

# Visitors' Expectation and Satisfaction with Planica 2015 FIS World Cup Ski Jumping Finals

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Planica is a valley inside Triglav National Park in Slovenia where the best ski jumpers have been to compete on the biggest ski jumping hill in the world meeting every year for more than 40 years. Partly financed by the Fund of the European Union, the Nordic Center Planica has recently been renovated, and the FIS World Cup ski jump finals took place there in 2015 for the first time since its renovation. To understand visitors' satisfaction and future expectation, research with a self-administered questionnaire in which 618 visitors were surveyed has been conducted. Respondents were asked to evaluate their expectations and satisfaction about different elements of the event. The main hypothesis claimed that respondents' expectations about the event affect their satisfaction with it. The hypothesis was tested using regression analysis. The main results confirmed the research hypothesis supporting the fact that visitors' expectations about the major sporting event influence their satisfaction with the it. With the Nordic Center reconstruction, Planica had a second chance to redevelop its image. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the organizer continue to monitor the visitors' expectations and satisfaction levels to be able to offer the optimal service experience.

*Keywords:* Planica, sporting events, expectation, satisfaction, visitors

## **Introduction**

Planica is a small valley in Slovenia where the best ski jumpers meet every year to compete on the biggest ski jumping hill in the world. The first ski jumping hill was constructed before 1930, and the 'Bloudek Giant' was added in 1934. In 1968, the Slovenian Gorišek brothers constructed the ski jumping hill called 'Letalnica,' where the first ski flying world championships took place in 1972.

Many renovations and reconstructions have taken place in Planica since then, in order to facilitate long

jumps and gain popularity worldwide. However, Planica is not only well known for sport tourism events. Its reputation has suffered from a wealth of unfortunately negative situations and complications, mainly arising from hundreds of landowners in and around the valley.

Although Planica has always been a 'Slovenian identity,' changes were needed to halt the decline in the number of visitors starting in 2005. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia established the Public Institute for Sport Planica in 2009. The institute's vision

and mission are the construction of the Planica Nordic Center based on two phases: first, the Center for Ski Jumps and Ski Flying with €24.3 million of investment; second, the Center for Cross-Country Skiing with €15.3 million of investment ([www.nc-planica.si](http://www.nc-planica.si)). Both projects are partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union. The first phase was completed as scheduled (31 December, 2014) and a new era for Planica began in 2015, as the newly established center organized its first 'FIS World Cup Ski Jump Finals – Planica 2015.' The organizers also had high expectations for both the number of visitors and the establishment of extreme jumps with record results.

The World Cup Finals organized on a newly renovated Planica ski flying hill between 19 and 22 March 2015 was, as such, the perfect sport event to investigate the opinion of visitors to understand their expectations and satisfaction with the event. Satisfaction of visitors at sporting events is a consequence of perceived value and different elements of quality.

The research problem of this paper is to examine the relationship between expectations and satisfaction of 'FIS World Cup Ski Jump Finals – Planica 2015' visitors. Thus, the purpose of this research is to first understand their expectations and satisfaction in order to follow directions for the future organization and better quality of the sporting event. In addition, the aim was to develop an empirical model derived from the data on visitors' expectations and satisfaction to provide a conceptual understanding of the significant predictors of event attendance at the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jump finals.

### Literature Review

Nowadays, organized sport generates events, which can evolve from local to international in attractiveness. If they are planned strategically, these events can become a significant generator and a determining factor in attracting tourist arrivals to destinations (Getz, 2012). Sport events are, therefore, an important component of the tourism industry. They also have the power to 'stimulate the development of the amenities in a place, to promote the place's marketing image, to increase the number of visitors and to reduce

the tourism seasonality' (Gelders & Van Zuilen, 2013; Wäsche, Dickson, & Woll, 2013; Hinch & Higham, 2011; Chalip & McGuirly, 2004). Sport-related major events are becoming an increasingly important motivator of tourism, attracting not only national, regional and local but also global audiences. Major sport events play an important factor for many worldwide destinations (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Getz, 2008). They also greatly contribute to the tourism promotion of a destination, opening new tourism markets and, consequently, attracting new tourists whose main motive is the attendance of a major sporting event (Dimanche, 2003). In addition to being significant tourism generators and promotional tools, sporting events are also one of the most widely studied areas of sports tourism (Getz & Page, 2015) and represent the largest component of the event tourism sector.

