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The Zurich Marathon Case Study.**

<b>Student Name:</b>	Clàudia Sáez
<b>Student ID no.</b>	12127
<b>E-mail adress (HTSI) :</b>	<a href="mailto:claudia.saez@aluhtsi.url.edu">claudia.saez@aluhtsi.url.edu</a>
<b>Lecture:</b>	Gilda Hernandez
<b>Lecture E-mai address (HTSI):</b>	<a href="mailto:gilda.hernandez@htsi.url.edu">gilda.hernandez@htsi.url.edu</a>

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Barcelona, May 2016

Clàudia Sáez

## 2 Abstract:

This thesis analyze why sport tourist choose Barcelona as a sport destination. It is going to be based on a real case which is a case study of Zurich Marathon of Barcelona. In order to know the opinion and experience of the participants a semi-structured questionnaires using Survio software was conducted. The survey was shared by social media, Facebook Zurich Marathon official page and Corredors.cat, because was the platform those organizations contact with their participants.

As a result, what I could observe after analyzing all the questionnaires was that most of the runners are Spaniards due to the fact of the location of the event, and the tourist that came are related with the marathons world, they had run other marathon in other parts of the world. Also most of the tourist will spend more than one night in the city in order to see the most touristic elements of the city, to enjoy the weather and the gastronomy. These are big point elements when the decision making process. Some of the runners look for destinations with a good weather, healthy and good quality, and in the case of sport tourist they look for sport spaces. Added to this, some positive and negative aspects from the point of view of the participant were analyzed of the event. As an example, pasta party, guard robe and price (90€) were a big negative point, whereas a lot of runners like the track and the city and they are fascinated with the good organization of the event. Finally some recommendations were extract about this aspects for future researchers or for professionals of the events world.

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### 3 Title:

Sport tourism in Barcelona: The Zurich Marathon case study.

### 4 Introduction

From a global point of view sport events or activities are experiencing a continued growth during the last ten years (Hinch T. D. and Higham, J. E. S. 2001). This growth was based in three main factors, the economic forces where people are experiencing more leisure time and less hours of work. The technological innovations, for example with the transport, every year the transport is faster so to move from one destination to another in order to participate in an event every year it is easier. Finally, the value changes, societies had change, initially the importance was based on work ethic values and nowadays the importance is based on self-realization. Sport has a greater societal influence than years ago, and also it is important to say that the sport clothing has become more usual in non-sport time (Ross, 2001).

It is important to try organize this kind of activities and events in a city in order to attract different and new targets and also can be very helpful for cities and destinations because they sell their image around the globe, it also affects positively to the economy of the city, it attracts more tourist and new targets. If the event goes well the promotion of the destination works without doing anything but if you want a good event you have to work hard previously in order to prepare everything and make the participants happy.

As it is said, it is a growing industry so it means that it is starting to be an important part of the economy of a certain destination, and if we want to continue experiencing this growth it is important to do the events every time better in order to attract tourist who are the ones that came with money to spend during the event or during the time in the city. In the case of Barcelona, it is being an important city for events, such as Mobile World Congress, Alimentaria, and some Cardiology congresses, but not with spot events, there is one concrete event which is promoting Barcelona in an important way. Zurich Marathon Barcelona promote Barcelona as a

sport destination but also the track goes through all the famous monuments of Barcelona so it could be considered as a touristic track, so it also sells image.

I had chosen the Zurich Marathon Barcelona, which will be held on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 because it is one “famous” sport event in Barcelona and attract a lot of tourist out of the high season. Also, it will allow me to explore on the decision making process of the sport tourist when they choose a destination, which factors or elements they take into account or value more. Finally, I want to know why Barcelona is chosen for running a marathon, the personal characteristics of participants, and also their likes and dislikes about the organization of the event.

I’ve chosen that topic because I would like to be involved in sport events in the future. Also, I considered it interesting because of the current recession.

#### 4.1 Research question, aim and objectives

My focus will be why athletes choose Barcelona as a destination to do these kinds of events. If these people travel because of marathons or if they come to Barcelona to watch it. So, my research question is *“Why sport tourists choose Barcelona as a Sport destination.”*

The objectives I will follow to answer the research question are the following:

- To review literature on sport tourism, sport tourists, sport destinations, destination choice (decision-making process) and Zurich Marathon Barcelona’s history.
- To analyze personal characteristics of the participants of the Zurich Marathon of Barcelona.
- To investigate the reasons of participants to choose Barcelona as a sport destination by conducting semi structured interviews
- To make conclusions and recommendations for future researchers, in order continue investigating that topic, make some recommendations for the sector, and finally to give some guidelines in order to improve the organization of events in the Barcelona.

## 5 Literature review chapter(s)

In this thesis some concepts will appear constantly such as **Sport Tourism, Sport Tourist, Events, Tourist Behavior, Decision Making Process and Motivations**. In this section they will be introduced making connections with the issue of the project. This thesis will try to establish a relationship between the Zurich Marathon Barcelona and all of these keywords in order to know why people choose our city, Barcelona, as a Sport destination.

### 5.1 Sport tourism

To introduce the sport tourism topic, the definition of tourism is required. As WTO (Tourism satellite account, 2001) says, Tourism is “considered the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”. There are a lot of people travelling around the globe for different reasons. Those could be leisure or vacation, business or fairs or congresses, family or health or shopping and studies. The leisure tourism is the most common around the world. Inside of leisure it is important to mention sport and sport tourism as a big point in the topic because it attract tourist out of their work and enjoy a destination doing sport.

Regarding sport tourism, tourists came to the city in order to run a marathon, so their objective is focus on an activity in a “special” place. T. D. Hinch and J. E. S. Higham (2001, 48) mention that “sport is an important activity within tourism and tourism is a fundamental characteristic of sport”. Tourism often includes activity, special and seasonal dimensions, and what is very important is that it is considered as a primary travel activity.

T. D. Hinch and J. E. S. Higham (2001, 49) try to relate the concept sport and tourism finding some definitions such as de followings:

- Travel for leisure reasons to participate or observe sporting activities away from your city.



- An expression of behavior of people during certain periods of leisure time, which is done in specially attractive natural landscapes and in artificial sports and physical recreation facilities in the outdoors .
- Holidays which involve a kind of sporting activity, being a spectator or participant.
- Kind of travel of leisure that takes individuals outside of their home communities for a certain time in order to participate, watch a physical activity, or venerate an attraction associated on it.
- As a forms of active and passive sport tourist in an activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for leisure or business reasons, that travel away from home and work locality is required.

Looking into all these definitions, all of them says something similar but some of them highlight the issue that there are two kinds of sport tourist, the passive and the active, which will be explained in the next point (look section 5.2).

Nowadays Sport Tourism could be defined as a way of tourism, or as an option to attract another segment of tourism. In the journal article of Klaus, P & Maklan S (2011), mentions that World Tourism Organization (2010) define Sport Tourism as “specific travel outside the customer’s usual environment for either passive or active involvement in sport is the prime motivational reason for travel”.

Standven and de Knop (1999) found an interdependent relationship between sport and tourism. They explain that using a basic premise which is that sport does not only influence tourism but that tourism influences sport. With that sentence Knop (1999) mentions the classification system of sport tourism which is recognized as offering a “two dimensional experience of physical activity tied to a particular setting”.

So, sport is attractive for tourist and it gives points to the city if it has events related with it or even infrastructures to practice. D. Getz (2007, 405) explains the destination point of view and the tourism perspective. In the tourism section he talks about “destination development, facilitate and promote events of all kinds to meet multiple goals such as attract tourist, serve as a catalyst, foster a positive destination image and contribute to general place marketing”. For

that reason the city has to provide good infrastructures for the tourist that wants to practice sport during their vacations.

In fact, to host a sporting event is a way to “rebrand” the city. It does not bring just the opportunity to improve infrastructures and appearances; it promotes the image of the city using the global media expositions. You can “create” a new image for the host cities to present around the world, and it could give the option to attract new markets (Adejobi W. 2016, Brown and Massey 2001, Harvey 1989)

In the next section Sport Tourist will be defined and linked with all the definitions in the way of the different tourist that exist in that segment, passive and active tourists.

## 5.2 Sport tourist

Following the previous point there are two kinds of Sport Tourist. On one hand, there are active tourist, who are those people who travel in order to participate in a competition or a sport event. Whereas, on the other hand, there are the passive tourists who are those that just see/observe or are spectators of a certain sport event, or competition.

As in the previous section, Hinch and Higham (2001) talk about some definitions from other authors about Sport Tourist, and they mention two definitions:

- Are those people who stay at least 24h in the event area and whose primary purpose is to participate on it with the area being a secondary attraction (Nogawa et al., 1996)
- People or groups who actively or passively participate in competitive or recreational sport, travelling and staying in a different area of their home. Their primary motivation is sport. (Gammon and Robinson, 1997)

Basing on what Ritchie (2004) noted in his book, the passive tourist are those spectators, which characteristics are clear. They usually, stay longer at the destination and spend more money on attractions and activities. They consider sport as a secondary issue of their visit, and they are

motivated by other factors. Sport events are a complement of their tourist experience. They are high yield tourist market, especially for the food and beverage and retail sectors.

