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SPORT ACTIVITIES IN EVERY-DAY FREE TIME VS. SPORT AS A MOTIVE FOR TRAVELING

ŠPORTNA AKTIVNOST V VSAKDANU PROTI ŠPORTU KOT MOTIVU POTOVANJA

ABSTRACT

The quality of the young people who form the basis of the university student population of the new century is very important as they represent our future world leaders. Childhood and adolescence is a precursor to a mature, adult identity, and young people may make leisure time choices that are marked by indecision, hesitation, experimentation and failed attempts or rejections. That leisure activities contribute immensely to the individual's mental and physical wellbeing is now generally well accepted, but not all over the world sport has the same strong importance. The present research has been developed to understand student's leisure activities from five countries, focusing on a sport activity in 'every-day spare time' and sport as a motive for travelling. The data has been collected through a computer assisted web questionnaire (CAWI) at the universities of five different countries, which are Slovenia, Poland, Greece, Taiwan R.O.C. and Mexico. The data were analysed using binary logistic regression. The results show differences between students from diverse cultural regions in choosing the activity in their spare time and their motives for travelling. Results shows that students from Slovenia (32.1%) and Poland (18.2%) were most likely to participate in sport as a spare time, although spending time on the Internet/PC remain the main 'activity' of the majority of students regardless of the country of origin. In addition, students typically do not see sports activity as a significant motive for traveling (4.3%), which could be a warning for sport tourism destinations and the future development of sport tourism.

Key words: spare time, sports tourism, travel motives, tertiary students, tourism destination

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IZVLEČEK

Mladi študentje bodo kot baza populacije novega stoletja zelo pomembni, tudi zato, ker bodo iz njihovih vrst izšli novi voditelji sveta. Otroštvo in adolescence sta dokazano obdobji, ki sta zelo pomembni za razvoj identitete odrasle populacije. Da dejavnosti v prostem času izjemno prispevajo k duševnemu in telesnemu dobremu počutju posameznika je zdaj splošno znano. To dejstvo nima povsod po svetu enako močnega vpliva na življenje posameznika. S pričujočim člankom raziskujemo prostočasne aktivnosti študentov petih držav. Raziskava se osredotoča na športne aktivnosti v vsakdanu in na šport kot motiv za potovanja. Podatki so bili zbrani s pomočjo računalniško podprtega spletnega vprašalnika (CAWI), na univerzah petih različnih držav: Slovenija, Poljska, Grčija, Tajvan (Republika Kitajska) in Mehika. Podatki so bili analizirani z binarno logistično regresijo. Rezultati kažejo, da pri izbiri dejavnosti v prostem času in motivih za potovanja obstajajo razlike med študenti različnih kulturnih področij. Študenti iz Slovenije (32,1%) in Poljske (18,2%) so v prostem času bolj športno aktivni kot študentje iz ostalih analiziranih držav. Ne glede na državo pa vsi študentje največ prostega časa porabijo za internet in druge dejavnosti na računalniku. Poleg tega študentje običajno ne vidijo športno dejavnost kot pomemben motiv za potovanje (4,3 %). To je lahko resno opozorilo za športno turistične destinacije in prihodnji razvoj športnega turizma.

Ključne besede: prosti čas, športni turizem, potovalni motivi, študentje, turistična destinacija

INTRODUCTION

Today's tertiary university students will become the world leaders, policy makers, workforce participants and engineers, doctors, professionals of our civil society. Their quality both intellectually and physically is very important, not only for them, but for the future of our world. Where education contributes to their mental development it is leisure time that contributes to personal satisfaction and overall quality of life. The World Health Organization (2003) has suggested that life skills are important for healthy development and preparation of adolescents for the future life challenges. It is also well established that the experiences gained through college student participation in leisure activities influences students in many areas of life, including work and personal satisfaction (Huang & Carleton, 2003). Childhood and adolescence is a precursor to a mature, adult identity, and young people may make leisure time choices that are marked by indecision, hesitation, experimentation and failed attempts or rejections. That leisure activities contribute immensely to the individual's mental and physical well-being is now well accepted (Verkooijen, Nielsen, & Kremers, 2009), but leisure time is affected by financial, personal, physical and other resources (Pigram & Jenkins, 2006; Schiano, Elliott, & Bellotti, 2007; Oguz-Duran & Tezer, 2009; Biddle, Marshall, Gorely, & Cameron, 2009) which means not all the adolescents in the world have the same opportunities in the way they spend their free time. Yet, the proposition that organized leisure activity participation is uniquely associated with adjustment among adolescents of different ethnicities and from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds continues to be understudied (Randall & Bohnert, 2009). Leisure activities play a very important role in subjective well-being (Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, & Šverko, 2011) especially when culture is much more a process than a distinctive whole (Usunier & Lee, 2000). A culture is the whole configuration of learned behaviours (Linton, 1945), which explains why obligations such as work and study along with leisure time behaviours are important in creating a description of the full nature of one's personality. During adolescence, individuals have an increasingly higher need for complex tasks and to take part in decision-making (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Participation in leisure activities among adolescents constitutes one such domain where basic psychological needs may be satisfied (Leversen, Danielsen, Birkeland, & Samdal, 2012). Recent research in developmental psychology has focused on understanding the processes by which development occurs in youthful activity settings and follow-up studies using YES (Youth Experiences Survey) have been of particular interest in the field of sport psychology. Furthermore, Hansen and Larson's (2007) study found that adolescents involved in sport spent the more time in that activity, had a leadership role more often, and were involved in smaller group sizes—all factors found to amplify their positive developmental experiences. It has been shown that sport is important for children's development in at least five domains (physical, lifestyle, affective, social, and cognitive) (Pangrazi, 2000; Bailey, 2006; Gould, & Carson, 2008; Eime, Payne, Casey, & Harvey, 2010) and a big influence of sport on later lifestyle was confirmed as well (Knoppers, 2011).

