowing. For that reason treadmill ergometers, cycling ergometers and rowing ergometers are usually used (Balogh, 2016).

Nowadays there are multiple different methods and instruments for measurement, that is, analysis of body composition (e.g. InBody720-Biospace Co.; Tanita-BC 545, etc.) that can be used in diagnostic centers as quite useful machines. Such machines work on the principle of passing low power current that goes through muscles without any resistance and through fatty tissue with low resistance.

Figure 8: InBody720



Source: <https://inbodyusa.com/products/inbody770/>

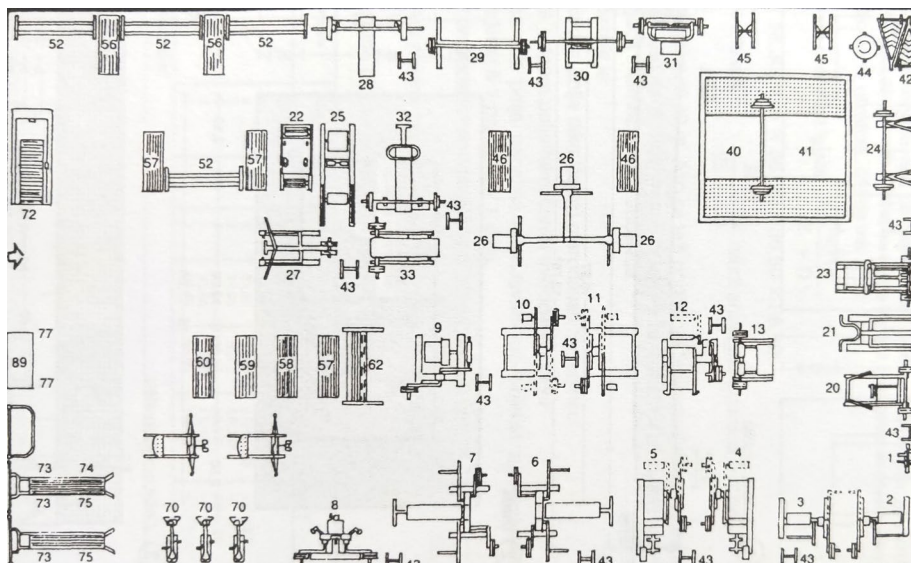
It is vital to list some of the equipment that is obligatory in the training areas of diagnostic centers, and these are free weights, props, as well as training machines. Training machines are an especially important group because they are beneficial in multiple ways, according to Petronijević, 2023. They can be grouped into:

- Cyclic machines – they serve for warm-up and increasing aerobic and anaerobic endurance (bicycle: spin-bike, ergometer or recumbent bike; treadmill; stepper; elliptical trainer and rowing simulator);
- Machines for arms, shoulders and chest include: biceps machine, triceps machine, forearm extension machine and forearm muscle strengthening machine.

- Machines for shoulders and legs include: leg press, leg extension machine, hip joint flexor, hip and leg muscle strengthening machine, gluteal region and hack squat machine.
- Multifunctional machines (very large devices that are also called basic machines that cover all muscle regions).

In order to have enough room for 40 to 45 people to train in, the size of the space needs to be at least 200 square meters, and ceiling height needs to be at least three meters. In the following figure, we can see two-cell setups of equipment, and the conditioning and preparation areas should not be less than six meters wide. When considering the minimum space for training, it should have 40 square meters, allowing 12 people to exercise simultaneously. In Figure 9 a room for conditioning exercise is shown with the following necessary equipment for the purpose: hand roller, biceps and triceps station, "pull/over" machines, machines for strengthening the back muscles, chest, trunk, hips, bones, feet, as well as the multi-exercise center. There are machines for pressing, knee bending, pulling and climbing, benches, various racks, training benches, weight discs and weights, bars, rowing machines, treadmills, a boxing pear and cabinets for storing the equipment, too.

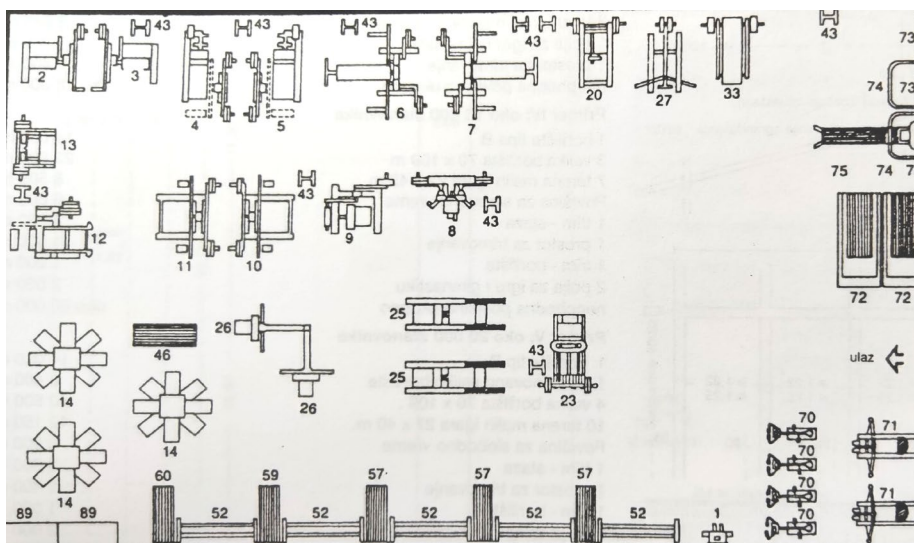
Figure 9: An example of furnishing the room for conditional training of the size of around 200 square meters



Source: Nojfert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 515.

In Figure 10, we can see an example of an exercising room of 200 square meters in dimensions. A large part equipment is doubled in number, there are hand rollers, biceps and triceps stations, "pull/over" machines, machines for strengthening the back muscles, chest, trunk, hips, bones, feet. Along with all this, there is a popular multi-exercise center, a pulling machine, a training bench, storage racks for weights of different sizes, various benches, a treadmill, an exercise machine, etc. This set of exercising machines is standard in almost all centers.

Figure 10: An example of an exercising space of 200 square meters



Source: Nofjert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 514.

When it comes to making the arrangement for all of the above-mentioned equipment, one should pay attention to the dimensions of each piece of equipment that we want in a space, its weight, width, but also height. For example, a rowing machine and a stationary bike require a lot of space (Figure 10) and the spot where they will be placed needs to be picked carefully. A rowing machine requires a minimum space of 1.5 square meters, and a stationary bike requires a bit less – about half a square meter.

In Figure 11, we can see an abdominal bench with an adjustable inclined board and wall bars, which takes up around two square meters. A specific area which most often occupies the most space is the so-called multi-exercise center (Figure 12), and it takes over two square meters of space.

Figure 10: A rowing machine and a stationary bike

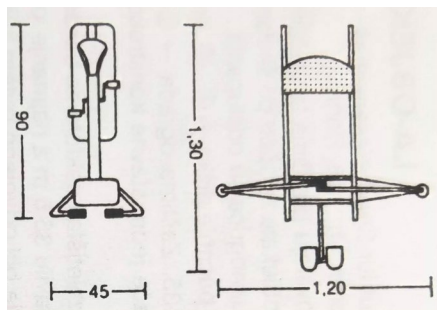
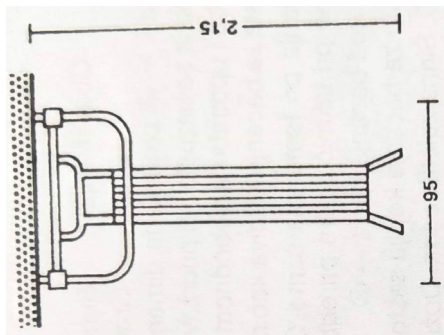
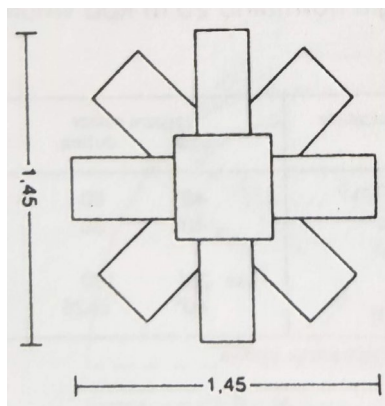


Figure 11: Abdominal bench



Source of Figures 10 and 11: Nojfert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 514.

Figure 12: Space for the multi-exercise center



Source: Nojfert, E. (2004). *Architectural Design*, 37th revised and expanded edition. Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, Stylos, pg. 514.

Conclusion

In order to continue with the development of sports in the Republic of Serbia, a complete revision and then a planned reconstruction and building of sports objects is imperative. The strategic plan has always been to revitalize the existing sports objects and additional facilities wherever that is possible and appropriate, and then to

build new objects. Modern and functionally organized infrastructure of sports objects is one of the key preconditions for achieving development and success in all fields (Krsmanović Veličković, 2021).

Sports diagnostics is a comprehensive scientific concept that encompasses the aspect of training monitoring and/or sports medicine. In many cases, that is quite challenging in the real world of sports especially in the professional sphere (Mercer et al., 2022). This level of control allows for managing fatigue and protects athletes from the excessive risk of injury during an intensive sports training (West S.W. et al., 2021). One of the main goals of sports diagnostics is maintaining health because a regular training process is possible thanks to it. The things that the training process can least influence are the ability to engage in sports, but also the overall health without injuries after the training is complete (Dijkstra H.P. et al., 2014). Maintaining health enables us to break down physical barriers and perform more complex and longer efforts.

Sports diagnostics is closely connected to training monitoring (external and internal loads). Therefore, it can be an interesting addition and it can contribute to knowledge about athletes and their adaptations to training. Scientist should be able to answer even the hardest questions of coaches, and, on the other hand, coaches should rely on their experience and the latest knowledge.

Taking everything into consideration, it is extremely important how diagnostic centers will be equipped and designed so as to completely fit the measures of a properly developed person, as well as the space required for different positions and movements. Having in mind that a man is not only a being that needs space, special attention needs to be paid to experience of the space itself, that is, how a space is dimensioned, divided, coloured, lit, what kind of furniture is in it, and these are just some of the most important things influencing the behaviour and mood of people in a space.

Acknowledgements

This work is part of a scientific research within the project “Defining and Verification of the Laws of Complex Movement under Conditions of Maximum Muscle Stress”, number 160/22 from June 21, 2022, at the Faculty of Sports, University “Union – Nikola Tesla”, New Belgrade. duration: from July 2022 until the end of 2026.

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INITIAL STEPS IN PREPARING A SCIENTIFIC CONCEPT OUTLINE – FORMULATING THE PROBLEM AND DETERMINING THE RESEARCH SUBJECT

Milan Vuković¹, Dejan Dašić², Aleksandra Vuković³

Abstract: This paper focuses on the initial steps in preparing a scientific concept outline, with a particular emphasis on the process of formulating the problem and determining the research subject. The aim of the research is to analyze the key steps and strategies that researchers need to apply in this early stage of the research process to ensure clarity, relevance, and feasibility of their research plans. Basic concepts and definitions related to problem formulation are explored, emphasizing the importance of accurately identifying the research problem to be investigated. Various methods and techniques that researchers can use in the process of formulating the problem and determining the research subject are analyzed. Examples of best practices and case studies are presented to illustrate the application of these methods in different scientific disciplines.