Kulczycki and Halpenny (2009) mentions that active tourist are those people who are totally involved in an sport event or activity, also they added that these kind of tourist have more importance of opportunities to participate in sporting events when choosing a vacation destination.

### 5.2.1 Sport destination

To introduce this section, it is required to say that the characteristics of a destination are very important in order to host an event, it totally contributes to the quality of the trip and it is a key component of the sport tourism experience (Higham, 2005; Standeven and De Knop, 1999).

In order to have a good sport destination some resources will be required, some of them will be more widespread than others, such as routeways along which people may run or cycle, facilities for activities such skiing or rock climbing are less widespread. But high quality resources are found in few locations. For example in football, when you want to played or observed a football match in a premier league stadium, you will live a very different experience than what you will encountered in the local park, and cycling through the attractive landscapes of national parks or in contrasts cycling along the busy streets of towns and cities.

When analyzing the resources of a destinations some factors have to be taken into account such, inherent physical characteristics and qualities, accessibility and associated infrastructural arrangements and level of development.

These factors are not just for the participants of an event, spectators have to be taken into account and some factors can be modify in terms of their interest, motives and values (Higham, 2005).

Weed and Bull (2004), mention in his article Clawson et al. (1960) who suggested other characteristics based on location, size and the artificial development, based on the

infrastructures or facilities. Under this characteristics, areas were arranged on a continuum of recreational opportunities, those areas are the following:

- User-oriented: small spaces located near to the athletes hotel or apartment with artificial infrastructures (human-made). Resources such as urban parks, swimming pools, golf courses and play grounds are included. On these spaces the landscape elements are less important.
- Resource-based: areas that take into account the quality of the physical resource with a big natural space, which is essential. Some examples are national parks, forests, upland and wilderness areas for picnic.
- Intermediate: areas were located between the user-oriented areas and resource-based areas. The accessibility issue is not the most important fact. Most of the places are located within one or two hours drive from the sport tourist facilities for camping, picnicking, hiking, swimming, hunting and fishing.

Higham (2005), highlight the 5 separate resource characteristics that Burton (1995) identified for a destination. These characteristics are climatic, coastal, landscape and wildlife, historic and cultural, entertainment and man-made.

Above all that resources it is important for the sport tourist destinations to take into account other tourism facilities, such provide accommodation, restaurants, bars, clubs and various forms of entertainment for the sports persons beyond the immediate attraction of sport.

To make a destination competitive over others in sport events issue, it is important to make reference to a prior literature from Getz (1997). The author highlights some important factors that make an event the core attractor into a competitive advantage for a destination. Some of the factors are a multiplicity of goals, this is related to the diversity of goals that the event have. Satisfying basic needs which is based on the human needs that are related with leisure and travel motivation and some of them can be satisfied by activities or events. The uniqueness factor which is a kind of wow factor that for example mega-events are a kind of events that require a must-see, once-in-a-lifetime no one is the same for that reason are attractive for the visitors. The quality, it is obvious that if an event is poor in the quality aspect, it will damage the

reputation of a city. Otherwise, a high quality event will generate high levels of satisfaction for the tourist. Authenticity factor based on the cultural values of an event. If the locals are engaged in the participation of a certain events, this will mean that is an authentic community celebration. The tradition it is associated with the local community which consequence is that mega events are closely related with it, so that event and destination images are traditional by nature. Also, flexibility factor is important in an event because it can be created with minimal infrastructure, also, moved in time and space, and adapted depending on the target. The last factor is hospitality which is important in destinations due to the fact that the tourist is provided with a hospitality community where the residents are the hosts.

As an example of a competitive destination that has used some of the previous factors is Lloret, Catalonia, Spain, it has become an sport tourism destination. It offers first-rate sport infrastructures in order to enjoy the sport at the top performance. For that reason, the Government of Catalonia has certified Lloret de Mar as sport tourist destination. Also, because its accessibility, around 20 minutes from the airport of Girona, and about 80 km far from Barcelona. In addition Lloret is surrounded by beaches and forest, that inspired Dalí, so it also has some cultural aspects. It is a destination that give tourist the opportunity to enjoy of different variety of sport, such swimming, climbing, running, cycling and do triathlons (Sports, 2014).

Another example of a good performance mega-event is Barcelona's Olympic Games 1992 (hereafter, OG). This OG were totally positive on the city due to the fact that before the Olympics Barcelona did not really have a beach before, then they create 2 miles of beachfront by demolishing industrial buildings. After the Olympics, the city has created a kind of brand and nowadays is known as sun and beach. In this case the Olympics represented an effort to "rebuild" the city. The games changed the way that the people thought of Barcelona, and the International Olympic Committee raked it now as the 12<sup>th</sup> most popular city destination for tourist in the world, and the 5<sup>th</sup> in Europe. Finally, a curios fact from the OG is that it turned Spain into a sport juggernaut. It has international athletes in a huge variety of sports such football like Piqué, Casillas and Iniesta, basketball the Gasol brothers, in cycling Alberto Contador, tennis, Rafael Nadal and swimming Gemma Mengual, Mireia Belmonte or Ona Carbonell.

To conclude this section, the Barcelona Key Factors as a successful tourist destination have to be mentioned. Duran (2010) mentions that the most important factors in the Barcelona success are the 1992 OG, the political leadership, the urban transformation, the citizen complicity, the Tourism sector coordination (public and private sectors work together), the permanent infrastructures investment, the mega-event development and finally the “Turisme de Barcelona” creation.

### 5.3 Tourist behavior

Consumer behavior is one of the most researched areas in marketing and tourism field. From this, it is necessary to define what tourist behavior is. Gilbert, C. (1992) for instance says in his paper that tourist behavior are those behaviors (motivations and attitudes) that a consumers demonstrates in a particular action of behavior. These actions could involve needs, attitudes, motivations, values, personality and perception which will be explained later (look section 5.3.2). Cohen et al. (2014) explain that consumer behavior involves decisions, activities, experiences or ideas that satisfy the consumer wants and needs. What Cohen et al. (2014) say could be linked with what Moutinho (1987) said about the two different processes that make a classification of the aspects that the first author mention.

Moutinho (1987) explains that the consumer behavior have two various processes. On the one hand the internal processes which could be circumstances such health, income available, leisure time; could be knowledge of the destination, the price differences between competitor organizations; could be attitudes and perceptions such as political views, preferences for particular countries and cultures, their attitudes to standards of behavior as a tourist; and also could be experiences of types of holidays, different destinations, taking a trip with a particular individuals or a group etc. All those aspects fit perfectly with the ones mentioned by Cohen et al. (2014). On the other hand the external processes to the individuals which could be the global, political, economic, social and technological factors, also the national, the society-wide political and economic factors, also people could be influenced by the media, by the marketing activity of tourism industry and finally by the view of friends and relatives. Those aspects are not taken

totally into account by Cohen et al. (2014) due to the fact that he talks more about the internal factors, the ones that the tourist will take into account by himself without looking for more information or asking others.

It means that it is necessary to analyze the interactions that people have because it could influence to the final decision. Obviously, depending on the culture or the nationality of a person the relationship between others and their environments, could be different, could be perceived with risk or with gratitude (Moutinho, 1987).

Another authors who talk about the interactions that could influence on the final decisions are Dimanche and Havitz (1995) who mention four concepts which are, ego-involvement, loyalty and commitment, family decision-making and novelty-seeking. Those aspects could “match” with the Moutinho (1987) ones, because what he did was to divide all the factors in internal and external, and years later what Dimanche and Havitz (1995) did was to divide these two initial factors in four. The ego-involvement, the loyalty, the commitment and novelty-seeking could be the internal factors because they are based on the personal opinion of the tourist. Then the family decision-making could be related with the external.

When analyzing tourist behavior, it is also important to analyze the decision making process and the factors that influence on the consumer such as values, motivations, self-concept, personality, expectations, attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, trust and loyalty (Cohen, Prayag and Moital, 2013). The next section will explain better this process.

### 5.3.1 Decision making process

Prior literature explain that the decision-making process is a vital cognitive process based on the human behavior (Moore et al. 2010; Neisser 1967).

In terms of decision making process there is one specific process to follow, but depending on which product are you selling you will find different characteristics in each step. The classic decision making process which appear on the academic paper written by Hanlan J. Fuller D. &

Wilde SJ (2005, 3) will be explained. In their article they mention Kotler P.H (1998), who draw the process from a consumer behavior point of view, identifying the stages.

