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## **BRENDIRANJE FINSKOG GRADA SREDNJE VELIČINE KAO GRADA SPORTA**

### **SPORT CITY BRANDING OF A MID-SIZED CITY IN FINLAND**

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**SAŽETAK:** Zbog rastuće globalne konkurencije među gradovima branding je od nedavno postao važan element gradskih strategija. Rad prikazuje kako dionici marke doživljavaju sportsku marku Jyväskyläe, grada srednje veličine u Finskoj. Autori su proveli dubinske intervjue s jedanaest gradskih dužnosnika i sportskih menadžera koji su utjecali na sportsku marku grada Jyväskyläe. Prema rezultatima istraživanja, ispitanici smatraju kako Jyväskylä ima snažan imidž grada sporta. On počiva na sportskom obrazovanju, sportskim događanjima, jakim sportskim klubovima i aktivnom građanstvu. Rezultati pokazuju da bi sport, a posebno sportska događanja, mogli biti ključan element u razvoju imidža marke grada Jyväskyläe. Ističe se da je za razvoj marke grada sporta važna bliska suradnja i dobri, produktivni odnosi među dionicima.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** brendiranje grada, brendiranje mjesta, sportska marka

**SUMMARY:** Global competition amongst cities has grown and branding has lately become an important part of cities' strategies. The aim of this paper is to study the brand stakeholders' perceptions of the sport city brand of a mid-sized city, Jyväskylä, in Finland. The authors conducted in-depth interviews with eleven city leaders and sport managers who had an influence on the sport brand of the city of Jyväskylä. The results show that in the minds of the respondents Jyväskylä has a strong image as a sport city. It stems from sports education, sports events, strong sports clubs, and active citizens. The results indicate that sports, and sporting events in particular, could be a key element in developing the brand image of the city of Jyväskylä. The results emphasize the importance of a closer cooperation and brand thinking amongst the stakeholders in order to develop the sport city brand of Jyväskylä.

**KEYWORDS:** City branding, place branding, sport brand

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## 1. UVOD

Brendiranje se doživljava kao alat za poboljšanje položaja i identiteta grada u svijesti brojnih dionika. Brendiranje grada istraživano je iz različitih gledišta, a istraživačko područje odlikuje interdisciplinarnost. Ovo istraživanje dio je veće studije kojom se ispituje kako donositelji odluka, stanovnici grada, posjetitelji i turisti doživljavaju imidž grada Jyväskyläe kao grada sporta. Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je utvrditi kako dionici iz područja sporta i gradski dužnosnici doživljavaju Jyväskyläu kao grad sporta. Broj istraživanja na temu brendiranja grada od početka stoljeća značajno je porastao (Lucarelli i Berg, 2011). Brendiranje grada postao je važan zadatak za gradove koji se međusobno natječu na globalnoj razini. Gradovi se pokušavaju istaknuti i stvoriti pozitivan imidž kako bi privukli različite grupe dionika, npr. posjetitelje, turiste i stanovnike. Sport može djelovati kao jedan od gradskih podmarki i privlačiti različite skupine klijenata i dionika. Snažan imidž grada može se izgraditi samo ako u izgradnji vanjskog i unutarnjeg imidža sudjeluju stanovnici grada, tvrtke, mediji i lokalno turističko tržište. Učinkovito upravljanje markom uzima u obzir unutarnje i vanjsko okruženje te imidž marke (Ranchhod, 2004:96-97). Ovo se istraživanje bavi unutarnjim okruženjem.

Fakultet sportskih i zdravstvenih znanosti Sveučilišta u Jyväskyläi, Finska sportska poslovna škola JAMK i Istraživački institut za olimpijske sportove istražili su gospodarsku strukturu regionalne (Središnja Finska) sportske industrije te su identificirali njezinu strukturu i resurse. Prikupljeni su i financijski podaci o prihodu i zaposlenosti u sportskoj industriji Središnje Finske i Jyväskyläe te podaci o obrazovnim potrebama ključnih dionika iz sportske industrije. Pokazalo se da je sport važna industrija za Središnju Finsku, a posebno za grad Jyväskyläu. Stoga je važno utvrditi bi li razvoj sportske marke

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Branding is seen as a tool to improve a city's position and identity in the minds of multiple stakeholders. City branding has been researched from various perspectives and the research domain is characterized by a cross-disciplinary mix. This study was part of a wider study examining the policymakers', residents', visitors' and tourists' perceived images of the City of Jyväskylä as a sport city. The aim of this research was to study sport stakeholders' and city leaders' perceptions of Jyväskylä as a sport city. The amount of research on city branding has grown remarkably since the beginning of the century (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011). City branding has become an important management task for cities competing globally. Cities try to differentiate themselves and create a positive image in order to attract different stakeholder groups, such as visitors, tourists and citizens. Sports can act as one of the city's sub-brands and attract different customer and stakeholder groups. In order to build a strong city brand, both the external and internal image must be built together with the residents, businesses, media and the local tourist market. In order to manage a brand effectively it is important to observe the internal and external environment, and to be aware of the brand image (Ranchhod, 2004:96-97). This study concentrates on the internal environment.

The faculty of Sport and Health Sciences from the University of Jyväskylä, JAMK Sport Business School Finland and the Research Institute for Olympic Sports examined the economic structure of the regional (the province of Central Finland) sports industry. The aim of this economic structure study was to identify the structure and resources of the sports industry. The collected financial data included both the turnover and employment figures of the sporting industry in Central Finland and Jyväskylä. The research group also collected data on the educational needs of the key stakeholders within the in-

Jyväskyläe pridonio uspješnom brendiranju grada (Keski-Suomen Liitto, 2013).

## 2. BRENDIRANJE GRADA

Marka je uvijek mnogo više nego ime ili logotip. U marki je sadržano i značenje koje proizvod ili usluga imaju za klijenta. Marka predstavlja mrežu asocijacija u svijesti članova ciljnih skupina te ovisi o različitim doživljajima marke unutar tih grupa (Braun i Zenker, 2010). Iako je brendiranje ključna varijabla u marketingu, kako u poslovnom tako i u javnom sektoru, jasne su razlike među njima (Ranchhod, 2004:93-95). Prilikom brendiranja u javnom sektoru, proizvođači marke nisu pod kontrolom jer sve u vezi grada, i podaci i iskustva, oblikuje imidž grada u svijesti klijenata.

*”Marka je dojam o proizvodu ili usluzi koji ostaje u svijesti klijenta. Ona je zbroj svih materijalnih i nematerijalnih elemenata, što znači da se radi o jedinstvenom odabiru.”* (Moilanen i Rainisto, 2009:6).

Iako trenutačno mnogi gradovi diljem svijeta prepoznaju brendiranje kao važan zadatak, vrlo su rijetka istraživanja u tom području (Lucarelli i Berg, 2011). U recentnim istraživanjima koriste se različiti izrazi za brendiranje zemlje i brendiranje grada. Ako se radi o brendiranju turističkih destinacija ili nacija, najčešće se koristi izraz brendiranje destinacije, dok se izrazi brendiranje mjesta ili brendiranje grada odnose na mjesta i gradove.

Brendiranje gradova može se shvatiti i kao pod-područje brendiranja mjesta (Merrilees *et al.*, 2009). U ovom istraživanju se izraz brendiranje grada odnosi na brendiranje grada Jyväskyläe za stanovnike grada, posjetitelje i turiste. Posjetiteljima se smatraju osobe koje u grad dolaze na jedan dan, a turistima osobe koje u gradu borave duže.

Činjenica da se stalno moraju natjecati za turiste, posjetitelje i stanovnike prisilila je gradove i općine da aktivnije na tržištu

industriju. The collected economic data showed that sport is an important industry in the province, especially in the city of Jyväskylä. Therefore, it is necessary to establish whether sports city branding could be a branding perspective for the city of Jyväskylä (Keski-Suomen Liitto, 2013).

## 2. CITY BRANDING

A brand is always more than a name or a logo. It is what the product or service means to the customer. Brand means a network of associations in the target groups' minds and it is dependent on different perceptions that these groups have (Braun and Zenker, 2010). Branding is a key variable in marketing, both in the business and public sector. However, business and public sector branding distinctly differ from each other (Ranchhod, 2004:93-95). In public branding the brand producers are not in control since all the information and experiences related to the city form images in the customers' minds.

*“A Brand is an impression perceived in a client's mind of a product or a service. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, which makes the selection unique.”* (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009:6).