Key words: research, methodology, draft of a scientific idea.

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The research presented in this paper was conducted with the financial support of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia, within the framework of funding scientific research at the University of Belgrade, Technical Faculty in Bor, under contract number 451-03-47/2023-01/200131.



Introduction

The research process is typically divided into a specific number of components or phases, with the number varying from author to author. From a formal perspective of scientific research, it can be discussed in terms of four phases, namely (1) collecting and organizing individual facts, (2) formulating a hypothesis that can explain the collected material, (3) testing the hypothesis, and (4) theoretical generalization and establishing scientific laws. Methodological procedure, instead of phases, can also be expressed through components, implying a deviation from the typical sequence of steps such as (1) research question, (2) theory, (3) data, and (4) data utilization (King et al., 1994). Simić, in his structure of scientific research, distinguishes (1) problem identification, (2) hypothesis formulation, (3) hypothesis testing (verification), and (4) practical application of solutions (2002: 34).

Most authors in contemporary methodological literature identify several phases in scientific research. Kumar (2011), for example, extensively examines the structure of the research process involving three phases and eight steps that need to be taken. Firstly, a decision must be made regarding the subject of the research. Then, during the second phase, planning is undertaken to clearly provide answers on how the research on the chosen phenomenon will be conducted. The final, third phase pertains to the actual implementation of the research. Although the first phase involves only one step – formulating the research problem (or subject) – this task requires considerable intellectual effort from the researcher. Research planning, as Kumar sees it, should include the following four steps: (1) conceptualizing the research approach; (2) constructing data collection instruments; (3) sample selection; and (4) writing the research proposal. Finally, conducting the research involves three steps: (1) data collection; (2) data organization and analysis; and (3) writing the research report.

Within this work, based primarily on Kumar's model of the research process structure, activities within the planning and implementation of scientific research are briefly identified. The quality of research planning is largely influenced by the author's creativity. This creativity later transforms into appropriate content during the research implementation through the application of specific research methods, techniques, instruments, and procedures.

The majority of the work focuses on the first two activities in preparing a scientific concept outline. Although the first phase of the research process involves only one step – formulating the research problem (or subject) – this task, as emphasized by Kumar, requires significant intellectual effort from the researcher (2011).

Research Design

Research design is "the idea of organizing, planning, and conducting research through all its developmental stages," meaning it integrates elements of "epistemological, logical, and technical nature" (Nikolić, 2010: 41). Due to its complexity, research design is not easily defined in a straightforward manner. As a type of scientific document, research design consists of (1) a draft of the scientific concept, (2) a plan for hypothesis verification, report preparation, and utilization of research results, and (3) a research plan. The draft of the scientific concept represents the epistemological and logical basis for conducting research and preparing accompanying documents. It determines the basic guidelines for every research: theoretical, empirical, or theoretical-experiential. Since the draft of the scientific concept is "a unit, a system of scientific-theoretical and methodological attitudes about the phenomenon, problem, subject of research addressed by the project," this document can be considered "exclusively" of a scientific nature based on its characteristics (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 420).

Preparing a draft of the scientific concept is a necessary activity to lay valid foundations for research at the outset. It is widely believed that the draft of the scientific concept is developed for the purpose of "initiating, motivating, and attracting" the attention of potential research clients (Milosavljević, 2013: 160). Moreover, in some situations, donors and financiers do not require a draft of the scientific concept but only a properly filled-out form that generally includes essential elements of the draft.

The draft of the scientific concept comprises six parts: (1) problem formulation; (2) determination of the research subject; (3) research objectives; (4) hypothetical framework of the research - hypotheses; (5) research methods; and (6) scientific and social justification of the research. Each part of the draft of the scientific concept, during the creation of this document, deserves appropriate attention to fulfill its role and purpose. Each part "must be elaborated to a level that will enable a complete understanding of the essence of the research project" (Bazić and Danilović, 2015: 19). Research practice shows that certain parts of the draft are often omitted or summarized. Usually, "problem formulation" and "justification of the research" are omitted, while "research subject and objectives" are merged or replaced, and the harmful consequences of such practices are manifold because in these cases, "the connection between the subject of specific research and the problem and phenomenon as a whole is missing, the research subject is not developed and defined adequately, the level of knowledge to be achieved through specific research remains insufficiently determined, hypotheses are unsuitable for testing, etc." (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 422).

Formulation of the Problem

Every research begins with the initial determination of the research problem to establish a relationship between the theoretical foundation and the specific research project. Based on this, later steps involve determining the most favorable ways to conduct the research to gain explanations about the phenomenon under study. But how is the problem formulated? How does the researcher decide on a specific problem and, later, on the research subject? Clear-cut answers cannot be offered to these questions (Dašić, 2023b). What is certain is that the rules of choice during these early activities of the research process are less formalized compared to later stages of that process. Personal experience and values upheld by individual researchers often provide motivation for addressing certain phenomena.

From the perspective of potential scientific contribution, personal reasons are neither necessary nor sufficient to confirm the choice of a specific research subject. In other words, it is not important what a particular researcher thinks, but "the academic community cares only about what can be demonstrated" (King et al., 1994: 15). Sources of ideas are varied; for example, problems observed in practice, literary sources, replication of research, etc. (Simić, 2002: 42). It should be noted that "a large number of scientists became famous not because of their ability to solve a problem, but because of their wisdom in choosing it" (Wilson, 1952: 375).

During the initial stage of research design, it is necessary to formulate the research problem in as precise a manner as possible. The precisely defined research problem, as well as the research subject (in the next stage), are arrived at through a process of narrowing down generality. In other words, a clear distinction is drawn among concepts such as topic, problem, purpose, and research subject (research question). The differences between these concepts are illustrated in Table 1 with a specific example.

The formulation problem of the research subject manifests to varying degrees among different categories of scientific workers. It is certainly more pronounced among younger individuals starting their scientific careers with a bachelor's thesis, master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation.

Beginners in scientific work are considered scientific workers until the completion of the doctoral dissertation. Hence, topics for scientific work are mostly proposed by experienced scientists, in consultation with candidates. Sometimes, "the candidate themselves proposes the research problem for the doctoral dissertation, and the methodology is jointly developed" (Sarić, 1989: 54).

Vuković, M., Dašić, D., Vuković, A., (2024). Initial steps in preparing a scientific concept outline – formulating the problem and determining the research subject, *Sport media and business*, 10(1) 75-90.

Table 1. The path from the problem to the subject of research

<i>Research topic</i>	Poor student performance in public schools
<i>A research problem</i>	Poor academic performance of students from marginalized social groups
<i>The purpose of the research</i>	Identifying factors influencing poor academic performance of students from marginalized groups
<i>Research question</i>	Do dysfunctional families affect the poor academic performance of students from marginalized groups ?

Source: authors

Regardless of their type and scope, research "never" captures a phenomenon in its entirety, that is, "all factors of its structure, function, relationships, and connections" (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 422). Accordingly, knowledge about any phenomenon is gradually acquired. Well-formulated research problem is one of the prerequisites for successfully accomplishing this task. The formulation of the research problem consists of three parts: (1) hypothetical statements about the problem; (2) justification of the importance of the research; and (3) review of basic theories and results of previous research.

During the formulation of the problem, three phases occur successively: (1) clearly identifying the phenomenon or process to be investigated (for example, organizational culture); (2) relating the identified phenomenon to other phenomena or processes in the environment (for example, how organizational culture influences employee behavior or motivation); and (3) systematically collecting existing scientific and other knowledge about the identified phenomenon or process (for example, gaining insights into all scientific and empirical knowledge related to organizational culture and its impact on employee behavior and motivation) (Bazić and Danilović, 2015a: 20).

Hypothetical Statements about the Problem

Hypothetical statements are part of the problem formulation that: (1) defines the process or phenomenon to which the research relates; (2) "identifies parts (factors), dimensions, and properties that can be considered the research problem"; and the identified parts (3) "are organized into units and defined, then classified according to similarity and ranked based on predetermined criteria" (Milosavljević and Radosav-

ljević, 2006: 423). Hypothetical statements are of great help in defining the research subject as they provide a basis for distinguishing various aspects that are also worth the research effort (Dašić, 2023a). During the creation of this part of the problem formulation, various mental and logical operations are used; primarily, analysis, induction, specialization, and classification.

Hypothetical statements should not be equated with hypotheses. Hypothetical statements are largely true statements, while hypotheses are based on assumptions. In later stages of drafting the scientific concept – after addressing the research subject and objectives – the hypothetical framework presented is further specified and concretized, focusing on those statements whose truthfulness (through hypothesis verification) will be established.

Defining the Significance of the Research

Determining the significance of the research, as the second part of the problem formulation, is a necessary and complex activity. Essentially, research is viewed through social and scientific significance. The first criterion pertains to the problem being "significant" in the real world. The chosen topic should be relevant to political, social, economic, and cultural life, helping in understanding and predicting events that can lead to harmful or positive consequences (Đašić, 2023b). When explaining the social significance, finding the right balance is crucial. One of the more common mistakes in drafting this part of the problem formulation is exaggerating the significance of the specific research. Researchers sometimes resort to this practice to attract potential research clients (Dašić et al., 2023).

In determining the scientific significance, the research project should make a concrete contribution to scientific knowledge by enhancing the ability to construct verified scientific explanations of some aspect of objective reality. The scientific significance of the research is assessed in terms of achieving certain levels of scientific knowledge or advancements in methodology. The first type of contribution is reflected in understanding the phenomenon itself (epistemological significance), while the contribution to methodology is achieved through the development of technical procedures and instruments, new research techniques, and so on. In terms of knowledge or research methods, this contribution can be heuristic (revealing new knowledge) or verificational (testing existing knowledge). Explicit contribution to increasing the body of scientific knowledge is achieved in various ways. For example, King et al. (1994: 16) suggest the following possibilities:

1. Take a hypothesis that is prominently present in the literature but has not been systematically studied. If evidence is found in favor of or against the hypothesis, a scientific contribution is made.
2. Choose an accepted hypothesis in the literature that is suspected to be untestable (or believed to be inadequately confirmed) and investigate whether it cannot be refuted or if another theory is correct.
3. Attempt to resolve or provide new evidence for existing controversial issues, or perhaps prove that the controversy was unfounded from the beginning.
4. Shape the methodological approach to illuminate or evaluate unresolved assumptions in the literature.
5. Argue that a significant problem is overlooked in the literature and then contribute by systematically studying that problem.
6. Demonstrate that theories or data from the literature developed for one purpose can be applied in other scientific disciplines for entirely different problems.