- 1) Need recognition: The first stage in the buyer decision process. The consumer recognizes a problem, a need or a necessity.
- 2) Information search: The stage in the process where the consumer is fomented to look for more information. In this step the consumer have to be encourage to go in active search of information or they may heighten their attention to important information sources, also advertising.
- 3) Evaluation of alternatives: The consumer will observe in the attributes of the product its different levels of satisfaction. This will determine an attitude toward the different solutions/brands. After that, consumers will rank the different brands and create the purchase intentions.
- 4) Choice of product or service: In this stage there are two factors, can come between the purchase intention and the purchase decision. The first factor is called the purchase intention which is the attitude of people that may influence the purchase decision. The second is unexpected situational factors. The potential purchaser may find some element of the marketing mix which does not meet their expectation, such as the price and type of service received.

This steps could be related with the decision making process of a tourist when choosing a destination. The first step will be the felt need or travel desire, followed by the information collection and evaluation image, then the travel decision (choice between alternatives), the travel preparation and travel experiences and finally the travel satisfaction outcome and evaluation (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999; Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

Added to this, the following Figure nº 1 is a way to explain how Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2006) develop the factors influencing in the consumer behavior. Thus, cultural, social, personal and psychological factors can influence on the consumer for instance when choosing a destination or a tourism product. As Oppermann (1999) explain psychological aspect are key when analyzing tourist behavior and their destination choices. He consider that the previous experience on a certain destination is a very important factor when de selection process because it affects to the



motivation and information stage during the process. Another author is Crompton (1979) who affirms that the destination have to take special attention to the socio-psychological motives when they develop their product and do the promotion strategies. Because it is important for a destination to be able to satisfy the socio-psychological needs. From this, I will explain those factors briefly.

Regarding Motivation, it is important to mention Kotler (2006), he use different explanations such as Maslow's theory of Motivation who explain the fact of why people choose something by particular need in particular times, also Herzber's theory who make a distinction between the factors that cause dissatisfaction and the factors that cause satisfaction. As it is obvious, he also mention the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, which the base of his pyramid is composed by the physiological needs, which are the ones this thesis describe, and end with the self-actualization going through safety needs, social, and esteem needs.

Inside of the motivation point there are four different sections which are, perception, which has three different types of it, the selective attention where the consumer have a lot of information to process, so they have to select them using their stimuli, such as preferences, needs, likes.... The selective distortion are those messages that a person do not always find in the same way the sender intent. And finally the selective retention, which are those information that a person have the capability to remember due to the fact that it support their attitudes and beliefs.

As Cohen et al.(2013) mention, the perception of the consumer is based on what they are expecting. There could be some influences such as familiarity, previous experiences, values and motivations. A clear definition about that topic could be the one wrote by Moutinho (2011, 88), perception is "the process which an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli in a meaningful and coherent way". The stimuli affect the senses, tactile, visual, auditory, olfactory and even taste.

The first perception that tourist have before choosing a destination is the perception of risk and safety, crime perceptions, terrorism and disease, seeking sensations, and trips to risky destinations (Cohen et al., 2013). All that perceptions could be the ones that you create by seeing the TV, so if the destination wants to give a good image to the future visitors it have to

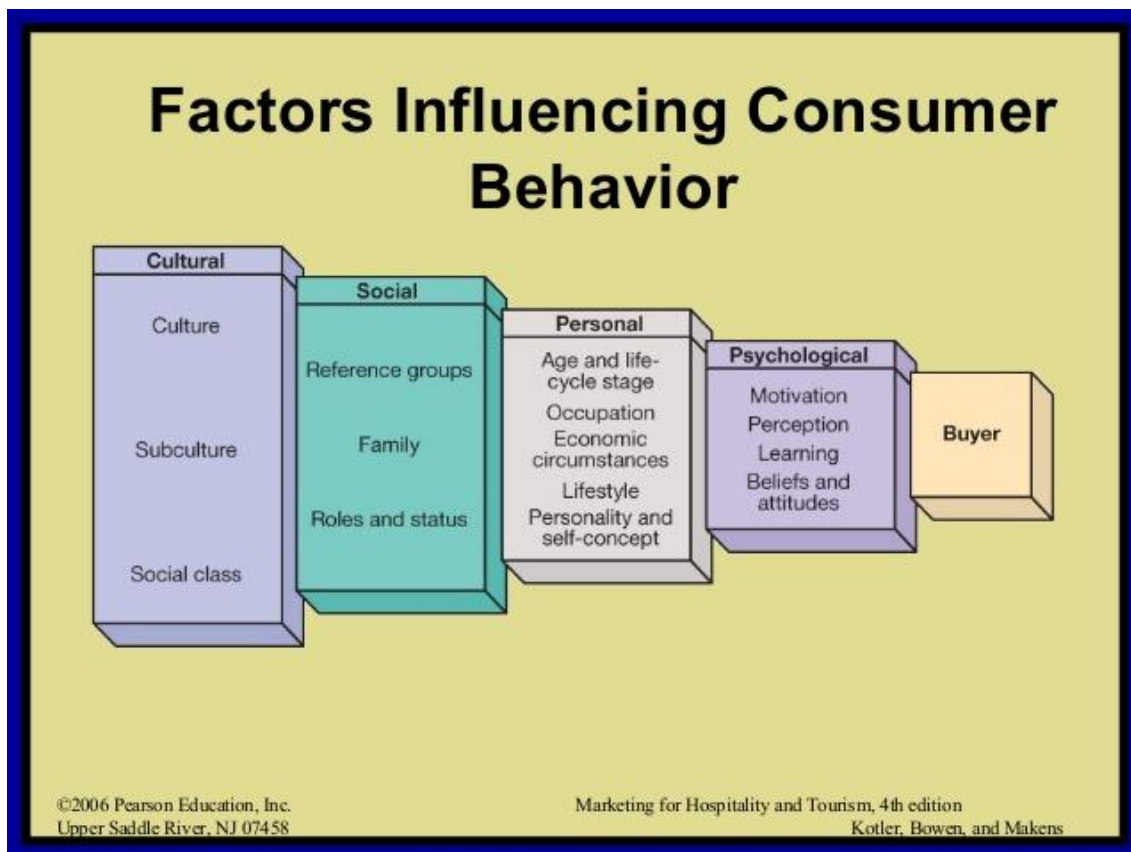
work hard in order to give a good perception using all the elements they have, could be social media, TV, radio, magazines...

Finally, the key implication for tourism that influence on perceptions, such as attitudes are crucial in the way of integrate visitors, destination image, satisfaction and obviously service quality. This last factor, nowadays is essential for tourism, the tourist want an amazing experience being well treated and that means that the quality of the service have to be superb in order to satisfy this essential need of the tourist. As a consequence of that they will satisfy all the socio-psychological needs mentioned before.

Another important aspect inside the motivation is learning, that describe how a person change basing on the experience, the beliefs, which is what a person think about something and the last aspect is attitude that describe how a person is basing in consistent evaluation, feelings and tendencies.

Ones knowing the components of the motivation it is important to mention the different reasons for tourist when choosing one or another destination. As Crompton (1979) explains in his paper, there are some specific motives of pleasure which influence in the selection process of a destination. The motives identified are socio-psychological, which are the aspects that are not related with the destination attributes (escape from a perceived mundane, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationship and facilitation of social interaction) and cultural category that are those qualities that a certain destination offer to the tourist (Novelty, Education).

Figure 1: Factors Influencing consumer Behaviour Kotler, Bowen, Makens (2006)



Taking into account consumer behavior discipline and the different factors that are involved like cultural, social, personal, psychological and the buyer decision, it is required to say that it is necessary to understand why people choose a certain destination. In this study the author had studied deeper the psychological factor in order to know the motivational aspects and the perceptions that the sport tourist have when choosing one destination instead another one. In that case the tourist had select Barcelona to participate in an sport event.

#### 5.4 Barcelona and the Zurich Marathon

During the year Barcelona receive a lot of tourist, most of them came for leisure or business. The months that Barcelona experience a huge amount of tourist are June, July and August

(summer season), which are considered the high season (Duro and Rodríguez, 2015). Zurich Marathon of Barcelona takes place in March, so it will attract tourist out of the high season, so this is very interesting for Barcelona due to the fact that it will generate a lot of income from the participants. They have to sleep, eat, and probably visit monuments and buy things. So, having these kinds of events is a big point for Barcelona during the low season, as they could have “peaks” of benefit.

In this case, Zurich Marathon Barcelona will attract sport tourist. This is an important fact for Barcelona due to the fact that it is receiving a new target which it is experiencing a growth, also because it affects to the economy of the city and for the publicity around the globe that this event create with the athletes.

A historical research of the Marathon was done by Pucurull and Fontova (2015), they analyze the marathon from the beginning till now. The first marathon held in Barcelona was in 1980, but was the continuity of two marathon done in Palafrugell, two years before. This marathon was “created” by Mr. Oliu. He was a chemist by profession and he has moved to Barcelona for business. He had run the New York Marathon, and when he had arrived to Barcelona he ask in the “federation” where the next popular marathon will be organized. Their answer was that there is not a popular marathon here, there is just a Spain championship once a year and every year the location change. After that answer, Mr. Oliu decided to organize a marathon in order to run it.

