Patryk Masłowski[1], Tomasz Karasiewicz[2]

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Faculty of Earth Sciences and Spatial Management
ORCID: [1] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8367-243X, [2] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3170-9517
Corresponding author: Patryk Masłowski, email: asus1557@gmail.com

Esports as a new trend in the tourism industry

Abstract: Tourists participating in the so-called sports tourism mostly benefit from general tourist infrastructure – accommodation, food services, transport, tourist information, sports and leisure facilities available to all tourists – regardless of the motivation underlying their stay. Thanks to global sports events a new form of sports-related tourism has been established, which has its maximum representation in major events such as the Olympic Games and the World or European Championships. Esports is undoubtedly one of the most rapidly developing industries in today's world, both in terms of business and as sports. This article sets out to present forms and current trends in sports tourism. Subsequently, it focuses on esports and provides basic information about this form of leisure, indicates similarities between cybersport and traditional sport, and offers examples of electronic sports events, including the top event in the city of Katowice, which appears to be the Polish capital of esports. In addition, the article offers an insight into how the cybersports industry reacted to SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, the authors analyse legal aspects of electronic sports in Poland and other countries and, finally, present and discuss the results of survey research pertaining to the impact of esports on tourism.

Keywords: sports tourism, esports, new tourist trend, SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, sports events

1. Introduction

In recent decades sport has become a sector of great economic importance and its confluence with the tourism industry has made sports tourism gain significant social and economic value. Within sport, a new field referred to as esports is developing dynamically. Competition in this case takes place online, but large esports events are also organised with the participation of the public. The aim of this work is to identify the development of a relatively new type of esports-related tourism that is definitely booming. This article presents the definition of this phenomenon, as well as demonstrates its distribution and latest trends related to it. The rise of electronic sports as well as legal aspects are discussed. We examine what elements traditional sport and electronic sports have in common. Attention has been drawn to the surge in interest pertaining to video games, the emergence of esports leagues and development of esports tourism, using the example of several tournaments with live audience. In addition,

the authors show how the cybersport industry is handling the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic. Another goal is to show the silhouette of an esports tourist, what he or she really expects, and how the tourism industry can benefit based on surveys performed by the Authors and available literature.

There are several definitions of sports tourism in literature and among the most cited is the one coined by Heather Gibson (1998), who states that sports tourism is a trip away from home to engage in sport activities for recreation or competition, a trip to watch popular and elite sport events, as well as a journey to visit famous sports attractions, i.e. sports halls, arenas, halls of fame, sports parks, sports museums, etc. According to Bończak (2013) it can also be understood as a form of tourism, for which sport is the main motive. The definition of Standeven and De Knop (1999) states that it is a journey involving active or passive participation in sports activities, outside of the

environment in which one lives on a day-to-day basis. Pawlikowska-Piechotka (2016) argue that the tradition of active or passive participation in sporting events was present in Europe as early as 3000 years ago, for example in the ancient Greek Olympic games.

The field of sports tourism, its specificity and trends, are discusses extensively by Kazimierczak and Malchrowicz-Mośko (2013), Malchrowicz-Mośko (2018) and Pawlikowska-Piechotka (2016). On the other hand, literature related to electronic sports is arguably inadequate, considering esports is a recent phenomenon. Although individual Polish publications on the topic can already be found: Cypryjański (2017), Rosiak (2018), Hodowany (2020), Sosnowski (2020) and Cajsel (2020), foreign papers were first to touch upon the issue, e.g. Antón (2018) or Vegara-Ferri et al. (2020).

Sports event tourism is one of the forms of sports tourism defined as a journey taken for the purpose of competing, spectating or cheering during organised sports competitions (Gibson, 1998). Tourist traffic associated with participation in various events is often one of the most important elements of tourist demand. Malchrowicz-Mośko (2018) explains that some destinations, states, regions or local governments use sport events to promote their tourist offer, making them a factor attracting tourists to the place. Most popular and frequently attended are major events of international importance, such as the Olympics and championship tournaments in various disciplines, which attract the biggest crowds to stadiums. Sport events are frequented by individuals who actively enter competitions – athletes – as well as passive participants – fans. Therefore, one can distinguish active and passive tourism of sporting events. Active sports tourism applies to those who travel with the aim of performing a particular sport. The partakers include both professional athletes, who receive remuneration for their sports performance, and amateurs wishing to experience the sense of rivalry, who perceive physical exertion through the prism of leisure or entertainment, deriving pleasure from satisfying vanity and snobbism. This group of participants does not partake in intense physical activity during the duration of sports events, and it includes, e.g. supporters, sports activists or volunteers. Fans intentionally devote their spare time and own finances to spectate sports events, but some of the staff members participate passively, yet professionally, i.e. coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, activists, journalists, businessmen and so forth.

