

On the Multidimensionality of Sport Tourism: Challenges and Guidelines

Abolfazl Dehnavi (M.Sc)

Student, Physical Education Department, Tehran Markaz University, Iran

Mojtaba Amiri (Ph.D)

Member, Management Department, University of Tehran, Iran

Parisa Hadian DehKordi (M.Sc)

Graduate, Tarbiat Moalem University, Tehran, Iran

Akbar Heidary (Ph.D Candidate)

Student, Physical Education Department, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran

Abstract

One of the Industries in the world is tourism industry in which sport tourism has attracted much more attention. Sport and Tourism make the world a small place enhancing more understanding between tolerance and world peace, eventually. The issue of sport tourism has become one of the new research approaches in recent years. In addition, it may affect the all social strata economically and politically. Thus needless to say that much more attention should be directed to the industry through clear-cut policies, visions and constructive plans in this regard. To this end, In this paper, the authors investigate multidimensionality of sport tourism development, generally. The research applies archival materials to get the required information. To sum up, authorities are supposed to pay much more attention to public sports in local, national and international levels and participate actively in international conferences and creating sports tourism database. Also, they can seek the support of private sectors, create employment and attract investors in terms of constructing and equipping multi-hosted/purposes sport facilities as well as undertaking sporting events.. Most importantly, developing Sport Tourism so as to consolidate peace and friendship and sport globalization and strengthening and striving for national identity shall be considered as the ultimate goal of sport tourism development.

Keywords: Sport Tourism, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sport tourism is a complex one. The complexity emanates from the difficulties in defining the concept. Gibson (1998) defined sport tourism as "leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to play, watch physical activities or venerate attractions associated with these activities". Sport tourism

makes an important contribution to local and national economies and appears to have substantial potentials to further build on this contribution. Sport tourism in industrial countries includes 1-2 percent of GDP and it has a 10-percent increased rate annually.

Sport has always been an important part of society, but with the global emergence of sports tourism it has also become an increasingly important part of the economy.

Consequently, the measurement and evaluation of benefits and costs of sporting events to host destinations and communities has become a focus of increasing interest to a number of groups, especially policy makers and sporting officials. Based on the proven economic benefits and impact that sport has delivered to a number of countries, our observation is that governments worldwide have become increasingly supportive of further investment in sport as an industry.

Sports tourism has become a multi-billion dollar business and one of the most intriguing of the modern-day service industries. The growth of sports tourism has been driven by increased global interest in sporting events that on the back of the massive expansion in satellite and digital television coverage over the past 10 years. For example, the 2006 FIFA World Cup stands as one of the most-watched events in television history. The final match attracted an estimated audience of 715 million people. The cumulative television audience for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa is estimated at 26 billion people for the duration of the tournament! With more leisure time, more disposable income and cheaper travel, sport is no longer just an add-on for travelers - in many instances it is the sole reason for travelling in the first place.

The intriguing nature of the business of sport and tourism emanates from the fact that it knows no barriers of language or culture, spans every sport imaginable, every age group and includes both those who travel to play and those who travel to watch their sport of choice.

Sports tourists are generally passionate, high-spending people who enjoy new sporting experiences. Very often they also stimulate other tourism categories. The direct benefit to a destination is cash - the indirect benefit can be years of return visits as tourists.

Sport Tourism is an economic, environmental, social, and political phenomenon as well as attractive mixture of both sport and Tourism. For instance, Tourism Organization in 2004 acknowledged that 55% of people travel abroad in Germany and 52% of Dutch people travel for sport purposes ⁽⁴⁾. A great number of those tourists are male, single and highly educated. Racially, the black and the Asians make up the biggest sport tourists and the age group below 40 years, especially between 17 to 22 years, gives more importance sports tourism. Sport Tourism in Iran has its root in Sport Tourism Commission in National Olympic Committee. World Tourism Organization (WTO) has predicted Tourism Industry in 2020 will increase with the Annual rate of 4.1%. Also, number of inbound tourist to Iran will grow with average annual rate of 8.4% through 1955 to 2020.

Leap for the multi-billion dollar business in sports tourism

Sports Tourism is a multi-billion dollar business, one of the fastest growing areas of the \$4.5 trillion global travel and tourism industry. It has become a vast international business

attracting media coverage, investment, political interest, traveling participants and spectators.

By 2011, travel and tourism is expected to be more than 10 percent of the global domestic product. The economies of cities, regions and even countries around the world are increasingly reliant on the visiting golfer and skier or the traveling football, rugby or cricket supporter. In some countries, sport can account for as much as 25 percent of all tourism receipts. Thus, Sports Tourism has started to earn its reputation to be a multi-million dollar business.

Trends in tourism over the last decade have shown that sports tourism is emerging as a very significant segment of the global tourist market. While tourism industry in the Philippines continues to grow, a significant expansion in the worldwide sports and recreation industry has also been felt. These industries come together in the sports tourism sector and with the emergence of niche markets as a major factor in tourism development, the potential for growth in the sector is considerable.

Push and Pull factors

Although these underlying factors maybe interesting, it is unrealistic to identify all the reasons for travel, which often maybe contradictory anyway. As a result of this most sport tourism motives literature tends to categorize the reasons for travel as escaping from and/or escaping to a particular destination.

Some examples of writers who categorize the travel motives are summed in the book of Pizam and Mansfeld (2000). Dann (1977) gives a basic model with seven different categories of travel motivations, namely:

1. Travel as a response to what is missing now (push factors)
2. Attractiveness of a certain destination (pull factors)
3. Willing to fulfil a fantasy
4. Motivation as a classified purpose, such as visiting friend and relatives or study
5. Motivational typologies
6. Experienced based motivations
7. Motivation as auto-definition, which means that it's better to define tourist situations rather than just observes their behaviour.

Conclusion and discussion

The tourism and sports shall supplement each other and the resulting revenue from sport tourism can be an economic leverage. Given the favorable geographical conditions, Zanjan can afford to host and cater a great number of mountain climbers, hunters, cyclists and national teams so that it can increase local economy productivity and meet social and recreational needs of different users.

Effects of Sport Tourism: Economic, Cultural and Social.

Economic impacts: Sport Tourism is one of the most prolific industry and world economy components. Plus, it is a multi-million dollar business and can be such an important source of foreign exchange earnings, generating economic and employment opportunity that ,based on reports, each tourist creates 7 to 9 jobs when entering the country .

Social and cultural effects: In order to stabilize cultural values in the international scene ,there must be increased sports tourism which is the best tool for dialogue among civilizations and causes development, strengthens friendships , builds bridges between cultures and ends up with strengthening social cohesion and promotion of national belonging.

To sum up, authorities are supposed to pay much more attention to public sports in local, national and international levels and participate actively in international conferences and creating sports tourism database. Also, they can seek the support of private sectors, create employment and attract investors in terms of constructing and equipping multi-hosted/purposes sport facilities as well as undertaking sporting events.. Most importantly, developing Sport Tourism so as to consolidate peace and friendship and sport globalization and strengthening and striving for national identity shall be considered as the ultimate goal of sport tourism development.

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