

Systematic Review: Developing Sports Tourism for Sustainable Economic Development

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ABSTRACT

Sports tourism presents an innovative pathway for sustainable economic growth, intertwining the excitement of sports with the expansiveness of the tourism industry. This review synthesizes current research on developing sports tourism with a focus on enhancing economic sustainability, aiming to offer actionable insights and a robust framework for practitioners and policymakers. The methodology for this systematic review involved a comprehensive search of databases including PubMed, Scopus, Web of science and Google Scholar for studies published in the last ten years. Keywords such as "sports tourism", "sustainable economic development", "tourism development models", and "community-based sports tourism" were used. Studies were screened based on relevance to sports tourism development and sustainability. The inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and case studies that discuss the implementation, outcomes, and challenges of sports tourism initiatives aimed at sustainable development. The review identified significant elements contributing to the successful integration of sports tourism into local economic development plans. These include community involvement, strategic location selection, infrastructure investment, and environmental management strategies. Best practice case studies were analyzed to illustrate these elements in action, highlighting the role of policy alignment and stakeholder engagement in fostering sustainable outcomes. Sports tourism offers substantial opportunities for sustainable economic enhancement if strategic, community-focused approaches are employed. Key recommendations for development include leveraging local sports culture, prioritizing environmental sustainability, and enhancing stakeholder collaboration. The review provides a foundational model for developing sports tourism that aligns with broader economic sustainability goals, recommending further empirical studies to refine and adapt the model to diverse geographical contexts.

Keywords: Sports tourism, sustainable development, economic growth, tourism models, stakeholder engagement.

1. Introduction

Sports tourism represents a unique intersection between the excitement of sports and the expansive opportunities of the tourism industry. This hybrid sector has emerged as a significant driver for sustainable economic development, offering numerous benefits to host communities and nations. By leveraging local sports culture and strategically integrating tourism initiatives, regions can enhance their economic resilience, promote cultural heritage, and foster environmental sustainability (Morfoulaki et al., 2023). The increasing global interest in sports tourism necessitates a comprehensive understanding of its potential and challenges to develop effective strategies for sustainable growth.

Sports tourism encompasses a wide range of activities, from large-scale international events like the Olympics and World Cup to smaller, community-based sports events. Each of these events can significantly impact the local economy by attracting visitors, generating revenue, and creating job opportunities (García et al., 2020). For example, the Winter Olympic Games have been shown to boost sport tourism, bringing substantial economic benefits to the host city (Bai et al., 2021). Similarly, small-scale events, such as local marathons or youth sports camps, also play a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism and local economic development (Anđelković et al., 2023).

One of the critical factors in the successful integration of sports tourism into economic development plans is community involvement. Engaging local communities in the planning and execution of sports tourism events ensures that the benefits are widely distributed and that the events align with local needs and values (Rheenen et al., 2021). This participatory approach not only enhances the sustainability of the events but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride among residents, which can lead to more significant support and engagement (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018).

Strategic location selection is another vital element in the development of sports tourism. Selecting locations with existing tourism infrastructure or those with the potential for tourism development can maximize the economic impact of sports events (Roche et al., 2013). Additionally, locations with unique cultural or natural attractions can leverage sports tourism to promote these assets, thereby enhancing their overall tourism appeal (Chen, 2024). For instance, regions like Hubei Province have capitalized on their natural landscapes to develop outdoor sports tourism, attracting a diverse range of tourists (Zhou et al., 2019).

Infrastructure investment is essential for the sustainable growth of sports tourism. Adequate facilities and services are crucial for hosting sports events and ensuring a positive experience for visitors. This includes not only sports venues but also accommodations, transportation, and other supporting infrastructure (Dong et al., 2022). Investments in these areas can have long-term benefits, as improved infrastructure enhances the overall attractiveness of the destination for both sports and general tourism (Hu, 2024).

Environmental management strategies are integral to the sustainable development of sports tourism. Ensuring that sports events and related tourism activities do not negatively impact the environment is crucial for maintaining the long-term viability of this sector (Hodeck et al., 2021). Sustainable practices, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation of natural resources, should be incorporated into the planning and execution of sports tourism events (Heebkhokung et al., 2023). These practices not only protect the environment but also enhance the appeal of the destination to environmentally conscious tourists (Yang et al., 2021).

