RUGBY, TRADITIONS AND DESTINATION IMAGE

An empirical analysis of the influence that the inclusion of the sporting heritage of a destination into its tourism strategy can have to attract tourists to a specific sport event

Author: Lucas Fernández Estévez

Supervisor: William C. Gartner

Faculty of Humanities, University of Southern Denmark
Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Tourism, University of Girona

University of Ljubljana, 31st July 2014
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned _____________________, a student at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, (hereafter: FELU), declare that I am the author of the bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation entitled ______________________________, written under supervision of ______________________________ and co-supervision of ______________________________.

In accordance with the Copyright and Related Rights Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nr. 21/1995 with changes and amendments) I allow the text of my bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation to be published on the FELU website.

I further declare

- the text of my bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation to be based on the results of my own research;
- the text of my bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation to be language-edited and technically in adherence with the FELU’s Technical Guidelines for Written Works which means that I
  - cited and / or quoted works and opinions of other authors in my bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation in accordance with the FELU’s Technical Guidelines for Written Works and
  - obtained (and referred to in my bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation) all the necessary permits to use the works of other authors which are entirely (in written or graphical form) used in my text;
- to be aware of the fact that plagiarism (in written or graphical form) is a criminal offence and can be prosecuted in accordance with the Criminal Code (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nr. 55/2008 with changes and amendments);
- to be aware of the consequences a proven plagiarism charge based on the submitted bachelor thesis / master’s thesis / doctoral dissertation could have for my status at the FELU in accordance with the relevant FELU Rules on Bachelor Thesis / Master’s Thesis / Doctoral Dissertation.

Ljubljana, _____________________  Author’s signature: _____________________
(Month in words / Day / Year,
e.g. June 1st, 2014)
# Table of Contents

List of Figures........................................................................................................................................ 1
List of Tables........................................................................................................................................... 2
1.0 Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 3
2.0 Literature Review .............................................................................................................................. 3
3.0 Propositions (hypotheses)................................................................................................................ 18
4.0 The Case; Rugby, England and the Rugby World Cup 2015....................................................... 19
5.0 Methodology..................................................................................................................................... 22
6.0 Analysis and discussion.................................................................................................................... 30
   6.1 Description of the Web-based survey ......................................................................................... 30
   6.2 Hypotheses testing ...................................................................................................................... 51
   6.3 Discussion.................................................................................................................................... 59
7.0 Conclusion......................................................................................................................................... 66
8.0 List of References............................................................................................................................. 71
9.0 Appendix .......................................................................................................................................... 75
   9.1 Questionnaire............................................................................................................................... 75
   9.2 Results.......................................................................................................................................... 78
List of Figures

FIGURE 1: DESTINATION IMAGE COMPONENTS ACCORDING TO ECHTNER AND RITCHIE ...................... 5
FIGURE 2: NATIONAL IDENTITY CONTINUUM FOR A DIFFERENT NATIONALITY THAN THE ONE ON YOUR PASSPORT .................................................................................................................................................. 15
FIGURE 3: NATIONALITY OF THE RESPONDENTS .................................................................................. 33
FIGURE 4: COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS ............................................................ 34
FIGURE 5: SKEWEDNESS OF THE DISTRIBUTION .................................................................................. 35
FIGURE 6: FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION ..................................................................................... 36
FIGURE 7: ACCUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE OF THE DISTRIBUTION ....................................................... 36
FIGURE 8: MEAN MEDIAN AND MODE OF THE “VIDEO VARIABLES” .................................................... 37
FIGURE 9: FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION ..................................................................................... 38
FIGURE 10: FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION ................................................................................... 40
FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION ................................................................................... 41
FIGURE 12: SKEWEDNESS OF THE DISTRIBUTION ............................................................................... 42
FIGURE 13: ACCUMULATIVE FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION .................................................... 43
FIGURE 14: MEAN MedIAN AND MODE OF THE “ENGLAND DESTINATION” VARIABLES .................... 44
FIGURE 15: FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION ................................................................................... 45
FIGURE 16: FREQUENCY OF THE DISTRIBUTION ................................................................................... 46
FIGURE 17: MEAN MEDIAN AND MODE OF THE “CORE VALUES” VARIABLES ..................................... 47
FIGURE 18: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO ARE AWARE OF THE WEBB ELLIS STORY ........ 48
List of Tables

TABLE 1: NORMALITY TESTS ........................................................................................................... 51
TABLE 2: STATISTICAL PROOF OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES "HOUR OF PARTICIPANT" AND "WILLINGNESS TO GO" BY THE MANN-WHITNEY TEST .................................................................... 52
TABLE 3: STATISTICAL PROOF OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES "HOUR OF PARTICIPANT" AND "WILLINGNESS TO GO" BY THE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST ........................................................................ 52
TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE STUDIED VARIABLES .......................................................................................................................... 54
TABLE 5: STATISTICAL PROOF OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES "CORE VALUE TEAMWORK" AND "WILLINGNESS TO GO" BY THE MANN-WHITNEY TEST .................................................... 54
TABLE 6: STATISTICAL PROOF OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES "CORE VALUE TEAMWORK" AND "WILLINGNESS TO GO" BY THE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST ................................................................. 55
TABLE 7: CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PAIRED SAMPLES ...................................................................... 56
TABLE 8: CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PAIRED SAMPLES ...................................................................... 58
TABLE 9: PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST RESULTS .......................................................................................... 58
1.0 Introduction

“My post-Sydney goals are to become a much better player and person”, Jonny Wilkinson’s quotation after having kicked the drop-goal which awarded the Rugby World Cup to the English team in 2003 in Australia. It was not only the first time England won a Rugby World Cup, but also the first Northern hemisphere country that succeeded in winning this competition since its first event in 1987. The quotation clearly shows the values related to rugby and how important they are for rugby players in their daily life. On the top of his career, Jonny Wilkinson, a star in his home country and in the rugby world, just wants to be better player and a better person.

Sport event tourism is one of the largest sectors within the tourism industry, having a great social impact on the local communities, the economy and overall the tourism sector of a country (Jones, 2001). The research in this field has always been focused on these three impacts and how they affect the destination, missing other insights that could potentially affect these largely studied impacts. That is the reason why it is important to pose several questions about the management and the potential of these sport events for their destinations in order to ensure appropriate use of the generated benefits. For example, are countries achieving the best possible results out of the organization of sport events? How could destinations engage in more proactive strategies to gain visibility for a greater success of a particular sporting event? What do potential tourists want to do in the destination besides going to matches? Is the destination targeting the right people with the right campaigns with the help of their marketing efforts? And finally, which is the best possible strategy to be used with potential tourists?

The aim of this paper is to understand whether the inclusion of a destination’s sport traditions into their tourism marketing strategy for a specific sporting event is effective and to understand the type of relationship between the destination and the organized sporting event that is necessary in order to attract the highest possible number of tourist and to gain visibility within a specific niche market (i.e. the players of such a sport). Specifically for this paper, the studied type of sport is rugby and the selected destination is England, where the sport was born and grew into what it is known as today. The
The event that is going to be studied and analyzed in this paper is the Rugby World Cup which will be held by England in 2015.

An efficient way of achieving the objectives explained above could be the fostering of feelings of national identity to set the destination’s image in a good position in the potential consumer’s mind. England, through the British Empire, is well known around the globe for having developed and introduced modern sports to the world, like football, cricket, rugby and others. Consequently, it has a great potential for attracting sport tourists through the organization of sporting events. Furthermore, a sport like rugby potentially gathers all the necessary characteristics to be able to touch people’s feelings and create awareness of England as a destination in their minds. Rugby, with its old roots and traditions and its late pass from amateurism to professionalism has the perfect elements to attract rugby fans to the country where it was born. Besides, the Rugby World Cup is among the most popular sporting events in the world, an advantage that the England tourism board must use to create an exceptional event where the rugby imagery and the destination become one, thereby showing a strong image to the rest of the world.

This paper will analyze the existing image that rugby players have of the game of rugby and the home of the sport, England, and connect it with the upcoming mega event, the Rugby World Cup 2015. In particular, it was designed to investigate which secondary services should be offered at the destination, which ancillary activities the potential customers for such an event would like to engage in and which underlying motives and motivations drive their decision to visit the destination of such an event.

Having all these factors in mind, the research question for this paper has been developed to address the theoretical and practical implications of the three aforementioned issues in order to demonstrate the value of sport traditions for destinations of sport events and is phrased as follows:

**What is the potential for a destination including its sport traditions into the tourism strategy? The case of rugby in England and the Rugby World Cup 2015.**

This investigation starts with a thorough literature review of different topics that have previously been researched by tourism scholars and that are helpful for the development of the case and the achievement of the final results. These topics cover a wide range of
issues in the tourism industry and other research fields such as destination image, national identity, serious leisure, sport tourism, relations between public and private sector in tourism. The study of these topics is needed to answer the presented research question and the hypotheses that arose from the literature review.

After the presentation of the theory, the hypotheses developed from it will be presented. Then, the case study that will help to practically test those theories will be further explained in order to finalize the theoretical part of the paper. The practical and the primary research section commences with the methodology. Firstly, the chosen method that has been employed for the analysis of the gathered data will be explained and then a description of the web-based survey with certain limitations and advantages will be presented. After that, the general limitations arising from the research are presented and will be preceded by the analysis of the gathered data and the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses. In order to show how the obtained survey results relate to the theories and models studied in the literature review, their discussion will be carried out consequently. Finally, the practical part will be completed with the conclusions drawn from the analysis and discussion of results and with specific recommendations for the usage of sport traditions in destination tourism strategy as well as for further research in the same area of interest.

2.0 Literature Review

The concept of destination image has been largely researched throughout the years and there are many scholars that have tried to give an exact definition of the term, nevertheless, these are normally “quite vague, and in several cases, are not even explicitly stated” (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Tourism images need to be in line with what the destination has to offer, to completely fulfill the tourist’s expectations and needs during their visitation to that destination. This firm image will contribute to differentiate the destination and strengthen its competitiveness in the tourism market (Camprubi, Guía, & Comas, 2008).

Destination image can be defined as the presence that a certain destination has in a potential tourist's mind (Gartner, 1994); therefore, there is a need for destinations to create awareness within the tourists that may be interested in visiting that country,
region or city. Without this image in their minds, the destination cannot be included in
the selection process of the customer because it is invisible for them. The destinations
that provide the type of activities which are appealing to the final consumer will be
placed in a higher rank into the tourist's destination choice set (Gartner, 1994).

A destination has different aspects and components that are analyzed by the tourists
before the final selection is made and this perception can be formed even if the tourist
has never visited the destination itself (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Baloglu & McCleary,
1999). The way a destination image is constructed in a tourist's mind has been
extensively researched by tourism scholars and all of them agreed on the components of
the construction of the destination image, although naming them in different ways.
Gartner (1994) has called them cognitive and affective components, including a third
one called conative, related to the behavior of the tourist. This view is similar to the one
adopted by Baloglu and McCleary (1999), who mention that an image structure is
formed by the cognitive perception, the affective perception and the global perception,
which is a combination of the latter two. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) in their literature
review revealed some aspects that were summarized into factors that influence the
creation of a destination image (cognitive, affective and global) prior to its visitation;
stimulus factor and personal factors. These personal factors can be defined as social
(age, education...) and psychological (values, motivations...), whereas the stimuli factors
are the information sources, the previous experiences and the distribution.

A difference between the holistic image of a destination (imagery) and the attributes of
that given destination placed in the consumer's mind is done by Echtner and Ritchie
(2003) ranking both of these components from their functional characteristics to their
psychological characteristics.
All the above mentioned factors that influence the image of a certain destination are interrelated and can determine the eventual purchase of a package or the organization of a trip to that destination (Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Furthermore, they help to construct the image of the destination in potential tourist's minds (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). To fully understand the different components of destination image, a definition of the above mentioned characteristics will be provided in the upcoming paragraphs, including the relationships that can be encountered among them.

The cognitive component of the destination image can be defined as a sum of beliefs and attitudes of a person towards an object that creates an internal picture in the person’s mind which is accepted as real by him/her (Gartner, 1994; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). This component also relates to the knowledge and the beliefs tourists have attached to the attributes of a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

The second factor which structures destination images is the affective component. This component is defined as the motives that a tourist has for choosing a certain destination...
(Gartner, 1994; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008), or as a sum of feelings and emotions that a tourist relates to that particular destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) and uses in order to differentiate it from others. Transposed to the Echtner and Ritchie (2003) explanation in their article *The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image*, the affective component of destination image will be what is referred to in the article as holistic view or imagery of the destination. The imagery of the destination is defined as a mental picturing of an object, place or product (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

According to Baloglu and McCleary’s (1999) research for constructing a model of destination image formation, there are more factors that may explain the image construction in the tourist’s mind of a destination, among which factors like motivations to travel, information sources, word-of-mouth can be found, for instance, but they concluded that they have very little impact on the construction of the destination image when compared to the great impact the affective and cognitive components have. Additionally, they arrived to the conclusion that, as mentioned before, the overall image is strongly influenced by the affective component of the image, and only moderately influenced by the cognitive one. Therefore, destinations where the affective component is placed high in the consumer’s mind will have a better chance to be chosen as the final destination for that specific tourist. However, their findings also show that the cognitive component strongly influences the affective one, which means, destinations that have a strong cognitive component will, as well, have a strong affective one, and therefore, the overall destination image in the tourist’s mind will have a primary spot, and is more likely to be chosen as a holiday destination, if it has a positive overall image. The image components in the consumer’s mind can be set as positive or negative, depending on the political situation (dictatorship) of the destination or the safety situation (war). Those destinations where the destination image is strong but that fail to provide safety or visas to tourists will not be chosen by the tourists as their holiday destination, regardless of the strength of their image. The perceptions that tourists have about the attributes of a destination are therefore important and influence the overall image (Gartner, 1986).