The aim of the study was to gain knowledge about esports and its impact on the tourism industry, especially in the situation of the SARS-COV2 pandemic. Furthermore, a survey was conducted via online forums among active e-players within the gaming community to shed some light on their interest in esports and live participation in esports-related events. The survey also included questions pertaining to further development of esports tourism and the esports industry as such.

2. Research methodology

The methodology of our research consisted of two parts. The first stage involved researching available literature and online resources due to the prevailing global situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. No esports events were organised with the presence of the public. The second part featured a detailed survey of the esports community. Sampling was to a certain extent hindered by the availability of respondents, hence the study sample cannot be unequivocally regarded as representative (Babbie, 2004). The research tool was a survey prepared in Google Forms, consisting of three parts: general inquiries about esports, sports tourism and behaviours associated with the activity, and the development of esports tourism in the future. The questionnaire contained fifteen questions addressed to the gaming community. Each respondent completed the survey remotely and independently. Respondents were asked to recall the days when they could watch live and/or participate in electronic sports competitions as fans, volunteers or players. The respondents were people actively interested in esports, who participated in tournaments several times. In the second stage of the study the obtained responses were summarised and examined.

3. Results

3.1. Trends in sports tourism

Pursuit of sports tourism is becoming a lifestyle today. The rising number of sport events of different ranks and levels of difficulty and emerging new sports that can be practiced in almost every corner of the globe make sports tourism develop more dynamically than ever before, and it has become a phenomenon of our time. There is no "great sport" without "great tourism", as evidenced by international sporting events with a global reach, for instance the Olympic Games. Kazimierczak and Malchrowicz-Mośko (2013) presented several newer trends, involving progressive commercialization associated with the development of sports services and the sport commodities industry, which renders sport an object of consumption and transforms a tourist-athlete into a customer. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the growing diversity of sports and tourist offer, examples of which include jogging, Nordic walking, surfing or kitesurfing. The authors point to growing focus on specific target groups interested in sports and tourism activities where the number of participants increases, especially in older age groups (40–60 years old). Kazimierczak and Malchrowicz-Mośko (2013) believed that there is a growing interest in sporting events that are governed by rituals and rules of a particular sport. Currently, the most notable sports events gather large number of viewers, are very interactive and extensively covered in the media. Such events usually take the form of mega, special or hallmark events. Rietkerk (2020) predicts that in the future more cities will pursue the organization of major electronic sports events. Preliminary analyses show this was an attractive option for forward-thinking cities striving to increase their revenue from tourism while presenting their city to younger demographic groups. The biggest of the cybersport events usually gather several thousand spectators and often take place in the United States, Asia and on the Old Continent. The most recognizable are Dreamhack, The World Electronic Sports Games (WESG), Intel Extreme Masters (IEM) and the League of Legends World Championship. WESG feature the highest prize pool reaching several million dollars. These events attract a great number of live spectators and online viewers. Table 1 lists the five biggest events in history held in various arenas. These tournaments took place in many locations and had prize pools at times exceeding millions of dollars. De la Navarre (2020) prepared a compilation that shows events attracting the largest number of fans in esports history. The results from the subsequent editions of IEM and the League of Legends World Championship, which did beat the previous year's results, were at the time unknown.

