

Rethinking Sport Tourism Events in a Post-Covid-19 South Africa

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Abstract

Sport tourism and its related events have been identified as a unique niche product and South Africa is considered globally as a leading sport event tourism destination. Despite the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector, it is recognised for its resilience and ability to overcome crises thereby creating employment and assisting economies to recover. For this recovery to effectively take place, recovery strategies, frameworks and policies are now a necessity for the sustainability of South Africa as a sport event tourism destination. The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical review of existing published and unpublished literature sources and policy documents in order to identify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport event tourism in South Africa and to propose directions for recovery strategies going forward, as well as recommendations for future research areas. In doing so, the current paper has found that through adequate recovery policies, strategies and frameworks, sport event tourism in South Africa can effectively be used as a post pandemic tool for urban regeneration, new business opportunities and a range of positive social impacts for host communities. As the sub sector begins to reopen, recovery strategies that include considerations of risk communication, community engagement, risk mitigation and the hosting of hybrid events are essential for its sustainability. For the effective implementation hereof, additional research is needed in the fields of crises in sport event tourism, the use of technology in the sub sector, as well as collaboration in small scale sport event tourism.

Keywords: COVID-19, sport tourism, South Africa, sport events

Introduction

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, sport event tourism was one of the fastest growing tourism sectors and was, across the world, seen as a tool to stimulate local economies (Chang, Choong & Ng, 2020). According to Kalvapalle (2016), the positive impacts of sport event tourism do not only relate to sport, but also to its contribution to local communities and government (Alexandris & Kaplanidou, 2014; Chen, Gursoy & Lau, 2018; Tichaawa, 2015; Tichaawa, Moyo, Swart & Mhlanga, 2015). Furthermore, the hosting of international and local sporting events drive tourism activities, generate profits for the host destination and benefit tourism services including restaurants, accommodation facilities and entertainment services (Chaigasem & Leruksa, 2020; Zagnoli & Radicchi, 2009). Sport event tourism has significant impacts on host communities and the host destination itself, the most significant of which is on the local economy, with event attendees spending money before, during and after the event. Sport events also attract investors for business ventures at host destinations (Chalip, 2014, Fairley, Lovegrove & Brown, 2016; Weed & Bull, 2009). Together, sport, events and tourism

have the potential to enact a range of far reaching impacts on a host destination and its people including increased tourism figures, decreasing seasonality, employment creation, income generation, tax revenue from expenses, urban regeneration, urban development, the emergence of new service sector opportunities as well as new business opportunities (Duglio & Beltramo, 2017; Gaudette, Roullet & Levebvre, 2017; Li & Jago, 2013; Schnitzer, Schlemmer & Kristiansen, 2017; Smith, 2012). Mega sport events have demonstrated major legacy implications which can be both positive and negative, planned or unplanned and tangible or intangible for the host and non-host communities (Hemmonsbey, Tichaawa & Knott, 2018; Hemmonsbey & Tichaawa, 2019). Cornelissen, Bob and Swart (2011) further add that these mega-event legacies are associated with sporting, urban, infrastructural, economic, environmental, societal and political impacts.

For countries in the Global South, particularly those considered emerging nations, sport event tourism is seen as a force for economic and social development (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004; Esfahani, Goudarzi & Assadi, 2009; Kaplan; 2004; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Marumo, Lubbe & Pelsler, 2015). These nations actively compete and bid for the hosting of sport tourism events under the premise that they promote economic development, provide much needed upgrades to sporting and transport infrastructure and provide opportunities for local communities (Briedenhann, 2011; Nyikana & Tichaawa, 2018). According to Njorege, Atieno and Do Nascimento (2017), along with the purported economic impacts of sport event tourism, other benefits which can be leveraged for the sustainable development of local communities include infrastructure development and the development of sport and leisure facilities that can attract investment and additional tourism activities. These investments then lead to increased destination attractiveness as well as business growth (Tichaawa, 2017).

