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# Socioeconomic Impact of Sports Tourism on Community Health Development in Kwara State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Sports, as a major global contributor to socioeconomic development of the society, has not been explored extensively. Therefore, the current study investigated the impact of sports tourism on the social, economic, and ecological development among the people of Kwara state, Nigeria. The study examined whether sports tourism would have a significant impact on the economic, social, and ecological development of people in Kwara state. Data was collected from a sample of 117 sportsmen and women employing a descriptive survey approach. The study probed into the multifaceted effects of sports tourism utilizing a meticulously designed questionnaire. Findings revealed that economic ( $\chi^2=130.23$ ), social ( $\chi^2=159.50$ ), and ecological development ( $\chi^2=150.90$ ) with  $p$ -values  $< 0.05$  alpha value. The study concluded that sports tourism has a significant impact on the economic, social, and ecological development of people in Kwara state. Moreover, the study also suggested that sports tourism should be encouraged since it serves as a seasonal economic advancement for small-and large-scale business. Sports tourism is also helpful to address the social challenges that afflict rural communities thus supporting community health development.

**Keywords:** community development, socioeconomic development, sports tourism, tourism

## Introduction

Many approaches can be employed to comprehend the concept of tourism. Tourism has economic, social, and geographical aspects as a multi-faceted phenomenon. It has long been recognized as a social, cultural, and economic dimension, involving the movement of individuals beyond their usual

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surroundings for personal or professional reasons. These individuals, commonly referred to as tourists or travellers, may be either residents or non-residents, and their activities contribute to various aspects of tourism expenditure (United Nations World Tourism Organization, [2008](#)). From an economic standpoint, tourism represents a complex industry where numerous independent entities cater to the needs of a single consumer, that is, the tourist who generates demand and provides a market for a multitude of interconnected industries by exhibiting a behaviour known as 'consumer behaviour' (Li & Cao, [2022](#)).

The sociological approach to study tourism is focused on understanding the effects of tourists on destination communities and vice versa. It also examines how both, residents and visitors, interact and impact each other. Rasoolimanesh et al. ([2017](#)) shed light on the intricate web of social and cultural transformations spurred by tourism. The study elucidated how tourism acts as a catalyst, triggering alterations in various facets of destination communities. These modifications extend across the spectrum, encompassing shifts in value systems, individual behaviours, familial ties, communal lifestyles, moral standards, artistic expressions, customary rituals, and organizational structures within the community. According to Minić ([2012](#)), tourism activity is perceived as an industry centred around providing experiences. Tourists seek emotional stimulation and are inclined to purchase "feelings" rather than tangible products. Geographers approach tourism by examining three key geographical aspects: the origin of tourists, the destinations they visit, and the routes they take. Their focus lies in understanding the spatial dynamics of tourism, including where tourists come from, where they go, and the paths they take within a territory. Similarly, various academic disciplines offer their unique perspectives and methodologies to study the phenomenon of tourism, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of its complexities.

Sports tourism is an increasingly prominent segment within the broader travel industry, encompassing individuals journeying to destinations specifically to engage in or spectate sporting activities (Morfoulaki et al., [2023](#)). This may range from attending major international competitions and test series to partaking in stadium tours, mass participation events, player testimonials, group tours, and various sporting exhibitions. Recognized as an integral component of global tourism, sports tourism holds significance, particularly within the context of Nigeria. The primary category of sports

tourists consists of individuals who travel specifically to engage in sporting events. These events may encompass a wide range of sports including golf, kayaking, tennis, fishing, snowmobiling, and surfing. According to Csoka et al. (2019), sports tourism encompasses all forms of travel undertaken with the intention of engaging in or observing sporting activities. Whether the individuals are actively participating or simply spectating, if the primary motivation for their journey is sports-related, it would fall under the category of sports tourism. This phenomenon underscores the expanding significance of sports within the economy, as its role continues to evolve and exert greater impact. According to research, sports tourism is becoming an increasingly significant sector within the broader tourism industry and the global economy at large. As an illustration, in 2008, over 55 million individuals from the USA travelled to engage in sporting events, leading to a 6.6% revenue growth as compared to 2007 and a remarkable 31% increase as compared to 2003 (Daniell, 2013). Csoka et al. (2019) further revealed that the sports tourism industry had a value of USD 15.8 billion in 2016 and is anticipated to quadruple in the coming years.

