

Pilot Survey to Investigate Participation in Exercise for All Programs and Sport Events and Their Impact on the Evaluation of the Attica Region



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Abstract Sport events are one of the most important and constantly developing parts of events industry. Municipalities organize exercise for all programs, and nowadays, they are involved in the organization of local sport events (Balaska, 2007, 2013). The ability of sport events to attract visitors—tourists, their positive economic impact, but also their wide coverage by the media contribute to the development of destination tourism promotion strategies (Balaska, 2013). Also, sport events improve personal well-being and the quality of life of the participants, as well as they promote an active lifestyle (Alexandris et al, 2012; Balaska & Kouthouris, 2014). Furthermore, sport tourism events are used to enhance the image of the destination (Keller, 1993). suggested that brand image consists of elements with features, benefits, and attitudes toward the “product.” Understanding these characteristics would help to identify the elements that determine the image of sport tourism event, which seemed to consist of images related to organization, environment, physical activity, socialization, self-fulfillment, and emotions (Kaplanidou & Vogt 2007). This study attempted to estimate and understand the relationship between the image of a small-scale sport tourism event, its impact on destination image, and the profile of participants. The study involved 203 individuals, who participated in municipal exercise for all programs and sport events in various municipalities of Attica. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed by public invitation. The questionnaire, which was used, was translated from (Kaplanidou and Kaplanidou, 2006) scale about the effect of sport event image on destination image. The results of this research could help to provide destination marketers and sport event marketers with insight into how various entities should be best combined according always to the participants’ profile.

Keywords Sport tourism · Sport city · Sport events · Destination image · Municipalities

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V. Katsoni (ed.), *Tourism, Travel, and Hospitality in a Smart and Sustainable World*,
Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26829-8_42

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JEL Classifications L83 · Sports · Gambling · Restaurants · Recreation · Tourism

1 Introduction

The implementation of mass sports programs (Sport for All) is carried out by Local Authorities (Code of Municipalities and Communities, N.3463/2006, Government Gazette A114, No.75). The programs include various sports and recreational activities that take place in outdoor or indoor areas and are aimed at general and special population of all ages. The philosophy of mass sport defines exercise with systematic guidance as an essential social investment because it improves the quality of human life, helps prevent degenerative tendencies, develops interpersonal relationships, and contributes to a better relationship between man and the natural environment. The aim of the programs is to improve the biological level of the participants, to cultivate a sporting character and sporting awareness, to optimize their leisure time, and to provide recreation for the participants (www.gss.gov.gr).

In order to fulfill the need of citizens for sport participation, the General Secretariat for Sports designed the Sport for All Programmes. These programs are implemented under the central responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Sports through the General Secretariat for Sports (G.G.A.), in cooperation with the Local Authorities and other bodies such as sports federations, sports clubs, educational associations, cultural associations, sports centers, company sports programs, and higher education institutions, and are addressed to all citizens. The participation of adults in exercise programs is limited, as a large proportion of them do not show interest in exercise (Balaska et al., 2008) or are reluctant to start participating in physical exercise activities (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a, b). For the participants, the two most important reasons for encouraging participation in exercise and recreation programs were to maintain health and fitness and to reduce body weight (Yfantidou et al., 2004; Fakriadou et al., 2009) and furthermore, for the emotions gained by participating in exercise (Balaska et al., 2018).

