



A proposed model for managing investment in sports tourism and its impact on sustainable development in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

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To develop a framework for managing investments in the sports tourism industry and to explore how these investments contribute to achieving sustainable development goals in Saudi Arabia. It employs both inductive and descriptive approaches, incorporating theoretical analysis, critical reviews, and quantitative surveys. The findings indicate that investing in sports activities offers numerous significant benefits and positively impacts the economic appeal and future potential of the industry. This, in turn, can facilitate progress in the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The study concludes with recommendations, the most important of which is the need for collaboration and integration across all sectors concerning financial aspects and incentives to attract investors. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of staying attuned to emerging opportunities to maximize advantages in the industry. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to align with legislative advancements by adapting investment regulations in the sports sector to fit the Saudi context and by addressing any barriers that could obstruct these investments. These actions will help achieve the expected returns from the sports tourism industry.

Contribution/Originality: This article discusses the vital role of managing investments in the sports tourism industry and explores how these investments contribute to achieving sustainable development goals in Saudi Arabia by adapting investment regulations in the sports sector to fit the Saudi context and by addressing any barriers that could obstruct these investments. These actions will help achieve the expected returns from the sports tourism industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports tourism is known as active tourism and is associated with recreational activities for enjoyment, adventure, excitement, and relaxation, which are carried out in natural settings and require physical activity (Ibrahim, Baqawy, & Mohamed, 2021). Sports tourism is a form of tourism related to the promotion, development, and organization of competitive and non-competitive sports and recreation events (González-García, Martínez-Rico, Bañuls-Lapuerta, & Calabuig, 2022). Usually, sports tourism includes specific elements such as sports clubs, facilities, transport services, and accommodations that better cater to the sports tourist. Sports tourism refers to traveling to participate in a sporting event, socialize with other tourists, or watch and cheer for others (Panagiotopoulos, Mitoula,

Georgitsoyanni, & Theodoropoulou, 2022). The impact of sports tourism includes sports events and their impact on international tourism, the economy, environmental protection, national conditions, and changes in people's awareness (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The sports tourism market is an important part of all tourism market systems and a driving force for the development of the tourism industry (Dwivedi, Laddha, Arora, Marfatia, & Begum, 2013). The actual conditions of tourism development and the management strategies for the development of the tourism industry have become the focus of current research (Jiménez-García, Ruiz-Chico, Peña-Sánchez, & López-Sánchez, 2020). The tourism experience is increasingly influenced by the extrinsic motivation provided through events, which act as catalysts to attract visitors and, hence, generate economic and social benefits (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Sports events are part of a country's tourism product, a significant factor in attracting visitors to the destination, a main motivation for travel, a focal point for the tourist experience, as well as the main element driving tourism development, and a source of new economic activity for the host destinations (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). For future growth and sustainability in the sports sector, the contemporary sports tourism model entails the seamless integration of sport, tourism, lifestyle, leisure, and economic components (Nguyen, Binh, & Su, 2023). Promoted as an alternative Saudi Arabia development strategy, the sports tourism industry has grown rapidly in relatively few countries (Mir & Kulibi, 2023). The media influences the creation of events and makes them sensational for the public. These sports events include local and regional championships for football, handball, and volleyball, along with major events such as the Asian Games, the Desert Energy Cup, and the World's Strongest Man (Herbold, Thees, & Philipp, 2020). This research aims to propose an investment model in Saudi sports tourism and its impact on sustainable development, which is an important contribution to research for a specific type that is only receptive to individuals, families, and small tourist groups. Many sectors are employing the sports tourism model, including knowledge distribution, sports attractions, sports events, and sports clubs, as these attractions include tourist destinations, countries, and locations (IJspeert & Hernandez-Maskivker, 2020). The research explored the feasibility of direct and indirect long-term public and private investments in structures, infrastructures, services, and regulations, as well as short- and medium-term investments in qualitative choices, marketing strategies, experience, and support. Together, by providing both economic and non-economic benefits to the nation and community as a whole, this research may also result in several academic and practical contributions. The main contribution to research is the literature on both sports and sports tourism, which is currently less developed than the mainstream sports literature. The paper presents an innovative conceptual model of analysis to revise, together with highlighting future research gaps, a partially developed theoretical literature.

The sports tourism concept refers to a journey that is undertaken to engage in, observe, or attend sports events that have been organized by the host country or a focused national effort that involves the organization of sports activities (Banhidi & Moghimehfar, 2024). The relationship between sports and tourism is established from the cornerstone of heritage and tourism, in which cultural and sports tourism share several connections. The purpose of sports, in general, is defined as allowing athletes to develop their physical and mechanical skills to represent their country in international competitions, in addition to improving the standard of sports skills of the citizens by practicing sports for physical fitness. This goes hand in hand with the tourism industries, which offer various services that suit the diverse physical abilities to support the strong demand for sports activities (Laftah, 2024). Sports events, the athletes, and the matches have acquired commercial value, and this has been targeted by the countries that work on their tourism development. The global tourism share has expanded as those wanting to own a successful share have struggled to attract attention to their cities. The worldwide interest in this type of tourism is the reason that pushes the owners of football clubs to establish large teams to participate in international matches, which is aligned with the interests of the economy and investment (Hu, 2024).

No doubt investing in sports tourism has become an important means for many countries to develop their economic, social, and cultural resources. At the global level, spending on sports tourism is estimated at over \$600 billion. The impact of the sports tourism industry on the global tourism industry can be represented by the value of investment projects in it (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). Global sports tourism investment projects have risen and become

one of the fastest-growing investment sectors in the world. This growth comes as countries continue to expand and improve their sporting and cultural infrastructure, organizing major international conferences, developing sports tourism plans, building a variety of sports complex foundations, and hosting a range of sports events from public festivals to world-class international competitions (Mascarenhas, Pereira, Rosado, & Martins, 2021). Since the Barcelona Olympics in 2004, many countries have adopted sports-based tourism as a long-term strategic plan, leading to significant investments in the development of sports facilities, the creation of new platforms, or the rehabilitation of former stadiums, as well as the development of infrastructure related to preparation, accommodation, public services, travel, and transportation. This includes a wide range of outdoor leisure facilities, hotels, shopping centers, and casinos, as well as planning several key sports events ranging from competitions to team events and more (Herbold et al., 2020). The investment in a wide range of sports tourism plans and constructions that are related to the country's key strategies shows the strategic value of any sport to investors, stakeholders, sports associations, governments, and other tourist attractions (Zuo et al., 2021).

For example, Dubai has occupied a distinguished position in the field of sports tourism for a long time, as it has successfully set a model to be emulated, directing its focus on hosting international sports tournaments, events, clubs, and football camps. Dubai was keen on linking its achievements in the sports field with the enhancement of tourism strategies and the prominent role of the private sector, which demonstrated an ability to invest in football clubs, with Dubai hosting more than 32 football clubs from outside the United Arab Emirates (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). The second model was Qatar, which succeeded in winning the right to host the World Cup in 2022. The success of Qatar was a result of its interest in sports tourism as well as in other types of tourism. Qatar joined the countries owning sports clubs and was the official sponsor for Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain; each of them opened camps in Doha. In 2017, Qatar was the host country for the World Athletics Championships, and in 2019 it was the host country for the Handball World Cup, in addition to the Volvo Sailing Championship. In line with Qatar's ongoing interest in and support for the sports tournament and events industry, it has become the location for world events, such as the Ironman competition in 2019, and the World Cup in 2022 (González-García et al., 2022).

The significance of sports tourism for policymakers, decision-makers, and service providers is highlighted in the study. It aims to aid in understanding the economic dimensions of sports tourism growth, achieving sustainability, and identifying the economic impacts of visitors participating in sports tourism. The study also emphasizes the potential marketing combinations of sport and tourism and the role of sports tourism in regional development.

The study used an inductive approach to develop a method by reviewing the literature on the importance and role of sports tourism. It aimed to determine the relationship between sports tourism and sustainable development and to analyze its impact. The research contributes to the literature by proposing a new model to enhance sports tourism, manage financial investments, and promote sustainable development, in line with Saudi Vision 2030. The research is divided into sections: literature review, definition and concepts of sports tourism, the relationship between sports tourism, investment, and sustainable development, research framework and proposed model, detailed analysis of the proposed model, and conclusions and recommendations.

This study aims to develop a proposed model for managing investment in sports tourism and understanding its impact on sustainable development through various aspects.

