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Greasing the Wheels for Sport Tourism: Key Success Factors for Participants at the 2019 Cape Town Cycle Tour

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Abstract

This study considered the key success factors (KSFs) for participants in sport tourism events, with a specific focus on the views of participants of the Cape Town Cycle Tour (CTCT). Adopting a quantitative approach and utilising systematic sampling, *n*=598 cyclists were sampled in both the mountain biking (*n*=218) and the road cycling (*n*=380) categories, through self-administered questionnaires at event registration venues between February and March 2019. The data were analysed using SPSS via a factor analysis. Of the 49 identified elements, eight corresponding KSFs emerged. Key findings highlighted the non-homogenous nature of the respective participant groups and noted differences in the rating of four of the eight KSFs. While road cyclists were noted to be seekers of fully rounded event experience, mountain bikers preferred to participate in activities promoting exploration and adventure. Importantly, the study highlights that understanding KSFs might assist concerned stakeholders with stimulating sport tourism participation through the hosting of tailor-made events for participants who might be more selective in their desires when travelling and participating in sport events. Insights from the study should prove crucial in attracting both new and previous participants, particularly considering the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that significantly hampered participation at such events.

Keywords: Sport event tourism, Cape Town Cycling Tour, key success factors

Introduction

Tourism is a significant contributor to both socioeconomic and cultural development, globally (McCabe & Qian, 2020). Within the broader tourism ecosystem lies the niche area of sport tourism. In South Africa, sport tourism plays a crucial role in driving socio-economic development, with it having contributed 2.8% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 (South Africa, 2020). Sport events are considered as the most recognisable manifestations of sport tourism, in terms of which people travel as spectators or participants in sport (Bunning & Gibson, 2017; Getz & Page, 2016). As well as attracting participants, sport event tourism also attracts visitors and investors, to the economic benefit of a destination

(Fairley et al., 2016). Sport event tourism can also be effectively leveraged as a tool for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as it can bring about positive social and economic impacts toward the rejuvenation of South Africa. For such recovery to be realised, recovery strategies, frameworks and policies are required that are aimed at confirming the country's sustainability as a sport event tourism destination (Daniels & Tichaawa, 2021).

Event sport management is a complex process that involves studying the brand, identifying its target audience, devising the event concept, and coordinating the technical aspects prior to the launch of the actual event. Consequently, the managerial aspects that are required to host memorable events are determined by the type of sport event involved (Fotiadis, 2020; Kruger & Saayman, 2012). To ensure successful event planning and management, relevant key success factors (KSFs) must be considered and implemented (Marais et al., 2017). Considered by Slabbert and Saayman (2003) as those factors that most affect the ability of organisations to prosper in the marketplace, KSFs are often used as an essential strategy for positively influencing the performance of an organisation or an event (Coster et al., 2014). Such KSFs are especially important when managing the expectations of participants at a sport event, because a better understanding of such factors influencing participants' experiences and behaviours will allow sport tourism stakeholders to gain further knowledge of the needs and desires of participants, which is critical for the organisation of future events (Kruger & Saayman, 2012). The current study considered the KSFs of participants in sport tourism events, with a specific focus on the views of road cyclists and mountain bikers participating in the 2019 Cape Town Cycle Tour. Regarded as the biggest timed cycling race in the world, the CTCT consists of two divisions: a mountain bike leg and a road cycling leg (Giddy, 2019; Kruger et al., 2016).

Several studies have shown that cyclists are not homogeneous in nature, but that they have different motives for attending cycling events or competitions (European Cyclists' Federation, 2021; Füssl & Haupt, 2017; Kruger et al., 2016). As such, mountain bikers and road cyclists possess different expectations and consider different KSFs, even when participating in the same cycling event (Bunning & Gibson, 2016). The existing research focused on outlining and monitoring the success indicators for the visitors to, and the participants in, both international and local cycling events (Cserháti & Szabó, 2014; Kokolakis, 2018; Kruger & Saayman, 2012; Kruger et al., 2016). In an effort to extend the extant body of knowledge in this area, the current study sought to come to an understanding of the KSFs that are of importance to both mountain bikers and road cyclists. Insights from the study should prove to be crucial to attracting both new and previous participants, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has significantly decimated participation at cycling events, due to several pandemic-related health and safety concerns regarding exposure to the virus (Bazzanella et al., 2021). To this end, a literature review is presented in the present article, with the review's focus being on literature relating to sport event tourism, event management, the CTCT and the KSFs concerned. The literature review is followed by an explanation of the research methodology that was utilised in the study. The findings are then elaborated upon in the results and discussion section. The paper concludes with both the implications and the recommendations of the study, after which the related research limitations are outlined, and further areas of research are highlighted.