One of the fastest-growing forms of sport tourism internationally, and in Greece, are city sports events (Horne, 2007; Kaplanidou et al., 2013a, 2013b). It is a form of sports tourism that has not been recorded and studied in depth in Greece, although its contribution to the economic development of local communities can be very important (0). In general, sport activities are useful both for promoting physical activity as a means of strengthening the local economy (Matheson, 2009; Tien et al., 2011) and enhancing the lives of local residents (Bretherton et al., 2016; Frawley & Cush, 2011; Girginov & Hills, 2008; Ramchandani et al., 2015; Veal et al., 2012; Wicker et al., 2013). They can promote the area by developing the brand of the destination, contributing to tourism development and economically strengthening the local community, enhancing tourism in all seasons, and enhancing social and environmental benefits (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012; Kaplanidou et al., 2013a, 2013b). The main target of the municipalities that organize sporting events and local events is the citizens and residents of the local communities. Their benefits are multiple for

local communities because they reinforce positive attitudes toward sport, promote mass participation in sport and unity of residents, and give them prestige. There is a significant increase in sports participants/tourists these days, who travel to participate in major and smaller sporting events and combine their travel with their sports participation (Funk, 2008; Gibson et al., 2012; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Ridinger et al., 2012; Ziakas & Costa, 2011).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between the image of a sporting event on the destination image and the influence of social and demographic factors (such as age and marital status, occupation, and economic level) on the evaluation of destination and sporting event images.

2 Literature Review

The involvement of local authorities in the provision of sport and leisure services has become even more pronounced and massive in recent decades. For this reason, their effectiveness and quality have attracted the interest of the scientific community. A study by Balaska et al. (2017) examined the relationship between the services provided by recreational sports and leisure programs and the degree of involvement of participants in these programs. The modified SERVQUAL scale of Alexandris et al. (2004a) was used to measure service quality, while the Kyle & Chick (2002) scale was used to measure involvement. The strong involvement resulting from their satisfaction with the services provided determines and influences the decision of individuals to participate in the programs. In general, there was low satisfaction with the quality of services provided, particularly in the quality of facilities, exercise conditions, variety, timing and type of programs, and issues related to responsiveness and problem-solving. However, despite the low satisfaction with services, the level of engagement with these sport recreation programs was satisfactory. The researchers concluded that the services provided can be improved through the adoption of new strategies and suggestions to solve specific problems and upgrade services with the ultimate goal of increasing participant satisfaction.

Regarding the factors of participation in the sport and recreation programs of municipal organizations, there were gender differences (Afthinos et al., 2005; Fakriadou et al., 2009), with women considered as important participation factors the functionality of the facilities, variety of programs and easy access, while men considered the interaction with other people as important factors. In contrast, in research by Yfantidou et al. (2011a, 2011b); Giles-Corti & Donovan (2002), there were no differences in men's and women's perceptions of participation factors such as location, appearance of the facilities, and safety. Older people perceived the responsibility of the staff working in the programs as more important (Afthinos et al., 2005; Fakriadou et al., 2009) and educational level did not affect the overall perception of participation factors (Afthinos et al., 2005; Fariadou et al., 2009; Yfantidou et al., 2011a, 2011b).

In addition to the regular sports and leisure programs, sports events are held in sports facilities, which are one of the most important and growing segments of the events industry. In recent years, local authorities, alongside mass sport activities, have started to get involved in the organization of local sports events (Balaska, 2007, 2013). A variety of sports are included in today's sporting events, and their impact is large and multifaceted. They are important for the strategic development of tourism destinations due to their ability to attract visitors, their positive economic impact, and their wide media coverage (Balaska, 2013). They also promote more active living and increase the personal wealth and standard of living of participants (Alexandris et al., 2012; Balaska & Kouthouris, 2014).

Sports tourism events are used to improve the image of the destination, but the brand image elements of an event have not been thoroughly studied. To determine the brand image dimensions of sporting events, research has been conducted in which it was found that consumer interest was increased by conveying specific images, by providing experiences that enhance or alter the image of the event, and by creative use of the brand image of the event's products (event history, uniforms, trophies, teams, stadiums, finals, sports ambassadors) (Chadwick & Holt, 2008; Keller, 1993; Papadimitriou et al., 2016). Existing literature suggests that images of sporting events and destinations could interact with the behavior of sports tourists. In a study by Beerli and Martin (2004), it was argued that motivation influences the affective component of the image, the travel-holiday experience has a significant relationship with cognitive and affective images, and the social and demographic characteristics influence cognitive and affective appraisal of the image. Several researchers aimed to investigate the variables (behavior, motivation, destination characteristics, socio-demographic data) of affective and cognitive image for branding of sports tourism destination. From the results of these studies, it was found that the impact of event image on destination image was significant, but not vice versa. The factors that increased the intention to repeat participation in the event were (a) the tourists' feeling of satisfaction, which was related to the degree of cooperation between destination marketing managers and sport event organizers, and (b) destination image (Kaplanidou & Gipson, 2010; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Keller, 1993; Yfantidou et al., 2011a, 2011b).