- (1) Identifying the investment management in sports tourism on the ground in Eastern region - Saudi Arabia.
- (2) Identifying the fundamentals of investment management in sports tourism Eastern region -Saudi Arabia.
- (3) Identifying the most prominent sports tourism activities in the Eastern region -Saudi Arabia.
- (4) proposing a model to activate investment management in sports tourism to achieve sustainable development in the Eastern region -Saudi Arabia.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This study focuses on the social and economic benefits of sports tourism in Saudi Arabia. It aims to propose a model for incentivizing investment in sports tourism, with the main achievement being the development of a triple-impact model for sports tourism in Saudi Arabia. This model addresses the economic, social, and tourist-related impacts. The research is structured around three main areas: the first part covers the fundamental concepts and how sports tourism businesses should be managed, providing a descriptive overview of the industry and market data, as well as defining the proposed model. The second part of the research presents a model for managing sports tourism businesses and their impact on the national sustainable development project. Finally, the research concludes with a presentation of the most significant findings and recommendations for the potential adoption of the proposed model in the future.

2.1. Sports Tourism Industry

The synergies that exist between sports and the travel industry were recognized several years ago. This led to the concept of sports tourism, which refers to travel away from regular residences to either observe or participate in a sporting event and to watch or engage in leisure events related to sports (Azmi & El Alaoui Ismaili, 2024). Typically, sports tourists are interested in travel packages that offer opportunities to watch events and participate in leisure activities in an atmosphere that is free from the stress and demands of the workplace or school. Although this concept is several decades old, over the past few years, there has been a resurgence of interest in sports tourism as an economic activity. Factors responsible for the resurgence of sports tourism include general travel trends, the changing composition of sports event audiences, and the desire for places to attract more tourists (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022).

2.2. Sustainable Development

According to the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development is "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological developments, and institutional changes are in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" (Matarese, Ndiaye, & Slattery, 2024).

This definition emphasizes the harmony among various component dimensions of sustainable development, stressing that development should be "capable of maintaining the stocks of capital intact over time, ensuring the physical sustainability of growth and reflecting a concern for balance among various forms, including man-made, natural, and human capital" (Banhidi & Moghimehfar, 2024).

There are four main principles of sustainable development. Three of these are criteria for sustainability (maintenance of what exists), sufficiency sustainability (exhaustible resources should be used within a scale that can be substituted), and the sustainability rule (present consumption levels should not exceed ecosystems' recovery rate). The last defining principle is that "regarding renewable resources, use levels should not exceed natural regeneration" (Nguyen et al., 2023).

2.3. Economic Theories Related to Sports Tourism Investments

To understand the relationship between sports tourism investments and the economy, many theoretical analyses have been conducted. Many researchers have attempted to study this relationship and its impact on economic development in different contexts, such as the impact of the Olympic Games, the evolution of the global market for football players, and the dynamics of the European football sector (Chadwick & Widdop, 2022). Since the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, there has been a growth in the significance of sports events for the economic development of regions and cities, as a result of the perception that countries can promote their culture and technologies through these events (Gratton, Shibli, & Coleman, 2020b). Thus, regions are certainly trying to maximize the economic benefits derived from such events. Major sports events can contribute significantly to the host country and related

regions, benefiting from higher sports consumption (Ibrahim et al., 2021). According to some economic theories, such as the consumption-based theory, the consumption of sports products can exceed the average growth of the economy because people act out of preferences more than the general population. Consequently, hosting a major sports event can represent a transient increase in the economic well-being of local people (Gratton, Shibli, & Coleman, 2020a).

According to more specific economic theories, such as the tourism-based theory, the supply and demand for tourism products have a great opportunity to grow. The co-presence of a major sports event can attract local and foreign tourists and cause an increase in regional wealth. However, in contrast to previous economic theories, it is important to also consider the costs connected with the quality of life (Gratton et al., 2020a). Sports tourism can contribute to the cultural branding of regional characteristics and increase the quality of life if efficient city management of sports is achieved. Cities can contribute to achieving these objectives by increasing the number of private and public sporting clubs and choosing future policies in the sports sector (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). It is, therefore, possible to talk about a new economic engine of sports tourism with great potential to induce trickle-down effects in less developed areas. From a theoretical point of view, the specificity of sports tourism is also reinforced by the fact that consumer demand is not necessarily directed towards the quality or quantity of services provided, but rather the simultaneous presence of multiple events throughout the year regularly (Moradi, Ehsani, Saffari, & Norouzi Seyed Hosseini, 2023).

2.4. Current Status of Sports Tourism in Saudi Arabia

Sport in Saudi society represents a culture related to identity and civilization. In this context, Saudi Arabia has witnessed various investments in the field of sports tourism through the launch of several sports tournaments of an international nature. A group of countries has preserved their cultural and sports heritage. However, Saudi society, through its long religious, economic, and historical experience, is considered on several levels concerning the concept of sports tourism, as indigenous sports in their various traditional branches have been practiced for many years, like many societies that have kept pace with their achievements over time. The development of human civilization throughout these periods is inspired by the environment in which they live (Sitorus, 2021). In the following sections, the most important advantages of sports tourism, in general, are summarized, followed by an analysis of this dimension in Saudi society within the framework of a review of local regulations related to leading sports trips in the Kingdom. This includes a statement of the reality and problems attributed to it concerning the most important sports-related activities and sites, to determine its financial and economic size and how it has contributed to the emergence of negative phenomena associated with them. Finally, proposals are made to control these phenomena and to put in place a strategy. The Kingdom realizes the great material and spiritual benefits that the economy of knowledge-based societies seeks to achieve through the development of the tourism sector and the search for possible opportunities to support it, maintain its historical position as well, and attract international competition to its land.

2.5. Key Players and Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the parties who will be affected by the project, are working on the achievement of the project goals, or can affect the project implementation process. Stakeholder management aims to include the appropriate stakeholders in the project, maintain their commitment, resolve issues or resistance arising during the project, promote effective dialogue to address conflicting agendas, and manage interdependencies (Yang, Lo, Chao, Shen, & Yang, 2020). These efforts help to ensure stakeholder satisfaction with the project and thus enable overall project success. The client, sponsor, and user of the project are considered the primary stakeholders. Other stakeholders can also include different communities that may be affected by the project, as well as public institutions that can influence project development and its success. Key players usually possess control and power over issues and can impact the project's success (Gratton et al., 2020a).

It is suggested to create a dedicated committee in Saudi Arabia that will operate under the direct oversight of the Minister of Sports and Tourism, along with other relevant government entities. This initiative aims to fulfill various strategic goals. The proposed commission should establish guidelines, criteria, and requirements for incorporating specific appealing sports tourism facilities into the state program designed to bolster sports infrastructure. The availability of these sports facilities shall meet the established standards that also take into consideration the territorial characteristics and peculiarities of a site and the regional tourist center or cluster where the sports tourism facilities are located. The commission, in partnership with involved stakeholders, will select the optimal site or sites for development and subsequently attract investment in economically feasible sports tourism facilities (Albuhlul, 2022).

All parties agree that sports tourism projects (excluding sports events) should, first and foremost, support local communities and contribute to social development. The elimination of the universal interpretation of the 'private sector' helps attract globally leading companies with a successful track record of operations in similar fields due to their efforts to strengthen their reputation through the support of social development (Aldulaimi, Abdeldayem, & AboKeir, 2023).

Based on the information provided in the previous section, it can be concluded that the positive conditions in Saudi Arabia may significantly contribute to attracting investment in sports tourism. These elements could help mitigate some of the obstacles typically encountered in this sector, and investment related to the Sports Opportunities Program in Saudi Arabia deserves special attention.

