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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING OF LUXURY SPORTS–POLO AND GOLF**

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**ABSTRACT**

The essence of the concept “luxury sports” is analyzed in the article. Very important points of the article explain what sport is and link it with the concept of luxury. Luxury sports such as polo and golf are the basis for further studies on sports management and the marketing of luxury. The conducted survey indicates the reasons why exclusive sports are played.

**Key words:**

Management, luxury, luxury sport, sport, polo, golf.

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**INTRODUCTION**

***The concept of sport (introduction and problem statement)***

Sport does not have a structured definition. Researchers call sport any physical activity that is performed according to specific rules, and that is not a form of work. Sport was created to provide entertainment to the participants and persons that are observing, as well as to improve their physical fitness [1]. In sports competitions, or activities in which each of the participants, competing with each other, the number of participants can be very diverse. Sometimes the participants are very many, sometimes only two. Team sports are a competition between several teams, sometimes there are many participants, sometimes only two. In all types of sports competitions, there can only be one winner; which could be an individual, several people or a whole team.

Every sport is played in accordance with strict rules to which participants must adapt to. This promotes and significantly affects the maintenance of fair competition during their duration and the emergence of a winner. Sports according to the rules have different factors, that decide how the winning points can be calculated according to a given pattern or order of crossing the finish line, e.g. horse racing. The winner is very often chosen by the judges who are experts in a particular sport and based on their own knowledge and experience as well as technical parameters or assessing artistic impression, decide, as most objectively about winning or losing of the player [2]. Recording or consolidation of other media records of the sportsmanship is a very common practice, especially for popular sports, for example basketball. Information about the competition or their results are announced in the media and widely commented on. This happens because since ancient times, sports have been entertaining and have aroused strong emotions in people who watch it. Sports marketing often focuses on the organization

of large and spectacular sports events, such as a championship, tournament or match. During such events sport is popularized and finds new followers. The highlight of each sports spectacle is its assessment by the audience, as well as present and future sponsors who can subsidize a particular athlete or even a club [3]. According to A.T. Kearney—world renowned consulting firm, the sports industry worldwide is worth approx. \$ 620 billion [4]. The most popular sport for many years has been football. [5].

***Analysis of recent research and publications***

The issues of management of luxury sports—such as polo and golf are paid attention in the works of Seifried C.S. [1], Klisi ski J. [3], Crego R. [8], Laffaye H.A. [9], Shmanske S. [12] and others. However, the question of study and systematization of the management and marketing of luxury sports such as polo and golf requires further in-depth research.

***Literature review about polo and golf***

***Polo as the sport of kings***

The roots of polo date back to Persia and as far back as the VI century AD, where discipline was entertaining the Persian aristocracy, who in this way successfully practiced the art of riding and agility [6]. The word “Polo” probably comes from the word “Pulu”, which in Tibetan means the ball. The game was popularized by the British, who discovered it at the beginning of the XIX century, reaching Manipur, now a state in the North East of India. This sport, even in the minds of locals lost signs of elitism and was cultivated by all, irrespective of their social, but the British seemed so dignified, they decided to instill it at home. To this day, polo is firmly embedded in the culture of the UK, where again it has beengiven the exclusive nature of and the appropriate envelope parlor. The fashion for polo among people with higher status is still ongoing. The polo playing members of the Royal Family, include Prince Charles and his sons—

princes William and Harry. Since 1960 the tradition in the Queen's Cup is the trophy which is given to the winning team—the silver jug—handed to the winner by Queen Elizabeth II, which, together with all participates in the characteristic of the discipline ritual—trampling destroyed by horses turf [7].

This is not the United Kingdom is present power of polo, it became Argentina. Polo wandered into this country together with the British settlers and due to ideal conditions for its practice, as well as almost unlimited access to quality horses, happened in this country one of the national sports, second only to football. It was from Argentina that came the best players in the Polo, who supplied not only the national polo clubs, but also teams from around the world. Around Buenos Aires dozens of polo schools are located and more than a hundred clubs, as many as in all European countries put together. In Argentina the most important polo tournaments include the Triple Crown, which is a masterful trio of Argentine Polo, The Open Championship, The Hurlingham Open and The Tortugas Open. Argentines were four times on the podium of the World Cup, and Argentine horses, those in which the native Argentines herds to pasture their cattle, are considered as the best polo ponies [8].