Although city branding is currently an important task for cities globally, it is a very fragmented field of research (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011). Recent studies use different terminology to refer to country and city branding. The most common term used, when talking about tourism destinations or nation branding, is destination branding, whereas place branding or city branding refer to towns and cities. City branding can also be understood as a sub-field of place branding (Merrilees *et al.*, 2009). In this study, the term city branding is understood as branding of the city of Jyväskylä to its residents, visitors and tourists. The visitors are understood as day visitors, and tourists as guests staying longer than a day.

prezentiraju svoju ponudu i brendove. Različite ciljne skupine žele različite proizvode i usluge. „Sportske turiste” uglavnom zanimaju aktivnosti slobodnog vremena, dok bi stanovnicima grada mogla biti važna lokalna mreža sportskih terena. Grad kao marka je složena lokacija. Zapravo nalikuje na niz lokacija koje treba zajedno brendirati (Braun i Zenker, 2010). Nadalje, brendiranjem grada bave se političari, donositelji odluka i stoga nije moguće zaobići gradska upravna tijela i procese donositelja odluka (Braun i Zenker, 2010).

Brendiranje grada nije lak zadatak jer u proizvodnom procesu sudjeluju mnogobrojni akteri. Stoga je marka grada kombinacija proizvoda i usluga koje pružaju različite organizacije, tvrtke, općine i neprofitne organizacije. Gradska tijela zadužena za marketing mogu jačati željeni imidž putem oglasa i promotivnih aktivnosti, a svaki će pojedini primatelj različito doživjeti imidž grada. Doživljaj marketinške poruke od strane primatelja ovisit će o njegovom ponašanju, ranijim iskustvima i osobnim obilježjima (Moilanen i Rainisto, 2009:6-21). Stoga je važno razumjeti koja obilježja utječu na imidž i identitet marke nekog grada. Qinqin (2011) nalazi da dobra marka grada jača svijest stanovnika grada, povećava privlačnost grada među ljudima i tvrtkama izvan grada te jača njegovu konkurentnost. Brendiranje grada može biti relevantno četirima ciljnim skupinama: posjetiteljima, stanovnicima, tvrtkama i industriji te izvoznim tržištima (Herstein i Berger, 2013a).

Brendiranje grada ima nekih sličnosti s korporativnim brendiranjem. U oba slučaja menadžeri se bave i unutarnjim i vanjskim pitanjima identiteta i imidža (Baxter i Kerr, 2010). Menadžeri marke grada često se moraju baviti velikim brojem podmarki i dionika. Svi dionici, a naročito oni koji utječu na odluke u procesu brendiranja, trebali bi imati isti stav o imidžu i identitetu mjesta. Kako je priroda marke grada vrlo složena, pravi je izazov prenijeti željenu poruku svim

The ongoing competition for tourists, visitors and residents has forced cities and municipalities to market their offerings and brands more actively. Different target groups appreciate different products and services. Sport tourists are mainly interested in leisure time activities, whereas the residents might value the local sports site network. City as a brand is a complex location. It is more like a series of locations that need to be branded together (Braun and Zenker, 2010). City branding is also a subject of political decision making and, therefore, involves municipal administration organizations and policy-making processes (Braun and Zenker 2010).

Branding a city is not an easy task since multiple actors take part in the production process. A city brand is a combination of products and services provided by different organizations, companies, municipalities and non-profit organizations. The role of the city marketing authorities is only to boost the aspired image by advertising and promoting, whereas the actual image is different from one receiver to the next. The received message is dependent on the receiver's behaviour, previous experiences and personal characteristics. (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009:6-21). Therefore, it is important to understand the characteristics affecting the image and identity of a city brand. Qinqin (2011) defines a good city brand as one increasing the awareness of its citizens, improving its attraction amongst the people and enterprises outside the city, and enhancing its competitiveness. City branding can be relevant to four target audiences; visitors, residents, business and industry, as well as export markets (Herstein and Berger, 2013a).

City branding shares some similar features with corporate branding. In both cases brand managers deal with both internal and external identity and image issues (Baxter and Kerr, 2010). City brand managers often need to deal with multiple sub-brands and stakeholders. The place's image and identity should be shared by all the stakeholders

dionicima uključenim u proces brendiranja. Klijn *et al.* (2012) dokazali su da uključivanje dionika u proces utječe i na koncept marke i na njenu privlačnost. U slučajevima kad brendiranje grada uključuje mnoštvo dionika i prikladnu marketinšku strategiju, njegov je ukupni učinak na privlačenje stanovnika, posjetitelja i turista veći nego njihovi pojedinačni učinci.

Anholt (2008) nalazi da brendiranje mjesta pridonosi konkurentnosti na globalnom tržištu. Za marketing mjesta važno je točno odrediti percipirani imidž i attribute identiteta mjesta (Baxter i Kerr, 2010). Brendiranje grada više je od pukog oglašavanja i promocije grada. Radi se o promjeni politike. Mjesta imaju imidž marke, ali ne mogu biti brendirana isključivo kreiranjem promotivnih ili marketinških kampanja. Marka grada je kombinacija proizvoda i usluga koje pružaju različite organizacije i koja se pridružuje karakteristikama grada. Baxter i Kerr (2010) naglašavaju važnost razumijevanja kreacije identiteta i imidža marke grada. Imidž i identitet uključuju veći broj elemenata i dionika, a menadžeri uključeni u razvoj imidža i identiteta moraju biti svjesni diskrepanci između identiteta mjesta i percipiranog imidža mjesta (Baxter i Kerr, 2010). Imidž grada može se unaprijediti promjenom konkurentnog identiteta u okviru međunarodnih odnosa, kulturnog identiteta, političkog djelovanja i javne diplomacije. Uspješno unaprjeđenje imidža rezultat je primjerene strategije, sadržaja i simboličkih akcija (Anholt, 2008). Drugim riječima, grad treba učinkovitu marketinšku strategiju, njezinu učinkovitu primjenu i simboličke akcije koji podupiru strateške ciljeve. Oni mogu biti dio strategije, a ponekad se događaju spontano. Između ostaloga, sport i sportska događanja mogu se iskoristiti kao simboličke akcije za potrebe kreiranja imidža.

Braun i Zenker (2010) nalaze da na percepciju marke mjesta utječu atributi stvarnog mjesta i imidž marke koji se komunicira prema ciljnoj grupi. Tako nastaje nji-

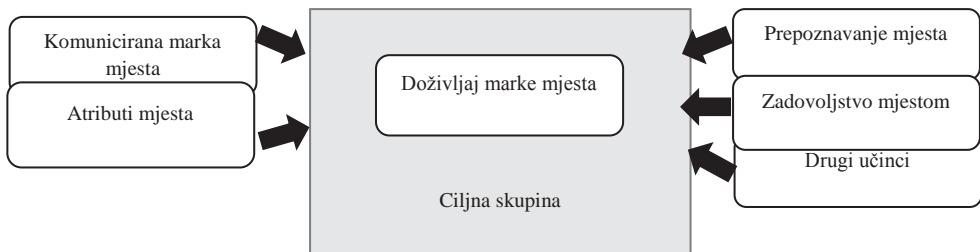
involved, especially those who influence branding decisions. Due to the multifaceted nature of city brands, the challenge lies in communicating the desired message to all the stakeholders involved in the branding process. According to Klijn *et al.* (2012) stakeholder involvement has been proved to influence both the brand concept and attractiveness. When city branding involves multiple stakeholders and an appropriate marketing strategy, the effect of branding on attracting residents, visitors and tourists is stronger than the effect of each of them separately.

Anholt (2008) identifies place branding as one of the competitive factors in the global market place. Place marketers should be able to identify the perceived image and attributes of the place identity (Baxter and Kerr, 2010). City branding is more than just advertising and promoting the city. It is about policy change. Places have brand images, but places cannot be branded solely by constructing promotion or marketing campaigns. A city brand is a combination of products and services provided by different organizations and attached to the city characteristics. Baxter and Kerr (2010) stress the importance of understanding the creation of the identity and image of a city brand. The image and identity include multiple issues and actors, and managers involved in developing the image and identity need to be aware of the gaps between a place identity and a perceived place image (Baxter and Kerr 2010). The image of a city can be improved by changing the competitive identity concerning international relations, cultural identity, policy making and public diplomacy. A successful image improvement is the outcome of a suitable strategy, substance and symbolic actions. (Anholt, 2008). In other words, a city needs an effective marketing strategy, its effective execution and symbolic actions that support strategic goals. These symbolic actions can be part of the strategy, but sometimes they are spontaneous. Among other things, sport and sporting events can be used as symbolic actions to create the city image.

hov doživljaj marke mjesta, što dovodi do prepoznavanja mjesta i zadovoljstva. Osim toga, doživljaj mjesta može nekoga potaći da se zadrži ili da barem razmisli o toj mogućnosti. Svi ishodi ovise o ciljnoj skupini koja je predmet istraživanja (Braun i Zenker, 2010). Prije kreiranja učinkovite strategije brendiranja potrebno je istražiti kako marku mjesta doživljavaju različite ciljne skupine i dionici.