The results of previous research

The results of previous research on the problem being investigated are presented in the last part of the problem formulation. This sort of "snapshot" of basic theories and research results is, in terms of volume, the "most significant" part of most problems and research projects (Mihailović, 1999: 88). The primary purpose of familiarizing oneself with scientific and professional literature is to gain insight into existing knowledge about the selected problem and to define the "theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and strategic" foundations of one's own research (Milosavljević, 2013: 159). The effort invested in understanding the results of past research will pay off multiple times for the researcher; primarily, it will facilitate the project's implementation. Analyzing previous results "reveals the initial foundation of the research, its breadth of insight and selectivity, and also indicates some basic starting points that the researcher will use in the research, forming opinions, defining concepts, determining the content of the research subject, hypotheses, indicators, methods, and techniques of data collection, processing, and interpretation" (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 428). Therefore, it is useful to gain insight into results of dual character, namely: (1) knowledge directly related to the researched phenomenon or process, and (2) knowledge indirectly related to the chosen problem. Within these two segments, the results of not only theoretical but also empirical research from various scientific fields and disciplines are analyzed.

In this part of the problem formulation, the "level of knowledge" from which the research process starts should be emphasized, highlighting the "most significant results" of previous research, and, if possible, identifying authors and works that have made the "greatest contribution" to understanding a specific problem (Bazić and Danilović, 2015: 20). The extent of these activities depends on the type of research. Heuristic and fundamental research requires a more extensive overview of previous results, often citing hundreds of bibliographic units. Action research, on the other hand, usually relies on a smaller number of widely accepted assumptions, mentioning only basic literature sources.

It is of great importance to familiarize oneself with relevant literary sources from a methodological perspective, especially when researchers decide to apply a methodological approach, method, technique, or instrument for the first time. Drawing on previous work on a specific problem is also beneficial when planning a project using the same approach or methodology, "as they form the basis of subsequent research phases – from selecting appropriate methods, not only based on knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses and their relevance to research goals and subjects, but also based on knowledge of how they have proven effective and successful in previous related research. Consequently, this also applies to data organization and analysis. If certain classification systems have proven suitable in previous research, they can be used in new research as well" (Milosavljević, 2013: 159).

A good understanding of literary sources, especially relevant theories, allows the researcher to define the initial conceptual-categorical apparatus and hypothetical framework of the research project well. Thus, studying scientific and professional literature emerges as a necessary condition for "defining the theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and strategic foundations of one's own research and the way to explore something for which there already exist scientific knowledge" (Milosavljević, 2013: 158). Therefore, the central place in analyzing previous research results belongs to scientific theories.

The role of theory in research

In many sciences, there are multiple equally acceptable general approaches to investigating a phenomenon or process. This is especially true in social sciences, where three positions (or ontologies) are predominantly represented – culturalism (or interpretive approach), structuralism, and rationalism. The third approach implies the rationality of individuals in making choices based on assessing the positive and negative aspects of a social action (behavior). The differences among these ontologies are depicted in Table 2. As can be seen from the presented table, the category

of "interest" (if taken, for example, as the subject of research) can be approached from three aspects: (1) interest seen as a result of individual preferences, (2) interest seen through the lens of social identity, and (3) interest viewed in the light of structural position.

The problem of determining the most general approach to research is present not only in the study of social phenomena but also in certain natural processes and phenomena. Sometimes, there is a dilemma of whether to approach the research subject from the perspective of the whole or from the perspective of parts. In such cases, it usually involves phenomena that must be considered in terms of their relationship to other phenomena and processes within the given system. Now, after determining the basic orientation, let's turn to questions related to the actual selection of theory/theories that will serve as a source of hypotheses for research.

Once a basic standpoint is taken, or a combination of them (which is less common), detailed study of theories is undertaken, including their selection, from which the research subject and the entire subsequent research work will later emerge. There are different ways of moving in terms of theories during research. For example, one can start: (1) from one and end with one theory, (2) from many and end with one theory, (3) from one and end with many theories, and (4) from many and end with many theories.

Theories about social phenomena are usually expressed by a smaller number of specific descriptive and causal hypotheses. A theory must be consistent with previously gathered evidence about a specific research question, and if a theory ignores existing facts, then it is nothing but an "oxymoron." Developing theoretical propositions typically appears as the first phase of the methodological procedure. It sometimes indeed appears first in practice, although that doesn't have to be the case. In fact, a theory cannot be developed without knowledge of previous work on a specific problem and gathering some data, even assuming that the chosen question has not been studied in the literature (Vuković, et al. 2023).

Table 2. Differences among the main paradigms

Dimension	Paradigm		
	Rationalism	Culturalism	Structuralism
Interests:	Individual preferences and beliefs	Social identities	Structural position
Identities:	Autonomous preferences and beliefs	Composed of individuals	Derived from structure
Institutions:	Equilibrium of strategic interactions	Expression of norms	A reflection of power relations

(Source: Lichbach, 2003: 132)

Which theories should a researcher pay attention to as a source of possible hypotheses for their research? Firstly, these are theories that could turn out to be incorrect. The philosophy of science has long shown that much more is learned from incorrect theories than from those that are presented so broadly that they cannot possibly be wrong in principle. Second, to ensure the testability of a theory, one should choose a theory from which as many observational implications can be derived as possible. This allows for a variety of ways to test the theory – with more data and greater diversity. Third, the proposed theory for testing should be as specific as possible. Vaguely stated theories and hypotheses serve no purpose other than to create confusion.

Finally, there are researchers who advocate the principle of parsimony, according to which simpler theories are more likely to be confirmed. Parsimony is therefore a judgment, or even an assumption, about the simple nature of the world. This stance is not equally receptive in all academic circles. One should never insist on parsimony as a general principle of theory construction, but rather as a useful tool in situations where there is already some knowledge about the simplicity of the aspect of the world being studied.

Younger researchers in choosing a theory can rely on comprehensive evaluations of existing theories in a specific scientific discipline (Dašić, et al., 2023). These comprehensive analyses of current theories are periodically published in the form of review articles in scientific journals and monographs. Review articles, as a specific category of scientific work, represent a valuable source and aid in the decision-making process regarding the choice of theory, especially in cases where the existing state of

research is described in relatively new, specialized disciplines. As an illustrative example, one can mention the study by Bruton et al. (2004) in which they assessed the contributions of different theories in the field of international strategic management – an area that began to develop more intensively in the early 1990s. The mentioned authors view international strategic management from the perspective of institutional theory, social network theory, organizational learning theory, and theory based on company's own resources. Similarly, one should start the analysis of results from previous theoretical sources for any selected research problem.

Definition of the Research Subject

The research subject, considering its role, place, and significance, represents the "core" part of the research proposal (Bazić, 2013: 72). This part of the research proposal is the "central and pivotal part of every project" (Mihailović, 1999: 88). Since the research subject directly impacts other parts of the project (objectives, hypotheses, and research approach), its successful definition requires considerable effort from the researcher.

Unlike formulating the research problem, "it is much more difficult and complex to define the research subject well because, in addition to knowledge and experience, it also requires a good understanding of the scientific field and methodology relevant to the chosen problem" (Milosavljević, 2013: 167). This task is easier when it comes to descriptive research, where the research subject is typically broadly defined. Defining the research subject is more complex in the case of explanatory, applied, and developmental research, and most challenging, of course, in quantitative research, which, in addition to questions from previous types of research ("what," "where," and "why"), also includes the crucial additional question – "how much."

The research subject more concretely expresses the title of the research project itself. For example, if the title of the research project is "The Role of Communication Satisfaction in Enhancing Employee Organizational Commitment," then that is also the research subject. In this case, the research subject relates to both phenomena being investigated, namely "communication satisfaction" and "employee organizational commitment," and their interrelationships. Based on this example, it is easy to see that the research subject is determined by two initial elements: (1) the phenomena whose relationship is being investigated and (2) the nature of the relationship established between them (Lukić, 1989: 228). The title of the research project preliminarily defines the research subject. However, the title does not

encompass all factors necessary for a complete definition of the research subject. A comprehensive definition of the research subject involves its theoretical and operational determination.

Theoretical Definition of the Research Subject

The theoretical definition of the research subject aims to clearly define the content of what is to be investigated. This content is most commonly derived through deduction from established scientific knowledge, primarily relevant theories related to the research problem. The importance of this part of the research project stems from the fact that it not only expresses the "philosophical, conceptual-theoretical, and scientific-theoretical perspective" on the research subject but also provides a preliminary indication of the use of specific methods (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 432).

When presenting theoretical foundations, it is not enough to simply identify and briefly outline selected theories; it is more significant to justify such choices. Similarly, stating that deductive or inductive approaches will be applied in the research is not sufficient. Moreover, it is not acceptable, as is often the case in practice, to list a series of general and specific theories without any explanation or connection to the goals and specific subject of the research. On the other hand, referring to a theory post facto and merely formally presenting the theories on which the research relies means nothing for the quality and effects of the research unless they are actually applied during the research process (Milosavljević, 2013: 168).

As sources for the theoretical definition of the subject, the following are used: (1) scientifically researched and verified facts; (2) unverified scientific knowledge; (3) empirical-experiential, non-scientific knowledge (although they may not be devoid of any scientific basis); and (4) so-called nonexistent knowledge, or what can be assumed about the relationships between phenomena covered by the research subject based on experiential and scientific knowledge.

The last two sources are exclusive to heuristic research. These investigations, mostly related to processes and phenomena concerning human behavior, face several challenges. Human behavior is primarily conditioned by specific economic, political, moral, or legal environments, as well as by belonging to various social groups or societies (cultures). Since certain types of phenomena of this nature lack adequate scientific knowledge, researchers are expected to demonstrate "a high degree of creativity" and possess "imagination and intuition" in conducting research (Bazić and Danilović, 2015a: 23; Mihailović, 1999: 90).

A significant part of the theoretical determination of the research subject involves the categorical-conceptual system and language. During the development of the categorical-conceptual system, scientifically verified knowledge is used (based on the analysis of relevant theories and theoretical models), using only those concepts that will be included in the research. Among the concepts within such a formed categorical-conceptual system are: (1) concepts adopted in their entirety; (2) concepts adopted in terms of content but with selected and specified terms; (3) concepts that are restructured; (4) concepts constructed from two or more concepts; and finally, (5) new concepts created for the needs of the research (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 435).

Operational Definition of the Research Subject

The operational definition of the research subject represents the final concretization of the phenomenon to be investigated. Firstly, all factors of the subject (phenomenon or process) are clearly stated, and then the research is dimensioned in terms of time, space, and disciplinary aspects. These are, in fact, the four elements of a complete definition of the research subject.

