


# Chapter 12

## Expenditure Behaviour and Satisfaction in Motor Sport Events: Insights From the FIA World Rally Championship in Sardinia

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter examines the differences in expenditure and satisfaction among first-time and repeat spectators at a motor sports event. A structured questionnaire was developed, and data were collected on site via 318 interviews carried out during the 2019 Federation Internationale de l'Automobile World Rally Championship in Sardinia. Data were analysed by running a series of descriptive analyses, independent t-tests, and regression analyses. The results show that repeaters are more satisfied and spend more when compared to first timers. This study helps to extend the scientific debate related to the growing, and often still inconsistent, comparison of first-timers' and repeat visitors' behaviours by offering insights from a motor sports event, where little research exists so far. Based on the findings, managerial implications are discussed, and suggestions for further research are given.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Events play a pivotal role in the marketing strategies of any tourism destination (Getz, 2008; Getz & Page, 2016; Leiper, 1990). Based on the existing literature (e.g., Getz, 2008), different types of events can be considered, namely: cultural (e.g., carnivals or festivals), business and trade (e.g., conventions, fair and expositions), educational and scientific (conferences, seminars etc.), entertainment and arts (concerts, festivals etc.), recreational (sports or games for fun), private (weddings, parties etc.) and sports (spectators, participants, sponsorships etc.). A vast amount of studies have been devoted to the analysis of the impacts generated by events, usually categorized into economic, environmental, sociocultural, political and touristic impacts (Beckman & Traynor, 2019; Bowdin, 2006; Herrero, Sanz, Devesa, Bedate & del Barrio, 2006; Warnick, Bojanic & Xu, 2015).

In this context, sports events are recognized for generating several benefits for the hosting destinations. For example, they can contribute to extending tourism seasonality (Bowdin, 2006), encourage spectators to spend, thus generating economic impacts for the hosting destination, and boost destination brand awareness and image (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2004).

Thanks to the synergy between sports organizations and sports event organizers, which involve different stakeholders with different behaviours (Turco, Riley & Swart, 2002), motor sports are a major global industry producing significant economic, entertainment, cultural and marketing impacts. Considering the two main motor sports events worldwide - Formula 1 and MotoGP World Championships - in 2019, more than 20 events were held in Europe. Again, the 2019 F1 Monza Grand prix attracted 200,000 participants and generated an economic impact of 15 million euros (source: official website of Monza Municipality). The World Rally Championship (WRC), like many other motor sports events, contributes to destination awareness and image (Xing & Chalip, 2006), significantly boosting the visibility of the hosting destination, thanks to media exposure (TV, radio etc.) and social media coverage (comments, pictures and videos uploaded to peer-to-peer platforms) before, during and after the event. It is therefore unsurprising that, nowadays, sports events are playing a pivotal sub-industry role for many European regions and cities, thus explaining the reasons why policymakers, destination marketers and event managers are strongly and increasingly interested in deepening their understanding of the needs, expectations and behaviours of sports spectators (Del Chiappa & Atzeni, 2016).

As any type of sport events, motor sport events can be big or small. Based on existing literature, the distinction between small scale and big events is not simply related to the size of the event (Müller, 2015). On the contrary, it is also related to the fact that small scale events operate within existing infrastructures, require lower investments of public funds, are more manageable in terms of crowding

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