

Study the Sport Tourism in Social Exchange Theory Perspective

Anirudh Raina

PhD Scholar, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Jammu

Abstract

Tourism sector is rapidly growing across the globe and sport tourism is continuously attracts the researchers' attention due to its numerous physical and mental benefits. Several higher education institutions and elementary school level introduce sports tourism as a subject to increase awareness among the students and scholars towards growing economic potential of sports tourism. For understanding the insights of sports tourism and explore the merits and demerits associated with sports tourism, social exchange theory is one of the constructive approaches. Social exchange theory explains the positive and negative aspects such as economic, socio-cultural and environmental of sports tourism. In addition, social exchange theory also highlights the community perspective towards sports tourism. In this review paper, several existing studies related to sports tourism and social exchange theory have been explored to understand the challenges and opportunities in sports tourism sector. This study also suggested some recommendations for policymakers to enhance the sports tourism in India.

Keywords: Tourism, Sports tourism, Social exchange theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports tourism is growing sector that pertains to persons traveling to a location to engage in or observe sports, including stadium tours, global sports events, international cricket games, large-scale events, athlete testimonies, group tours, athletic events, and exhibitions (Kapur, 2018). In contrast, sports tourism is categorized into two types: spectator sports events, where persons go to enjoy the event, and participation sports events, which encourage tourists to engage in the activities (Halдар, 2017). Sports tourism is a vital component of global tourism and is highly regarded in India. Indian travelers have a strong interest in sports tourism and are eager to see diverse venues associated with globally recognized sporting events (Radicchi, 2013). In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the number of Indian visitors attending international sporting events such as F1 Grand Prix, Chess championship, Olympics, Golf events, Lawn tennis, FIFA, and many more (Mishra et al., 2022). In addition, sports tourism significantly contributes in the economic development of a developing nations by providing employment opportunities, infrastructure growth, boost to hospitality sector, enhance local goods procurement, promote socio-cultural exchange which positively impact the GDP of the nation (Idrees et al., 2021). According to Gough (2025), the worldwide sports tourism sector was valued at almost \$ 565 bn in 2023 and it is expected to exceed \$ 1.3 trillion by 2032. Similarly, the sports tourism industry in India is anticipated to reach \$ 133,351.0 mn by 2030 and it is estimated that Indian sport tourism sector will grow with 19.3% of CAGR from 2024 to 2030 (Grand View Research, 2025). Therefore, researchers showed significant interest in sport tourism to understand the insights of sports tourism and social exchange theory facility

ates the research to analyze the challenges and opportunities associated with sports tourism.

2. Social exchange theory

Social-exchange theory posits that people's participation in tourist development escalates when they consider the anticipated benefits to outweigh the associated expenses. Economic, socio-cultural, and environmental trade-offs influence their endorsement of more tourist growth. The social-development theory of tourism is based on social-exchange theory, which elucidates inhabitants' attitudes towards tourism via their views of economic, social, and environmental impacts. Nonetheless, there were favorable correlations between the endorsement of sports tourism and the sense of social, cultural, and environmental advantages. Adverse consequences, including clashes with traditional family values and cultural discord, may also influence sports tourism. Social exchange theory is a significant sociological framework for examining tourism-community connections, emphasizing the analysis of resource exchanges between two interacting groups. The domain of sports tourism has not advanced as anticipated, mostly owing to an emphasis on broad ideas rather than theories specifically tailored to sports tourism. The effects of tourism, particularly sports tourism, may be categorized into four factors: social advantages, environmental advantages, economic advantages, and overall detrimental effects. The economic implications significantly influence the interaction between these variables, influencing communities engaged in this sort of activity. Nonetheless, tourist expansion has adverse effects, like heightened living expenses, transient employment and unemployment, as well as price inflation. A multidimensional framework for sport tourism research is essential to enhance comprehension of citizens' views on tourist effects. Sports tourism has a considerable social influence on communities, shaping ethical standards and societal values. It may enhance community services by generating additional recreational options, although it may also result in adverse outcomes such as urban congestion, heightened public insecurity, overcrowding, and environmental degradation. Tourism researchers often depend on indicators to assess variables; nevertheless, these indicators may include measurement mistakes that jeopardize the validity of study outcomes. The tourist industry, particularly active sports tourism, has the obligation to preserve a sustainable connection with the environment. Some studies indicate that tourism may conserve natural resources and enhance environmental conditions, while others highlight pollution and the reduction of natural ecosystems. Nonetheless, the significance of tourism in the context of sustainability may enhance the interaction between inhabitants and visitors, while safeguarding and sustaining the environment, culture, and socio-economic welfare. Social exchange theory elucidates both favorable and unfavorable perspectives of tourism effects, with this study concentrating on sports tourism. Collaboration between governmental organizations and commercial enterprises is essential for investment, financing, and marketing, while taking into account the cultural legacy of the location. Consequently, social exchange theory establishes the link between sports tourism and its economic, socio-cultural, and environmental effects, serving as a mechanism for community development plans.

