



Exploring the Role of Sport Tourism on the Cultural and Moral Promotion of Society

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Article Info

Abstract

Received:

2023-12-16

Accepted:

2024-01-24

Keywords:

Tourism

Sports Tourism

Cultural and Moral

Promotion

Mixed method

Sports tourism is one of the types of tourism that has an increasing growth in the tourism industry. Its effects are evident in all dimensions and fields, and there is a need to explain the role of this type of tourism on promoting the culture and ethics of the host society. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to investigate the role of sports tourism on promoting the culture and ethics of the host society, which is done using a mixed method. In the first stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted using the qualitative method of the focus group of 15 experts who were selected by the purposive sampling method. In the second stage, 27 experts were identified using stratified sampling. Through the tool of the questionnaire, they expressed their opinions regarding the extracted components and indicators. According to the research findings, 32 key codes, 14 integrative codes and 4 overarching codes were obtained through coding by King and Harrocks method. In the quantitative stage, all the experts approved the extracted components and indicators. According to the results, sports tourism has a fundamental role in promoting the culture and ethics of the host society and this role is through components such as "developing and promoting positive and useful values in the host society; cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host society; promotion of participation and ethical cooperation; developing and promoting a culture of altruism and empathy" was approved. These cases can not only bring positive and extensive communication fields to the host society, but they are also able to be effective in creating social capital in the host society.

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How to Cite:

Zare, R., Mahmoudi, A., & HemmatYar, Z. (2023). Exploring the Role of Sport Tourism on the Cultural and Moral Promotion of Society. *International Journal of Tourism, Culture and Spirituality*, 6(2), 45-56.

Introduction

The promotion and development of tourism is generally considered as a great source of income, new jobs and changes and improvements in community infrastructure (Kim et al., 2013). Tourism activity has not been left out in its relationship with sport, the latter being one of the areas of most remarkable growth in tourism at present (González-García et al., 2022). Sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry. Millions of tourists are interested in sports and recreational activities during their travels, regardless of whether sports are the main purpose of the trip or not (Morfoulaki et al., 2023). Sports tourism is defined as a recreational trip in which people temporarily leave their place of residence to participate in physical sports activities, observe physical sports activities, or visit attractions related to physical sports activities (Gibson, 2017; Weed, 2005; Gibson, 1998). Sports tourism is one of the important and influential branches of the tourism industry, which in the last few decades has not only provided suitable conditions for obtaining foreign exchange resources and job creation, but has also been involved in the development of culture and health of different regions (Rezai & Alimoradian, 2020). In fact, one of the leading and fastest growing sectors in the global tourism sector is culture and sports (Lohana et al., 2023). Both sports and tourism are leisure activities and important elements that influence sports culture and ethics (Malchrowicz-Mosko & Munsters, 2018). In relation to tourism, there is a need for a multidimensional framework for sports tourism research, one that recognizes time, place and sport as an activity (Leung et al., 2018). Therefore, some thinkers have introduced the theory of social exchange. Social exchange theory is considered one of the most appropriate frameworks for society's understanding of the effects of tourism (Ap, 1992). One of the advantages of using social exchange theory is that it can explain positive and negative perceptions and also examine residents' relationships at both individual and collective levels (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Hence, the social exchange theory is considered as an important sociological conceptual approach to the study of tourism-society relations and to understand the exchange of resources between two parties in an interaction situation, where the objects offered for exchange have validity and value. are, pays (Weed, 2009; Weed, 2005). On the other hand, it can be seen that the reasons why the field of sport tourism has not developed as fast as expected may be because the vast majority of contributions have focused on general theories rather than specific theories of sport tourism (Gibson, 2017; Weed, 2005). For this reason, it can be seen that most of the researches related to the role of sports tourism have focused on economics and concepts such as monetary value, profit, etc., and researches that have provided results on the role of this type of tourism on ethics and culture. are few (González-García et al., 2020; Hritz & Ross, 2010; Gibson, 1998). The impact of sports tourism on society's culture is associated with changes in moral and social norms and values (Hemmonsbeay & Tichaawa, 2020; Gibson, 2017; Bull & Lovell, 2007). Sports tourism not only affects the economy, but also the cultural

and moral aspects not only affects the society. Encouraging and implementing a variety of cultural activities through the development of a wide range of sports tourism projects, such as seasonal cultural events, inclusive sports and outdoor recreational facilities and activities, as well as holding meetings, conferences and exhibitions, etc. can have positive effects. This type of tourism affects society (Látková & Vogt, 2012; Oviedo-Garcia et al., 2008; Fredline, 2005). Therefore, it is determined whether sports tourism has an effect on the promotion of culture and ethics of the society or not, and in what dimensions and components are these effects? Therefore, the main goal of this research is to investigate the role of sports tourism on promoting the culture and ethics of the host society, which is investigated using a mixed approach.