In South Africa, sport event tourism has been identified as a unique niche product. As such, the South Africa government has strongly encouraged the provision of facilities, training, marketing and the promotion of sport event tourism in the country (Nyikana & Tichaawa, 2018; Swart & Bob, 2007). The result of this has been that South Africa as a country has identified the sub sector as a means to creating a national identity and as a catalyst for economic growth and overall development (Nyikana, 2016). Due to the strong focus on sport event tourism development, South Africa has emerged as one of the leading sport event tourism destinations in the world, hosting several sport events ranging from smaller scale recurring events to major once-off events that attract large numbers of attendees (Nyikana, 2016). According to the South African National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) (2016-2026), South Africa has become a notable global competitor and attractive events destination for sport events and has experienced a number of benefits from hosting these events. In addition to economic benefits, these events can be used as tools for the promotion, positioning and branding of the country, and to improve the geographical and seasonal benefits of tourism while also encouraging domestic travel (South Africa, 2017).

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world saw a dramatic increase in the growth of sport event tourism. In 2020, the pandemic swept across the globe, imposing unprecedented and significant impacts on sport event tourism and its related activities. The outbreak of the pandemic had serious impacts on sport event tourism as well as on the chain of activities that support them which caused a global shutdown of these sectors (Nhamo, Dube & Chikodzi, 2020; Poon & Peiris, 2020). The pandemic and its impacts have shown that the sport event tourism sector is highly vulnerable to crises, bringing its associated potential positive impacts and future sustainability into question. As a result of COVID-19, governments across the globe implemented policies to restrict the movement and gathering of people, directly influencing tourism and sport events (Evans, Blackwell, Dolan, Fahlen, Hoekman, Lenneis, McNarry, Smith & Wilcock, 2020; Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020; Swart & Maralack, 2020). In

South Africa, a National State of Disaster was declared which led to the cancellation of all public activities including sporting and other events (Cape Town Travel, 2020; Swart & Maralack, 2020). This was also the case internationally, as sport events of varying natures and scale were cancelled.

Current research (South African Tourism, 2020) shows that the sport event tourism sub sector in South Africa is beginning to show signs of recovery with an increase in visitor arrivals from African countries, as well as an increase in domestic travel. Although the sub sector has suffered significant negative impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, sport event tourism is recognised for its resilience and ability to overcome crises thereby creating employment and assisting with the recovery process of economies (United Nations, 2020). According to Weed (2020), sport tourism and its related events are also recognised for their ability to make significant contributions to outcomes and policy goals around economic development, wellbeing, physical health, mental health and environmental development. As the world begins to ease restrictions around travel, the sport tourism event industry will begin to reopen and the development of recovery strategies, frameworks and policies is now a necessity in order to ensure the future sustainability of the industry (South Africa Travel Trade, 2020). From the above, it is evident that sport event tourism is a key component of South Africa's growth strategy and will remain so after the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have passed. For South Africa to continue to benefit from sport event tourism and for the sub sector to be used to counter the negative effects of the pandemic on the country, the cause and effects of the pandemic linked to sport tourism need to be carefully examined in order to understand how the industry can recover. Thus, the focus of this study is to provide a critical review of existing published and unpublished literature sources and policy documents to identify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport event tourism in South Africa and to propose directions for recovery strategies going forward, as well as recommendations for future research areas.

Methodological considerations

This current conceptual article was written by observing and analysing existing published and unpublished literature on the given topic. The concepts and ideas present in these existing sources have been drawn upon to develop propositions relating to the rethinking of sport tourism events in post-COVID-19 South Africa. In conducting the research, the process was underpinned and guided by a multidimensional conceptual framework based on the sport tourism framework, resilience theory and stakeholder theory. These concepts were used as the main theories to inform the research and provide guidance on potential areas for future research.

Background literature

Sport event tourism impacts

The phenomenon of sport tourism and its related activities has received considerable attention as a result of the potential impacts on a host destination, community and environment (Crompton, 1999; Daniels et al., 2004; Delpy, 1998; Higham & Hinch, 2002). Destinations increasingly compete for the hosting of sport events as destination marketing tools (Kim & Chalip, 2004), for entertainment purposes, to boost community pride, and to stimulate spending (Yuan, 2001). In identifying and discussing the impacts of sport tourism, the triple bottom line (TBL) approach is the most used and accepted, assessing the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts pertaining to sporting events on host communities (Fedline, 2005; Hritz & Ross, 2010; Mules & Dwyer, 2005).