Table 1. Five biggest esports tournaments in history and their viewing ratings (Source: prepared based on de La Navarre, 2020)

Name of tournament	Date	Location	Viewers live	Viewers online	Prize pool
LoL World Championship 2015	01-31.10. 2015	Paris, London, Brusells, Berlin	43 000	36 000 000	$2 130 000
CFS World Championship 2017	30.11-03.12. 2017	Xi'an	no data	37 000 000	$850 000
LoL World Championship 2016	29.09-29.10. 2016	San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles	47 268	43 000 000	$5 070 000
IEM Katowice 2017	25-26.02, 03-05.03.2017	Katowice	173 000	46 000 000	$250 000
LoL Mid-Season Invitational 2018	03-20.05. 2018	Adlershof, Paris	>7000	60 000 000	$1 370 520

Explanation of abbreviations: LoL – League of Legends; CSF – Crossfire Stars; IEM – Intel Extreme Masters.

Member of Electronic Sports League (ESL – a company organising some of the biggest electronic sports tournaments, including those in Poland), Ulrich Schulze, posted a tweet on social media (eslgaming.com) to show the origin of the audience visiting one of the first and biggest events related to electronic sports – ESL One Frankfurt held in Germany in 2014. Fans from all over the world came to Europe to cheer for their favourite players. They travelled from around the world to reach one of the most important financial metropolises and watch their idols regardless of the costs or distance. As far as the Polish market is concerned, Intel Extreme Masters has definitely made its mark on the esports map. It has been held annually since 2013 (Rosiak, 2018) (except for the pandemic years) in Katowice Spodek (sports and entertainment hall, due to its futuristic construction locally called "Spodek", i.e. *saucer*), which is filled up to the last seat time after time (TVP Sport, 2019). Owing to its continuous development and a growing number of attractions in recent years, IEM finals in Poland have reached a considerable size, breaking new records every year. During the first edition 50,000 fans came to the Katowice Spodek arena. Year later, in 2015, the number of registered supporters reached 104.000, and in the subsequent year the event attracted 114.000 esports enthusiasts (Alkier and Demirkiran, 2019). In order to avoid overcrowding, the organisers of the 2017 edition divided the event into two consecutive weekends. In 2019 more than 174.000 fans from 60 countries watched live games held at Katowice Spodek (TVP Sport, 2019). In addition, the show was broadcasted in 21 languages on various streaming channels and on live television. Organisers have also reported that the broadcasts of the event reached 230 million viewers and again broke the record of viewership as far as the ESL tournament is concerned. Such a great success was possible due to the fact that the tournament was attended by the best players from the world, competing for a total of 2.5 million dollars in prizes (Hodowany, 2020). The event in 2018 gathered 173 thousand fans (over a period of several days), and it should be noted that Katowice has a population of a little less than 300 thousand inhabitants (Rosiak, 2018). IEM as the largest "congress" event in Katowice also exerts a huge impact on the development of business tourism. This affects different spheres of economic and social life. Tens of thousands of visitors make considerable profit for the capital of the Silesian voivodeship. This phenomenon was also observed in other countries. According to a report by Duran (2019), the League of Legends European Championship (LEC) Finals held in Rotterdam, which lasted merely two days, brought in more than 2.6 million dollars in revenue for the city economy. Esports fans are therefore most certainly tourists. Unfortunately, the pandemic reality interfered with these predictions and plans.

3.2. Elementary of esports

Computer games can be divided into two categories – those focused on a single player experience, and those where players compete with one another in what is referred to as multiplayer mode. The second category contributed to a global success of several game titles, such as Quake, Counter-Strike, League of Legends, StarCraft and Warcraft, which are the leading games in the world of electronic sports. These games can be divided into the following categories: First Person Shooter (FPS), popularly called just "shooters" are predominantly embedded in the war setting (Counter-Strike, Call of Duty, Battlefield). The goal usually involves eliminating the opponents. Players' objective in Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) games is to destroy the main building in the enemy base, usually called "Nexus". Recently, League of Legends has been at the forefront in terms of popularity and prize pools among MOBA games. Most common sports games are football simulators Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA, Pro Evolution Soccer). This field has its own structures that are often officially supported by sports federations (e.g. Polish Football Association). Battle Royale games are among the newest trends in esports alongside MOBA games.