Based on the Echtner and Ritchie’s (2003) model of destination image components as seen in Figure 1, the relationship between the attributes of a destination and the holistic view of it (imagery) is highly interdependent and both are interconnected or might be overlapping in some places. The attributes of a destination may influence the way its
overall imagery is perceived, and vice versa. The feelings developed for a destination may have an impact on the way the attributes of that destination are perceived by tourists. As seen in the model, the attributes and the imagery of a destination are divided into functional and psychological characteristics. Functional characteristics are defined as “directly observable or measurable” (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, p. 4). On the other hand, psychological characteristics are not measurable and depend upon the tourist’s subjectivity of the destination being visited (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Destination image formation is created through several agents, which were identified and explained by Gartner (1994) in his article *Image Formation Process*. It can be seen that among the eight different agents defined, four of them have attached the word *induced* and three of them *organic*. For those components considered as induced (Over Induced I, Over Induced II, Covert Induced I and Covert Induced II), it becomes apparent that they all share a common element, which is the effort from the destination management organization to transmit the destination to potential customers in different ways. It can be done by introducing advertisements on TV or radio (Overt Induced I), as well as collaborating closely with tour operators or wholesalers (Overt Induced II), which has been proven to be an extremely effective way to transmit the image of a destination and to meet the customer’s expectation by having a congruence image between the destination itself and those agents selling it. Contrary to that, the existence of several images for a destination may harm the customer’s final decision (Camprubí, Guía, & Comas, 2008). The usage of famous people or celebrities to promote the destination is a clear destination management organization (DMO) effort to gain visibility in the market and is called Covert Induced I agent (Gartner, 1994). The Covert Induced II agent is identified in Gartner’s article as travel writers, for instance, who are invited to a destination to write articles about its main features or give advice on the variety of activities available and which nowadays are more frequently known as travel bloggers. As a final conclusion, induced image can be considered as an image which the DMO’s try to introduce in the potential tourist’s minds by gaining relevance in the tourism market through marketing campaigns. The induced concept of image formation of a destination was already introduced by Gunn in the year 1997 and was defined as the “overt processes designed to attract travelers to certain target markets” (p. 38), which means that all the promotional efforts are made directly from the destination authorities to bring new customers to that destination. The different states and tourism
boards may advertise a specific activity in a destination strongly and repeatedly (like a sport event) in order to foster aspects of the destination that might have remained hidden for the potential customers (rugby heritage) with the purpose of shifting the demand to attract a specific gap in the market (rugby fans/travelers) (Gartner, 1986). The induced efforts to change the image of a destination are important, because the attributes intrinsically rooted in a destination, although they cannot be changed, can be altered through media (Gartner, 1986).

On the other hand, Gunn (1997) explains image formation in 7 different phases while the first one is defined as organic image. The organic image is formed by sources of information which are not tourism related and that create an initial image of the country as a tourism destination in the consumer's mind. This concept was structured by Gartner (1994) in four different categories, mentioned in the paragraph above, which are autonomous, unsolicited organic, solicited organic and organic. The autonomous category is basically the set of information heard or read in the news that formed the image a person has about a country or destination. Unsolicited and solicited are very similar, receiving information from relatives or friends about a destination. The difference is either the person actually asked for that information (solicited) because he or she is interested in going to the destination or the information was passed to the potential tourist without him/her asking. The organic agent is the actual visitation of the tourist to the destination. The idea of organic image was already defined by Hunt (1975), without clearly stating the term, when he explained that the individual's perception of a place can contribute as much to the tourism development of a destination as the tourism resources and leisure activities present in that region. This organic definition of the destination image is also in line with what Gunn (1997) stated in his book Vacationscape, where he firstly defined organic image as the total amount of information that a person has gathered about a destination from different types of sources, such as newspapers, radio, TV or word-of-mouth.

Among the different attributes that can influence the cognitive component of a destination image in the consumer’s mind, like climate, natural attractions, accommodation, shopping facilities, for instance (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), heritage is considered one of the main influencers. As mentioned by Mason, Duquette and Scherer (2005) “history has become a strategic tool for tourism development” (p. 254).
heritage that a destination possesses can be crucial to attract tourists, which will construct an image of the destination based on its cognitive component, meaning all the beliefs and knowledge they have about the destination’s heritage, learned through their lives, as well as its affective component, based on the myths and stories related to that destination. As Ramshaw and Gammon (2005) stated; “in the field of tourism, heritage is identified as a key component of its attraction base” (p. 239)

Heritage is a concept which causes trouble for researchers in the tourism industry, since heritage can be defined as the use we nowadays make of the past (Timothy, 2011), therefore the temporal component is very important which is always present when talking about heritage (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). This definition implies a broad concept, where everything could potentially fall into that category. The heritage of a certain country can be used either locally as an educational tool in order to teach the history of that country, or externally, mainly for tourism purposes (Timothy, 2011; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). A sub-division of the term heritage would be natural heritage and cultural heritage (Timothy, 2011). When having a closer look at the cultural heritage category, which is defined by Timothy (2011) as “the past created by humankind and its various manifestations” (p. 3), two distinctions can be clearly identified, which are tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Timothy, 2011). The intangible heritage of a country might be represented by its history, nostalgia, myths, memory and traditions (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005; Timothy, 2011) and always has a cultural significance for that country, which can be either individual or collective (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). Many opportunities can arise for a destination if the DMO manages to draw tourists to the region by using their heritage attractiveness (Mason, Duquette, & Jay, 2005). Heritage tourism is as well a developer for identities and communities (Ruiz Ballesteros and Hernández Ramírez, 2005), which will be looked at deeper in the following sections of this paper.

It has been researched and proven that there is a strong connection between cultural heritage and sport tourism (Fairley, 2003; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005), creating a new branch of heritage tourism, which is called sport heritage tourism. Sport and heritage jointly can transmit powerful messages about the identity of a community, as well as have a great impact on the overall quality of life of a population (Wood, 2005). To be
able to understand the linkage that exists between these two concepts of sports tourism as well as sports heritage in further detail, a definition of each of them is needed first.

Sport tourism has been largely researched and many authors have defined it in several ways, with Gibson’s definition (1998) being one of the most accepted within the tourism research in this field. Gibson (1998) states that sport tourism can be defined as travel done for leisure purposes, in which the person involves travels away from his/her normal residence to practice a particular sport, to watch a particular sport or because of nostalgia feelings, to venerate attractions associated with a particular sport. Thus, it can be easily observed that three main points are shown, which are participation, spectator and nostalgia. These three concepts are not unrelated, since they can be influenced by each other in order to motivate the tourist to engage in a sport-related trip to a certain destination (Fairley, 2003). Therefore, it can be argued that if a destination has a wide offer of events, amateurs and professionals, and a well-structured sport history, the possibilities that it will attract a large number of tourists is high. From this definition it can as well be observed that not only those tourists who travel to do sports are considered sport tourists. The term is broader and those tourists that travel for other sport purposes (watch or visit sport related monuments) are considered sport tourists as well (Kurtzman, 2005). Thus, the motivations of these three types of tourists are essential to understand how to market a certain sport destination. The final goal of the tourism destinations should focus on creating satisfactory experiences for these tourists coming to a destination, regardless of the type of sport tourism they are seeking to engage in (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005).

Sport heritage is the veneration and celebration of the sporting past for present purposes (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). There are also different ways of engaging in sport heritage, as the authors Ramshaw and Gammon (2005) state in their article More than just nostalgia? The heritage/sport tourism nexus, where they differentiate between heritages of sport, in which the main goal is to celebrate achievements of teams and athletes in history, and on the other hand, sport as heritage in which the culture that surrounds a sport surpasses the sport itself. The creation of a sport heritage offer in a destination can be done by the promulgation of different myths and stories related to the beginnings and the roots of the sport, which would create a sense of order and identity with which the tourists could find identification (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). The two
authors also structure sport heritage on different scales; which include the segments of tangible immovable, tangible movable, intangible as well as goods and services. Tangible immovable refers to spaces that have relevance within a sport’s history, such as stadia or sites where the sport was originated. These spaces are considered to offer the local community a sense of pride. All the objects which are linked to a specific sport, tangible experiences and even location where a sport event needs to take place to have relevant significance fall into the category of tangible movable. The intangibles, as with the concept of heritage itself, relates to the rituals, traditions, chants and nostalgia which are related to a sport. Goods and services can be classified as the different attractions and merchandising which sport tourism generates in a specific destination.

Nostalgic images held by the inhabitants of a country serve to articulate the meaning that they give to their sporting past (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006) and therefore sport heritage is a good framework to develop a certain tourism area, since “nostalgia and tourism are closely connected” (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006, p. 400). Nevertheless, the linkage between sport, heritage and the tourism sector should be strengthened in order to gain competitiveness in the sport tourism market (Wood, 2005). The combination of heritage, sport and leisure activities is crucial for a destination in order to gain a competitive advantage compared to other destinations (Mason, Duquette, & Jay, 2005). Consequently, a strong connection from the public bodies and the private companies related to the tourism/heritage and sport sectors would be necessary in order to create a good and congruent sport heritage tourism offer, together with sporting events and other sport related activities (Wood, 2005).

The bigger problem arises from the fact that in most of the countries, sport and tourism were created and grew separately which is why the connections between them are limited or non-existent (Weed, 2005). A destination that engages in sport tourism needs to be aware of the contribution that this new offering has to the rest of the activities they are currently providing for tourists (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005). The marketers of the destination need to have a clear idea of the experiences that the potential tourists are seeking regarding a specific sport in order to build a set of activities to optimize the depth and quality of these tourists’ experiences while at the destination (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005). The decisions and policies set up from the government will affect the companies and other public entities (Weed, 2005). Therefore, correctly and deeply
understanding which activities need to be implemented by the marketers is highly important. The organization of a major sport event may be good to attract tourists, but the DMOs need to work hand-in-hand with the private sector in an attempt to offer a wider range of activities, because as stated by Harrison-Hill and Chalip (2005), the meaning of a sport event for a tourist is based on the quality of it, and complementary activities will help to place the sport event into a heritage context in the destination. With these measures the marketer will be able to deepen, sharpen and extend the experience, thus, the stay of the tourists (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005). A sport tourist's experience is affected by the environment and destination where the sporting event takes place (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005); hence a congruent balance between both is needed in order to provide a satisfactory experience for the customers. Overall, a memorable tourism experience is defined by Harrison-Hill and Chalip (2005) as the sum of sharing experiences with other sport tourists, the quality of the surroundings, the service providers and the possibility to interact with other fellow sport tourists with the same motivations.

To understand which motivations drive the decision making process of the tourists willing to engage in sport heritage tourism, a deep look to the concept of the serious leisure traveler is needed. Serious leisure can be defined as a concept in the middle between casual leisure and work (Stebbins, 1982). Casual leisure is defined as a pleasurable activity which produces instant reward and that requires little training and no special skills whereas, on the other hand, serious leisure is a constant participation in a specific activity which brings feelings of self-identification, self-esteem, personal identification and social identity within a group to the participant (Green & Jones, 2005). In 1982, Robert Stebbings defined the six qualities that a serious leisure participant has and what exactly differentiates him or her from a casual leisure participant. Firstly, there is a need to show perseverance in the serious leisure activity, as the final outcome of the activity will brings positive feelings to the participant, no matter the path that he or she has to undertake to finish it (injuries, embarrassment, etc.). The second quality is that serious leisure offers the opportunity to those that engage in it to develop careers within the same activity. These developments of careers are highly interrelated with the third quality of leisure tourism because personal efforts are required for the participation in the activity by using his or her knowledge about the activity, by utilizing the training received and the skills obtained through that training.
The fourth quality represents the social interaction and the sense of belonging that a serious leisure activity brings to the participants. This quality is very important, since it provides the participant with feelings of acceptance, self-esteem, self-expression among others, which are fundamental for humans and highly valued in today’s society. The serious leisure activities grow up around a unique ethos (language, beliefs, principles, etc.) which makes them special for the participant, reinforcing the sense of belonging mentioned above. The last quality of the serious leisure concept is the strong identification that the people who engage in a certain serious leisure activity have with their chosen pursuits.

Apart from the specific qualities of the serious leisure, Stebbings (1982) has also structured the participants engaging in them in different categories; amateurs, hobbyist and volunteer. Amateurs are defined as those serious leisure participants who have a professional counterpart, where both are part of a complex system; Professional-Amateur-Public. Professionals with their performances and competitions create a set of skills, clothes or behaviors which are later on imitated by the amateurs (Green & Jones, 2005). Hobbyist have no professional counterpart (Stebbins, 1982) and it can be argued that they create their “own social world” (Green & Jones, 2005, p. 170). They engage in their favorite hobby beyond their jobs because it brings them long term psychological benefits (Stebbins, 1982). The volunteers, on the other hand, engage in serious leisure activities without receiving any remuneration (Green & Jones, 2005). As defined by Stebbings (1982) “volunteering is a recurrent, skill-and knowledge-based activity in which people can have a career in a special social world” (p.264).

Looking at the serious leisure concept from a more touristic approach, the implications for sport tourism are very clear. As Green and Jones stated in their article *Serious Leisure, Social Identity and Sport Tourism* (2005), serious leisure activities have many opportunities to include sport tourism, while sport tourism foments the engagement in those serious leisure activities. They stress as well the importance of the feeling of social identity and acceptance that serious leisure can give to the participants and how sport boost these feelings of belonging through its unique ethos. Both passive and active sport tourists engage in serious leisure and both show an extremely high commitment to the sport that is their serious leisure, since this is what brings rewards in a non-job related context for them.
As a conclusion of the development of the serious leisure concept in sport tourism, it can be assumed that when tourists are travelling to a destination as serious leisure travelers and they engage in sport heritage tourism, going beyond the sport itself, but enjoying all the aspects of the subculture that surrounds the sport, they are willing to be integrated in the social identity arising from that sport in the host society. As Friedman, Andrew and Silk (2004) concluded in their article Sport and Façade of Redevelopment in the Postindustrial City, sport heritage is used as an attempt to build a link with the sport history of a country, boosting and fostering a sense of national identity.

“Sport can become a metaphor for the health of a nation and its national character” (Tuck, 2003, p. 500) is a relevant quotation which shows how sport tourism and the national identity of a country are related. The influence of tourism on the identity of a community or the inhabitants of a country is regarded as clear by recent scholars (Ruiz Ballesteros & Hernández Ruiz, 2007). The fact that the national identity of a country and the sporting heritage are closely tied together has been researched by many scholars (Hunter, 2003; Maguire, Joseph, & Tuck, 1998; Tuck, 2003). It is even argued by some scholars that the image of a nation becomes more real thanks to the sporting achievements of their national teams (Tuck, 2003). Many researchers have come to the conclusion that national identities are formed by several myths, stories, memories and images which have strong meanings for the population of a country (Tuck, 2003; Jarvie, 2003). These myths, stories and memories become part of a person’s beliefs, and therefore transform into reasons why he/she feels part of a bigger group, a nation (Tuck, 2003).