Higham and Hinch (2018), defined sports tourism as a temporary departure from one's usual environment to engage in sports activities characterized by standardized rules, physical competition, and recreational enjoyment. They emphasized that sports can be a significant aspect of travel, whether it is the primary purpose of the trip or not. Kotus (2016) argued that tourism and sports are closely intertwined and mutually beneficial. Both sectors drive investment in infrastructure projects, such as airports, roads, stadiums, and hotels. These projects benefit both local populations and visiting tourists. Once established, this infrastructure supports sustainable economic growth, job creation, and revenue generation within the tourism and sports tourism industries. Sports tourism encompasses a wide range of activities including extreme tourism in natural areas isolated from urban life. Additionally, it involves temporary absence from one's usual place of residence or work to engage in sports-related activities. This may range from being a passive spectator, observing competitions from side lines, to actively participate in the events themselves. Sports are treated as a commodity in this context, with offerings tailored to meet the needs of consumers. These offerings not only include goods and services purchased before and during the sporting events, however, also those obtained while staying at the destination. Factors, such as the cost of sports tourism package and the satisfaction of customers with

their overall experience play significant roles in shaping the industry (Zmyślony, [2013](#)).

Many scholars concur that the burgeoning tourism industry has a significant impact on the economies, social cultures, and environments of host communities. This impact is generally positive, as tourism contributes to economic growth, fosters the development of natural and cultural attractions, and plays a significant role in their preservation (Głabiński & Duda, [2017](#); Pekerşen & Kaplan, [2023](#)). Sports tourism is an essential aspect of marketing blend for tourist destinations. The definition of sports tourism may be linked to two combined factors: destination and kind of activity. Regarding a destination chosen specifically from among sports social phenomena, sports tourism is referred to as the expression of physical exercises (competition, fun, adventure sports, etc.) and/or cultural events (sports events, shows, conferences, and congresses).

Sports serve as a platform for many individuals to improve their physical, psychological and social competencies. Sports also play an instrumental role in replacing negative cultural norms with positive and conducive relationship among the sportspersons. Tourism provides various opportunities for individuals to travel, experience, learn, and interact, thereby gaining insights into diverse cultures and environments. Sports and tourism are envisioned as shaping the future, potentially elevating a nation's global standing (Sabaruddin, [2014](#)). Public sporting events entail significant investments in infrastructure, construction, maintenance, and staffing, thereby stimulating the economic activity across various sectors, such as engineering, administration, Information Technology (ICT), education, transportation, hospitality, and security. Host countries have the advantage to control a significant portion of the tourism revenue associated with such events. Despite its significance, the economic impact of tourism remains a complex and poorly understood aspect of the industry. Both, sports and tourism, contribute substantially to the global economy, attracting attention from policymakers, organizers, and economists seeking to stimulate local economies. Sports tourism, as an amalgamation of the two, exerts a notable economic impact. Sports and tourism represent significant economic sectors in both developed and developing countries (Tomino et al., [2020](#)). Sports tourism brings about an economic growth through investment in facilities, job, increment in tourism activities, and increased tax-generation. By 2030, arrivals are expected to reach 1.8 billion, meaning that in two decades' time,

5 million people will be crossing international borders for leisure, business or other purposes such as visiting friends and family every day (Handszuh, [2023](#)).