Because people do not take part in leisure activities just in their usual environment¹ in their everyday life, but when travelling leisure time activities are also undertaken, the present paper focuses on both. The primary purpose is to analyse cross-cultural "every-day life activities" among students with the support of new empirical data and a secondary purpose is to understand motives of travelling. A key question is whether same activities are practice by same people in their every-day spare time and when travelling.

¹The usual environment of an individual, a key concept in tourism, is defined as the geographical area (though not necessarily a contiguous one) within which an individual conducts his/her regular life routines (UN WTO, 2008).

Leisure time: Spare time vs. time used for travel

A detailed explanation of definitions of leisure time, free time, spare time and travel time is needed here for better understanding of this research. Defining leisure is a complex and problematic undertaking since there are almost as many definitions as there are scholars of the phenomenon (Thomas & Venne, 2002). In addition, leisure-time activities are closely related to one's way of life (Mosonyi, Könyves, Fodor, & Müller, 2013) and travelling. However, there is a general consensus that leisure is time free from obligations, work and tasks required for existing (sleeping, eating). It is an experience, but in context; it is a form, but not defined by form; and it takes place in time, but is not defined by time (Freysinger & Kelly, 2004). Thus, tourism and time spent for travelling, both are important part of leisure time. In fact, travelling time is defined as the most concentrated leisure time (Kimmelman, 1974). In consequence, in the continuing of the present paper, the following terms are used: leisure time defines and includes both, every-day free or spare time, and time for travelling. "Spare time" is used for every-day free time, when "travelling time" is used for naming the time when we are free for travelling, being a tourist. Finally, both, spare time activities and travelling time activities represents leisure time activities. Spare time activities (every day free time activities) and activities that motivate tourists for travelling are the main focus of the present research. Comparing activities in spare time and in the time of traveling is interesting from the marketing perspective also; for example Eurobarometer (2010) found that 52% of Slovenian residents are sport active in their spare time, but Slak Valek, Jurak & Bednarik (2011) claimed that only 6% of the residents of Slovenia are sport active while travelling. Thus, comparisons between leisure activities in spare time and time when traveling are the focus of the present research.

Various explanations are accepted in dividing the range of leisure-time activities into different categories, but for the purpose of this paper the most important is to identify both the passive and active ways of spending leisure time. Extensive social studies in many countries shows that many adolescents have mostly a sedentary lifestyle (Sproston & Primatesta, 2003) where watching TV and playing computer games are standard; an issue that it is argued leads students to later unhealthy life habits. A recent multiple cross-sectional and longitudinal observational study documented the impact of television viewing on obesity (Taveras et al., 2007) and other experimental studies have shown an overconsumption of food associated with the practice of computer-related activities (Chaput et al., 2008). Not only is it confirmed that school-age physical activity influences physical activity in latter adult life (Telama et al., 2005), has a positive influence on a person fitness and shape (Smoll & Smith, 2002; WHO, 2003) and mental health (Biddle & Asare, 2011), but the results of Curtis, McTeer and White (2003) show that those who participated in organized sport as a youth tended to have higher annual earned incomes. Similar, Ewing (1995) found that former black male high school athletes earn a wage premium and fare better in the labor market than their non-athlete counterparts. Many studies about after-school time have been done in the western world recently although very little information is available on Asian students (Chen & Lu, 2009). The extension of their conclusions is that an understanding of cultural differences in active and passive behaviors amongst adolescents could help guide a design for innovative public programs that promote active ways of spending leisure time in different countries. Thus, the present paper investigated the cross-cultural differences in (sport) activities among the students of 5 countries.

METHODS

For this research study the standardized questionnaire developed by the International Social Survey Programme about Leisure Time and Sports (ISSP, 2007) has been used as a starting point, but adapted and adjusted for the purposes of our study. The modified questionnaire has not been validated, thus is non-standardized. The final questionnaire consisted of two parts:

- the first part includes questions about leisure activities in everyday free time (defined as spare time).