For most destinations, the hosting of sport tourism events is the primary motivation for pursuing sport tourism as their perceived economic impacts are used to validate their hosting (Daniels, 2007). Although these events can in fact boost spending in a region, many sport events also require significant capital spend and public investment that may or may not result in long term benefits for host communities (Gratton, Shibli & Coleman, 2005; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Porter, 1999). Whereas regular and smaller events often have low bidding costs, little or no infrastructure costs, and a low burden on public funds, this is not the case for the hosting of sport mega events (Daniels, 2007; Daniels & Norman, 2003; Higham, 1999). The economic benefits of sport events are considered as the tangible aspects and can include benefits such as investments in sport, event infrastructure, employment, extended tourism seasons, increased tourism and tax revenues (Chalip, 2014; Duglio & Beltramo, 2017; Fairley et. al., 2016).

Often the socio-cultural impacts of sport event tourism are considered the soft impacts, largely because their assessment, management and measurement can be challenging (Dwyer, 2005; Getz & Page, 2016). These soft or intangible impacts include impacts on quality of life of residents, improved social cohesion, national pride, enhanced destination image and increased participation in sport by residents (Gibson, Walker, Thapa, Kaplanidou, Geldenhuys & Coetzee, 2014; Jamieson, 2014). Despite these positive impacts, there is also the concern that sport event tourism and its resultant increase in visitor numbers can lead to cultural conflicts between tourists and residents, traffic congestion and increased levels of crime (Liu, Hautbois & Desbordes, 2017; Toohey & Taylor, 2008). Regarding the environmental impacts of sport event tourism, some studies have shown that positive environmental changes occur through the development of new sporting and event infrastructure (Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo & Alders, 2013). Ahmed (2017) asserts that for this to occur, there is a need for appropriate regulations and concerted planning efforts, without which, the high concentration of people attending sport events will have negative impacts through increased waste, high noise levels and air and water pollution (Ritchie, Shipway & Cleeve, 2009).

Proposition I: Sport event tourism results in a range of economic, environmental and social impacts at a host destination. Through appropriate planning, these impacts can be used as tools to develop the destination, the economy, host communities and the local environment.

Sport event tourism in the South African context

In South Africa, sport tourism and the hosting of sport events as drivers of tourism development have been identified as a niche product in the country (Bama & Tichaawa, 2015). The South African National Tourism Sector Strategy (2017) states that the country is currently recognised as a notable global competitor in the sport tourism industry and an attractive destination for the hosting of sport events. The strategy further states that these events do not only provide the country with economic spin offs, but are also effective tools for the promotion, positioning and branding of the country. These events also improve the geographical and seasonal benefits of tourism and encourage both domestic and international travel (South Africa, 2017). Swart (2005) noted that the history of apartheid in South Africa meant that sport tourism in the country was not able to achieve its full potential due to sanctions that were in place. Since the formation of a democratic government in the country in 1994, South Africa has strongly encouraged the provision of facilities, marketing, training, and the promotion of sport tourism (Nyikana, 2016; Swart & Bob, 2007). Additionally, South Africa has identified sport tourism as a means to develop a national identity, stimulate economic growth and promote the development of the country as a whole (Cornelissen, 2004).

According to Swart and Bob (2007), the focus of sport tourism in South Africa has largely been on the hosting of sport events. The result of this is that the country has emerged as a leading sport event tourism destination, hosting a range of large and smaller scale events including the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 African Nations Cup, the 2003 Cricket World Cup, the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup, the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and the annual Cape Town Cycle Tour, Two Oceans Marathon, Durban July and Comrades Marathon (Achu, Nyathi, Bama & Tichaawa, 2015; Bama & Tichaawa, 2015; Knott & Hemmonsbey, 2015; Nyikana, Tichaawa & Swart, 2014; Swart, 2005). The most significant of these events was the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This event served to highlight the role that sport mega-events can play in stimulating economic, environmental and social development (Lepp & Gibson, 2011; Swart & Bob, 2007). The hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup created an opportunity to leverage commitment from various stakeholders and to begin the process of developing a South African Sport Tourism Strategy, specifically focussing on the development of host cities (Nyikana, 2016; Swart & Bob, 2007). Nyikana (2016) further states that following on from this, the event created the momentum for the hosting of the 2013 African Cup of Nations that assisted South Africa in achieving its long-term sport tourism goals and objectives and in developing a holistic sport tourism product.