Hunter (2003) argues that the feelings of national identities can be expressed to lie on a continuum, where one of the extremes is a strong sense of national identity and the other end highlights a weak feeling of national identity. The strong feeling is seen as the nationality that the person holds in his/her passport. On the other hand, having a special sympathy for a country’s culture, myths, history or traditions will be placed on the other side of the continuum. This means that the feeling of national identity can exist in a person that is not a citizen of that specific country (Bairner, 2003). It has been proven that tourism can help to create a common identity for those who are national passport holders and those who are not citizens of a country (Misener & Mason, 2006).
The concept of national identity has been largely affected by the globalization era that the world is going through at the moment (Maguire, Joseph, & Tuck, 1998; Jarvie, 2003; Bairner, 2003). The effects that such a relationship has on the national identity of a state have been pointed out as both positive and negative. Maguire and Tuck (1998) stated that the concept of globalization helps people to come closer and be able to know and learn different cultures and to sympathize with them, whereas, it may also create feelings of weakening around those nationals who share a set of values and myths (their national identity) which will make them reluctant to share them with foreigners, fearing that they will be lost or changed. In line with this thought is what Jarvie (2003) commented in his article *Internationalism and Sport in the Making of Nations*, where he argues that “the sharing and cross-fertilization of different sporting cultures and tastes is something to be celebrated” (p. 538). However, he also points out that this trend to globalization is seen by many as a way of spoiling the sporting heritage of a nation. During major sporting events in the international context, sports can be promoted thanks to the images, myths and stories attached to them, fostering the national identity of those who share those images (Jarvie, 2003). Moreover, outstanding performances in a given sport help to create a greater sense of national identity, as well as showing these sentiments to the rest of the world, as Jarvie (2003) states, “sporting achievements contribute to a nation’s greatness, national identity, and at times help to transcend internal strife and social deference” (p. 540). A suggested way to keep the national identity feelings of a country in a globalized context alive by Jarvie (2003) is via the promotion of so-called heroes or heroines who achieved a high rank or context in an international sport arena. By this means, they will keep alive the idea of what a certain nation is about with respect to a particular sport.

The globalization process has been said to be able to weaken the national identity feelings of the inhabitants of a certain nation, but in addition to that, Jarvie (2003) found
out that the contribution of the World Tournaments in any sport or the Olympics are keeping them alive, and moreover, reaching a higher number of people in the world, which allows them to identify themselves with those myths, stories or images. This identification may be achieved through the practice of such a sport and the sharing of the values transmitted by that sport. As it can be seen in the international context, many players are playing for a country where they were not born (Jarvie, 2003). An example of this portrayed by many scholars is the inclusion of The Republic of Ireland and the Northern Ireland region, which belongs to Great Britain, into one rugby union, to perform in an international context under an unified Ireland jersey (Tuck, 2003; Maguire, Joseph, & Tuck, 1998). It is also remarkable that the joint team of the British Nations and the Republic of Ireland summarized under the name of British and Irish Lions, also within the framework of the rugby union, is formed every four years to tour in South Africa, New Zealand or Australia. This creates a strong sentiment for two important nations with big historical differences that despite of these play together as a team, which highlights the difference between sport identity and political identity (Tuck, 2003; Maguire, Joseph, & Tuck, 1998).

The enjoyment and the feeling of belonging to a specific sporting heritage by people who engage in serious leisure activity shows that sport can be understood from the perspective of a combination of the globalization concept in the world of sports and the strengthening of the culture itself achieved by locals. These two elements will allow the serious leisure participants to get to know, feel and participate in global events of that sport as well as providing an authentic image of the sport, which may be highly appreciated by those serious leisure people. As Richard Giulianotti (2007) presents in his article *Popular Culture, Social Identities, and Internal/External Cultural Politics; The Case of Rangers Supporters in Scottish Football*, the groups of supporters studied were mainly Scottish, being also a great number of fan clubs located in other parts of the world, like England, Europe or the USA. In the same line of argument, it is said that supporters of a team identified themselves with a number of different identities arising from that team, which can also be a national team, rather than just because of the national location of that team (Jarvie, 2003). It was also well stated by Bairner (2003) that, “certain sports competition … can promote a nation in which they may have no political interest and to which they may not even belong in terms of nationality or national identity” (p.517).
A way in which destinations have to foster the feelings of national identities in their communities is through the organization of sport events (Getz, 2008). These sport events relate to the theory described in the above paragraphs about sport tourism and sporting heritage in a destination; thereby fostering nostalgia feelings in the fans (Getz, 2008). The connection with the presented concepts in this paper are wider, meaning that the events organized in a destination in a way help to create a new image of the destination, by placing it positively in the consumer’s mind (Getz, 2008), through the different means explained before. The linkages of the public sector with the private sector are also of great importance when organizing a sporting event, with the main organizing bodies being the National Tourism Organizations and the Destination Management Organization (NTOs and DMOs) (Getz, 2008) which both normally either public or with public influence. Therefore, a congruence plan and set of policies between these public organizations and the businesses in the area is needed for the event to be successful. Getz (2008) also mentioned the concept of serious leisure in his article called *Event Tourism: Definition, Evolution and Research* and exemplifies how people who engage in a certain serious leisure activity (sports) will also be prompted to assist in a sporting event of that sport which represents his/her serious leisure activity as an intrinsic motivation to visit the destination. In order to be able to reach those serious leisure sport tourists and engage them to visit a given sporting event in a given destination, the marketers need to identify which are the important issues that the tourists are expecting from the destination and the event itself. Once that is known, it is essential to induce tourists into the niche market through media in different ways which have been explained in the first part of this section. With the help of these means DMOs are able to influence the willingness to visit that destination through a change of image (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003). These factors where media should work to change the image perception of a destination of certain tourists are pointed out by many scholars as the feelings of nostalgia (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005), since sub-cultures are significantly fostered by sporting events, and consequently, give rise to feelings of nostalgia (Getz, 2008). Nostalgia is an important motivator to travel to a specific sporting event as it relates to one’s youth when some tourists might be reminded to also have participated in the sport (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006). To be able to evoke such feelings in potential customers, sport event marketers need to make sure that the host destination is not just the setting where the event takes place, but becomes part of the event itself (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003).
As a conclusion for this literature review, the complexity of the sport tourism sector and its close relation with heritage, and therefore traditions, myths, stories and images that surround a specific sport, has been explored. These images form the collective imagery of a nation regarding its sporting past, but as it has been explained and argued by different authors, thanks to the globalization era in which we live nowadays, this imagery is easily accessible to more people around the globe that may be interested in learning more about that specific sporting heritage. These people can be assumed to be those individuals who will involve themselves during their free time in that sport as a serious leisure activity (amateur or hobbyist for the case of this study). Marketers need to be aware of what these potential visitors are seeking to find when organizing a major sport event, working hand-in-hand with the private sector and understanding that there has to be a close connection between the event itself and the host nation, for example by creating a secondary offer which will satisfy the nostalgia needs of these potential tourists, not just the sport as such (games). In order to successfully penetrate into the niche market that the event provides, it has been argued that fostering and boosting national identity feelings in their own population will attract tourists which identify themselves with the same values and imagery of these nationals. This can be done by advertisements in this precise field, trying to change the induced image of the destination that is held in the minds of potential visitors. This would be a successful way to attract more tourists, since, as stated in the first part of this section, induced destination image affects the affective component of the destination image in a person’s mind, which is the component that influences the final decision to travel to a destination most decisively.

To be able to study the matter as deeply as possible, a case study has been chosen, which will be utilized to give meaning to the previously discussed theoretical implications. The case study revolves around the development of Rugby Union in England with the central theme of the major sporting event, the Rugby World Cup 2015 which will take place in England.

3.0 Propositions (hypotheses)

A number of hypotheses have arisen from the literature review and the topics studied. The hypotheses presented aim to uncover a relationship between the different variables
which were presented to the participants of the Web-based survey. Every hypothesis was designed to test the willingness of participants to travel to the Rugby World Cup 2015 against a variety of variables that, according to the topics studied and the models reviewed, could potentially exert an influence on their travel behavior in relation to the Rugby World Cup 2015 in England.

Consequently, the hypotheses are fourfold and can be categorized into the following groups:

1\textsuperscript{st} hypothesis: If the potential tourists of a sport event engage in that sport as their serious leisure activity, they will be willing to take part in that event.

2\textsuperscript{nd} hypothesis: If the potential tourists of a sport event are aware of the different myths, stories, images and traditions embedded in that sport, they will be willing to take part in that event.

3\textsuperscript{rd} hypothesis: If the potential tourists of a sport event have been exposed to advertisements of that sport event, they will be willing to take part in that event.

4\textsuperscript{th} hypothesis: Potential tourists of a Rugby World Cup are attracted to the event by nostalgic feelings coming from the traditions of the sport.

4.0 The Case; Rugby, England and the Rugby World Cup 2015

The case chosen to illustrate the developed literature review section is rugby in England, and more precisely the Rugby World Cup, which will be held in the same country in the year of 2015. This case was regarded as ideal to study the relationship between the different concepts explained in the theoretical part of the paper and more specifically the relationship between tourists’ willingness to visit a sport event and the sports traditions associated with it.

The sport of rugby has a long tradition in England since its roots are located in that country. The image that has arrived to the present time in the development of the sport has been constructed on top of some myths and stories which Allison and MacLean (2012) challenged in their article; There’s a Deathless Myth on the Close Tonight: Re-assessing Rugby’s Place in the History of Sports. They reviewed the myth of a student
of the Rugby School, William Webb Ellis, who while playing a rudimentary form of today’s Football (soccer) in 1823, took the ball in his hand and carried it until the opponent’s end of the pitch. After a deep research on the matter, they concluded that there is no clear evidence that such a thing actually happened, and even if it did they argue that there was a high number of players who were more interested in this style of playing by actively making use of their hands as the sport was still in its development phase and the rules that separate Rugby Union and Football (soccer) were not clear yet (Allison & MacLean, 2012). Thus, they conclude that “the Webb Ellis story works as a foundation myth and consequently as a brand image” (p. 1870) for the sport. This foundational myth is of such importance in the rugby culture that the Rugby World Cup trophy holds the name of this first rugby player, the Webb Ellis Cup.

Rugby Union is also known in the world of sports for the unique values that surround it because it is one of the only sports where a specific report researching how the ethos of the sport is perceived by the fans and which are the best ways to protect and promote the connected values and traditions for the future is carried out. The Rugby Football Union (RFU), the governing body of Rugby Union in England for both amateurs and professional clubs (Rugby Football Union, n.d.), developed this report to analyze how the professionalism of the sport, which started in 1995, has affected the core values that have been related to rugby since its creation. The committee in charge of the development of this report pointed out a number of values and ethos which can be regarded as the legacy of rugby through history. In order to obtain these results a Web-based questionnaire and several focus groups were done. The results of the study were that the six values of teamwork, discipline and respect, sportsmanship, enjoyment and friendship are highly attached to rugby (Rogers, et al., 2008), sometimes even considered as the most important part of the sport. These core values have been spread all over the world to wherever this sport is played. From the different interviews and data gathered by this task group, it was moreover concluded that the practice of rugby is beneficial for the communities where it is played as well as for the entire society. The skills and knowledge learned through the sport’s core values and the full acknowledgement of the ethos by the game classifies rugby a way of life according to the report (Rogers, et al., 2008). Among other important characteristics and traditions that are related to rugby and that were identified by the task group in their report are the drinking culture of the game and the close relation that rugby traditionally has with
beer. Mixing with the opposition is as well a very important tradition for the rugby culture and it is tied to the already mentioned drinking culture; sharing a beer and stories after a match is commonly known as “the third time” and it helps rivals to mingle and chat, creating a sense of community (Rogers, et al., 2008). Finally, the behavior of fans when they arrive to a stadium and the entertainment and atmosphere throughout the entire rugby match is as well very characteristic with the typical silence of the crowd, regardless of the team they support whether home or the away team, when the kickers are aiming to get extra point. All these studied and identified traditions are built not only around the English nation and people, but also around all the rugby players in the world which has led to the construction of a sub-culture around the sport that creates a sense of belonging and social identity.

Rugby is played worldwide by a large number of people, which makes it one of the most popular sports across the world (Sporteology, n.d.). For many it remains unknown but in countries like New Zealand, France, Australia, Wales or Ireland it is the most important sport and the most popular one (Sporteology, n.d.). The fact that it still needs to be professionally developed in the majority of countries that formed the International Rugby Board (IRB) gives rugby an extra potential that needs to be studied in depth to fully exploit it. The possibility of watching professional players on the pitch, like for instance in fully professional leagues in England or in an event like the Rugby World Cup, is also an important contributing factor for rugby players from non-traditional rugby countries that could act as a motivator for the latter to engage in a rugby trip to the Rugby World Cup in England. This big difference between the different countries in the rugby world is as well important to estimate whether rugby players from non-traditional rugby countries will be prompted not only to go to the different matches, but also to engage in more rugby related activities. These could, for example involve rugby traditions and local English people, to make sure that tourists have a taste of what a rugby culture means, since they are unable to find this experience in their home countries.

The election of the case study was also highly influenced by the destination where the event is going to take place. Apart from the history and heritage, England has a wide range of activities and services which make it one of the most important destinations in the world. It was ranked eighth among the 10 first destinations in the world in international arrivals (World Tourism Organization, 2013). Likewise, in terms of
tourism receipts it is ranked in the same position for the year 2012 (World Tourism Organization, 2013). London is the most visited city in the UK, according to the statistical evaluations of VisitBritain (Visit Britain, 2013). It is by far the city in the UK with the highest number of international tourists (more than 15.000.000), followed by Edinburgh as second most visited city with around a million international tourist arrivals (Visit Britain, 2013). England is as well a destination that has a well-known image among tourists, mainly because of its heritage as mentioned above, but also since it offers different types of tourist attractions apart from cultural tourism, like family tourism, rural tourism, coast tourism, romance tourism, for instance (The Official Tourist Board for England, n.d.), which may help to prolong the stay of the potential tourists coming to watch the Rugby World Cup in 2015.

As seen from the explanations presented above, rugby is a phenomenal example for the aim of this study since it has an old history that has prevailed through time and is deeply rooted in the English culture. It is also a sport which is popular worldwide and the people who practice it feel a high degree of attachment. Additionally, the Rugby World Cup event will soon take place in the most iconic destination for this sport, England, where the sport was born and grew as it is known today.

5.0 Methodology

The structure of this paper is composed of a theoretical and a practical part. This section introduces the practical part, explaining how and why the research has been chosen, the type of data gathered and its use for the present paper. Finally, the section will conclude with the different limitations that the writer faced throughout the research process.

The research strategy of this paper has followed a classical path of social sciences research. Firstly, a research question was presented which will drive, give sense to the rest of the paper and present the topics to be studied. Secondly, a deep study of these topics out of the existing literature in the field was conducted with the help of reading already published articles from scientific journals to acquire the necessary knowledge on the issue to proceed with the primary research. Finally, the way these concepts are going to be practically studied is presented in this section, with a detailed explanation
regarding the type of data that has been gathered and the sources from which it has been extracted, among other important issues for the methodology.