According to Hemmonsbey and Tichaawa ([2019](#)), there is evidence to suggest that sports tourism has played a significant role in fostering the socioeconomic development in various African nations, such as South Africa, Gabon, and Cameroon. However, their research also highlighted a concerning trend wherein certain developing countries have begun to rely excessively on sports tourism as a primary driver of economic growth. Collaboration and support from various stakeholders including government agencies, universities, sports organizations at all levels, businesses, NGOs, and other entities, are essential. The advancement of sports tourism activities should involve all stakeholders to align with the interests and success of each party. Activities should be coordinated to benefit everyone involved, encompassing conferences, sports tourism exhibitions, special events, museums, architectural developments, sports performances, artistic expressions, traditional sports, and tourism initiatives (Sabaruddin, [2014](#)). Hosting events play a crucial role in determining the process of community urbanization by enhancing the infrastructure, as highlighted by Kim and Walker ([2012](#)). The development of sports tourism has the potential to not only improve the overall infrastructure, however, to enhance sports and leisure facilities as well. Reis et al. ([2017](#)) also opined that the emergence of sports tourism has provided various opportunities for infrastructural development and help land rejuvenation. Thus, these advancements may stimulate investment in the housing and catering sectors. For instance, in the case of the Tomsk region in Russia, tourism-related events have provided opportunities for the growth of small-scale businesses (Chibir & Shirko, [2015](#)) and have also paved the way for the establishment of a sports industry chain (Huang, [2015](#)).

In a nutshell, several studies have identified the impact of sports tourism on the developmental goals of every nation. While investigating the substantial economic benefits of sports tourism, research conducted by Tomino et al. ([2020](#)) indicated that sports-related events attract visitors, leading to an increased spending on accommodation, transportation, and local goods and services. In sports-related events and activities, individuals from diverse backgrounds come together, forging bonds and promoting mutual understanding. The role of sports in breaking down societal barriers,

fostering a sense of unity, and celebrating the cultural heritage was emphasized by Pekerşen and Kaplan (2023). On ecological benefits, studies such as Reis et al. (2017) and Kim and Walker (2012) highlight the impact of sports tourism on infrastructural improvement.

### **Problem Statement**

Sporting events serve as magnets for a diverse array of individuals including athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, officials, journalists, photographers, researchers, writers, artists, fan clubs, and spectators. These participants often travel using various means to reach the host destinations. The influx of people and activities surrounding these events contribute significantly to the tourism industry. This impact is evident in various sectors, such as transportation, accommodation, food services, beverage and catering, as well as the manufacturing and sale of equipment, accessories, and souvenir items. Sports tourism involves economic, social, and environmental development of regions as it provides them with cultural propagation, business opportunities, and technological advancement in infrastructure.

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus to explore the cultural and economic implications of sports tourism, as it has been observed to exert both positive and negative impact on the economies and socio-psychological aspects. However, according to Kim et al. (2015), most of the attention has been directed towards understanding the economic ramifications, with less consideration given to social impacts. Studies have suggested that sports tourism yields psychological advantages beyond its economic contributions (Jamieson, 2014). These non-economic benefits encompass aspects, such as reputation enhancement (Kim & Walker, 2012; Cheung et al., 2016), among others. Studies have also established the impact of sports tourism on societal development (Njoroge et al., 2017; Njoroge, 2015). Although, all the above mentioned studies emphasized the need of sports tourism to enhance community development, sports tourism has been neglected in Kwara state as poor consideration has been accorded to sports industries.

### **Research Questions**

The current study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Does sports tourism impact the economic development among people in Kwara state?

2. Does sports tourism impact the social development among people in Kwara state?
3. Does sports tourism impact the ecological development among people in Kwara state?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Following hypotheses were tested in the course of the study:

1. Sports tourism would have a significant impact on the economic development among people in Kwara state.
2. Sports tourism would have a significant impact on the social development among people in Kwara state.
3. Sports tourism would have a significant impact on the ecological development among people in Kwara state.

### **Methodology**

The current study utilized a descriptive survey research design as it is suitable to define the problem clearly, collect relevant and sufficient data, and report findings, especially to describe the existing data. The population for the current study consisted of all 152 indigenous athletes in Kwara state, from which a sample of 117 indigenous athletes was surveyed. It was decided that out of the population of 150, 108 respondents were adequate as a sample size. To cater for attrition, the sample size was increased to 120 respondents. A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection. To ensure the questionnaire's content and face validity, experts in the field reviewed and provided feedback, which was incorporated to enhance the instrument's quality. For reliability assessment, a split-half method was employed, where the questionnaire was administered to 20 respondents outside the study area. The scores from even and odd questions were computed and correlated using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a reliability coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.76, indicating the instrument's reliability.

