

ROLE OF SPORT TOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN'S LOCAL TOURISM MARKET

Kalandarov Jalol Abdujalilovich

Email: jrstudyhouse@gmail.com

Abstract

Local sporting activities have evolved into vehicles for promoting the local tourism market and economic development in the communities where they take place. Knowing the specific profile of the athletes who participate in them, recognizing their expectations, and providing them with good experiences is critical for maximizing the benefits that these events may bring to the destinations. In this regard, the goal of this study was to determine the characteristics of the destination and event that had the greatest influence on participants' enjoyment. The study's findings revealed that the presence or absence of athlete fellow companions has an important impact on the destination characteristics that influence athlete pleasure. They also discovered that the quality of the journey, the professionalism of the organization and volunteers, the implementation of environmental protection measures, and the quality of the refreshment facilities are the event-related factors that have the greatest influence on participant satisfaction. The destination's environmental and natural attractions, as well as the surroundings and atmosphere, were shown to be the most influential factors.

Keywords. local sporting events, tourist satisfaction, sport destination, sport tourism, tourism market, travel.

Introduction

Sports events can give numerous benefits to the destinations that host them, including increased value to the tourist experience, economic effect, the building of a destination image, tourist appeal, and local prestige. Historically, studies on this topic have concentrated on significant sporting events. However, since the early 2000s, many destination managers have recognized the economic and tourism potential of local sport events (LSE), which are minor events with more participants than spectators, aimed at amateur athletes, held annually, and have low media interest, economic activity, and public investment when compared to major events. The number of LSEs has increased dramatically in recent years, as has the interest in investigating tourism potential. Some of the most studied benefits of LSEs are the promotion of sustainable tourism, the economic impact, the depersonalization of tourism, and the improvement of destination image. Although LSEs have a small impact on the national level, they are very important to the places that host them. In certain circumstances, local events have a greater potential for tourism growth than huge events, particularly if they are held regularly [1,2]. The simple act of organizing and hosting LSEs, however, does not guarantee that all of these advantages

will be realized. According to studies, buyers are looking for experiences that satisfy their expectations rather than simply purchasing things and services. They argue that addressing consumer demands necessitates knowing and aligning them with the athletic service before creating, producing, and delivering it. According to these authors, pleasure is critical to realizing all of the possible benefits listed above. Satisfaction in sports has been investigated at numerous levels, particularly in terms of infrastructure and sporting activities. Satisfaction is frequently characterized using the expectation-disconfirmation model, which implies that customer satisfaction exists [3]. In the context of sporting activities, satisfaction is defined as “the rewarding fulfillment of needs arising from participation in the sport event and the services provided.” Furthermore, there should be a differentiation between overall pleasure and satisfaction by attribute. In this sense, socio-demographic characteristics, such as the type of companion or the goal of attending the sporting event, influence the attributes that are most valued in both events and locations. Several studies have shown that participants’ enjoyment of sporting activities predicts future engagement. As a result, increased satisfaction improves the likelihood of returning to the place and recommending it to others. Participants judge their experience by evaluating the organizational elements of events [4]. In this regard, various factors influencing participant satisfaction were found and classified into five categories: event operations, event qualities, complementary services, exhibition facilities, and service delivery. Participant satisfaction is influenced by factors such as accessibility to the location, transportation, lodging quality, and entertainment alternatives. Furthermore, it shows that environmental factors such as geography and surrounds influence the satisfaction of sport tourists. Similarly, the importance of travel circumstances when participating in sporting events is emphasized, as is the fact that the judgment of the event and the destination is heavily influenced by fellow travelers. In brief, a successful experience at a local event is directly dependent on the destination's facilities, services, and product offerings. Therefore, this study had three objectives: To determine which event characteristics influence participant satisfaction in local outdoor sports events, to determine which destination elements influence participant satisfaction in local outdoor sports events, as well as to investigate how the type of companion and the number of events in which athletes have participated effect satisfaction.

Literature Review

Sport tourism is described as traveling for leisure and taking part in or watching sporting events away from home. Sport tourism is traveling mostly for pleasure, participating in fitness activities, watching sports, and visiting places that are associated with sports. Furthermore, sport tourism encompasses the area of business tourism, meaning that sport tourism can take place while a person is traveling for work. The forms of sport tourism are outlined based on the objectives and substance of the journey, the main reasons sport tourists travel are for leisure or business, to be active or passive, to observe, to engage in, to be organized or independent [5]. Sport tourism incorporates certain unique objectives, such as fans and addicts in some sports, in addition to the usual travel purposes which are

determined, contain pull and push factors. The driving forces behind fans' decisions to travel to small-scale sporting events and the attitudes and actions of sport tourists using the concepts of role theory, family life cycle theory, motivation theory, and social structure changes.