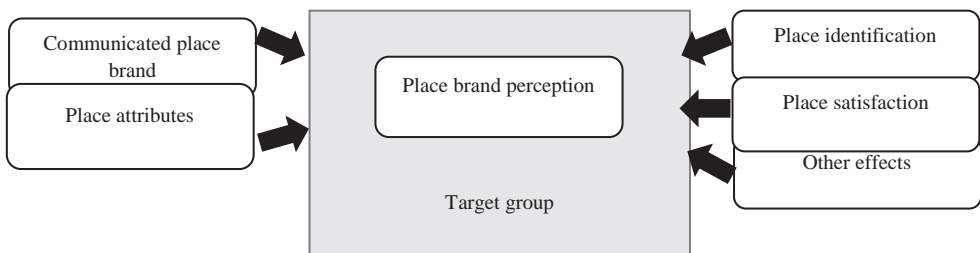
Braun and Zenker (2010) identify place brand perception as being formed by the attributes of the actual place and the communicated brand image. This creates the target group's perception of the place brand. These perceptions then lead to place identification and satisfaction. Other effects resulting from these perceptions could be, for example, commitment or intention to stay. All these outcomes are dependent on the target audience being investigated (Braun and Zenker, 2010). The place brand perceptions of different target groups and stakeholders need to be investigated in order to create an effective branding strategy.

*Slika 1: Koncept doživljaja marke mjesta*



*Izvor: Braun i Zenker, 2010*

*Figure 1: The concept of place brand perception*



*Source: Braun and Zenker, 2010*

Za učinkovito brendiranje grada potrebno je pronaći sinergiju među svim relevantnim dionicima. Proces brendiranja grada uključuje donošenje odluka o viziji i strategiji marke i kulturu koja je usmjerena na mar-

In order to effectively brand a city, synergies among all relevant stakeholders must be found. The branding process of a city combines the city's decision making about the vision and brand strategy with a brand oriented



ku. Brendiranje nekog grada treba počivati na postojećoj infrastrukturi, atributima mjesta i prilikama za brendiranje. Brendiranje treba biti sveprisutno u gradskim politikama, a ne tek još jedna aktivnost u marketinškom odjelu grada (Kavaratsis, 2009). Hankinson (2004) nalazi da u razvoju marki destinacija ključne uloge igraju jako i vizionarsko vodstvo, organizacijska kultura usmjerena na marku i uspješni odnosi među dionicima.

Svaki se grad pokušava diferencirati i stvoriti jedinstveni imidž. Grad time može steći konkurentsku prednost pri privlačenju stanovnika, posjetitelja, turista ili poslovnih tvrtki. Jaka marka može unaprijediti proces donošenja odluka u javnom sektoru, ojačati identitet stanovnika grada i privući poslodavce i stručnjake (Rainisto, 2013). Snažan imidž grada može se izgraditi samo ako u izgradnji vanjskog i unutarnjeg imidža sudjeluju stanovnici grada, tvrtke, mediji i lokalna turistička tržišta (Knott, 2012).

Brendiranje grada ima mnogo obilježja brendiranja korporacija. Korporativne marketinške teorije govore o brojnosti dionika, što je često obilježje brendiranja grada (Kavaratsis, 2009). Svaki od tih dionika stvara marku i utječe na njen imidž. Marke gradova i marke korporacija razlikuju se od tradicionalnih marki proizvoda i usluga. Kako imaju mnoštvo dionika, teže je njima upravljati. Iako grad ima ograničenu kontrolu nad izgradnjom svoje marke, i dalje ima dužnost voditi svoju marku. Kavaratsis (2009) ističe da brendiranje grada i brendiranje korporacije imaju mnogo toga zajedničkog: interdisciplinarnu osnovu, uključenost većeg broja dionika, visoku razinu apstraktnosti i složenosti, društvenu odgovornost, višestruke identitete i potrebu za dugotrajnim razvojem. Nadalje, on tvrdi da je brendiranje grada još složenije od brendiranja korporacije jer poslovanje grada uključuje veći broj raznovrsnih funkcija. Primjerice, tu su političko donošenje odluka, razvoj infrastrukture i, jednostavno, javni interes. Mjesto kao proizvod, odnosno grad kao proizvod, nastaje su-

culture. A city's branding should be based on its infrastructure, place attributes and branding opportunities. Branding should be a policy around the city, not an extra activity for the city's marketing department (Kavaratsis, 2009). Hankinson (2004) identifies a combination of strong visionary leadership, brand-oriented organizational cultures and successful stakeholder relationships as essential in developing destination brands.

Every city tries to differentiate itself and create a unique image. By doing so, the city can gain competitive advantage in terms of recruiting residents or attracting visitors, tourists or businesses. A strong brand can improve public decision-making, strengthen the identity of the residents, and attract employers and professionals (Rainisto, 2013). In order to build a strong city brand under the conditions of global competition, both the external and internal image must be built in collaboration with the residents and businesses, potential investors, media and local tourist markets (Knott, 2012).

City branding often has the characteristics as corporate branding. Corporate marketing theories include the element of multiple stakeholders, which is a common feature of city branding as well (Kavaratsis, 2009). Each of these stakeholders creates the brand and has an influence on the image. City brands as well as corporate brands are different from traditional product or service brands. They have multiple stakeholders and are, therefore, more difficult to manage. A city's control over brand building is limited but it has the responsibility to lead the brand. Kavaratsis (2009) points out that city branding and corporate branding share multidisciplinary roots, multiple stakeholder involvement, a high level of intangibility and complexity, social responsibility, multiple identities, and a need for long term development. He also argues that city branding is even more complex than corporate branding since a city's operations include a wider variety of functions than a company's operations: e.g. political decision making,



radnjom privatnih i javnih organizacija. Stoga ga zajedno konzumiraju različiti klijenti s različitim ciljevima. Doživljaj klijenata proizlazi iz konzumacije mnoštva proizvoda i usluga te ga ne može kontrolirati samo jedna strana (Hankinson, 2007).

### 3. BRENDIRANJE GRADA I SPORT

Brendiranje grada iz perspektive sporta nije česta pojava i stoga ima vrlo malo istraživanja na tu temu. Braun i Zenker (2010) predstavljaju koncept upravljačke strukture koja se sastoji od krovne marke mjesta i specifičnih podmarki za pojedine ciljne skupine. Na podmarke utječe krovni imidž marke, a komunikacija se razlikuje od jedne ciljne skupine do druge. Autori tvrde da je brendiranje mjesta za određene ciljne skupine mnogo učinkovitije nego generalno brendiranje. Podmarke je moguće odvojiti od drugih podmarki, ali suradnja među podmarkama je ključna (Braun i Zenker, 2010). Taj zaključak govori u prilog uklapanju marke grada sporta pod krovnu marku grada Jyväskyläe.

Sport i sportska događanja potiču mnoge turiste na putovanja. Sportski turizam je aktivnost u nastajanju koja se brzo razvija, a sport privlači turiste i posjetitelje k novim destinacijama. Sport može izvrsno poslužiti prilikom kreiranja identiteta neke destinacije (Hinch i Higham, 2011:103). Smatra se da su velika sportska događanja naročito učinkovita za brendiranje nacije ili grada (Knott *et al.*, 2015, Wang *et al.*, 2012). Štoviše, međunarodna događanja mogu biti jednako važna za manje gradove kao i velika događanja za velike gradove. Bogat portfelj sportskih događanja imat će bolji učinak na razvoj pozitivnog i dugotrajnog imidža nego jedinstven događaj koji se neće ponoviti (Westerbeek, 2012). Kreaciji uspješnog portfelja događanja treba pristupiti pažljivo i dobro ga povezati sa strategijom grada. Mreža koja sudjeluje u organizaciji različitih događanja treba biti dobro povezana i radi-

infrastructure development and, simply, public interest. The place product, i.e. a city, is co-produced by private and public organizations and at the same time co-consumed by different customers seeking different objectives. The customer experience, created by multiple services, cannot be controlled by a single party (Hankinson, 2007).

### 3. CITY BRANDING AND SPORTS

City branding from a sports perspective is not a common phenomenon and, therefore, the existing research is very limited. Braun and Zenker (2010) present the idea of a management structure which involves a place umbrella brand and target group-specific sub-brands. The sub-brands are influenced by the overall brand image and communicated differently to different target groups. They argue that target group-specific place branding is more influential than general branding. These sub-brands are not inseparable from other sub-brands, but the communication and co-operation between sub-brands are the key tools in branding (Braun and Zenker, 2010). This supports the idea of a sport city brand as a part of the city of Jyväskylä's umbrella brand.