For Slovenia and its residents, the FIS World Cup Ski Jumping Finals in Planica is more than just one of the regular yearly events, but is, as described by Kreft (2010, p. 17) more of a 'national sport.' This is not because of the number of jumpers who come to compete in the event but because the nation has identified itself with this sport and their competitions for more than 80 years, including Planica flying, which represents a massive, annual festival of national identity, featuring a continuous ambition to break records. High attendance sporting events attract sponsor revenue and thus an empirical understanding of the factors that influence sports attendance is essential to the long-term viability of these events (Hall, O'Mahony, & Vieceli, 2010). After its renovation, the Nordic Center Planica started a new era with high hopes and expectations for the future, which needs special attention from the organizers in understanding the visitor's needs. It is certain that sporting events would not be the same without the sport visitors who are ready to pay high prices for tickets experience emotions of highly memorable sport events (Emery, Kerr, & Crabtree, 2013).

Currently, visitor satisfaction with the organization of sporting events correlates with numerous positive business and social outcomes. Therefore, sport event organizers recognize a vital goal in satisfying their customers. To be able to satisfy the sport visitors at various events, the organizers need to know their

expectations. Sport visitors' satisfaction experience in association with a sporting event is based on the 'comparison of their perceptions on predictive expectations for the event service experience and perceptions of what actual service experience is consumed' (Kelley & Turley, 2001). Gnoth (1997) suggested that tourist expectation is constructed by their needs and motivations. Furthermore 'specific expectations are tentative representations of future events and can both refer to a specific situation and an unknown or abstract situation' (Gnoth, 1997, p. 298). Expectations depend on the individual's personal traits and desires (Shahin, Jamkhaneh, & Cheryani, 2014). Additionally, Higham and Hinch (2002) discovered that expectations and desired outcomes are the functions of many factors including individual identity, attitude, and personality. For Forinash (2003), the expectation is 'an assumption of the inevitable' and the affirmation that the desired outcome will occur.

Satisfaction, in contrast, is a response to expectations. Oliver (2010, p. 8) defines satisfaction as 'the consumer fulfillment response with a judgment that the product/service feature or the product or service itself provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment including levels of under- or over-fulfillment.' Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) investigated the aspect of service quality in the sport tourism industry and explain satisfaction as the comparison between expectations and perceptions of service quality on the part of the consumer. Satisfaction could also be understood as a 'pleasurable reaction to a good or service in an act of consumption' (Oliver, 2010, p. 8). Yoshida and James (2010, p. 340) explain that 'customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's pleasurable, fulfillment response to the entertainment of sport competition and/or ancillary services provided during a game and the service satisfaction is a customer's overall satisfaction with the services experienced at a sporting event.' The outcome dimension of service quality measured by player performance, opponent characteristics and game atmosphere (Yoshida & James, 2010) is what the sport event visitors receive in the process of the competition. According to Gronroos (1984) the facility in the stadium, the supporting service, the design, the accessibility,

the security, the space/functions, and interaction between employees are all elements of functional quality that are somehow related to the service quality. The satisfaction of the sport visitors additionally presents a crucial point for sport event organizers since it has consequences on the service quality, which are a manageable factor of the future organization of the sporting event. The satisfaction of the sport event visitors is not solely dependent on the achievements of professional athletes.