Additionally, Saudi Arabia's Sports Opportunities Program signifies substantial prospects for fostering long-term sustainable tourism (Mir & Kulibi, 2023). Due to its geographical advantages, the country has the potential to become a hub for sports activities and competitions targeting professional athletes, particularly in sports such as swimming, cycling, marathons, rugby, sailing, and golf, made feasible by its favorable climate and proximity to sports facilities supporting the Sports Opportunities Program (Ibrahim et al., 2021). This development could subsequently enhance sports engagement within the local community. Furthermore, tourists from nearby nations might be interested in participating in these activities. With the endorsement of prominent figures from the sports industry, Saudi Arabia has the opportunity to draw in tourists, the general public, and international media to attend these events, thereby diversifying their experiences and allowing them to explore various local attractions (Morfoulaki, Myrovali, Kotoula, Karagiorgos, & Alexandris, 2023).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sports tourism has been considered the fastest-growing segment in the global tourism industry. There is a necessity to investigate the model that manages and sustains the capability of investment in sports tourism and strengthens its relationship with other sectors (Albuhlul, 2022). Tourist decision-making processes are powerfully affected by art, music, entertainment, and events. Cultural and recreational facilities support the success of tourism destinations and host their unique identity (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Some destinations utilize different types of sports as a major promotion for their tourism. Sporting events have become interesting as a focal point of tourism activities, and sports have been introduced to attract tourists (Banhidi & Moghimehfar, 2024). There are several well-established theories of the cause-economic growth relationship. Most of these theories are based either on the key role of the physical expansion of the capital stock or on the importance of a series of notions such as the capacity to export, infrastructure, and the development of human resources (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). In the recent literature, investment in tourism is highlighted as a driver of economic growth. The increasing number of awards ceremonies and special prizes for specific regions has given tourism a bolt of recognition on the international stage (Rangkuti, Setyawati, Hartono, & Hidayah, 2024). The situation of creating sports events as a strategic priority can be of interest in two respects. The first lies in the proven power of sports as a high-profile vehicle for brand promotion. The second is in

the opportunity offered by a tightly run sporting event to drive targeted programs to channel huge public and private investments to boost the economic and touristic appeal of hosting cities (Sitorus, 2021).

Tourism, sports events, and sports activities are closely correlated with each other because of the nature and goals of each interaction (Ibrahim et al., 2021). For many people in today's world, a trip includes attending a sporting event. Many people see a holiday as unfinished without going to a game (Rangkuti et al., 2024). Research by Gholipour, Arjomandi, Marsiglio, and Foroughi (2020); Hassan and Hilaly (2022) and Higham and Vada (2024) has shown that a significant percentage of people plan a trip specifically to attend a sports activity. At the same time, sports occur, in part or whole, in most tourism activities. In other words, sports activities and events are an essential part of tourism, and the vast tourism market significantly influences the sports economy (Cooper & Alderman, 2021). Almost all sports are of direct interest to tourists, not related to only a few types of travel, work, or visitors in all respects, but a few sports spectators can be defined exactly as tourists, and tourism includes sports as part of the attraction for which tourism factors are involved in its origin and management (Herbold et al., 2020). Sports tourism represents a unique category of tourism, different from traditional tourism forms, including its development forecasts, but it has not yet been researched (Zuo et al., 2021). Sports tourism is a large and dynamic market referred to as sport-related tourism, event tourism, adventure tourism, ecotourism, or active tourism because sports tourists participate in material and non-material sports or fitness activities (Gholipour et al., 2020). Leisure time is always important, and its importance increases when people have more free time. Sports events, too, have become a significant leisure activity for the public because people want active, comfortable, secure, and high-quality leisure opportunities (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). However, the sports industry varies from traditional commercial sectors in a range of important respects, resulting in a different economic framework. The main characteristic of most commercial sports is that the principal product is intangible, inhomogeneous, inseparable, perishable, and closely related to the participation of satisfactory groups of people who meet various criteria, and these products usually require substantial fixed costs, which have to be financed (Ibrahim et al., 2021). In the sports industry, a typical feature is also the relationship between sports activities and economically active tourism. For instance, television revenues for sports bodies are largely derived from broadcasting sports events to ideally a large audience, which requires a successful blend of high-profile players, big clubs, engaging competitions, and fair terms of access by broadcasters. At the same time, enhanced, resource-rich sports clubs require predictable, successful competitions in large, attractive broadcasting markets so that receiving substantial broadcasting revenues becomes a standard part of the income strategy for organizational successors (Yang et al., 2020).

Academically, sports tourism has gained a lot of interest recently (Aldulaimi et al., 2023). For instance, it is suggested that Qatar's advancement in implementing sustainability development goals and embracing sustainable practices in the sports tourism sector has been remarkable. The outcomes highlight the successful cooperation among different stakeholders in Qatar, which has played a significant role in accomplishing sustainability targets (Gholipour et al., 2020). The review highlighted key factors that contribute to the successful incorporation of sports tourism into local economic development plans, including getting the community involved, strategically selecting locations, investing in infrastructure, and implementing environmental management strategies (Aldulaimi et al., 2023). To demonstrate these elements in practice, we examined case studies of best practices, emphasizing the significance of aligning policies and engaging stakeholders to promote sustainable outcomes. We examined previous instances of sports tourism investment and then conducted a qualitative survey of tourism stakeholders in several countries. The results showed that sports tourism is expected to contribute to the development of a distinct identity that aligns with sustainability objectives. It is stated that considering the presence of an ideal solution to harmonize the three main concepts of sustainable sports tourism is justified: appreciation of environmental preservation, fair support for economic growth, and acknowledgment and fulfillment of the requirements of local communities.

Based on the above discussion, the research questions were developed as follows.

1. What are the current investment management practices in sports tourism in Saudi Arabia?

2. What are the essential components of investment management in sports tourism in the Saudi Arabian environment?
3. What are the most prominent sports tourism activities in Saudi Arabia?
4. How to activate investment management in sports tourism to achieve sustainable development?

4. METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Considering the importance of sports tourism management, among the requirements for its discipline are sophisticated, effective management systems that may guarantee enabling sports tourism to play expected roles. The objectives of this study are the identification of a proposed model for managing investment in sports tourism and its impact on sustainable development in Saudi Arabia, making use of the SWOT environmental scanning technique to promote the role of sports tourism in the achievement of sustainable development and provide a model plan for managing sports tourism to increase investment in this vital area.

A purpose-designed questionnaire was used for collecting the data. The variable measurement items were formulated based on previous studies, as presented in (Appendix A). A 5-point Likert scale with anchors that ranged from one (1), depicting strongly disagree, to five (5), depicting strongly agree, was employed for answering questions. The primary version of the questionnaire was sent to five academicians and five senior professionals in sports and tourism ministries for review. The questionnaire items were adjusted to their final edition based on their comments, and then the questionnaire was initially tested on a small scale for reliability and validity confirmation purposes. It is worth mentioning that the respondents' communication language was Arabic, so a language professional translated the questionnaire and responses from English to Arabic and vice versa, in addition to proofreading revisions. The translated questionnaire was tested on a small sample consisting of 30 employees in sports institutions to ensure questionnaire clarity and to test the constructs' reliability, following the suggestion of Dwivedi et al. (2013). The constructs' Cronbach's alpha all exceeded 0.70, which, according to Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019), indicates a good reliability level. The final edition of the questionnaires consisted of two sections.

The first section: Investment in sports tourism,

- Assessment of the current investment management in sports tourism in Saudi Arabia.
- Identification of the components of investment management in sports tourism in the Eastern Province.
- Identification of the most prominent sports tourism activities in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Second Section: Mechanisms for Activating Investment Management in Sports Tourism to Achieve Sustainable Development in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Questionnaires were sent to the respondents via email and WhatsApp links.

The study community consists of employees and administrators in the Saudi Ministry of Sports in the Eastern Region, as well as employees in the Saudi Tourism Authority, totaling 325.

Study Sample: The researcher selected a sample representing the study community using the simple random method. The basic study sample consisted of 201 individuals, in addition to 30 individuals as a survey sample from the study community. The following tables show the demographic characteristics of the basic study sample.

5. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Quantitative or statistical methods are used to generate and analyze data that allow us to perform tests and hypothesize about relationships among data, people, processes, or the environment. These techniques are primarily employed in analyzing the required surveys of the study and the accuracy of the findings of the quantitative simulation model. The t-test was employed to validate the research's basic model. We employed SPSS to analyze the variables examined.

The Cronbach's Alpha for all the scales was performed to establish the validity and reliability of the scales. The tool is most frequently used in social sciences since it discusses the degree of relatedness ranging from 0 to 1, with 0.0 as the minimum value. The Cronbach's Alpha limit values are used as suggested by specialists in the field. If the value of each occasion or item is greater than or equal to 0.7, it is considered relevant, relatively considering the sample size.

Table 1. Questionnaire stability results by Cronbach's alpha.