"Sport cities are important for the economic transformation as well as the industrialization of sport. They also provide opportunities for the development of sport and leisure tourism (Gibson, 1998). Modern cities are considered areas that contain "consumption-related activities and tourism, sport, culture and entertainment" (Hannigan, 2003). Some cities, such as Melbourne (Francis & Murphy, 2005) and Birmingham and Sheffield (Smith, 2005), use sport to promote their images. In addition, some cities, such as Manchester, Cardiff, and Dubai, are considered as 'sports cities' due to the special themed sports zones in which their governments create sports facilities (Smith, 2010)" (Avloniti et al., 2022).

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample

The study involved people who participated in municipal sports and recreation programs in various municipalities of Attica. Participation was voluntary and the participants were informed by public invitation at the places where they were exercising. The total sample size was 203 citizens (83.7% women, 15.3% men, and 1% other). The questionnaires were distributed at the sports facilities and were completed in hard copy (n = 110) and via google forms (n = 93).

3.2 Measurement Scales

The questionnaires used were as follows: (a) the negotiation strategies scale of Balaska et al. (2019), derived from the questionnaires of Alexandris et al. (2007) and Marcus et al. (1992c), which includes eleven dimensions: (1) Knowledge Increase, (2) Understanding Negative Effects of Non-Exercise, (3) Self-Motivation, (4) Activation, (5) Socialization, (6) Empowerment, (7) Engagement, (8) Stimulus Creation, (9) Relationship Development for Encouragement, (10) Time, and (11) Financial (Responses recorded on a seven-point Likert-type scale, 1 = never, 7 = forever), (b) Schiffman and Kanuk's (2007) three-dimensional model scale, as translated into Balaska's (2013) doctoral thesis, for capturing attitudes toward sport recreation, consisting of the dimensions: Cognitive, Affective and Intention to Participate, and (c) Kaplanidou's (2006) scale concerning the impact of the image of sporting events on the image of the destination.

3.3 Process

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Democritus University of Thrace. The contact with the participants of the sport programs was conducted after approval by the municipal authorities, and outreach was conducted during their participation in the sport and recreation programs from February to April 2022. Questionnaires were distributed and collected at the facilities where the sports and recreation programs were implemented. A total of 180 paper questionnaires were distributed of which 110 were returned completed, 6 were returned blank and 64 were not returned at all. Also, some participants preferred to complete the questionnaire through google forms and provided their email address, where the link of the questionnaire was sent to them and 93 responded.

4 Results

Total Reliability of Scale

The overall reliability was tested through Cronbach α analysis for all variables of the questionnaire and scored a very satisfactory value of 0.91.

Reliability of sub-scales

All sub-scales that were used in the research revealed satisfactory values. In particular:

Three-dimensional model scale for capturing attitudes toward sport recreation
Cronbach $\alpha = 0.83$

The scale of intention to participate or continue to participate in the exercise in future
Cronbach $\alpha = 0.89$

The negotiation strategies scale
Cronbach $\alpha = 0.92$

The image of sporting events on the image of the destination
Cronbach $\alpha = 0.895$

The scale of evaluation of the municipality as a destination for sports activities
Cronbach $\alpha = 0.87$.