Confidentiality of the data and prompt retrieval of completed questionnaires were ensured to prevent loss. However, out of 120 questionnaires distributed among participants, only 117 were completed and subsequently utilized for data analysis. The collected data was sorted, coded, and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis.



**Table 1***Chi-square Analysis on Sports Tourism and Economic Development*

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	df	$\chi^2$	p	Remarks
During the sports tourism, jobs were created by selling souvenirs, T Shirts, and flags to spectators.	30 (17.0%)	50 (42.8%)	20 (17.1%)	17 (17.5%)				
Face painting is another important business activity during sports events.	33 (28.2%)	60 (51.3%)	20 (17.1%)	4 (3.4%)				
When undergoing sports programme, jobs are created for foods and beverages suppliers.	57 (48.7%)	41 (35.0%)	10 (8.5%)	9 (7.7%)	9	130.03	0.01	Ho rejected
People enjoy considerable increase in income due to sports events.	47 (40.2%)	69 (59.0%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)				
Column Total	167	220	51	30				

**Note.** SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree.

**Table 2***Chi-Square Analysis on Sports Tourism and Social Development*

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	df	$\chi^2$	p	Remarks
Sports tourism serves as a good platform for public health campaigns.	38 (32.5%)	62 (53.0%)	10 (8.5%)	7 (6.0%)	9	159.50	0.00	Ho rejected

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	df	$\chi^2$	p	Remarks
Sports tourism inculcates good values and skills to cope with stress.	40 (34.2%)	53 (45.3%)	17 (17.8%)	7 (6.0%)				
Sports tourism aids in physical and mental development of children.	43 (36.8%)	54 (45.3%)	11 (9.4%)	9 (8.0%)				
Sports tourism cultivates cooperation and partnerships.	30 (25.6%)	62 (53.0%)	20 (17.1%)	5 (4.3%)				
Column Total	151	231	58	28				

**Note.** SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree.

**Table 3**

*Chi-square Analysis on Sports Tourism and Ecological Development*

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	df	$\chi^2$	p	Remarks
Sports tourism stimulates infrastructural development.	30 (17.0%)	50 (42.8%)	20 (17.1%)	17 (17.5%)				
Diversification of livelihoods is encouraged with sports tourism.	33 (28.2%)	60 (51.3%)	20 (17.1%)	4 (3.4%)				
Sports tourism improves the quality of life of local residents.	57 (48.7%)	41 (35.0%)	10 (8.5%)	9 (7.7%)	9	150.90	0.00	Ho rejected
Sports tourism fosters inter-community union.	47 (40.2%)	69 (59.0%)	1 (1.0%)	0 (0%)				
Column Total	167	220	51	30				

**Note.** SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree.

Percentile was used to address the research questions, while inferential statistics, specifically chi-square ( $X^2$ ), were utilized to test the postulated hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05, employing the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

### **Results**

In Table 1, the obtained chi-square value of 130.03 generate a sig. value of 0.01 which is below the alpha level of 0.05 with 9 degrees of freedom. This indicates a statistically significant result. Hence, sports tourism has a significant impact on the economic development among people in Kwara state.

In Table 2, the calculated chi-square value of 159.50 generate a sig. value of 0.00 which is below the alpha level of 0.05 with 9 degrees of freedom. This indicates a statistically significant result. Hence, sports tourism has a significant impact on social development among people in Kwara state

In Table 3, the obtained value of 150.90 generate a sig. value of 0.00 which is below the alpha level of 0.05 with 9 degrees of freedom. This indicates a statistically significant result. Hence, sports tourism has a significant impact on ecological development among people in Kwara state.