The most appropriate choice of a research method which could give a scientific answer to the research question presented at the beginning of this paper and to test the different theories including concepts and models that were derived from the study of previous literature on the topics in a practical manner seemed to be the case study method. A case study marks the perfect tool to enable a proper empirical research. As stated by Yin (2003), a case study is an “empirical research that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). In the context of this paper, the contemporary phenomenon that was studied is the tourism industry, specifically the relationship between a specific destination’s sporting heritage linked to the feelings of national identity that their inhabitants possess and the willingness to travel to that destination in order to participate in a sport event for those tourists who fall into the category of serious leisure for that sport. The case study method also allows having a more holistic view of the situation, providing a tool that empowers the researcher to generalize the results obtained (Baharein Mohd Noor, 2008). Three different types of case studies can be found within the case study literature; exploratory, explanatory and descriptive (Yin, 2003). Among these three kinds, the one that suits this research best is exploratory, since it is normally used to study the validity of hypotheses and to give an answer to a research question (Yin, 2003). Therefore, the concept of serious leisure, national identity, and willingness to travel, alongside with others, like destination image, would supposedly highly influence the rugby niche market and entice them to go to England, where the Rugby World Cup 2015 will take place. The relationship is not evident, since the proposed variables are lacking interlinkages and therefore a study of these variables and the way they relate to each other is needed to try to find these relationships.

Since the purpose of the research strategy is to understand the behavior and preferences of the potential tourists attracted to the event, with a special focus on motivation to travel and on factors that influence it, the required data type was quantitative. Quantitative data is the type of data which defines variables and can be used for statistical purposes (Business Dictionary, n.d.). Statistics can be defined as the branch of mathematics which transforms numbers into useful information, by processing and
analyzing them (Levine, Stephan, Krehbiel, & Berenson, 2008). The mandatory selection of quantitative data determines the selection of the collection instrument to gather the data. There were different options, but the conduction of a Web-based survey was eventually chosen because it suited the resources and means of the researcher best in order to reach the potential respondents and to achieve a large sample out of the overall population. There are several advantages of using Web-based surveys, stated by Granello and Wheaton (2004) in their article *Online Data Collection: Strategies for Research*. These advantages consist of the following: a reduced time for collecting the data, a lowered cost of conducting internet research in contrast with mail surveys, easily accessible data for the researcher at any time, the flexibility and control over the format of the survey, inter alia (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). These above mentioned advantages are the ones that drove the choice of a Web-based survey collection method for this study. There are also disadvantages on the usage of Web-based surveys. For instance, the problems of obtaining a representative sample, the odds of not getting enough respondents, problems that may arise from the use of technology either from the point of view of the researcher or from the side of respondents (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). Furthermore, respondents that answer several times or provide non-related answers to open questions as similarly encountered in the Web-based survey designed for this paper can pose a problem as there is no way of keeping those who have answered it from answering it again (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). Lastly, the motivation to fill in the surveys can be lower for the Web-based surveys compared to other type of surveys, adding to the already mentioned problems (Stanton, 1998).

The Web-based survey has been developed thoroughly with the intention of gathering sufficient data which will provide an answer to the research question of the paper in the first place, mainly achieved with the aid of the four hypotheses that will be accepted or refuted after conducting the appropriate statistical tests between the different variables of the study. The hypotheses, which are expectations made by the researcher, intend to present easily understandable and clear connections between the studied variables (Creswell, 2009). They will provide results for the total population studied (the rugby niche) from the people who has answered the Web-based survey (the sample). There are several points that need to be taken into account when designing a Web-based survey which are that the accessibility to the online form needs to be easy, its compilation has to be simple for all respondents and it should not require high technological skills
The credibility and the anonymity that the survey provides are as well two important characteristics which can help to engage people to participate in the survey (Carbonaro and Bainbridge, 2000 as cited in Lefever, Dal, & Matthíasdóttir, 2007). The dynamic and easily accessible survey form engages the respondent and ensures that the survey will be completed once it has been started. To create such a survey which complies with the above stated requirements, the form application of Google Drive has been used, since it is free and easily accessible from every computer and everywhere in the world. In addition to this, it directly sorts out the answers on a separate spreadsheet and creates a summary of responses where all the answers to the different questions are shown in different charts and allow easy exporting to other software. This application also ensures and increases the researcher’s credibility, since he or she is always available to be contacted. The anonymity of the respondents is as well ensured, since no names, email addresses or personal data were asked throughout the survey. The Google Drive application is as well the suitable software to gather quantitative data, needed for the purpose of this paper, because it provides a wide range of options to design the questions, for instance by means of Likert-scales, multiple choice options and lists.

The population of a study is defined as the total number of individuals to whom the survey is addressed (Levine, Stephan, Krehbiel, & Berenson, 2008). For this study, the population was reduced to all those people who engage in rugby as a sport activity, meaning all the individuals who have or have had contact with rugby as a sport in any manner, either as a player or now as a former player, referees, trainers or just by being a fan, watching it and knowing the rules. They have been chosen because they have specific and relevant knowledge about the sport, and as shown in the literature review, they will be most likely to engage in sporting heritage travel and possibly, visiting the Rugby World Cup in England, as a motivator to fulfil the interests arising from their serious leisure activity. Another requirement that had to be fulfilled to participate in the survey was being over 17 years old, as the researcher desired to have a sample that can make independent travel decisions or influence the travel decisions with their opinions. Another important requirement mandatory to be eligible for the survey was not to hold an English passport which is why all English citizens were immediately excluded from the survey. They were made exempt from the survey since some of the topics that respondents were asked about related to England as a travel destination and their
connections with English culture and thus their national pride. It can be assumed that the English citizens are aware of their own culture and identify themselves with the stories and values embedded in it.

The survey is formed by eighteen questions, as seen in Appendix 1, divided into four different sections. Firstly, the respondent had to watch an introductory video about the history of the Rugby World Cups in which different images of each event are shown, finishing with the one to come next year and some images of the most important monuments and landscapes of England. The video was chosen among other commercials for the Rugby World Cup because of its historical footage on the different tournaments and because it introduces different concepts that are important for the meaning of the survey; namely the core values of rugby. The footage is also important because it shows great moments of the seven different world cups that have taken place, which is meant to touch the respondent and engage him/her on a more sentimental level.

The first section consists of a set of questions about the Rugby World Cup in England which relates to the video previously watched by the respondents. The first question is meant to analyze the content of the video by the respondents and to check whether it arouses memories and nostalgic feelings in them. Five different statements had to be ranked from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The second survey question measures the willingness to travel to the Rugby World Cup 2015 and the answers given to it will allow the respondents to answer a variety of follow-up questions, since only those who want to assist to the event can answer them. These two last questions are addressed to the potential tourists to the Rugby World Cup and they were designed to understand whether these potential tourists would like to engage in other activities during their stay at the destination and what is their real underlying motivation to travel to the event.

The following and second section of the survey is composed of a single question where the respondents had to answer five different statements about England as a tourism destination and the perception they have about England as a nation, rating them from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). These statements are aimed at identifying the cognitive, affective and overall image components of destination image that are held by these potential tourists supported by two cognitive questions which are asking about the English offer of tourism services and activities and England’s contribution to world
history. In addition to this there are two affective questions, which inquire about the feelings attached to England as a travel destination and the perception respondents have about English people. The final question in this section is concerned about the overall image of the country and directly asks about participant’s perception of England as whole.

The third section of the survey is the longest one and contains questions about rugby, mainly to see to what extent respondents are involved in rugby as their serious leisure activity. The posed questions concerned the number of hours weekly spent on the activity, which kind of involvement they have with the activity and the general knowledge about the core values of the sport. As well, the section entails questions that were created to check the familiarity of the respondents with stories and images embedded in the rugby culture including the foundational myth of the sport, their memories from previous Rugby World Cups, the core values and their national team preferences (apart from their own national team). It is common in the world of rugby due to the different levels between the top ten rugby countries and the rest, that rugby players from non-traditional rugby countries have a preferred one among the top ten national teams.

In the final section, a few demographic questions were posed, with age, gender, the nationality and the country of residence of the respondents being of primary importance for the data analysis. Age and gender of respondents are important in order to have a clear idea of the type of sample that has been reached through the different channels of distribution. Furthermore, the nationality is an important variable. If the respondents come from a traditional rugby country their answers would be influenced by the rugby culture that surrounds them in their country. On the other hand, the participants who come from a non-traditional rugby country would probably have less knowledge about rugby and its history. The inclusion of the country of residence is meant to check if living on a traditional rugby country will have any effect on the answers of the respondents.

Once the survey was developed, tested and accepted by the paper’s supervisor, it was launched through the Internet, mainly using social networks; Facebook and Twitter. Once sufficient significant data were gathered, they were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS 22 by IBM. By using this statistical software it was possible for the
researcher to draw inferences about the whole population from a study sample (Creswell, 2009). The statistical methods will be applied to the sample of the population, meaning the number of people that actually completed the survey out of the total of eligible respondents (Levine, Stephan, Krehbiel, & Berenson, 2008). The study of this sample will lead the researcher to some assumptions which consequently can be generalized to the whole population.

Furthermore, there are several limitations that the researcher faced during his study. Firstly, there was an important limitation on the distribution of the survey, which was only achieved via two social networks. There are several limitations that arise from the use of these types of distribution channels, as previously explained in the Web-based survey selection process. The majority of the potential problems have not occurred, since a large number of respondents were achieved and technical problems arose from neither respondents nor the researcher. Additionally, there is no evidence that the same person answered the questionnaire more than once, despite the difficulty to detect such double responses by for example similar answers in all sections. The distribution channels for the survey also limited the sample, mainly by age of respondents. Social networks are primarily used by young people, holding a great number of potential respondents while older demographics prevailing in the population, at least those with low computer literacy or affinity to social networks, were excluded from participating in the survey because they either did not have access to the survey, or were not reached by the employed distribution strategy. The social media used as the only distribution channels allow the researcher to reach parts of the world which would not have been possible with a paper survey; therefore the sampling in this regard is more complete, with a great variety of nationalities. On the other hand, some of the survey participants can be regarded as biased due to the lack of motivation of many respondents to answer the survey since there were no rewards, financial incentives or prizes that would increase the motivation of the respondents to fill in the survey. The repeated selection of answers in the 5-Likert scale questions and the blank spaces in the open questions are clear evidences of this limitation.

The lack of answers for the two open questions can be regarded as a consequence of the language of the survey, which is another limitation. The fact that the survey was entirely written in English may not represent a problem for those questions where the respondent only had to choose among a number of options; however, the open
questions, which require a development of sentences and ideas can create a problem for those respondents who are not confident about their English or that just understand written English but are not able to write themselves. This can be regarded as one of the major problems since the majority of the respondents did not have English as their mother tongue and therefore much useful information regarding the knowledge of the respondents about rugby’s history was missing, which consequently had an influence on the analysis as well as results of the paper.

Moreover, the paper itself has several limitations related to the employed research focus. The specific relationship that the destination has with the sport makes the case study almost a unique in the world. The case study provides low reliability in generalizing the results of this study to other destinations organizing sporting events, since the features of the sport, the attractiveness of the destination and the way they are historically related can barely happen in any other destination. The fact that England is one of the main tourism destinations in the world, with large campaigns to attract tourists, and the large amount of information available its main features and attractions makes it difficult to understand whether the results of the research will be affected because of the specific rugby history that the destination possesses or because of the overall English history combined with the development of tourism campaigns that England has implemented over the years. As well, visitation of local destinations, like London, may also be a great motivator that will drive the behavior of some potential tourists, with the Rugby World Cup relegated to a second position in their priorities while visiting the destination. The unique ethos of rugby and the circumstances that existed around its development, the late pass from amateurism to professionalism and the huge differences between levels of the countries on the international arena are some features that make the sport unique. These two limitations are the reason why the results that may arise from the research of this paper cannot be generalized to other sports or to the same sport in other destinations, and can simultaneously be regarded as the reason why the results may not be totally trustworthy. This can be attributed to England as a tourism destination which normally attracts a large number of tourists, regardless of whether their primary motivation is the Rugby World Cup or any other type of tourist activities and services that exist in the destination. At the same time, the attractiveness of England as a destination limits the possibility to understand whether the cognitive component of the English image among the population is resulting from respondents’
knowledge about rugby and its history or because they have been exposed to other non- 
rugby related commercials about England as a tourist destination.

6.0 Analysis and discussion

In this section of the paper the data gathered with the help of the Web-based survey will 
be analyzed and discussed. Firstly, a descriptive analysis of the results and a summary 
of the responses of the survey will be presented. After that, the hypotheses presented in 
the previous section (see 3.0) will be accepted or rejected, applying statistical and 
mathematical tests in order to check the relationship between the different variables. To 
conclude this section, a discussion of the presented data in comparison to other 
collected secondary data will be performed and connected with the concepts and models 
presented in the theoretical part.

6.1 Description of the Web-based survey

At the beginning a draft survey was developed and tested among a small sample of the 
population to check whether the questions proposed were convenient. The feedback 
received suggested that the survey was engaging and challenging for the respondents. 
After filling it in, the respondents were asked about the quality of the survey and out of 
their suggestions some amendments were made to help the researcher refine its purpose 
and to create a more easily accessible survey that will engage more people to answer it 
and thus achieve a higher response rate. The main channels of distribution were social 
networks, especially Facebook and Twitter. These channels were perfect to post the 
survey’s link to specialized rugby groups; team groups where the researcher has played 
and to tweet it to famous and important people in the rugby world, who helped with 
their retweets to achieve a wider and more heterogeneous sample. The link to the survey 
was launched on May, 5th 2014, and it was closed exactly 33 days later, on June, 6th 
2014. This period of time is relatively short for the number of answers gathered, which 
represented a total of 185 responses, but was one of the advantages of Web-based 
surveys mentioned earlier in this paper. The total number of responses could not be 
studied since four answers were eliminated due to missing data or biased data, which 
are known as fraudulent responses (Lefever, Dal, & Matthíasdóttir, 2007). For instance,
all these eliminated cases had ranked all the Likert scales with 5 and had given incoherent answers to the open end questions.

As previously mentioned in the above section, the SPSS 22 software was chosen to statistically study the sample. This software developed by IBM is the perfect tool for this analysis, since it provides all the necessary statistical tests needed for a thorough analysis of the data and the relationships between the different studied variables. The program allows to firstly introduce the different variables that are going to be studied in a spreadsheet, and then in another spreadsheet the data that defines those variables can be displayed. Once all the data have been introduced into the program, different statistical tests can be carried out.