The first marathon was held in the old F.C Barcelona infrastructures with a 350 m track (field). In that moment he met Mr. Catalán. He recommend to Mr. Oliu to talk with Dr. Pujol who had some friends in la Costa Brava. So, Mr. Oliu convinced Dr. Pujol in order to organize and run the marathon. In 1978 a marathon was held around Palafrugell-Calella-Palagrugell-Pals-Torroella and back. In that first marathon 185 athletes participated. The next year the number of people registered was 308.

In 1980 the first marathon started from Barcelona was organized, the runners started in Maria Cristina avenue. Nowadays they start also in Maria Cristina. This event, was an sporting event of the first order for the city. This time the number of people registered increase and were 956

people who participate in the marathon. With this marathon the mayor of the city, Narcís Serra and Pascual Maragall as a deputy mayor, had the idea to ask for an Olympic Games for Barcelona. It means that the 1980 marathon was very important and meaningful when we think about the Olympic Games of 1992.

In 1981 the number of registered people also increase, and this time were 1108 runners, and in 1982 were 1310. In 1982 the number of tourist that came to Barcelona to run the marathon had also increase before the previous year. In 1983 for the first time in the history a new rule was establish which was doping controls. Also, as an innovation fact of the marathon an electric car was utilized in order to open the marathon with the objective to avoid toxic gases in front of the runners. This marathon was the first marathon run entirely inside the city. As well as the previous years, the number of runners had increase, and was 1879. The next year, the number of registered runners was 2894 with a huge amount of sport tourist from all over the globe who came to run a marathon in Barcelona. This fact could be the consequence that Barcelona was nominated to host the Olympic Games '92.

As a negative aspect of that marathon could be the traffic event with all the improvements achieved. In 1985 less runners participated in the marathon, 2810, may be as a consequence of the entity in charge of the organization had lose one of their pillars, Mr. Oliu, who had returned to the USA. But the attention to the runners improved every year. This time the route had change from the other years. And this fact do not like to the runners/athletes. They like to run every year the same route in order to see their improvements in time. The next year, again, the number of participants decrease, 2808. This aspect do not affect the organization team, and they tried to show it to their athletes with telling them that they did not want a massive marathon, they prefer the quality of the event. Again, the itinerary change. Ignoring the decrease number of runners, 1986 was the first year that the Marathon was televised in real time.

In 1987 the city hall put many obstacles when preparing the marathon. That year was the first time that economic prizes were given to the winners. The number of runners was around 2930. And each year the symposium the day before the marathon was better. The following year an

important increase of participants was observed, 3250. And each year the number of girls participating in the event increase little by little.

In 1989 the route was changed again, but this time, because of the complaints of the previous year by the runners. And also, the number of runners increase, 3300. The 1990 marathon was very important for the runners due to the fact that the itinerary run that year has to be the same in 1992 for the Olympic Games, the participation was 3349 runners. In 1991 the number of spectators increase in the coastal villages. They also, repeat with a child run for kids around 8 - 17 years, they run 4.3 km.

The 1992 was an emblematic one, because it was held almost 4 month before the Olympics, and the itinerary has to be the same. For that reason, around 6586 athletes were registered for that marathon. The price for the inscription was 2000 “pesetas” if you get registered before February 15<sup>th</sup>, and 3500 if you do it after. The following year the number of athletes was approximately the half, around 3106. In 1994 again, the number of participants decrease, 2853, something was happening. And the cost was 2500 “pesetas”.

1995 was remembered as the Chip marathon, due to the fact that was the first time in Spain that a chip was used with the objective to time the athletes. The bad issue was that it was not able to buy it, it had to be returned after the marathon. This time the number of runners was 2876. The next year the chip was used again and the participation of the marathon decrease, 2477. The price to participate was 2800 “pesetas” and out of time 5000.

In 1997 the number of runners rise a little bit 3448. That year the marathon change the president, Domingo Catalán, and this fact affect in the number of registered runners, well known athletes, and obviously a good attention with the athletes.

The following year was known as the Record marathon due to the fact that the time of the winner was the best in Spain. the number of runners was 2818, that decrease could be because the marathon did not connect with the city of Barcelona, also there was no animation in the streets and the pasta part the day before the marathon was cancelled. In 1999 a known journalist in TV3, from Barcelona, Xavi Bonastre, run the marathon for its first time. 2775 runners had participated in the marathon that year. The 2000 was the last marathon with it has start in

Mataró. The number of athletes was 3100. That year the pasta party was done again, also, they give the option to the participants to take a shower after the marathon, and the services improved. An important fact was that runners can learn more about the marathon from Internet.

In 2001 the start point was Maria Cristina Avenue. Again the number of participants increase, were around 3482. In 2002 the route had change for two reasons, in Badalona and Sant Adrià there was no people supporting the runners and also for the first time the marathon of Barcelona was entirely held on Barcelona. 3550 was the number of participants that year. The next year the participants were 3300, and the organization had change the manager, Rafael Salinas was in charge of the event. The price of the inscription was 35€, and 45€ out of time (30 days before the marathon).

In 2004 the organization had some internal problems that could have bad consequences as the cancelation of the marathon for the next year. The price for the inscription decrease 5€ from 2003. Before it start, all the athletes from around the globe make a minute of silence and leave 200 white balloons to the sky as a remembering of what had happened in Madrid ten days before the marathon, 11-M. the number of participants was 4150. They do not achieve the goals of participants as a consequence the marathon for 2005 was totally cancelled.

2006 was a special year due to the fact that the marathon was held again. The organization was in charge of R.P.M, with experience in other marathons such as Paris, and a promoter committee was created, formed by Area d'Esports of the City Hall, Federación, and la Plataform Marató a Barcelona (PMAB). This last organization was an sport association formed by 200 popular runners that were linked by and athletic website 10 of 1000 and they had claimed for the return of the marathon. Pablo Pluvinet was the one who design the itinerary and he also was a member of the mentioned web. The route was the best ever had because it was run inside Barcelona going through all the emblematic spaces of the city. The number of participants was 4636 that was the edition with more runners, not taking into account the year of the Olympics).

In 2007 the number of participation increase again, with a total of 7413. The itinerary was the same. Was also the year that most people was giving support in the streets to the participants,

maybe because of the promotion campaigns and the press such as El Periodico, Sport. Also the city Hall give a lot of information and recommendations to the locals. For the first year there was the option to put your name in the dorsal, in order that the people who give support could say your name. During the “Feria del corredor” (runner fair), the symposium of the marathon was done. The following year the number of participants increase, 9121. And the people who gave support, also was absolutely increasing. As a negative point some athletes mentioned that well known runners are missing in that kind of events.

With the 2009 marathon Barcelona was doing it enough well to be one of the best Marathons in Europe. Around 10000 runners were participating that year. The number of sport tourist did not increase in contrast of the Catalans. Another fact was that a lot of runners from the association corredors.cat join the marathon. This association did an action called “Zapatillas Solidarias”, which consist in collect second hand shoes in order to send them to Africa. That year one of the runners dead during the marathon in the 34.5km, he was from Ireland and had 27 years old.

In 2010 the number of participants was over 10000, 10120. And also was the year that the best time was achieved in Europe and the fourth in the world. The itinerary was the same, but with little modifications due to the fact of construction in the city. It was the first time that when you registered in the marathon you can put Catalonia as an origin country. The prices where 45€, 55€, and 65€ depending on the day you make your registration. Since December 20<sup>th</sup>, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and till last day, respectively. That year the Marathon Barcelona, was classify as the best marathons in Europe and around the world. The next year around 15000 participants were registered, to be exactly 15134. From Catalonia 6445, for the rest of Spain 2123, and tourist 6566. The official places to give support were 42, again new record. They use platforms such Twitter and Facebook in order to ask locals help with the objective to give support to the participants in the places where other years was no one supporting them, the motto used was “ayúdanos a superar el muro” (help us to pass the wall). That “help call” was really effective with more than thousand people cheering the athletes. Again this marathon become very popular due to the fact that appear in some no sport journals such as “El Periodico”, radio, even the catalan TV, TV3 did a reportage called “Entre línies”. The same activities before the event were held and the Runner Fair change its name with Expo Esports. The inscription price were 50€



(from March 8<sup>th</sup> till December 19<sup>th</sup>), 60€ (December 20<sup>th</sup> till January 30<sup>th</sup>) and 70€ (January 31<sup>st</sup> till February 20<sup>th</sup>).