Esports is a form of sports competition in computer games, which is attracting increasingly more participants. Rivalry may take place in a recreational form, but also during official

tournaments organised and sponsored by the most recognizable corporations and brands in the world. It is difficult to determine the beginning of esports development. Pioneering early-century competitions, such as the World Cyber Games (WCG), or leagues, for instance the Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL), have laid the foundations for the phenomenon that is now followed around the world by hundreds of millions of fans. At the beginning of the 21st century, in South Korea, a global business emerged, which strived to popularise video-game competitions. WCG, the largest to date electronic sports event was held there. It attracted players from all over the world in various games available on the market at that time. The event was broadcasted live on a specialised online platform, streamed for 24 hours a day. Esports began to evolve dynamically at the beginning of the current millennium – a process that commenced with the first mass-available high-performance computers capable of ensuring smooth online gaming. In just a few years games became so popular that people started playing all over the world. Today's level of electronic sport has made it possible to organise professional tournaments, which are held on large stadiums and can gather tens of thousands of people. Many times arenas fill up entirely and, in addition, millions of people spectate the game via online broadcasts. Esports is a phenomenon dependent on video games, but not all video games can be considered as electronic sport. Games like FIFA have solidified their position in the cybersport industry. Popularity of other genres, such as FPS or Battle Royale, tend to fluctuate, and so does their position. This first mentioned type of games has played a considerable role in competitions that originated from local events, such as small LAN (Local Area Network) tournaments, and have developed into professional leagues and tournaments with a formal sporting structure (Antón, 2018). The spread of esports events has made it possible to fulfil young people's dreams of playing games and making a living from it. The best example is the 2019 World Champion in Fortnite, when Kyle "Bugha" Giersdorf, who at the time of winning the trophy was 16 years old, received 3 million dollars. The highest-paid professional players can earn up to several hundred thousand dollars a year. Extremely large number of people creating the gaming community attracted the interested of computer hardware manufacturers, who focus on this group as an opportunity to develop their marketing strategy related to esports. Cooperation with professional players resulted in the creation of specialized equipment designed for players. Dedicated companies have emerged that focus only on providing the best components for professional players and enthusiasts alike. The esports market has outrun the cinema market. Forecasts for 2020 predicted more than 1.5 billion dollars in gross revenue (Rosiak, 2018). Increasing availability of online streaming media platforms further aids the promotion of electronic sports worldwide. Twitch, most famous of said platforms, brings in an average of over 2.5 million users per day (Twitch Statistics&Charts), who watch and comment on playing various computer games. Mainstream TV stations launched channels solely dedicated to gaming – Polsat Games – or departments and programs about esports, e.g. TVP Sport or ESPN.

3.3. Legal aspects of electronic sports in Poland and worldwide

The Sports Act of 25 June 2010 lays down the rules for the practice and organisation of sport (Ustawa z dnia 25 czerwca 2010 r). On 20 July 2017 the said act of law was supplemented with a paragraph on esports. Paragraph 1, Article 2 provides the definition of sports: "Sport is any form of physical activity which, through ad-hoc or organised participation, contributes to building or improving one's physical and mental fitness, to developing social relationships and to enhancing sports performance at any level". Paragraph 1a. complements that definition: "Sport is also considered to be competition based on intellectual activity, the aim of which is to achieve a sporting outcome." Biliński (2020) explains that this phrase significantly expands the existing concept of sport. At the same time, the wording of that provision should make it possible to classify at least some of the rivalry taking place in the gaming environment into the sphere of sport, since they have competitive character and are usually based on

a kind of intellectual activity. They also aim for a sport-related result. However, the possibility of considering an esports competition as a kind of sport within the meaning of the Sports Act is not devoid of controversies and leads to a number of legal problems. One of them is the fact that esports is not included among the disciplines featured at the Olympics, Paralympics or other federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee. This prevents the creation of a sports organization with the status of a Polish sports association. Biliński (2020) adds that not being able to establish a national federation makes it difficult to create consistent rules for esports competition or licensing of sports clubs. There is ambiguity regarding the possibility of supporting esports activity under the applicable regulations and the legal status of persons participating in various forms of electronic competition (Ustawa z dnia 25 czerwca 2010 r.; Ustawa z dnia 20 lipca 2017 r.). Cajsel (2020) argues that the popularity of this new sports and very likely systematic increase in sponsor-led expenditure will result in increasing professionalization of this form of activity. Regulations on hiring players and employment relations in esports are among the issues that require attention in the near future.