The sport event organizers and sport event visitors each bear significant responsibility in the total satisfaction of the sporting event. The sport event organizers have the ongoing task to produce friendly and smooth services to the sport event visitors and treat them as individual customers with unique needs. Sport event visitors themselves also play a major role in ensuring complete satisfaction for other visitors. This may be achieved by choosing to engage in conversation with other visitors and giving their personal opinions on the sporting event. When the sport event visitors are cheering, clapping, and singing, this can also contribute to uplifting the social environment (Cant & Wiid, 2012).

Sport event visitors' satisfaction is high only when the sport event organizers have ensured that the visitors have received a 'value-for-the-money' experience. Moreover, the service experience is also connected to the 'servicescape' which explains the physical surroundings to facilitate the service offering to consumers (Cant & Wiid, 2012). The 'servicescape' of sport events organization includes the importance of tangible elements, such as the event area infrastructure, and intangible elements, such as the temperature or the sound, that might influence the overall service experience (Hoffman & Turley, 2002). Bitner (1992) discovered that a 'servicescape' has three basic dimensions: (1) ambient conditions, (2) spatial layout and functionality and (3) signs, symbols, and artifacts (Cant & Wiid, 2012). Ambient conditions of a sport event affect perceptions of visitor's responses to the sport event environment. Generally, they affect the five senses, such as temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scent. The dimension connected to spatial layout and functionality refers to the ways in which seats, aisles,

food service lines, security, toilets, entrances, and exits are designed and arranged in the sport event area. The aspect of aesthetic appeal is connected to factors such as the surrounding environment, cleanliness, signage, and other elements. Based on the perception of these dimensions of factors, sport event visitors will have set thoughts and feelings that lead them to either approach or avoid the sporting event (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994; Cant & Wiid, 2012). Additionally, sport event visitors need to feel safe in the sporting environment to fully enjoy the event. The safe atmosphere dimension relates to safety issues inside and around the sport event area (Westerbeek & Shilbury, 2003). The sport event organizers nowadays need to pay particular attention to the safety and security of sport event visitors due to many terrorist attacks and violence situations around sporting events infrastructure where masses of people gather to enjoy different sporting events.

We can conclude that there are various factors influencing sport event visitors' satisfaction that need to be investigated. All those factors play a major role in constructing the visitors' satisfaction with the event and potential revisiting of organized sport events. Based on the literature review, not much research directly connected particularly on sport event visitors has been conducted (Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Two of the most critical studies of sport visitors' satisfaction are those by Madrigal (1995) who tested the affective determinants of fan satisfaction with a sport event and Wakefield and Blodgett (1994, 1996) with the examination of the effects of quality perceptions of the sport facility on customer satisfaction and re-patronage intentions. In the literature review of sport event service quality, two perspectives of research in which researchers analyze the perceptions of sport event visitors can be found. Some studies (McDonald, Sutton, & Milne, 1995; Theodorakis, Kambitsis, & Laios, 2001) have adopted the measurement model based on the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithmal, & Berry, 1988) but others developed specific measurement scales for analyzing the perceptions and satisfaction of sport event visitors (Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2013; Ko, Zhang, Cattani, & Pastore 2011).

Table 1 Gender and Country of Residence of Respondents

Category		<i>f</i>	<i>f</i> %
Gender	Male	341	55.4
	Female	274	44.6
Country of residence	Norway	67	10.9
	Poland	74	12.1
	Germany	5	0.8
	Czech Republic	1	0.2
	England	1	0.2
	Austria	8	1.3
	Bosnia and Herz.	1	0.2
	Croatia	2	0.3
	Canada	2	0.3
	Slovenia	453	73.8

### Research Methodology

For data collection of this study, a face-to-face questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was developed using the findings from the literature review suggesting that the quality of service (Gronross, 1984; Yoshida & James, 2010) is an important aspect of a sporting event, and that it should be taken into consideration by organizers and researchers to evaluate the sporting event. Visitors' satisfaction has a major role in determining service quality. Satisfaction with the event was measured according to the elements that Bitner (1992) pointed out as being crucial in measuring the satisfaction of sporting event visitors.