The first question in this part *“The following questions are related to your free time, that is, time you are not occupied with work or household duties or other activities that you are obliged to do in everyday life. What is your main activity in your leisure (every day) time? Please think about one-main activity you can identify yourself with.”* was a close-ended question with fourteen offered answers, where only one answer could be chosen. Possible answers were as follow: 1. Shopping, 2. Going to spas, hot springs, health resorts (sauna, massage, ...), 3. Participate in sport (being active doing any kind of sport activity), 4. Attend cultural events (concerts, live theatre, exhibitions, visit museums, galleries), 5. Attend sport events (as spectator), 6. Go to the cinema, watching movies, 7. Reading books or magazines (at home or in the library), 8. Play games, video-games or other games on computer or mobile phone, 9. Religious activities (pray, visit church..), 10. Artistic creating (photography, calligraphy, sculpture, design..), 11. Sleep, 12. Watch TV, DVD, videos, 13. Spend time on the Internet/PC, 14. Cooking and exploring different foods and 15. Other.

- the second part of the questionnaire focuses on the main motive for traveling (defined as the main motive for traveling)

The first question of the second part was also a multiple choices close-ended question with one answer possible. *“Now please think about your travel time, vacation, holiday, trip, in your own country or abroad. This is the time when you do not have class, you do not work, the time when you are free for travel. Think about your last vacation, travelling. What was your main motive for travelling? (mark one, main motive)”*

Possible answers were generally same as in the first question of the first part in the same questionnaire, with two changes: *“11. Sleep”* has been replaced with *“11. Sun, sand, beach”* and *“12. Watch TV, DVD, videos”* has been replaced with *“12. Travelling around, explore the country”*. Both changes in possible motives of travelling have been made after testing the questionnaire, where this need has been found.

Assessment of leisure-time physical activity has been controversial and there is still a lack of a universal measurement. Most studies, included the present study, are based on self-reported physical activity from questionnaires, since they are easier, cheaper, and more reproducible than other methods, although the trend to over-report the actual level of physical activity is well known (Lichtman et al, 1992). The data for the present research has been collected through a computer assisted web interview (CAWI) method using an online questionnaire in English language. Data collection period is from October 2012 to January 2013 from tertiary level students representing three different cultures and five different countries (covering one university institution in each) that were included in the survey:

- Slovenia, Poland, Greece (European culture): University of Primorska, Slovenia; Katowice School of Economics, Poland; University of Macedonia, Greece
- Mexico (Latin America culture): Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
- Taiwan R.O.C. (Asian culture): I-Shou University, Taiwan

Table 1: Sample (N) by the Institution

	N	Percent
I-Shou University, Taiwan R.O.C.	169	22%
University of Primorska, Slovenia	152	20%
Katowice School of Economics, Poland	249	33%
University of Macedonia, Greece	113	15%
Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico	70	9%
Total	753	100%

Table 2: Sample Crosstabulation for gender, age and university/country

			Under 20 years old	21 -23 years old	24 - 26 years old	27-30 years old	More than 30 years old	Total
Male	I-Shou University, Taiwan	Count	28	5	3	2	0	38
		%	73.7	13.2	7.9	5.3	0.0	100.0
	University of Primorska, Slovenia	Count	14	17	8	1	4	44
		%	31.8	38.6	18.2	2.3	9.1	100.0
	Katowice School of Economics, Poland	Count	0	27	18	12	17	74
		%	0.0	36.5	24.3	16.2	23.0	100.0
	University of Macedonia, Greece	Count	4	21	3	2	0	30
		%	13.3	70.0	10.0	6.7	0.0	100.0
	Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico	Count	8	10	1	3	5	27
		%	29.6	37.0	3.7	11.1	18.5	100.0
	Total	Count	54	80	33	20	26	213
		%	25.4	37.6	15.5	9.4	12.2	100.0
Female	I-Shou University, Taiwan	Count	62	27	1	0	0	90
		%	68.9	30.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
	University of Primorska, Slovenia	Count	35	32	17	0	3	87
		%	40.2	36.8	19.5	0.0	3.4	100.0
	Katowice School of Economics, Poland	Count	1	53	52	34	33	173
		%	0.6	30.6	30.1	19.7	19.1	100.0
	University of Macedonia, Greece	Count	9	37	7	4	3	60
		%	15.0	61.7	11.7	6.7	5.0	100.0
	Tecnologico de Monterrey, Mexico	Count	14	6	4	6	4	34
		%	41.2	17.6	11.8	17.6	11.8	100.0
	Total	Count	121	155	81	44	43	444
		%	27.3	34.9	18.2	9.9	9.7	100.0

Frequencies (N) collected by the university are shown in the Table 1 and Table 2.