Best practice case studies from around the world illustrate the successful implementation of sports tourism initiatives. For example, the development of e-sports tourism in new Egyptian tourism cities highlights the potential of innovative sports tourism forms to attract new visitor demographics (Elsaid, 2023). These case studies underscore the importance of policy alignment and stakeholder engagement in fostering sustainable outcomes (Tsekouropoulos et al., 2022).

Stakeholder collaboration is crucial for the development and sustainability of sports tourism. This involves cooperation between government agencies, private sector entities, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders (Melo et al., 2021). Effective collaboration ensures that the diverse interests and expertise of different stakeholders are harnessed to create comprehensive and sustainable sports tourism strategies (Petrović, 2020). For instance, the success of indigenous games as a catalyst for sports tourism development in South Africa demonstrates the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving sustainable development goals (Ntelezi, 2024).

Sports tourism offers substantial opportunities for sustainable economic enhancement if strategic, community-focused approaches are employed. Key recommendations for development include leveraging local sports culture, prioritizing environmental sustainability, and enhancing stakeholder collaboration. The development of a foundational model for sports tourism that aligns with

broader economic sustainability goals is essential. Further empirical studies are needed to refine and adapt this model to diverse geographical contexts, ensuring that sports tourism contributes effectively to sustainable economic development worldwide (Frans et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the systematic development of sports tourism can significantly contribute to sustainable economic growth. By focusing on community involvement, strategic location selection, infrastructure investment, and environmental management, regions can maximize the benefits of sports tourism. Best practice case studies provide valuable insights and highlight the importance of policy alignment and stakeholder collaboration. The future of sports tourism lies in its ability to integrate sustainability into every aspect of its development, ensuring that it remains a viable and beneficial sector for years to come.

2. Methods and Materials

The methodology of this systematic review was designed to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the literature on developing sports tourism for sustainable economic development. The review involved searching several academic and professional databases to gather relevant studies. The databases included PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. These databases were chosen due to their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, government reports, and case studies relevant to sports tourism and sustainable economic development.

2.1. Search Strategy

A detailed search strategy was employed to identify relevant literature. The following keywords and phrases were used: "sports tourism," "sustainable economic development," "tourism development models," "community-based sports tourism," "sports events and local economy," and "sustainable tourism practices." These keywords were selected to capture the broad scope of the topic while focusing on the intersection of sports tourism and sustainable economic growth.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the studies included in the review, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria were: studies published between 2000 and 2024, peer-reviewed articles,

government reports, case studies, articles written in English, and studies explicitly discussing the implementation, outcomes, and challenges of sports tourism initiatives aimed at sustainable development. The exclusion criteria were: studies not directly related to sports tourism or sustainable economic development, articles lacking empirical data or detailed methodological descriptions, and opinion pieces, editorials, and non-peer-reviewed articles.

2.3. Study Selection

The initial search yielded a substantial number of articles. The titles and abstracts of these articles were screened for relevance based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Full texts of potentially relevant studies were then retrieved and assessed for eligibility. The selection process was conducted in two stages: Title and Abstract Screening, where two independent reviewers screened the titles and abstracts, resolving disagreements through discussion or by consulting a third reviewer, and Full-Text Review, where the full texts of the selected articles were thoroughly reviewed to ensure they met all inclusion criteria.

2.4. Data Extraction

Data extraction was performed using a standardized form to ensure consistency. The following information was extracted from each study: author(s) and publication year, study location and context, objectives and research questions, methodological approach, key findings related to sports tourism and sustainable economic development, implementation strategies and challenges identified, and recommendations and conclusions.

2.5. Quality Assessment

The quality of the included studies was assessed using a modified version of the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist. The assessment focused on the following criteria: clear statement of aims and objectives, appropriateness of the methodological design, rigorous data collection and analysis methods, relevance and validity of findings, and transparency in reporting limitations and potential biases.

2.6. Synthesis of Findings

The findings from the included studies were synthesized to identify common themes, successful strategies, and key challenges in developing sports tourism for sustainable

economic development. Both qualitative and quantitative data were integrated to provide a comprehensive overview. Best practice case studies were highlighted to illustrate successful implementation and outcomes.