In 2012 the runners participating were 19507, and that time the places of cheer were 53 with almost 1500 volunteering. The prices were the same of the previous year. The increasing number of sport tourist and local athletes was in fact because our marathon has a lot of attractive, as the Professor Sixto Abadía (Ramon Llull University) says our offer is very big, we have culture, shopping, architecture and leisure. In 2013 the way of starting the marathon was in a stepwise to avoid agglomeration of participants in certain points. The number of participants decrease, 18389, due to the fact of the economic crisis or the Rome marathon that was held the same day. The price was 55€ but a VAT increase make the organization increase the prices too 61.62€ (before the 10000 registered runners), 72.82€ (from 10001 till 17000 runners) and 84,02€ (from 17001 runners). The day before the marathon the City Hall homage Mr. Oliu, because he was the person who introduce the marathons in Catalonia, with a plate in a monolith in Montjuïc, the location of that plate was the starting and ending point of the first marathon held in Barcelona by him. That year also, had a sad ending, Xavier Jiménez with 45 years old fell to the floor after crossing the end line.

In 2014 the participants decrease, almost 18000, and that year there were a lot of runners who had run that marathon for a solidary cause (Run for Charity).

Last year, 2015, had an special significance because 10 years ago the marathon was cancelled. That year more than 19000 runners run the marathon. Also there were some innovation aspects such as an application were the families of the athletes can follow them with their phones, again it was retransmitted by the TV3, and one day before the event a run for kids was held, it was called Kids Race. That year the International Federation of Athletism (IAAF) had grant the Bronze Label to the Barcelona's Marathon. This fact could be thanks to the number of elite athletes, doping tests, places to support the participants, TV representation, safety for the participants and other aspects. (Pucurull and Fontova, 2015)

## 6 Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework summarize the previous literature review. From the top to the bottom in its different sections, explain the most important issues mentioned on it.

Sport tourism appear as a mix of two different concepts which are tourism and sport. With that concept it is important to say that those tourist came to a certain destination in order to participate or see an event or an activity. The sport tourist is the principal actor of an event due to the fact, that thanks to them, the event is possible; it does not matter if they are active or passive participant. These two different types of sport tourist have an important difference, the active tourist are the ones that take part into an event, whereas the passive are those that they just go to see it or because they are familiar of a participant.

This sport tourist choose a destination basing in certain characteristics in order to satisfy their needs like good weather, good gastronomy, touristic monuments and good facilities to do sport. Sport destinations have to be competitive between others and offer all the facilities that the sport tourist demand, such as good infrastructures, and buildings, also, good outdoor spaces to practice sport outside a gym. The way how they choose can be analyze through the study of the consumer behavior discipline, what they like in each moment and taking into account what they are going to do in a certain time. Different factors can influence on their decision, this factors can be internal or external. Internal means that they have their own opinion about a destination or topic, and with the external makes reference to the opinion of others and also information about the destination.

This thesis attempts to analyze why sport tourist choose Barcelona as a sport destination, in order to understand this, the Zurich Marathon Barcelona will be studied and all the opinion of the participants are going to be analyzed.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework (own elaboration)



## 7 Methodology:

The methodology of this exploratory research was based fundamentally in semi-structured questioner with closed and opened ended questions and a little bit of observation as another research tool. With the observation what the author want to research is that the organization of Zurich Marathon Barcelona had communicate with its participants using social media, basically the Facebook of the marathon. So, by observing that page it was very easy to follow some participants behaviors such as if they agree or disagree with the organization of the event. Obviously, the semi-structured questioner will have some advantages and disadvantages. As an advantage the researcher can obtain the real point of view of the interviewee, it could receive unexpected and unforeseen information, the reliability of the information can be proved and the researcher can observe what the interviewee really want to mean. Some drawback of that kind of questionnaire could be the validity of the data, the interviewee can lie about the answers, most of what the interviewee say could be unused, and finally it is difficult to compare responses between different answers, because the different interviewee can understand the question in different ways (Walsh and Wiggins, 2003).

Regarding the types of questions of the questionnaire, it was formed by open questions (qualitative analysis), and few closed questions (quantitative analysis). With the close questions the author explore on sociodemographic variables, such as nationality, or age. Some of the advantages that García Córdoba (2002) mentions of the closed ended questions were to obtain data on personal customer's characteristics of the event, to obtain a bigger sample of answers and it is an easier way to answer for the people who are doing it. Whilst, with the open questions the interviewee can write as much as he or she want, it gives extra information.

Some drawbacks regarding to the closed questions could be that to answer it, it is required to have a minimum knowledge of reading, the questions must be short. Another important disadvantage is that you can not see emotional or extra information, the person who ins answering choose the answer which fit more with her or his opinion but maybe it is no the one he will write in an open question. Finally, the topic of this questions is totally focus, and the person who answers has to have knowledge about it, also he or she can invent or lie with the answers. Basing on the open questions the time to answer is longer and this affects to the

number of total answers, also there is a high percentage of provability to lose some questionnaires, it is necessary to have knowledge about the topic and sometimes could be difficult to find some connection between answers from different people (García Córdoba, 2002).

The program used in order to do the questionnaires is called Survio. It provides templates, which can be use it for free. It allow you to mix close and open questions, and when you finish your questionnaire, it gives you the option to share the link of the questionnaire in social media. Also, it helps researchers in order to do some analytics in some close questions. And for the open ended questions it classify the information depending on the questions.

In total 48 semi-structured surveys were analyzed, whereas 341 were not finish it so the author could not access to it because of the software limitations.

The aim of the questionnaire was to analyze the different opinion that participants have, in order to do that, the classification and categorization of the information was compulsory.

In the annex you can find the links to the survey that where published on the Zurich Marathon Barcelona Facebook page, with the objective to contact the participants of the marathon.

With all the questionnaires collected, the next step was to group all the data or results by the different themes, which were:

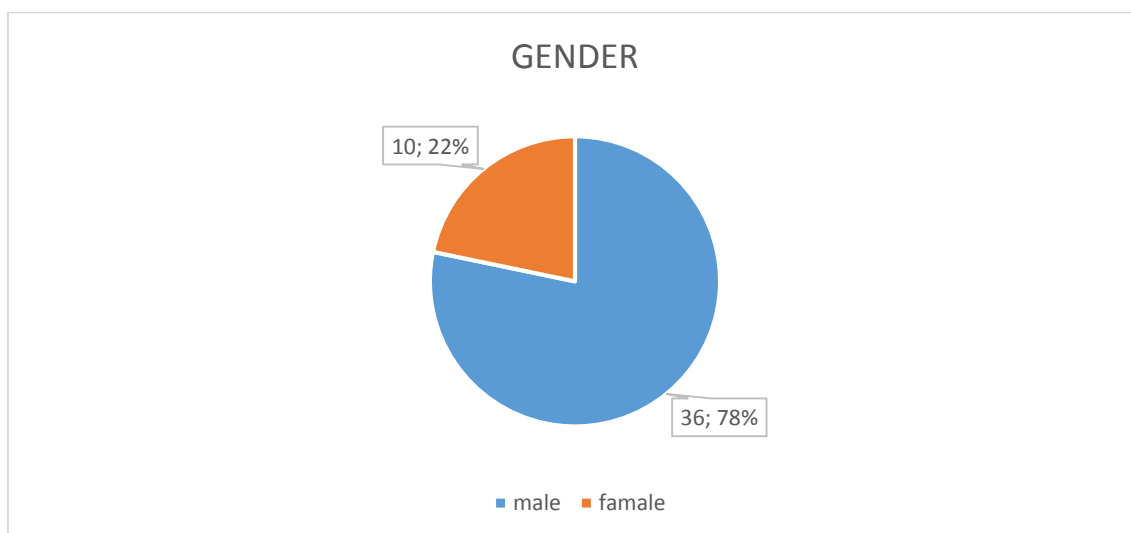
- Quantitative answers
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Nationality
  - Profession
- Qualitative
  - About the event:
    - Interest in this event
    - Opinion about the event
    - Expectations

- Destination
  - Qualities that people look in a destination
  - Days in the destination
  - Planning without taking into account the marathon
  - Why Barcelona to run a marathon
- Transport and groups
  - Way and people who travel
- Previous experiences
  - Other ran marathons
  - Positive experiences when running a marathon
  - Negative experiences when running a marathon (organizational point of view)
- Improvements

## 8 Findings and Discussion

Regarding personal characteristics and looking into what Pucurull and Fontova (2015) mention about the Zurich Marathon Barcelona, the author can agree with what they say which was that the bigger group of runners are men, and in figure nº3 of the research, we can observe that nowadays men continue to be the bigger group, and at the same time it is possible to observe that the females are still growing, as is mentioned in the literature review. It is a small group but every year it is trying to be bigger. Other authors Leyk et al. (2007) analyzed some marathons between 2003 and 2005 in Germany and also the bigger group of runners were male.

Figure 3: Gender (own elaboration)



Another fact is the age, which is represented in the fourth Figure. Pucurull and Fontova, (2015) explain that the common age to run a marathon is between 30-40 and with the graph (figure nº4), we can observe that it is still the bigger group formed by 16 people. Also, Leyk et al. (2007) mention in their academic paper that the common age to run a marathon (in this case in Germany) is around 35 to 45, which is also the other bigger part in the figure represented by 8 people. As the Marathon is run in Barcelona the bigger group of participants are Spaniards, figure nº5, but there are tourists that specifically come to the city in order to run this Marathon. The tourists came from all over the world. Countries such as, Holland (interviewee #2), Venezuela (interviewee #6), Brazil (interviewee #9), UK (interviewee #20), Greece (interviewee

#19) and Italy (interviewee #16). These tourists are known as marathonians, which means they are people whose objective is to run a few marathons in different cities around the world every year. Most of these tourists had run a marathon before this one. Authors such as Drengner, Jahn and Gaus (2010) Also explore on events and how customer satisfaction and emotional experiences determine the loyal intention on them.