The questions of the survey can be grouped into two different groups, the numerical variable questions, with 5-Likert scale questions and the non-numerical variable questions. There are two types of this latter one with some questions that required participants to choose among various statements and some open questions. To work with them, they had to be introduced into the SPSS 22 program. To do so, all the questions which were based on a 5-Likert scale were introduced as numerical variables, ranked with the values given by the respondents in their answers; from 1 to 5. The non-numerical variables were introduced as numerical variables, rating them with 0 and 1 depending, whether they had been chosen or not. For instance, for the third question, respondents were asked to choose among a number of options which activities which they would like to do if they were intending to go to the Rugby World Cup. Each of the options given were converted into a variable, and then, given values of 0 and 1, being rated 0 if the respondent did choose it, and 1 if, on the other hand, the respondent did not choose the option. Therefore, each statement was classified with a different variable. This procedure has been used with all questions with similar characteristics to this example, like the fourth (factors influencing visitation to the Rugby World Cup) and the tenth question (the core values of rugby). In this regard, the eighth question that was designed to enquire about the number of hours that respondents spend in rugby related activities weekly marks a special case. For the purpose of this paper, and out of the studied concepts and literature on serious leisure, it was concluded that any respondent that spends more than 6 hours on rugby related activities weekly will fall under this serious leisure category. Thus, those who selected the answers “less than 2” or “3-5” were not considered to belong to the serious leisure classification. The value 0 was
assigned to those who chose one the latter two options. Those participants who chose “6-10”, “11-15”, “16-20” and “other” have been given the value 1, on the other hand.

Generally, not all variables were typed into SPSS 22, since not all of them were necessary to be tested to validate the hypotheses. As the application used to collect the data immediately provides bar graphs and also an excel file with all the data, the description of these variables could be done out of these two forms, and no transcription to SPSS 22 was needed.

The analysis of the results of the Web-based survey, as seen in Appendix 2, will start with the demographic variables, to have an idea of the composition of the sample and the possible relations that it can have with other variables. Then, a statistical descriptive analysis of the variables introduced in SPSS 22 will be shown. To finish this part, a descriptive analysis of the rest of questions which were asked in the survey and which were important for the research but not used for the hypotheses testing part were analyzed. The descriptive statistics which are going to be used to describe the results of the survey are the arithmetic mean, a measure of central tendency, the median, which represents the middle value of the data studied and the mode, the most repeated choice chosen by the respondents (Levine, Stephan, Krehbiel, & Berenson, 2008). The way the variables are distributed will also be explained with negative or left-skewed distributions where the value of the median is greater than the mean and positive or right-skewed distributions, where the value of the median is lower than the value of the mean (Levine, Stephan, Krehbiel, & Berenson, 2008).

The sample of the survey is mostly young, with 46% of the respondents being between 17 and 25 years old, and a 65% younger than 30. Seventeen percent are between 31 to 35 years of age and the rest of the age groups are more or less equally distributed, with n=14, n=9 and n=11 for the groups 36-40, 41-45 and over 45 respectively. The youth of the sample can be attributed to the used channels of distribution. As commented before, Facebook and Twitter were the employed social media where most users are young, making the older age groups more difficult to reach. The majority of the respondents were male, 149 out of 181 which marks a total of 81% of the respondents. The number of female respondents was surprisingly high (n=36), taking into account that most of the answers came from posting on former teams’ Facebook groups, where it was mostly attended to by men. This shows that the other tools used to spread the survey through
the internet successfully worked, since at the beginning of the survey distribution, only male respondents were expected. The large number of nationalities collected in the survey is a sign of how well the survey was spread throughout the internet, reaching a large number of people and cultures from all over the world. The majority of the respondents were European, with Spain and Austria as countries that contributed the most to the response rate, with n=58 and n=38 participants respectively. Other nationalities from Europe are Slovenian (n=10), French (n=10), German (n=5), Danish (n=4), Icelandic (n=2), Irish (n=2) and one Dutch as well as one Italian respondent. From countries outside Europe most of the respondents came from the American continent, with 20% of the respondents from the USA (n=37) and from Canada (n = 8). From South America one Argentinian respondent could be found and from other overseas countries, 1 participant from South Africa and 2 from New Zealand as well Australia were among the sample. The table below shows a bar chart of the percentage that each nationality represents for the total sample. As it can be seen, the Spanish, Austrian and US nationalities are the largest one among the seventeen nationalities collected.

![Figure 3: nationality of the respondents](image)

This trend matches with the countries of residence of the respondents. This variable was introduced to test whether there was any difference between people from a specific nationality who live in another country, a traditional rugby country, for instance England or Ireland, and those whose residence is in a non-traditional rugby country, for
instance Spain or Austria. As 150 of the respondents lived in their origin country and as out of those who live in a country different from their nationality some did not indicate to live in a traditional rugby country, there is a lack of data to test whether living in a traditional rugby country actually affects the perception about rugby and the corresponding willingness to travel. As can be seen in the bar chart below, some new countries appear, like Belgium or Mexico; which do not have a citizen from there among all respondents, but are also an example of non-traditional rugby countries. Spain, Austria and the USA are still the three top countries where people live, for the nationalities variable.

This data reflects the method chosen to collect it, since Web-based surveys allow the researcher “to access large and geographically distributed samples” (Lefever, Dal, & Matthiasdóttir, 2007, p. 1), and unique ones, that would be impossible to reach by other classical means (Wright, 2005).

The questions about rugby and the willingness to go will be explained next. The five questions the video presented were on a 5-Likert scale where “totally disagree” was assigned the value 1 and “totally agree” to the value 5. The first question asked to rank how the video impacted the viewer and whether memories from his/her rugby life were remembered while watching it. The answers are more or less similarly distributed among the three top answers, three with a 28%, four with a 34% and five with a 20%.
The mean of this variable is 3.55, its median 4 and the most repeated answer, the mode, is 4 as well. This data clearly shows that the distribution is left-skewed, since the median is greater than the mean.

![Figure 5: skewedness of the distribution](image)

The second question about the video refers to the values seen on the video and the relation to their perception of rugby. These values watched by the respondents were discipline, passion, respect and integrity. In this case, the majority of the respondents, 52%, ranked this question with a 5, \((n=94)\). Furthermore, 51 ranked it four, with the two top answers gathering the vast majority of answers. Therefore, the mean is the highest of the four questions related to the video, 4.27 and median and mode are also high, 5. The distribution is also left-skewed, and therefore negative, since the mean is less than the median.
The third question does also have a high mean with 3.98. When inquired about the images shown and how they fit their perception of rugby, 74% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (126). The median and mode are equal to four, having again a left-skewed distribution. The other three options (1, 2, 3) only account for 25.1% of the total of respondents, as can be seen in the accumulative percentage bar chart below.
The fourth question aimed to check whether feelings of belonging to a rugby sub-culture arose after watching the video. The answers were, as in the other questions mainly 4 and 5 with exactly 65% of the respondents who picked those options. In this case, 3 also gathered slightly more responses than in the previous questions, with a quarter of the respondents having chosen this option. The lower values of this question only achieved 12 respondents between both of them. The mean of the sample for this variable is 3.85, and median and mode coincide in their values, namely at 4. As well as before, this distribution is left-skewed. Finally, the last question related to the video tried to understand the respondent’s opinion about the goal of the video itself, integrating the history of the Rugby World Cup and England as an appealing destination to visit. The results show the lowest mean of the 5 questions, only a 3.41, thus according to the respondents of the survey it was not very well connected. Only 18 respondents chose the value 5, and between 4 and 5 the number of respondents is lower than 50%, although 4 is the most chosen value, 3 gathered a lot of respondents as well with a total of 57, and 2 and 1 have the rest of 31 responses. The skewedness of this distribution is negative, which means it is left-skewed since its median is 4 and it is greater than the above mentioned mean while the mode is 4 for this distribution. The comparison of the mean, median and mode of these five variables is presented below in a bar chart.

![Figure 8: mean median and mode of the “video variables”](image-url)
The sixth question of the survey is still included in the first part, and it is about the respondent’s willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup. This is one of the key questions of the questionnaire and was designed as a 5-Likert type scale question, with 1 indicating “not at all” and 5 “of course”. The results clearly show that the vast majority of the respondents are willing to go to the Rugby World Cup. The highest value, 5, has by itself more answers than all the rest together (110) and the answers 4 and 5 obtain more than 80% of the sample. With these results, it is obvious that the most repeated value chosen is 5, which simultaneously is the mode and the median. The mean is a bit lower, 4.36, leaving a left-skewed distribution for this variable. The bar chart presented below shows clearly the big difference between the highest value and other values in terms of number of respondents.

![Bar chart showing frequency distribution](image)

*Figure 9: Frequency of the distribution*

The last two questions of this first set of questions about the introductory video and the Rugby World Cup are non-numerical variables and both of them are influenced by the previous question, only those who had rated their willingness to go, 4 or higher, could answer them; which means the sample was reduced from 181 to 151. The first one presents several ancillary activities to which the potential tourists to the destination could engage in once they are there. Respondents were able to choose as many as they wanted from the eight possibilities offered. The majority of the options were equally chosen by the respondents, as it can be seen in the graph below; “Visit Museums” (65), “Contact with other rugby fellows” (120), “Activities with rugby legends” (72), “Get to know participating teams” (85), “English rugby culture” (88), “Rugby related events”
(111), “Play with a local team” (89), “Local culture” (94). The two activities which the potential tourists selected the most are to have contact with other rugby fellows (80%) and to participate in rugby related events when in the destination (61%). This clearly shows the need of feeling part of the whole rugby community and also the want to practice skills in kicking, passing or other types of rugby related competitions that may be put in place by the destination. As mentioned before, each statement was introduced in SPSS 22 as an individual variable, ranking either 0 if it was chosen and 1 if it was not. This way, the descriptive statistics for these variables are as follows. For the variable “Visit Museums” the mean is 0.56, median and mode are equal to 1 which leads to a left-skewed distribution and the result that less than half of the sample chose this option. The next variable, “Contact with other rugby fellows”, has a high rate, as mentioned before. This reflects in its mean which is very close to 0, 0.23 and its median and mode that are 0. The distribution of this variable is positive, since its media is greater than its median, and can therefore be regarded as right-skewed. The variable “Rugby legends” was among the least chosen one, with a mean of 0.52, closer to 1 than to 0. Its median and its mode are also 1, leading to a left-skewed distribution. For the variables which are left leaning, the tendency repeats; they all have equal median and mode, 0, and are right-skewed distributions since their means are 0.41, 0.28, 0.43, 0.38 respectively for “Get to know participating teams”, “English Rugby Culture”, “Rugby related events”, “local team” and “local culture”. Special attention should be paid to “English Rugby Culture” since it is the second choice which has been selected by more respondents (111). These results clearly show that all of the potential visitors to the destination want to engage in some other activities just than merely go to rugby matches and the offer that the destination must provide should be wide because most of them ranked three or four options. Creating opportunities for the visitors to meet and talk and create rugby related events around the matches should be a priority for the destination since those gathered the highest number of responses.
The last question of this set is similar to the previous one in format. Only those respondents who had answered 4 or 5 to the willingness to go question were allowed to answer it. The inquiry was about the factors that would most influence their possible visitation to the Rugby World Cup. They could choose as many as they wanted from a list of five different factors. The aim of this question was to mix nostalgic factors with simply sportive ones and to understand which ones were more important for the respondents. The five options presented were “just watch rugby”, “be part of a big event with other rugby fellows”, “support favorite national team”, “feel the atmosphere of a rugby match” and “the importance of the game in my life”. To use these variables for hypotheses testing, they were typed into SPSS 22 the same way as the ones in the previous paragraph with the help of dummy variables. Each of them have a similar sample as the previous ones, 151, since only people who rated their willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup 4 or higher were able to answer it. Two of the variables were picked by a high number of respondents which were to “be part of a big event with other rugby fellows” (100) and to “feel the atmosphere of a rugby match” (123). Their means are 0.34 and 0.19 respectively, while the values for their median and mode are equal; 0. These values show a positive distribution with right skewedness for both. These are the only two variables out of the five with means lower than 0.5, being 0.51, 0.64 and 0.74 for the other three, respectively “just watch rugby”, “support my favorite national team” and “the importance of the game in my life”. As their means and modes are all 1, their distributions are left-skewed, and thus negative.
The next set of questions to be analyzed is the one that relates to the perception of England as a tourism destination by the respondents. These questions were designed as a 5 point Likert type scale, and the different statements could be ranked from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All of the respondents were able to answer this question; therefore the sample increased back to 181. Firstly, there will be an analysis of the affective image questions, then the cognitive ones and finally the overall image question. The affective questions were aimed to understand what type of feelings respondents have about England as a tourism destination, thus they were asked about the feelings the destination arouses in them and about the perception they have about English people. The first statement included 103 of the respondents who agreed with it, 65 marked the 4 option and 38 the 5 one; which means more than half of the respondents (56%). The other 44 split between the other three options, with number 3 the one with the highest number of respondents, 53. This is reflected in the mean, median and mode of the variable. The mean is 3.62 whereas the median and the mode coincide in their value, 4. This triggers a left-skewed distribution since the median is greater than the mean. The second affective statement was aimed at understanding what perceptions respondents have about English people. The question addressed the English people’s friendliness and their behavior towards the tourists from the point of view of the respondents. The majority of the respondents chose number 3, with a frequency of 80. This clearly shows that their perception of the English people is low which is reflected in the mean of the variable (3.26) and consequently the lowest one among the
5 variables about England as a destination. The second highest chosen option was 4, with a total of 31% of the respondents. Not many respondents strongly agreed with this statement, only 6%, while 18% of them strongly disagreed or only disagreed. As mentioned above, the mean of the distribution is 3.26, greater than the mean and the mode, which values are similar (3); consequently the distribution of the variable is positive and right-skewed.

![Figure 12: skewedness of the distribution](image)

The cognitive image questions were then analyzed to understand what perceptions the respondents had about England regarding their knowledge about the destination only and not their feelings. To accomplish such a goal they were asked about England’s offer of activities and England’s history. The respondents of the survey are aware of England’s offer for tourism, with almost half of them having chosen the option 4 (n=80) in the survey, and with a quarter of them having chosen 5 (n=43). This is reflected in the descriptive statistics for this variable; mean is 3.83, mode and median are both 4. The variable is negatively distributed since the median is greater than the mean; and thus it is left-skewed. The left options gathered the other third of the respondents, with just two of them who strongly disagreed with the statement and 42 who ranked it 3. The next cognitive question inquired about the English history and whether participants found it relevant to the sporting world history. This variable has the highest mean of all in this set of questions, with none of the respondents having chosen the option 1 for their answers. The rest, as it can be assumed, are mainly gathered along the options of 4 and
5, this time with 5 greater than 4 in terms of frequency, 67 and 73 respectively. The other two options, 2 and 3, represent 25% of the sample only. As said before, the mean is high, exactly 4.11, greater than the median, which for the first time is different than the mode; median is 4 and mode is 5. The distribution is positive, since the median is smaller than the mean. The bar chart below shows the accumulative frequency of the responses.