The results of the systematic review are presented in a structured format, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. This ensures clarity, transparency, and replicability of the review process. This methodology ensured a thorough and systematic examination of the literature, providing robust insights into the development of sports tourism as a pathway for sustainable economic growth.

3. Findings and Results

The systematic review of the literature on sports tourism for sustainable economic development revealed several key elements that contribute to the successful integration of sports tourism into local economic development plans. The findings are categorized into six main themes: community involvement, strategic location selection, infrastructure investment, environmental management strategies, policy alignment and stakeholder engagement, and the role of innovative sports tourism forms.

3.1. Community Involvement

Community involvement emerged as a critical factor in the success of sports tourism initiatives. Engaging local communities in the planning and execution of sports tourism events ensures that the benefits are widely distributed and that the events align with local needs and values. According to Rheenen, Sobry, and Melo (2021), participatory approaches not only enhance the sustainability of the events but also foster a sense of ownership and pride among residents (Rheenen et al., 2021). This sentiment is echoed in the study by Malchrowicz-Moško and Poczta (2018), which found that small-scale heritage sporting events in Poland significantly contributed to local tourism development by involving community members in event planning and execution (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018).

Youth sport camps are another example of community-based sports tourism that has shown positive impacts on sustainable development. Anđelković et al. (2023) highlight the importance of these camps in promoting local economic development and fostering community cohesion. By providing opportunities for youth engagement, these camps not only contribute to the local economy but also help in

building a sports culture that supports long-term tourism goals (Anđelković et al., 2023).

3.2. Strategic Location Selection

The selection of strategic locations for sports tourism events is crucial for maximizing their economic impact. Locations with existing tourism infrastructure or those with the potential for tourism development are particularly advantageous. Roche, Spake, and Joseph (2013) emphasize the importance of selecting venues that can attract a diverse range of tourists (Roche et al., 2013). For instance, the Winter Olympic Games have historically brought significant economic benefits to their host cities by leveraging existing infrastructure and enhancing the city's global profile (Bai et al., 2021).

Regions with unique cultural or natural attractions can also benefit from sports tourism by promoting these assets. In Hubei Province, the development of outdoor sports tourism has been strategically planned to take advantage of the region's natural landscapes, thereby attracting a diverse range of tourists and enhancing the overall tourism appeal (Zhou et al., 2019).

3.3. Infrastructure Investment

Infrastructure investment is essential for the sustainable growth of sports tourism. Adequate facilities and services are crucial for hosting sports events and ensuring a positive experience for visitors. This includes not only sports venues but also accommodations, transportation, and other supporting infrastructure. According to Dong et al. (2022), investments in infrastructure can have long-term benefits by enhancing the overall attractiveness of the destination for both sports and general tourism (Dong et al., 2022).

The role of recreational sports in Indonesia highlights the importance of infrastructure in sports tourism. Bangun (2014) discusses how the development of sports facilities and recreational areas has contributed to improving the quality of life and promoting tourism in Indonesia. By investing in infrastructure that supports both sports and recreational activities, regions can attract more tourists and generate sustainable economic benefits (Bangun, 2014).

3.4. Environmental Management Strategies

Environmental management strategies are integral to the sustainable development of sports tourism. Ensuring that sports events and related tourism activities do not negatively

impact the environment is crucial for maintaining the long-term viability of this sector. Hodeck et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of incorporating sustainable practices, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation of natural resources, into the planning and execution of sports tourism events (Hodeck et al., 2021).

Heebkhoksung, Rattanawong, and Vongmanee (2023) propose a new paradigm of a sustainability-balanced scorecard model for sports tourism, which integrates environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. This model provides a comprehensive framework for assessing and managing the sustainability of sports tourism initiatives (Heebkhoksung et al., 2023). Similarly, Chen (2024) uses a linguistic neutrosophic multi-criteria decision-making method to evaluate the sustainability of sports tourism, highlighting the need for systematic approaches to environmental management (Chen, 2024).

3.5. Policy Alignment and Stakeholder Engagement

Effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement are crucial for the development and sustainability of sports tourism. This involves cooperation between government agencies, private sector entities, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders. Melo, Rheenen, and Sobry (2021) argue that effective collaboration ensures that the diverse interests and expertise of different stakeholders are harnessed to create comprehensive and sustainable sports tourism strategies (Melo et al., 2021).