Questionnaire axes	Number of phrases	Stability coefficient Cronbach's alpha (a)
the current investment management practices in sports tourism in the Eastern region - Saudi Arabia	9	0.968
Elements of investment management in sports tourism Eastern region -Saudi Arabia	9	0.828
The most prominent sports tourism events in the Eastern region - Saudi Arabia	24	0.799
Activating investment management strategies in sports tourism Eastern region -Saudi Arabia	16	0.947
The total.	58	0.919

It is clear from the results in [Table 1](#) that Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged between 0.799 and 0.968, while the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the whole survey was 0.919. Therefore, all Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients are statistically significant, indicating that the questionnaire has a high degree of stability and is acceptable for study purposes.

[Table 2](#) presents the descriptive analysis of the main dimensions of this study. The mean of the current Saudi investment management practices in sports tourism was 2.07, which means that respondents mostly and strongly agreed with the variable items, while the mean of the investment management components in sports tourism in Saudi Arabia was 3.05, indicating that there is a good awareness of sports tourism components in Saudi Arabia, but it could be enhanced. The mean of the most prominent sports tourism events in Saudi Arabia is 3.50, indicating that sports events are activated to a good extent, but they need to be developed. Moreover, the activation of strategies for investment management in sports tourism to achieve sustainable development in Saudi Arabia seems to be at a good rate, as the mean of the dependent variable was 3.25.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of research dimensions.

Research dimensions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis		Quartiles	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. error	Statistic	Std. error	Q1	Q3
The current investment management practices in sports tourism in the Eastern region - Saudi Arabia	201	1.14	3	2.0712	0.48019	0.115	0.274	-1.008	0.541	1.5714	2.2857
Elements of investment management in sports tourism Eastern region -Saudi Arabia	201	1.7	4.4	3.0535	0.37323	0.336	0.274	0.03	0.541	2.1	2.6
The most prominent sports tourism events in the Eastern region -Saudi Arabia	201	2.18	4.82	3.5031	0.34521	0.689	0.274	0.239	0.541	1.6364	2.0909
Activating investment management strategies in sports tourism Eastern region -Saudi Arabia	201	2.25	4.25	3.2517	0.4589	0.137	0.274	-0.479	0.541	3	3.625
Valid N (List-wise)	201										

5.1. Discussion of Findings

In the following section, we will present and discuss the main findings to answer the research questions.

To learn about the role of investment in sports tourism and sustainable economic development, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated, and the direction of the study sample's responses was determined on a five-point Likert scale. Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 show the responses and opinions of the study sample on the dimensions of the axes.

Table 3 presents the average increase in the distance of sports tourism as perceived by the individuals in the study sample. The average response of the study sample to the statements in this dimension was 3.57, indicating a high level of agreement with the statements in this dimension. The average scores of the sample members on the statements ranged from 4.74 to 2.45, falling into three categories: "completely agree," "agree," and "disagree."

The study sample confirmed that the reality of sports tourism in the Eastern Province involves developing and advancing aspects of sports tourism. This requires a revitalization of recreational sports tourism activities as an important development element, supporting new proposals and encouraging the establishment of diverse programs and activities that correspond to sustainable economic development. It is supported by Mir and Kulibi (2023).

The study also indicated that various elements of attraction for sports tourism activities play a fundamental role in creating economic value and are necessary to match the needs and desires of tourists and visitors. However, there is an indication that the Eastern Province has great attractions for recreational sports tourism destinations but they are not utilized to the required extent to encourage visitors and tourists to visit those places. This lack of utilization hinders the attraction of greater investments to the community and limits the achievement of economic goals (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Table 3. The current investment management practices in sports tourism in Saudi Arabia. "IMP " (n=201).

M	IMP	Phrases	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T	Significance level	Likert trend (Response)
1	IMP.1	The Ministry of Sports of Saudi Arabia adopts strategies for administrative professionalism in investment in sports tourism, which contributes to achieving sustainable economic growth.	4.74	0.92	1.73	0.0013	Totally agree
2	IMP.2	The Ministry of Tourism in Saudi Arabia provides services that lack administrative organization for tourist sporting events, based on the opinions of tourists during their visits to tourist sites.	3.79	1.03	1.52	0.0021	Agree
3	IMP.3	The strategic objectives of the ministries of tourism and sports in Saudi Arabia include elements of attraction for visiting destinations and sports tourism events.	3.81	0.91	2.23	0.0012	Agree
4	IMP.4	The Ministry of Tourism and Sports in Saudi Arabia provides appropriate advertising media and media coverage for all recreational sports tourism events at their designated times and locations.	4.69	0.98	1.95	0.0003	Totally agree
5	IMP.5	The tourist sites in Saudi Arabia are fully utilized, taking into account all age groups and determining the marketing category based on administrative regulations for the sporting event being held.	2.45	1.38	2.67	0.0235	Disagree
6	IMP.6	The ministries of tourism and sports provide professional administrative arrangements for all sports tourism events in line with the expectations and aspirations of citizens, visitors, and tourists.	2.52	1.41	1.56	0.0341	Disagree
7	IMP.7	Sports tourism activities take full advantage of the tourist flow of visitors to the sites where they are held.	3.82	1.09	1.98	0.0033	Agree
8	IMP.8	The ministries of tourism and sports work to promote sports tourism events and activities and provide everyone with information and data that interest them.	3.84	1.01	1.25	0.0021	Agree
9	IMP.9	The ministries of tourism and sports follow up on the development of general administrative policies for investment in sports tourism events based on the desires of citizens, visitors, and tourists.	2.51	1.43	0.89	0.0135	Disagree
Average			3.57	0.88	2.05	0.0015	Agree

Table 4. Components of investment in sports tourism for Eastern region (Saudi Arabia) "IMC " (n=201).

Phrases			Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T	Significance level	Likert trend (Response)
IMC	NI	Sports tourism events highlight the natural assets of the Kingdom by creating an interactive tourism style that suits the needs and desires of visitors.	4.51	0.94	1.51	0.0021	Totally agree
Natural ingredients	NI.1						
	NI.2	The ministries of sports and tourism are attracting the attention of tourists to the spread of sports tourism, which depends mainly on natural resources and components that distribute sports events according to the weather, climate, and geographical features.	3.87	1.14	2.27	0.0016	Agree
Human resources	HR. 1	The ministries of tourism and sports provide their employees with all the information they give to visitors and tourists about the various tourist sites and sports events held.	2.73	1.19	1.98	0.0023	neutral
	HR. 2	Young people are trained to become qualified for work in sports tourism events, empowering them and providing job opportunities in the field.	3.56	1.04	2.69	0.0032	Agree
Climatic components	CC. 1	Sporting events held in the Eastern Province attract visitors to enjoy the natural beauty and climate.	2.36	1.33	1.24	0.0511	Disagree
	CC. 2	The ministries of tourism and sports encourage sports practice at times appropriate to climate change that meet the aspirations of citizens, residents, tourists, and visitors.	4.64	0.96	1.99	0.005	Totally agree
Material components	MC. 1	Sports tourism activities increase the marketing value and national income in Saudi Arabia.	2.23	1.31	1.28	0.2281	Disagree
	MC. 2	Sports tourism activities held in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia represent attractions that must be supported to bring about a shift and prosperity in the tourism and sports sectors, achieving good financial income for the national economic product.	3.40	1.23	0.87	0.0051	neutral
Cultural components	CC. 1	Advertising and publicity contribute to the preparation and publication of electronic and television bulletins about sporting events.	4.61	0.89	1.83	0.0017	Totally agree
	CC. 2	Sales promotion helps promote sporting events to citizens, visitors, residents, and tourists.	4.63	0.91	1.97	0.0021	Totally agree
Administrative components	AC. 1	A good selection of human resources within the management of sports events is one of the most important reasons for the success of the organizational process in sports events.	4.53	0.91	1.59	0.0031	Totally agree
	AC. 2	Public relations, conscious management, and direct marketing help in building an effective audience of foreign tourists and participants in sporting events.	4.82	0.98	1.96	0.0001	Totally agree
	Average		3.82	0.83	2.09	0.0013	Agree

It is necessary to develop marketing operations for tourist places in the Eastern Province, which are rich in areas qualified to host global events. Doing so would positively impact the success of sports tourism, increase the desire of citizens, visitors, and tourists to visit sports tourism destinations, and benefit from them, thus activating sports tourism and achieving sustainable economic growth (Jiménez-García et al., 2020).

Based on the discussion of the findings shown in Table 3, the first research question (What are the current investment management practices in sports tourism in Saudi Arabia?) can be explained.