Sports and sporting events motivate many tourists. Sport tourism is a fast emerging activity and sports attract tourists and visitors to new destinations. Sport can be one of the most influential resources in creating a certain identity for a destination (Hinch and Higham, 2011:103). Sport mega-events in particular are seen as an effective tool in branding a nation or a city (Knott *et al.*, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, international events may be as important for smaller cities as mega-events for big cities. A strong portfolio of sports events can contribute to the creation of a positive and enduring image much better than a single one-time event (Westerbeek, 2012). A successful event portfolio should be built carefully and linked to the city's strategy. The whole network orga-

ti na postizanju zajedničkog cilja. Neki su gradovi bili vrlo uspješni pri izradi portfelja različitih događanja dok neki drugi nisu mogli povezati relevantne aktere iako su sve komponente važne za razvoj uspješnog portfelja sportskih događanja već bile poznate (Clark i Misener, 2015). Da bi portfelj dobro funkcionirao, grad treba uložiti mnogo truda u koordiniranje, a organizatori događanja razviti bliske odnose. Gradovi koji žele ugostiti periodična međunarodna sportska događanja trebaju uspostaviti vezu s organizatorima događanja i povezati to događanje s gradom i marketinškim djelovanjem grada (Herstein i Berger, 2013a). Xing i Chalip (2006) navode da povezivanje događanja i destinacije koristi oboma zbog transfera imidža: destinacije domaćini sportskih događanja ostavljaju privlačan dojam povećane aktivnosti unutar destinacije.

Knott *et al.* (2015) prepoznaju medije i domaće stanovništvo kao ključni faktor utjecaja na ostavštinu marke neke nacije. Što je snažnija potpora nekom događanju među lokalnim stanovnicima to su iskustva turista pozitivnija. Knott *et al.* (2015) također ističu da sport potiče izražavanje osjećaja, što nije česta pojava kod drugih vrsta događanja. Mediji, pogotovo društveni mediji, igraju važnu ulogu u stvaranju imidža grada jer su turisti postali korisnici globalnih medija (Knott, 2012).

Poznato je da sportska događanja imaju utjecaja na društveni i gospodarski razvoj grada domaćina (Qinqin 2011). Dok se veliki gradovi natječu za domaćinstvo mega-događanja, poput Olimpijskih igara, manji se gradovi natječu kako bi bili domaćini manjim sportskim događanjima. Herstein i Berger (2013a) tvrde da korištenje sportskih događanja u procesu brendiranja donosi gradovima i kratkoročnu i dugoročnu korist. Sportovi privlače više ljudi nego bilo koja druga događanja: oni vežu promatrače i navijače snažnim emocijama, privlače veliku i raznovrsnu publiku te ostavljaju pozitivne učinke gradovima u dugotrajno nasljeđe (Herstein i Berger, 2013a). Gradovi domaćini velikih sportskih događanja imaju koristi i od kratkoročnih učinaka i od dugo-

nizing the different events should be linked together and work towards a common goal. Some cities have been very successful in creating such a portfolio of different events, whereas some have been unable to connect the actors even though all the components of a successful sports events portfolio development have been identified. (Clark and Misener, 2015). A successful sports event portfolio requires a lot of coordinating effort from the city and close relationships among event organizers. Cities wishing to host regular international sports events should create a bond with the event organizer and link the event to the city and its marketing actions (Herstein and Berger, 2013a). Xing and Chalip (2006) state that matched events and destinations benefit from each other in terms of image transfer: hosting a sports event increases the sense of activity within that destination.

Knott *et al.* (2015) identify media and local citizens as the key influencing factors of a nation's branding legacy. The more support an event has from the locals, the more positive the experience is for the tourists. Knott *et al.* (2015) also point out that sport expresses feelings that often cannot be found in other events. The media, and especially the social media, play an important role in creating an image for a city since tourists have become global media users (Knott, 2012).

Sporting events are widely recognized to have an influence on the social and economic development of the hosting city (Qinqin, 2011). While big cities compete for hosting sport mega-events, such as the Olympic Games, smaller cities compete for hosting smaller scale sporting events. Herstein and Berger (2013a) state that cities branding themselves using sport events benefit both in the short and long term. Sports attract more people than any other events: they have emotional power over the spectators and fans, they tempt multiple audiences, and benefit the whole city with long-term legacies (Herstein and Berger, 2013a). Hosting major sporting events can create both short-term impacts and long-term legacies that benefit

ročne ostavštine koja prelazi i na okolno područje (Solberg i Preuss, 2007). Gradovi vide sportska događanja kao značajne poslovne prilike jer donose dobit poslovnom okruženju i jačaju imidž grada.

Brendiranje gradova kao gradova sporta u porastu je od početka modernih Olimpijskih igara i globalizacije profesionalnog sporta. Prema Reinu i Shieldssu (2006), nacije i gradovi koriste tri različite strategije za sportsko brendiranje: 1) samo događanje, 2) sportske timove i 3) mjesto. Od Olimpijskih igara održanih 1894. godine u Los Angelesu, Olimpijske su igre najveće sportsko događanje i najprivlačnija prilika za brendiranje grada (Herstein i Berger, 2013b). Čini se da u današnje vrijeme samo vrlo veliki gradovi mogu biti domaćini Olimpijskih igara, npr. Peking (2008), London (2012), Rio de Janeiro (2016) i Tokyo (2020). Istovremeno, zimske Olimpijske igre prilika su za manje i manje slavne gradove poput Lillehammera (1994) i Pyongyanga (2018). Ispod olimpijske razine sve veći broj gradova koristi međunarodna sportska događanja (npr. svjetska i europska prvenstva te rastući broj profesionalnih sportskih događanja) kako bi se promovirali. Dobri primjeri takvog ponašanja su Melbourne (Emery, 2015), Glasgow i Birmingham (Pye, Toohey i Cuskelly, 2015).

Profesionalne sportske momčadi također pružaju gradovima mogućnost da se promoviraju kao gradovi sporta. Barcelona, Manchester, Liverpool i München primjeri su europskih gradova s jakim imidžom gradova nogometa. Važno je primijetiti kako mnogi mali ili srednje veliki gradovi koriste iste metode brendiranja kao veći gradovi (Kozma, Radics i Teperics, 2012). Mnogi gradovi u SAD-u rabe marku grada sporta kako bi iskoristili franšize svoje glavne lige (Austrian i Rosentraub, 2002). Najnovija strategija brendiranja grada ugrađuje sport u dizajn marke mjesta (Rein i Shields, 2006). Recentni primjeri takvih marki su bliskostični gradovi Abu Dhabi i Dubai. Naročito je Dubai slavan zbog svog sportskog grada

the surrounding area (Solberg and Preuss, 2007). Sport events have become an important business opportunity for cities since they profit the business environment and strengthen the city's image.

The modern growth of sport city branding has started with the Olympic Games and globalization of professional sports. According to Rein and Shields (2006), nations or cities can use three different strategies for sport branding: 1) the event, 2) the teams and 3) the place. Since the 1894 Los Angeles Olympics, the Olympic Games have been the ultimate mega sport event and the most competitive branding opportunity for cities (Herstein and Berger, 2013b). It seems that only very big cities, such as Beijing (2008), London (2012), Rio de Janeiro (2016) and Tokyo (2020), are currently able to host the Olympics while the Winter Olympics provide opportunities for less famous, smaller cities such as Lillehammer (1994), and Pyongyang (2018), to host the event and brand the hosting city. Below the Olympic level, a growing number of cities are using international sporting events, such as World Championships, European championships or a growing number of national professional sport events to promote their cities. Good examples of such cities are Melbourne (Emery, 2015), Glasgow and Birmingham (Pye, Toohey and Cuskelly, 2015).

Professional teams are the second option for cities to promote themselves as sport cities. Barcelona, Manchester, Liverpool and Munich are examples of European cities with a strong football image. It is important to notice that many small or mid-sized cities can use the same branding methods as their bigger counterparts (Kozma, Radics and Teperics, 2012). Many US cities have used the sport city brand as a way to leverage their major league franchises (Austrian and Rosentraub, 2002). The newest city branding strategy integrates sport into the design of the place brand (Rein and Shields, 2006). The recent examples of such brands are middle-east cities Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Especially Dubai is famous for its

(Dubai Sport City) koji se proteže na više od 50 milijuna kvadratnih stopa (Rhein i Shields, 2007; Balakrishnan, 2008).

Dubai Sport City spreading over 50 million square feet (Rhein and Shields, 2007; Balakrishnan, 2008).

#### 4. GRAD JYVÄSKYLÄ I SPORT

Jyväskylä je grad srednje veličine u središnjoj Finskoj s 137 000 stanovnika (sveukupno 180 000 u regiji Jyväskylä). Dobro je poznat po kulturnim i sportskim događanjima kao i po svojim prekrasnim prirodnim resursima. Jyväskylä se promovira kao vodeće obrazovno, stručno, kulturno i sportsko središte. Grad Jyväskylä utemeljen je 1837. godine i najveći je grad u središnjoj Finskoj. Nalazi se 270 km sjeverno od Helsinkija. Strategija grada identificira tri glavna gradska cilja: aktivno, zdravo i sretno građanstvo, mudro korištenje resursa i odvažnu poslovnu politiku (Jyväskylä, 2016). Jyväskylä je središte sportskog obrazovanja i istraživanja u Finskoj. Sveučilište u Jyväskyläi jedino je sveučilište u Finskoj koje ima Fakultet sportskih i zdravstvenih znanosti dok Sveučilište primjenjenih znanosti JAMK nudi jedini redovni studij sportske poslovne ekonomije u Finskoj. Nadalje, Istraživački institut za olimpijske sportove i Istraživački centar za sportske i zdravstvene znanosti također se nalaze u Jyväskyläi.