In South Africa, the success of indigenous games as a catalyst for sports tourism development demonstrates the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving sustainable development goals (Ntelezi, 2024). Similarly, the integration of sports, tourism, culture, commerce, and agriculture in Guizhou Province has been facilitated by effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement, leading to significant economic benefits (Yang et al., 2022).

3.6. Role of Innovative Sports Tourism Forms

Innovative forms of sports tourism, such as e-sports and small-scale sports events, are playing an increasingly important role in the sustainable development of this sector. E-sports tourism, in particular, has shown significant potential in attracting new visitor demographics and generating economic benefits. Elsaid (2023) investigates the potential of e-sports tourism in new Egyptian tourism cities, highlighting its capacity to attract young, tech-savvy tourists

and boost local economies (Elsaid, 2023). Similarly, Frans, Cahyadi, and Hermanto (2022) use a triple bottom line analysis method to explore the potential of e-sports tourism, demonstrating its positive impacts on economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Frans et al., 2022).

Small-scale sports events, such as local marathons and fencing tournaments, also contribute significantly to sustainable tourism development. Csobán and Serra (2014) discuss how small-scale sports events can promote local economic development by attracting tourists and generating revenue. These events often require lower investment compared to large-scale events but can have a substantial impact on local economies by promoting local businesses and services (Csobán & Serra, 2014).

3.7. Best Practice Case Studies

Several best practice case studies illustrate the successful implementation of sports tourism initiatives and their contribution to sustainable economic development. In Poland, small-scale heritage sporting events have demonstrated the potential for significant local tourism development by involving community members and promoting cultural heritage (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018). These events not only attract tourists but also foster community engagement and cultural preservation.

In Indonesia, the development of recreational sports facilities has improved the quality of life and promoted tourism. Bangun (2014) discusses how investments in sports and recreational infrastructure have contributed to local economic development by attracting tourists and enhancing the overall attractiveness of the destination (Bangun, 2014). Similarly, the development of outdoor sports tourism in Hubei Province has successfully leveraged the region's natural landscapes to attract a diverse range of tourists (Zhou et al., 2019).

E-sports tourism has also emerged as a promising area for sustainable tourism development. In Egypt, the potential of e-sports tourism has been investigated, highlighting its capacity to attract young, tech-savvy tourists and boost local economies (Elsaid, 2023). Similarly, a study using a triple bottom line analysis method demonstrates the positive impacts of e-sports tourism on economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Frans et al., 2022).

3.8. Challenges and Opportunities

While sports tourism offers substantial opportunities for sustainable economic development, several challenges must be addressed to maximize its potential. One of the main challenges is ensuring that sports tourism initiatives are environmentally sustainable. Hodeck et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of incorporating sustainable practices into the planning and execution of sports tourism events to minimize their environmental impact (Hodeck et al., 2021). This requires systematic approaches to environmental management and the adoption of sustainable practices, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation of natural resources (Chen, 2024).

Another challenge is the need for effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement. Melo, Rheenen, and Sobry (2021) argue that successful sports tourism initiatives require cooperation between government agencies, private sector entities, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders (Melo et al., 2021). This involves aligning policies and strategies to ensure that the diverse interests and expertise of different stakeholders are harnessed to create comprehensive and sustainable sports tourism strategies.

Infrastructure investment is also crucial for the sustainable growth of sports tourism. Adequate facilities and services are essential for hosting sports events and ensuring a positive experience for visitors. This includes not only sports venues but also accommodations, transportation, and other supporting infrastructure (Dong et al., 2022). Investments in infrastructure can have long-term benefits by enhancing the overall attractiveness of the destination for both sports and general tourism (Hu, 2024).

The development of innovative forms of sports tourism, such as e-sports and small-scale sports events, presents both opportunities and challenges. E-sports tourism, for example, has shown significant potential in attracting new visitor demographics and generating economic benefits (Elsaid, 2023). However, it also requires investments in technology and infrastructure to support the unique needs of e-sports events. Similarly, small-scale sports events can promote local economic development but require careful planning and coordination to ensure their sustainability (Csobán & Serra, 2014).