The content factors of the research subject must be developed from general concepts to specific and individual concepts starting from general concepts. The basis of analysis in this sense are the interconnections and relationships of elements within the structure of the phenomenon. This is significant from a methodological perspective as it provides the content of specific and individual hypotheses. In numerous research projects across various scientific fields, the constant factors of the research subject are generally identified as: (1) the content of the phenomenon; (2) the conditions under which the phenomenon occurs; (3) the forms in which the phenomenon appears; (4) the time of occurrence of the phenomenon; (5) the space in which the phenomenon occurs; (6) the effects of the phenomenon on other phenomena; and (7) the actors in the realization of the phenomenon (Mihailović, 1995).

In the first part of defining the research subject, which refers to the content factors of the subject, it is necessary to accurately list the factors that will be directly investigated during the project's implementation. Using the previously mentioned example of the research topic, "The Role of Communication Satisfaction in Enhancing Employee Organizational Commitment," the theoretical definition explains the basic categorical concepts of the research: "communication satisfaction" and "organizational commitment." These two basic (general) categorical concepts are further broken down into specific factors during the operational definition of the research subject, while these specific factors are eventually dissected into individual factors.

For instance, the first basic concept – "communication satisfaction" – can be broken down into specific factors such as: (1.1) "communication with superiors," (1.2) "communication with colleagues," and (1.3) "communication channels." Similarly, the second basic concept ("organizational commitment") can be broken down into specific factors such as: (2.1) "affective commitment," (2.2) "continuance commitment," and (2.3) "normative commitment." After completing the operationalization of basic concepts, i.e., their breakdown into specific factors, the operational definition of the subject continues by further dissecting specific factors into individual factors. For example, specific factor 1.3, "communication channels," can be further broken down into individual factors such as: (1.3.1) "communication via email," (1.3.2) "communication at business meetings," and (1.3.3) "communication through rumors and gossip."

The same process should be applied when dissecting the other two specific factors of the first concept, or all three specific factors of the second concept. It is expected that during the research, structural and functional relationships and connections between the named factors will be examined. Operationalization thus sets the framework for the planned research. Initiating the development of content factors should not occur before a full explanation of the research subject is provided. In other words, during the elaboration of content factors of the research subject, efforts should be made to avoid the "most difficult," and perhaps "most common" mistake; that is, failing to define a certain subject more precisely (Milosavljević and Radosavljević, 2006: 438).

In the second part of the operational definition of the research subject, temporal determination is approached, which relates to the period covered by the research subject; for example, hour, day, week, month, year, decade, or century. This time does not refer to the duration of activities in researching the selected subject but rather to the period during which the subject exists and is covered by the research.

In the third part of the operational definition of the research subject, the space to be included in the research is determined. Space, like time, is also one of the factors of the phenomenon. The research space, for example, encompasses the space of one or more companies, regions, countries, institutions, organizations, etc.

Finally, in the fourth part, the subject is determined disciplinarily. The researcher opts for one (intradisciplinary approach) or multiple scientific disciplines (interdisciplinary approach) within which to investigate a particular phenomenon.

Conclusion

The preparation of a scientific proposal is a crucial phase in the research process. The first step is identifying the research topic, which involves reviewing the literature and identifying gaps or deficiencies that your study can address. Next, it's essential to clearly define the research objectives and formulate hypotheses or research questions to be investigated. Subsequently, selecting an appropriate research methodology and collecting relevant data are necessary. It's important to consider the ethical aspects of research and ensure that all activities comply with standards and regulations.

Once the data is collected, the analysis of results and interpretation of findings in the context of the set objectives follow. Finally, drafting a scientific paper that includes an introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion is necessary. It's important to note that preparing a scientific proposal is a dynamic process that may require revisions and additions as the research progresses and new information becomes available.

Acknowledgment

The research presented in this paper was conducted with the financial support of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia, within the framework of funding scientific research at the University of Belgrade, Technical Faculty in Bor, under contract number 451-03-47/2023-01/200131.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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APPLICATION OF MARKETING PROCESSES AND TOOLS AS AN IMPERATIVE OF THE MODERN MARKET

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Abstract: The book *Marketing*, authored by Bozidar Milenovic and Milijanka Ratkovic, covers all important topics in this field. Marketing is a comprehensive textbook that dispels illusions about marketing as an "omnipotent force" of consumer society and sheds light on the laws of supply and demand on a scientific basis, processed in such a way that related disciplines participate in them in an optimal way, from which it can be concluded that this is a serious and complex content, which provides answers to many insufficiently treated topics. The authors, excellent experts in marketing both from the point of view of theory and practice, present modern marketing as a way to achieve a new paradigm of marketing as a more responsible, directed and less invasive tool to achieve success in the market in the sense that meet the more subtle needs of consumers through a more responsible design of the offer. Therefore, this book is not intended exclusively for students, but is suitable reading for proven experts, professional managers and everyone else who wants to learn but also to confirm their knowledge in this field. It is written in a clear and concise style, with numerous examples from the real business world and life that vividly evoke marketing strategies that various companies have successfully or unsuccessfully applied at some point in their development. This textbook gives a look at the most modern marketing trends and application in real time and real business environment, especially with emphasis on the domestic business environment. All of these contents certainly indicate that Marketing deserves the full reader's attention of a narrowly professional audience, scientific workers in this field as well as students eager for new knowledge.

Key words: Research, segmentation, positioning, marketing mix, promotion.

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Introduction

Regardless of the large number of publications in the field of marketing, there is still no agreement or understanding regarding certain concepts and terms that have arisen in this area. Part of that misunderstanding stems from insufficient commitment to theory by experts in practice in this field, and especially in the part of equating marketing with promotion and advertising. This happens for a number of reasons, starting with the fact that promotion, or part of promotional techniques, is the most transparent topic for the general public, to reasons that stem from the fact that other topics represent much more complex contents, which as such are not attractive, both to the audience and unfortunately, also certain authors, therefore, authors pay less attention to them, although these topics are the basis for the development of adequate promotional strategies (Grubić, Ratković, 2012)

A serious study of marketing in all the topics that make up this area implies the possession of knowledge from many other disciplines and sciences. For example, it is management, scientific research methodology, communications, human resources, microeconomics and even macroeconomics, etc. (Raletić-Jotanović, et al 2015; Manić, et al 2018; Milenović, Ratković, 2009; Ratković, 2009; Milenović, 2011; Milenović, 2014; Milenović, 2003; Ratković et al., 2012; Ratković, Dašić, 2018). Therefore, authors of books in the field of marketing must have relevant knowledge in order to create content that will really be of help to experts on the market, but also to scientists who may find parts of this field useful during scientific research work. Such an approach has been observed in a smaller number of publications on the topic of marketing, which gives publications like this one created by the authors Milenović and Ratković another quality.

The current marketing practice has created certain criticisms of this area, which must be corrected. (Milenović & Ratković, 2012; Wu, & Geylani, 2020; Darke, et al., 2010; ; Stoeckl, & Luedicke, 2015) Therefore, any book that deals with all topics in the field of marketing in the way that the mentioned authors dealt with in their book, represents an exceptional contribution to theory and practice, but also to some extent to science. From the point of view of these authors, science in marketing can be discussed through certain aspects of the research process, as well as in the part of the influence of psychological factors on consumer behavior (Ratković, et al., 2012). Therefore, if we seriously study consumer behavior in the context of marketing strategies, knowledge of psychology for authors dealing with this topic is also imperative. Finally, and in connection with the related areas of other disciplines with marketing, we must also mention logistics, which is processed within distribution as an element of the marketing mix, and which is of fundamental importance for the

successful development of marketing channels. (Milenović, 2007) The appropriate measure of the participation of all mentioned areas is also an indicator of the author's experience and knowledge in the field of marketing topics.

Bearing in mind the above, as well as the book *Marketing*, which is the subject of analysis in this article, I believe that the authors of this book have presented all the topics that are relevant in this area in an appropriate manner in each of the mentioned aspects. In this connection, a review of the contents of the book by chapters follows, but before that, a few technical characteristics of this publication.

The book *Marketing* is the second edition of the book of the same name from 2012. It is intended for undergraduate students of the faculty who have economics modules. It is also intended for master's degree students, especially with the content presented in the fourth and fifth chapters, the description of which will be given in the continuation of this presentation. It contains 414 pages, which are divided into 10 chapters. The book is made in B5 format. Each chapter in the book ends with questions for reflection and discussion, an example that illustrates the content of the chapter, and questions from that example.

The book was created as a result of the author's experience with topics of a micro-economic nature, which the authors, especially the first, dealt with for most of their academic life. The authors of the book have several joint publications, which, like this one, are based on successful long-term cooperation. (Milenović, Ratković, 2012; Milenović & Ratković, 2001; Milenović & Ratković, 2009) Their collaboration in publishing books and articles began in 2001 and continues to this day.

Description of the contents of the book *Marketing* by chapters

The content of the book begins with a description of the role of marketing in modern business with a focus on the basic purpose of the marketing concept. In this chapter, the authors present the basic aspects of the importance of applying the marketing concept in the modern market, with a focus on its evolution, i.e. the growth of importance over time. With that growth, marketing as a concept was exposed to numerous criticisms that arose as a consequence of the negative context of the application of its instruments and processes. Explaining this, the authors state that even today there are market participants who abuse marketing potential, and direct their business towards current interests, without a long-term vision of what they are doing, and especially without the intention of creating a satisfied customer. Unfortunately, precisely because of such subjects, even today, marketing has certain negative connotations. At the same time, the digital environment has created some new

potentials that, by their nature of action, can be classified as marketing, and they are also subject to ethical assessments. (De Lira, et al., 2018; Mattsson, & Rendtorff, 2006; Hodson, 2023) Nevertheless, this part of the negative perception of marketing can be given a certain period of adjustment, given that it is still a newspaper, both from the digital set of potential and from marketing.

The first chapter provides an insight into the basic concept of marketing, which is the well-known marketing mix, which the authors of this book expand to five pes, including as a mandatory element people, i.e. employees. The marketing mix as a marketing tool, regardless of the criticisms that accompany it, illustrates in a good way the importance of the key marketing potential of the elements that make it up. (Darmawan & Grenier, 2021; Išoraitė, 2016; Syapsan, 2019). Each of the elements is analyzed in separate chapters later in the book.

The first chapter ends with the key perspectives of marketing, which are presented as potentials if the participants in today's market follow them in accordance with the nature of their business. In this sense, the authors single out global orientation, improvement of relations between all participants in the value delivery chain, ethics, social responsibility, added value, digital marketing, scientific approach, etc.