Figure 4: Age (own elaboration)

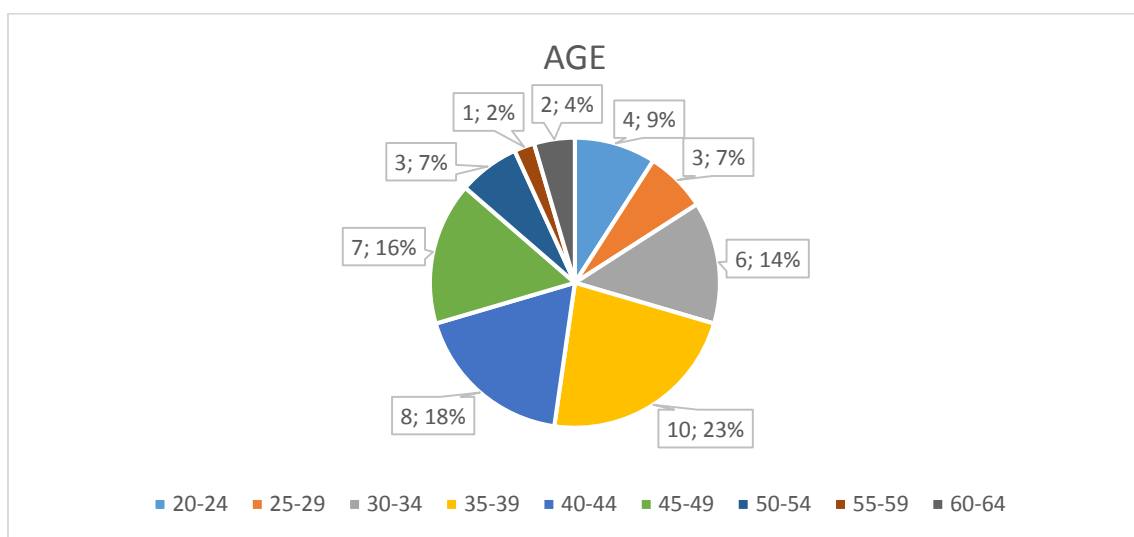
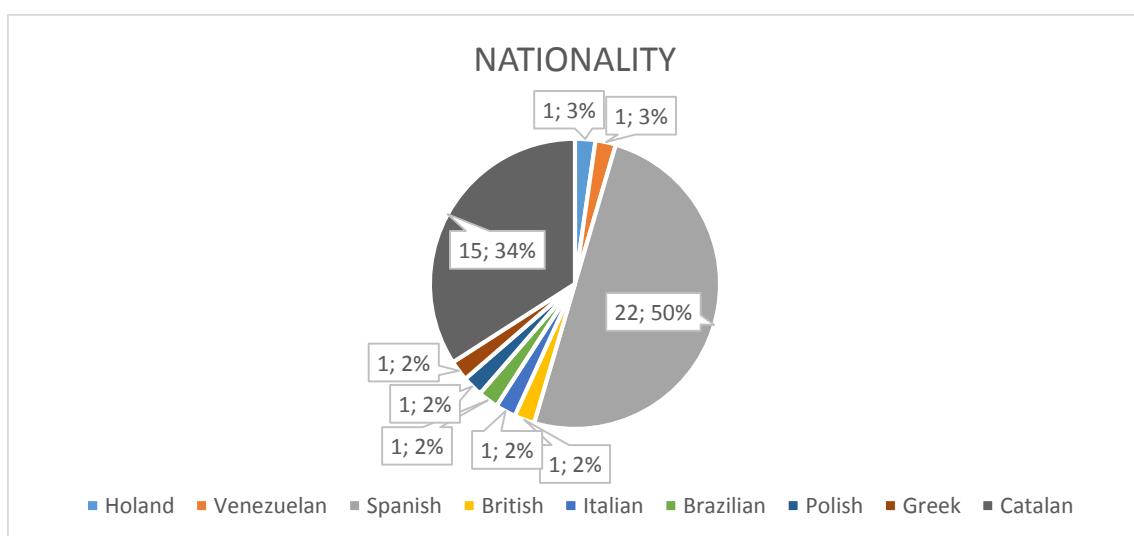


Figure 5: Nationality (own elaboration)

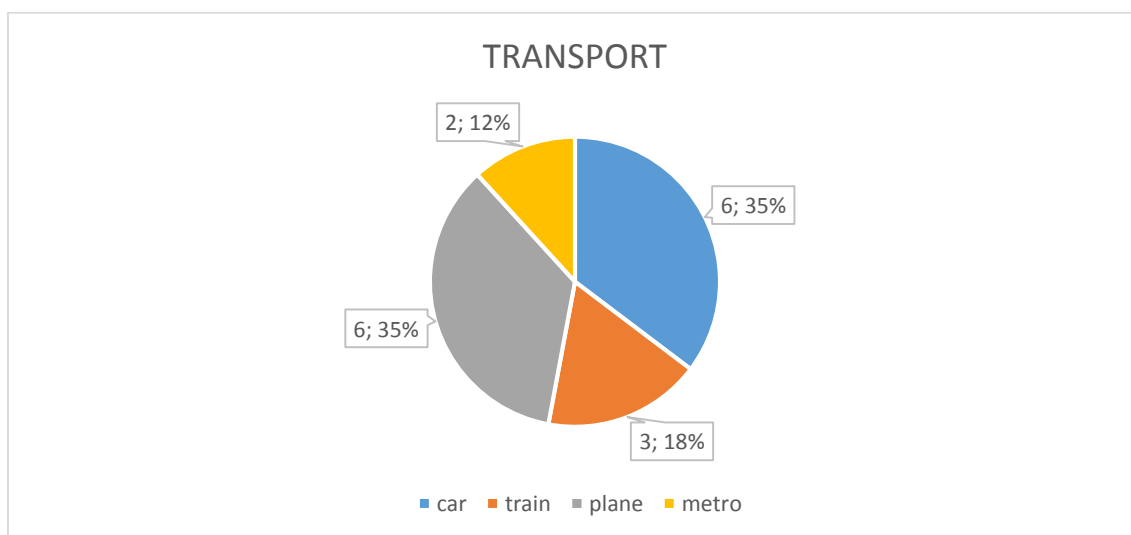




Regarding professions, there is a wide variety of jobs, so there is no one concrete profession which leads the groups of runners. Some professions could be, consultants, policemen, administrative workers, gynecologists, sales people, computer engineers...

Then, the author was interested in knowing how the runners got to Barcelona and who they came with. And the results were the following:

Figure 6: Transport (own elaboration)



In a global way most of the tourist came by plane or car, depending on where they are from, and the majority came with their families or with their Athletic club. Here you will observe some answers:

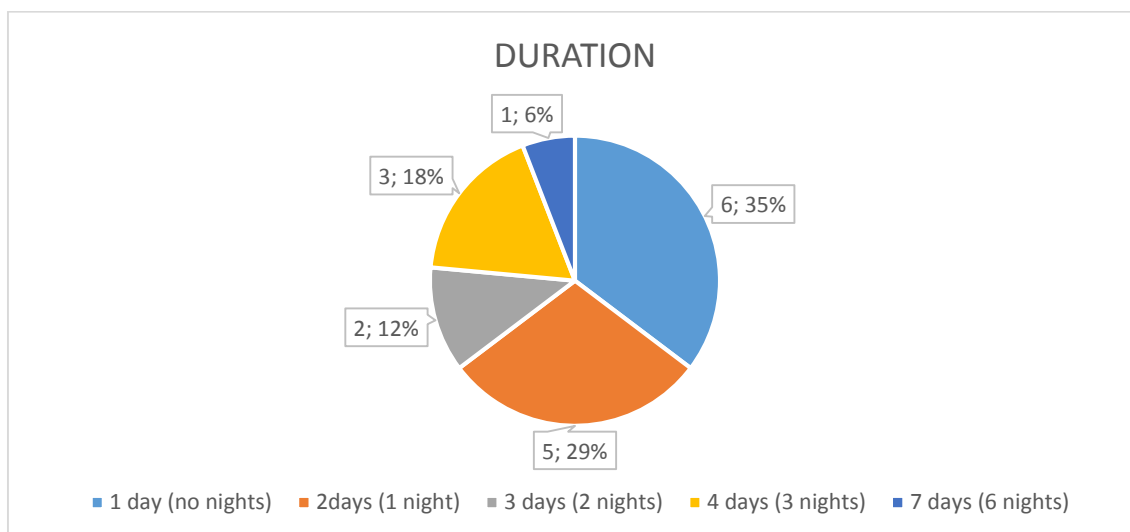
*“Visc a Barcelona però aquell dia m’hi van acompanyar familiars de fora de la ciutat”* (I live in Barcelona but the day of the event family from outside Barcelona came to cheer me on. Interviewee #40)

*“En avió desde Madrid, viajo con mi mujer”* (by plane from Madrid, with my wife. Interviewee #34)

*“Most of us by plane, some by car. I will be there alone, but others bring their family too.”* (Interviewee #1, from Holland).