Literature review

Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, sporting events provided an opportunity for both tourists and locals to travel around the world (Proos & Haarhoff, 2018). However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly hampered participation in sporting events generally and cycling events specifically (Bazzanella et al., 2021). Thus, the industry is in the process of trying to

recover from the negative impacts of the pandemic prior to which the sector had demonstrated rapid growth (Bama & Nyikana, 2021; McKay et al., 2019). Such growth was partly due to increasing demand for a variety of events, the availability of disposable income, and new demands from consumers within the experience economy (Oklobdžija, 2015). According to Tichaawa et al. (2015) the hosting of events can contribute significantly to the local economies and to the social development of the local populations, including in the form of extending the traditional tourism season, and the spreading of the demand for tourism more evenly throughout an area. Additionally, sport participation has been regarded as a global phenomenon that has fuelled an ever-increasing world tourism market (Kruger et al., 2016; Turco et al., 2002). The hosting of these sport events such as cycling events could also provide an opportunity for urban renewal and the economic development of the host cities and communities involved (Bama & Tichaawa, 2021; Mboumba, 2017). With an increase in countries and communities wanting to host sport tourism events, the events field has steadily become increasingly prominent over the years (Peeters et al, 2014). Of increasing importance, therefore, is the need for event experts and academics to contribute to the provision of beneficial guidelines for event practitioners, so as to enable successful event organisation in future (Ismail, 2014). A closer consideration of the ambit of sport event tourism becomes necessary at this point.

Sport event tourism

Sport and tourism are social phenomena that, in contemporary times have had a huge impact on society and allowed for the socialisation of individuals and communities (Boonsiritomachai & Phonthanukitithaworn, 2019). Additionally, it is widely accepted that sport event tourism can have both favourable and unfavourable impacts on host communities and event participants (García et al., 2015; Ntloko & Swart, 2008). In the last two decades, sport event tourism has been noted to be one of the fastest-growing sectors of the industry, with a relatively recent focus being afforded on planning aspects, especially within the developing context (Bama & Tichaawa, 2021; Dixonet al., 2012; Morgan, 2014; Peeters, Matheson, & Szymanski, 2014; Tichaawa & Bama, 2012; Weed & Bull, 2012).

As an industry that has experienced extensive growth in contemporary times, the sport event and sport tourism industry has become increasingly important for developing nations (Bama & Tichaawa, 2020, 2021; Daniels & Tichaawa, 2021; Higham, 2018; Knott et al., 2017; McKay et al., 2019). Consequently, sport events are widely recognised as having evolved and gained their own management subsector in the events field (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Importantly, these sport events tend to create visitor attractions, with them often being predisposed by two key aspects, one being the location of the event and the other being the management features that are related to the organisation of the event (Larson & Won, 2012). Participants in these sport events have also been known to pay specific attention to these management features such as attractiveness, innovation, amenities and health, safety and security features, (Kruger & Saayman, 2012). According to Bjelac and Radovanovic (2003), sport events are characterised by creative and complex sport-like recreational activities, including those relating to entertainment, and they are performed in accordance with a particular predetermined programme. Specifically, insights into participants' considerations for taking part in sport tourism events can benefit tourism marketing, in relation to product development, service quality evaluation, image development and promotional activities (Kruger et al., 2016). Sport events management, therefore, entails the organisation, marketing, implementation and evaluation of any type of event that is related to sport (Saayman et al., 2005). The extensive development in the global sport event sector has precipitated the necessity for event management within the industry.

Event management

Extant research highlights that event management involves the planning and production of events of varying natures and types (Bama & Tichaawa, 2016; Larson & Won, 2012; McKay et al., 2019). Commensurate with the above should be the possession of the requisite event knowledge and theory within the fast-growing professional field, in which tourists provide a potential market for planned events, with the tourism industry having become a vital stakeholder in terms of their success and attractiveness (Getz, 2005, 2008; Ismail, 2014; Tassiopoulos, 2010). Managing events, especially sport tourism events, requires much planning, organising, leading, controlling of resources, coordination and communication, on multiple levels, so as to be able to achieve the event's specific objectives (Foster & Hyatt, 2008; Saayman, 2009; Silvers, 2010). According to Simasathiansophon (2020), participants often consider organisational aspects before choosing to participate in sporting events, ranging from the uniqueness and quality of the event and the event's reputation in the marketplace.