The second chapter shows the actors in the market in the context of the analysis of the marketing environment. The division used by the authors is based on the division given by the well-known author of many marketing books, Philip Kotler. The internal environment of the company is the one that contains all the sectors that exist in it, but also some external entities that can work for it (Ratković, et al., 2017). The external environment consists of micro and macro parts, where the first contains all those who have a direct impact on its work. These are customers, competitors, suppliers, intermediaries and the public, as well as some other subjects depending on the type of market. The macro part takes into account all possible influences from this level of action towards the business entity. These are factors such as economic, technological, sociological, cultural, ecological, demographic, psychological, and others. The type of market determines the intensity of actual and potential influence, but they can be broadly categorized into the following. The authors of the book *Marketing* point out that the correct perception importance and intensity of the influence of subjects and environmental factors of the company, determines its success and competitive position in the future (Raletić-Jotanović, et al., 2015). However, determining relevant influences is a complex job, and as the authors claim, regardless of the continuity of market research, we cannot be completely sure that we have made a good business decision. It's about the fact that market research gives answers, however, unpredictable circumstances can always happen that will

affect the company's operations to an unknown extent. The authors deal with the topic of research in the third chapter, both through the presentation of the research process itself, and a deeper analysis of the characteristics of the research methods.

By explaining the research process through the phases that make it up, and based on the activities that must be implemented within them, the authors present a basic framework that can serve decision makers in proactive action. It is known that research can be reactive and proactive, but through the presentation of market trends, the authors of this book emphasize the importance of proactive action. Like every other chapter, this one also ends with an appropriate example that illustrates how to present the obtained results, which is one of the stages in the research process.

The following chapter deals with segmentation and positioning, as a logical sequence of the market research process. In this chapter, the authors provide an overview of the known criteria for segmentation, within which they also mention belonging to generations X, Y and Z as a possible criterion, thus responding to trends that are currently current in research processes. Segmentation and positioning belong to the so-called target marketing, and the choice of target markets stands out as one of the key activities here. This step includes assessing market attractiveness segments, as well as an assessment of the company's competitive ability. The chapter Market Segmentation and Positioning represents the basis for getting to know the ways of making strategic decisions in business, which gives this book a serious tone, and at the same time, value in the form of knowledge that can be directly used in practice. Also, another level of seriousness that we have here points to the fact that all books that are used in postgraduate studies in the field of marketing must have as a basis the topic of segmentation and positioning, that is, target marketing. The chapter ends with an analysis of the repositioning process, and like any other, with an adequate example.

The contents of the previous chapters indicate the importance of customer relationship management. Customer relationship management strategy is part of the modern marketing concept, which most often has to include the potential of modern technologies. (Ratković, et al., 2013; Ratković, et al, 2016; Ilić, et al, 2021; Bogosavljević-Jovanović & Ratković, 2021) The authors of this book, through the presented content, but also through the chapters that follow, indicate the importance of improving customer satisfaction, as well as achieving good long-term relationships with them.

In accordance with the topic of segmentation and positioning, and taking into account the strategic determination of the goals of studying the complete basis of

marketing principles, in the following chapter, the authors provide the framework of the marketing plan and strategy. A brief insight into the basics of target market coverage strategy is given in chapter four, but in chapter five, the process of realizing these strategies is explained in more detail, and a brief presentation of alternative competitive marketing strategies is also given. Starting from the level of strategic planning and control, through the presentation of the basics of planning and implementation of marketing plans, the authors conclude the first part of this chapter with an exposition of the methods of monitoring the implementation and control of the performance of plans. The previous chapter, as well as this one in its entirety, give a special value to the book, because the topics covered by the authors include concrete guidelines, opportunities and the importance of carefully selected processes, plans and strategies in the marketing field. The knowledge that is necessary for the appropriate presentation of the mentioned topics includes not only marketing and management, but also broader aspects of economic sciences, as well as practical knowledge from the current market, both at the micro and macro level.

The second part of the fifth chapter deals with marketing strategies, and as already mentioned, insight into them begins with the presentation of the process of their creation. That process begins with the definition of the mission, followed by a marketing check and SWOT analysis, and ends with the creation and evaluation of strategic options, goals and development directions, as well as the creation of the core of the marketing strategy. Implementation and control is a logical sequence of this process, and within these activities the authors indicate the necessity of defining the key issues of implementation and control of marketing strategies. This chapter ends with a detailed presentation of alternative competitive marketing strategies, from which they distinguish the market leader's strategy, the market challenger's strategy, the market follower's strategy and the market buffer's strategy.

Based on the content of the fourth and fifth chapters, one can define another additional value of this book, which is precisely in the correctly chosen titles and the participation of the content in each of them, to the extent that is sufficient to introduce the reader to the key strategic aspects of the positioning of the business entity. In translation, this part of the book could serve as an independent course for training students on the most important strategic contexts of marketing activities.

From Chapter 6 to Chapter 9, the authors return to the tactical variables of marketing, that is, to the micro level of the use of marketing instruments. It is about the already mentioned set of marketing circumstances, or the popularly known marketing mix in its basic form of the so-called. 4 pe. Keeping in mind the expanded version of this mix, the authors pay special attention to employees, as well as processes

that are particularly important elements in the delivery of services. However, although these are topics that are elementary in marketing, in some titles the authors highlight the complexity and management of certain aspects that make them up. For example, with products, the life cycle is handled very precisely and usefully from the aspect of strategic management and marketing decision-making at the highest level. Also, through brand and product line portfolio management, the authors provide insight into the matrix of market growth and participation, then into the model of market attractiveness and competitive positions, as well as product growth strategies. With these topics, including titles that deal with highlighting the conditions for the emergence of a brand, the authors demonstrate a deep understanding not only of marketing decisions related to products, but also of new product and market development. The aforementioned belongs to the domain of business strategies, whereby the authors point out several times the inseparability of marketing from other disciplines, that is, the necessity of a wider knowledge of the context of positioning in today's market.

In chapter five, the authors deal with basic price strategies, of which they emphasize cost-based, competitively oriented and marketing-defined pricing. By explaining how customers evaluate value versus price, they enter in more detail into the marketing context of price definition, and knowledge of psychological and other decision-making factors when purchasing. All the time guided by the basic marketing goal, which is reflected in the improvement of customer satisfaction, the authors maintain the direction of marketing analysis of relevant topics. In this context, they continue with topics about communication, emphasizing promotion as an element of the marketing mix. This set of topics, because there are certainly more of them than in other elements of the marketing mix, is the set that most authors from the field of marketing deal with the most. There are several reasons, starting with the fact that this is the most transparent marketing area (hence the equating of promotion with marketing, which the authors point out as a mistake), to the fact that this area is in a certain way the easiest to understand, both by the lecturer and by the listeners who are receptive to easy-to-understand topics. Without going into these, but also some other possible reasons, the authors of this book quite rightly place promotion as one of the elements of the basic pattern of the marketing mix, a concept that is the most well-known in marketing, but certainly not the only important topic (Ratković, et al., 2011). Therefore, by placing promotion as an element of the marketing mix in such a place, the authors leave no doubt that it is only one of the same set of decisions made by marketing experts, and that it should not be considered separately, but only in the context of all others that make up this mix (Mihić, et al., 2023). As part of the promotion, which goes without saying, an overview of the promotion techni-

ques, as well as their basic characteristics, and mutual comparison is given. The selection of elements of the promotional mix depends on a large number of factors that the authors also mention in this chapter, but they make a special connection with the product life cycle, showing for the umpteenth time in this content much more than the basic knowledge that includes only the reproduction of well-known facts from the field .

By analyzing individual promotion techniques, such as advertising, then personal selling, as well as sales promotion and public relations, as well as publicity and other techniques, the authors look at broader aspects of the manifestation of their advantages, that is, point out their limitations. And as they state with the elements of the marketing mix, they emphasize here that the use of each technique must be viewed in relation to others, as well as to all the possible characteristics that make it up, as well as the conditions in which it will bring the best effects. They see public relations as one of the techniques, although they emphasize the importance of this potential in a much broader sense than the marketing context. Also, they see publicity as the result of all activities of a business entity that "go on the air", and which can be part of a desired, but also an unwanted process. On the other hand, they see publicity as a solution in crisis situations. They give special attention to spin in the media, considering the increasing prevalence of this phenomenon, which carries more and more threats to marketing strategies, especially when it comes to the political market, where this phenomenon was actually recorded for the first time.

This is followed by chapter 9, which deals with distribution, and which the authors consider to be the most complex both from the marketing point of view and from other angles of viewing the topics that make it up. The reasons are multiple, starting with those who say that decisions in the area of distribution are the least frequently made, and that they are the most expensive. This especially applies to the design of marketing channels. Also, the authors note that only a small number of authors deal with this topic from a marketing perspective, and that there are unused potentials in it. The authors note that this is a fact in practice, especially on the domestic market. This chapter begins with a description of the basic characteristics of distribution as a marketing variable, then goes into a description of the types of marketing channels, and in relation to the criteria related to length, number of levels, degree of dependence of participants, etc. The type of participants depends on the type of channel, which the authors divide into primary and specialized. The chapter ends with physical distribution and titles related to the design of marketing channels, as well as the modification of existing ones. The last mentioned titles indicate the seriousness of the analysis in this part, because they refer to key topics in the field of logistics,

which again shows the author's knowledge in areas that are indirectly related to marketing.

The last chapter deals with the current challenges of competitive marketing, which is partly found in modern information and communication technologies, but, on the other hand, also in the greater importance of the human factor and building long-term relationships with participants in the value delivery chain. One does not exclude the other, because good long-term relations are not the result of personal contact only, but also of effective information exchange that takes place precisely on the infrastructures of modern technologies. Of course, this is not the only contribution of the mentioned technologies in the marketing context, but one of many. The modern information and communication environment has created some new, but also improved some existing marketing techniques, especially in the field of promotion. (Ratković & Grubić, 2011; Garača et al., 2013; Dašić, et al., 2023) However, their contribution is also evident in the field of distribution, especially if we talk about the product availability factor, but also in the fact that certain contents can be delivered digitally. The contribution of modern technologies to marketing is so great that a special field of studying its potential, known as digital marketing, has been formed. The authors of this book deal with the stated basic principles, without going into specific current techniques, considering the dynamism of this environment, and the changes that are more frequent than any other area. What they particularly highlight here, in addition to the basic potential of the digital environment, are topics related to building good long-term relationships both with customers and with all other participants in the value delivery chain. In this sense, they define the 4O model, which emphasizes the importance of good relations with four types of target groups, namely: customers, partners, the public and employees. In this way, they emphasize the importance of the concept of internal marketing, then the process of managing relations with customers, as well as models like the IDIC model, or the importance of the Internet's participation in attracting and maintaining relationships with target groups. Additionally, the authors highlight the inevitable concept of social responsibility, and thus socially responsible marketing, then research in the light of new achievements such as neuromarketing, as well as the role of influencers, the importance of content marketing, and many other trends.

As already mentioned, each of the ten chapters ends with an appropriate example that illustrates the whole chapter or a part of it. To that end, in the order of the chapters, the authors presented the following examples in this book: 1) Toyota Motor Corporation with a focus on social responsibility, innovation and the global dimension of business; 2) Zijin Cooper doo Bor with a focus on ecological aspects of business and cultural differences; 3) Enough was enough, a movement that grew

into a political organization, with a focus on the results of research into the perception of the voting body in Serbia; 4) Faculty of business studies and law with a focus on segmentation, positioning, but also promotion; 5) Procter & Gamble with a focus on marketing strategy during the Kovid 19 pandemic; 6) David Beckham the soccer player, with a focus on personality analysis as a brand; 7) Cargo Butler as a response to the emerging market crisis caused by the Kovid19 pandemic; 8) Nonna Hand-made, as an example of the positioning of a domestic company in the field of fashion with a focus on differentiation in the assortment as the basis of the marketing strategy; 9) E-fit studio with a focus on certain elements of the marketing plan over time; 10) Gaming industry in Serbia on the example of RELOG MEDIA.