Table 4 demonstrates high agreement among the study sample members regarding the sports tourism components in the Eastern Region. The natural, human, material, climatic, cultural, and administrative components of the Saudi environment qualify it to host sports events, especially those aimed at tourists. The support from the Ministry of Tourism makes the area attractive for tourists and visitors. The region's diverse nature can be leveraged to develop and promote activities that attract tourists and visitors. However, the lack of media interest in the Eastern Region hinders its potential for sports tourism (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

The average responses of the study sample to the statements of this dimension were (3.82), which is an average that falls in the high category, indicating that the sample members agree with the statements of this dimension to a significant degree. The arithmetic averages of the sample members on the statements of this dimension ranged from (4.82) to (2.23), which are averages that fall into four categories, the first of which is the category of completely agree. This indicates that there is strong agreement from the study sample members, confirming that there are substantial natural, human, and material components that qualify the Eastern Region to receive and host sporting events (Rangkuti et al., 2024).

The study suggests the need for more activation and intensification of advertising, holding events and competitions, and inviting celebrities in some sports to promote recreational sports tourism activities and sporting events in the region. The Ministries of Tourism and Sports play a crucial role in supporting tourist flow and developing cooperation between sports and tourism institutions. It is important to promote sporting events that suit the region's climate to achieve economic development and encourage young people to work in the field of sports tourism and media (Higham & Vada, 2024).

As mentioned earlier, the key players and stakeholders, as human and administrative components, have a vital role in promoting sports tourism in Saudi Arabia. Well-qualified and trained human resources within the management of sports events, as well as public relations and sponsoring companies that support the promotion of sports events in Saudi Arabia, are some of the most important reasons for the success of sports tourism activities (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Rangkuti et al., 2024).

As we explored the essential components of investment management in sports tourism within the Saudi Arabian environment, we provided an answer to the second research question.

Table 5. The most prominent sports tourism events in the Eastern province." STE " (n=201).

M	Dimension/Effectiveness		Phrases	Average arithmetic	Standard deviation	T	Significance level	Likert trend (Response)
1	Shooting (Retaliation)	<i>SR .1</i>	Shooting and hunting activities in the Eastern Province achieve tourist attractions that are compatible with sustainable development goals.	4.29	0.96	1.51	0.133	Totally agree
2	<i>STE - SR</i>	<i>SR .2</i>	There is an active plan to hold shooting and hunting events in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	3.95	1.14	1.10	0.806	Agree
3		<i>SR .3</i>	Shooting and hunting activities achieve the desired economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	2.73	1.25	2.41	0.093	Neutral
4	Horse riding and equestrian <i>STE -HRE</i>	<i>HRE .1</i>	Check out the horse events, riding, and equestrian activities in the Eastern Province, as well as tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	4.72	0.84	2.69	0.130	Totally agree
5		<i>HRE .2</i>	There is an active plan to hold horse events, including riding and equestrian activities, in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	4.82	1.33	1.24	0.226	Totally agree
6		<i>HRE .3</i>	Check out the horse events, including riding and equestrian activities, and the expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	4.92	0.96	1.99	0.095	Totally agree
7	Camels	<i>C. 1</i>	Check out the camel events in the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	4.89	1.31	1.28	0.228	Totally agree
8	<i>STE -C</i>	<i>C. 2</i>	There is an active plan to hold camel events in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	4.95	1.23	0.87	0.364	Totally agree
9		<i>C. 3</i>	Check out the camel events' expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	4.79	1.19	2.66	0.091	Totally agree
10	Sand sports and the mountains <i>STE -SSM</i>	<i>SSM. 1</i>	Check out the sand events and mountain sports in the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the objectives.	2.49	0.91	1.97	0.138	Disagree
11		<i>SSM. 2</i>	There is an active plan to hold sand events. and mountain sports in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	2.98	0.94	1.51	0.133	Neutral
12		<i>SSM. 3</i>	Check out the sand events and mountain sports. The expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	2.39	1.14	2.27	0.806	Disagree
13	Sea games	<i>SG. 1</i>	Check out the sea events and games in the Eastern Province, as well as tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	1.79	1.19	1.98	0.052	Totally disagree

M	Dimension/Effectiveness		Phrases	Average arithmetic	Standard deviation	T	Significance level	Likert trend (Response)
14	STE -S G	SG. 2	There is an active plan to hold sea events and games in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	2.57	0.91	1.63	0.009	Disagree
15		SG. 3	Check out the sea events' expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	3.10	1.33	1.48	0.701	Neutral
16	Car and bike racing (Rally)	C B R. 1	Car and bike events in the Eastern province achieve tourism attractions compatible with the objectives	3.17	1.43	0.89	0.274	Neutral
17	STE -C B R	C B R. 2	There is an active plan to hold events. Cars and bicycles in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	3.24	1.14	2.36	0.099	Neutral
18		C B R. 3	Check out the car and bicycle events, expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	2.98	1.26	0.89	0.314	Neutral
19	Skydiving	S. 1	Check out the skydiving in the Eastern province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals	1.58	1.48	1.92	0.092	Totally disagree
20	STE -S	S. 2	There is an active plan to hold Skydiving events. in the Eastern province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	2.38	0.82	1.64	0.136	Neutral
21		S. 3	Check out the events of skydiving, the expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	4.84	1.61	0.78	0.093	Totally agree
22	Paragliding (Balloon ride)	P (B R). 1	Check out the paragliding events in the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals	2.47	1.38	2.67	0.019	Disagree
23		P (B R). 2	There is an active plan to hold paragliding events in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	2.15	1.38	2.67	0.013	Disagree
24	STE -P (B R)	P (B R). 3	Check out the paragliding events, the expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	2.53	1.71	2.39	0.008	Disagree
		Average		3.36	0.83	2.09	0.043	Agree

Table 5 The study indicates a high agreement with sports tourism events in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, such as horse riding, equestrian events, camel activities, skydiving, shooting, and hunting. There is a need to develop and increase shooting and hunting events and promote all related sporting events internationally (Morfoulaki et al., 2023; Rangkuti et al., 2024). The study identified different categories of responses, suggesting the need for new attractions, emphasizing the importance of sporting events for sustainable development, and highlighting the potential of marine and outdoor events as global tourist attractions (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The study indicates the importance of media in promoting national and international sports tourism and advertising sports events in various locations (Moradi et al., 2023). The average responses of the study sample to the statements of this dimension were (3.36), which is an average that falls in the high category, indicating that the sample members agree with the statements of this dimension to a degree of agreement. The arithmetic averages of the sample members on the statements of this dimension ranged from (4.95) to (1.58), which are averages that fall into five categories, the first of which is the category of completely agree. The researchers attribute this to the fact that there is great agreement among the study sample members on statements No. 1,4,5,6,7,8,9,21. This confirms that horse riding, equestrian, camel, and skydiving activities can contribute significantly to the sports tourism industry in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and attract more tourists to raise the level of sustainable development and that it highlights the tourism components of the region and encourages investment for sponsoring companies and consolidating tourism marketing by holding events, festivals, competitions, and organizing global sporting events related to sports tourism (Albuhlul, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2021). The researchers emphasize the role of Ministries of Tourism and Sports in supporting tourist flow and developing cooperation between sports and tourism institutions. It is suggested that sports events should be tailored to the natural components and climate of the Eastern Region (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Additionally, promoting sports events that suit the local atmosphere and weather is seen as beneficial for economic development and youth engagement. However, there is a need for improved promotion and marketing of sports events to attract tourists and visitors. The study also suggests professional development for those working in sports tourism and entertainment media. Lastly, there is a call for planning to sponsor sports festivals, workshops, and specialized training courses in sports tourism to further develop this sector (Rangkuti et al., 2024).