Frequencies

Regarding gender, 83.7% of the survey participants were female ($n = 170$), 15.3% were male ($n = 31$), and 1% people did not answer which gender they belong to ($n = 2$).

Regarding educational level, 42.9% were university graduates, 21.7% were holding master, 17.7% were lyceum graduates, 9.4% were college graduates, 5.4% had Ph.D and 2% were high school graduates, and 0.5% were technical public school and 0.5% other.

As far as occupation, 24.6% of the total sample were civil servants, 21.7% were pensioners, 20.2% were private employees, 11.8% were freelancers, 11.3% were engaged in domestic work, 5.9% were unemployed, 2.5% stated that they did not belong to any of the above-mentioned professional categories and 2% were students.

Concerning income, 53.2% noted that they had a total family annual income of 20.000–60.000€, 38.4% below 20.000€, 1% 60.000–100.000€, and 7.4% did not answer about their income (Fig. 1).

Furthermore, 55.7% were in the 40–59 age group, 32.5% were 60 and over, 10.8% were 17–39 years old and 1% did not respond (Fig. 2).

Also, 61.1% of the total sample were married, 14.8% divorced, 12.3% single/never married, 8.4% widowed, and 3% cohabiting (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1 Total family income:
1. below 20.000 €, 2.
between 20.000–60.000 €,
3. over 60.000–100.000 €

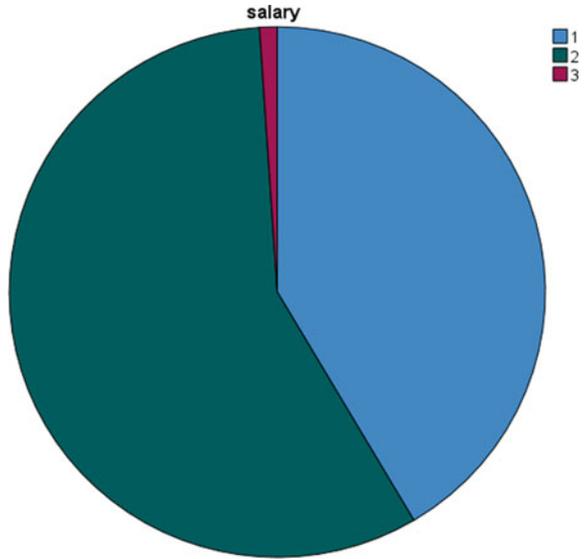
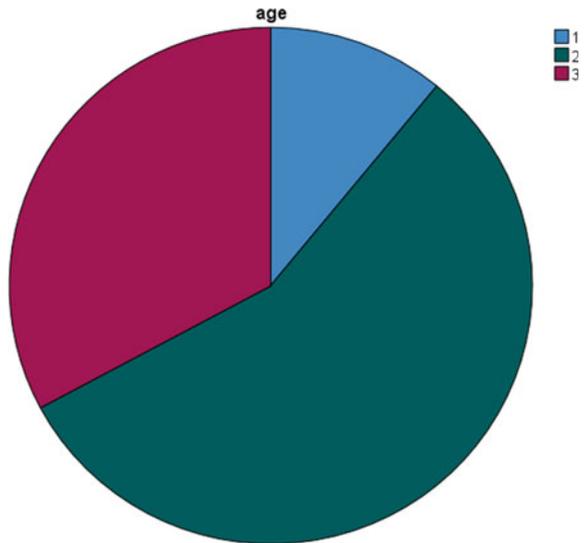


Fig. 2 Age: 1. 17–39 years,
2. 40–59 years, 3. 60 and
over



Descriptive Analysis of Municipality’s Image Evaluation

Using the descriptive analysis of the questions related to the image evaluation of the municipality developing sports events and sports programs where the participants exercised, the following table shows the mean values and standard deviations (Table 1).