Što se tiče broja gledatelja i medijske pokrivenosti, hokej na ledu je najpopularniji sport u Finskoj (i u Jyväskyläi). Jyväskylä stoga već desetljećima ima imidž grada hokeja na ledu. U posljednjih osam godina klub hokeja na ledu iz Jyväskyläe dvaput je osvojio finsko prvenstvo, tri puta broncu i jedanput europsko prvenstvo. Hokej na ledu jedini je visoko profesionalizirani sport u Jyväskyläi, a drugi popularni sportovi sporo se profesionaliziraju, npr. nogomet (broj jedan po broju sudionika), finski bejzbol, atletika, gimnastika, *floorball* i košarka. Atletski klub iz Jyväskyläe nedavno se istakao te postao najuspješniji atletski klub u Finskoj, što je privuklo i sportaše i gledatelje. *Floorball* i finski bejzbol specifični su finski sportovi,

#### 4. THE CITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ AND SPORTS

Jyväskylä is a mid-sized city in Central Finland with 137 000 inhabitants (all together 180 000 in the region of Jyväskylä). It is well-known for its cultural and sporting events as well as for its beautiful natural resources. Jyväskylä promotes itself as a leading centre of education, expertise, culture and sport. The city of Jyväskylä, established in 1837, is the biggest city in Central Finland. It is located 270 kilometers to the north of Helsinki. The city strategy identifies three main goals for the city: active, healthy and happy citizens, wise use of resources, and a bold business policy (Jyväskylä, 2016). Jyväskylä is the center of sport education and research in Finland. The University of Jyväskylä is the only university in Finland with the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, whereas JAMK University of Applied Sciences offers the only full time Sport Business degree in Finland. Furthermore, the Research Institute for Olympic Sports and the Research Center for Sport and Health Sciences are also located in Jyväskylä.

Ice hockey is the most popular sport in Finland (and in Jyväskylä) in terms of spectators and media coverage. Jyväskylä has therefore been well known as an ice hockey city for the past decade. The Jyväskylä Ice Hockey Club has won the Finnish Championships twice, bronze three times, and the European Trophy once in the past eight years. Ice hockey is the only highly professionalized sport in Jyväskylä, whereas other popular sports, such as football (number one in terms of participants), Finnish baseball, track and field, gymnastics, floorball and basketball are still slowly professionalizing. The Jyväskylä Track and Field Club has raised its profile lately and become the most successful athletics club in Finland, attracting both athletes and specta-

a u Jyväskyläi se oba igraju na nacionalnoj razini. U Jyväskyläi nalazimo sve popularne sportove, a većina se igra na najvišoj nacionalnoj razini. Stoga je ponuda sportova vrlo raznolika.

Popularnost zimskih sportova u posljednje je vrijeme značajno porasla. Jyväskylä je tradicionalno bila poznata po skijaškim skokovima i skijaškom trčanju, ali danas su u središtu interesa slobodni stil i slalom. Tereni za alpsko skijanje nalaze se kraj samog središta grada, što je olakšalo razvoj brojnih događanja posvećenih zimskim sportovima.

Jyväskylä je svjetski poznata po reli utrka od 1951., kad se tu počela održavati utrka za Svjetsko reli prvenstvo. Nestle reli svake godine okuplja na desetke tisuća gledatelja i jedno je od najvećih sportskih događanja u Skandinaviji. Utrka je vrlo značajna za grad, naročito zbog svog izravnog gospodarskog učinka (14,7 milijuna eura u 2013.). Radi se o globalnom događanju srednje veličine koje se održava u relativno malom gradu (Ahonen *et al.*, 2015).

## 5. METODE I DIZAJN ISTRAŽIVANJA

Ovo istraživanje dio je većeg istraživačkog projekta koji se bavi markom grada sporta Jyväskyläe, finskog grada srednje veličine, a u dvije faze istraživanja uključuje različite istraživačke metode. Šire istraživanje obuhvatilo je studiju u kojoj se rabio splet metoda u dvije faze - kvantitativnoj i kvalitativnoj. U radu se analizira istraživanje koje je provedeno 2015. i 2016. godine, a odnosi se na prvu fazu istraživanja o percepcijama imidža sportskih marki važnih sportskih menadžera i dužnosnika grada Jyväskyläe. Čitav projekt, čiji je generalni cilj bio ispitati najvažnije dionike percepcije marke grada Jyväskyläe, može se prikazati kako slijedi:

tors. Floorball and Finnish baseball are special disciplines in Finland, both played on the national top level in Jyväskylä. All mainline sports are represented in Jyväskylä, most of them also played on the highest national level. Therefore, the sports offering for visitors or residents is varied.

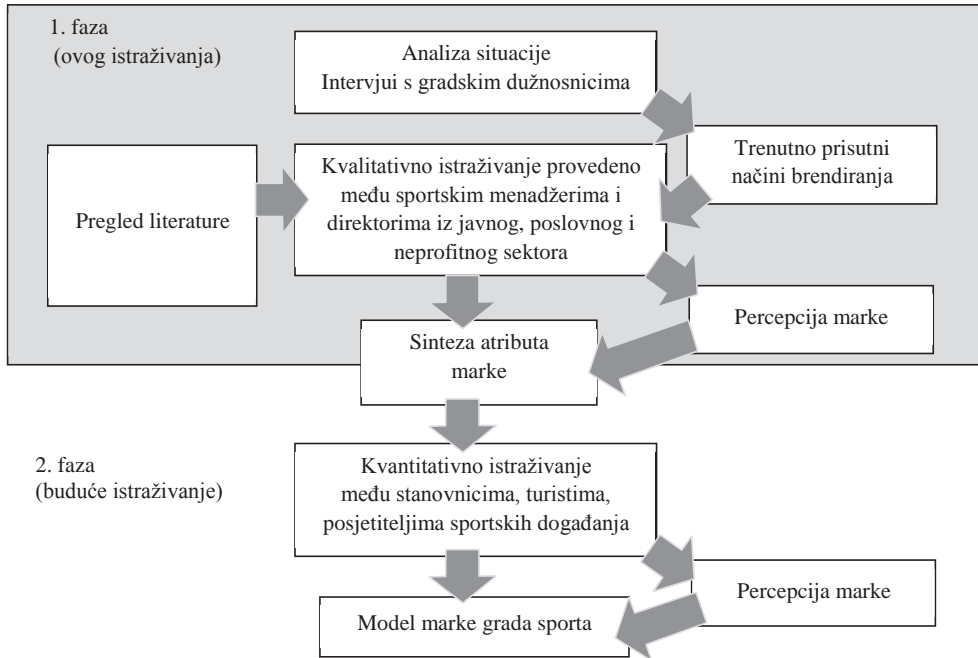
The overall popularity of winter sports has lately increased remarkably. Traditionally, Jyväskylä was famous for ski jumping and cross-country skiing, but nowadays the trend has turned to freestyle and slalom. The down-hill skiing facilities in Jyväskylä are located next to the city center, and this has facilitated the development of multiple winter sport events there.

Internationally, Jyväskylä has been known for rally driving ever since a World Rally Championship race was brought there in 1951. The Nestle Rally gathers tens of thousands of spectators annually and it is one of the biggest sporting events in Scandinavia. The impact of the rally event on the hosting city is remarkable, especially as regards its direct economic impact (14.7 million euros in 2013). It is a medium-size event on a global scale taking place in a relatively small municipality (Ahonen *et al.*, 2015).