Asian countries, in particular South Korea, are considered pioneers in esports regulations. The support system for the video game industry and the development of esports is framed within two major legal acts, Law On The Promotion of The Video Game Industry of 28 April 2006, Number 7941 with subsequent amendments, and the Act On The Promotion of Esports of 17 February 2012, Number 11315 with subsequent amendments (Sosnowski, 2020). The latter is an example of an attempt to establish a legal framework for state action in the field of esports. Its main objectives are to improve the health of the electronic sports industry, develop infrastructure, and to promote esports as a form of leisure. There is also the International Federation of Esports, based in Korea and founded in 2009 by countries such as Denmark, Korea and Belgium. The organization in question seeks to have esports acknowledged as a form of sport, and to equate the status of e-athletes with traditional athletes. It also provides training courses to referees and creates documents specifying rules on doping and acceptable behaviour among players (Sosnowski, 2020). The U.S. State Department allows foreign players to enter the United States under a visa for "professional computer players". In the U.S. League of Legends has become considered a sport, and Russia went one step further, equalizing esports with traditional sports. Players from Russia compete under the auspices of the Ministry of Sports, and in 2020 they were given a chance to perform at the Olympics (Cypryjański, 2017).

3.4. Electronic sport in the era of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

Since much of the world's population has been quarantined due to the pandemic, playing video games and the use of the internet has evolved significantly. Steam, one of the leading digital stores for desktop video games, has amassed over 24 million simultaneous online gamers (Steam: Game and Player Statistics, 2020), surpassing all previous records. It is worth mentioning that the platform has been in operation since 2003. Most events oscillate around online games, albeit they are typically played in local arenas to reduce network latency between players and to provide a better audience experience. The Coronavirus pandemic caused many of these events to be cancelled or switched to a fully online format. However, the demand and supply of esports content is greater than ever before. A study conducted between 29 May and 28 June 2020 by Bossman at el., (2020) and Reitkrek (2020) aimed to show the dynamics of esports development in Europe, as well as to present changes in esports viewership caused by COVID-19. The sample included 10,715 respondents interested in electronic sports, aged 18–45, from western and northern European countries. The biggest changes have taken place in countries of Western and Southern Europe, such as Spain, where as many as 70% of respondents spent more time playing games than before the pandemic (Bosman et al., 2020). More than 60% increase was recorded in Great Britain, Italy and France, which may be due to strong lockdown restrictions or a simple desire to escape the problems

of everyday life and fill their spare time. Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, featured only minor changes, as esports is very popular

in this part of the continent, and the society has a tradition of social isolation.

3.5. Analysis of survey results

The form was completed by 172 people, including 7 females and 165 males. The respondents were divided into five age groups categorised as follows: under 16 years, 16–25 (people studying in high schools, technical schools, vocational schools, students and young working people); 26–35 (those who have finished compulsory education); 36-45 (adults), 50+ (people who experienced the beginnings of esports in their youth). The largest age group was between 16 and 25 years old – 83% (143 respondents), followed by the age group 26–35 – 15% (26). Most respondents had secondary education, 53% (92), while 23% held tertiary education. Another question concerned the time period of respondents' interest in electronic sports. Exactly 50% of interviewees had been interested in esports for 5 years and more, which is indicative of their considerable knowledge. Interestingly, only 6 individuals (3.4%) had been fascinated by cybersport for less than a year. The main reasons for their interest in esports (Fig. 1A) involved emotions and the

atmosphere during the competition, passion for computer games, as well as rivalry. More than two-thirds of respondents indicated these qualities. High prize pools in esports competitions and passion for traditional sports were the least important factors for the surveyed, with less than 16% answers. Forty-three percent (73) of surveyed had not participated in any electronic sports event as a supporter, player, organiser or volunteer.