Fig. 3 Family status: 1. Married, 2. Divorced, 3. Single/never married, 4. Widowed, 5. Cohabiting

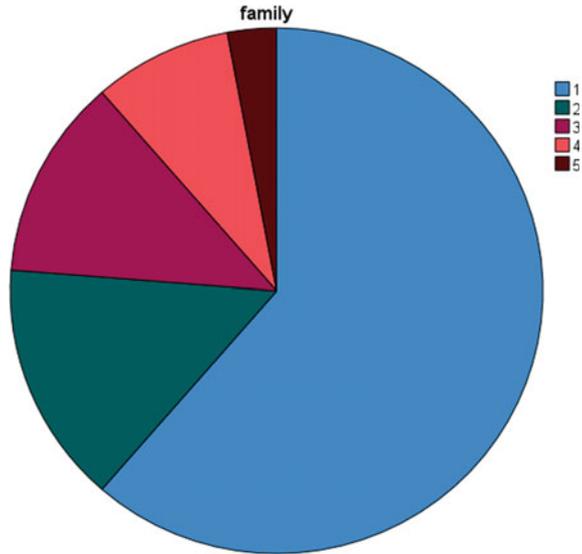


Table 1 Mean values and std of municipality’s image evaluation

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
Opportunities for sport activities	197	1	7	5,56	1,218
Good climate	194	1	7	5,30	1,352
Friendly people	196	1	7	5,15	1,286
Standard hygiene and cleanliness	199	1	7	5,13	1,495
Quality of infrastructure	196	2	7	5,08	1,244
Personal safety	197	1	7	5,05	1,393
Great trails	192	1	7	5,03	1,709
Suitable accommodations	192	1	7	5,02	1,631
Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	192	1	7	4,96	1,776
Good value for money	191	1	7	4,92	1,378
Shopping facilities	190	1	7	4,56	1,565
Good quality restaurants	190	1	7	4,55	1,657
Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	192	1	7	4,52	1,659
Good nightlife and entertainment	194	1	7	3,85	1,664
Interesting historical attractions	190	1	7	2,33	1,875
Great beaches	188	1	7	1,79	1,796
Great museums	187	1	7	1,78	1,433
Valid N (listwise)	171				

Table 2 Mean values and std of municipality’s evaluation as a sport destination

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Friendly	190	1	7	4,86	1,640
Pleasant	192	1	7	4,72	1,680
Arousing	196	1	7	4,68	1,483
Exciting	190	1	7	4,33	1,636
Relaxing	188	1	7	4,27	1,837
Valid N (listwise)	184				

Descriptive Analysis of Municipality’s Evaluation as a Sport Destination

Using the descriptive analysis of the questions related to the municipality’s evaluation as a sport destination, the following table shows the mean values and standard deviations (Table 2).

T Test Between Municipality’s Image Evaluation and Gender

According to the results of the questions related to the evaluation of the image of the municipality, the t test of independent variables showed only one effect of gender on the question about the quality of infrastructure with $t_{192} = 3.117$ and $p < 0.05$. The mean values of the answers given by men and women were $M = 5.72$ and $M = 4.96$, respectively.

The t test of the independent variables did not show the effect of gender on the following questions ($p > 0.05$):

- Good nightlife and entertainment with $t_{190} = -0.409$
- Personal safety with $t_{193} = 1,392$
- Standard hygiene and cleanliness with $t_{195} = 1,892$
- Suitable accommodations with $t_{188} = 1,178$
- Good quality restaurants with $t_{186} = 0,364$
- Great beaches with $t_{184} = 0,243$
- Friendly people with $t_{192} = 0,739$
- Great museums with $t_{183} = 1,958$
- Interesting historical attractions with $t_{186} = 1,329$
- Beautiful scenery/natural attractions with $t_{188} = 0,020$
- Good value for money with $t_{187} = 0,772$
- Unpolluted/unspoiled environment with $t_{188} = 0,788$
- Good climate with $t_{190} = 0,184$
- Opportunities for sport activities with $t_{193} = -0,108$
- Shopping facilities with $t_{186} = -0,064$
- Great trails with $t_{188} = 0,014$.