Then, the author analyze the duration of the trip and the results are showed in figure nº7.

Figure 7: Duration (own elaboration)



Regarding the marathons the author was interested in knowing if people had run a marathon before, and there were several answers. There is a group of people who says that this was their first marathon, and they were enthusiastic. Other people say that they had run other marathons like interviewee #1 who said that he had run a marathon in Paris, interviewee #9 in Berlin, Paris and Buenos Aires, interviewee #13 Madrid and Barcelona 6 time. Some of the tourists who had run more marathons are the foreign people who had come to Barcelona due to the fact, that they are marathonians and they are active tourists, (Gammon & Robinson, 1997). What Kulczycki and Halppeny (2009) say is that these kinds of tourists are totally involved in sports events.

*“After several years of running short distance courses, I took the (brave) decision to join this event last year, although I got injured just one month before the race, after running Barcelona’s half marathon. I was not fully recovered but I ran it anyway, but far behind my expected time due to the lack of the last month training. Now this year I am willing to prove to myself that I can do it in 3h30m. I am not injured for the time being, so I knock on wood to be at my best next March 13th.” (interviewee #8.)*

*“We are with a group of 15 runners from Holland and come to run and have fun” (interviewee #1).*

Talking about what qualities tourists look for in order to choose a destination. It was based on investigating if the qualities that tourist look for in a destination are related to the ones outlined by Hinch and J.E.S. Higham in order to choose Barcelona. In the literature review one of the things that T. D Hinch and J. E. S. Higham (2001) mention was that sport is essential within tourism and tourism is a fundamental characteristic of sport, it means that tourists look for spaces or infrastructures to do sport in the destination. And, if these infrastructures are prepared and in good conditions the destination will attract sport tourism.

Another author, Higham (2005) mentions 5 characteristics that Burton (1995) identified for a destination which are: climatic, coastal, landscape and wildlife, historic and cultural, entertainment and man-made. In this case, Barcelona as a destination has a lot of resources that these authors mention such as spaces to practice sport, gastronomy or monuments to visit, it has amazing weather with splendid beaches, and at the same time has a forest, so its landscape could be considered as a magnificent mix. Analyzing the results of the questionnaire the author found that most of the tourists mention that the important characteristics that they value in a destination are the weather, the touristic places, the race, the gastronomy. The locals say that proximity to their homes is an important factor. Some examples could be:

*“Nice track, nice city, and good weather 😊”* (Interviewee #1, Dutch).

*“Nice race, enthusiastic people, good food and attractions.”* (Interviewee #19, Greek)

*“The beautiful city and the weather”* (Interviewee #9, Brazilian)

*“Bueno el destino de Barcelona es excelente de por si que voy a decir yo si vivo a 25 km en Granollers”* (the destination is excellent, what can I say if I live 25km away, in Granollers. Interviewee #18, Catalan)

*“As this is the place where I was born and lived, I do not look for anything special, but people usually appreciate our food, the architecture, the sun, the beach...”* (Interviewee #8)

So, there is a relationship between what tourists look for and why they choose Barcelona. Some of them mention the weather. Other tourists say they come for memories because they had studied or lived there.

*“I believe that was the logical decision since this is the place where I live, so I have started here. As I was injured last year, I repeat this one to redeem myself.”* (Interviewee #8)

The author also wanted to know their expectations of the marathon. Pucurull and Fontova, (2015), in their explanation about the history of the Zurich Marathon Barcelona, mention that a big expectation that the runners have in the this event is the people in the street cheering their names, for that reason the organization of the marathon “create” a t-shirt with the name of the participants on the back. Another common expectation they mention is that participants want to get new personal bests and for this reason the marathonians like to run the same circuit each year. Analyzing the questionnaire the author found that most of the runners’ main goal is to finish or improve their time, to see people cheer them in the streets and to feel fulfilled.

*“Disfrutarla corriendo y hacer más o menos el tiempo que tengo previsto”* (enjoy myself while running, and achieve my timing objective. Interviewee #39)

*“This marathon will be more difficult than the others, but I know that the race, the people in the street and the weather will help me”* ((Interviewee #9)

*“A big smile on my face along with muscular soreness.”* (Interviewee #8)

The author was interested in asking about the activities the tourist would like to do during their stay in Barcelona asked what the tourist were planning to do those days in Barcelona. In the literature review the WTO says that tourists are looking for gastronomy, to go sightseeing and buy things during their stay in the destination. These characteristics are related to the ones explained in a previous point about the keen elements in order to choose a destination by T. D Hinch and J. E. S. Higham (2001). The most common answers to the questionnaires were, going sightseeing and going to some restaurants.

*“visitar la ciudad en general, monumentos y zonas de ocio.”* (visit the city, specially monuments and leisure zones. Interviewee #3)

*“Tourism: I’ll show this beautiful city to my boyfriend (Interviewee #9)”*

Finally, related to positive and negative aspects plus how runners would improve the event there are different opinions. As a positive aspect, many people make reference to how well organized the marathon and the volunteering was, also about the refreshment stations and obviously the cheering. Others talk about their feelings, they make their minds and memories stronger.

*“Well, I don't know why I enjoy the suffering of running this distance. I like the fact that there are many refreshment stations, one each 2.5 km. People cheering help a lot. I like the circuit to be the same as last year to be able to compare my performance now and then.” (Interviewee #8)*

*“Una experiencia especial en un marathon fue cuando debute en 1994 tambien en la marathon de Barcelona la ilusion del debutante no tiene precio igual que mejorar tus marcas” (An special experience was when I first ran the Barcelona Marathon in 1994, the illusion from a debutante is priceless, nor does the feeling you get when you improve your timing. Interviewee #18)*

About the negative aspects, one of the most relevant aspects that the runners mention is the price. Making reference to that aspect, Chin Ming Ku, G., Chiming Hsieh, A. (2014) mention in their analysis of a marathon in Korea that the runners who are totally involved with that sport have lower price complaints. Another authors, Wicker and Hallmann (2013) did research on how runners are willing to pay for travelling to a marathon in Germany (270€), Europe (568€) and overseas (1429€). In that case, most of the participants find it expensive, 90€, in relation to what they are receiving (t-shirt), pasta party, the place to keep the clothes, the public transport (they say that it should be free for the participants). This last aspect was finally solved and published on the Facebook page, all the participants of the Zurich Marathon Barcelona, will have free underground services several hours - before starting and at the end of the marathon.

*“Too expensive and a lot of business around the race, but this is the new business of running. After the boom of running everything is organized around the one race without finding economic benefits.” (interviewee #13)*

*“1- Este año no me gustó el trato recibido en el tradicional "Pasta Party" (comida del sábado en la Expo del Corredor), muy lento, sistema de tickets individual (ahora solo puede comer pasta el corredor, los tickets se agotaron y hubo muchos corredores que no pudieron participar del "Pasta Party", y para colmo la bebida la tenías que comprar aparte). Como decimos en Catalán "Séls hi ha vist el llauto". Si tengo que pagar lo hago fuera de la Expo y como comodamente y mucho más rápido en cualquier restaurante. 2- Ultimamente (los últimos años) nos obligan a cambiarnos en medio de la calle, antes de dejar la bolsa en el guardarropa, antes se habilitaba como guardarropa uno de los palacios de la Fira, con lo cual te podías cambiar comodamente bajo techo.”* (1- I did not like the treatment during the Pasta Party of this year (Saturday lunch in the Expo del Corredor), too slow, individual ticketing service (a lot of runners could not eat in the event, and also if you want to drink you have to pay for it separately). If I have to pay I will do it outside the Expo with comfort and quicker in a restaurant. 2- In the last few years we had to change our clothes in the street, before giving our bag to the people in charge of looking after the clothes, years ago a space inside the “La fira” was given to the runners in order to change and leave their clothes. Interviewee #44)

*“El precio, la bolsa q dan q es la misma q la del año pasado y que se rompe antes de usarla. También nos dieron la medalla del año pasado, creo que deberían renovar esto con la cantidad de dinero que reciben del evento.”* (the price, the bag they give us is the same as last year, and it rips before using it. Also the medal they gave us was the same as previous years, they have to improve these things with the amount of money collected from the event. Interviewee #41)

The last part was how participants would improve the event, some of them emphasize certain aspects such as; reducing the prices, in the negative aspects it was stated that the registration price is too expensive in comparison with the goody bag received. Another fact is the way to arrive to the starting point (making groups) because everything was crowded; the runners complained about the massive movement of people in the train station or busses. Finally, an interesting fact in order to improve the event some participants proposed creating some packs (hotels+registration), where the price of the registration would be a little bit more expensive but it would include the hotel.