Literature Review

Sports tourism, a two-dimensional economic and social activity, is located at the intersection of tourism and sports sectors (Pigeassou, 2004). Sports tourism is tourism that is planned by people with the purpose of observing or participating in various sports events. It is a tourism that focuses on sports (Kapur, 2018). In more general terms, sports tourism is defined as "all activities related to the travel of individuals or groups who leave their place of residence in order to participate in sports events (professional and recreational) or in activities unrelated to sports events, to exercise (physical) defines (Berger, 2021). The field of sports tourism includes human experiences that focus on a set of services during travel to specific destinations to participate in a sport product. The trip has a professional (sports-related business, e.g., professional teams and players) or recreational (e.g., trail runners at small-scale outdoor sporting events) purpose (Morfoulaki et al., 2023). On the supply side, sport tourism, with an emphasis on a stronger spatial context, involves various stakeholders and fosters local economic development, socio-cultural exchange and interactions (Spaij, 2016). Sports tourism has different potentials, and these diverse potentials can have significant effects on tourist valuation based on local characteristics (Novixys, 2022). Different and interconnected elements form sports tourism. Next, the authors determined four criteria to describe sports tourism, all elements of which are directly related to the Sustainable Development Goals (Higham & Hinch, 2018):

1. Travel: refers to a trip, beyond the hometown, to a tourist destination, being (travel) the part of the tourism experience that can be influenced by the shift to more sustainable transport modes.
2. Accommodation: includes accommodation, at least one day, in the host destination. The benefits of adopting sustainable accommodation management practices in the hospitality sector seem promising. However, there is a strong need for investment in time and resources and two-dimensional pressure (from customers to entrepreneurs and vice versa) (Hobson & Essex, 2001).

3. Motivational factors: includes internal and/or external motivations (motivators) to actively involve people in a sports product, motivation and awareness for green and sustainable tourism, which are highly interrelated aspects (Higham & Hinch, 2018):

4. The nature of the sports product: describes the formation of sports products that the consumer may be involved with. In achieving sustainability goals, sports products offered should be related to messages, including the benefits of active life at the personal level and from an environmental perspective (McCullough & Trail, 2022).

Sports tourism should emphasize the active participation of tourists in sports, not just attending and watching some sports events. Sports tourism is a way to expend physical energy and experience the culture and features of a place through sports (Yang et al., 2020). Some scholars argue that sports tourism is not only a physical activity, but also a cultural experience (Standevan, 1998; Standeven, 1998). Sports tourism and its relationship with local development. Researchers have described sports development as a tourism phenomenon due to various contemporary trends, including demographic expansion, health orientations, demand for active participation during vacations, and increasing interest in sports events (Herbold et al., 2020). In fact, the growing link between tourism and culture has been investigated in various studies on the impact of culture on tourism. In addition, several elements of the relationship between tourism, culture and the attractiveness of a place have been the subject of research conducted by several researchers (Herrero-Prieto & Gomez-Vega, 2017; Romão et al., 2013). One of the main prerequisites for promoting the culture and ethics of society is sports tourism (Morfoulaki et al., 2023; Lohana et al., 2023) and to create sustainable tourism, tourists' interest in experiencing local cultures or natural environments should be increased. and their sense of responsibility and ethical behavior should be encouraged (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Wooliscroft, 2016; Goodwin & Francis, 2003). On the other hand, to gain a comparative advantage in the increasingly competitive sports tourism industry and create regional differentiation in the face of globalization, many regions are now actively trying to strengthen their tangible and intangible cultural assets (Lohana et al., 2023).

Cultural and tourism industries are increasingly used to promote sports venues and increase their competitiveness and popularity, which is expected to continue (Alberti & Giusti, 2012). Sports activities in a region are always related to the local identity of the residents of that region. Sports act as a means of identity formation and stabilization in a region or place (MacClancy, 1996).