T Test Between Municipality’s Evaluation as a Sport Destination and Gender

According to the results of the questions concerning municipality’s evaluation as a sport destination, the t test of the independent variables did not show the effect of gender in any of the questions of this scale ($p > 0.05$):

- Exciting, $t_{186} = 0.924$
- Pleasant, $t_{188} = -0,252$
- Arousing, $t_{192} = 0.833$
- Relaxing, $t_{184} = -0.416$
- Friendly, $t_{186} = -0.852$.

Interaction and Main Effect of the Factors Age and Family Status on the Evaluation of the Image of the Municipality

Testing the interaction of age and marital status did not reveal any statistically significant difference in any of the variables examined (Table 3).

Testing the main effect of the age factor revealed no statistically significant difference in any of the variables examined (Table 4).

The test of the main effect of the marital status factor revealed no statistically significant difference in any of the variables examined (Table 5).

Table 3 Tests of between-subjects effects—age*family

Questions	F _(6,158)	p
1. Good nightlife and entertainment	0,407	0,874
2. Quality of infrastructure	1,103	0,363
3. Personal safety	0,972	0,446
4. Standard hygiene and cleanliness	1,540	0,168
5. Suitable accommodations	1,960	0,074
6. Good quality restaurants	0,915	0,486
7. Great beaches	0,373	0,895
8. Friendly people	1,474	0,190
9. Great museums	0,570	0,753
10. Interesting historical attractions	0,492	0,813
11. Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	0,810	0,564
12. Good value for money	1,293	0,263
13. Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	1,196	0,311
14. Good climate	0,828	0,550
15. Opportunities for sport activities	0,876	0,514
16. Shopping facilities	1,148	0,337
17. Great trails	1,244	0,287

Table 4 Tests of between-subjects effects—age

Questions	F _(2,158)	p
1. Good nightlife and entertainment	1,175	0,312
2. Quality of infrastructure	0,178	0,837
3. Personal safety	0,222	0,801
4. Standard hygiene and cleanliness	0,013	0,987
5. Suitable accommodations	0,551	0,577
6. Good quality restaurants	0,184	0,832
7. Great beaches	0,727	0,485
8. Friendly people	1,025	0,361
9. Great museums	1,892	0,154
10. Interesting historical attractions	0,280	0,756
11. Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	0,330	0,720
12. Good value for money	0,543	0,582
13. Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	1,453	0,237
14. Good climate	2,225	0,111
15. Opportunities for sport activities	0,465	0,629
16. Shopping facilities	0,186	0,830
17. Great trails	1,459	0,236

Table 5 Tests of between-subjects effects—family

Questions	F _(4,158)	p
1. Good nightlife and entertainment	0,487	0,745
2. Quality of infrastructure	1,137	0,341
3. Personal safety	0,970	0,426
4. Standard hygiene and cleanliness	0,779	0,540
5. Suitable accommodations	0,281	0,890
6. Good quality restaurants	0,597	0,665
7. Great beaches	0,230	0,921
8. Friendly people	0,355	0,841
9. Great museums	0,241	0,915
10. Interesting historical attractions	2,495	0,050
11. Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	0,790	0,533
12. Good value for money	1,223	0,303
13. Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	0,647	0,630
14. Good climate	1,017	0,400
15. Opportunities for sport activities	0,728	0,574
16. Shopping facilities	0,619	0,649
17. Great trails	0,190	0,943

Table 6 Tests of between-subjects effects—job*salary

Questions	F _(7,146)	p
1. Good nightlife and entertainment	1,695	0,114
2. Quality of infrastructure	0,794	0,593
3. Personal safety	1,225	0,293
4. Standard hygiene and cleanliness	2,348	0,027
5. Suitable accommodations	2,013	0,057
6. Good quality restaurants	1,913	0,071
7. Great beaches	0,629	0,731
8. Friendly people	2,159	0,041
9. Great museums	1,232	0,289
10. Interesting historical attractions	2,142	0,043
11. Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	1,076	0,381
12. Good value for money	0,625	0,734
13. Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	0,488	0,842
14. Good climate	1,218	0,297
15. Opportunities for sport activities	0,864	0,537
16. Shopping facilities	1,367	0,223
17. Great trails	1,302	0,253