3. Literature review

The worldwide sports tourism sector is rapidly growing in national and international level and in some locations, sports tourism constitutes 25% of overall tourist earnings, with estimates rising to 55% in Australia and certain areas of New Zealand (UNWTO, 2017). Mishra et al. (2022) explored travel motivations that drive engagement in active sports tourism (AST) between India and Poland. The study

used a self-administered questionnaire and SPSS Statistics 24 for descriptive data and SPSS AMOS 25 for measurement model testing and multi-group analysis. Results showed that participants are primarily driven by trip discovery, social connection, and stress alleviation, but these motivations differ across the two countries. Active sports travelers are not driven by physical prowess, personal improvement, or social acclaim. Further, Halder (2017) discussed the socio-cultural standpoint, including talks on limits, serious leisure, identity in society, and nostalgia in sport tourism. Part two utilizes paradigms from sport and tourism investigations, including tourist duties, marketing of destinations, seasonality, host–guest interactions, and urban regeneration. Part three delineates themes and paradigms from business studies, including marketing, quality of service, the field of economics policy, and management challenges. However, tourism is a crucial sector in the Indian economy, with substantial significance. (Sah, 2014) indicated that the tourism sector in India has shown a steady annual growth rate of 11% since 2013. Furthermore, it significantly impacts the national economy, accounting for 10% of the GDP and employing 9% of the overall workforce (Sah, 2014). A significant link exists between higher levels of education and the tendency of people to invest in tourism activities. Research results reveal that female-headed families devote a lesser percentage of their income to tourism-related expenditures compared to male-headed households. Sahoo found that travel and familial traits had diverse effects on tourist spending, revealing an absence of consistency in the results.

The author proposed that the Indian government prioritize the enhancement of tourist packages and the empowerment of women regarding resource ownership (Sahoo et al. 2022). Furthermore, the economic ramifications of medical tourism may lead to significant environmental consequences. Medical tourism has shown its capacity to enhance the economic development of several countries by producing significant economic resources. This specific kind of tourism has been widespread in several countries globally, constituting a vital aspect of tourism for development, akin to sectors like metal manufacturing or athletics. Education has a vital role, both directly and indirectly, in the development of tourism (Xu et al., 2023). This examines academic papers related to "Tourism Education" and the international context of "curriculum" in this discipline. Tourism education, with other pertinent disciplines, significantly contributes to the enhancement of knowledge and the advancement of the cumulative Tourism industry (Şimşek et al., 2023). Tourism education faces issues such as a shortage of qualified professors and practical methodologies. The activities fostered innovative and active thinking in tourism students, while also improving their communication, teamwork, decision-making, and empathy skills. Moreover, it has been established that design-based learning, an educational methodology that encourages experiential learning, improves information retention, nurtures a positive attitude towards the subject, fosters collaboration among students, and encourages consistent class attendance (Mamhoori, 2015). The research is expected to provide direction to educators for the incorporation of the design thinking technique into the curriculum (Doğantan, 2023). The research by Fuchs examined attitudes of the in-house training for university students in the domain of tourist education. In the absence of industrial placements. A study technique using an exploratory approach was used to get insights into the experiences of student interns throughout their in-house training. This research included 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants, analyzed via SPSS. The empirical findings demonstrate that the current state of the specific classroom curriculum is not a sustainable long-term solution for undergraduate students in the tourist sector (Fuchs, 2022).