IBM SPSS Statistics 21 program was used for data analysis. Absolute and relative (in %) frequencies for all variables were computed and plotted. Contingency tables (crosstabs) were used

to establish bivariate associations between single questionnaire items and predictor variables (country, gender and age); the power of association between the three variable pairs was expressed using Cramer's *V* coefficient. As the expected cell frequencies in contingency tables were too small in several cases, statistical significance (*p*-value) for the associations between variable pairs was computed using Monte Carlo simulation with 10.000 samples. Differences between countries (controlled for gender and age) in sport activity of students in spare time and while travelling were analysed using binary logistic regression.

RESULTS

The results (see Table 3) show all the analysed associations between leisure time and sports questionnaire items and countries (institutions) to be moderate and statistically significant (*p*-value ≤ 0.001) except in two cases (Table 3: 0.596 and 0.957) where the number of responses has been lower due to a previous filter question (Now please think only about sports activities in your free/spare time. What sport or physical activity do you take part in most frequently?).

The two main questions used in this paper (Q2 and Q10 in Table 3) are about the main activity in which students partake in their every day spare time and the main activity that motivates them for traveling. Only one answer from the list of proposed answers was possible.

Table 3: Cramer's *V* coefficients and their Monte-Carlo *p*-values for the association between Spare Time and Sports questionnaire items and institution (country) of study

		Cramer V	M-C p
Q2	The following questions are related to your free time, that is, time you are not occupied with work or household duties or other activities that you are obliged to do in everyday life. What is your main activity in your leisure (every day) time? Choose one main activity.	0.25	<0.001
Q3	Who do you usually do this activity with?	0.15	<0.001
Q4	How often do you do the mentioned activity?	0.18	<0.001
Q5	How much do you spend on this activity (in US\$) per month?	0.14	<0.001
Q6	Now please think only about sports activities in your free time. What sport or physical activity do you take part in most frequently?	0.18	<0.001
Q7	Why do you not take part in sport in your free time?	0.27	0.596
Q8	Do you think sport has a positive influence on people?	0.04	0.957
Q10	Now please think about your travel time, vacation, holiday, trip, in your own country or abroad. This is the time when you do not have class (July and August), you do not work, the time when you are free for travel. What is your main motive of travelling?	0.31	<0.001
Q11	Who do you usually travel with?	0.24	<0.001
Q12	While you are on vacation/trip/holiday or away from home, how often do you do the mentioned activity?	0.20	<0.001
Q13	How much do you spend for the mentioned activity only (in US\$) when you are on vacation in total? (exclude costs for accommodation, travel ticket, food, etc.)	0.21	<0.001
Q14	Beside the motive of travelling you mentioned do you do any sport-activity when you are on vacation?	0.17	0.001
Q16	Why then is sport not your main motive for travel?	0.17	<0.001

In Figure 1 the results of the main spare time student’s activities from the five different institutions are shown. They show differences between the students in participating in a leisure spare time activity. Students from the University of Primorska, Slovenia had the highest proportion that participated in sport activities during their spare time (more than 30%), whereas the students from I-Shou University from Taiwan have chosen sport as the main activity in far fewer cases (10.6%). On the other hand spending time on the Internet/PC is chosen by students from Greece mostly (38.0%), following by Mexico (29.0%) and Taiwan (23.2%) in the majority of cases. In contrast to other cultures, shopping as an every-day free time activity practiced mostly by the Taiwanese students (11.3%) whereas reading books is the main spare time activity for those in Poland (14.6%).