![Figure 13: accumulative frequency of the distribution](image)

Finally, the last statement of this question measures the overall image that respondents have of the destination. A great majority of them have a fairly good perception of England, since the most repeated answer is 4 (n=81). Around a quarter of the sample strongly agree with the statement, and have a very good overall impression of England as a travel destination. Only 6% disagree or totally disagree with the statement, which is a sign that the sample has a good impression of the destination. That fact is reflected in the mean of the variable, which is rather high, 3.87, with a median and a mode of 4. This leads to a left-skewed distribution for this variable.
The following set of questions is about rugby as a serious leisure activity of the participants in the survey. The first of these questions to be analyzed is the length of the respondents’ involvement in rugby expressed by the number of years. The mean of this variable is high, 10.78 years, with a median of 9.00 and a mode of 5. The number of years per person is a good indicator of the expertise and experience the sample has about rugby, and therefore of their interest and willingness to participate in anything related to rugby. However, it has extreme values; some respondents have 30 years of experience, whereas some others have just 1.

The following question is aimed to know which type of involvement the respondents have with rugby. Most of them are currently players of a team (n=135), most of them considering themselves fans too (n=96). Then, former player (n=49) and trainer (n=35) followed, with other and referee as the least chosen options, n=19 and n=11 respectively. It is important to know that respondents could choose more than one option, allowing them to show a greater involvement, if they have it, since some of them are players and trainers or former players and referees at the same time. The high number of players is due to the channels of distribution where the survey has been passed on. Some more interesting types of involvement could also be found in the survey, for instance, team doctors, team chairmen, sponsor responsible person, among others.
After the type of involvement, a question about the hours spent weekly by each respondent in dedication to the sport was posed. There were six different options, from “less than two” to “other”, being more than twenty hours weekly of involvement in rugby. The majority of the respondents showed a huge involvement in the sport of rugby, with 62% of the respondents having an involvement of more than 6 hours weekly (n=114). This variable, when introduced to SPSS 22 was divided in two subsections. For the purpose of the paper, those participants who chose 6 or a higher number of hours were given the value 1, and those who, on the other hand, chose 6 or less number of hours were given the value 0. This subdivision coincides with the descriptive results, since the mean of the distribution is 0.62, showing that the majority of the participants may fall into the serious leisure category. It reflects as well in the median and mode, which are both 1 and leads to a left skewed distribution. The chart presented shows the frequency for each option available in the survey. The respondent who marked the option “other” was involved in rugby for a total of 60 hours weekly.
The ninth question of the survey was meant to analyze the preferences of the respondents according to teams of the international arena. As it has been shown before in the demographic part, the majority of the respondents come from non-traditional rugby countries, therefore it is expected that they have a preferred national team from another country to support in international competition where their national teams are unable to compete due to the high difference of competition. The results were clear as the vast majority of the respondents who come from non-traditional rugby countries have one of the more famous and successful rugby countries as their favorite national team to support in international competition. The two teams who stood out the most were New Zealand and Ireland. Although a list was provided listing Tier1 teams of international rugby, some respondents chose the “other” option, with teams like Samoa displayed in that list. Some others chose this option but to include their own national teams in the list, whereas some of the respondents from traditional rugby countries were shown to not fully support their country, since among the French respondents, many chose other teams as their favorite, such as Canada or New Zealand. Out of the total number of participants from traditional rugby countries, only 6 chose the option “my national team is in the above list”. For those who chose the option “NO”, it is assumed that they support their own national team having no preferences in the international arena for higher level teams.

The following question to be analyzed can be regarded as key for the development of the paper. It enquired about the respondents’ perception of rugby through how they perceive the core values of the sport. The three main core values for rugby found by the
“Ethos and Culture Task Group” in their report from 2008 were introduced among others; some pointed out as threats by the same report and some inexistent within the rugby culture. The results demonstrate that the three main core values for rugby were the most chosen ones as well by the participants (Teamwork n=178, Discipline and Respect n=164 and Sportsmanship n=152). For the purpose of the study, these variables were typed into SPSS 22 as dummy variables, counting whether they had been chosen by the respondents (Yes=0) or not (No=1). The means of teamwork, discipline and respect and sportsmanship are obviously close to 0, with 0.02, 0.09 and 0.18 respectively. Their medians and modes are equal for the three variables (0), which lead to three positive distributions; right skewed. All the other values have higher means, which is a reflection of the low importance that they had for the participants. All of them have median and mode equal to 1. Among those respondents that chose the option “other” (n= 18), they wrote what they believed to be strong values like fun, fellowship, effort, tradition, true sport, way of life and so on. The following bar chart shows a summary of all the means, median and modes for the totality of core values variables.

![Figure 17: mean median and mode of the "core values" variables](chart.png)

The next question of the survey was a combination of two with the first one aiming to check whether the respondents were aware of the foundational myth of rugby or not. In case they were, an open question was presented where they could give their explanation about this foundational myth and the implications it had for the development of rugby. For the first question the majority of the respondents were not aware of the story of Webb Ellis, with only 40% of the respondents knowing of its meaning and importance.
Among this 40%, n= 73, only 43 actually gave an answer to the second part of the question with a number of 30 participants having answered “Yes” but not being able to explain the meaning of the story.

![Figure 18: percentage of respondents who are aware of the Webb Ellis story](image)

Among those who answered “Yes” and were able to explain the story (43 participants), some gave proper explanations of the story, some provided more detailed and some less detailed descriptions, but they explained in one way or another that the Webb Ellis story is the origin of rugby, its foundational myth and that it is not legitimate or scientifically proven. Examples of these short and direct explanations are, for instance, this quotation from some of the respondents: “He was the one that playing a soccer game catched [sic] the ball with the hands, so he was the first to play rugby, in theory he starts our sport” or “it is a myth that…has not [sic] legitimate backing”. Some others are even more precise, for example: “it’s de origine [sic]” or “it started it”. On the other hand, other respondents have great knowledge about the story and are able to develop a bit more their answers, for instance:

> It is probably a bit of a myth, and I have heard people say Web Ellis picking up the ball was a statement of self-expression and individualism as a break away from soccer. However, the modern rugby game has more clearly defined positions and roles for each position than soccer for example. Basically, I think it is a nice story/myth but doesn't have huge implications for the game.

Another answer from this participant shows the high degree of background knowledge: “In 1823, in the city of Rugby in England during a football match, he took the ball in his hand and he went to score a try. He died in Menton, in the South of France”.

Another example with a very passionate style and evaluation of the importance of rugby and its evolvement over time can be seen in this participant reply:
Rugby is the ultimate black sheep sport. William Webb Ellis took a chance and picked up the ball. Others had thought of it. He DID it. Rugby defines respect but it took an act of defiance to evolve this amazing sport. As a player I loved being part of this "black sheep" almost underground (at least in the US) sport and the culture that surrounds it. As a referee I appreciate the ability for one to play within the charter of the law yet walk that same line where creativity meets non-conformity as William Webb Ellis did so long ago. Thank William Webb Ellis. You created a masterpiece!

On the other hand, a more negative valuation of the foundational myth can be seen here:

Which bit? The controversy of whether Web Ellis did in fact "invent" the game? Or the fact that he allegedly did something against the current rules of the game and got away with it?

I'd say Web Ellis is just a figure head and the only implication this has for the modern game is to impart a sense of history and continuation with past generations.

Some of the respondents had also mixed knowledge about the story, and they explained the implications it had for rugby as a reflection of the values of rugby with some other more personal views: “I think it shows the unique individualism you will find amongst ruggers. Rugby is what brings us outcasts together, giving us a home and a family that understands and accepts our crazy assets!”; “anybody can be a tough guy, but being creative and tough is what win matches” or “it shows that rugby is a sport for everybody!” Finally this response emphasizes the views of another passionate rugby player:

The controversial origin of the sport gives the rugby world someone to relate to. Football is missing something that can only be produced in rugby. The violence of the sport is honestly the largest draw away from a kickball game. I personally love the club atmosphere and my life has ultimately changed for the better because of it, but there is nothing better than tackling a guy who is attempting to invade your territory. It is the ultimate battle of brawn and brains outside of going to war with my mates in the Army. Us flankers are drawn to the collision.

The last question of the survey was as well an open question, where the participants were asked about their memories of the different world cups throughout history. Among the whole sample, only a 35% answered this question (n=65). The answers collected are interesting, since many of them relate to situations where the events went beyond rugby and became a social event, not just a sport event. This is the case for all respondents who answered in relation with Rugby World Cup in South Africa in 1995 and Nelson Mandela;

Specially the World Cup in South Africa, for the political situation of the country in that moment. The image of Nelson Mandela giving the cup to Francois Piennar had a strong significance related to the values of the sport (although rugby was a sport strongly related to white race there)
Another indication of importance of this world cup can be seen in this stated answer: “The meaning of the World Cup 1995, the rugby meant much more than a simple sport”.

A great majority of the respondents talked about the way England won the Rugby World Cup in 2003, naming Jonny Wilkinson and his famous last kick that awarded the English team with the victory over Australia: “Wilkinson's drop goal in 2003” or a bit more passionate like: “When Wilkinson looked me in the eyes before he kicked the drop in world cup's final”.

The incredible performance of Argentina during the Rugby World Cup 2007 was part of the great memories about the Rugby World Cup for many respondents: “the world cup that the pumas did in 2007” and “The first [sic] match of the IRB World Cup 2007, between France and Argentina”.

The rest of the respondents gave different answers according to the time they have been playing and the different world cups they have lived through, while the world cup of 2007 in France and the world cup of 2011 in New Zealand were the most mentioned due to the age of the respondents, a rather young sample, but also 2003, 1999 and as said before 1995. On the other hand, very few respondents answered with great knowledge and passion, since probably they have been more affected by these events in their rugby life or their personal life:

Ireland's great wins against Argentina in Australia in 2003 and against Australia in NZ 2011. I have fond memories of both those world cups from getting up early and watching the matches over breakfast with friends or family. Ireland losing to Argentina in France 2009 and being eliminated from the group stages as a result is one of my first rugby memories and still one of the ones that hurts the most!

This view is also held by another respondent:

I was first introduced to rugby while stationed in McMurdo Station, Antarctica. While there, us Americans put together a team of American Football misfits and attempt to learn the game of Rugby in a few short months in order to play the New Zealanders stationed just a mile away. Since a lot of my instruction came from my Kiwi mates, I naturally became a fan of All Black Rugby. Though we were no match for the ICE BLACKS on the pitch, my life as a sports fan and a player changed forever. I couldn't get enough of rugby. After I went home in 2010, I was able to watch the All Blacks win the RWC in 2011 and it was just an awesome sight to see my newly favorite sports team win it all.

It is important to mention that those respondents who answered in a more explicit way, or developed their answers better, giving more insights and explanations were normally those whose mother tongue is English, coming from Ireland and the US in the majority.
6.2 Hypotheses testing

1st hypothesis: If the potential tourists of a sport event engage in that sport as their serious leisure activity, they will be willing to take part in that event

Some assumptions were made with the purpose of testing this first hypothesis; the main one is related to the variable “serious leisure”. For a respondent to be considered a potential serious leisure tourist it was assumed that he/she has to engage in rugby at least 6 hours weekly. The other variable to be compared with the rugby involvement of the potential tourists is their willingness to go to the destination to take part in the Rugby World Cup.

Firstly, the normality of the variables needed to be tested. As we can see in the table below, the significance (p) values for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk tests are less than 0.05, therefore it can be concluded that the data significantly deviates from a normal distribution. The distribution is not bell shaped, but left skewed, since its mean (0.62) is less than its median (1.00).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of participants</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov(^a)</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic al</td>
<td>gl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williness to travel to RWC</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
<td>.381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Normality Tests

Thus, a test for not normally distributed variables and a test for a categorical variable (serious leisure) and a numerical variable (willingness to go) was needed. The Mann-Whitney test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were chosen to ascertain the relationship between the variables. The Mann-Whitney test is used to compare “differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed” (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test allows the researcher to test whether two samples come from the same population (Departamento de Sociologia, n.d.). These tests were used to accept or reject other hypotheses within this paper as well.
After conducting the test, the Mann-Whitney test shows a level of significance (p=0.052) of over 0.05, which means that the groups defined by the variable “serious leisure” come from populations with the same mean. Therefore, there is no significant difference between both variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Willingness to travel to RWC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U de Mann-Whitney</td>
<td>3262,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W de Wilcoxon</td>
<td>5608,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymptotic Sig. (bilateral)</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Grouping variable: Hours of participant

*Table 2: Statistical Proof of the Relationship between the Variables “Hour of Participant” and “Willingness to go” by the Mann-Whitney Test*

This fact is proven as well by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which with a level of significance of p=0.516, also greater than 0.05, shows us that both compared groups are significantly similar on their willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup, and therefore there is not significant relation between them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Willingness to travel to RWC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest extremes</td>
<td>Absolute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>differences</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z de Kolmogorov-Smirnov</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymptotic Sig. (bilateral)</td>
<td>.516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Grouping variable: Hours of participants

*Table 3: Statistical Proof of the Relationship between the Variables “Hour of Participant” and “Willingness to go” by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

The results of both test lead to the rejection of this first hypothesis. There is no significant relation between the participants’ willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup and whether they engage in rugby as their serious leisure activity. Consequently, the number of hours spent by the respondents weekly does not affect their willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup, with the majority of respondents being willing to go.
2nd hypothesis: If the potential tourists of a sport event are aware of the different myths, stories, images and traditions embedded in that sport, they will be willing to take part in that event

The same procedure used to test the first hypothesis is needed to test the second one, since the variables willingness to go and core values, and willingness to go and Webb-Ellis will be tested. Firstly, the variable willingness to go will be tested separately with the three core values which were ranked by at least fifty percent of the respondents among the eight different possibilities given. The minimum number needed for a core value to be tested is 91, and only Teamwork (n=177), Discipline and Respect (n=165) and Sportsmanship (n=148) were over that number. The variable willingness to go was also tested with whether the respondents had knowledge about the foundational myth of rugby, namely the Webb-Ellis story. These four variables (core values teamwork, discipline and respect and sportsmanship, and the Webb-Ellis story) were the ideal ones to understand how the respondents are influenced by the history and traditions of the sport. The core values are embedded in the game and are a fundamental part of it for all players over the world (Rogers, et al., 2008). The Webb-Ellis story is the foundational myth of rugby, and although it is a mystic, non-scientific-based story, it has great potential to influence potential tourists to visit England for the Rugby World Cup.