Visitors to the FIS World Cup ski jumping finals 2015 were the target population. The event was held between the 20th and 22nd of March 2015 in Planica, Slovenia. The face-to-face interviews were conducted at the event by specially instructed interviewers in order to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of different sections: demographic characteristics, prior travel organization to attend the event, motives for attending the event, the influence of promotion of the event, expectations, and satisfaction with the event. The final database consists of 618 valid units.

According to the theoretical background, we have formulated the following research hypothesis: 'Visitors expectations about the Planica 2015 event influence their satisfaction with the event.'

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Expectations about the Event

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
The atmosphere at event	554	4.66	0.715	-2.345	0.104	5.657	0.207	0.153433
Time with friends/relatives	553	4.58	0.873	-2.433	0.104	5.954	0.207	0.190611
The excitement of the event	551	4.35	0.987	-1.545	0.104	1.771	0.208	0.226897
Weather on the day of the event	553	4.29	1.046	-1.509	0.104	1.636	0.207	0.243823
The security at event	550	4.05	1.072	-1.119	0.104	0.644	0.208	0.264691
Care for the environment	554	3.86	1.103	-0.793	0.104	-0.034	0.207	0.285751
Information on the big screen	551	3.78	1.228	-0.789	0.104	-0.317	0.208	0.324868
The sanitary conditions (wc)	549	3.77	1.149	-0.665	0.104	-0.396	0.208	0.304775
Big screen	550	3.75	1.183	-0.678	0.104	-0.415	0.208	0.315467
Food & Drink	550	3.71	1.141	-0.617	0.104	-0.314	0.208	0.307547
Entertainment at the event	546	3.69	1.117	-0.613	0.104	-0.249	0.209	0.302710
Culture of the event	551	3.67	1.175	-0.714	0.104	-0.203	0.208	0.320163
Speaker at event	550	3.57	1.281	-0.533	0.104	-0.814	0.208	0.358824
Music at event	554	3.55	1.178	-0.423	0.104	-0.716	0.207	0.331831
No crowd/queue at the event	550	3.46	1.249	-0.463	0.104	-0.666	0.208	0.360983
Warm tents	547	3.17	1.323	-0.176	0.104	-1.062	0.209	0.417350
Famous people at the event	549	2.91	1.514	0.031	0.104	-1.445	0.208	0.520275
The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs	552	2.77	1.378	0.220	0.104	-1.146	0.208	0.497473

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of responses, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation, (4) skewness – statistics, (5) skewness – standard error, (6) kurtosis – statistics, (7) kurtosis – standard error, (8) coefficient of variation. Valid  $N$  (listwise) = 528.

Statistical analyses used for the purpose of this research are as follows: frequencies, descriptive statistics, and distribution of the variables, and linear regression.

First, we present the sample. Table 1 presents the gender and nationality of respondents. There were 55.4% male and 44.6% female respondents in our survey.

Most of the respondents came from Slovenia (73.8%); 12.1% of respondents came from Poland, 10.9% from Norway, 1.3% from Austria, 0.8% from Germany, 0.3% from Croatia and Canada each, while 0.2% of respondents were from the Czech Republic, England, and Bosnia and Herzegovina each.

The average age of respondents was 32.33 years. The youngest respondent was 12 years old, while the oldest was 79 years old.

### Expectations about the Event

We asked respondents about their expectations for the event: 'To which degree are the following expectations

about Planica 2015 important for you?' Respondents were asked to mark the importance of the following factors using a 5-point Likert-type scale ('1' meaning very unimportant, '5' meaning very important): Care for the environment, Music at event, Speaker at event, The security at event, The atmosphere at event, Time with friends/relatives, The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs, Culture of the event, Entertainment at the event, No crowd/queue at the event, Weather on the day of the event, Food & Drink, Big screen, Information on the big screen, The sanitary conditions (wc), Warm tents, Famous people at the event, and The excitement of the event.