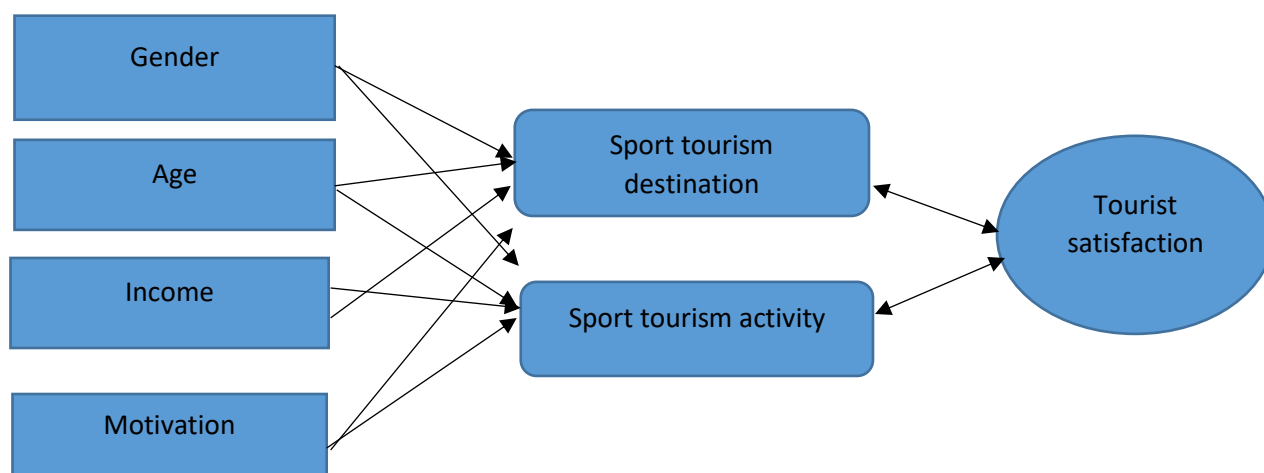


Figure – 1. Model of socio-demographic characteristics that sport tourism and tourist satisfaction¹

Extreme sports, outdoor activities, and “slow adventure” can fall under the category of sport tourism, which is less expensive, less taxing on organizations, and more commercially viable. Additionally, it tends to boost incentives, activities, and the number of quick excursions done annually, favoring the economic and environmental sustainability of a region and urban regeneration, which might result in increased spending by tourists from other countries. The economic benefits and appeal it conveys, which are primarily connected to the environment, ecology, and concern for wellbeing are tied to the rising interest in active sport tourism. The discussions centered on local and national institutional communication, fair trade, and relationship management are sparked by these crucial components. Tourism is a rapidly expanding sector of the global economy that is closely related to the social and cultural transformation of contemporary culture [6]. Because it provides a variety of economic alternatives in addition to selling local goods, it significantly lowers poverty in certain traditional communities. By encouraging visitors and forming connections with investors, well-developed local tourism will greatly increase the community's job prospects and boost economic growth, assuring a community's continual progress.

Since the 20th century, improvements in communication and transportation technology have accelerated the globalization of tourism. The rise of tourism supports economic growth, particularly in developing nations, because of increasing investments in people and physical resources. The growth of the tourism industry spurs the growth of other industries like agriculture, food processing, and handicrafts, which improve the quality of life for everyone

¹ Author work

in the community [7]. Despite its benefits, tourism's rapid expansion hurts various social issues, causes environmental harm, and produces a lot of garbage. Consequently, it is urged that environmental organizations and groups do all possible to save and conserve cultural and natural resources. Tourism has therefore led to conflict between younger people who frequently engage with visitors and older people who remain to themselves and uphold traditional views. However, tourism-related money has a beneficial impact on the environment since it helps to restore and preserve historically significant and environmentally protected regions. Given its negative impacts, it would be able to improve tourism-related activities with substantial policy reinforcement. With the most obvious economic impact and high-value goods, sports tourism is a crucial component of the tourism sector. It has been recognized as one of the significant tourism industries boosting the economy. It has been identified as a crucial source of revenue for the tourist industry. Sports tourism refers to a type of leisure travel when people leave their homes for a short period to take part in physical activities, see places, or see things. Sports are combined with the tourism industry to boost local culture, and economic growth, and to draw tourists (Yang, 2020). Sports tours are one type of sport tourism activity that are provided to common interest groups that plan visits to sporting locations with a primary focus on sporting activities. Tours for sports tourism can be planned based on accessibility, location, and the environment [8,9,10].

Methodology

In partnership with the organizers of five local outdoor events in Uzbekistan, online assessed three traditional competitions: "Local sport" (300 participants), "Traditional sports" (100), and "Kurash" (100). In addition, all study participants provided informed consent and were analyzed by SPSS 28.