Interaction and Main Effect of the Factors Occupation and Income on the Evaluation of the Image of the Municipality

The test of the interaction of the factors occupation and income revealed statistically significant differences with $p < 0.05$ (Table 6):

- In the question on standard hygiene and cleanliness, a statistically significant interaction was found between those who answered that they belonged to the occupational category of private employees with Mean = 5.640 and unemployed with Mean = 3.250, belonging to the category with income of 20,000–60,000 euro.
- In the question on friendly people, a statistically significant interaction was found between civil servants with Mean = 4.667 and freelancers with Mean = 5.750, belonging to the income category below 20,000 euro.
- In the question on friendly people, a statistically significant interaction was found between private employees with Mean = 5,520 and pensioners with Mean = 4,471 who belong to the income category below 20.000–60.000 euro.
- In the question on friendly people, a statistically significant interaction was found between civil servants with Mean = 5.300 and pensioners with Mean = 4.471 who belong to the income category below 20.000–60.000 euro.

- In the question on interesting historical attractions, a statistically significant interaction was found between those who answered that they belonged to the professional category of civil servants with Mean = 1,933 and freelancers with Mean = 4,091 who belonged to the income category of 20.000–60.000 euro.

From the test of the main effect of the occupation factor, there was a statistically significant difference in the question on good nightlife and entertainment and the question on unpolluted/unspoiled environment (Table 7). The main effect analysis identified differences in the question on good nightlife and entertainment between civil servants and those who were engaged in domestic work, with means of 4.81 and 2.39, respectively. In the question about the unpolluted/unspoiled environment, differences were found between civil servants and those who were engaged in domestic work, with averages of 3.82 and 6.27, respectively.

The test of the main effect of the income factor found no statistically significant difference in any question except one. The difference was in the question on great museums between the income category of less than 20.000 euro with Mean = 2.237 and 20.000–60.000 euro with Mean = 1.575 (Table 8).

Table 7 Tests of between-subjects effects—occupation

Questions	F _(7,146)	p
1. Good nightlife and entertainment	3,399	0,002
2. Quality of infrastructure	1,518	0,166
3. Personal safety	1,369	0,222
4. Standard hygiene and cleanliness	1,683	0,117
5. Suitable accommodations	0,917	0,495
6. Good quality restaurants	1,879	0,077
7. Great beaches	0,904	0,505
8. Friendly people	0,598	0,757
9. Great museums	1,180	0,318
10. Interesting historical attractions	0,558	0,789
11. Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	0,604	0,752
12. Good value for money	1,515	0,166
13. Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	2,115	0,045
14. Good climate	1,083	0,377
15. Opportunities for sport activities	0,862	0,539
16. Shopping facilities	1,048	0,400
17. Great trails	1,376	0,220

Table 8 Tests of between-subjects effects—income

Questions	F _(2,146)	p
1. Good nightlife and entertainment	0,313	0,732
2. Quality of infrastructure	0,714	0,491
3. Personal safety	0,894	0,411
4. Standard hygiene and cleanliness	0,650	0,524
5. Suitable accommodations	2,152	0,120
6. Good quality restaurants	0,961	0,385
7. Great beaches	1,340	0,265
8. Friendly people	1,064	0,348
9. Great museums	3,645	0,029
10. Interesting historical attractions	2,067	0,130
11. Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	1,349	0,263
12. Good value for money	1,397	0,251
13. Unpolluted/unspoiled environment	0,315	0,730
14. Good climate	0,441	0,644
15. Opportunities for sport activities	0,102	0,903
16. Shopping facilities	1,336	0,266
17. Great trails	1,733	0,180