4. Conclusion

This study found that sports tourism is rapidly growing sector of tourism which has great growing potential in future. Even education institution also introduced sports tourism as a subject in school and university level to increase the awareness among the youth and community. The social exchange theory reveals that sports tourism has positive as well as negative impact on economy, environment and socio-cultural aspects. Therefore, sports tourism in social exchange theory perspective needs empirical research to study the impact on community attitude towards the sports tourism. This paper suggested that policymaker should implement policies that improve the existing condition of sports tourism in India and portray India as global sports event hub to boost the economic growth of India in future.

Reference

1. Doğan, E. (2023). Experiential learning through the design thinking approach in tourism education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 33, 100460. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2023.100460>
2. Fuchs, K. (2022). An interview study to explore the perceived usefulness of in-house training programs in tourism and hospitality education. *Heliyon*, 8(12), e12547. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e12547>
3. Gough, C. (2025). Market size of sports tourism worldwide in 2023, with a forecast for 2032. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1610707/sports-tourism-market-size/#:~:text=The%20global%20sports%20tourism%20industry%20was%20valued%20at%20just%20under,trillion%20U.S.%20dollars%20by%202032>
4. Grand View Research (2025). India Sports Tourism Market Size & Outlook, 2023-2030. <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/horizon/outlook/sports-tourism-market/india>
5. Halder, D. (2017). Sports tourism: Impact and aspect in India. *International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health*, 4(4), 292-297.
6. Idrees, M. A., Bibi, M., Naveed, J., & Khan, A. (2021). Sports tourism and its impact on economic growth of a developing nation. *Sustainable Business and Society in Emerging Economies*, 3(4), 617-628.
7. Kapur, R. (2018). The significance of sports tourism. Access through the internet: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328412942_The_Significance_of_Sports_Tourism
8. Mamhoori, A. (2015). Sustainable tourism development: an empirical survey of tour operators in India. *Journal Tourism Hospitality*, 4(183), 1-6. doi.org/10.4172/2167-0269.1000183
9. Mishra, S., Malhotra, G., Johann, M., & Tiwari, S. R. (2022). Motivations for participation in active sports tourism: a cross-national study. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 13(1), 70-91.
10. Radicchi, E. (2013). Tourism and sport: Strategic synergies to enhance the sustainable development of a local context. *Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research*. 57, 44-57.
11. Sah, N. (2014) How to help your graduates secure better jobs? An industry perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hotel Management*, 21(3), 308-322.
12. Sahoo, B. K., Nayak, R., & Mahalik, M. K. (2022). Factors affecting domestic tourism spending in India. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 3(2), 100050. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2022.100050>
13. Şimşek, E. K., & Kalıpcı, M. B. (2023). A bibliometric study on higher tourism education and

- curriculum. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 33, 100442. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2023.100442>
14. United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2017) Is the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. Available online: <https://www.unwto.org/archive/global/press-release/2017-01-03/2017-international-year-sustainable-tourism-development>
15. Xu, A., Johari, S. A., Khademolomoom, A. H., Khabaz, M. T., Umurzoqovich, R. S., Hosseini, S., & Semiromi, D. T. (2023). Investigation of management of international education considering sustainable medical tourism and entrepreneurship. Heliyon, 9(1), e12691. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e12691>.