In Table 2, the results of the descriptive statistics are presented. The most important factor was the expectation about the atmosphere at the event. The average was 4.66 showing that this was a very important expectation for respondents. We can see that expectations about spending time with friends and relatives were also very important (average 4.58).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction with the Event

Item	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
The atmosphere at event	520	4.64	0.663	-2.023	0.107	4.592	0.214	0.14288793
Time with friends/relatives	521	4.61	0.813	-2.505	0.107	6.565	0.214	0.17635575
The excitement of the event	518	4.37	0.972	-1.584	0.107	1.892	0.214	0.22242563
Weather on the day of the event	516	4.34	1.022	-1.612	0.108	1.896	0.215	0.23548387
The security at event	522	4.12	0.980	-1.025	0.107	0.632	0.213	0.23786408
Food & Drink	515	3.96	0.997	-0.612	0.108	-0.371	0.215	0.25176768
Culture of the event	519	3.91	1.061	-0.810	0.107	0.077	0.214	0.27135550
Care for the environment	523	3.90	0.989	-0.711	0.107	0.071	0.213	0.25358974
Big screen	517	3.88	1.127	-0.790	0.107	-0.137	0.214	0.29046392
Entertainment at the event	513	3.85	1.010	-0.601	0.108	-0.103	0.215	0.26233766
Speaker at event	518	3.85	1.088	-0.577	0.107	-0.518	0.214	0.28259740
Information on the big screen	516	3.82	1.188	-0.837	0.108	-0.116	0.215	0.31099476
Music at event	518	3.73	1.095	-0.554	0.107	-0.390	0.214	0.29356568
No crowd/queue at the event	515	3.63	1.172	-0.525	0.108	-0.468	0.215	0.32286501
The sanitary conditions (wc)	515	3.59	1.072	-0.355	0.108	-0.475	0.215	0.29860724
Warm tents	511	3.35	1.196	-0.341	0.108	-0.660	0.216	0.35701493
The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs	516	3.33	1.293	-0.309	0.108	-0.882	0.215	0.38828829
Famous people at the event	512	3.14	1.363	-0.151	0.108	-1.135	0.215	0.43407643

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) number of responses, (2) mean, (3) standard deviation, (4) skewness – statistics, (5) skewness – standard error, (6) kurtosis – statistics, (7) kurtosis – standard error, (8) coefficient of variation. Valid N (listwise) = 492.

Expectations that were important (but not very important) for respondents included the excitement of the event (average 4.35), the weather on the day of the event (4.29), the security at the event (4.05), care for the environment (3.86), information on the big screen (3.78), the sanitary conditions (3.77), big screen (3.75), food and drink (3.71), entertainment at the event (3.69), culture of the event (3.67), the speaker at the event (3.57), and the music at the event (3.55).

The following expectations were considered as neither important neither nor important by respondents were no crowd at the event (average being 3.46), warm tents (3.17), famous people at the event (2.91) and the possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs (2.77).

The coefficient of variation (CV) is lower than 1 for all indicators, suggesting a good model fit ('FAQ: What is the Coefficient of Variation?' 2007).

Skewness and kurtosis showed a distribution close to the normal one for almost all the factors of expectations about the event, except for the atmosphere at

the event and spending time with relatives and friends where both coefficients were too high (above |2|) and showing a distribution being not normal. In this case, we decided to omit these two factors of expectations about the event from further statistical analysis.

### Satisfaction with the Event

In the following, we asked the respondents the next question: 'To which degree are you satisfied with the following factors about Planica 2015.' Respondents were asked to report their satisfaction using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 meaning not satisfied at all, 5 meaning completely satisfied) for the following factors: Care for the environment, Music at event, Speaker at event, The security at event, The atmosphere at event, Time with friends/relatives, The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs, Culture of the event, Entertainment at the event, No crowd/queue at the event, Weather on the day of the event, Food & Drink, Big screen, Information on the big screen, The sanitary conditions

Table 4 Regression Coefficients among (Pairs of Indicators) Expectations and Satisfaction at the Event