Recognising KSFs facilitates the acquisition of a deeper understanding of how to host sport events and of the factors influencing participation-related decisions than might otherwise be possible (Pretorius et al., 2016). Streicher (2009) notes that the management-associated characteristics and critical factors include entertainment, technical aspects, food and beverages, marketing, exhibitors, entrance, participators/visitors, transport, information, layout, accommodation, financial services, parking, community, staff, emergency and medical services, the presence of children, safety and security, entry fees, directions, infrastructure and venues. Moreover, the focus of the event organisers should be on the setting of the location and on the management of the KSFs related to the needs of the visitors attending the event and the participants taking part in the event (Small, Darcy & Packer, 2012).

The Cape Town Cycle Tour

The CTCT, which is one of the largest annual sporting events in South Africa (Giddy, 2019). is hosted by the City of Cape Town, with it usually taking place on the second Sunday in March (Streicher, 2009). Both the 2020 and the 2021 events were cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (CTCT, 2020). The event was officially founded by engineer Bill Mylrea and architect John Stegmann in 1978, with the objective of creating a network of safe and efficient cycle paths across the Cape Peninsula (CTCT, 2018). Each year, the event attracts up to 35 000 (being the maximum number allowed) both amateur and professional cyclists, from across the globe (Cape Town Tourism, 2014). The CTCT race is conducted along a scenic route of 109km, with a total elevation of 1220m starting in Cape Town, traversing the Cape Peninsula and back (CTCT, 2014a, b; Giddy, 2019). With the evolution of the event, sponsorship was secured from the Cape Argus local newspaper in 2014, which led to its name changed to the Argus Cycle Tour (EWN Sport, 2014). Furthermore, in 2012 Pick n' Pay and Momentum joined in as sponsors of the race, with it becoming formally known as the Cape Argus Pick n' Pay Momentum Cycle Tour in September 2014, a title that it has maintained to date (CTCT, 2020). Having already gone through three rebranding exercises, the event was once again rebranded as the CTCT effort to position the tour as an iconic bucket-list event of a global scale, while using its growing international appeal to attract a wider audience than before to participate in the event, and to spend time in Cape Town and South Africa (CTCT, 2020). The CTCT can be classified as an intense endurance event, which takes place under variable weather conditions, requiring much physical effort and strength, and involving a certain level of risk (Kruger et al., 2016). Over the years, the CTCT has grown into a Life Cycle Week, consisting of multiple events that take place prior to the actual event date. Such preparatory events include the Mountain Bike Challenge and the Junior Cycle Tour, in which young children participate, with it forming a mini cycle tour for the youth aged 12 years old or younger. Other event components

include the Expo, which is an exhibition that showcases and sells relevant cycling equipment, along with providing a great deal of related knowledge (Streicher, 2009).

Key successful factors

KSFs indicate what the participants attending any such events regard as being important. Based on previous research (Bunning & Gibson, 2016), the participants in sporting events are seen to have certain preferences when attending sporting events that they would like to have catered for. Awareness of the KSFs involved has become key to gaining an enhanced understanding of how to host events successfully and of the factors influencing the decision to participate (Pretorius et al., 2016). Gaining such knowledge would allow the sport tourism stakeholders to learn about the needs and wants of their niche market, of which understanding is vital to secure a positive future for a sporting event (Pretorius et al., 2016).

In terms of KSFs specifically, evidence from previous studies suggests that event participants often consider certain factors to be more critical than are others when participating in such events. For example, Kruger and Saayman (2012) conducted research on the Two Oceans Marathon in South Africa, which established that amenities were the most important factor for the participants concerned. In turn, Freeman (2013), in conducting research into mountain bike tourism, found that community champions, stakeholders and political buy-in and support were identified as being the most important factors by the mountain bike participants in the event. Similarly, a study of the success criteria for the FNB Wine-2-Whales Mountain Bike Event in South Africa, undertaken by Pretorius et al. (2016), noted that the prominent success factor involved related to the prizes and the prize money that were made available to the participants. Kaur Kler (2016) also conducted research into the KSFs of the Mount Kinabalu International Climbathon (which is considered to be the world's toughest mountain race), 25 years on into the event, with the findings made revealing that the innovation of summit trails was regarded as the most important KSF by the endurance sport participants. Furthermore, in the study conducted by Myburgh et al., (2018), attractiveness and exposure were considered to be the most important KSFs for the endurance sport participants.

Existing research suggests that because participants at sport events such as cycling have different motives for taking part, understanding their motives, attitudes and behaviour will have the effect of providing event planners and decision-makers with insights into designing interventions that will encourage more participation, and may even reveal opportunities for designing policies and promotional strategies for such events (Foster & Hyatt, 2008; Kruger & Saayman, 2014; Larson & Won, 2012; Nkurunziza et al., 2012; Ritchie et al., 2010; Streicher & Saayman, 2010). Such feedback highlights the fact that the participants at such events tend to have different desires, which require differentiation in terms of both needs and event packaging.