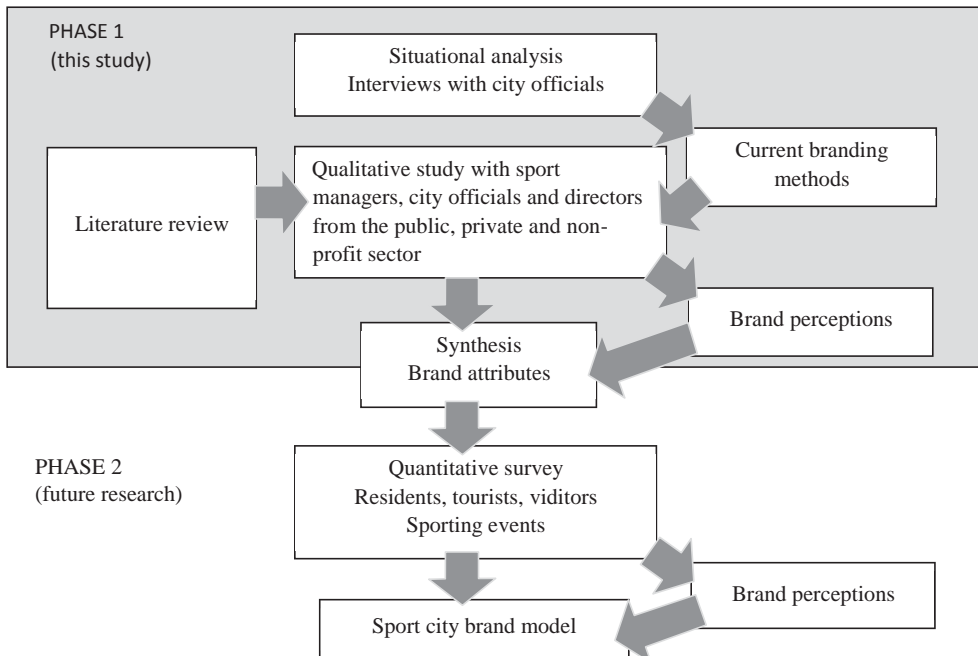
## 5. METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was part of a wider research project examining the sports city brand of a mid-sized city in Finland, Jyväskylä. This is an interim report of the sport city brand research conducted in 2015-2016. The wider research project was a mixed-method study including two different phases, qualitative and quantitative surveys. This paper reports on the first phase of research into sport brand image perceptions of important sport managers and city leaders in the city of Jyväskylä. The overall aim of this study was to examine the most important stakeholders' brand perceptions of the city of Jyväskylä. The whole research project can be outlined as follows:

**Slika 2: Dizajn istraživanja marke grada sporta provedenog u Jyväskyläi**



**Figure 2: Research design of the Jyväskylä sport city brand study**





Ovo istraživanje bilo je kvalitativne prirode, a cilj mu je bio istražiti ulogu sporta u brendiranju grada i ispitati kako najvažniji dionici sportske marke doživljavaju trenutnu situaciju. Odabran je kvalitativan pristup jer se željelo razumjeti i interpretirati dojmove i mišljenja dionika koji svojim odlukama utječu na imidž i identitet Jyväskyläe kao grada sporta.

Podaci su prikupljeni metodom dubinskog intervjua, a pitanja su se bazirala na nizu tema iz literature i našem istraživačkom problemu. Provedeni su intervjui s jedanaest sportskih menadžera i gradskih dužnosnika, odnosno s pet gradskih dužnosnika (gradonačelnik, direktor grada za komunikacije, dva menadžera iz odjela za sport i direktor regionalne tvrtke za razvoj) pet predstavnika najistaknutijih sportskih ustanova (različiti sportovi) i jednim predstavnikom medija. Dvoje sportskih menadžera predstavljalo je obrazovne i istraživačke institucije, jedan urednike sportske sekcije najvećih regionalnih novina, a dvoje najuspješnije sportske klubove, od kojih je jedan bio neprofitan. Intervjui su trajali između 50 i 90 minuta. Svi su intervjui provedeni u proljeće 2015. godine. Doslovno su transkribirani i obrađeni NVivo programom za kvalitativnu analizu. Odgovori su prvo kategorizirani prema temama, a zatim kodirani prema podkategorijama koje su proizišle iz samih intervjua. Kategoriziranje i kodiranje podataka u NVivo programu rezultiralo je jasnom strukturom, što je omogućilo detaljnu analizu percepcije sportske marke Jyväskyläe među gradskim dužnosnicima i sportskim menadžerima. Upotrebom računalnog programa na minimum je svedena mogućnost pristranosti.

Prikupljeni podaci i opsežan pregled literature omogućili su utvrđivanje kako dionici sportske marke trenutno doživljavaju marku. Istovremeno su dobiveni i podaci potrebni za razvoj upitnika za veliko kvalitativno istraživanje kojim će biti obuhvaćeni stanovnici grada, njegovi posjetitelji i turisti. Anketa

This study was qualitative in nature. The aim of this study was to understand the role of sport in the city's current branding, and survey the most important sport brand stakeholders' perceptions of it. A qualitative approach was chosen since the aim was to understand and interpret the perceptions and opinions of the current sport brand decision makers who influence the sport brand image and identity of the city of Jyväskylä.

In-depth interviews were used to collect the data. These interviews were based on different themes emerging from the literature and the research problem. Altogether eleven sport managers and city leaders were interviewed, five of them representing the city of Jyväskylä, five of them the most prominent sport organizations and one representing the media. The interviewees were the city's mayor, city's communication director, two managers responsible for the sports department, the regional development company's managing director, and five sport managers from different sports stakeholder groups that have a strong influence on sport branding. Two of the interviewed sport managers represented education and research organizations, one represented the biggest regional newspaper's sport section's editorial staff, one a regional association, and two the most successful profit and non-profit sporting clubs. The length of the interviews varied from 50 minutes to 90 minutes. All the interviews were conducted during spring 2015 and were transcribed verbatim. The interview data was processed using NVivo qualitative analysis software. The responses were first categorized according to the interview themes and then coded into sub-categories according to the findings emerging from the interview data. By categorizing and coding the data in NVivo, a clear coding structure was developed to further analyze the sport brand perceptions of the city leaders and sport managers. By using a computer software the possible human-bias was minimized.

The data collected and the extensive literature review enable insights into the current sport brand stakeholder perceptions and

među posjetiteljima i turistima provedena je tijekom različitih sportskih događanja u Jyväskyläi dok je lokalno stanovništvo ispitano putem internetske ankete koja je bila objavljena na službenim gradskim stranicama te uz pomoć lokalnih medija i sportskih organizacija.

## **6. KAKO SPORTSKI MENADŽERI I GRADSKI DUŽNOSNICI DOŽIVLJAVAJU SPORTSKU MARKU GRADA JYVÄSKYLÄE**

Svi ispitanici doživljavaju Jyväskyläu kao grad sporta. Grad ima dugu tradiciju u elitnim i masovnim sportovima, a nosi i jedinstvena obilježja u pogledu sportskog obrazovanja, istraživanja i prakse. Svi ispitanici menadžeri i gradski dužnosnici dijelili su mišljenje da Jyväskylä ima jaku sportsku marku koja se slabo koristila pa njen plasman na tržište nije bio naročito učinkovit. Što se tiče sportskih terena i objekata, grad ima velike planove pa je razvoj sportske podmarke grada trenutno od velike važnosti.

Učinkovita izgradnja marke treba se temeljiti na strategiji, što ističu svi ispitanici gradski dužnosnici, a sa sportskim menadžerima se slažu da u izgradnju marke treba uključiti sve utjecajne dionike. Projekt razvoja marke, međutim, treba voditi grad, njegovi dužnosnici i predstavnici. Sport kao podmarka povezan je s gradskim gospodarskim politikama. Sport se doživljava kao rastuća aktivnost i važno poslovno područje, ali ispitanici su naglasili i važnost neprofitnih udruga. Gradski dužnosnici istakli su da strateški ciljevi grada uključuju i dobrobit građana i uspješno poslovanje. Prema mišljenju ispitanika, sportovi su važni za privlačenje tvrtki koje će u Jyväskyläi razviti svoje poslovanje i pojedina koji će grad odabrati za svoj dom.

Kao najsnažnije atribute sportske marke grada Jyväskyläe ispitanici su naveli sportsko obrazovanje i istraživanje, sportska događanja, Neste Oil Rally Finland, JYP hoke-

provide the information needed for developing a questionnaire for a large-scale quantitative survey amongst the residents, visitors and tourists. The visitor and tourist survey was conducted in various sporting events in Jyväskylä. Local residents were reached through an Internet survey published in the city's official web page and supplemented with local media and sport organizations.

## **6. SPORT MANAGERS' AND CITY LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPORT CITY BRAND OF JYVÄSKYLÄ**

The city of Jyväskylä was seen as a city of sports by all the interviewees. It has a strong history both in elite sports and sports for all, and it has unique characteristics in terms of sports education, research and practice. All the interviewed managers and city officials shared the opinion that Jyväskylä had a strong sport brand although it had not been marketed very efficiently or utilized as strongly as it could have been. The city has big plans concerning the sports facilities and, therefore, the need to develop the sport sub-brand is of great current interest.

Effective brand building should be based on a strategy, which is highlighted by all the city leaders. Both sport managers and city officials agreed that brand building should be a joint project with all the influential stakeholders involved. However, the leader of this development has to be the city and its officials and trustees. Sport as a sub-brand is linked to the city's industrial policy decisions. Sport is seen as a growing activity and business field but the importance of non-profit associations was also stressed by the interviewees. City officials emphasized that the city's strategic aim includes both the citizens' wellbeing and successful enterprises. Sports were seen as an important asset in tempting both companies and individuals to choose Jyväskylä as their destination to settle down.

jašku momčad, sve sportove, sportske terene i zgrade te aktivno gradsko stanovništvo. Svi ispitanici prepoznali su obrazovnu tradiciju i sveučilišta kao jedan od najvažnijih elemenata imidža i identiteta Jyväskyläe. Trećina stanovnika Jyväskyläe su studenti, a u gradu se nalaze dva poznata sveučilišta (Sveučilište u Jyväskyläi i Sveučilište primijenjenih znanosti JAMK). Fakultet sportskih i zdravstvenih znanosti Sveučilišta u Jyväskyläi ima snažan utjecaj na brendiranje Jyväskyläe kao grada sporta. Njegov izniman položaj proizlazi iz činjenice da jedini u Finskoj ima studij sporta na sveučilišnoj razini. Osim toga, međunarodno je priznat kao istraživački centar. Prema mišljenju ispitanika, Istraživački institut za olimpijske sportove, koji se nalazi kraj fakulteta, značajno doprinosi stvaranju pozitivnog imidža među elitnim sportovima i sportašima.