The study sample individuals showed high agreement with the statements related to sports tourism events in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Activities such as horse riding, equestrian events, camel activities, skydiving, shooting, and hunting are considered significant contributors to the sports tourism industry in the region. There is a need to develop and increase the percentage of shooting and hunting events and to promote all related sporting events at the international level. These activities highlight the tourism components of the region, encourage investment, and promote tourism marketing through events, festivals, and competitions (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2021). The study identified different categories of responses from the participants. One category expressed neutrality about certain phrases, suggesting the need for new attractions to encourage more visits to sports tourism destinations. Another category showed disagreement with specific statements, emphasizing the importance of sporting events as a pillar of sustainable development. The final category indicated total disagreement with certain phrases, highlighting the potential of marine and outdoor events in the Eastern Region as global attractions for tourists. The study aligned with existing research (Chadwick & Widdop, 2022; Widianingsih et al., 2023). The researchers attribute this to the fact that marine games, parachuting, and events that can be held in the sea, air, and open-air have not yet been utilized in the desired manner, as the Eastern Region is rich in ideal water bodies and suitable atmospheres for holding such events, which can be a global attraction for tourists and everyone, and attention must be paid to them, as it was noted that the events are limited and the capabilities of the Eastern Region are not being utilized in favor of activating sports tourism in this region, so more and larger events must be adopted in proportion to the size and capabilities of the Eastern Region and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and this is what was agreed upon with the study (Ibrahim et al., 2021) Based on discussing the results shown in Table 5, the third research

question can be interpreted as (What are the most prominent sports tourism activities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?).

Table 6. Mechanisms for activating investment management in sports tourism to achieve sustainable development in the Eastern province (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) " IMST " (n=201).

M		Phrases	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T	Significance level	Likert trend (Response)
1	IMST .1	Sports tourism activities in the Eastern Province contribute to the creation of renewable sources of income.	2.73	1.21	2.69	0.079	Neutral
2	IMST .2	Investing in sports tourism attracts investors, tourists, and visitors.	2.86	1.34	2.28	0.109	Neutral
3	IMST .3	The ministries of tourism and sports adopt strategies that contribute to achieving economic, social, and environmental growth.	4.17	0.86	1.73	0.096	Agree
4	IMST .4	Investing in sports tourism brings greater economic income to Saudi companies.	4.27	0.93	2.16	0.099	Totally agree
5	IMST .5	Investing in sports tourism contributes to improving the standard of living for individuals.	4.16	0.99	0.97	1.83	Agree
6	IMST .6	Sports tourism in the Eastern Province plays an important role in investing in the tourist flow to event sites at the local and international levels, as well as in economic, social, and environmental development.	3.56	1.01	1.17	0.808	Agree
7	IMST .7	Commercial sponsorship in promoting and activating sports tourism increases the number of visitors and tourists, improves the market category, and boosts sales during sports events.	4.52	0.91	1.92	0.094	Totally agree
8	IMST .8	The size of sporting events in the Eastern Province encourages investors and sponsoring companies to invest in the field of sports tourism.	2.58	1.42	2.97	0.008	Disagree
9	IMST .9	Sports tourism activities in the Eastern Province are being utilized as an investment tourism product that contributes to generating economic impact development, social, and environmental benefits based on administrative organization.	2.49	1.39	2.59	0.709	Disagree
Average			3.48	0.86	0.83	0.872	Agree

Table 6 displays the high average agreement of the study sample with statements related to sustainable development. The responses ranged from (4.52) to (2.49), indicating strong agreement with specific statements. The study confirms the positive impact of sports tourism on sustainable development, in line with findings by Morfoulaki et al. (2023). In addition, cooperation between tourism and sports agencies is essential to ensure the success of a sports tourism destination, especially in countries with natural resources such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. If sports tourism is developed, it will contribute to achieving sustainable development. The second category of statements came from the responses of the study sample members, which is in agreement with statements 6, 5, and 3. The researchers attribute this to the fact that sports tourism can contribute to the national product and increase economic, social, and environmental activity as a result of the increase in events held in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia. Sports tourism constitutes an economic sector that attracts tourists without the need for complex commercial operations (Chadwick & Widdop, 2022; Rangkuti et al., 2024). Opportunities and future of sports tourism are one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry, but this must be taken into account in order to contribute to the better development of sports tourism by activating the areas qualified for it in a global context and as a tool for achieving sustainable development (Morfoulaki et al., 2023). The third category of phrases in the responses of the study sample individuals was neutral on phrases 2,1. The researchers attribute this to the fact that a set of new attraction elements must be applied to encourage tourists, visitors, and citizens to visit sports tourism destinations in the region by presenting and offering new events and sports activities that are different from what they are currently. It is possible to identify and achieve the opinions of citizens and visitors to convince them of the services provided to them, which prompts them to be keen on permanent attendance at all sports tourism events to achieve sustainable economic development. This is what the study agreed with IJspeert and Hernandez-Maskivker (2020). Researchers believe that a new system or mechanism should be put in place to encourage investment in sports tourism, expand the fields of sports tourism, and deepen the contribution of economic and societal awareness that is now evident in the promotion and development of sports tourism in all archaeological, natural, desert, mountainous, marine, beach, air, and nature reserve areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to ensure the current development of sports tourism destinations successfully by addressing different forces that affect the events held as follows.

- Determining the types of sports tourism events and planning for each type of sports event, as well as methods of organizing them, with the primary goal of highlighting the national heritage.
- Treating events as major projects with a beginning, specialized planning, precise implementation mechanisms, and professional monitoring methods, then ending with evaluation.
- Completing all previous stages through specialized experts by determining the appropriate time for the Saudi atmosphere and climate, distributing the costs, and identifying the risks and obstacles that can be avoided, as well as ensuring the quality of work.
- Benefiting from the Kingdom's capabilities in supporting sports tourism investment for promising opportunities and huge events.
- Enhancing national income by integrating private tourism sectors with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.
- Activating new sports tourism experiences, competitions, and festivals while enhancing the tourism environment in the Eastern Province and all regions of the Kingdom. Based on the discussion of the results shown in Table 6, the third research question can be interpreted as follows: How can investment management in sports tourism be activated to achieve sustainable development?

6. PROPOSED MODEL FOR MANAGING INVESTMENT IN SPORTS TOURISM

This study dealt with the important issue of managing investment in sports tourism, especially in a country with immense potential for investing in various sports tourism activities. The study emphasizes that the main purpose of managing such investments is to allocate resources in a way that achieves the goals of sustainable development in a manner compatible with the requirements of society and future generations. This is achieved through the proposed investment management model. It is consistent with the study (Rangkuti et al., 2024).

The experience in the management of tourism investment, in general, represents valuable experience in the growth of sports tourism, where the Kingdom enjoys the presence of some of the most attractive natural and cultural sites, including several sites that can form the infrastructure of sports tourism and promote it to take the position that matches its economic value (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The model suggests a set of organizing sports tourism investment activities, responsibilities, and workflows that align the interests and influence the behavior of the investment parties despite the presence of tensions between the cultural and environmental aspects on the one hand and the economic aspects on the other (Herbold et al., 2020). It is noted that the model proposes efforts to plan sports tourism investment through clear laws, regulations, goals, and performance measures to achieve the objectives in the

short and long term and possess the capacity and capabilities that assure the performance of these tasks in terms of staff and budget, and form appropriate administrative configurations and bureaucratic procedures to enhance efficiency and overcome the obstacles and challenges facing the growth of sports tourism that may hinder or obstruct the desired investments. It is consistent with the study (Laftah, 2024). The paper concludes with a set of recommendations.

6.1. Components of the Proposed Model

This model consists of three main components: regulations, strategies for development plans, and international competitiveness. These components identify the main sectors of relevance and specify the nature of the collective and required investment so that the sports tourism system contributes to achieving these requirements and directs them according to the rules and regulations, ways of cooperation, and priorities with which they are implemented. The proposed model demonstrates how these components work together to link the most important foundations of the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 that interest the adjacent sports tourism market, ensuring that sports tourism measures fulfill their obligation to advance economic development that meets the objective of creating a sustainable economy. It is consistent with the study (Mir & Kulibi, 2023).

Regarding regulation, Vision 2030 led to the publication of some laws and regulations that stimulate the flow of foreign direct investment and internal investment to enhance the role of the private sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the economic growth of the sports tourism sector, and the integration of the efforts of the government and private sector companies (Mir & Kulibi, 2023). Vision 2030 comprises restructuring the Public Investment Fund and granting it full powers as a sovereign fund to become the chief investment arm of the government. The fund has ambitious goals by 2030 and beyond, in addition to increasing spending on sports, entertainment, and other industries, greatly contributing to GDP. A law for the establishment of a sports city enhances the participation and attractiveness of Saudi Arabia for sports tourism, which was developed as a sports academy or any integrated sports complex that invests in sports, supports sports event management in all sports sectors, and achieves sports excellence. It is supported by Albuhlul (2022).