### **Discussion**

Sports tourism has recently been reviewed to have an impact on national development. Moreover, it has emerged as a significant driver of socioeconomic development worldwide, with its potential impact extending to various facets of community life. This has gained attention in sports, economics, and hospitality industries. Sports tourism entails changing of location to view or participate in sporting facilities or activities. The current study investigated the relationship between sports tourism and community development in regards to economic, social, and ecological development. In the context of Kwara State, Nigeria, this phenomenon is gaining attention for its potential to foster economic growth, social cohesion, and infrastructural development.

It was hypothesised that sports tourism would have a significant impact on the economic development in Kwara state. The results indicated that sports tourism has a significant impact on economic development among the people in Kwara state. This is evident with majority of the respondents agreeing that people enjoy considerable increase in income due to holding

sports events. This finding corroborates with the World Travel and Tourism Council (2019) estimates, that is, 11.7% of the world employments would be related to the tourism industry by 2029. Thus, tourism may significantly impact sports-based services and products in terms of functional and visual dimensions. Sports and tourism represent significant economic sectors in both developed and developing countries. According to Tomino et al. (2020), sports tourism increases the economic growth through investment in facilities, job, increment in tourism activities, and increased tax-generation

It was also hypothesized that sports tourism would impact the social development in Kwara state. The findings suggested that sports tourism has a significant impact on the social development among people in Kwara state. Findings are in line with Kim et al. (2015) who emphasized that the objectives of sports tourism on a large scale, revolves around fostering cross-cultural understanding, promoting peace and harmony among nations, and providing employments while offering leisure and relaxation to a significant portion of population. As also noted by the authors, most time, it is difficult to quantify the effect of sports tourism on the social development. Based on the finding, sports tourism cultivates cooperation and partnerships and also aids in physical and mental development of children. Attractions for visitors among other range of socio-cultural impacts have the potential to foster or bolster social sustainability (Tomino et al., 2020).

Sports tourism would have an impact on the ecological development in Kwara state was propounded. It was also noted that sports tourism stimulates infrastructural development. The findings lined with literature, Reis et al. (2017) argued that the emergence of sports tourism has provided opportunities for infrastructural development and help land rejuvenation. Similarly, Kim and Walker (2012) observed that hosting events may contribute to the development of rural communities by promoting infrastructure improvements. Sports tourism development could lead to the advancement of general infrastructure as well as sports and recreation facilities.

## Conclusion

The findings highlighted the multifaceted impact of sports tourism on the community development in Kwara State, Nigeria. Firstly, the significant

impact of sports tourism on economic development is evident, as it stimulates revenue generation, fosters entrepreneurship, and creates employment opportunities within the local economy. Secondly, the contribution of sports tourism to social development is notable, as it promotes cultural exchange, strengthens community bonds, and engenders a sense of belonging among residents. Lastly, the implications for ecological development highlight the need for sustainable practices and environmental stewardship to mitigate potential negative effects on natural resources and ecosystems. These findings collectively emphasize the importance of leveraging sports tourism as a strategic tool for holistic development, encompassing economic prosperity, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability, leading to better public health and well-being in Kwara State and beyond.

### **Limitations**

The current study's limitations include the sole involvement of sportsmen and women as research participants. They might be biased or have no sufficient knowledge of the possible socioeconomic development that can be achieved through sports tourism. Therefore, future research may look into the understanding of residents or traders around sports event centres. Longitudinal studies may also be conducted to track the long-term impact of sports tourism on economic, social, and ecological development in the study area. By examining trends over time, researchers may assess the sustainability of the observed effects and identify any potential fluctuations or shifts in patterns. Other studies may complement quantitative findings with qualitative research methods, such as interviews, focus groups, or case studies to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the observed relationships between sports tourism and development.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, following recommendations were proposed:

1. Sports tourism should be encouraged as it serves as a seasonal economic advancement for small-and large-scale business.
2. Sports tourism should be targeted to addressing the social challenges that afflict rural communities.

3. The ecological development of a region should be a watchword of every sports tourist.
4. It develops a sense of competition and participation among the community.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

### Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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