Zbog velike studentske populacije, Jyväskylä se doživljava kao mlad i aktivan grad. Aktivno stanovništvo značajno doprinosi izgradnji imidža i identiteta grada, posebno u pogledu sportskog imidža. Ispitanici su naglasili i važnost geografskog položaja, prirodnog okoliša i životnih uvjeta. Velika i raznovrsna sportska ponuda čini Jyväskyläu mjestom na kojem je dobro živjeti i podizati obitelj. Jyväskylä u svojim predgrađima ima razvijenu mrežu sportskih terena, staze za trčanje i skijanje, klizanje na ledu i jake, funkcionalne sportske klubove koji stanovništvu nude brojne usluge. Ispitanici su smatrali da centri za alpsko skijanje značajno doprinose imidžu grada, pogotovo što se tiče mlađe populacije. U gradu i njegovoj okolini nalaze se tri skijaška centra, što jača imidž Jyväskyläe kao grada zimskih sportova.

Kao pojedinačni element marke ispitanici su najčešće spominjali hokej na ledu i profesionalnu hokejašku momčad JYP (Jyväskylä Ice Hockey Club). Po broju gledatelja i rezultatima hokej na ledu je najpopularniji sport u Finskoj. Finska nacionalna momčad je mnogo puta ostvarila uspjeh na svjetskim prvenstvima, a hokej na ledu je sport koji prati naj-

The strongest sport brand attributes that were connected with the city of Jyväskylä were sports education and research, events, the Neste Oil Rally Finland, JYP Ice Hockey Team, overall sports and sporting facilities and active citizens. Every interviewee identified the educational traditions and universities to be among the most important image and identity constructors of Jyväskylä. One third of Jyväskylä's citizens are students and two well-known universities (University of Jyväskylä and JAMK University of Applied Sciences) are located there. The Faculty of Sport and Health Science of the University of Jyväskylä has a strong influence in branding the city of Jyväskylä as a sports city. The faculty has a unique national position as it is the only sport faculty at the university level in Finland. Moreover, it is internationally recognized for its research. The Research Institute for Olympic Sports, located next to the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, was seen as an important operator in gaining a positive image amongst elite sports and athletes.

Jyväskylä was seen as a youthful and active city due to the number of young students living there. Active citizens were seen as important actors in building the image and identity of the city, especially concerning the sports image. The interviewees also highlighted the location, nature, and living conditions as success factors attracting the residents. Jyväskylä was seen to be a good place to live and raise a family due to its numerous sports offerings. Jyväskylä city has a good network of suburban sports sites, running and skiing tracks, ice skating locations and strong and functional sporting clubs offering services to the residents. Downhill skiing centers were mentioned as important facilities and image constructors especially for younger people. There are altogether three downhill skiing centers in Jyväskylä and its surroundings, which strengthens the image of a winter sports city.

The most frequently single brand creator was ice hockey and the local professional ice hockey team JYP (Jyväskylä Ice Hockey

veći broj gledatelja. Prva liga hokeja na ledu jedina je posve profesionalna sportska liga u Finskoj, a JYP je najbrojnija elitna sportska tvrtka u Jyväskyläi. Privukla je više medijske pažnje, gledatelja i sponzorskih sredstava od svih drugih sportskih klubova u regiji i stoga je marka lider među lokalnim sportskim klubovima. Njegovu važnost za sportsku marku Jyväskyläe prepoznali su svi ispitani gradski dužnosnici i sportski menadžeri.

Svi ispitanici naveli su da sportska događanja predstavljaju vrlo važan element u izgradnji marke grada. Naglasili su kako je važno imati puno događanja koja su vezana uz različite sportove i koja se periodički ponavljaju. Dok jedno zasebno događanje možda neće postići dugoročne učinke, niz sportskih događanja ojačat će sportski imidž grada. Po mišljenju ispitanika, geografski položaj Jyväskyläe u sredini Finske savršen je za organizaciju nacionalnih i međunarodnih događanja, a postojanje dobrih sportskih i turističkih objekata omogućuje različitim sportskim organizacijama da budu domaćini velikih događanja. Najveće godišnje događanje u Jyväskyläi je svjetsko reli prvenstvo Neste Oil Rally Finland koje se održava početkom kolovoza. Reli je tijekom vremena stekao status ikone Jyväskyläe, a njegova važnost za brendiranje grada je izvanredna. Ispitanici su naveli da imidžu Jyväskyläe doprinose kako reli tako i finski vozači relija koji potječu iz područja oko Jyväskyläe. Jedan od ispitanika drži da Jyväskyläe možda nije dovoljno iskoristila ovo poznato događanje u svrhu svog međunarodnog marketinga. Velika sportska događanja u grad privlače turiste i posjetitelje, a učinak svih tih posjeta gradu domaćinu može biti izniman.

Brojnost različitih sportova i sportskih klubova također su važni za Jyväskyläu. Lokalni sportaši su postigli brojne uspjehe u mnogim disciplinama na nacionalnoj i međunarodnoj razini. Uspjeh atletičara iz Jyväskylä Track and Field Cluba (JKU) i pobjede JYP hokejske momčadi na Finskom i

Club). Ice hockey is the most popular sport in Finland in terms of the number of spectators and success. The Finnish national team has been successful in world championships many times, and ice hockey is the most widely watched sport in Finland. First league ice hockey is also the only fully professional league in Finland, and JYP is the biggest elite sport company in Jyväskylä. It has attracted more media coverage, spectators and sponsorship money than any other sports club in the area and, therefore, it is the brand leader amongst the local sporting clubs. Its importance for Jyväskylä's sport city brand was recognized by all the interviewed city officials and sport managers.

Sports events were mentioned by all the interviewees to be very important in building the city brand. The interviewees emphasized the importance of having multiple events in different sports on a regular basis. One event by itself does not necessarily bring long term effects, but a series of sporting events strengthen the sport image of the city. Jyväskylä's location in the middle of Finland was mentioned to be perfect for organizing national or international events, and this, together with good sporting facilities and other tourism facilities, allows different sports organizations to host big events. The biggest annual event in Jyväskylä is the World Rally Championships (WRC) Neste Oil Rally Finland, taking place at the beginning of August. The rally event has become an iconic event for Jyväskylä, and its importance as a brand constructor is remarkable. Both the WRC event itself and successful Finnish rally drivers from the Jyväskylä area were mentioned to improve the image of Jyväskylä. One of the interviewees expressed his doubt that Jyväskylä may not have utilized the awareness of this event in its international marketing well enough. Big sporting events attract tourists and visitors to the city and their economic impact on the host city can be remarkable.

Multiple sports and strong sporting clubs are an asset to the city of Jyväskylä. Many disciplines and athletes have gained success

Europskom prvenstvu također predstavljaju čimbenike koji doprinose uspjehu brendiranja. Nekolicina ispitanika spomenula je i pojedinačne sportaše koji predstavljaju uzore za čitav grad.

Marketinško djelovanje grada Jyväskylä bilo je usmjereno na industrijski marketing, s naglaskom na nova razvojna područja, npr. centar Hippos. Svi ispitanici su spominjali sportski centar Hippos kao razvojni projekt koji će u najvećoj mjeri doprinijeti jačanju sportske marke grada Jyväskylä među stanovnicima i posjetiteljima. Prema mišljenju gradskih dužnosnika, gradske promotivne aktivnosti usredotočene su na menadžment i razvoj događanja. Sportski menadžeri također smatraju da bi imidž Jyväskylä kao grada sporta profitirao kad bi se menadžment ili razvoj sportskih događanja našli u središtu pozornosti marketinških stručnjaka. Što se tiče uloge dužnosnika u procesima odlučivanja o marki, ispitanici su ju doživljavali na vrlo različite načine. Neki su smatrali da političari nedostatno cijene sport, dok su drugi bili mišljenja da političari snažno podržavaju sport. Svi su se slagali da je uloga gradskih dužnosnika u brendiranju grada mala, ali da bi trebali imati ključnu ulogu u razvoju sportskih objekata i terena.