One of the theories that is effective in this field is the social exchange theory. The social exchange theory explains that both the local community and the tourist community are influenced by each other (González-García et al., 2022; Koščak et al., 2023). Some thinkers believe that the positive and negative perceptions that this relationship creates can lead to changes in collective and individual attitudes. In this case, the residents are attractors who stimulate tourists and visitors to travel and supporters who

keep alive the interest in the place, the sport tourism offers, and its sustainable value until the time comes that the tourists can speak of its authenticity and enhance its value, creating the identification of the potential tourist with the resident (Cordina et al., 2019, Taheri et al., 2019). It is true that the phenomenon of sports tourism can have a positive and negative impact on the host society, and the social exchange theory provides the possibility to explain both positive and negative perceptions (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Látková & Vogt, 2012). But in this research, we focus on positive perceptions.

Materials and Methods

Each research is different from other research in terms of purpose, type, nature, and methodological approach. The current research is applied in terms of purpose and of a mixed type, with an exploratory nature, it tries to investigate the role of sports tourism on promoting the culture and ethics of the host society. In this research, in the first stage, the qualitative method of the focus group was used, and in this stage, the main components and indicators are extracted. Then, these extracted cases are analyzed from the point of view of experts to check and analyze their rejection or confirmation. The tool for collecting information in the first phase is semi-structured interviews; And in the second phase, there is a questionnaire. The participants of the first phase are experienced experts in the field of sports tourism, sports management, culture management, ethics in sports, who have both university education and executive experience in this field. The sampling method at this stage is the purposive sampling method, the number of samples was determined according to the achievement of theoretical saturation. Finally, 15 experts participated in the focus group, and the resulting interviews were classified into three categories of "key, integrative, and overarching" using the coding method of King and Harrocks (2010). Then, in the second phase, the components and indicators extracted from the interviews were compiled in the form of a questionnaire and sent to the second group of experts to express their opinions regarding their approval or rejection. In this phase, using stratified sampling, 27 experts were identified and answered the questionnaires. In the following, the findings of the research are presented.

Results

In the first stage, interviews were conducted using the focus group method. At first, the purpose of the research was presented to the participating experts. Then, using the thematic axes, each of the experts conducted the interviews and the researchers recorded them. In the next step, using the inductive approach, all interviews were coded and related components and indicators were extracted. After this process, it was observed that 32 key codes, 14 integrative codes and 4 overarching codes were obtained. The findings are listed in Table 1. In Table 1, the extracted components and indicators were categorized in the form of "key, integrative, and overarching" codes.

Table 1. Key, integrative, and overarching codes

Overarching Codes	Integrative Codes	key Codes
Development and promotion of positive and useful values in the host society	Moral and social norms and values; Positive behavior and values; Value orientation of the host society; Positive attitude of tourists and host society; Co-creation of positive values	Implicit moral and social norms; Explicit and implicit values of the host society; Optimizing the social desirability of the host community; Creating common value for tourists and the host community; Value fields of the host society and tourists; Paying attention to the customs and beliefs of the host community and tourists
Cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host community	Respecting the rights of others; The need to promote moral behavior and character; Culture of responsibility and ethical behavior	Attention to the socio-cultural issues of the host society; Moral intentions; popular culture; Socio-cultural phenomena; Creating new leisure opportunities; Moral or immoral behavior of tourists and host society; fairness and ethics; Paying attention to the cultural and moral education of the society; Charter of Citizen Rights; Public justice
Promoting ethical participation and cooperation	Participation and ethical interaction; Collective consensus and ethics; Partnership efforts	Holding ethical and collaborative sports events; Participation and cooperation of different departments; Creating continuity and alignment; Active participation; collaborative orientations; Supportive and cooperative intention and behavior; Collaborative and collaborative ideas; Collaborative and interactive tourism activities
Developing and promoting a culture of altruism and empathy	Mutual respect for views and cultures; Attracting the support of tourists and residents of the local community; Altruistic and effective communication	Citizen-oriented behaviors; Sense of Selflessness and altruism; Coordination and alignment; Unity and oneness; Communication and friendship; Voluntary and benevolent behaviors; Willingness to help; Strong relationships based on empathy and trust