The modern game is quite traumatic and very dynamic—only meeting the high demands thoroughbreds crossed with American quarter horses and the Argentine horses, although conventional animals involved in Polo are still called “ponies” (Polo ponies), regardless of race. The game takes place on a specially marked out grassy field and is between two, usually 4 player teams (may, this affects the size of the square for the traditional influenza has dimensions of 274m on 146m—and the number of participating in the game horses). The aim of the game is to score goals, or punch the ball between the goal posts on either side of the pitch. Each match consists of the chukkers, which further 7.5 minute rounds. During the 3 minute intervals a pony rider changes the horse, which is not only very important, even honor the rule, but this is due simply to the fact that 7.5 minutes is the optimum time for the animal to maximize its speed and maneuverability. The same horse may not participate in the game over the two parts of the game, the most in club competition takes place therefore 4 chukkers using two horses interchangeably [9]. Each player has a number assigned place and function on the pitch. Number one plays on the offensive, the player with number two fulfills his or her role as attacker, number three is the most experienced player, who watches over tactics and played the ball number four in turn has the most defensive position and protects the goal in front of the goal opponent.

Players hit the ball (today it is made of plastic) using a mallet, or special wooden mallets with rubber ends—grips. Hitting balls at full gallop is not an easy task—players on the one hand must therefore be masters of horseback riding, which is polo-specific, the other to teach the techniques of attacks Mallet that while the game does not hurt the animal. It requires many hours of exercises in the saddle. To level the playing field teams taking part in a polo match in this sport, like e.g. in golf, use the system Handicap (-2 to +10 for each player—higher hep the better player). The sum of handicap players is hep team. If a team with a better handicap game with a weaker team in this regard, that at the outset gets a certain number of points (goals) lead. Handicaps are also used in order to regulate the participation of specific players in international tournaments. As is typical polo matches may

participate together professionals together with amateurs, which in practice boils down to the fact that the pro game with his patron, or sponsor, so that can ever think of performances in tournaments.

Characteristic is also a dress code. Its elements are indispensable white pants, leather (usually brown) boots to the knee and a polo shirt. It is also mandatory that a helmet be worn to protect the player from falling or being hit with a hammer [10].

In 1985 the small Alpine town of St. Moritz hosted the first contest Snow Polo World Cup. What started out 30 years ago in the snow of St. Moritz, gave rise to the worldwide trend. Currently, the snow polo tournaments are played around the world: in the US Aspen, Cortina's Italian and Chinese Tianjin. To this day, the original tournament St. Moritz remains the most prestigious event and the awarded cash prizes are stunning. The competition is accompanied by a unique atmosphere, which provides not only the participants of the game, but also its observers. Staying in this beautiful corner guests and riders can enjoy the spectacle, gourmet food and many top-class attractions prepared specifically for them [11].

Polo is an exotic sport and very exclusive, reserved for the elite. This is an expensive sport, and the cost of its practice generates most of all need to have their own, well-trained horses. This sport can however, enchant, on the one hand, what has competition team—dynamism, constant twists, bravado players, on the other beauty of animals and hovering over all ambience exclusivity.

### ***Golf- the most beautiful game***

Everything probably started in the fifteenth century in Scotland, because it is considered to be the cradle of golf. With the expansion of British colonialism began as a great world career of the sport. Today, golf played by millions of people around the world and there are countries, even such as the United States, where the sport enjoys the greatest popularity among citizens. Despite its Scottish roots, it is hard to find on the golf course to meet men in skirts and distinctive checkered pantaloons, at least not resemble them in most athletic, colorfully dressed young people taking part in the tournaments biggest professional leagues of golf, such as the US PGA Tour or The European Tour. It is athletes like all the other people spending hundreds of hours in training and grinding techniques. As the pros are playing for money and it is big. Prize pools in tournaments of this magnitude reach several million dollars, so it is no wonder that the competition is high, and the summit gets few [12]. The contemporary icon of the sport is still the American Tiger Woods, who at a dizzying pace climbed to the top of golf rankings, winning on the road more than a hundred professional golf tournaments worldwide, including fourteen Slams (The majors) [13].

Golf is a sport still firmly rooted in tradition, although it is changing, trying to cope with the demands of modernity. Some things in golf are still the same in the sport, but it still plays an important role knowledge of the rules and etiquette and respect for them. The golfer's Bible is a small booklet entitled “Rules of the game of golf”, which contains all the, often very detailed, rules of the game. Equally important is the label, which is a kind of code used and unwanted behavior during the game. The label is not an ordinary courtesy, it

helps to take care of safety on the golf course and maintain its good condition. That's according to its principles a golfer should keep complete silence when hitting your fellow players, help them in their search for lost balls (this is the time up to 5 minutes), keep an eye on the proper pace of play, be punctual, rake the sand in the bunker after giving impact to repair divots (grass torn off at impact) and be appropriately dressed (most golf courses do not welcome clothes like jeans). And most importantly, should play fair play above all for himself, because judges are able to keep an eye on compliance with the rules only during golf tournaments, and still do not see every hit of a players. In golf, unthinkable behavior is banned not like in football, especially when players simulate fouls and nobody sees this as a problem. Here, the foundation should be honesty [14].

