

# The costs of access to playing tennis in selected countries of the world: An introductory study

Aleksander Kaczmarek

## ABSTRACT

While many studies have focused on the financial situation of professional team sports, little attention has been paid by research to individual sports from an economic point of view. The aim of this article is to provide some initial data on the cost of access to tennis in different countries in the world. It is hoped that these figures will assist in providing a better understanding of the participation landscape worldwide in order to design and deliver the appropriate development policies needed by the end users.

## Key words:

economy, participation, expenditure, development

**Received:** 23 September 2018

**Accepted:** 6 November 2018

## Corresponding author:

Aleksander Kaczmarek

Email:

[alik.kaczmarek@gmail.com](mailto:alik.kaczmarek@gmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

In the past, tennis used to be considered as a sport available only for the wealthy people (Barget, 2006). However, this situation is gradually changing and our sport is becoming more and more accessible to people from different social classes; however, it has still been shown that over 79% of the countries where tennis is prevalent are considered to be more economically developed (Martin 2015).

The ITF recently presented the results of its Tennis Participation Survey which included data from 190 out of the 210 ITF member nations. The most relevant figures from this Survey are included in figure 1.



Figure 1. Some of the data collated in the ITF Tennis Participation Survey (ITF, 2018).

Following up on this data, the aim of this article is to provide an insight on the accessibility of tennis in different countries in the world. Our hypothesis is that accessibility to tennis is not the same all over the world. Even though this statement may seem obvious, to date there has been no research studying this

issue, and this is an issue which could help drive participation in tennis worldwide.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to better understand the accessibility to tennis, the following variables were identified as important measures: cost of a tennis racquet; cost of renting a tennis court (1 hr); and, average cost of a 1 hr lesson with a tennis coach. To expose the disparity of costs of playing tennis, it is hoped that the data will show how big a part of the average monthly income of citizens of different countries is needed to pay for the mentioned variables.

All the costs of tennis participation are compared to the average monthly income in (USD) in the selected countries of the sample.

This approach allows us to show the amount in percentage of the monthly income that people need to buy a tennis racquet, rent a tennis court or receive a lesson with a tennis coach once a week. Data was collected from 21 countries from all around the world. These countries provided different macro-level economic, social and cultural features such as: economic welfare, population, geographic and climatic circumstances (De Bosscher, 2003). All the costs were estimated according to the data provided by local tennis experts, feedback from facebook tennis groups, a survey from the website "numbeo.com" and

top “google.com” searches. Table 2 includes the list of the countries in the sample:

Continent	Country	Total
Europe	Spain, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Russia, Germany	7
Africa	Egypt, Ghana, South Africa	3
Asia and Oceania	Lebanon, Japan, Australia, India	4
North and Central America and the Caribbean	USA, Canada, Guatemala, Trinidad & Tobago	4
South America	Argentina, Brazil, Colombia	3

Table 1. List of countries participating in the study.

## RESULTS

The results of the study will be presented attending to the different variables identified: cost of racquets, cost of renting a tennis court and cost of one-hour lesson with a coach

### Racquets

Two popular racquet models were chosen for our study. The first one was a Prince racquet for kids, the “Prince Tour 23”, available for approximately 33\$ all around the world. The second one was the “Babolat Pure Aero”, which is a well know model among both amateur and high-performance players. The cost of this racquet oscillates at around 200\$ worldwide.

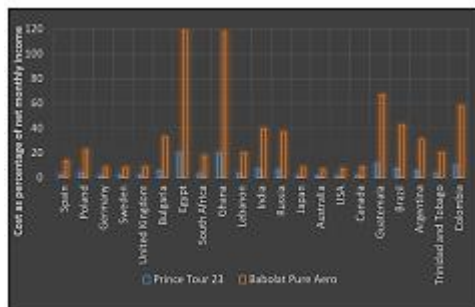


Figure 2. Cost of the racquets related to the national monthly income.

Figure 1 shows the amount of the monthly income that citizens of the chosen country needed to use to pay for the racquet. Usually more developed countries have higher average monthly income, so the relative cost of tennis rackets is lower. In the case of less developed countries, the relative cost is higher. Citizens of Ghana and Egypt need to contribute almost 120% of their net monthly income to afford a “Babolat Pure Aero”. On the other hand, in Sweden, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, USA and Canada, people needed to spent less than 10% of their income for the same racquet. “Prince Tour 23” is a racquet for kids and because of its lower price, it is more affordable. The main objective here was to make tennis

aficionados aware that tennis equipment is not at the same level of accessibility in every country and the differences are big.

### Renting a tennis court

The cost of renting a tennis court depends on several factors. The main one is the demand, understood as the ratio of available tennis courts in a given country to the number of active players. The higher the demand, the higher the price. Another factor is the weather; in some countries like Poland for example, weather conditions allow for playing outdoors for half of the year. Usually renting of indoor courts is considerably more expensive than renting outdoor ones. In more developed countries the wages are higher, but so the costs of living; therefore, tennis court rental is more expensive too.