As can be seen, the role of sports tourism in promoting the moral culture of the society in the macro codes of "developing and promoting positive and useful values in the host society; cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host society; promoting ethical participation and cooperation; Developing and promoting a culture of altruism and empathy" is explained that each has a background or platforms that are compiled in the form of integrative codes. According to what was mentioned in the theoretical foundations section, it can be said that the role of sports tourism in promoting the culture and ethics of the society cannot be evaluated from a specific dimension, but it can be analyzed from several dimensions that are noticeable in the above codes. According to experts, sports tourism can be effective in developing and promoting positive and useful values in the host society. It is clear that cultural and social exchange takes place in the relationship between the tourist and host communities and this can lead to the development and promotion of positive and useful values in the host community. Also, sports tourism can lead to cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host community. Many experts and thinkers have also pointed out that tourism is not a one-sided phenomenon. Either directly or indirectly, it affects both the host society and the tourism society, which cultural and moral empowerment is one of its main manifestations. Promotion of ethical participation and cooperation was

another component that was mentioned in the codings. Every collective and group action requires participation and cooperation. Since sports tourism is a collective and collaborative activity, it also requires interaction. And finally, it is the component of developing and promoting the culture of altruism and empathy, which many experts emphasized during the interviews. One of the main pillars of cultural and ethical discussions is the existence of important concepts such as altruism and empathy, which also completes their meaning. Sports tourism can be fruitful with other consequences for the host society, referring to the above components, in the field of development and promotion of the society's culture and ethics.

Second phase: Quantitative Survey Method

As mentioned before, after coding and identifying the components and indicators, we test each of them to check what the experts' opinion is regarding the approval or rejection of these items. Therefore, 27 experts answered the questionnaires and the results were analyzed using PLS3 and SPSS software. It should be noted that only overarching codes (Components) and integrative codes (Indices) were analyzed. In the following, the findings are discussed.

In the following, using the mentioned software, the Path coefficient, average sample values, P values, standard deviation, T statistic, coefficient of determination (R Squares criterion), goodness of fit index (GoF criterion) are calculated. It should be noted that, in order to avoid wording, other diagrams have been omitted.

Table 2. Path coefficient, Average Sample Values, P values, Standard Deviation, T statistic, Coefficient of determination (R Squares criterion), Goodness of fit index (GoF criterion)

Constructs	Path coefficient(β)	Average sample	Standard deviation	T	P value	R Squares	Q2
Development and promotion of positive and useful values in the host society	0/647	3/536	0/076	8/549	0/000	0/419	0/307
Cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host community	0/574	3/568	0/079	7/294	0/000	0/330	0/241
Promoting ethical participation and cooperation	0/672	3/401	0/054	14/150	0/000	0/581	0/239
Developing and promoting a culture of altruism and empathy	0/676	3/492	0/077	8/786	0/000	0/458	0/208

Analysis As can be seen in the above table, the sample mean and standard deviation are in good condition and all 4 constructs have a significant relationship. Also, the T statistic has acceptable values, and the Goodness of fit index (GoF criterion) and Coefficient of determination (R Squares criterion) are in the

acceptable range, which indicate the high predictive power of the model. So it can be said that these components and indicators are approved from the point of view of experts.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, rho_A, Cronbach's Alpha

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Development and promotion of positive and useful values in the host society	0/589	0/585	0/914	0/780
Cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host community	0/892	0/921	0/932	0/820
Promoting ethical participation and cooperation	0/701	0/739	0/807	0/564
Developing and promoting a culture of altruism and empathy	0/760	0/748	0/766	0/532

As can be seen in the above table, The values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, rho_A, Cronbach's Alpha are within the acceptable range and confirm the model and its components and indicators. In the following, the GoF coefficient is calculated, and with the findings, its value is 0.332, which indicates the overall fit of the model.

$$GoF = \sqrt{\text{communalities} \times R^2} \quad 0.332 = \sqrt{0.248 \times 0.447}$$

In the following, the discussion and conclusion are presented.

Discussion and Conclusion

As stated before, the main goal of this research is to investigate the role of sports tourism on promoting the culture and ethics of the host society, which was done with a mixed method. According to the findings of the first phase, things like "developing and promoting positive and useful values in the host society; cultural and moral empowerment of tourists and the host society; promoting ethical participation and cooperation; Developing and promoting a culture of altruism and empathy" as components The main goals of this type of tourism were considered in promoting culture and ethics in the host society. In fact, sports tourism can lead to the emergence of activities that not only economic activity and local development, but also behavioral and value concepts such as culture and ethics undergo changes. These items can be counted and checked in the above components and according to the findings of the quantitative phase, it is concluded that all the components and indicators obtained explain the role of sports tourism in promoting the culture and ethics of the host society. One of the important results of this research is to explain the role of participation of residents and visitors in sports tourism and promotion of culture and ethics. This category is associated with the concepts of participation,

interaction, community, which can lead to the development of sustainable tourism in the best case. Also, ethics-based concepts and their role in the host society are also among the things that bring positive and wide communication fields to the host society. In general, it can be concluded that each of the above components can be effective in creating social capital in the host society.

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