Proposition II: South Africa is a globally recognised sport event tourism destination. This sub sector has been successfully used by the country as a driver for economic, marketing, tourism and societal growth.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport event tourism

In 2020, the world was hit by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which imposed significant impacts on the sport event tourism industry and all of its related activities, resulting in a global shutdown (Nhamo et al., 2020; Poon & Peiris, 2020). In response to the pandemic, various COVID-19 restriction measures were put in place which limited the movement of people and stopped all event attendance (Askitas, Tatsiramos & Verheyden, 2020; Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020; Swart & Maralack, 2020). In South Africa, the first reported case of COVID-19 was identified in March 2020 (South African Tourism, 2020). Later that month, a national state of emergency was declared in the country. Under the state of emergency, all mass gatherings including those for the purposes of sport were cancelled (Nhamo et al., 2020), which led to the cancellation of sport events across the country (Cape Town Travel, 2020). The cancellation of these events had significant adverse impacts on the South African economy and led to the devastation of the events industry in the country. It is widely acknowledged that crises are inevitable in the tourism industry, (Biggs, Hall & Stoeckl, 2012; Bec, McLennan & Moyle, 2016; Gani & Singh, 2019; Hall, 2010; Mair, Ritchie & Walters, 2016; Parsons, Brown, Nalau & Fisher, 2018; Pforr & Hosie, 2008; Scott, Laws & Prideaux, 2008) and that they result in significant economic, social, political and environmental consequences for a destination. Within sport tourism and the broader tourism and events industries, it is no longer a question of whether or not crises will occur, but rather of when and how they will be managed when they do occur (Parsons et al., 2018).

Sport tourism, and the broader tourism industry, has been noted for its capacity for continued growth despite adverse impacts (Fenich, 2008). According to the United Nations (2020), historically, sport and tourism have proved to be successful drivers of inclusive and sustainable development. During the world's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, these industries must reinvent and redesign themselves to ensure resilience against future crises and

to assist the world's efforts in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2020).

In research conducted by Madray (2020), sport event stakeholders and role-players have stated that the recovery of the industry will depend largely on a shift towards the hosting of virtual events. These events allow attendees to feel increased personalisation as they do not feel the impacts of overcrowding or disconnection at an event. They also allow for easy access to and from any location and for the removal of geographical borders for attendees, allowing them to have a global presence. COVID-19 has also had an impact on the advertising of sport events - as people have become confined to their homes, social media and online advertising has become more effective (Correia, Luck & Verner, 2020; Goldblatt & Lee, 2012; Madray, 2020). In South Africa, hybrid events have been identified as the future of the sport event industry (Lepule, 2020). These events bring online experiences into the homes of attendees and allow for interaction between fans, supporters, attendees, and participants in a safe space.

Proposition III: Despite the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sport event tourism sub sector, the industry is known for its resilience. Through the implementation of effective recovery strategies, sport event tourism can once again be used as a driver for economic, societal, urban and environmental growth. These strategies will guide the sustainable redevelopment of the sub sector and ensure its resilience in the face of future crises.

Theoretical framework

The multidimensional conceptual framework for the current research study is based on the sport tourism framework, resilience theory and stakeholder theory. For the purpose of this research, the focus is on sport event tourism as a dimension of sport tourism. Considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sport event tourism and the wide range of stakeholders involved therein, these theories provide valuable guidelines for the analysis of the findings of the study. The stakeholder theory is used due to the large number of stakeholders involved in sport event tourism. Resilience theory provides guidelines on how sport event tourism can withstand future negative occurrences, recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure sustainability and success for the future.

Overall, the primary focus of sport event tourism is located within the larger framework of sport tourism. Given that the study focusses on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sport event tourism sub-sector, as well as how the sub-sector can become more resilient to similar occurrences in the future, the resilience theory is also used to provide useful insight into the current COVID-19 induced situation, as well as to provide guidance on the imperatives to consider in future situations. Offering an additional link between these two theories is the stakeholder theory which speaks to the large number of stakeholders involved in sport event tourism.