Imidž Jyväskylä kao grada sporta promijenio se u prošlih nekoliko desetljeća, ali ispitanici koji imaju dugu karijeru u ovom području smatraju kako je imidž grada sporta uvijek bio prisutan. Naglasili su kako je moguće da su i marka i imidž grada sporta jači izvan Jyväskylä nego unutar grada. Ispitanici su smatrali kako je suradnja među dionicima nedovoljna, ali da stalno jača. Tvrdili su da nije došlo do ko-brendiranja iako se svi slažu da je to preduvjet razvoja marke. Prema mišljenju ispitanika, rasprave među dionicima predstavljaju značajan alat za razvoj sportske industrije i marke. Ispitanici su se složili da bi gradonačelnik trebao imati vodeću ulogu u razvoju takve suradnje. Svi sportski menadžeri koji su sudjelovali u istraživanju bili su voljni sudjelovati u razvo-

on the national and even international level. The success of the athletes of Jyväskylä Track and Field Club's (JKU) and the victories of the Finnish Championships and European Trophy by JYP ice hockey team were mentioned as brand building success factors. Successful individual athletes as models for the city were brought up by a few interviewees.

In the marketing actions of the city of Jyväskylä the emphasis was on industrial marketing, focusing on new development areas, such as the Hippos sports facilities. The Hippos Sports Center was mentioned by all interviewees as one of the city's most important development areas as regards improving Jyväskylä's sports brand amongst the citizens and visitors. According to the city leaders, the city's promotion focuses on event management and development. The sport managers also stated that the image of Jyväskylä as a sports city would benefit from making event management/development an important future marketing focus. The interviewees perceived the role of officials in brand decision making in very different terms. Some of them felt that politicians did not hold sports in a sufficiently high regard, whereas others felt that politicians were very supportive of sport issues. Their role in branding the city was seen as minor although their importance as city leaders, especially as concerns the development of facilities, was seen as essential.

Jyväskylä's image as a sports city has changed during the past decades but, according to the interviewees with a long career in the field, the sports city image has always been present. They stressed that the sport city image and brand might be stronger outside Jyväskylä than inside the city. Cooperation between different stakeholders was mainly seen as insufficient, but continuously improving. The respondents stated that co-branding did not occur even if it was deemed to be a requirement for developing the sport city brand. Discussions between different stakeholders were seen as an important tool in developing the sports industry and brand. The respondents agreed that the city mayor should have



ju ko-brendiranja između različitih sportskih organizacija i gradskih dužnosnika.

## 7. ZAKLJUČCI

Grad Jyväskylä općenito se doživljava kao grad sporta. Svi ispitanici prepoznali su sport kao značajan dio gradskog imidža i identiteta. Unatoč tome, prema mišljenju ispitanika, slabi su napori usmjereni na brendiranje Jyväskylæe kao grada sporta. Mladenačko ozračje grada, njegova razvijena mreža sportskih terena i objekata, jaki sportski klubovi te uspješne momčadi i sportaši osnova su sportske marke. Prirodno je da sport funkcionira kao jedan od podmarki krovne marke grada, ali boljom komunikacijom prema ciljnim skupinama mogao bi se bolje iskoristiti njegov marketinški potencijal. Kako bi se iskoristile mogućnosti koje pruža brendiranje, različiti dionici trebali bi se uključiti u proces ko-brendiranja.

Jyväskylä tijekom godine nudi brojna sportska događanja te je domaćin jednom od najvećih sportskih događanja u Skandinaviji, Svjetskom prvenstvu u reliju. Velika međunarodna sportska događanja učinkovito su sredstvo brendiranja grada posjetiteljima i turistima iz Finske i inozemstva. Za kreiranje sportskog imidža također su važna manja sportska događanja i mreža sportskih terena jer privlače stanovnike grada i regije koji imaju značajnu ulogu u razvoju imidža grada. Bilo bi korisno koordinirati portfelj sportskih događanja i bolje povezati različite aktere i grad pri organizaciji sportskih događanja.

Jyväskylä je istaknula sport kao jednu od svojih strateških smjernica, a razvojni plan za sportski centar Hippos primarna je akcija koja proizlazi iz spomenute strategije. Suradnja među dionicima u proizvodnom procesu ključ je uspjeha u razvoju sportske podmarke Jyväskylæe. Brendiranje grada trebalo bi počivati na gradskoj infrastrukturi, atributima mjesta, prilikama i učinkovitoj komunikaciji marke. Sportsko brendiranje može

the leading role in developing the co-operation. All of interviewed sport managers were willing to take part in the development of co-branding between different sport organizations and city officials.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Jyväskylä was generally seen and experienced as a sports city. All the interviewees identified sport as a big part of the city's image and identity. However, the efforts to brand the city as a sport city were still seen as weak. Jyväskylä's youthful atmosphere, good network of sports sites and venues, strong sports clubs and successful teams and athletes create a basis for the sport brand. Sport is naturally one sub-brand in the city's umbrella brand and it can be utilized more efficiently by communicating it to specific target groups. However, the different stakeholders should engage in co-branding in order to utilize the branding possibilities.

Jyväskylä offers multiple sports events during the year and hosts one of the biggest sporting events in Scandinavia, the WRC rally event. International big sports events are an efficient tool in branding the city for visitors and tourists nationally and internationally. The importance of smaller sporting events and sport site network are also essential in constructing the sports image since they attract local and regional residents who play an important role in creating the city image. Jyväskylä could benefit from coordinating the sports events portfolio and connecting the different actors, organizers and the city closer together.

Jyväskylä has already raised sport as a one of its strategic leads and the Hippos Sports Center development plan is the leading action following the strategy. The co-operation between different stakeholders in the production process is the key to success in developing the sports sub-brand for Jyväskylä. The city's branding should be based on the infrastructure, place attributes, and op-



biti uspješno samo ako su promotivni alati i marketinška strategija jasni i razumljivi svim dionicima uključenim u proces proizvodnje i razvoja marke. Kako svi dionici nisu uključeni u političke procese donošenja odluka u gradu i gradske aktivnosti, pravi je izazov postići zadovoljavajuću razinu razumijevanja. Učinkovita komunikacija među dionicima ključna je za uspjeh u kombiniranju različitih učinaka brendiranja.

U slučaju Jyväskyläe svi ispitanici su naglasili važnost ko-brendiranja među podmarkama (npr. obrazovanje, kultura i sport) kao i potrebu za suradnjom između različitih sportskih organizacija. Prema mišljenju ispitanika, postoji kultura razgovora koja pruža dobru osnovu za daljnji razvoj ko-brendiranja. Sport može biti jedna od komparativnih prednosti grada Jyväskyläe ako dionici razviju učinkovite međusobne odnose u procesu ko-brendiranja i tako podupru imidž i identitet grada sporta.

Ovaj rad donosi preliminarni izvještaj o podacima prikupljenim u jednom većem istraživanju. Prikazani su dojmovi unutar-njih sportskih dionika o sportskom imidžu i identitetu Jyväskyläe, grada srednje veličine u Finskoj. Mali broj ispitanika i srednja veličina grada predstavljaju ograničenja ovog istraživanja. Ovim se istraživanjem nije ispitivala tržišna vrijednost marke grada Jyväskyläe. Cilj je bio prikupiti podatke na temelju kojih se može razviti i proširiti postojeću marku Jyväskyläe u smislu razvoja sportske podmarke grada. Istraživanja u kojima će se ispitati vanjski imidž i identitet grada među posjetiteljima, turistima i stanovnicima pružit će opsežniju sliku obilježja koja se vežu uz imidž Jyväskyläe kao grada sporta. U konačnici će se razviti model za brendiranje Jyväskyläe kao grada sporta, što će istovremeno predstavljati i znanstveni i praktični doprinos.

portunities together with effective brand communication. In order to succeed in sports branding, the sports facilities, promotional tools and marketing strategy should be clear and understandable to all the stakeholders involved in the production and branding process. In an organization, such as a city, this is a challenging task since the stakeholders are not involved in the city's decision making or operations. Effective communication among different parties is the key to success in combining the different branding effects.

In the case of Jyväskylä, all the stakeholders who were interviewed emphasized the importance of co-branding between the sub-brands (i.e. education, culture and sports) and the need for cooperation between different sport organizations. According to the interviewees, the culture of discussion provides a good basis for the further development of co-branding. Sport can be one of the competitive advantages of the city of Jyväskylä if the stakeholders can develop effective co-branding relationships to support the image and identity of the city of sports.

This study is an interim report on a wider study. It introduces only the internal sport stakeholder perceptions of the sport city image and identity of the mid-sized city of Jyväskylä, Finland. It is limited in terms of the number of interviewees and the size of the city. This study did not research the brand equity of the city of Jyväskylä, or the brand value. The purpose of the study was to obtain the information necessary for developing and extending Jyväskylä's existing brand by improving its sports city sub-brand. Further studies examining the external image and identity amongst the visitors, tourists and residents will give a bigger picture of the characteristics related to the image of Jyväskylä as a sports city. The overall academic and practical contribution of the wider study will be a sport city branding model designed for the city of Jyväskylä.

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