Methodology

A cross-sectional case study research design was deemed to be appropriate for achieving the objectives of the current study. The sample frame was arrived at by taking the average of the population that participated in the CTCT between 2016 and 2018. In terms of sampling, a probability approach, utilising a systematic random sampling method, was implemented in terms of administering the questionnaire survey to both the mountain bikers and the road cyclists concerned. The participants were approached, beginning at a random point, with the systematic asking of every fifth participant who arrived at the registration area thereafter to complete the questionnaire during the registration and collection of their race packs. The data were collected between 28 February and 2 March 2019 at Rondebosch Golf Course and at Dirtopia Farm in Stellenbosch for the mountain bikers, and, between 7 and 9 March 2019 at

the Cape Town Stadium for the road cyclists, respectively. In all, 598 responses were received from 218 mountain bikers and 380 road cyclists. The main variables measured by the survey included the self-reported sociodemographic profiles of the participants and the critical success factors relating to participation. Ethical considerations, as determined by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) of the Business and Management Sciences faculty of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) were strictly adhered to. In terms of the considerations, the voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were guaranteed by means of informing them of their rights and privileges. The quantitative data were analysed and reported on by way of implementing a factor analysis approach.

Results and discussion

Demographic and geographical profiles of the respondents

The demographic analysis of the study participants was presented across six categories: age; gender; marital status; home language; province of origin; education; and occupation (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Demographic profiles of the respondents (*n*=598 in percentage)

Demographic characteristic	Overall results	Mountain bikers	Road cyclists
Age			
<19	3	1	4
20–35 years	38	54	28
36–50 years	35	29	38
51–65 years	20	16	22
>66	4	0	8
Gender			
Male	69	61	73
Female	31	39	27
Marital status			
In a relationship	71	73	71
Single	23	20	24
Divorced	5	6	4
Language			
English	56	52	59
Afrikaans	35	42	31
Xhosa	3	2	3
Other	6	4	7
Origin			
Western Cape	59	85	44
Gauteng	13	5	17
All other provinces	21	8	30
Other (international)	7	2	10
Education			
Post-matriculation	75	76	74
Matriculation (Std 10/Grade 12)	16	16	17
Some schooling	9	7	9
No schooling	0	2	0
Occupation			
Employed	73	66	71
Student	9	10	9
Retired	5	3	5
Unemployed	1	2	1
Other	15	19	14

The data collected reflected a relatively young field of participants, with about 76% of them being between the ages of 19 and 50 years of age (3% under 19 years of age, 38% being between 20 and 35 years of age, and 35% being between 36 and 50 years of age). The remaining 24% were between the ages of 51 and 65 or over 66 years of age. The mean age was 40 years

old. In terms of gender representation, the male participation rate was 69%, whereas the female was 31%. When the participants were asked to indicate their marital status, the majority (71%) of the respondents stated that they were in a relationship, whereas 28% were not. As is highlighted in Table 1, a cross-section (28%) of the participants were loosely spread across most of the provinces (with the Eastern Cape having 6%, the Northern Cape 4%, Limpopo and North West 3% each, the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal with 2% each, and Mpumalanga with 1%). The international participants made up 7% of the participants who emanated from countries such as Australia, Botswana, Canada, Germany, Ireland, London, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, South Korea, Swaziland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America and Wales.

Most of the respondents (59%) were based in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces (13%) respectively, and were all relatively well educated, with 75% indicating that they had a post-school education. Roughly 27% of the participants had matriculated, being the vast majority of those surveyed. Accordingly, the respondents were found to vary widely in their employment profiles, with 12% being involved in management, 10% in engineering, 8% in finance, 7% in entrepreneurship, 6% in medicine, 5% in sales, marketing and law (respectively), 3% in tourism, events and hospitality or real estate, respectively, and 2% in retail or agriculture, respectively, with 15% being involved in other employment fields, as is highlighted in Table 1. Besides the above, 9% indicated that they were currently busy with their studies, with 5% indicating that they were pensioners and retired, and the unemployed participants constituted only 1% of those surveyed. Such results concur with the research completed by Myburgh et al. (2018), who established that endurance events like the CTCT tend to attract mostly male participants. Prati (2018) also highlights that men still tend to be the dominating gender in sport events, be it in terms of being participants or attendees. Even though the literature seems to suggest male domination, in recent times there is evidence that the gap in sports participation between men and women is narrowing (Ferreira, 2015).