The questionnaire section regarding sports tourism was filled in by 99 respondents (57%) who have participated in electronic sports competitions. The most popular events among the respondents were IEM Katowice and PGL Major in Krakow (Professional Gamers League; championship tournament in Counter-Strike: Global Offensive), which took place in 2017. When asked how they reached the locations of the esports events, almost half of the surveyed (48%) chose car as their main means of transport.
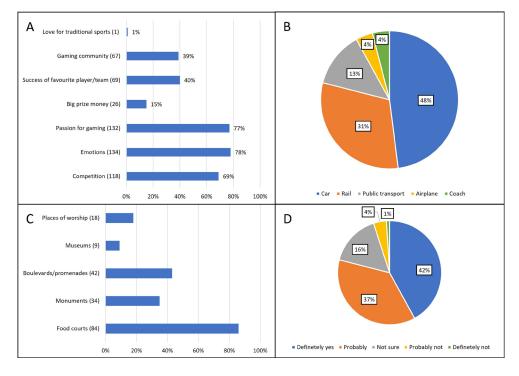

Figure 1. Respondents' answers to the topic: A – Main reasons for interest in esports; B – Type of transport used to reach the host city; C – Most popular places visited beside main reason of arrival; D – Interviewees' opinion about the development of sports tourism

Less than a third (31%) travelled by train, and 13% of the interviewees used other forms of public transport, hence they were probably fortunate enough to have the competition held in their place of residence. Only one of the respondents opted for coach or air travel (Fig. 1B). With the question pertaining to the length of journey to the event, the answer 3–6 hours was chosen 39 times. For more than half of respondents it took less than 3 hours to get to the venue. Twenty-seven drove between 1 and 3 hours, and twenty-five individuals travelled less than an hour (27.3% and 25.3%, respectively). Only eight respondents spent more than 6 hours travelling to the event location. Beside watching the show and cheering their favourite teams or players, esports enthusiasts usually have a sizable amount of spare time. Among the most popular places visited outside of the competition, respondents usually (86%) mentioned food courts. The respondents also visited typical tourist attractions, i.e. boulevards or promenades (indicated by more than 42%) and historical monuments (34%). Among the places that were least frequently visited in their leisure respondents mentioned places of worship (18%) and museums (9%). Such a result can be explained by the young age of the esports audience, and their preference for entertainment, adrenaline and unforgettable emotions (Fig. 1C).

When asked about the factors that led to their arrival at a particular place of the competition, in addition to the competition itself, 47% of surveyed mentioned the influence of friends who, perhaps, participated in such events before. Another frequently highlighted factor was the tourist quality of the tournament places – selected 41 times (41.4%). Other motives included low prices of accommodation (more than 19%) and affordable tickets for various means of transport (11%). For 9% respondents a significant factor was close distance to the event from the place of their residence. They were likely living in the cities where electronic sports events took place.

The last part of the form included questions about the current trends in esports tourism and its potential development (Fig. 1D). Almost 80% of the respondents believed that esports tourism will continue to grow. This finding is encouraging and may potentially help direct the tourism industry towards this particular sector, as well as create new types of offers for tourists. Only 5% respondents had negative opinion on the development of sports tourism. Less than 16% of the surveyed could not determine whether there would be progress or decline in this type of tourism in the future. Finally, respondents were asked to express their views on the impact of electronic sports on the tourism industry in the coming years. There was a number of interesting answers, for example: "In my opinion, electronic sports will have a very important impact on the tourism industry in the future in larger cities. Esports is becoming more and more popular, so more fans coming to various events will use the services of hotels and accommodation, as well as local attractions." (Male, 16–25, university education). Another respondent answered: "I think positively. First of all, it will guarantee increased tourist traffic, perhaps outside the so-called high season. Cities that are not strictly tourist cities (like coastal and mountain towns), such as Katowice, have a good chance of making a profit. It is quite possible that people who would like to travel or go somewhere from time to time, but who do not like sightseeing as such, will find esports a good motivation for travelling. It can become their new interest" (Female, 16–25, higher education). Another answer states: "The industry will grow steadily, which will increase tourism revenues. Hotels, restaurants and more will benefit. Esports events held in a given city/country will popularise the region, which will result in the will to return to such a place" (Male, 16–25, university education). Finally: "Big events attract tourists from all over the world. With the development of tournaments and esports events, more and more people will visit the places, thereby driving the local economy, but also the tourism industry itself" (Male, 16–25, secondary education).