Conclusion

The content of the Marketing book meets the needs of studying the basics of marketing in undergraduate studies at all faculties where this subject is part of the program. In addition, this book can be used as supplementary reading for the subject of strategic marketing. Certainly, the book has a logical structure and current content, but also marketing principles that can be used as such in different times and conditions. Therefore, the presented content has a much wider readership than just the category of students. Namely, everyone who is interested in knowledge in this field can use the contents of this book to learn about marketing. This content can create interest in deeper entry into marketing issues, both for people who are engaged in entrepreneurship, and for experts in this field. It provides the first with basic knowledge, if they do not have it, in a quick and easily acceptable way, while it deepens the existing knowledge for the others.

The high frequency of citations of the authors of the Marketing book indicates their wide experience, which gives an additional impression of their competence and the relevance of the presented content. The choice of chapter topics, as well as the representation of each of them, additionally show that it is about serious content, as well as about serious authors. This is also confirmed by the inclusion of topics dealing with strategic marketing, to the extent that they present basic knowledge in this area as a basis for entering into the study of this topic.

Each chapter ends with a list of key concepts, questions for reflection and discussion, and examples. Terms are carefully selected according to their importance, regardless of the number of occurrences. From this it can be concluded that the authors entered many new areas that border on marketing, and used terms that are frequent in them, and represent the most important terms. The questions they singled out are

crucial for preparing the exam in the subject, that is, for checking knowledge, either on the exam or for other purposes. In the end, by choosing examples, the authors indicate their knowledge of the marketing aspects of the modern, predominantly domestic market, since most of the examples are from the domestic environment.

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Review Article

UDK: 351.861:316

351.861:33

351.861:796/799

Received: 22.2.2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58984/smb2401105j>

Accepted: 28.3.2024

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THE INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND POLICY IN SPORTS SAFETY

In relation to the book 'SECURITY CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY' (2022) by Dejan Dašić (ed.), publisher: Faculty of Law, Security and Management "Konstantin the Great", University „UNION – Nikola Tesla“ Belgrade, Serbia

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Abstract: The growing and deepening geopolitical differences suggest a growing threat to international security. People often ask us if there is still a cold war. With the involvement of regional and international forces, crises are becoming more widespread and conflicts are becoming more transnational. This is confirmed by the situation in Ukraine, as well as by the rising tensions and conjecture on a European military confrontation. Even in 2021, with fewer people traveling across EU borders due to the COVID-19 epidemic, migration remains one of the most contentious issues in European politics. In an attempt to slow the spread and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, nations have limited international, transnational, and domestic travel. This has had an impact on migration and human mobility in the European region. Safety in sports is of paramount importance to ensure the well-being and longevity of athletes across various disciplines.

Key words: Security, sport, Covid 19, athletes.

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Introduction

These days, the term "security" is used in a wide range of quite diverse social contexts and is found in practically all languages and cultures. Whether we are reading about politics, sports, computer science, ecology, psychology, economics, finance, or even movies, we frequently come across the phrases "security" or "national security" while reading about global affairs (Bajić, 2023).

According to Baudrillard, cinema, for instance, is utilized not just to recreate the past but also to predict and predestine the future. Put another way, everything is "enacted" on screen first to prepare the audience, and then the proposed building is really repeated in real life. A great deal of armed robberies, hijackings, and the like are premeditated, prearranged in the media's orchestration and ceremonial justifications, foreseen in their staging and potential outcomes.

It is essential to acknowledge that in the contemporary global security landscape, security issues and dangers are posed by both military and non-military threats; nevertheless, non-military threats bear the brunt of these concerns. Because various security challenges and issues are closely related, the state of affairs in one sector may have a big influence on other areas. However, most of the threats and issues that currently plague one area of the planet also impact adjacent areas, or perhaps even a number of far-off places (Radaković, Marinković, 2021). This just highlights the complexity of the current situation for international security. The idea of "comprehensive security," which considers the complete spectrum of security concerns and dangers to communities, states, and the international system as a whole, is therefore a leading item (Nikolajová Kupferschmidtová, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the inadequacy and moral bankruptcy of our global financial system, which has increased systemic inequality between North and South. Some authors state, one of the key questions regarding COVID-19 vaccines is whether they can reduce viral shedding (Đukić, Kojić, 2023). Its detrimental impacts are evident in every aspect of peoples' lives and careers. Flows of foreign direct investment are also subject to this procedure. Foreign direct investment flows declined mostly as a result of political responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including border closures, which combined with supply and demand shocks to cause a pandemic. Worldwide productivity was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic (Koblianska, 2022), increased the prices of many products, and significantly increased the price of transportation, i.e., distribution of products to the end customer (consumer).

Sport plays a key role in every society by contributing to social cohesion, overcoming prejudices, increasing positive public opinion, and spreading ethical and general principles conveyed through it. In the times we live in, sport is currently one of the most important and significant social activities, primarily motivated by economic reasons and opportunities for quick profit, followed by its positive impact on health. Therefore, due to the increasing profit in the sports industry and the popularity of sports globally, there is no sector of production that is not interested in collaborating with the sports industry (Dašić, 2018).

The most crucial aspect of organizing a sporting event is safety. The sports sector generates enormous revenue, in the hundreds of billions of euros or dollars (Stanković, Charalambides, Misić, 2023). The sports sector cannot withstand any disruptions for whatever reason, including safety concerns, as it does not expand and experiences financial losses. It is crucial to stress that ensuring safety must come first in order to successfully utilize marketing opportunities during sporting events.

The monograph contains 28 works divided into 5 sections, by authors from 13 countries (Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, USA, Croatia, India, Ukraine, Cyprus, UAE, Montenegro and Serbia) by 35 institutions. Security challenges of modern society: dilemmas and implications: thematic international monograph, it has 522 pages, B5 format, all works are in English, and it was printed by the printing house Sven from Niš.

The Far-Reaching Impact of COVID-19 on Economy, Society, and Media

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only posed a significant threat to global health but has also unleashed a cascade of socio-economic repercussions (Chmyha, 2022), reshaping the fabric of societies and transforming the media landscape. From the disruption of supply chains to the surge in misinformation, the pandemic has left an indelible mark on economies, societies, and the media worldwide.

The economic fallout of COVID-19 has been profound, with businesses of all sizes grappling with closures, supply chain disruptions, and plummeting consumer demand. Lockdown measures and social distancing protocols have forced many industries, including retail, hospitality, and travel, to adapt or face existential threats. Small businesses, in particular, have borne the brunt of the crisis, with millions forced to shutter their operations permanently (Singh, Singh, 2022; Koçi, 2022).

In their work "Quality of data and information in the function of business," Nebojša Denić and Milan Mišić report that, according to recent research, the average

company uses only 10% of its existing data and information efficiently, despite possessing 90% of what is needed for an efficient business. The amount of information that businesses and business systems import on a daily basis into their databases these days is enormous. Businesses now gather significant volumes of data from a variety of sources, and by employing business intelligence (BI) to gather, organize, and analyze this data, they may greatly enhance their firm's value. From a theoretical and practical standpoint, it has emerged that the quality of data and information has a direct impact on the efficacy and efficiency of business operations for firms. It also plays a significant role in delivering enjoyment to larger audiences and serves as a foundation for making the best judgments possible in the present. Business intelligence comprises concepts and techniques for enhancing and bolstering business decisions grounded on truth from company operations. Typically, while implementing business intelligence solutions, the majority of issues arise during the data transformation process from the original systems. Even though the relevance of business process management has been demonstrated in recent studies, there are still surprisingly few important scholarly publications in this field. The answer to the question "how much are the managers of companies, pleased with given informations, are they getting real reliable and usefull informations" was sought for with this article, which is based on conducted investigations among others. The majority of managers are only somewhat satisfied with the information gathered, but there must still be room for enhancing the caliber of business information.

The social ramifications of COVID-19 extend far beyond the realm of economics, profoundly altering the way people live, work, and interact with one another. Lock-downs and social distancing measures have led to increased feelings of isolation, loneliness, and mental health challenges, particularly among vulnerable populations and those living alone.

The authors of "Political risk as a treath factor of global order security," Radomir Stojković and Slađan Milosavljević, believe that political risk is an inevitable component of contemporary international (economic) relations. The concept's multidisciplinaryity is a result of its intense and comprehensive character, which gives it an economic and social realm in addition to its original political one. Political risk, broadly speaking, is any action taken by the government that has political motivations and disturbs the social and/or corporate environment.

In modern circumstances, the global order is burdened with numerous challenges. The beginning of the 21st century was marked by security, economic and energy crises. Political risk (generally and as a summary category) has become increasingly important in the multipolar division of the world.

Moreover, the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated pre-existing social divides, including disparities in access to healthcare, education, and digital resources. Marginalized communities, including racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, and people with disabilities, have faced heightened risks of infection and mortality, further underscoring systemic inequities in society.

In the midst of the crisis, the media has played a pivotal role in disseminating critical information, debunking myths, and holding governments and institutions accountable. However, the pandemic has also exposed the vulnerabilities and pitfalls of the media landscape, with misinformation, sensationalism, and polarization running rampant (Mihić, Dašić, Bogdanova, 2023; Vlajković, 2023).

In their work "Media as an instrument of strategic communication in armed conflicts," Miroslav Mitrović and Nenad Perić assert that the media has a powerful influence on shaping public opinion. When it comes to conflicts and security-related matters, the media is a potent tool for shaping public perceptions of reality, promoting made-up, oblique, yet impactful experiences, and being especially useful during a state of war. Because "modern societies are highly integrated in terms of communication, through the mass media," the media may effectively mobilize the country to engage in military war. It is obvious that the public's power affects political elites in making choices since the public is described as the "ultimate democratic authority" or the largest form of democratic administration. In light of this, there is no denying the opposing effect of the media and politics, as demonstrated by the stance of the "information controllers," who shape the narrative and subjects covered by the media for a variety of reasons.

Social media platforms have become breeding grounds for misinformation and conspiracy theories, fueling public confusion and eroding trust in traditional media sources. The proliferation of fake news and misinformation has hampered efforts to combat the pandemic effectively, leading to widespread skepticism about public health measures and vaccination campaigns.