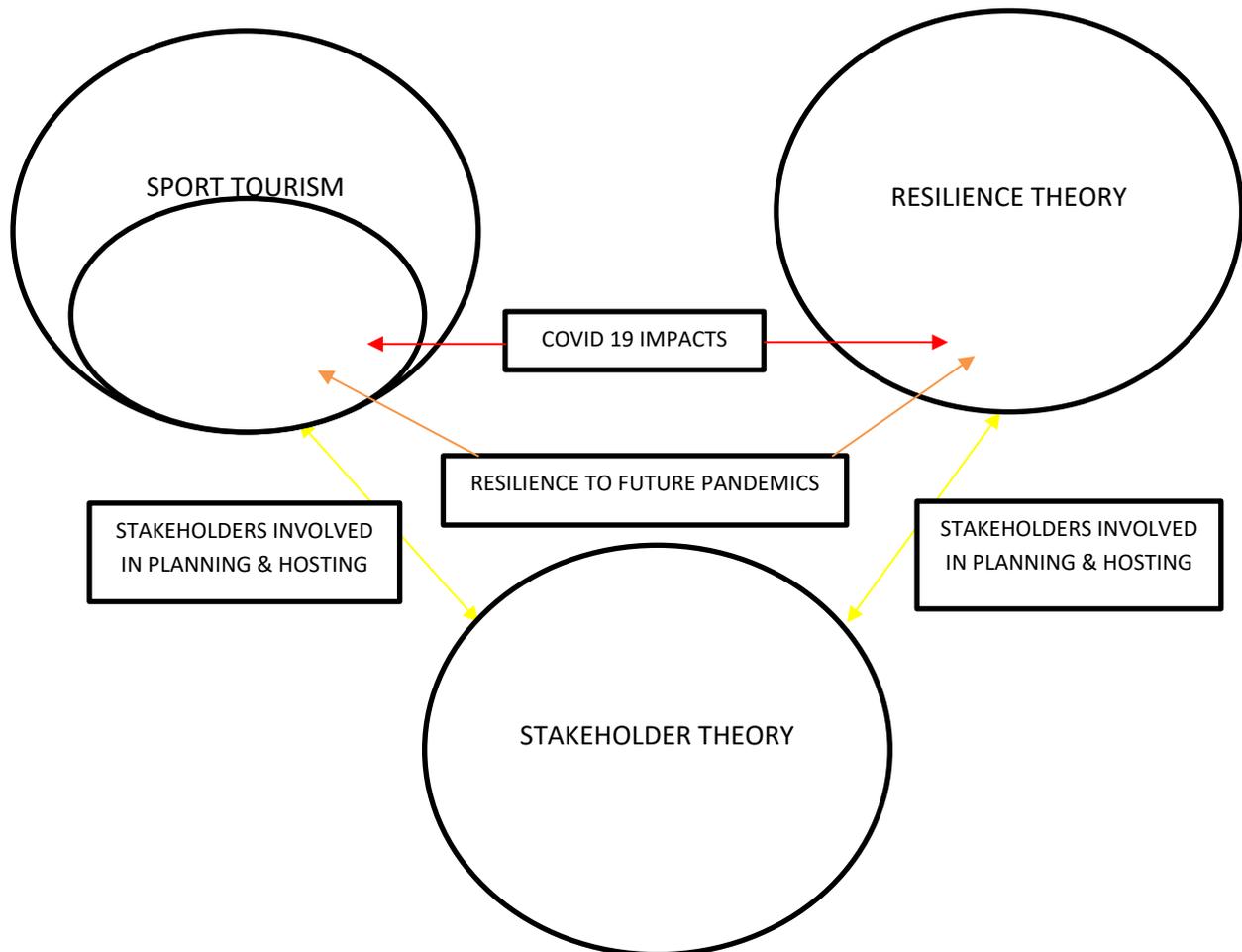


Figure 1: Multi-dimensional conceptual framework

Discussion and conclusion

The impacts of sport event tourism in South Africa

In this study, the far-reaching impacts of sport event tourism are explained. Proposition I acknowledges the various economic, environmental and social impacts of sport event tourism on a host destination and its local communities. Linked to this is proposition II which recognises how South Africa has used sport event tourism as a catalyst for its economic, branding, tourism and societal development. Sport event tourism is undoubtedly an important part of the sport tourism industry in South Africa and has become the highest profile product within the sport tourism portfolio (Peric, 2018; Weed & Bull, 2009). The reason for this in large part is due to the benefits generated for host communities, the economy and tourism. As a form of tourism, sport event tourism attracts visitors before and after the hosting of events as well as investors, generating economic benefits for the host destination (Chalip, 2014; Fairley et al, 2016). This illustrates the synergistic relationship between sport events and tourism through increased tourism figures, the reduction of seasonality, increased employment opportunities, income generation and tax revenue (Daniels et al., 2004; Duglio & Beltramo, 2017; Hinch, Higham & Moyle, 2016; Li & Jago, 2013; Meurer & Lins, 2018; O'Brien, 2007; Schnitzer et al., 2017; Solberg & Preuss, 2007).

Sport event tourism in South Africa has been used as a tool for urban regeneration and development, through the creation of new service sector opportunities, new business opportunities and employment creation (Hall, 2010). While these tangible economic impacts of sport event tourism on the country have been easy to measure and therefore widely assessed, the industry has also generated a range of non-monetary and indirect impacts such as the improvement of the destination image (Cheung, Mak & Dixon, 2016; Hallman & Breur, 2010). As the nature of these impacts means that they are much more difficult to measure and manage they are often less publicised and underestimated, especially in the case of social and cultural impacts which have only recently gained recognition and scholarly attention (Getz & Page, 2016). In South Africa, sport event tourism has been used as a catalyst for a range of social impacts such as increasing sport participation, enhancing quality of life, the promotion of national pride and social cohesion, and patriotism in host communities (Gibson et al, 2014). Despite this however, the effectiveness of sport event tourism as a tool for development is largely dependent on adequate policies and strategies, supporting leveraging and long-term sustainability.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sport event tourism sub sector