5 Conclusion

From the averages of the responses relating to the image evaluation of the municipality developing sports events and sports programs where participants practiced, it appeared that there were several opportunities for sporting activities, a fairly good climate, friendly people, standard hygiene and cleanliness, quality of infrastructure, personal safety, great trails, suitable accommodation, beautiful scenery/natural attractions, and good value for money. For shopping facilities, quality restaurants, and unpolluted/unspoiled environment, they responded that it was offered neither very much nor a little to somewhat, and for good nightlife and entertainment, they responded that it was offered a little to neither very much nor a little. Finally, for interesting historical attractions they answered that they were offered very little and the great beaches and great museums were offered very little to none at all. The answers concerning the questions on beaches and large museums were due to the limitation of the survey to municipalities close to the mountainous area of Attica and not to the historical center of Athens where the majority of historical attractions are located.

From the averages of the responses regarding the evaluation of the municipality as a sports destination, it appeared to be quite friendly, pleasant, and arousing and somewhat exciting and relaxing. According to the results of the questions related to the evaluation of the image of the municipality, the effect of gender on the question about the quality of infrastructure was evident. The mean values of the answers given

by men were higher than the mean values given by women in terms of the assessment of the infrastructure offered.

The test of the interaction between the factors of occupation and income revealed statistically significant differences in the question on standard hygiene and cleanliness between those belonging to the occupational category of private employees and the unemployed, in the income category of 20,000–60,000 euro. The mean values of the answers given by private employees were higher than the mean values of the unemployed in terms of the assessment of the standard hygiene and cleanliness services offered, maybe because they invested more and they seek for value for money. Also, in the question on friendly people, a statistically significant interaction was found between civil servants and freelancers, who belong to the income category below 20,000 euro, with the latter having higher average values in their answers and this may arise from the social skills that freelancers acquire due to the demands of their work. In the same question, a statistically significant interaction was found between private employees and pensioners in the income category of 20,000–60,000 euro, with the former having higher average values in their responses. In addition, in the same question, a statistically significant interaction was found between civil servants and pensioners in the income of 20,000–60,000 euro, with the former having higher average values in their responses. Maybe pensioners feel difficult to socialize with others due to health reasons or lack of social activities. Finally, statistically significant differences were found in the question on interesting historical attractions between those belonging to the professional category of civil servants and freelancers with an income of 20,000–60,000 euro. The mean values of the answers given by civil servants were lower than the mean values of freelancers with regard to the assessment of interesting historical attractions. Maybe civil servants demand more from the municipalities due to their position at the public sector.

From the test of the main effect of the occupation factor, there was a statistically significant difference in the question on good nightlife and entertainment and the question on unpolluted/unspoiled environment. From the main effect analysis, there were differences in the question on good nightlife and entertainment between civil servants and those who were engaged in domestic work, with higher mean scores in the responses of civil servants. Those who do domestic work is difficult to invest money in nightlife as they fight to survive the years of economic and health crisis. In the question on the unpolluted/unspoiled environment, differences were found between civil servants and domestic workers, with higher averages in the responses of domestic workers.

Finally, the test of the main effect of the income factor revealed a statistically significant difference in one question. The difference was in the question on great museums between the income category of less than 20,000 euro and 20,000–60,000 euro, with higher mean scores in the responses of those in the income category of less than 20,000 euro. The prices in Greek museums are not expensive, so people with less income appreciate more the opportunity to visit museums.

We expect the results of this survey will contribute to improve the quality of municipal sport and leisure programs and events, meeting the needs of participants more effectively and timely. The social benefits are multiple, as it will help to set

standards for the extroversion of municipalities to other visitors and to develop more attractive destinations through sport and recreation. The findings can be used by sports and tourism marketers and managers to assess intentions and organize relevant programs and events to attract more tourists and visitors to sport destinations/cities.

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