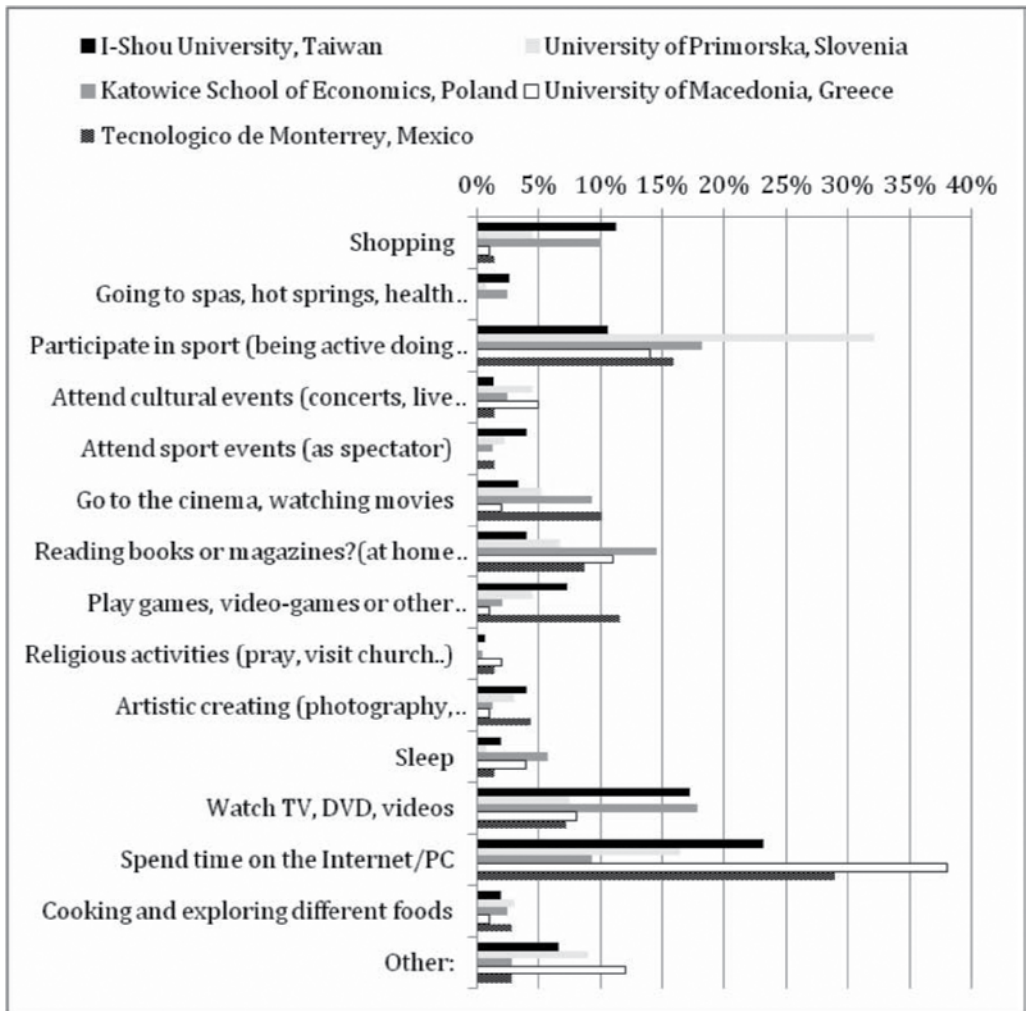


Figure 1: Main spare time activity by Institution (Country)

In the Figure 2 the motives for travelling among students are shown (activities that motivates students to travel). Participating in sport has not been shown as a strong motive for traveling regardless of the country or culture although spa and health resort tourist activities are still important for Slovenian students and cultural events remain significant for Mexican students.

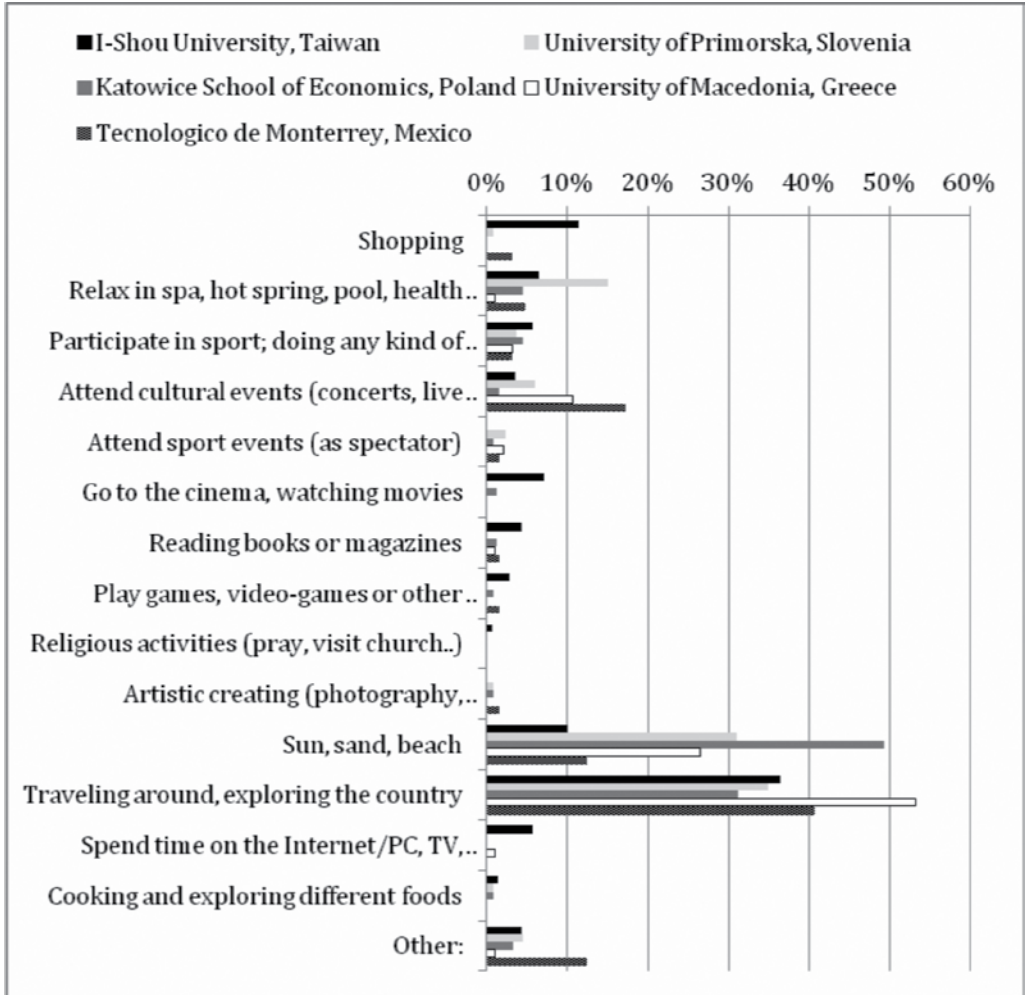


Figure 2: Main motive for traveling by Institution (Country)