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments around the world responded by implementing policies restricting the movement of people (Askitas et al., 2020). The main policy that was adopted internationally to limit the spread of COVID-19 was that of ‘social distancing’, a concept that is very challenging to implement in the case of sport tourism and sport events (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020; Swart & Maralack, 2020). There is no doubt that gatherings in the sport event tourism sub sector contribute to the spread of COVID-19. The networked nature of sport tourism and its related events bring together athletes, employees and supporters which heightens the potential threat of the spread of the virus (Memish, Steffen, White, Dar, Azhar, Sharma & Zumla, 2019; Parnell, Widdop, Bond & Wilson, 2020).

The largest sport event impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic was the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Approximately 204 countries were due to take part in this event, and Tokyo was set to receive approximately 20 million visitors and 70 000 volunteers (Nhamo et al., 2020; Ingle, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread, on 24 March 2020 the decision was made to cancel the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games (Canadian Olympic Committee, 2020). This was the first time such a decision had been made in the 125-year modern history of the event (Dang & Hals, 2020) and it placed severe tolls on the sponsors, planners and potential attendees of the event (Scott, Roan & Capstick, 2020).

In March 2020 the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in South Africa which subsequently led to the president declaring a national state of emergency in the country later that month (South African Tourism, 2020). Under the state of emergency, all mass gatherings including those for the purposes of sport were cancelled (Nhamo et al., 2020). This led to the cancellation of sport events across the country including the ABSA Cape Epic Mountain Bike Race in the Western Cape, the Two Oceans Marathon in Cape Town, the Comrades Marathon in KwaZulu Natal and all annual sporting league events (Cape Town Travel, 2020). The cancellation of these events had significant adverse impacts on the South African economy and led to the devastation of the events industry in the country.