6.2. Implementation Strategies

A comprehensive plan to manage and develop sports tourism and investment in Saudi Arabia must be based on practical visions and objectives to ensure the success and sustainability of this nascent sector (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The importance of the proposed model for managing strategic sports tourism lies in its emphasis on the bold strategies and plans that it represents and adopts as a regulator of growth in the sports tourism industry through a concerted effort by several parties. These parties include the General Authority for Tourism and National Heritage and the Saudi Arabian General Sports Authority, which serve as the foundation for establishing sports tourism. Also included are the Ministry of Investment and other concerned parties such as the National Tourism and National Heritage Council, the Office of the General Supervisor of the Strategies and Policies Unit, the National Tourism Information Center, and other related parties who play an effective and pivotal role as supporters of the structure for the growth of sports tourism as part of the sustainability of this industry. It is supported by Sam (2023).

The model should organize the means and methods to establish a sports tourism product for both the economic and social benefits it provides to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which opens the door to the largest possible share of the private sector to enter this promising new sector, where the role of venture capital, digital marketing, pro, and the latest technologies gain the lion's share and support it Morfoulaki et al. (2023).

6.3. Expected Outcomes and Benefits

The expected results and benefits of the systematic collection refer to a structured approach designed to collect and analyze data that can benefit the decision-making process to enhance their understanding of sustainable

development trends in the tourism sector and make more informed decisions, ultimately leading to improved outcomes (Azmi & El Alaoui Ismaili, 2024). The main objectives are to guide and organize investment for national sustainable development in sports tourism through five proposals. First, it proposes employment in sports tourism to increase national productivity. Second, it proposes enrichment and development of expertise. Third, it proposes to increase public interest in sports tourism daily. Fourth, it proposes to increase the investment cycle and sustainability in sports tourism. Finally, the fifth proposal is to maximize the marginal return on sports tourism investment by managing the location, size, and type of investment (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

In conclusion, it can be said that, to date, studies analyzing the benefits of investment in sports tourism for stakeholders and implications for sustainable development have lacked a clear model to describe the relationship between the different elements that compose it and the effect of managing the link between the elements. In this research, the proposed framework suggests an open system cycle of athletes' employability and profit-enhancing investment in sports tourism that exploits the synergy between sports and tourism. The comprehensive system proposed can be used by stakeholders, including universities, companies, national federations, governments, and the media, who are interested in increasing the value of investment in sports tourism, identifying the key elements, and utilizing the systemic framework provided for structuring work in sports tourism.

6.4. Impact of Sports Tourism Investments on Sustainable Development

For Saudi Arabia, which has great investment capabilities, sports tourism is a new and unique area for investors. To turn Saudi Arabia into a sports-oriented tourist destination and make the best possible use of sports tourism to contribute to achieving sustainable development goals, it greatly requires activating the investment climate in which sports can be practiced and tourist attractions visited (Ibrahim et al., 2021). This involves developing outdoor activities, cultural and urban sports, sports cities, residential tourist cities, and mega projects that support sports tourism in general. These efforts aim to elevate the Arab identity to its rightful place and contribute to the advancement of Arab tourism (Albuhlul, 2022). The rise of fast-growing markets in sports and entertainment presents openings for large investment opportunities with significant economic value for investors in the coming years. Managing the investment process in sports tourism professionally and intensively requires careful planning and serious comprehensive actions to provide investment opportunities in a way that guarantees attracting qualitative investments that achieve high economic performance. It is supported by Khan (2020).

Figure 1 illustrates, Components of the proposed model For Managing Investment.

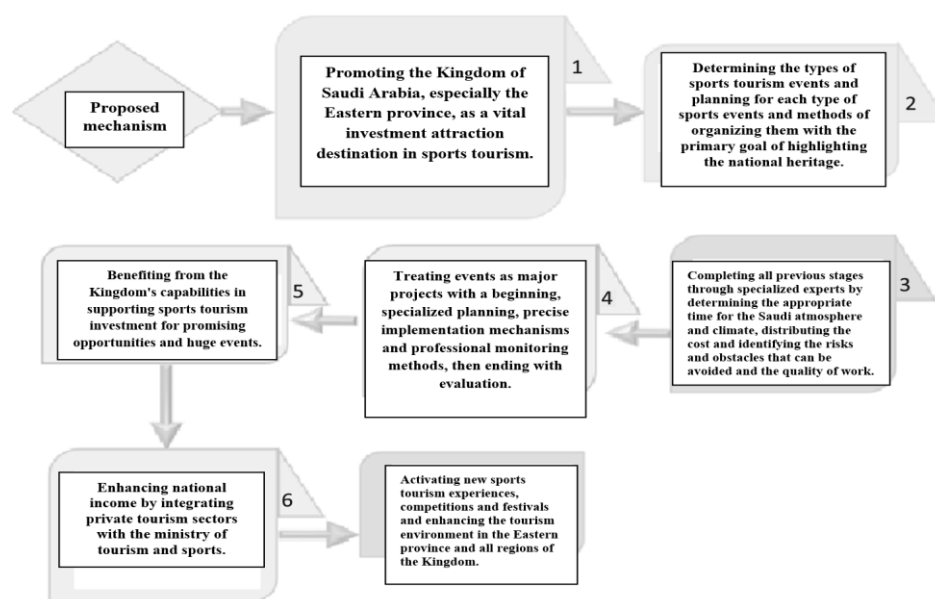


Figure 1. Components of the proposed model.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no doubt that investment in sports tourism is one of the outputs of the knowledge economy, which constitutes a source of economic growth for any country. It helps in discovering new destinations, attracting tourists to spend, and enhancing cooperation between various countries (Hassan & Hilaly, 2022). Taking into account the most important results reached by the study and its significance, KSA possesses various natural, economic, cultural, and environmental components that characterize its multiple tourism products. It also has a set of factors and elements that support sports tourism, such as organizing events and tournaments, infrastructure, tourism facilities, media, and satellite communication. However, the tourism product is still underdeveloped and does not meet the Kingdom's prospects concerning attracting tourists from all around the world, which makes it necessary to identify the investment model in sports tourism and its impact on sustainable development for creating the tourism product in the Kingdom. The study concluded that focusing on human and financial resources in the sports tourism sector and the sports economy, in general, could lead to a live renaissance by building a cultural tourism product that keeps pace with the ambitious plans of the Kingdom and the government for Vision 2030 (Khan, 2020). In addition to these ambitious aspirations and Vision 2030 for the sports tourism industry, which is being promoted by a large number of countries all over the world, these recommendations represent a proposal for constructing a creative environment that encourages all age groups to engage in sports activities to increase awareness of the benefits of sport and its significant role in building and developing healthy and sustainable economies. This way, we can coordinate with all components of society and elevate its standards while enabling the sports industry to reach the most remarkable point of economics (Albuhlul, 2022; Rangkuti et al., 2024).

Significant contributions are made by this study to attempt to fill the research gap about the presence of coordination and interaction between sectors, including the influence of international stakeholders in creating the most appropriate management model for sports tourism in Saudi Arabia and also how to manage and promote sports tourism in the selected country.

Sports tourists are usually less interested in history, cultural heritage, or even adequate recreation facilities and environmental attributes; the excitement of sports events or activities becomes significant and most desirable among sports visitors (Khan, 2020). As expected, the presence of sports events and the combination of other leisure purposes with sports activities in building sports tourism products were identified as gaps in the identification of tourism products, as well as consumer assessment of the tourism resources that have the potential to be used in Saudi Arabia.

This study argues that the partnership between both the public and private sectors is established due to the significant role that both play in sports tourism investment. Hence, the study proposes the following policy recommendations that are likely to help decision-makers in both sectors benefit from sports tourism opportunities and manage them effectively. The first on the list of policy recommendations is the provision of adequate strategies to elevate the appeal of Saudi Arabia as a tourist destination. These strategies can be well thought out and actualized by creating an exceptional brand identity, enhancing Saudi tourism information globally, and creating special events and sports facilities. It is crucial to use a well-devised Global Sports Index to identify and evaluate the attractiveness of sports tourism markets and to automatically mix a variety of attractive sports in diversified regions. Moreover, designing attractive tourism programs gives tourists a special sense of place and connects them to the environment. The tourism programs should contain different forms of activities in various regions to ensure interest among many tourists. The Kingdom's plan and strategy to promote transnational tourism and the development of the surrounding infrastructure, which will lead to faster growth in tourism development, must be adhered to (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Albuhlul, 2022; Khan, 2020).