4. Discussion

The article presents the trend for sports tourism related to the development of electronic sports. Organizing traditional sporting events generates tourist visits and economic value for host cities. The phenomenon in question ought to be regarded as essential for territorial marketing policy, considering the opportunity for attracting tourists and expanding this sector in cities and regions. Said trend can be extrapolated to esports events, which are creating a phenomenon called esports tourism. Vegara-Ferri et al. (2020) undertook a study in this growing field of tourism with the article: "Evaluation of the tourist perception of the spectator in an esports event," which analysed the impact of electronic sports on tourism based on an esports event in Barcelona, Spain. The sample counted 390 people who took part in the competitions, and the results of the research served as a starting point for creating a strategy to encourage large numbers of tourists to attend electronic sports tournaments in the future. More than 92% were men and less than 7% were women. In order to compare the results with the authors' studies, the following results should be called upon. For 73.5% of respondents, participation in esports competitions was the main reason for coming to the place. Typically, between 3.6 and 2.4 people accompanied a single tourist, 81% of them were friends and 15% relatives. Sports tourists travelled more than 93 km on average to reach the competition arena (Vegara-Ferri at al., 2020). Only 8.6% of surveyed spent their leisure time differently than at the event itself, and one in four spent time in a restaurant. There is a considerable similarity with the results obtained by the authors of this work. They show almost identical pattern, namely that food serving facilities are the most frequented objects outside the main destination, and other cultural or historical places do not enjoy much interest of the esports audience.

5. Conclusions

Summing up, esports is a growing trend in tourism. Not only does it drive the sectors associated with it, but also encourages people (mainly of young age) to compete in this type of events. Sports tourism is becoming more popular with each successive international event, bringing tens or hundreds of thousands of fans to the host cities. A good example of this is the cyclical competition held in the Katowice Spodek arena (Poland), attracting massive crowds of fans from all over the world. Intel Extreme Masters in Katowice is a flagship tournament aimed at young people. For them Silesia is no longer associated with coal and dullness, but with hospitality and a well-organized event. It is these people who will travel in a few or a dozen years, search for a place to live, start businesses, make important decisions. Esports enthusiasts are most often between 16 and 35 years old and predominantly comprise men, who seem to be more interested in cybersport than women. They travel to cities on their own or by using cheap means of public transport. In their spare time they visit catering services, public spaces, most popular sights of a given location and much less often go to places related to culture or art. The most important factors leading to the arrival at the competition venue are the tourist values of the location or low prices of accommodation. This information should be used by tourist agencies, catering or transport services and other companies to create an offer that will be suitable to attract potential visitors from any corner of the world. The vast majority of people interested in esports are convinced that the trend of electronic sport in the tourism industry will grow, as events attract more sports tourists to the host cities with each subsequent organised tournament. It remains to be seen whether potential host cities will show interest in this phenomenon and start benefitting from it. The COVID-19 pandemic, the

resulting restrictions on meetings, cancelling esports events and transferring the competition to the Internet only supports the development of the esports community. Most likely, after the pandemic there will be a sharp increase in the organisation of esports events with the participation of fans who want to spectate the performance live.

References

Alkier R., Demirkiran K., 2019. Esports: The Investment Opportunity Of The Decade For Regional Tourism Development. [In:] Strossmayer J.J., 2019, 8th International Scientific Symposium Economy Of Eastern Croatia – Vision And Growth, Osijek, 636–649.

Antón M., 2018. Los Eventos de Deportes Electrónicos (Esports) Como Herramienta de Promoción Turística. XII Congreso Virtual Internacional Turismo y Desarrollo, Spain, 77–89.

Babbie E., 2004. Badania Społeczne w praktyce. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa [In Polish].

Biliński M., 2020. Problemy prawne działalności z zakresu e-sportu. [In:] Klimczyk Ł., Leciak M. (Eds.), E-sport. Aspekty prawne. Monografie prawnicze. C.H. Beck, Warszawa, 3-13 [In Polish].

Bończak B., 2013. Aktywne formy turystyki – problemy terminologiczne. [In:] Wiluś R., Wojciechowska J. (Eds.), Nowe – stare formy turystyki w przestrzeni, Warsztaty z Geografii Turyzmu 3, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź, 49–62 [In Polish].