After showing the activities practiced in every-day spare time and those that motivate students to travel (Figure 1 and Figure 2) the analysis was extended to examine the socio-demographic differences in gender and age group between those students who participate in sport in their every-day spare time and those who have chosen “participating in sport” as a travel motive.

Table 4: Binary logistic regression model for the differences in spare time sport activities between Institutions (countries)

		OR	95% CI for OR		p
			Lower	Upper	
University/ Country	I-Shou University, Taiwan R.O.C.				<0.001
	University of Primorska, Slovenia	3.725	1.880	7.384	0.001
	Katowice School of Economics, Poland	1.685	0.770	3.686	0.192
	University of Macedonia, Greece	1.365	0.568	3.281	0.487
	Technologico de Monterrey, Mexico	1.233	0.498	3.052	0.651
Gender	Male	2.083	1.380	3.145	<0.001
	21-23				0.092
Age group	<= 20	1.824	1.002	3.322	0.049
	24-26	1.376	0.741	2.556	0.313
	27-30	1.806	0.847	3.850	0.162
	30+	2.319	1.158	4.643	0.018

Note: Nagelkerke R²=0.093. OR–adjusted odds ratio; CI–confidence interval.

Compared to the reference category of students at I-Shou University (Taiwan), the Slovenian students from the University of Primorska participate in sport to much greater extent (OR=3.725, 95% CI=[1.88 – 7.38]) as part of their spare time activities. No other comparisons were statistically significant (Table 3 and 4). The sample results show students from Poland's Katowice School of Economics participate in sport activities in their spare time much more than Taiwanese students from I-Shou University (OR=1.685), followed by students of the University of Macedonia (Greece) (OR=1.365). Taiwan's I-Shou University students show the lowest interest in sport activities during their spare time comparing to their peers from our sample. Male students from all institutions covered by this research take part in sport activities twice as much as female students (OR=2.083, $p < 0.001$) and amongst the five age group categories the only statistically significant difference (with the reference variable 21-23 years of age) was found in the group of 30+ (OR=2.319, 95% CI=[1.158 – 4.643]) and in the group under 20 (OR=1.824, 95% CI=[1.002 – 3.322])

In analyzing sport activity as the main motive of travel the results show a country to be a significant predictor (Table 5). A comparison with the reference category (University of Macedonia from Greece) shows higher odds of being involved in sport activities while traveling among Slovenian students (OR=2.791, $p = 0.001$), and Polish (OR=2.437, $p = 0.001$). Sport is the least strong motive for travelling among the students from Greece. On the other hand it has been noticed that Taiwanese students show a higher level of interest in sport as a motive for traveling (OR=2.409, $p = 0.005$) compared to the reference university.

Table 5: Binary logistic regression model for the differences in travel time sport activities between Institutions (countries)

		OR	95% CI for OR		p
			Lower	Upper	
University/ Country	University of Macedonia, Greece				0.001
	I-Shou University, Taiwan R.O.C.	2.409	1.303	4.456	0.005
	University of Primorska, Slovenia	2.791	1.570	4.961	0.001
	Katowice School of Economics, Poland	2.437	1.433	4.144	0.001
	Technologico de Monterrey, Mexico	1.303	0.663	2.559	0.443
Gender	Male	1.654	1.154	2.369	0.006
	30+				0.824
Age group	Under 20	1.303	.660	2.574	0.446
	21-23	1.351	0.751	2.430	0.315
	24-26	1.428	0.760	2.685	0.268
	27-30	1.437	0.704	2.933	0.319

Note: Nagelkerke R²=0.054 OR–adjusted odds ratio; CI–confidence interval.

In terms of gender, male students from our sample are 1.6-times ($p=0.006$) more likely to be interested in taking part in sport during their travel compared to their female colleagues. For the five age groups there is no pronounced significance evident in the results, although all age categories in our sample show higher ($OR>1$) likelihood of involvement in sport activity during travelling than the reference age group 30+, which is opposite to the results obtained for sport activity in spare time (shown in Table 4).