Respondents' participation category in the CTCT

The respondents were next required to indicate their participation category. The majority of the participants (91% in the mountain biking category and 87% in the road cycling category) indicated that they were recreational cyclists. Furthermore, the remaining 9% of participants in the mountain biking category identified themselves as professionals, whereas 13% did so in the road cycling category. These findings are reflective of general societal assumptions and other similar research studies which indicate that household influence, most commonly analysed in the form of variables such as marital status, parental influence and size of household, could encourage participants to engage more in recreational than in professional sporting activities (Eberth & Smith, 2010; Ferreira, 2015). The evidence, however, is mainly suggestive and in this regard begs for empirical enquiry to determine such widely held assumptions.

Respondents' frequency of participation in cycling-related events

The respondents were further requested to indicate how often they participated in cycling-related events. The findings made, as presented in Table 2, indicate that most of the mountain bikers (58%) were new to such an event, with only 14% having participated in similar events between two and five times before. Furthermore, 13% of the respondents had participated between six and ten times in such events, with 6% having engaged in such activity between 11 and 14 times before. The remaining participants in the mountain biking category identified themselves as having participated in such events between 15 and 20 times (4%) or over 20 times (5%) before. Looking at the road cycling category, the results were very different, with

very few newcomers. Whereas 1% were participating in such an event for the first time, 26% were found to be participating for the second to fifth time. Furthermore, 28% of the respondents had participated between six and ten times before, 9% between 11 and 14 times, 16% between 15 and 20 times, and 10% exceeded 20 times. Overall, most of the participants (76%) had participated in cycling events of the nature between one and ten times, suggestive of growing levels of loyalty towards the event from participants in recent years, and an indication that decision-makers and event organisers should focus on implementing emerging suggestions that are in alignment with participants' requirements.

Table 2: Participation rates in cycling-related events (*n*=598, in percentage)

Frequency of participation in cycling events	Mountain bikers	Road cyclists	Overall average
Once	58	1	29
Between two and five times	14	26	24
Between six and ten times	13	28	23
Between 11 and 14 times	6	9	7
Between 15 and 20 times	4	16	10
Over 20 times	5	10	7

Findings of the factor analysis of the key success factors for participants in the CTCT

The pattern matrix of the principal axis factor analysis, using an Oblivion rotation with Kaiser normalisation, identified eight factors (KSFs), which were labelled according to the similarity in their characteristics, as is depicted in Table 3. The factors concerned accounted for 67% of the total variance, explained in terms of a high-reliability coefficient ranging from 0.95 (the highest) to 0.70 (the lowest), implying the presence of internal consistency for all the factors. Lastly, all the factors that loaded with a loading higher than 0.3 indicated a reasonably high correlation between the factors and their component items. The factor scores were calculated as an average for all the items concerned, thereby contributing to a specific factor, in terms of enabling its interpretation in relation to the original five-point Likert scale of measurement. Additionally, the standard deviations ranged from between 0.741 (the lowest) and 1.121 (the highest). As indicated in Table 3, the following KSFs were identified.

Table 3: Key success factors of mountain bikers and road cyclists

	FL	M	RC	AIC	SD
Factor 1: Communication and technical aspects		3.75	0.95	0.54	0.777
Adequate flowing communication between participants and event personnel	0.76				
Effective signage and directions along the route	0.75				
Easy noticeability of race personnel	0.74				
Presence of easy-to-read signs along the route	0.72				
Supply of accurate timing devices for the timing of the race	0.72				
Friendly and professional personnel trained to handle race enquiries	0.70				
User-friendly website with adequate information regarding the race	0.68				
Correct information provision through marketing (e.g., date, time, venue, etc)	0.67				
Variety of communication tools for participants, spectators and stakeholders	0.64				
Good organisation of the event	0.60				
Effective technical aspects (sound, announcements, etc.) during the event	0.53				
Variety of event categories (professional, amateur & charity) to participate in	0.49				
Effective signage and directions to the sportsgrounds	0.46				
Good-quality media coverage along the route on the day	0.35				
Factor 2: Destination attributes		3.67	0.87	0.45	0.798
Favourability of expected weather conditions	0.69				
A world-class destination for the event	0.67				