To be able to proceed with the tests it is needed to test their normality first. The four variables to be tested with the willingness to go variable have shown similar results. The significance of both, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk have been less than 0.05, which means that they are not normally distributed. The core value variables (Teamwork, Discipline and Respect and Sportsmanship) are all right skewed distributions, since their means (0.02, 0.09 and 0.18) are higher than their medians (0.00, 0.00 and 0.00) respectively. On the other hand, the Webb-Ellis story variable is left skewed due to the higher value of its median in comparison with its mean (0.60<1.00).
The Mann-Whitney and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were carried out again since the variables were a combination of a numerical one with several categorical ones. The core values were tested individually with the variable willingness to go. For the core value teamwork the results showed a significance of \( p=0.462 \) for the Mann-Whitney test and a significance of \( p=1.00 \) for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov. It can be concluded that both compared groups of the variable Teamwork are significantly similar to each other, accepting that they have equal distributions. Also, the Mann-Whitney test shows that the groups defined by the variable Teamwork come from populations with the same mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Lost</th>
<th>Core value teamwork</th>
<th>Core values discipline and respect</th>
<th>Core value sportmanship</th>
<th>Foundational myth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Studied Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willingness to travel to RWC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U de Mann-Whitney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W de Wilcoxon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. asintótica (bilateral)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 287,500          |
| 16040,500        |
| 0.735            |
| 0.462            |

**Table 5: Statistical Proof of the Relationship between the Variables "Core Value Teamwork" and "Willingness to go" by the Mann-Whitney Test**
The same results apply for the other two core values tested, Discipline and Respect and Sportsmanship. The values of $p$ for Discipline and Respect are 0.182 for the Mann-Whitney test and 0.689 for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, whereas for Sportsmanship the Mann-Whitney test shows $p=0.865$ and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov $p=1$. These results show as well that the groups defined by the variables Discipline and Respect and Sportsmanship come from populations with the same mean and that the groups compared are significantly similar in their willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup.

For the last test between willingness to go and the knowledge of the Webb Ellis story the results do not differ much from the ones obtained previously, with a significance for the Mann-Whitney test of 0.067 and for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of 0.589. Both are greater than the significance level of 0.05, and therefore the conclusions are similar than the ones already shown, the people who know the Webb-Ellis story and those who do not have significant similar willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup.

After the study of this data and the relation these variables have with each other it is clear that this hypothesis must be rejected. The assumption taken that the knowledge of the myths, stories and traditions embedded in the sport of rugby would have an effect on the willingness to go of the potential tourists is false for this case. Nevertheless, the means of the variables core values for the higher values of willingness to go (4/5) are close to 0 (Yes), showing a clear tendency towards a relation between these variables, the knowledge of the core values with the willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup.

As an example, 149 respondents out of 181 (82.3%) felt that teamwork is a core value in rugby and their willingness to travel to the destination is high (4/5).
3rd hypothesis: If the potential tourists of a sport event have been exposed to advertisements of that sport event, they will be willing to take part in that event

In the first Web-based survey draft there were some questions related to whether the potential respondents had watched advertisements about the Rugby World Cup. Once it was tested, all of the first respondents had not watched any and therefore this hypothesis would not have been able to be tested. This hypothesis was the main reason why a video was included in the survey, an official Rugby World Cup commercial, to test its influence on tourists.

To be able to accept or reject this hypothesis a paired t-test was conducted comparing pairs of variables. This is the more convenient test since both variables are numerical and can therefore be tested to show how their means relate to each other. The four questions related to the video and the feelings, memories and emotions it brings up in the respondents were individually tested one by one with the willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup of those respondents.

The table of correlations between these four variables and the willingness to go clearly shows that there is no significant correlation between these pairs of variables, since the $p$ values are all greater than 0.05. For example, the coefficient $p$ for the correlation of the variable “willingness to go” with the variable “feeling part of a rugby world” is 0.613.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Willingness to travel to RWC &amp; Sharing of the values seen on the video</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Willingness to travel to RWC &amp; Perception of rugby and life</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Willingness to travel to RWC &amp; Feeling part of a rugby world</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Willingness to travel to RWC &amp; Remember stories from rugby life</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7: Correlation between the Paired Samples*
The second table provided by SPSS 22 for the paired t-test shows the bilateral significance for the pairs studied; p=0.00 for the four variables. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the means of each variable of each pair, matching with the results obtained in the previous table. There is no significant relation between any of the studied pairs.

After presenting the data, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant relation between the variables, that leads to the rejection of the hypothesis. To clarify this it can be assumed that being exposed to a Rugby World Cup advertisement does not have a direct influence on the willingness to go of the respondents. Nevertheless, 54 of the respondents who participated in the Web-based survey marked these five variables with a four or higher, being the highest answers (4 and 5) chosen for these variables. This fact clearly shows that, even though the statistical relationship does not exist, people who engage on rugby as their serious leisure activity react similarly to commercials where values, images and memories of the Rugby World Cup are included, which is mostly positive.

4th hypothesis: Potential tourists of a Rugby World Cup are attracted to the event by nostalgic feelings coming from the traditions of the sport.

When the Web-based survey was designed, some questions which referred to the nostalgic feelings as mentioned in the literature review were included. Among the factors that could influence the potential tourists’ visitation to the destination, there were two which aimed to understand whether nostalgia was relevant or not; these were “be part of a big event with other rugby fellows” and “feel the atmosphere of a rugby match”. As it was previously described, these two were the two variables which gathered the most number of answers, with high means in both cases. In this part we will test if they have a statistical significant relationship with the variable willingness to go to the Rugby World Cup.

Since both variables are numerical, a paired t-test was carried out to test the relationship between the three. After choosing the test and entering the needed data, SPSS 22 shows a correlation table between the variables of each pair, “willingness to go”- “be part of a big event with other rugby fellows” and “willingness to go”- “feel the atmosphere of a rugby match”. The table can be seen below:
The value $p$ would have to be lower than 0.05 for their relationship to be significant. As the values of $p$ are 0.953 and 0.778 respectively, it can concluded that there is no significant correlation between both variables in each pair.

The second table obtained in SPSS 22 after the paired t-test was carried out, shows that for both pairs their bilateral significance is less than 0.05, with a value of 0.00 for each one of them. This allows us to state that the means of each variable are significantly different from each other; therefore, it can be concluded that if the means are different, there is no relationship between the variables themselves.
The data presented does not provide statistical significant evidence that a relationship between the different investigated variables exists. Consequently, the last hypothesis has to be rejected as well as the others. However, as shown in the descriptive part of the data, it is clear that the nostalgic factors were chosen by a large number of respondents; therefore they can be regarded as of high importance. This shows a clear tendency towards the relationship between how nostalgic feelings are important for rugby players, but they do not necessarily affect their willingness to go to the destination.

6.3 Discussion

This section of the paper is devoted to compare the results of the Web-based survey with the theoretical framework of the paper. Analyzing the results at the same time as the theories will allow understanding how the gathered practical data is based on the literature that already exists about the topic in the tourism research field. It will also give the framework to draw the final conclusions and suggestions for further research.

The results of the tests carried out in order to test the validity of the hypotheses of the paper have been negative, with all the hypotheses rejected since the relationship between the tested variables were not statistically significant. However, the data clearly showed interrelations with the literature review; verifying theories and matching with results from previous studies. The whole population of this study had contact with the sport of rugby, normally as a player or former player, therefore England would have a premier spot on their tourism destination set of choices since destination and sport are highly tied. The results have shown that the cognitive image of the destination was more developed than the affective one among the respondents, with a great knowledge and interest in the destination’s history and its relation to the sport, which could have been easily assumed since cognitive image is highly influenced by the heritage of the destination as Mason, Duquette and Scherer’s (2005) research already showed. Therefore, to increase its overall image, the destination has to work on the affective component, by for instance tackling and consequently changing the way their inhabitants are perceived by the potential tourists which can be considered as essential as the results have shown, since they are not regarded as friendly and welcoming by the majority of the participants in the survey. The lack of affective image among the respondents can be a cause of potential lower visitation to the Rugby World Cup, since this type of image affects the overall component of destination image the most, which
eventually drives the consumer’s final choice of a destination. The findings of Baloglu and Mc Cleary (1999) showed the importance of the affective image and the way it highly influences the overall image. Therefore, in order to improve the affective image, the destination has to work on what the survey has shown to be failing; namely the perception that potential visitors and participants have of the English people as a whole. These results are slightly unexpected since the majority of the respondents, as seen before, have the same perception of rugby as the English people have, including the teamwork, discipline and respect and sportsmanship values and thus, it can be assumed that they share their national and social identity. Nevertheless, they do not seem to attach these values to the society where their sport grew, but to the sport itself. This can be related to the theories that have been developed by several researchers about the internationalization of sports, and how, thanks to globalization, more people can identify themselves with a specific sport or sporting nation, despite having little knowledge about the country or its history.

Jarvie (2003) has researched on how the national identity feelings of a country and the country’s sport achievements are intrinsically related in the globalization era, which could be the reason why the majority of the respondents chose New Zealand as their preferred national team apart from their home country’s national team. New Zealand is historically one of the better teams in the rugby world, having won two Rugby World Cups, both organized in New Zealand in 1987 and in 2011, and with outstanding records on the international arena as, for instance, being the only team that has been able to win all its international matches in one year, 14 out of 14 in 2013. Furthermore, its impressive culture demonstrations during the matches, the famous Haka and other Māori dances and the inclusion of a lot of Maoris players make it an interesting team which people can easily identify with. It is clearly understandable that England as a destination has little power to influence the performance of their national team to create awareness and change the affective image of the potential tourists about the destination. Therefore, the English tourism board must work with the history and the culture embedded in it as it familiar to the majority of rugby players, although sometimes, as the survey results showed, the relation of that rugby culture with the English culture and the destination itself is not specifically clear. The globalization era can also help to better spread the foundational myth and other historical myths that are part of rugby around the globe.
As it has been discussed before, the foundational myth of rugby, the Webb Ellis story can be used as tool for image development, as Allison and MacLean (2012) stated in their research about the foundational myth of rugby. The national identity feelings among the English population that arise from the foundational myth of rugby can be transported to other rugby players and fans around the globe, according to Tuck’s (2003) theory about how national identities are based on myths which provide them with meanings, and by the use of globalization that will allow that meaning to reach a larger number of people. Clearly, as the survey has shown, the majority of the respondents were not familiar with the foundational myth of rugby, and among those who did know about its background many could not properly explain the story or related it to different characteristics of the sport. Although in this specific case it has been proven that the statistical relationship between the knowledge of the story and the willingness to go to the world cup is not significant, there is a clear trend, and many researchers like Hunter (2003), Tuck (2003), Friedman, Andrews and Silk (2004), have concluded that the myths and stories that surround a specific sport are the perfect tool to build links between the history of a nation and its national identity, and thus to exert an influence on the feelings of belonging and the social identity of a certain group. The combination of belonging feelings and knowledge of the rugby history is potentially a great asset for the destination to attract tourists to the Rugby World Cup.

Ramshaw and Gammon (2005) researched about what can be considered ways to improve the perception of a sport’s development through time in the minds of supporters of the sport and identified the nostalgic images as a motivator to go to a certain destination. The nostalgic images, when held by the population of a country and successfully transmitted to potential tourists should, according to their research, drive these visitors to the destination, since they will be interested in the sporting heritage which adds up to these nostalgic images. The survey results show how the participants are influenced by the nostalgic statements introduced by the questions and allow the destination to understand which actions can be undertaken to activate these nostalgic feelings in the potential customers. The atmosphere of a rugby match, which is difficult to find in their home country for those players who come from non-traditional rugby countries and the importance of sharing stories and having a good time with other rugby fellows were considered nostalgic. Moreover, the results of the survey show a clear relation between the activities that the potential tourists want to engage in at the
destination and these nostalgic feelings. As described before, a large number of respondents would like to engage in activities in the destination where they could share experiences and meet other rugby fellows from all over the world which resembles the nostalgic feeling of sharing memories and rugby stories with other rugby fellows that is very important for the studied sample. Sharing memories and spending time with other rugby fellows from all over the world, fulfils the feelings of belonging to the rugby culture that many of the tourists are seeking when they engage in rugby as their serious leisure activity. The atmosphere of a rugby match is clearly tied with the willingness of the respondents to engage in rugby related events, events that normally happen before, during the half-times or after the rugby match and that provide a more integrated experience beyond the match itself. This information should be used to satisfy the tourists who will visit the destination for the upcoming world cup, but also allow the destination to understand that if they can create awareness of more nostalgic feelings related to the sporting heritage of rugby and provide activities to fulfil these nostalgic feelings, more people will find reasons to go to the destination. As Jarvie (2003) found out during his research, the potential of boosting the achievements in a specific sport with the help of heroes or heroines can serve as a basis to influence the affective image of the potential tourists. Promoting the success of the English national team and its achievements through time will create awareness of the English sporting traditions even for those who are not English and thus, may not be aware of these achievements. The destination is already using this approach to increase the affective image by using Jonny Wilkinson, English rugby and sporting legend, one of the best players in history and a representative figure of all the values attached to rugby as its main Rugby World Cup ambassador. Jonny Wilkinson is participating actively in many of the promotional videos and strategies presented by the Rugby World Cup, but its social media impact is rather low in comparison with other major sport events. The promotional videos can be seen in the Rugby World Cup YouTube channel, which has only around 11.500 subscriptions, a considerably low number when compared with other major competitions in the sport world, like the FIFA World Cup YouTube channel, which has around a million subscriptions and the Olympic Games YouTube channel, which also has around a million subscriptions. The use of Jonny Wilkinson in the Rugby World Cup commercials is a way of changing the image of the destination called Covert Induced I agent, according to Gartner’s (1986) classification of the different ways to influence the image of a destination.
The connections mentioned above between the nostalgic feelings and the activities in the destination should be a key factor for England’s strategy for the Rugby World Cup as Harrison-Hill and Chalip (2005) developed during their research. Being in contact with other sport fellows in the destination and the quality of the surroundings of the event are of high importance for the tourists to have a satisfying and memorable experience during their stay, creating synergies between the event itself and the destination. The area in which the English tourism board should work the hardest to achieve the best results on attracting tourists should be, according to the researcher, the core values of rugby. The “Ethos and Culture Task Group” (2008) report for rugby showed, as presented alongside with the case study, a number of core values attached to rugby that later on were introduced in the Web-based survey to check whether the respondents identified them as core values among many others. The results were precise and accurate, since the three of them were chosen by a high number of respondents and resembled the three most important core values shown in the report. The report also shows how binding the rugby values are for people who practice this sport, having a great impact not only in their sport life, but as their serious leisure activity, with which they fill their leisure time and pursue the development of a career.