Although the game of golf is associated with cognition very finicky rules and hours spent on the development of technology impacts, the sport is also a great golf course and a game of their own weaknesses. Golf clubs, operating in virtually every golf course, bring together people whose common passion is golf. Belonging to the most elite is associated with great prestige and great honor. Until last year, one of the oldest golf clubs in the world, the Scottish St. Andrews Golf Club refused admission into their ranks to women. The club defended that as a private association has the right to decide the criteria for selection of its members, bent only after many years of pressure from, among others, feminists. [15].

**The main aim of the article** is to discover the reasons why people invests their time, energy and money to play in exclusive sports like polo and golf. What is more discover the answer to the question of what marketing methods gives the most benefits.

#### **Basic material**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The survey is based on primary data collection, by collecting and analyzing answers to questions previously selected questions. The survey requires the participation of the interviewer and the respondent's questionnaire. The interviewer is the person who is the moderator of this method, which prepares and then distributes prepared by himself or another person questionnaires questions. The questionnaire is properly arranged, grouped and formulated questions that are responding respondents. The person who answers the questionnaire questions are the respondent [16].

The survey is focused on selected by interviewer persons that represent interesting and tested qualities. The survey omits persons that do not have features which are being studied. An example is the study of the phenomenon of luxury sports prestige, while respondents are the only players and observers of those sports who have a certain opinion about them. Individuals who for various reasons are not interested in luxury sports, were excluded from the study because they do not have the relevant experience and a clear opinion about the exclusive sports [17].

The survey was created by Anastazja Kasztalska (author of this article) and sent by email to people who are actively participating in the life of polo and golf clubs were both players, their sponsors, as well as fans. In a survey 100 people

participated. The survey was conducted in December 2015 and January 2016. Respondents had a very high degree of freedom of expression, because they could modify the questions and add their own observations and comments. Subjects were men and women, diverse in age, as the youngest tested person was 25 years old and the oldest 73. Age and gender had little significance as a major determinant. The main factor was the wealth of a person who can afford to be active or passive in the participation in luxury sport such as golf or polo.

#### **Results of the survey and data analysis**

The survey clearly indicates the reasons for having the exclusive sports studied. Most people (26%) indicated a liking for the sport, nothing motivated, stemming from the specific character of the person. Another very large group of people (23%) pointed to an atmosphere of luxury that accompanies a particular sport, concerns e.g. the fact of appearance of famous competitions or costs resulting from the purchase of the appropriate tools to freely be able to enjoy the sport, e.g. buying poles for golf. This point is a fact of great marketing campaigns.

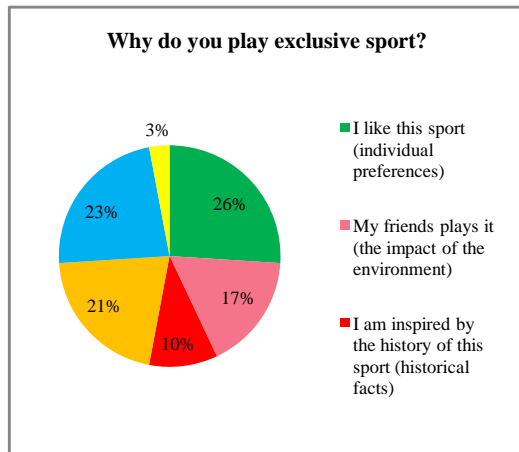
Respondents were playing the sport just to feel the atmosphere created by the marketing. On prestige of sport indicated almost a quarter of respondents (21%) who paid attention to a sense of uniqueness and satisfaction resulting from spending time in such an elitist way. People playing just because these sports are prestigious are a new market.

Astonishing is the fact that a well-run marketing influences decisions about practicing the luxury sport like golf. Another indicated factor (17%) was the influence of friends and acquaintances of the respondents, which directly connects to the factor of sport's prestige. Respondents argued that happens, that their friends urge them to a particular sport or even require them to cultivate it as a determinant of their financial status. This is the proof of the efficient functioning of the marketing of a luxury sports. The actions of managers made in the minds of people, that some sports are prestigious and people, who are wealthy should practice them, because it falls not do.