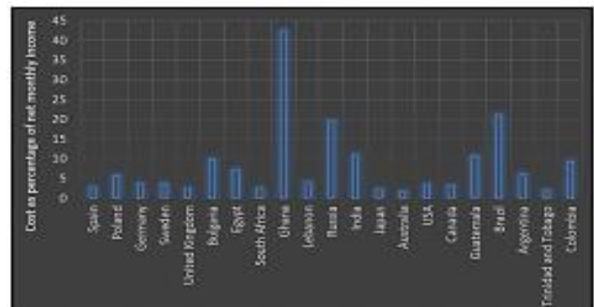


Figure 3. Cost of renting a tennis court related to the national monthly income.

Figure 2 shows the amount of monthly income tennis players in different countries use in renting a court once a week for a month. Ghana, Russia and Brazil are the countries where renting tennis courts is the most expensive. Citizens in those countries need to contribute over 19% of their monthly income to afford to play tennis regularly. The cheapest tennis court rentals are in United Kingdom, South Africa, Japan, Australia and Trinidad& Tobago. Citizens of those countries need to spend less than 2.5% of their income to play tennis weekly.

### One-hour individual lesson with a coach

The main factors that influence the price of an individual tennis lesson with a coach are the qualification and experience of the coach. Another relevant factor is the competition among coaches. The higher is the number of available coaches the lower the price is. The economic development of the nation

also influences the cost of a tennis lesson. Higher wages mean that tennis coaches also earn more, so that the price of tennis lesson will be higher.

Figure 3 shows the amount of the monthly income tennis players in different countries need to allocate to play tennis with a coach regularly once a week for a whole month. Citizens of Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala and Brazil need to spend over 25% of their net monthly income on an individual tennis lesson with a coach. Japan offers the cheapest tennis lessons with the cost being around 3% of the monthly income contribution.

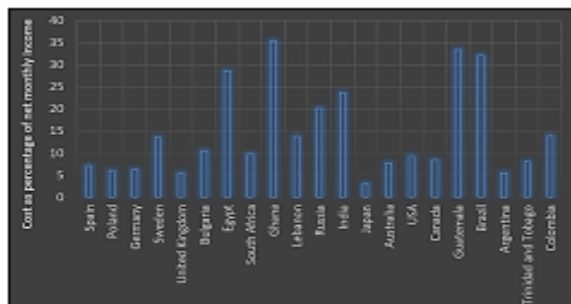


Figure 4. Cost of individual tennis lesson with a coach related to the national monthly income.

## SUMMARY

The costs of tennis in some countries are higher than in others. Sport participation is positively associated with household income (Farrell & Shields, 2002), and this is why western success in professional tennis is closely correlated with aggregated income in the country (Griginov, 2007). In poorer countries, fewer people can afford to buy equipment and pay for tennis court hire or lessons with a coach. What is more is that these countries have fewer sports facilities and less money for development. Because of these facts, participation in tennis in those countries is lower. Consequently, those countries are not able to produce as many professional players as the wealthier ones. For this reason it is crucial to support participation in less developed regions, through programmes such as the ITF Development and Coaching programmes, ITF Training Centers and the Junior Tennis Initiative

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to give thanks to the following individuals for their invaluable contribution to the study:

Hayato Sakurai (Japan), Philip Born (Germany), Kawlajeet Singh (India), Marcelo Albamonte (Argentina), Armando González (Colombia), Hani Nasser (Egypt), Amir Borghei (Iran), Presiyann Koev (Bulgaria), Noah Bakerbaseh Bukari (Ghana), Cesar Kist (Brazil), Michael Diaz (Guatemala), Kyle Hannays (Trinidad & Tobago), Nicolas Sassine (Lebanon), Karl Davies (USA), Debbie Kirkwood (Canada), Patrick McInerney (Australia), Riaan Kruger (South Africa), Tim Jones (England), Niklas Fjelstad (Sweden)

## REFERENCES

- Barget, E. (2006). The Economics of Tennis. In Andref, W. & Szymanski, S. (Eds.), Handbook on the economics of sport (pp.418-431). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- De Bosscher, V., De Knop, P., & Heyndels, B. (2003). Comparing tennis success among countries. *International Sports Studies*, 25(1), 49-68.
- Girginov, V. (1998). Capitalist philosophy and communist practice: The transformation of Eastern European sport and the International Olympic Committee. *Culture, Sport Society*, 1(1), 118-148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14610989808721804>
- Farrell, L., Shields, M. A. (2002). Investigating the economic and demographic determinants of sporting participation in England. *Journal of the Royal Statistics Society*, 165(2), 345- 358. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-985X.00626>
- ITF (2018). ITF Tennis Participation Survey. ITF Ltd: London.
- Martin, L. (2015). Is Socioeconomic Status a Contributing Factor to Tennis Players' Success? *Journal of Medicine and Science in Tennis*, 20(3), 116-121.
- Rankings by Country of average monthly net salary. (2018, October 15). Retrieved from [https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country\\_price\\_rankings?itemId=105](https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_price_rankings?itemId=105)
- Rankings by Country of Tennis court rent. (2018, October 15). Retrieved from [https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country\\_price\\_rankings?itemId=42](https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_price_rankings?itemId=42)

## RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT (CLICK BELOW)



Copyright (c) 2018 Aleksander Kaczmarek



This text is under a [Creative Commons BY 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

You are free to Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format - and Adapt the content - remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially under the following terms:

Attribution: You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

[CC BY 4.0 license terms summary](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) [CC BY 4.0 license terms](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)