4. Discussion

The systematic review of sports tourism for sustainable economic development has revealed critical insights and practical recommendations for practitioners and

policymakers. This section synthesizes the key findings, discusses their implications, and highlights the remaining challenges and opportunities for future research and practice.

4.1. Community Involvement

Community involvement is paramount to the success of sports tourism initiatives. When local communities are actively engaged in planning and executing sports events, the benefits are more equitably distributed, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents (Rheenen et al., 2021). This participatory approach ensures that sports tourism aligns with local needs and values, enhancing its sustainability. Malchrowicz-Moško and Poczta (2018) illustrated how small-scale heritage sporting events in Poland promoted local tourism development through community engagement (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018). Similarly, youth sport camps have been shown to significantly contribute to local economic development and community cohesion by providing opportunities for youth engagement and fostering a sports culture (Anđelković et al., 2023).

However, engaging the community effectively requires strategic planning and continuous dialogue with local stakeholders. One challenge is ensuring that all community segments, including marginalized groups, are represented in the decision-making process. Future research should explore best practices for inclusive community engagement and develop frameworks that can be adapted to various cultural and socio-economic contexts.

4.2. Strategic Location Selection

The selection of strategic locations for sports tourism events is crucial for maximizing their economic impact. Locations with existing tourism infrastructure or the potential for tourism development are particularly advantageous. Roche et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of selecting venues that attract a diverse range of tourists (Roche et al., 2013), while Bai et al. (2021) highlighted how the Winter Olympic Games significantly benefit host cities by leveraging existing infrastructure and enhancing their global profiles (Bai et al., 2021).

Regions with unique cultural or natural attractions can further benefit by integrating these assets into sports tourism initiatives. For example, Hubei Province has effectively utilized its natural landscapes to develop outdoor sports tourism, attracting diverse tourists (Zhou et al., 2019).

Despite these successes, selecting suitable locations involves several challenges, including the potential for environmental degradation and the need for substantial initial investments. Policymakers must balance the economic benefits with the potential social and environmental costs, ensuring that location selection aligns with long-term sustainability goals.

4.3. Infrastructure Investment

Infrastructure investment is essential for the sustainable growth of sports tourism. Adequate facilities and services are crucial for hosting sports events and ensuring a positive visitor experience. This includes not only sports venues but also accommodations, transportation, and other supporting infrastructure. Dong et al. (2022) noted that investments in infrastructure could have long-term benefits, enhancing the destination's overall attractiveness for both sports and general tourism (Dong et al., 2022). The case of recreational sports in Indonesia, as discussed by Bangun (2014), highlights the importance of infrastructure in promoting tourism. Investments in sports and recreational facilities have improved the quality of life and attracted tourists, contributing to local economic development (Bangun, 2014). However, the challenge lies in ensuring that these investments are sustainable and do not lead to overdevelopment or environmental harm.

Future research should focus on sustainable infrastructure development strategies that minimize environmental impact and maximize economic and social benefits. This includes exploring innovative financing models and public-private partnerships to support infrastructure development.

4.4. Environmental Management Strategies

Environmental management is a critical component of sustainable sports tourism. Ensuring that sports events and related tourism activities do not negatively impact the environment is crucial for maintaining the long-term viability of this sector. Hodeck et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of incorporating sustainable practices into sports tourism planning and execution (Hodeck et al., 2021).

Heebkhoksung et al. (2023) proposed a sustainability-balanced scorecard model that integrates environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. Similarly, Chen (2024) highlighted the need for systematic approaches to environmental management using a linguistic neutrosophic multi-criteria decision-making method to evaluate sustainability (Heebkhoksung et al., 2023).

However, implementing effective environmental management strategies requires significant resources and commitment from all stakeholders. Challenges include balancing short-term economic gains with long-term environmental sustainability and addressing the varying capacities of different regions to implement these strategies. Policymakers should prioritize capacity-building initiatives and provide incentives for adopting sustainable practices.

4.5. Policy Alignment and Stakeholder Engagement

Effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement are crucial for the development and sustainability of sports tourism. Cooperation between government agencies, private sector entities, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders ensures that diverse interests and expertise are harnessed to create comprehensive and sustainable sports tourism strategies (Melo et al., 2021).