DISCUSSION

Since the literature suggests physical activity as one of the most important educational tools, our research investigated the cross-cultural differences in leisure time activities (spare time and time when travelling) with a focus on sport activities among the students of 5 countries. Similarly Haase, Steptoe, Sallis and Wardle (2004) in analyzing the leisure behaviors of university students from 23 countries found that the prevalence of inactivity in leisure time varied with cultural and economic developmental factors; this averaged 23% (North-Western Europe and the United States), 30% (Central and Eastern Europe), 39% (Mediterranean), 42% (Pacific Asian), and 44% (developing countries). Thus, their results in activities are expanded in the study reported here which examined activity during leisure time in Greece, Mexico, Poland, Slovenia, Taiwan, meaning inclusive of three different cultures (Asian, Latin American and European). In the following the discussion about all 5 studied countries is presented.

According to our results students from Slovenia and Poland do take part in sport activities in their every-day spare time in the greatest extent among the analyzed countries. It is evident that student behaviours in Greece and Mexico could be of greater concern as more than 25% of students from these two universities spend their spare time on the computer. Various behavioural and attitudinal factors could be researched to lead to a lower interest in sport activities by young adults in Greece, Mexico and Taiwan, but since all 3 countries have warm Mediterranean or

humid tropic weather all year round the present result could lead to a conclusion that a warm and humid climate has an association with an inactivity. Future studies are suggested in this contest. Students from cooler countries, Slovenia and Poland, show much more interest for sport; both in spare time and while travelling. These findings are confirmed by Eurobarometer that reported citizens of the Nordic countries (and The Netherlands) are the most physically active in the EU (Eurobarometer, 2010, 2014). The results also show that citizens of Mediterranean countries tend to exercise less than the EU average where warmer and more humid weather leads to spending time in closed air-conditioned rooms, which results mostly in sedentary ways of leisure time use. Similar the results by Varo et al. (2003) shown that the share of sedentary lifestyles across European countries ranged between 43.3% (Sweden) and 87.8% (Portugal), and confirming again that residents of northern countries seat less in comparison with Mediterranean countries. As a consequence, in this modern electronic world seating means spending time on the Internet or watching TV, behaviour, which is also confirmed by our current results. The modern opportunity for indoor sports in Mediterranean and tropical countries cannot be neglected and should be noted by the sport organizations in those countries.

Students from Taiwan are the least engaged in sport in their spare time, according to our results (10.6%). Education is in first place amongst Taiwanese families and parents expect their children to study almost continuously without having any time for leisure and fun. Taiwanese students therefore spend their free time passively in their rooms, pretending to study, but actually spending much of their time playing games on the computer; a situation, which is likely to affect their physical health and social development. From Chen and Lu's (2009) study it is clear that Taiwanese (Asian culture) students spend their spare time on extra study, making homework and preparing for the tests, academic enrichment and extra-curriculum activities such as music, dancing, ballet or even abacus lessons. Confucianism remains a strong cultural traditional through many parts of Asia where there is the belief that well and highly educated people have a destiny to become leaders and contribute to all society. Consequentially, it is seen that educational success leads to a better life, including higher social status, getting a good job, establishing a better marriage and developing loyal relationships (Huang & Gove, 2012). In Taiwan, playing computer games has become a major leisure activity for many adolescents (Chou & Tsai, 2007) and today the pattern remains very similar (Chiu, Hong & Chiu, 2013). At the extreme, the results of Chou and Hsiao (2000) indicated that Internet addiction does exist among some Taiwanese college students. All these findings suggest that physical activity and sport should play a greater role in the Taiwanese students' life (in both: spare time and when travelling).

There is limited research about leisure time activities of Mexican students, which was important another reason to include them in our study. It has been found that 15.9% Mexican students covered by our sample take part in sport in their spare time, but only 3.1% of them undertake sport activities when travelling. The culture in Mexico suggests so called "siesta" as a leisure time "activity", but Valencia-Flores et al (1998) suggested that Mexican students actually nap less when compared to other college student populations. Researches among Mexican Americans show Latinos to be highest among all ethnic groups for leisure time inactivity and several studies have demonstrated that although Latinos understand the benefits of exercise few engage in the behaviour (Marquez & McAuley, 2006). Latino culture is collectivist in nature, meaning that emphasis is placed on the group (family, extended family, social and community) rather than the individual. As a result, the importance of family relationships is highly emphasized (Evenson, Sarmiento, Macon, Tawney, & Ammerman, 2002). Developing and motivating students to par-

ticipate into group sports in Mexico is shown as an opportunity for developing physical activity amongst the younger population.