*“Ofreciendo más packs de inscripciones (hoteles+inscripción) y colaborando con más instituciones.”* (offering more packs of registration (including hotel+registration) and working with other institutions. Interviewee #29)

*“Better gifts. I’ve run Barcleona Marathon 4 times: 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016. The T-shirt I like the most was the first in 2012 (MIZUNO). Since 2013 asics have been the promotor of this event and the quality of the gifts are worse than before. Also the finisher medals could be different from year to year.”* (Interviewee #21)

*“Precios más ajustados, mejor calidad en obsequios al corredor y mas variedad. Servicios concertados, ofertas y descuentos a los corredores inscritos.”* (Adjustment of prices, quality of the gifts and different services, offers and discounts for the runners. Interviewee #3)

## 9 Conclusions

The last part of this thesis is the conclusions; it will be divided in four subsections. The first part will be the general conclusions of this project, then some recommendations for future professionals, and finally , some recommendations for future researchers and finally some limitations.

### 9.1 Conclusions

In order to start the conclusion the author is going to repeat the initial question of the thesis. *Why sport tourists choose Barcelona as a sport destination. Zurich Marathon Barcelona Case study (March 2016)*. This question is answered throughout project starting with the literature review which is divided in order to facilitate comprehension for those who are going to read it.

We can see that sport tourism is a growing sector in Barcelona due to the fact that each year this destination receives more tourists in order to practice sport in the city or participate in events. Thanks to events Barcelona is attracting other targets which is sport tourism. With the Zurich Marathon Barcelona we can see this new target, sport tourists. The destination is not just attracting the active tourist, the ones who participate in events, it is also engaging passive tourists, these tourists that come to the city in order to see the event.

To maintain both tourists it is important to take into account what their interest are when choosing a destination. As Higham (2005) mentions 5 characteristics that Burton (1995) identified that the most important factors in order to choose a destination are climatic, coastal, landscape and wildlife, historic, cultural, entertainment and man-made. Barcelona has all those characteristics and at the same time it has good infrastructures to practice sport starting from the beaches until the buildings. All those spaces were created after the OG and are in use nowadays.

Making reference to the participants profile of this event the bigger group were male between 30 and 45 years old, from Barcelona or near the city. There are some participants considered



marathonians, people with expertise in marathons, and others are beginners. Those people came in order to satisfy two needs, fulfill and remember. The marathonians came in order to improve personal timing and other expert runners and obviously beginners, run this marathon because of memories. Thus, we can see that people go to a certain destinations in order to remember experiences or go back to places where they had lived. Most of these tourists come by plane or car, the ones that live far away, others by train, commonly the locals.

Added to this, many of the tourist like the weather, gastronomy and the culture that Barcelona offers, this is a big pull when choosing a destination. There is a tendency to stay in the city after the marathon to enjoy time there with their families who have travelled to support them during the race.

Regarding the organization of the event, we can say that the Zurich Marathon Barcelona is considered very well organized but with one big drawback which is the price. The 90€ registration fee is considered it expensive by the participants.

Most of those opinions, such the price and the transport could be observed in their Facebook official page. So, focusing on the literature of Zurich Marathon, in some moment of the history of the marathon the internet appeared and the organization started to advertise online. Nowadays social media is an important point in order to participate in sport. All the information for the participants was uploaded on the official Facebook page and, also, in forums for runners Corredors.cat. Added to this, this research was possible thanks to social media because the semi-structured questionnaires were uploaded on those pages and participants could answer it immediately.

To conclude, for events in general it is important to be well organized and if it is possible with a determinate target. Also the price has to be coherent with what the organization give to their participants and obviously the runners have to be informed of everything, considering weather during the event, recommendations of how to get ready for it, the easiest way to arrive to the event and some offers to attract more tourist. For sport tourists a well organized event is very important. But, obviously the destination itself is the most important point. As an example during the decision making process the runners analyze the destination, the weather, the

monuments, gastronomy, and other, because if the destination is not attractive they will run a marathon in another city.

## 9.2 Recommendations for future professionals

For future events professionals should take the different opinions of the participants into account, due to the fact that they are inside the event and can criticize what is not correct or what is excellent. By doing that, the organization can improve an event by changing what the athletes disliked in previous years.

Another recommendation is to be “fair” with the price, adjust prices because otherwise the athletes will be unhappy with that aspect or worse, will not participate in it. The price should be reflected in what the athletes are given by the organization. It means, that if the registration is expensive, the athletes will expect some quality gifts.

More aspects that can be improved for the future is to create marathon packs. For those athletes that come from other countries, they will expect to have offers such as hotel and registration for the event that will be cheaper than buying everything separately. So, the organization should get in touch with some hotels to provide cheaper accommodation for their athletes. Also, would be interesting that the companies that prepare this kind of events take into account the locals, making the registration price cheaper for them, it will be interesting due to the fact that with a low price some events can engage more people. Other facts could be that the private sector such sport companies, like energetic drinks and sport wear, can participate being sponsors (like Asics this year) or also giving gifts or doing some discounts for the participants. In the case of the energetic drinks, these can be distributed during all the track. Finally, an important aspect will be an improvement in charge of the destination and its organizations. During the marathon a lot of streets have to be closed in order to not have accidents, so what the different organization of the destination, like the police department or the Creu Roja or the city hall, have to do, is help the organization of the marathon to not have problems with the traffic or with the construction. This will be possible not giving just four hours of traffic closed, giving few more hours because there will be athletes that will finish the marathon later and they want to be safe to. So, the safety fact is an important aspect to take care of because it will help the destination

to host further events. Otherwise if there are accidents during an event the participants the following years will think about participating or not because they will remember those accidents.

### 9.3 Recommendations for future researchers

Research on events is a very interesting topic that need a lot of time in order to analyze the athlete in detail. An important aspect to analyze is for instance the decision making process of an athlete when choosing the final destination. It is really interesting and engaging to know why people are interested going to a certain destination and what is their main motivation in order to participate in the event.

For that reason some recommendations for future researchers of the events world is to do a more in depth study into the motivation aspect of the events. What are the motivations of the athletes who participate an event: if price is a big aspect to take into account, if they have a personal motivation or is just a hobby or if the destination is the motivation for the sport tourist.

### 9.4 Limitations of the study.

The most important limitation was the process used in this thesis in order to collect all the data. There were different plans thought out. The first option was to contact the Zurich Marathon Barcelona in order to ask for help, if they can distribute the questioner to their participants, there was no answer, so plan B was to email them using Facebook. The conversation with the organization by Facebook was also surprising because their refused to help -, even when I told them that I will share the results of the analysis with them. So, the next step was to distribute the questioners using a platform called Survio, in their official Facebook website. Even if this second plan did not work a plan C had been thought out, it was the last opportunity to be in contact with the participants and it was to be at the end of the marathon interviewing the athletes.

The same happened with the forum of corredors.cat. They gave me the option to put the questioner in their Facebook group but it was a closed group and I could not access it. Finally I talked by message with the coordinator of the Facebook group and he gave me access to corredors.cat Facebook page.

Another limitation is related to the open questions used in the questionnaire. Some of the respondents did not answer them. If all the questions had been closed the number of people who participated would have been bigger but the opinion of the participants would not have been given. In the following figure nº8 you can observe the big difference between those two groups, the people who answered 48, and at the same time the people who did not finish it, 341.

The last limitation was the software which I used to do the survey. It did not give me the option to see what those people who did not finish all the questions had said in those questions that they had answered

Figure 8: Total answers of the questionnaire (own elaboration)



## 10 Appendices

Semi-structured questionnaire:

- 1) Gender
- 2) Age
- 3) Nationality
- 4) Profession
- 5) Why have you decided to come to this event (Zurich Marathon)?
- 6) Have you run any marathons in other cities? If yes, which cities?
- 7) What is your opinion about this event?
- 8) What qualities do you look for in your destination?
- 9) How did you get here and who do you come with?
- 10) How long do you plan to stay?
- 11) Apart from the marathon what are you planning to do during your time in Barcelona?
- 12) What do you expect from the marathon?
- 13) Why did you choose Barcelona for this event?
- 14) Could you tell me some of the positive experiences you felt during the marathon?
- 15) Could you tell me some of the negative experiences you felt during the marathon from an organizational point of view? (if any)
- 16) How could the event be improved?

This survey was shared on the official Zurich Marathon Barcelona Facebook page and also in a closed group that the Corredors.cat has in Facebook using the following link:

ESPAÑOL: <http://www.surveio.com/survey/d/K8B2V0K8Y3A7Z5E8U>

ENGLISH: <https://www.surveio.com/survey/d/F8F7V8A9F1J4Q4L6S>

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