Furthermore, the pandemic has accelerated existing trends in media consumption, with digital platforms experiencing a surge in traffic as people increasingly turn to online sources for news, entertainment, and social interaction. Traditional media outlets, already grappling with declining revenues and audience fragmentation, have been forced to adapt to evolving consumer preferences and digital disruptions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated unprecedented disruptions across all facets of society, none more so than in the realm of information technology (IT). As nations grappled with the need for remote work, distance learning, and virtual interactions, the demand for innovative technological solutions skyrocketed. From

accelerating digital transformation to reshaping cybersecurity priorities, COVID-19 has reshaped the landscape of information technology in profound and lasting ways.

One of the most noticeable impacts of COVID-19 on information technology has been the accelerated pace of digital transformation across industries. With lockdown measures and social distancing protocols in place, organizations were compelled to rapidly adopt remote work solutions, cloud-based collaboration tools, and digital communication platforms to sustain operations (Vladislavljević, Milenković, Radosavljević, 2023).

To mitigate these risks, businesses and government agencies ramped up cybersecurity measures, implementing robust encryption protocols, multi-factor authentication systems, and employee training programs. Additionally, there has been a growing emphasis on cybersecurity awareness and resilience, with organizations investing in threat intelligence, incident response capabilities, and cyber insurance to safeguard against evolving cyber threats.

Moreover, the pandemic has underscored the critical role of technology in fostering resilience, agility, and innovation in the face of unprecedented challenges. As societies adapt to the realities of a post-pandemic world, information technology will continue to play a central role in driving economic recovery, enhancing public health initiatives, and shaping the future of work and education.

Enhancing Safety Measures in Sports: A Comprehensive Approach

Sports play a significant role in promoting physical fitness, teamwork, and personal development. However, along with the myriad benefits, sports also carry inherent risks of injuries ranging from minor sprains to severe concussions and fractures. Safeguarding athletes against such risks requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including sports organizations, governing bodies, coaches, athletes themselves, and medical professionals. This paper delves into the critical aspects of safety in sports and proposes strategies to enhance safety measures across different levels of participation.

Sports safety is a multidisciplinary field that draws insights from various disciplines, including biomechanics, epidemiology, psychology, sociology, and public health. Sports safety books provide interdisciplinary perspectives on complex issues, fostering collaboration and exchange of ideas among researchers and practitioners from different academic backgrounds:

Injury Prevention:

Preventing injuries is paramount in maintaining the safety of athletes. This involves a combination of strategies, including proper warm-up and cool-down routines, strength and conditioning programs tailored to specific sports, and regular health screenings to identify any underlying medical conditions. Additionally, coaches and trainers should emphasize proper technique and skill development to reduce the risk of acute injuries such as ligament sprains and muscle strains.

The fast industrial revolution of the late 19th century made safety a major issue that needed to be addressed in industries; similarly, as sports become increasingly "industrialized," we are witnessing a similar need in today's sports. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines safety as the "condition in which conditions and hazards leading to physical, psychological, or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and the community" (Vuksanović, 2017). Sports and physical exercise are likely to always include some degree of danger, at least for certain participants, because they test human physical capabilities. However, the majority of the dangers connected to participating in sports, especially for those at the community level, may be reduced or managed by implementing effective preventative measures. (Timpka, et al., 2008).

Equipment Standards:

The use of appropriate sports equipment is essential in minimizing the severity of injuries. Sports organizations and governing bodies should establish and enforce rigorous standards for equipment such as helmets, pads, goggles, and footwear. Regular inspection and maintenance of equipment are crucial to ensure their effectiveness in protecting athletes during play. Moreover, advancements in technology should be leveraged to develop innovative protective gear that offers enhanced safety without compromising performance.

While most accidents that occur in school sports facilities are unintentional, maintaining the equipment's safety is a crucial component since many of these incidents are brought on by poorly maintained areas and sporting goods. In modern society, this cannot be tolerated if we are to uphold the law and ensure that children receive a high-quality education. Therefore, in addition to classifying potential hazards, the solution should also include a deeper comprehension of the factors that might aid in their prevention (Macia, et al., 2020).

Rule Modifications:

Modifying rules and regulations can significantly impact the safety of sports. For instance, in contact sports like football and rugby, rule changes aimed at reducing

high-impact collisions and head injuries have been implemented, such as stricter penalties for illegal tackles and limits on full-contact practices. Similarly, in sports like gymnastics and diving, regulations governing equipment specifications and competition formats can be adjusted to minimize the risk of catastrophic injuries.

Athlete Education:

Educating athletes about injury prevention, recognition, and management is essential for empowering them to make informed decisions about their health and safety. Athletes should receive comprehensive training on concussion awareness, proper tackling techniques, injury rehabilitation, and the importance of rest and recovery. Additionally, coaches and support staff should be trained in first aid and emergency response protocols to ensure prompt and effective care in the event of an injury.

Team performance is negatively impacted by injuries, although those that could be attributed to "training load" are typically seen as "preventable," falling under the purview of the sport science and medical team. The aim of practitioners of sport medicine, which includes physicians and physiotherapists, and sport science, which includes strength and conditioning specialists, is to prevent injuries in athletes. By subjecting athletes to physically challenging training, sport scientists and strength and conditioning professionals want to build resilience in players and prepare them for the physical demands of competition, especially the most taxing play segments.

Although there is a link between high training loads and injuries, this study shows that the issue is more prevalent with prescribed training than with training in general. A significant number of non-contact, soft-tissue injuries are probably the result of excessive and abrupt increases in training loads. But exercise that is physically demanding (and appropriate) builds physical attributes that help prevent injury (Gabbett, 2016).

Organizational Responsibilities:

Sports organizations and governing bodies bear a significant responsibility in fostering a safe and supportive environment for athletes. This includes implementing policies and procedures to address issues such as bullying, harassment, and abuse, which can have profound effects on athletes' physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, organizations should prioritize investments in medical resources, including qualified healthcare professionals and sports medicine facilities, to provide timely and effective care for injured athletes.

Safety in sports is a multifaceted endeavor that requires collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders involved. By prioritizing injury prevention, enforcing stringent equipment standards, implementing rule modifications, educating athletes, and fulfilling

organizational responsibilities, the safety and well-being of athletes can be safeguarded effectively. As sports continue to evolve, it is imperative to adapt and innovate safety measures to address emerging challenges and ensure that athletes can enjoy the benefits of sports participation without undue risk to their health and safety.

Athlete abuse has been the subject of several high-profile international incidents, which has prompted initiatives to promote "Safe Sport." Organizations involved in coaching and sports are working quickly to develop and execute programs, rules, and procedures that will promote a culture of safe sport. In order to promote a culture of safe sport -one free from abuse and harassment- national and inter-national sport and coaching organizations have created efforts, such as educational programs and laws. To improve safeguarding practices among sport stakeholders and organizations, Safe Sport International (2019), an international collaborative agency dedicated to the worldwide eradication of all forms of abuse, harassment, and violence committed against athletes of any age, offers educational webinars, current research, and consulting services. A national coaching organization that supports coach development in Canada, the Coaching Association of Canada (2020), provides a range of safety-based regulations and educational training programs centered on ethics, concussion awareness, and abuse. There are other organizations that work to promote safe sport: the International Olympic Committee (2020), the Child Protection in Sport Unit in the United Kingdom (2020), Play by the Rules (2020) in Australia, and the U.S. Center for SafeSport (2020). Each of these organizations uses a different strategy. The duties and responsibilities of these organizations differ when it comes to safe sport; some, like Play by the Rules, just serve as advocacy bodies and provide information, while others, like U.S. SafeSport, handle allegations of sexual assault (Gurgis, Kerr, 2021).

The work "Sports competitions safety management" by Igor Radosevic and Ana Gavrilovic serves as a helpful reminder that the most crucial aspect of organizing sporting events is safety. The sports sector generates hundreds of billions of euros or dollars in revenue annually. Because the sports industry does not grow and loses money, it cannot allow itself to be disturbed for reasons of safety or any other kind. The writers of this research conducted an investigation of the safety factors in the sports business that are essential to the smooth running of sporting events. Because of these factors specifically, safety management may be separated into:

1. Safety management of sports competitions;
2. Safety management of top athletes;
3. Safety management of sports venues;
4. Security management of sports companies. Information technology today is the most efficient method of the security sector in sports.

Thanks to surveillance cameras and facial recognition program, we can identify potential hooligans or terrorists who may endanger the safety of sports competition. The theory of sport and safety and security in sport, that is, their reciprocal compatibility and cause-and-effect interactions, are the topic of the study "Safety and security in sports corresponds with the structure of the theory of sports" by Zoran Mašić and Marko Begović. A solid understanding of a subject is required to describe it, and great expertise and abilities are required to protect specific assets or values. This calls for an unbiased observation of the variables, realizations within and between them, and the anticipation of potential dangers. In this regard, the paper's three sections -sport actors, sport processes, and circumstances for sport realization- present the framework of the theory of sport. Sports safety and security are taken into consideration, and several risk categories are listed. Next, several aspects of the idea of sport were examined in relation to environments and practices that promote safety and security, or their impact. It is clear that every section of the philosophy of sports appropriately addresses safety and security in sports. Early identification and mitigation of potential hazards in sports allows for the avoidance of potential outcomes and demonstrates the interdependence between sports theory and safety and security in sports.

It is crucial to stress that ensuring safety must come first in order to successfully utilize marketing opportunities during sporting events. According to Dejan Dašić and Milijanka Ratković's work, "Safety at sports events as a condition for the implementation of marketing potential," sport management started to prioritize security more after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, especially when it came to planning sporting events. Other elements like as organizational theory, sport marketing, sport facility management, sport law and policy, economics and finance, gender and diversity, have been deemed less important because they cannot exist without security.

In the present world, the topic of sport safety is quite essential (Mašić, Begović, 2023). It is critical that society be awash in justice, morality, and culture for the sake of all sports spectators, athletes, and residents of sporting facilities. The safety of all resources used in the sport, both individually and internationally, is a component of sport safety. It encompasses all athletes, sporting venues and associations, sporting events, and other sports-related businesses.

And lastly, there is a serious public health issue with sports injuries. They are frequent, expensive, a deterrent to engaging in physical exercise, and a source of worry for parents of younger participants. Many sports injuries are thought to be

avoidable, and it has been suggested that doctors, scientists, and sports administrators should make it a top priority to prevent them.

There have been compelling arguments made for the inclusion of implementation research components in sports injury prevention studies. Athletes and athletic organizations have to implement and uphold effective sports injury prevention procedures in order to prevent injuries. Some efficient preventative measures may not have been shown beneficial in field-based research due to a lack of awareness of the implementation environment. In the larger area of injury prevention, it has also been noted as a research priority how crucial it is to comprehend the implementation environment in order to support the acceptance and spread of successful treatments. "To date, despite calls for an ecological approach to understanding sports injuries and their prevention, very little research has been conducted into the safety management structures or processes of community sporting organisations" (Donaldson, Borys, Finch, 2013).