The results among our sample of students from Greece shows that 14% participate in sport in their spare time and spending time on the Internet/PC has the highest share (38%) of all the activities mentioned and the largest number of students included in this research. Half of the studied population in the work of Pitsavos, Panagiotakos, Lentzas, & Stefanadis, (2005) has been reported as physically inactive, indicating that sedentary lifestyle is becoming a serious epidemic in Greece. Eurobarometer (2010) reported that Greece had the fewest citizens who play sport regularly (only 3%) and the study by Janssen et al (2005) reported that in adolescents aged 14–17 years, the prevalence of overweight ranged from 8% in Slovenia to 23% in Greece. In last 5 years the Greek financial crisis and demonstrations and protests on the Greek streets could be a part of the reasons for spending time on the computer, watching the news or checking for the “way-out” of the crisis, which all compound the sedentary lifestyle that had been reported in Greece even before the most recent issues, which is not confirmed by our research, but by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2011), in adults Greece the unemployment has risen from 6.6% in May, 2008, to 16.6% in May, 2011. Even more concerning is the youth unemployment that rose from 18.6% to 40.1%, which is leading young generation to spend more time on computer at homes. Overall, the picture of health in Greece is concerning. It reminds us that, in an effort to finance debts, ordinary people are paying the ultimate price: losing access to care and preventive services, facing higher risks of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and in the worst cases losing their lives. Greater attention to health and health-care access is needed to ensure that the Greek crisis does not undermine the ultimate source of the country's wealth—its people (Kentikelenis et al., 2011).

In the present study comparisons were made between gender and age groups, also. Male students from all five universities choose sport activity as their main spare time activity more often than their female peers. Also as a main motivation for travelling, sport is of higher interest among male than female students. This finding is also supported by Eurobarometer (2014) which shows that men are more likely than women to exercise or play sport: 45% of men do so at least once a week, compared with 37% of women; meanwhile, 37% of men never exercise or play sport, compared with 47% of women. Therefore, the importance of exercise for female students should be promoted in different ways to develop a habit of physical activity among women as well, although this is probably different in each country due to different cultural backgrounds. For example it has been reported that Latina women who had seen other women exercising in their neighbourhood were more likely to be physically active (Evenson et al., 2002). In analysing age groups practicing sport as a spare time activity a statistically significant difference for comparison with reference group (Latino-Mexican) was found only in the age group 21-23 years and with less than half more of sport activities. In contrast no statistical significant differences have been found in the comparison of age groups when analysing sport as the main motive for travelling, although it is interesting to note that in the study sample all age categories show higher interest in sport as a motivation for travelling than the age group 30+. It is expected that after the age of 30 other travel activities take the priority, such as having a family vacation, and hence they prefer to do more sport in their every-day spare time. It seems like younger students do not have enough time to participate in sport since they are still at the beginning of their study years, which demands the majority of their attention. After the habit of studying has become routine (after the age of 30) students may spend more of their leisure time practicing sport as well.

CONCLUSION

According to Scott and Willits (1998) adolescent leisure participation is predictive of leisure choices in latter life for example in their sixties. Thus, it is important to understand the leisure time of today's youths to anticipate the most demandable activities in the future. In terms of sport activities in spare and travel time, at least two important results for the sports and tourism sphere have to be highlighted from the present paper:

First, although cross-cultural differences in spending leisure time have been confirmed by many researchers before this study, spending time on the computer is still the main "activity" of today's students regardless of their country of origin. In addition male students still today participate in sport activities more than their female peers. Focusing on cultures included in this research could be concluded that in Poland and Slovenia students do participate in sport activities more than in other cultures. Generally speaking, in Greece, Mexico and Taiwan, an organized system for promoting physical activity is needed, as the warning for schools, parents and educational systems has already arrived in discussions about spending leisure time on the Internet/computer and watching TV. The establishment of regular sedentary ways of spending leisure time in adolescence may lead our future leaders to forget or even reject physical activity especially sport activities. Given the levels of economic growth and technological change in the developing world and therefore the likelihood of increased physical inactivity there are various calls for urgent action to be taken now to set up interventions aimed at increasing physical activity levels in these settings (Guthold et al., 2008).

Second, most students today do not see sport activity as a motive for traveling which could be a warning for the future of sport tourism development that relies on visitors from other countries. The future of sport tourism does not seem that bright in all the surveyed countries because students are not motivated by the idea of sporting activities as part of traveling. Tourism destinations developing sports, sporting facilities and events should take this finding into serious consideration and find the right way for promoting sport as a travel activity and attract young generations.

Limitations of the present study

Although our findings replicate and extend previous work with results that emerge from the findings in leisure time activities and tourism sports motivation, there are some limitations present. Although five countries are involved in the research, only one university per country took part, which is insufficient to prove that the results are representative and generalizable to the whole country. In addition, the field of study of the respondents was not included in the questionnaire and in the sample of Taiwanese students do not includes students within 30+ age group, which both, could affect the final results. Moreover, one country representing a cultural group may not be enough to generally speak about all peoples with a related or similar culture. Furthermore, although the survey method gave good access to potential respondents and the numbers of survey refusals were reported as small the actual response rate is not known. This raises issues about representativeness of the sample for each institution that was included. Further research to overcome these limitations is needed so that the connection between sport as a spare time activity and an activity during traveling (sport tourism) can be more effectively understood.

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