Uniqueness of destination	0.65				
The party atmosphere surrounding the event	0.64				
The scenic nature of the route/course	0.58				
The ideal location of the event in terms of climate and altitude	0.57				
The historical significance of the destination	0.53				
The many things to do and places to see at the event location	0.51				
Factor 3: Accessibility		3.66	0.87	0.58	0.938
Adequate parking arrangements close to the start	0.83				
Adequate traffic control of parking	0.80				
Adequate security in parking areas	0.75				
Accessibility for the disabled	0.57				
Easy accessibility to the start shuts	0.52				
Factor 4: Emergency management		4.32	0.91	0.77	0.741
Adequate number of emergency personnel along the route	0.96				
Visibility of emergency personnel and emergency vehicles	0.92				
Fast-acting medical personnel at the event and along the route	0.90				
Factor 5: Event status		3.38	0.70	0.38	0.922
Professional cycling component	0.64				
A seeding event for other cycling events	0.62				
Pre-events involving the whole family (e.g., Cape Town Cycle Tour Junior)	0.45				
International standing of the event	0.33				
Factor 6: General management		4.00	0.91	0.55	0.747
Adequate number of water points along the route	0.86				
Adequate number of information boards in the sportsgrounds	0.79				
Adequate number of rubbish bins at the water points and finish line	0.77				
Clean and hygienic ablution facilities at start/finish points and along the route	0.71				
Adequate number of marshals to usher participants during registration and race	0.67				
Visibility of security at start, as well as along the route and at the finish line	0.63				
Flowing traffic control before, during and after the race	0.55				
Adequate number of safety measures/precautions in place during the race	0.37				
Factor 7: Event uniqueness		3.93	0.78	0.54	0.783
Challenging nature of the event	0.79				
Good reputation of the event	0.76				
Interesting route/course for the event	0.63				
Factor 8: Amenities		3.38	0.84	0.65	1.121
Affordability and variety of souvenirs (e.g., caps, T-shirts, etc.)	0.60				
Variety of food and beverages available (e.g., halal, vegetarian)	0.56				
Availability of affordable food and beverages at the sportsgrounds	0.50				
Total variance	67%				

FL=Factor loading; Mean=M; Reliability coefficient=RC Average interitem correlation=AIC; Standard deviation=SD

Factor 1: Communication and technical aspects

Extant literature tends to suggest that participants KSFs for engaging in events of this nature are often non-homogenous are often rely on various factors, including communication and technical aspects. In the current study, as presented in Table 3., this factor received the fourth highest mean value (M = 3.75), RC of 0.95, an AIC of 0.54 and SD= 0.777. This factor, which was considered as the fourth most important KSF in relation to participating in the CTCT, included such elements as adequate and flowing communication between the participants and the event personnel (FL = 0.76), effective signage and directions (FL = 0.75), the easy noticeability of race personnel (FL = 0.74), easy-to-read signs along the route (FL = 0.72), accurate timing devices for the race (FL = 0.72), friendly and professional personnel trained to handle race enquiries (with a factor loading of 0.70), user-friendly website with adequate information (FL = 0.68), correct information given via marketing (FL = 0.67), the variety of communication tools (FL = 0.64), the organisational structure of the event (FL = 0.60), effective technical aspects (FL = 0.53), the offering of a variety of event categories in which to

participate (FL = 0.49), effective signage and directions (FL = 0.46), and good-quality media coverage along the route (FL = 0.35). In a study undertaken by Kruger and Saayman (2012) communication and technical aspects were highlighted as the most important KSF making for a memorable experience at the Two Oceans Marathon, while Myburgh et al. (2018) identified the factor as the second most important KSF for endurance athletes from a tourism perspective.

Factor 2: Destination attributes

Table 3 presents the results in terms of the destination attributes, which received the fifth-highest mean value (M = 3.67), with RC = 0.87, AIC = 0.45 and SD = 0.938, and featured as the fifth most important KSF for the respondents in the study. Among the different elements of destination attributes, the participants highlighted their expectations of the weather conditions being favourable (FL = 0.69) as being the most important element in this category, which was followed by the world-class destination of the event (FL = 0.67), the uniqueness of the destination (FL = 0.65), the party atmosphere surrounding the event (FL = 0.64), the scenic nature of the route/course (FL = 0.58), the ideal location of the event regarding the climate and altitude (FL = 0.57), the historical significance of the destination (FL = 0.53), and the many things to do and places to see at the event location (FL = 0.51). The present study results indicate that participants in cycling events consider the destination's attributes to be an important factor in the planning and delivery of a good cycling event experience. As such, the results concur with Freeman's (2013) findings, in terms of which destination attributes were considered to be the sixth most important KSF in terms of participating in mountain bike tourism events.

Factor 3: Accessibility

This factor highlighted and measured elements of the aspects related to accessibility, including the parking arrangements (FL = 0.83), the traffic control (FL = 0.80), the security in the parking areas (FL = 0.75), the access for the disabled (FL = 0.57) and the ease of access to the start shut (FL = 0.52), as are reflected in Table 3. Accessibility received a mean value of (M =3.66), RC = 0.87, AIC = 0.58, and SD = 0.938 and featured as the sixth most important KSF in the view of the study respondents. Freeman (2013) contends that the element of accessibility, which was seen as being guided by legislation and regulatory frameworks, was ranked as the seventh most important factor for mountain bike tourism events, which is a finding with which the current research study concurs. However, attention should be given to the issue of accessibility by the organisers of such events, to be able to establish what accessibility aspects participants consider to be important to enhancing the visitor experience at such events as the CTCT.