The success of indigenous games in South Africa, as discussed by Ntelezi (2024), demonstrates the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving sustainable development goals (Ntelezi, 2024). Similarly, the integration of sports, tourism, culture, commerce, and agriculture in Guizhou Province has been facilitated by effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement, leading to significant economic benefits (Yang et al., 2022).

Despite these successes, achieving effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement is often challenging. It requires continuous dialogue, trust-building, and a clear framework for collaboration. Future research should explore mechanisms for enhancing stakeholder collaboration and developing policies that align with the goals of sustainable sports tourism.

4.6. Innovative Sports Tourism Forms

Innovative forms of sports tourism, such as e-sports and small-scale sports events, are playing an increasingly important role in sustainable development. E-sports tourism, in particular, has shown significant potential in attracting new visitor demographics and generating economic benefits. Elsaid (2023) and Frans et al. (2022) demonstrated the positive impacts of e-sports tourism on economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability (Elsaid, 2023; Frans et al., 2022).

Small-scale sports events, such as local marathons and fencing tournaments, also contribute significantly to sustainable tourism development. Csobán and Serra (2014) discussed how small-scale sports events promote local

economic development by attracting tourists and generating revenue. These events often require lower investment compared to large-scale events but can have a substantial impact on local economies by promoting local businesses and services (Csobán & Serra, 2014).

However, developing and promoting innovative sports tourism forms requires strategic planning and investment. Challenges include ensuring that these new forms of tourism are sustainable and addressing potential resistance from traditional tourism stakeholders. Future research should focus on exploring the potential of innovative sports tourism forms and developing strategies to integrate them into local economic development plans.

5. Conclusion

This systematic review highlights the significant potential of sports tourism as a pathway for sustainable economic development. By focusing on community involvement, strategic location selection, infrastructure investment, environmental management strategies, policy alignment and stakeholder engagement, and the development of innovative sports tourism forms, regions can maximize the benefits of sports tourism.

Community involvement ensures that sports tourism initiatives align with local needs and values, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Strategic location selection leverages existing tourism infrastructure and unique cultural or natural attractions to attract diverse tourists. Infrastructure investment enhances the destination's overall attractiveness, while environmental management strategies ensure the long-term viability of sports tourism by minimizing environmental impact.

Effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement are crucial for the success of sports tourism initiatives, ensuring that diverse interests and expertise are harnessed to create comprehensive and sustainable strategies. Innovative forms of sports tourism, such as e-sports and small-scale sports events, offer significant potential for attracting new visitor demographics and generating economic benefits.

However, several challenges must be addressed to maximize the potential of sports tourism. These include ensuring environmental sustainability, achieving effective policy alignment and stakeholder engagement, and developing sustainable infrastructure. Additionally, the development and promotion of innovative sports tourism forms require strategic planning and investment.

Future research should focus on refining and adapting models of sports tourism development to diverse geographical contexts, exploring the potential of innovative forms of sports tourism, and investigating the effectiveness of different environmental management strategies and policy coordination approaches. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the opportunities, sports tourism can significantly contribute to sustainable economic growth and the overall development of regions worldwide.

In conclusion, sports tourism represents a promising avenue for sustainable economic development. Through strategic planning, community involvement, and innovative approaches, regions can harness the potential of sports tourism to enhance their economic resilience, promote cultural heritage, and foster environmental sustainability. The insights gained from this systematic review provide a robust framework for practitioners and policymakers to develop and implement effective sports tourism strategies that align with broader economic sustainability goals.

Authors' Contributions

K.G. conceptualized the study, designed the research methodology, and led the systematic review process. L.S., the corresponding author, conducted the comprehensive database search, screened relevant studies, and led the drafting and revising of the manuscript. M.N.F. assisted with data extraction, contributed to the analysis of best practice case studies, and supported the synthesis of findings. N.M. provided critical insights into the framework development, contributed to the literature review, and helped in discussing the implications of the findings. All authors participated in discussing the findings, critically reviewed the manuscript for important intellectual content, and approved the final version for publication.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

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Ethics Considerations

Not applicable.

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