Indicator	$R^2$	$F$		$\beta$	
		(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Care for the environment	0.253	173.833	0.000	0.503	0.000
Music at event	0.244	164.250	0.000	0.494	0.000
Speaker at event	0.284	201.702	0.000	0.533	0.000
The security at event	0.220	143.683	0.000	0.469	0.000
The possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs	0.275	191.800	0.000	0.524	0.000
Culture of the event	0.246	166.009	0.000	0.496	0.000
Entertainment at the event	0.281	196.154	0.000	0.530	0.000
No crowd/queue at the event	0.132	76.500	0.000	0.363	0.000
Weather on the day of the event	0.109	62.123	0.000	0.330	0.000
Food & Drink	0.189	117.516	0.000	0.435	0.000
Big screen	0.316	233.172	0.000	0.562	0.000
Information on the big screen	0.322	240.493	0.000	0.568	0.000
The sanitary conditions (wc)	0.129	74.432	0.000	0.359	0.000
Warm tents	0.232	150.993	0.000	0.481	0.000
Famous people at the event	0.301	216.833	0.000	0.549	0.000
The excitement of the event	0.379	309.458	0.000	0.615	0.000

Notes Column headings are as follows: (1) statistics, (2) significance.

(wc), Warm tents, Famous people at the event and The excitement of the event. The descriptive statistics can be found in Table 3.

Respondents reported being very satisfied with two factors, the atmosphere at the event (average 4.64) and spending time with friends and relatives (4.61). Respondents were satisfied (but not very satisfied) on average with the following factors: the excitement at the event (average 4.37), the weather on the day of the event (4.34), the security at the event (4.12), food and drink offer (3.96), the culture of the event (3.91), care for the environment (3.91), big screen (3.88), entertainment at the event (3.85), speaker at the event (3.85), information on the big screen (3.82), the music at the event (3.73), no crowd at the event (3.63), and the sanitary conditions (3.59).

Respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied on average with the following: warm tents (3.35), the possibility to buy clothes and souvenirs (3.33) and the presence of famous people at the event (3.14).

The coefficient of variation (CV) is lower than 1 for all indicators suggesting a good model fit ('FAQ: What

is the Coefficient of Variation?' 2007). Skewness and kurtosis showed a distribution close to the normal one for almost all the factors of satisfaction with the event, except for the atmosphere at the event and spending time with relatives and friends where both coefficients were too high (above |2|) and showing a not normal distribution. In this case, we decided to omit these two factors of satisfaction with the event from further statistical analysis.

### Research Findings

The research hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis (ENTER method), comparing the expectation and satisfaction with the same factor about the Planica 2015 event. The results are presented in Table 4. The coefficients that are statistically significant at the 0.05 level are marked in bold.

From Table 4 ( $R$  square), it can be seen that between 10.9% and 37.9% of the total variance can be explained by regression models when considering the influence of the expectations on the satisfaction with the Planica 2015 event. All the regression models are sta-

tistically significant at the 0.01 level. We can conclude the regression models are appropriate.

All the Beta coefficients among the pairs of the same factors show statistically significant correlations at the 0.01 level of expectations and satisfaction about the Planica 2015 event. Thus, we can accept our research hypothesis that expectations about the event influence the satisfaction with it. Respondents who had higher expectations about the event were more satisfied with it in comparison to respondents who had lower expectations about it.

### Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of the study was to understand how the expectations of visitors attending a sport event influence their satisfaction with it. To test the research hypothesis, a questionnaire was constructed, and face-to-face interviews were completed during the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jumping finals in Slovenia. The results revealed that the visitors to the event had very high expectations regarding the atmosphere at the event and the time spent with their family and friends. The same two factors came in the first two places while asking about their satisfaction with the event. An assumption of the theory of the service quality in connection with expectations and satisfaction is that providing high-quality goods/services will enable organizers of major sport events to satisfy sport event visitors and to survive in a competitive market of other similar events (Dobholkar, Thorpe, & Rentz, 2000). The results of the survey confirmed the reviewed literature findings, suggesting there is a connection between the expectations and the satisfaction of visitors at the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jumping finals. Since the service quality of the major sporting event is an indirect measure of the connection between the expectations and the satisfaction with the event, we can conclude that the organization of the event was of high quality, as perceived by the visitors.