Only a small number of people (10%) pointed to the history of the sport as a determinant of their choice. The study took into account people who want to give up, but there were very few (3%), and its decision motivated losing financial liquidity. The resignation of the old ways of spending free time, not due to get bored in sports, but in the absence of further measures for its cultivation.

These studies are strongly associated with sports marketing, and thus creating the demand, and therefore the economy. It shows the relationship between successively conducted a marketing campaign and increase awareness, and thus the popularity of the sport. Formerly luxury sports were very unpopular, now everyone knows them and wants them to have as a determinant of their social and economic position. These studies refer to the relationship between the interest of the sport and sports marketing. Respondents clearly indicated the influence of the environment on the choice of the sport and of the prevailing atmosphere of luxury around the sport, which is after all created by marketing. The economic consequence of marketing is to increase the popularity of the sport and what goes after increase in demand for accessories associated with

it, as well as increased interest in events connected with the sport such as competitions. The economy of sport cannot be effective without effective marketing. This is very important especially when it comes to exclusive and expensive sports such as polo and golf. Research clearly shows that human choices can be directed through marketing and demand generation. It is a powerful tool with which you can get a substantial income, because people interested in exclusive sports are wealthy individuals who often have significant cash resources, which will be able to spend on favorite sports team or themselves become active participants in the game. Economics and marketing are inseparable when it comes to luxury sports and skillfully guided marketing refers positive effects from an economic point of view.



**Table 1** Results of the survey

**CONCLUSION**

Sport has always been a very important part of people's lives. Every man according to their skills or affluence plays sport. Luxury sports have always existed, they were very exclusive and reserved for only a few people. This gave them a sense of prestige, and thus a huge financial outlay. Polo and golf are sports luxury's flagship examples, which are available only for the richest. Many people play these sports because they just love them. However, there is a large group that is interested in participating in both active and passive because, as it is for them a kind of manifestation of the material status. Moreover, there is some kind of dependency, such as the influence of the environment on the person about what kind of sport is proper. This is due to the desire of belonging to like-minded people and gain their trust through joint leisure activities. Very many respondents said- "as you already start to play, you can stop it only for two reasons: bankruptcy or death ". This is due to the huge commitment to the sport. Exclusive sport has become an integral part of the lives of people practicing it.

Marketing of luxury sports significantly increases interest in them. This is so because for many people the most important is the prestige of the sport, which is created by the marketing of the company. Another factor is the value and lifestyle represented by the luxury sport, which is also created by the appropriate marketing to a specific group of customers. The entire market associated with the luxury sports draws huge profits, thanks to proper creation in people's minds the notion of luxury that is inextricably associated with a given sport. The tradition and history of the brand has very little importance, very often customers are not interested in it and

do not attach to practically any attention.

We could say that sport becomes a luxury only thanks to clever marketing activities. People are investing huge sums of money in favorite players, the equipment needed to play sports or they sponsor the team, which cheer. They do all this because they want to adapt to the pattern of behavior: wealth = exclusive entertainment, such as luxury sports. Sport does not need the most expensive, exclusive equipment, stems solely from advertising campaigns and the desire to gain significant income from the sale of utensils for games. Managers create models of behavior by the marketing tools. It is obvious that to play sport it is not needed to have large amounts of money.

The novelty of the article and research is that never before nobody connected the feeling of luxury, as a result of efficient sports activities and the choice of the sport. It has been never before proven as a strong influence on sports marketing luxury, especially for those who practicing them. Managers may affect any techniques to increase the popularity of the sport fields, but the strongest influence exists in the industry of exclusive sports. The novelty of article is the fact that people who practice luxury sports are a new market for companies, that produce luxury equipment, allowing for the play sports such as golf or polo. We can also say, that many people play luxury sports because of the fact of exists pressure on them, that is created by marketing. It is clear now that luxury sport has become much more popular due to innovative marketing.

**Further suggestions**

Summarizing the above, we can say that:

1. There are many reasons why people play luxury sports,
2. Only a few people want to give up hobbies associated with exclusive sports,
3. These studies could be used for the appropriate management of marketing,
4. Managers by marketing tools can create in the minds of the people the concept of a luxury sport, that is the reason why many people play this kind of sports,
5. People who practice luxury sports are a new market for companies, that produce luxury equipment, allowing for the play sports such as golf or polo,
6. Many people play luxury sports because of the fact of exists pressure on them, that is created by marketing,
7. A lot of people indicated interest in sports by urging of friends, it gives the ability to use web marketing.

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