With declining infection rates and increasing numbers of vaccinated individuals, 2021 has seen restrictions on the hosting of sport events slowly begin to ease. Sport events in the post-pandemic era are steadily increasing in numbers within a new environment of controlled access; COVID-19 checks on athletes, attendees and event staff; limited contact; digitalization of event hosting and organisation; limitations on numbers; new event formats and the requirement of new sport event managerial skills (Bazzanella, Muratore, Schlemmer & Happ,

2021). The steady increase in the number of sport events being hosted once again, speaks to proposition III which states that the industry is known for its resilience and through effective recovery strategies, can continue to be used as a tool for economic, societal, urban and environmental development.

Recovery strategies for sport event tourism and the way forward

Proposition III of the current research suggests that despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sport event tourism sub sector in South Africa, the industry is known for its resilience and if managed properly, can once again be used to promote development and growth of a destination and its communities. In order for this to take place, effective recovery strategies are needed to guide the recovery of the sub sector and to ensure its resilience in the face of future crises. A number of recommendations have been made for the management of sport event tourism going forward including the inclusion of COVID-19 action plans, risk communication, community engagement and the development of risk mitigation strategies (McCloskey, Endericks, Catchpole, Zambon, McLauchlin, Shetty, Manuel, Turbitt, Smith, Crook, Severi, Jones, Ibbotson, Marshall, Smallwood, Isla, Memish, Al-Rabeeah, Barbeschi & Zumla, 2020; WHO, 2020a, 2020b). These tools are becoming increasingly important for sport event tourism role-players in their decision-making processes.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many sport event tourism role players have begun to offer virtual or hybrid events, which can be used to complement traditional sport events in the future (Helsen, Derom, Corthours, De Bosschler, Willem & Scheerder, 2021; Westmattmann, Grotenhermen, Sprenger & Schew, 2020). Hybrid sport events allow participants and attendees to participate in a virtual world from any location, while still offering a certain level of realism that makes them credible. Looking forward, it is likely that these types of sport events will be a part of the new normal in the sphere of sport tourism which will require new and specialised knowledge. Sport event tourism stakeholders and role-players must be clear on whether hybrid events will be incorporated into existing sport event tourism strategies or if they require stand-alone strategies of their own. What also needs to be considered is whether hybrid events should resemble traditional events as closely as possible or whether they should be considered through the lens of gamification (Westmattmann et al, 2020). Research conducted by Weed (2020) has shown that during the time of the global COVID-19 lockdown, sport event attendees developed strong feelings of nostalgia - linking memories of attending sport events in the past to the hopes of attending them once again in the future. This nostalgia indicates a clear link to the desire for social interaction and connectedness of sport event attendees, illustrating their desire to once again attend these events as soon as this is possible (Adams, Leizbrandt & Moon, 2011; Weed, 2020). This desire additionally suggests the strong likelihood of the sub sector's rapid recovery post-pandemic as individuals show a significant eagerness to attend future sport events.

Future research directions

In light of what has been proposed in this study and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is suggested that future research be conducted in the fields of management strategies for sport crises in sport event tourism, building resilience in sport event tourism, the sport tourism disaster life cycle, emergency management in sport event tourism and the use of technology in sport event tourism. In the post pandemic redevelopment of sport event tourism, collaboration is an essential strategy for the design and implementation of recovery plans for a sustainable industry (Mollah, Cuskelly & Hill, 2021).

In sport event tourism, collaboration is necessary due to the fact that multiple stakeholders are involved in this niche sub sector. Further research is therefore required which addresses how collaborative sport event tourism plans can be designed and implemented effectively and efficiently. Although collaboration has been recognised as an essential aspects of sport event tourism management prior to the pandemic, the focus has largely been on collaboration for the hosting of mega events and additional research is thus required in the field of small scale sport event tourism collaboration as well as the determinants and effects of these collaborations (Gibson, Kaplanidou & Kang, 2012; Hinch et al, 2016; Ito, 2019; Mollah et al., 2021). A number of researchers in the sport event tourism field (Hemmonsby, Tichaawa & Knott, 2021; Maphanga & Henama, 2019; Shipway, 2018) have proposed that there is a need for the development of suitable resilience strategies so that the sub sector is prepared for future crises. These strategies should include monitoring and evaluation policies and systems that incorporate input from different stakeholders at various levels. Future research into the development of these strategies should have a strong focus on community engagement and the concept of resilience (Shipway, 2018).

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