The application of these core values is the base of all players’ development since they start playing at a young age. This is reflected as well for the professionals who play the highest divisions and tournaments; for instance with the case of Bryan Habana, a South African player. He is one of the most important players in the rugby world who won the Rugby World Cup in 2007 and was awarded by the IRB (International Rugby Board) with the player of the year trophy in the same year. He also holds the record of try scoring in a World Cup (eight tries), shared with another rugby legend, Jonah Lomu. This player, during the final match of the Heineken Cup, which is the highest club competition in Europe, faked a hit to gain the favor of the referee to whistle a foul to his side which is an action that goes clearly against the core values mentioned by the “Ethos and Culture Task Group” (2008). The following day, he expressed his apologies to all rugby fans and the players of the other team for trying to cheat and for having gone against the values of rugby. He used social media to get his message across (Twitter), as we can see in the tweet from his official account:

“So before anything... Apologies in every way and to the whole community for happened in the Heineken Cup final yesterday... It was in no way intended with malice or to bring the game into disrepute. Sportsmanship and integrity are key factors to what makes rugby so special and I let...
myself, the fans, our opponents and the game down. Hopefully it didn’t take away from what was a fantastic spectacle and even more so a special victory for @RCTOfficiel.”

Many examples like this can be found in the rugby community and the fact that professionals act according to the same values as those rugby players who pursue rugby as their serious leisure activity creates a feeling of community and identity to which people are highly connected. This type of behavior allows those people, who engage in rugby as their serious leisure to feel part of the subculture that rugby creates around it, where everyone can be included, thanks to the inclusiveness value that is as well embedded in the sport of rugby according to the “Ethos and Culture Task Group” (2008).

Going on with the results of the survey and going deeper in the serious leisure theories, the pursuit of a career for many of the respondents in rugby is clear, with many of them having chosen more than one option in relation with their involvement in the sport. This clearly matches with the theories of Stebbings (1985) about serious leisure and the development of careers among those who engage in an activity as their serious leisure. Among the three categories he pointed out, only amateurs and hobbyists are part of the survey respondents. Amateurs are those who are still playing or coaching or refereeing, because they have a professional counterpart, whereas former players who no longer play are only fans and will fall into the hobbyist category. Volunteers were not looked at in the survey; however, the organization of the world cup has developed a strong volunteer program, called “the Front Row”, as it is common practice for international sport events. Although it has been shown with the rejection of the first hypothesis that there is no significant relation between the willingness to go and whether the respondents engage in rugby as their serious leisure activity, the tendency in the results show that those who spend more hours weekly practicing the sport or have a higher involvement also obtain a higher number of task or roles within the rugby community (coach, referee, club executive, etc.), that they are aware of the foundational myth and clearly relate the values they have attached to rugby with those found by the “Ethos and Culture Task Group” (2008). This follows the findings of Green and Jones in 2005, who stated that the identity, belonging and acceptance feelings are boosted by the unique ethos of the sport. This tendency is noticeable in the survey as well, which showed with the aid of the open questions, that there is a subculture of the Rugby World for those
who play it and that the feeling of belonging is high. Those respondents who answered
the open question about the Webb Ellis story naming other characteristics of the sport
without knowing the story itself is a proof of this condition. They may not know exactly
what happened or about the way it happened, but they use the core values embedded in
rugby to describe it, because the values of rugby are never lost and are shared by all
rugby players around the world, which is in line with the finding of Giulianiotti (2007)
and his research on different Ranger supporters all around the world and how they all
felt the same way about the football team and its history. Also, as Bainer (2003)
presented in his research, the subculture which rugby players belong to is very close to
the English culture and in combination with the organization of the Rugby World Cup
in England should awaken the interest about the destination for tourism purposes, even
if the players have no specific interest on England as a tourism destination.

Looking back to other Rugby World Cups, the event in 2011 in New Zealand is a good
example of how the local culture was marketed for the event. The government of New
Zealand had culture and tourism programs under the New Zealand brand in order to
increase the visitation for the event. The use of the Māori culture, which had a very
important role in the whole tournament, was one of the most important programs
developed. There were TV promotion campaigns and spectacles all around New
Zealand, which were meant to engage the tourists in the local culture (Ministry of
Business Innovation and Employment, 2012). This community engagement was very
important for the New Zealand event in 2011 but nevertheless England needs to go a
step further and concentrate its tourism strategy on these aspects before the arrival of the
tourists. The English culture which is large and, as seen in the survey, interesting for the
potential visitors, needs to be promoted for the Rugby World Cup as in the New
Zealand case. Nevertheless, it should be done beforehand, because as Mason, Duquette
and Scherer (2005) showed in their research, heritage can be a strategic tool for tourism
development and therefore with a successful campaign a larger number of tourists will
be attracted to the destination.
7.0 Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the analysis and discussion of the survey results will be drawn here. Firstly, some suggestions on what could be done to increase the visitation to England for the upcoming mega event will be made and will consequently lead to the answering of the research question. These will be accompanied by the implications of the findings for industries and destinations alike as well as general propositions for future research that should aim at investigating the different aspects in further detail.

The destination, as discussed in the above section and backed up by the theories and models presented in the literature review section, has to work on improving its overall image through the strengthening of the affective component mainly. This can be achieved with the help of making use of the sporting heritage the destination possesses and the interest that this heritage can create in the potential tourists through effective and efficient promotional campaigns as well as other strategic tools.

The fact that, as seen in the survey, for a lot of respondents’ the most important memory of all the Rugby World Cups is Jonny Wilkinson’s drop goal that awarded the English team the world cup title in 2003, marks an important association that the English tourism board could potentially use to boost visitation for the upcoming event. The strategy of using Jonny Wilkinson as their ambassador and his involvement in many of the promotional activities which have been organized or are currently taking place is clearly positive since the destination is making an effort to change the affective component of the destination image through induced image. Nonetheless, the marketing should be more focused on the international market, by means of using Jonny Wilkinson and the story of the Rugby World Cup 2003 which was the first one won by England and the first one ever won by a Northern hemisphere country, to drive their campaign in the most beneficially way. Also a more personal campaign, where for instance the European rugby federations are addressed individually, using the history of England in rugby world cups and integrating this history with the title in Australia in 2003, may be a potential strategy. This can lead to a better targeting of the niche market consisting of rugby players from all over the world who will react to this strategy by increasing their overall image about the destination, through positively reinforcing the cognitive component via information, which consequently exerts and influence on the affective component and thus affects the overall image.
However, generally the destination needs to stress the affective component more than the cognitive one, since, as it has been clearly shown in the literature review it is the main component of destination image, which influences the decision making process and the purchase of a trip to a destination to the greatest extent. The improvement of the image of the English citizens as a whole should be regarded as the most important decision to be undertaken, due to the bad perception the respondents of the Web-based survey, on average, had of the English people. A good strategy to solve this problem would be through initiatives where local teams host other teams from other countries. This could be used to show the friendliness of the English people to the rest of the rugby world. Creating networks between European and American clubs and clubs in England could be an influential means to achieve a higher number of visitors by reaching the potential tourists at their rugby clubs where they have more chances to positively react towards the possibility of traveling to a Rugby World Cup. Offers for tickets for non-English rugby clubs through English clubs with which they have a partnership could be a magnificent idea to create networks and also to change the image of English people in general towards more positive associations among the potential tourists. The idea of including programs where English families host other families coming from these non-English clubs could also be an important idea to strengthen the network and to change the image of the English people. The creation of this network will allow opportunities for engaging in some other activities for potential tourists to the Rugby World Cup like playing rugby with a local team and having closer contact with the English and the rugby culture, which were some of the motivators asked in the Web-based survey and had great acceptance.

Creating a whole world around the history of the sport and its development can have the possibility to engage more tourists, since many of them, as seen in the survey, are willing to engage in rugby related activities during their stay at the destination and are attracted by the history of the destination. Furthermore, for all of these potential tourists that could come to the destination but do not have knowledge about the foundational myth, for instance, it could be considered a favorable strategy to show and explain rugby-related stories in order to engage them into the rugby culture, thereby increasing visitation to the Rugby World Cup. The rugby heritage of England needs to be a key factor in the development of commercial strategies for tourists, but it has to be important for the English citizens as well, so they can be the ambassadors of their own
To sum up, and give an answer to the research question, the inclusion of the sport traditions of a destination in their tourism strategy for a specific event is good for a destination, since it will help increase the affective image of the potential tourists, create a sub-culture and sense of belonging for those who practice that sport, increase the feelings of national identity among their citizens and the potential tourists willing to visit the event, which will in a final step help increase the visibility of the destination worldwide. There needs to be a closer relation between the public sector and the private sector in order to be able to successfully organize different events for the tourists while visiting the destination. These events will help enhancing the tourists stay as well as create promotional campaigns that can be adapted for both public and private sectors to reach the better possible results.

Although the hypotheses, which were mainly meant to understand the way the willingness to visit of the respondents was influenced and affected by the other variables, were all rejected, the conclusion is that the connection or relation between these variables remains unknown and could not be explained by the information gathered. Nevertheless, the fact that 83% of the respondents were willing to go to the World Cup provides England with a useful piece of data because rugby players around the world are willing to assist to the event regardless of the degree of involvement they
have with the sport, whether they engage in it as serious leisure or not, whether they have knowledge about its history, its myths, stories and past traditions and whether they have been exposed or not to commercials of the event. The rejection of the hypotheses is mainly a result of the extreme values obtained on the “willingness to go” question, as in the rest of questions and variables. The results for the “willingness to go” variable in comparison with any other variable were always not significant because respondents, in great majority, always wanted to go regardless any other factor. The inclusion of additional other factors into the Web-based survey, such as the willingness to pay, the dates of the event and the availability that respondents, for instance, might have influenced the answers of the respondents which would have provided more significant data to be analyzed.

Consequently, it is clearly understandable from the information obtained during this research that the English tourism board needs to create awareness of the event, by providing clear information about when, how and in which conditions it will happen and as a result rugby players from all over the world will be willing to go. The right channels of communication need also to be carefully selected, making sure that this important information arrives to the exact people to which it is targeted, aiming mainly at nation rugby federations around the world and to the clubs of these federations, where the contact with the players, trainers and fans will be easier and more direct.

The focus of this research is very local due to the characteristics of the different topics studied and it cannot be generalized. For further research the history of the country and the popularity of the sport have to be taken into account. If the campaign is meant for any sport other than rugby or another country than England, even if the sport is still rugby, the results obtained in this paper would not be applicable. The markets should be addressed separately as well, to have a better idea of each market’s needs and in order to address them properly different surveys in different languages need to be developed in order to allow the participants to answer the open questions more extensively and in a more detailed manner. The perception that these markets have of the destination is important in order to be able to prepare more effective campaigns and to obtain more relevant and reliable data to develop better studies in the future. If further research is intended, sampling should be improved to find out who is in charge of making travel decisions among the potential tourists of the population to influence the purchase. Directly addressing the different segments among the potential tourists will allow the
tourism boards of the organizing countries to develop different campaigns to obtain better results.

The core values and their survival through time, their presence in nowadays game and the respect that all players have for them, regardless whether they are professionals or amateurs, is a great source of inspiration that bring people together, people who will be willing to travel in order to have vivid experiences of these values that drive their lives. As Jonny Wilkinson said after becoming the most famous rugby player in rugby world, quoted at the beginning of the paper, these values make rugby players want to become better players and persons. That is what makes rugby such a great sport!
8.0 List of References


Visit Britain. (2013). Top Towns for "staying visits" by inbound visitors.


9.0 Appendix

9.1 Web-based survey

- Introductory video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7ueZ-uvnU4

- Rugby World Cup 2015

1) Rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)
   a) The video made me remember stories from my rugby life
   b) I share the values seen on the video as part of my rugby culture
   c) The images shown were familiar and they coincide with my perception of rugby and life
   d) The content of the video makes me feel part of the rugby world
   e) The video integrates well the Rugby World Cup history and its relation to England

2) Are you interested in visiting England for the Rugby World Cup? From 1 (not at all) to 5 (of course)

3) If your previous answer was FOUR or FIVE, while visiting the Rugby World Cup 2015 I would like to,
   a) Visit rugby museums and halls of fame
   b) Have contact with other rugby fans from other parts of the world and share experiences
   c) Participate in activities with English rugby legends (Wilkinson, Dallaglio,...)
   d) Get to know participating teams
   e) Have a close contact with the English culture, rugby in particular
   f) Participate in rugby related events
   g) Play rugby with a local team
   h) Get to know the local culture and visit cultural museums

4) What would be the most important factor for you if you intend to visit the Rugby World Cup 2015?
   a) Just watch rugby
   b) Be part of a big event with other rugby fellows
   c) Support my favorite national team in an international competition
   d) The atmosphere of a rugby match
   e) The importance of the game in my life
   f) Other:
- **England as a destination** (rate from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree)
  1) I connect positive feelings with England as a travel destination (affective)
  2) I think that England offers a great range of services and activities for travelers (cognitive)
  3) I believe that English people are friendly and open-minded (affective)
  4) I find interesting the English history, and specially its contribution to sport (cognitive)
  5) Overall, I have a good impression of England as a travel destination

- **Rugby as serious leisure activity**
  1) How long have you been involved in rugby? Time period since you started playing or following it until now.
  2) Rugby involvement:
     a) Player
     b) Former player
     c) Trainer
     d) Referee
     e) Fan
     f) Other:
  3) How much of your time do you use for activities related to rugby weekly (in hours)?
     Training as a player or a trainer, watching matches, etc.
     a) Less than 2
     b) 3-5
     c) 6-10
     d) 11-15
     e) 16-20
     f) Other:
  4) Do you have any favorite national team (apart from your national team) you would like to support and to watch playing in a Rugby World Cup?
     a) NO
     b) England
     c) Wales
     d) Scotland
     e) Ireland
     f) France
     g) Italy
     h) Argentina
i) New Zealand
j) South Africa
k) My national team is in the above list
l) Other:

5) Please select FOUR of the following characteristics that you connect the most to rugby:
   a) Teamwork
   b) Winning
   c) Discipline and respect
   d) Fighting
   e) Sportsmanship
   f) Inclusiveness
   g) Individualism
   h) Professionalism
   i) Other:

6) Are you familiar with the Webb Ellis story? Y or N.

7) If yes, what implications did it have for rugby? OPEN ANSWER

8) If any, which would you mention as your major Rugby World Cup memory? OPEN ANSWER

- **Demographics**

1) Age
   a) 17-25
   b) 26-30
   c) 31-35
   d) 36-40
   e) 41-45
   f) Over 45

2) Gender
   a) Male
   b) Female

3) Nationality

4) Country of residence
9.2 Results