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Highlighting Future Research Directions Based on the findings of the previous study, we note several gaps and directions that future research can pursue. Specifically, our research offers theoretical and practical development in

the area of sports tourism, a field neglected by current literature. We provide an empirical test of a model for evaluating investment in sports events and its impact on both potential and actual sports tourists' behaviors. Nevertheless, several limitations are present, and future research is encouraged to bridge significant gaps. First, we explored sports tourism in general and did not distinguish between different sports events held in one particular destination. Therefore, the effects of different sports events on the perception of that host destination are potential areas for future research. Second, we indicated that the most important factor is the way investments are managed. This is essential, but it is also important to investigate which investments and management strategies are the most appropriate for different sports tourism. Third, the flow in the direction of the model has its limits as well. The model runs from investment management to destination attractiveness, potential tourists' behavior, and then to actual tourists' behavior. We assume that each part has a direct and positive effect on the next part, but we do not investigate or look for potential bidirectional relationships. Therefore, this is another direction that can or should be taken into consideration. A fourth limitation can be found in the way organizational and execution investments are measured. According to our proposed theoretical model, we suppose that these types of investments, or factors, are static and unchangeable. However, it is important to determine which factors within these two inputs are most important or which can be considered a type of high-quality input or low-quality input. With inputs in hand, different management strategies could be defined.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire.

Variables	Measurement items	Reference
The current investment management practices in sports tourism in Saudi Arabia – IMP		
IMP.1	The Ministry of Sport in Saudi Arabia adopts strategies of administrative professionalism for investment in sports tourism, which contributes to achieving sustainable economic growth.	Rangkuti et al. (2024)
IMP .2	The Ministry of Tourism in Saudi Arabia provides services that lack administrative organization for tourist sporting events, based on the opinions of tourists during their visits to tourist sites.	
IMP .3	The strategic objectives of the ministries of tourism and sports Saudi include elements of attraction for visiting destinations sports tourism events.	
IMP .4	The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Saudi Arabia provides appropriate advertising media and media coverage for all recreational sports tourism events at their designated times and locations.	
IMP .5	The tourist sites in Saudi Arabia are fully utilized, taking into account all age groups and determining the marketing category based on administrative regulations for the sporting event being held.	
IMP.6	The ministries of tourism and sports provide professional administrative arrangements for all sports tourism events in line with the expectations and aspirations of citizens, visitors and tourists.	
IMP.7	Sports tourism activities take full advantage of the tourist flow of visitors to the sites where they are held.	
IMP.8	The ministries of tourism and sports work to promote sports tourism events and activities and provide everyone with information and data that interests them.	
IMP.9	The ministries of tourism and sports follow up on the development of general administrative policies for investment in sports tourism events based on the desires of citizens, visitors, and tourists.	González-García et al. (2022)
Components of investment in sports tourism for Eastern region ((KSA) - IMC)		
1- Natural ingredients		
IMC – N I	N I.1 - Sports tourism events highlight the natural assets of the Kingdom by creating an interactive tourism style that suits the needs and desires of visitors.	Morfoulaki et al. (2023)
	N I .2 – The ministries of sports and tourism are attracting the attention of tourists to the spread of sports tourism, which depends mainly on natural resources and components distribute sports events according to the weather, climate, and geographical nature.	
2- Human resources		

Variables	Measurement items	Reference
IMC -H R	H R. 1- The ministries of tourism and sports provide their employees with all the information they give to visitors and tourists about the various tourist sites and sports held.	Morfoulaki et al. (2023)
	H R. 2- Young people are trained to become qualified for work in sports tourism events empower qualified and provide job opportunities in the field.	
3- Climatic components		
IMC -C C	C C. 1- Sporting events held in the Eastern Province attract visitors to enjoy the natural and climatic	Tsekouropoulos, Gkouna, Theocharis, and Gounas (2022)
	C C. 2- The ministries of tourism and sports encourage sports practice at times appropriate to climate change that meet the aspirations of citizens, residents, tourists, and visitors.	
4- Material components		
IMC-M C	M C. 1- Sports tourism activities increase the marketing value and national income in Saudi Arabia.	Aldulaimi et al. (2023)
	M C. 2- Sports tourism activities held in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia represent attractions that must be supported to bring about a shift and prosperity in the tourism and sports sectors, achieving good financial income for the national economic product.	
5- Cultural components		
IMC -C C	C C. 1- Advertising and publicity contribute to the preparation and publication of electronic and television bulletins about sporting events.	Moradi et al. (2023)
	C C. 2- Sales promotion helps promote sporting events to citizens, visitors, residents, and tourists.	
6- Administrative components		
IMC -A C	A C. 1- Good selection of human resources within the management of sports events is one of the most important reasons for the success of the organization process in sports events.	Matarese et al. (2024)
	A C. 2- Public relations, conscious management, and direct marketing help in building an effective audience of foreign tourists and participants in sporting events.	
The most prominent sports tourism events in the Eastern province ((KSA)-STE)		
1- Shooting (Retaliation)		
STE -S R	SR .1 - Shooting and hunting activities in the Eastern Province achieve tourist attractions compatible with sustainable development goals	Matarese et al. (2024)
	SR .2 – There is an active plan to hold shooting and hunting events in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	SR .3 – Shooting and hunting activities achieve the desired economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
2- Horse riding and equestrian		
STE -H R E	H R E. 1- Check out the horse events riding and equestrian in the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	Matarese et al. (2024)
	H R E. 2- There is an active plan to hold Horse events. Riding and equestrian In the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	H R E. 3- Check out the horse events riding and equestrian the expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
3- Camels		
STE -C	C. 1- Check out the Camels events In the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	Matarese et al. (2024)
	C. 2- There is an active plan to hold Camels events. In the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	C. 3- Check out the camel events expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
4- Sand sports and the mountains		
STE –S S M	SSM. 1- Check out the sand events and mountain sports In the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the objectives.	Matarese et al. (2024)
	SSM. 2- There is an active plan to hold Sand events. And mountain sports In the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	

Variables	Measurement items	Reference
	SSM. 3- Check out the sand events and mountain sports The expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
5- Sea games		
STE -S G	SG. 1- Check out the sea events games In the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	Sam (2023)
	SG. 2- There is an active plan to hold sea events and games In the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	SG. 3- Check out the sea events games expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
6- Car and bike racing (Rally)		
STE -C B R	C B R. 1- Car and bike events in the Eastern Province achieve tourism attractions compatible with the objectives.	Sam (2023)
	C B R. 2- There is an active plan to hold events. Cars and bicycles the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	C B R. 3- Check out the car and bicycle events expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
7- skydiving		
STE -S	S. 1- Check out the skydiving In the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	Matarese et al. (2024)
	S. 2- There is an active plan to hold Skydiving events. In the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	S. 3- Check out the events of skydiving the expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
8- Paragliding (balloon ride)		
STE -P (B R)	P (B R). 1- Check out the Paragliding events In the Eastern Province, tourist attractions compatible with the goals.	Sam (2023)
	P (B R). 2- There is an active plan to hold Paragliding events. In the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	
	P (B R). 3- Check out the Paragliding events the expected economic, social, and environmental flows and returns.	
Mechanisms for activating investment management in sports tourism to achieve sustainable development in the Eastern Province (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) – IMST.		
IMST .1	Sports tourism activities in the Eastern Province contribute to the creation of renewable sources of income.	Mir and Kulibi (2023)
IMST .2	Investing in sports tourism attracts investors, tourists, and visitors.	
IMST .3	The ministries of tourism and sports adopt strategies that contribute to achieving economic Social and environmental growth.	
IMST .4	Investing in sports tourism brings greater economic income to Saudi companies.	
IMST .5	Investing in sports tourism contributes to improving the standard of living for individuals.	
IMST .6	Sports tourism in the Eastern Province plays an important role in investing in the tourist flow to event sites at the local and international levels and economic, Social, and environmental development.	
IMST .7	Commercial sponsorship in promoting and activating sports tourism increases the number of visitors and tourists, improves the market category, and boosts sales during sports events.	
IMST .8	The size of sporting events in the Eastern Province encourages investors and sponsoring companies to invest in the field of sports tourism.	
IMST .9	Sports tourism activities in the Eastern Province are being utilized as an investment tourism product that contributes to generating economic impact development. Social and environmental factors are based on administrative organization.	

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