The research hypothesis was tested using the linear regression analysis. The relationship between several (16) different aspects (service quality) of expectations and satisfaction were analysed. There were 16 different linear regression analyses used, each one checking for the influence of an expectation to the same as-

pect of satisfaction. The results of the regression analyses confirmed the main research hypothesis, showing there is a strong, statistically significant, influence of visitors' expectations on their satisfaction with the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup. Thus, it can be seen that visitors with higher expectations about the event were more satisfied with the event in comparison to those who had lower expectations about it. Since visitors were very satisfied with the event, they will come with even higher expectations of it in the coming season(s). Thus, it is crucial for the organizers to focus on researching the expectations and satisfaction with the event to be able to prevent lowering the expectations and the satisfaction with it in the future.

The contribution of the study is that the research of the expectation and satisfaction of the major sporting events needs to be interdisciplinary and including both the factors of atmosphere of the major sporting event with various background characteristics (noise, scent, sound, crowd, lighting and music) and the service quality of the components of the major sporting event such as security, food & drinks, sanitary conditions, stadium characteristics, speakers, official souvenirs, etc. Therefore, major sport event organizers have to produce friendly and smooth services to achieve great atmosphere to satisfy the visitors with unique individual needs. In future research, the relationships between the atmosphere of the major sporting event, supplementary services, and also other activities (entertainment) should be examined (Yoshida & James, 2010).

The goal of major sport event organizers is also to attract as many visitors as they can so as to cover their expenses that arose during the organization and promotion of the event. Every organizer of a major sporting event is interested in acquiring a certain level of service quality that will lead to satisfied visitors. If the major sporting event is a part of a series of events that happens every year or several times per year at the same destination, then the organizers like to focus even more on the satisfaction of visitors since this will lead to a greater percentage of repeat visitors. If the promotion of the destination is done simultaneously with the promotion of the event, the organizers will not have just obtained higher revenue from visi-



tors, but they will promote the destination itself, leading to visitors who will come back to the destination as tourists.

Any visitor that comes to a major sporting event is full of expectations about it. Those expectations arise from the promotion of the event, the experience that he/she already had when attending similar events, the experience he/she was told about by friends or relatives, and other factors. From previous research (Jin et al., 2013; Ko et al., 2011), it can be found that the experiences of the visitors of sporting events influence their satisfaction with it. Thus, it is paramount that the organizers of the events be able to research the expectations and the satisfaction of the visitors. The current study offers an attempt to measure visitor expectation and satisfaction at the specific major sporting event of the Planica 2015 FIS World Cup ski jumping finals. The results will be a good start for better quality service of the organization of future events in Planica.

### Limitations of the Study

Several limitations may have influenced the study's results. The limitations of the survey are mainly connected to the data collection. The greatest concern is the fact that there is no full database containing the sample frame with their contacts. Visitors to a sporting event do not need to register themselves, or they can buy tickets for a group of people leading to the first limitation: it is difficult to prepare a sampling procedure that will enable probability sampling that leads to the representativeness of the data. The second limitation of data collection during the sporting events comes from the fact that visitors come to see the competition; thus they are focused on the event itself and do not want to be disturbed by interviewers asking them questions about the event. The third limitation is because visitors tend to report higher satisfaction because they are still under the influence of the ambiance and the atmosphere of the event. The fourth limitation is caused by the fact that if we ask visitors opinions during the event, it is not over yet, so there are things happening that could affect their opinions.

Suggestions for future research include reconsideration of data-collecting techniques for the purpose of

researching the expectation and satisfaction of the major sporting events.

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