Factor 4: Emergency management

Aspects considered under the emergency management factor included the provision of emergency personnel along the route (FL = 0.96), the presence of visible emergency personnel and emergency vehicles (FL = 0.92) and the supply of medical personnel along the route (FL = 0.90), as is highlighted in Table 3. The findings indicated that the factor obtained a mean value (M = 4.32) RC = 0.91, AIC = 0.77, and SD = 0.741, making it the most highly ranked KSF. Additionally, the participants noted that the presence of an adequate number of emergency personnel along the route was the most important aspect for the KSF concerned, while the visibility of emergency personnel and emergency vehicles, and the fast-acting of the medical personnel at the event, including along the route, were ranked second and third, respectively. Previous studies of the KSFs of similar events have seldom considered emergency management and its components, as was expounded upon in the current enquiry. Consequently, the outcomes of the current study in this regard are critically important, given that events of

this nature are subject to risk so emergency management should form a core consideration in empirical enquiries of this nature. Though the study was undertaken before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, such feedback also lends credence to the importance that health, safety and emergency management could play in the light of the hosting of such events in future. For the 44th edition of the race that took place in March 2022 only 22,500 entries were allowed to ensure compliance with all local and national COVID-19 protocols (CTCT, 2022).

Factor 5: Event status

This factor included such elements as the event's professional cycling component (FL = 0.64), the use of the event as a seeding event for other cycling events (FL = 0.62), followed by the existence of pre-events involving the whole family (FL = 0.45) and the international standing of the event (FL = 0.33). According to the factor analysis, as Table 3 indicates., event status ranked as the seventh most important KSF, with a mean value of (M = 3.39, RC = 0.70, AIC = 0.38. and SD = 0.922. Compared to previous studies, the factor could be seen to have regressed in terms of importance. Myburgh et al. (2018) note that event status was the most important factor in terms of influencing the commitment of the endurance athletes whom they studied. The results in the current study, therefore, serve to provide an opportunity for event marketers to consider innovative marketing strategies that could motivate the participants in future episodes of the CTCT, especially in the context of the two-year (2020 and 2021) cancellation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Factor 6: General management

General management, which was labelled factor number six, included such aspects and factor loadings as the number of water points on route (FL = 0.86), the supply of an adequate number of information boards in the sportsgrounds (FL = 0.79) and an adequate number of rubbish bins at the water points and finish line (FL = 0.77), the provision of clean and hygienic ablution facilities at the start/finish points, as well as along the route (FL = 0.71), the supply of an adequate number of marshals to direct the participants during the registration and race days (FL = 0.67), the visibility of security at the starting line, along the route and at the finish line (FL = 0.63), flowing traffic control before, during and after the race (FL = 0.55) and the securing of an adequate number of safety measures/precautions during the race (FL = 0.37). In order of importance, the general management factor featured as the second most important KSF according to the participants, with a mean value of (M = 4.00), RC = 0.91, AIC = 0.55 and SD = 0.747. The results concurred with those found in previous research by Kruger and Saayman (2012), whereby the respondents also regarded general management as being the second most important KSF in terms of the planning and production of an endurance event. With a plethora of existing studies suggesting that general management plays a vital role in the delivery of quality event tourism experiences, the findings of the current study should be viewed in its contribution towards emphasising consideration for general management elements when preparing and planning such events.

Factor 7: Event uniqueness

This factor, which was considered to be the third most important KSF, had a mean score of (M = 3.94), RC = 0.78, AIC = 0.54 and SD = 0.783 as reflected on Table 3. The factor included such aspects as the challenging nature of the event (FL = 0.79), its good reputation (FL = 0.76) and its interesting route/course (FL = 0.63). The existing research into such events highlights the presence of high regard for event uniqueness. For instance, a study conducted on KSFs of the Mount Kinabalu International Climbathon highlighted event uniqueness as being the most important factor of the race (Kaur Kler, 2016), while Freeman (2013) found that the factor

ranked second most important in terms of mountain bike tourism events. As event participants are becoming more and more discerning, the event experience needs to be elevated, providing an opportunity for the organisers, marketers and managers to create social media content and a visual story about the sport event and unifying the event by partnering with a green, sustainability-related cause which could highlight its uniqueness in promoting environmental awareness.