Result

The first factor, "event," explains 38% of the variance and includes 13 factors related to the organizational elements of the sport event. The second component, "destination prices and services," accounts for 9% and combines the destination's service and accessibility qualities. The third factor, "environment and atmosphere," accounts for 8% of the variance and is related to the local environment. The fourth factor, "entertainment and leisure," accounts for 3% of the variance and refers to the destination's entertainment, recreational, and cultural offerings. Finally, the fifth category, "environmental attractions," accounts for 5% of the variance and comprises items relating to the area's natural features. In contrast, "the proximity of the event to the place of residence" (4.02), "the photo service for the athletes during the event" (4.34), and "the quality of the village" (4.40) had less influence on participants' satisfaction. These are the only three criteria with less than 4.5 points. When the elements were compared by sex, no significant differences were found between men and women. On the other hand, substantial differences were found in the type of companions with whom the participant travels to the event, for two elements: "the quality of the village"

and “the tradition and history of the event”. According to the post hoc analysis, there were significant differences between those who went alone and those who went with friends. When comparing athletes’ participation in the event, just one category (Tradition and history of the event) showed significant variations. In this situation, the feature in the issue had a greater impact on the satisfaction of athletes who had participated in more than two competitions (5.08) than those who had only participated once (4.49). The other elements differed slightly, although not much. In terms of determining the components of the destination that had the greatest impact on participants’ satisfaction, the data revealed that “unique natural landscapes and attractions” (6.05) and “attractive trails and paths” (6.05) were the only categories with values greater than 6 points.

Discussions and Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, the elements that have the greatest impact on LSE participants’ satisfaction - and thus their intentions for future participation, return to the destination, and recommendation to friends and family - are five: event; destination price, and services; environment and atmosphere; entertainment and leisure; and environmental attractions. The event-related factors are consistent with prior studies, with the quality of the journey having the greatest influence, according to the data. The professionalism of the organization and volunteers is the second most important factor in participant satisfaction. There was no significant association between participants’ interactions with organizers and satisfaction. Some research has found a link between interaction with staff and the pleasure of bystanders. The third most important factor is the implementation of environmental protection measures, which is consistent with the findings, which indicate that this could be due to increased environmental awareness among participants and a desire to preserve the natural environment, which is necessary for practicing their sporting disciplines. The study’s findings have practical consequences for the organization of LSEs and their usage in tourism, both from the perspectives of organizers and destination managers. Collaboration between LSE organizers and destination managers is viewed as critical to increasing the enjoyment of accompanied participants, who also have a greater economic impact in the area. Finally, given the size of the sample in this study, the impact of event and destination elements on participant satisfaction should be examined further in other sorts of events, in new locations, and with various samples. It appears especially crucial to explore the perspectives of other companions and viewers, who frequently have a significant impact on the ultimate decision of both the event and the destination. Finally, a better understanding of the organizer’s perspective, and the possibility of aligning it with that of the participants, is an intriguing line of research that could help to improve and consolidate the quality of local sporting events, as well as the satisfaction of athletes and those accompanying them.

References

1. Aicher, T. & Newland, B. (2018). To explore or race? Examining endurance athletes' destination event choices. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 24(4), 340-354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766717736364>
2. Buning, R. & Gibson, H. (2016). The role of travel conditions in cycling tourism: implications for destination and event management. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 20(3-4), 175-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2016.1155474>
3. Chi, C. & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 624-636. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.06.007>
4. Du, J., Jordan, J., & Funk, D. (2015). Managing Mass Sport Participation: Adding a Personal Performance Perspective to Remodel Antecedents and Consequences of Participant Sport Event Satisfaction. *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(6), 688-704. <https://doi.org/10.1123/JSM.2014-0225>
5. Elasri, A., Triadó, X., & Aparicio, P. (2015). La satisfacció dels clients dels centres esportius municipals de Barcelona. *Apunts Educació Física i Esports*, 119(1), 109-117. [http://dx.doi.org/10.5672/apunts.2014-0983.cat.\(2015/1\).119.08](http://dx.doi.org/10.5672/apunts.2014-0983.cat.(2015/1).119.08)
6. Fotiadis, A., Xie, L., & Li, Y. Huan, T-C. (2016). Attracting athletes to small-scale sports events using motivational decision-making factors. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), 5467-5472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.157>
7. Dostonbek, T. (2023). THE INDUSTRY OF TOURISM AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN. *World scientific research journal*, 21(1), 63-74.
8. Malchrowicz-Mosko, E. & Poczta, J. (2018). A Small-Scale Event and a Big Impact – Is This Relationship Possible in the World of Sport? The Meaning of Heritage Sporting Events for Sustainable Development of Tourism – Experiences from Poland. *Sustainability*, 10(11), 4289. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10114289>
9. Milovanovic, I., Alexandris, R., Alexandris, K., Maksimovic, N., Milosevic, Z., & Drid, P. (2021). Destination image, sport event quality, and behavioral intentions: The cases of three World Sambo Championships. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 45(7), 1150-1169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348019883920>
10. Newland, B. & Aicher, T. (2018). Exploring sport participants' event and destination choices. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 22(2), 131-149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2018.1436464>.