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed a seismic wave of socio-economic upheaval, reshaping economies, societies, and the media landscape in profound ways. As the world grapples with the ongoing crisis and its aftermath, it is imperative to address the systemic inequalities and vulnerabilities exposed by the pandemic, rebuild resilient economies, and foster a media ecosystem that promotes truth, transparency, and trust. Only through collective action and solidarity can we navigate the challenges ahead and emerge stronger and more resilient in the post-pandemic world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed a seismic shift in the realm of information technology, accelerating digital transformation, reshaping educational paradigms, and heightening cybersecurity concerns. As organizations and societies navigate the complexities of a post-pandemic world, the transformative impact of COVID-19 on information technology will shape the trajectory of technological innovation and digital resilience for years to come.

Sports safety books serve as valuable resources for the academic community due to several significant reasons. These texts provide in-depth insights into various aspects of safety in sports, including injury prevention, risk management, athlete health, and organizational responsibilities. By synthesizing research evidence, providing educational resources, and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, these texts contribute to the development of effective strategies to enhance safety and mitigate risks in sports.

Conflicts of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: R.J., Formal Analysis: B.V. Investigation: R.J., Methodology: R.J., B.V., Data curation: B.V., Resources: R.J., A.N. Writing – original draft: R.J, Writing – review & editing: B.V. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Ovo uputstvo za autore daje sve neophodne informacije, kao i šablon za pripremu radova pre podnošenja za publikovanje u časopisu *SPORT MEDIJI I BIZNIS*. Molimo Vas da maksimalno pažljivo pristupite korišćenju ovog dokumenta, odnosno da ga shvatite kao skup uputstava i praktičan primer koji u mnogome doprinosi lakšoj i efikasnijoj manipulaciji nad Vašim radom u svim fazama uređivanja časopisa. Radovi koji odstupaju od datog šablona se neće uzimati u razmatranje.

Format strane (paper size): Width 170 mm x Height 240 mm; **Margine:** gore/dole 20 mm, levo/desno 18 mm; **Layout:** Header 1,25cm, Footer 1,25cm; **Orientation:** Portrait. Preferira se **obim radova** do maksimalnih 30.000 karaktera (bez razmaka), odnosno 15 stranica. Radovi ne bi trebalo da budu kraći od 8 i duži od 15 stranica. U zavisnosti od kvaliteta rada Uredništvo može prihvatiti i duže radove. Molimo Vas da radove pripremate na računaru u programu **Microsoft Word XP** ili nekoj kasnijoj verziji ovog programa.

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ŠABLON: NASLOV RADA (CENTRIRAN, CALIBRI SIZE 12, BOLD, SVA SLOVA VELIKA, MAKSIMALNO DVA REDA)¹⁵

Ivana Marković¹⁶, Petar Petrović¹⁷, Mirko Mirković¹⁸

Summary

Poželjno je da rezime sadrži do 150 reči, te da sadrži sve bitne činjenice rada, poput cilja rada, korišćene metode, najvažnijih rezultata i osnovnih zaključaka autora.

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Izbegavajte korišćenje indeksa i specijalnih simbola u apstraktu, odnosno definišite sve skraćenice u apstraktu kada se prvi put upotrebe. Nemojte citirati reference u apstraktu.

Key words: *navesti, maksimalno, pet, ključnih, reči.*

JEL: Q16, M24 (www.aeaweb.org/jel/jel_class_system.php)

Introduction

Molimo Vas da striktno poštujete uputstva o formatiranju i stilove date u ovom šablonu. Ne menjajte veličinu fonta ili razmak redova da biste ubacili više teksta u uslovno ograničeni broj stranica.

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¹⁵ Rad je deo istraživanja u okviru projekta br. IV 26003 - Uticaj pandemije Kovid 19 na industriju oglašavanja i sponzorstva u sportu. Vreme trajanja projekta: 2019-2012. *Ovaj segment nije obližoran u radu.*

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Molimo Vas da poštujuete osnovna načela strukturiranja naučnih radova, odnosno trudite se koliko je to moguće da Vaš rad ima sledeće segmente: Uvod, Cilja rada i korišćena metodologija, Rezultati rada sa diskusijom, Zaključak, Literatura.

Tokom pisanja rada treba koristiti slova **Calibri**, veličina fonta (**font size**) **11**, ravnanje teksta **Justify**, a tekst rada pisati bez proreda (**Line Spacing Single**), sa razmakom od **6 pt između pasusa, bez uvlačenja prvog reda**. Radovi se pišu isključivo na engleskom jeziku. Preporučljivo je rad pisati u trećem licu jednine ili množine uz korišćenje aktivnog oblika. Pre slanja rada, obavezno proveriti pravopisne greške putem spellchecker-a za engleski jezik.

Podnaslovi se pišu fontom **Calibri**, veličina fonta (**font size**) **11, bold, centrirano**, samo prvo slovo veliko, razmak podnaslova i teksta iznad 12 pt (**before 12 pt**), a razmak podnaslova i teksta ispod 6 pt (**after 6 pt**). Molimo Vas koristiti prikazani stil pisanja u ovom šablonu.

Molimo Vas da definišete **skraćenice i akronime** prilikom prvog pojavljivanja u tekstu rada, čak i u slučaju da su već bili definisani u apstraktu rada. Ne koristite skraćenice u naslovu rada osim ukoliko se one apsolutno ne mogu izbeći

Radi unosa **jednačina i formula** u rad, koristite Microsoft Equation Editor ili dodatak za pisanje jednačina MathType (www.mathtype.com). Ne preporučuje se korišćenje ugrađenog editor jednačina iz programa Word 2007. Proverite da li ste definisali sve simbole u jednačini (neposredno posle jednačine).

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Tabele moraju biti formirane u tekstu rada, a ne preuzete u formi slika iz drugih materijala. Tabele unositi u sam tekst rada i numerisati ih prema redosledu njihovog pojavljivanja. Nazivi tabela moraju biti dati neposredno iznad tabele na koju se odnose. Koristite dole prikazani stil tokom njihovog formatiranja. Naslov tabela pisati sa razmakom 6 pt – iznad/before i 3pt – ispod/after, u fontu Calibri, font size 11, ravnanje Justified. Tekst unutar tabela pisati fontom Calibri, font size 9. Tekst u zaglavlju tabela boldirati. Izvor i potencijalne napomene pisati sa razmakom 3 pt ispod tabela (before). Izvore i napomene pisati u fontu Calibri, font size 10, ravnanje Justified. Naredni pasus početi na razmaku od 6pt od izvora tabele ili napomene (after). Tokom pisanja rada u originalnom tekstu treba markirati poziv na određenu tabelu (Table 5.). Trudite se da se sve tabele u radu veličinom uklapaju u zadati format strane (Table properties – preferred width – max 97% - alignment: center). Sav tekst u poljima tabele treba unositi u formi (paragraph – spacing: before/after 0pt, line spacing: single). U slučaju da se tabela lomi na narednu stranicu, molimo Vas da prelomljeni deo tabele na narednoj stranici bude praćen zaglavljem tabele.

Table 5. Nike's distribution costs from production to retail stores

Indicators	Period			Total
	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	
Distance crossed (km)	12.926	11.295	13.208	37.429
Fuel consumption (litre)	3.231	2.823	3.302	9.356
Value of fuel consumption (\$).	242.378	211.790	247.653	701.821
Total time spend on touring (hour)	314	266	417	997
Value of total time spend on touring (\$).	47.048	39.890	62.570	149.508
Number of tours	98	77	102	277
Toll value (\$).	0	0	0	0
Number of pallets transported (piece)	1.179	976	1358	3.513
Total weight transported (kg)	602.600	429.225	711.116	1.742.941
Vehicle maintenance costs (\$).	203.858	164.970	224.806	593.634
Lease costs (\$).	480.938	454.214	565.784	1.500.936
Total sum (\$).	974.222	870.864	1.100.813	2.945.899

Source: Milić, 2012;

Note: Values within the table are calculated without Value Added Tax (VAT)

Grafike, dendrograme, dijagrame, šeme i slike treba unositi u sam tekst rada (ne koristiti opciju Float over text) i numerisati ih prema redosledu njihovog pojavljivanja. Njihovi nazivi se moraju pozicionirati neposredno iznad grafika, dendrograma, dijagrama, šeme ili slike na koju se odnose. Kod navođenja naslova, izvora i napomena koristiti isti stil koji je predhodno prikazan za formiranje tabela. Tokom pisanja rada u originalnom tekstu treba markirati pozive na određeni grafik, dendrogram, dijagram, šemu ili sliku (*Graph 2.*). Svi grafici, dendrogrami, dijagrami, šeme i slike u radu se svojom veličinom moraju uklapati u zadati format strane, te moraju biti centralno postavljeni. Fotografije nisu poželjne u predmetnom radu, a ukoliko se one ne mogu izbeći molimo Vas da koristite optimalnu rezoluciju (preniska rezolucija dovodi do pikselacije i krzavih ivica, dok previsoka samo povećava veličinu fajla bez doprinosa čitljivosti rada).

Kod pisanja zaključka rada, molimo Vas imajte na umu da iako **Zaključak** može dati sažeti pregled glavnih rezultata rada, nemojte ponavljati apstrakt na ovome mestu. Zaključak može objasniti značaj rada, dati preporuke za dalje delovanje ili predložiti dalji rad na obrađivanoj temi.

Literatura se navodi na kraju rada (kod autora iz Srbije na srpskom jeziku), abecednim redom, prema prezimenu autora. **Molimo Vas da reference navodite u originalu (na jeziku na kome su objavljene) u obimu u kom su korišćene/citirane tokom pisanja rada.** Literaturu navoditi u fontu Calibri, font size 11, ravnanje Justified, sa međusobnim razmakom 3pt – iznad/before i 3pt – ispod/after. U svim literaturnim jedinicama samo se prezimena daju u punom obimu, dok se sva imena autora skraćuju na inicijal i stavljaju posle prezimena. Molimo Vas da navodite prezimena svih autora, a ne da koristite stil navođenja Petrović et al. Nemojte kombinovati literaturne jedinice (pod jednim rednim brojem može biti samo jedna referenca) i uvek pišite pune naslove u radu korišćenih

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9. *Naziv zakona/uredbe*, Službeni glasnik, Zemlja, br. i godina izdanja.
10. *Naziv standarda*, Standard br. xxx, izdavač standarda, godina izdanja, Mesto, Zemlja.

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CIP- Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

005:796

SPORT, mediji i biznis : naučni časopis iz oblasti sporta,
medija i biznisa = Sport, media and business : scientific Journal
in the Field of Sport, Media and Business / glavni i odgovorni
urednik Dejan Dašić. - God. 8, br. 8 (2022)- . - Beograd :
Fakultet za sport, Univerzitet "Union-Nikola Tesla", 2022-
(Beograd : RIS). - 25 cm

Godišnje. - Tekst na srp. i engl. jeziku. -

Je nastavak: Спорт и бизнис = ISSN 2335-0539. -

ISSN 2956-0780 = Sport, mediji i biznis
COBISS.SR-ID 84407817



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