Factor 8: Amenities

Given the participants' opinions regarding the importance of event amenities, the findings of the current study, as reflected in Table 3, highlight that it was considered the eighth most important KSF, with a mean value of (M = 3.38, RC = 0.84, AIC = 0.65 and SD = 1.121. The respondents considered the affordability and the variety of souvenirs (FL = 0.60) as being the highest-ranked aspect in the amenity category, followed by the availability of a variety of food and beverages (FL = 0.56) and the affordability of the food and beverages available (FL = 0.50). The findings made concur with those made in existing studies, such as that of Pretorius et al. (2016), which considered the category of amenities as sixth in ranking order. Emphasising the value of amenities could require putting value chain policies in place to partner with local businesses and curating specialised merchandise from the local community which will not only enhance the amenity value for participants but emphasise its contribution toward the socio-economic rejuvenation of the host community through such sport event hosting.

Discussion and implications

Based on the findings of the current research, the following discussions and implications are highlighted. Firstly, the results identified eight KSFs for participation in the CTCT including communication and technical aspects, destination attributes, accessibility, emergency management, event status, general management, event uniqueness and amenities. For participation in the 2019 CTCT, emergency management, general management and event uniqueness emerged as the most highly ranked factors respectively, supporting the notion that KSFs differ from one sport tourism event to the next and are unique for each offering. Secondly, the results reflect both similarities and differences in relation to extant studies on KSFs from a participants' point of view both in terms of the ranking and consideration. For instance, destination attributes featured as fifth in ranking in the current study, and sixth in a similar study conducted by Freeman (2013) respectively. General management which is ranked second in the current study also received a similar ranking in a study conducted by Kruger and Saayman (2012). While amenities were ranked eighth in the current study, the findings were distinctly different from those of Kruger and Saayman (2012). In the latter study, amenities ranked as the most important factor, with them being one that created a memorable experience for the participants of the Two Oceans Marathon. The implications of the divergent nature of these outcomes lend credence to calls to view KSFs within the specific context of sport tourism events and encourage the continuous monitoring of the evolving nature of participants' needs in events of this nature. This study has the potential to assist managers of the CTCT in identifying gaps and addressing certain critical aspects to ensure a memorable experience to the events' participants and guarantee customer loyalty. It further provides the basis for developing an understanding of KSFs from a demand-side perspective relating to considerations of participants or consumers of such tailor-made event tourism products and contributes to the understanding of the constantly evolving nature of consumer demands giving organisers and managers the opportunity to understand what participants consider as important for engaging in such events.

Importantly, the evolving landscape of sport tourism events in the context of emerging crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic further highlights the need for further empirical engagements in this regard, especially considering evolving participant requirements, event organisers and managers should ensure the introduction of elements of comfort by demonstrating compliance with, and care for, the safety of the attendees and participants across all communication platforms, including in terms of social media channels and onsite signage.

Conclusion

The results highlighted the non-homogenous nature of the respective CTCT participant groups. Of the eight KSFs identified, differences in the level of importance were noted in the rating of four factors, namely communication and technical aspects, destination attributes, event uniqueness and amenities. The results of this research indicated that various event-related aspects played a crucial role in the participants' consideration of whether or not an event like the CTCT was successful. The above indicates that the event managers should differentiate the CTCT offerings provided by each of the events categories as each cycling category is unique, requiring the specific application of the KSFs (mountain biking or road cycling). Understanding the KSFs of the CTCT might be of significance to those stakeholders concerned with marketing sport tourism events through the creation of tailor-made events that meet the needs of the participants who suggestively could become more selective in future in terms of travel and participation in sport events. The current study mainly set out to determine the KSFs considered to be important in relation to the CTCT. In the research, eight KSFs were identified as being of importance to the management of such an event. In comparison with the existing literature, the ranking of the KSFs in the present study appeared to be similar in some cases and different in others. Therefore, it is important to continue investigating the KSFs for such events, because different events tend to reflect different trends and patterns. Such investigation could assist in identifying the reasons for the occurrence of shifts in KSF considerations and the need to implement increasingly responsive event management. Further, a comparison between the KSFs of different events, as well as the difference between the KSFs for mountain bikers versus road cyclists is suggested. The findings of the current study require viewing in light of some of its limitations. The prior research relevant to mountain bike participants and events has, so far, had only a limited impact on the scope of the theoretical foundations constructed in this regard. The timing of the research was impacted by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the current study provides insights only regarding the KSFs prior to the outbreak of the virus. As such, there is now a need to undertake research that considers KSFs in the context of emerging crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Such research could provide frameworks and guidelines respecting the policies and protocols to be adopted when planning such events in similar contexts.

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