Bosman S., Keller F., Rietkerk R., 2020. Esports in Europe: High Engagement and Even Higher Potential. PayPal Report, Newzoo, https://filecache.mediaroom.com/mr5mr_paypal_uk/178070/PayPal%20Report%20on%20 Esports%20in%20Europe%202020.pdf.

Cajsel W., 2020. Problemy prawne zatrudnienia w e-sporcie. [In:] Klimczyk Ł., Leciak M., (Eds.), E-sport. Aspekty prawne. Monografie prawnicze. C.H. Beck, Warszawa, 47-67 [In Polish].

Cypryjański M., 2017. E-sport. Optymalizacja gracza. Helion, Gliwice [In Polish].

De la Navarre T., 2020. Biggest eSports Live Events in History, https://www.lineups.com/esports/biggest-esports-live-events-in-history (Date of access: 14.06.2021).

Duran H.B., 2019. Riot: LEC Spring Split Finals Contributed $2.6M to Rotterdam Economy. The Esports Observer, Sports Business Journal, https://esportsobserver.com/riot-tourism-lec-spring-rotterdam (Date of access: 12.10.2020).

Gibson H., 1998. Active Sport Tourism: Who Participate?. Leisure Studies 17(2), 155–172.

Hodowany J., 2020. Imprezy e-sportowe w Polsce – charakterystyka. [In:] Banaszek M., Patkowski K., Walczak A. (Eds.), E-sport 2020. Raport ekspercki. Biznes – Rynek pracy – Edukacja. Collegium Da Vinci, Poznań [In Polish].

Kazimierczak M., Malchrowicz-Mośko E., 2013. Specific and Developmental Trends of Sport Tourism. Folia Turistica 28, 67–90 [In Polish with English abstract].

Malchrowicz-Mośko E., 2018. Turystyka sportowa. AWF w Poznaniu, Poznań [In Polish].

Pawlikowska-Piechotka A., 2016. Sports tourism: Active and passive participation in sporting events (amateur and professional). Tourism 26(1), 94–96.

Rietkerk R., 2020. Newzoo's Esports Trends to Watch in 2020, https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/newzoos-esports-trends-to-watch-in-2020 (Date of access: 20.09.2020).

Rosiak M., 2018. Świadectwo pewnej patologii. Men's Health 5(164), 57–62 [In Polish].

Sosnowski W., 2020. Prawne i organizacyjne uwarunkowania rozwoju e-sportu w Republice Korei (Korei Południowej). [In:] Klimczyk Ł., Leciak M., (Eds.), E-sport. Aspekty prawne. Monografie prawnicze. C.H. Beck, Warszawa, 15-30 [In Polish].

Standeven J., De Knop P., 1999. Sport tourism. Human Kinetics, Champaign, pp. 376.

Ustawa z dnia 25 czerwca 2010 r. O sporcie. Dz. U. 2010, nr 127, poz. 857 [In Polish].

Ustawa z dnia 20 lipca 2017 r. o zmianie ustawy o sporcie oraz ustawy o ujawnianiu informacji o dokumentach organów bezpieczeństwa państwa z lat 1944–1990 oraz treści tych dokumentów. Dz.U. 2017 poz. 1600.

Vegara-Ferri J.M., Ibáñez-Ortega D., Carboneros M., López-Gullón J.M., Angosto S., 2020. Evaluation of the tourist perception of the spectator in an eSport event. Publicaciones 50(1), 373–386 [In Spanish].

Internet sources

Steam: Game and Player Statistics, 2020, https://store.steampowered.com/stats (Date of access: 05.12.2020).

TVP Sport, 2019, IEM Katowice pobił kolejne rekordy! Ponad 174 tysiące odwiedzających w Spodku!, https://sport.tvp.pl/41951563/iem-katowice-2019-pobil-kolejne-rekordy-ponad-174-tysiace-odwiedzajacych-w-spodku (Date of access: 27.12.2020).

Twitch Statistics&Charts, https://twitchtracker.com/statistics/viewers (Date of access: 05.12.2020).