



Economic Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Sports Tourism in Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Sport tourism serve as economic catalyst of any Nation, therefore, this study investigated Economic impact of covid-19 pandemic on sports tourism in Kwara State. The objectives of this study were to: (i) evaluate the relationship between sports income generated on sports centers and closure of hotels and sports tourism. Descriptive research design of survey type was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of all Hoteliers, staff of sports council and sports marketers. Stratified and purposive sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents. Researchers designed questionnaire was used for the study. The instrument was validated by lecturers in the Department of Human Kinetics Education University of Ilorin and lecturers in the Department of Human Kinetic & Health Education, Kwara State University. A correlation coefficient of 0.68 was obtained. The instrument was administered by the researchers. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistic of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The result of the findings revealed that income generated on sports centers, closure of hotel have economic impact and sport tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara State. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that people should be encouraged to embark on digitalization of sports in term of sales of sports products and viewing of sports events on social media so as to enhance effective participation in sports tourism.

Keywords: *Economic Impact; Sports Tourism; Covid-19 Pandemic; Sports Marketers.*

INTRODUCTION

Sports are major contributors to economic and social development of a community especially through tourism in term of traveling hospitality and visitation to recreational centers for relaxation. However, the emergency of global covid-19 pandemic as an unforeseen situation has hindered the social changes in the livelihood of Africans especially Nigeria. It was noted that government of Nigeria in its response to covid-19

outbreak, the apex monetary authority in Nigeria, Central Bank pronounced that it would provide support to affected household, business, sports and regulate financial institutions and other stakeholders in order to reduced the adverse economic impact of covid-19 pandemic in the country (Ozil, 2020).

Sports are effective in creating employment for people because it is community based which depends on human interaction and as such the implication of investing in sports is for economic tool that would help the country to reduce unemployment during a recession and it can be a valuable insight for the post covid-19 period (New Zealand, 2020). The current pandemic is likely to present great challenges to sports tourism across the globe in terms of maintaining existing participation rate of people traveling for sports programmes and people engaging in sports business such as buying and selling of sports products (Lateef & Samuel, 2020). Furthermore, the outbreak of covid-19 has spread to all corners of the globe, disrupting many aspects of day to day activities. The pandemic has led nations to implement stringent social distancing measures to prevent the spread of the virus and these include stay-at home syndrome, closure of all schools, business and a pause to everyday social life in order to reduce close contact among people and sport is no exception. (World Health Organisation 2020). Sports tourism during the Corona virus pandemic had been several disrupted, visitation to gym for leisure sports activities, visiting recreational centre such as stadium, swimming pool, hotels and other sports facilities have been shut down, football league across the globe and community sports was suspended and other sporting events have also been cancelled. All these stringent measures may have hinder the growth of sports tourism in the community. Italy is facing the major economic downturn and sports tourism is no exception. Most major events such as football and tennis have been disrupted. Essentially revenue from sponsorship, production and distribution of media rights to ticketing and in stadium with hotel business have suddenly dried up. (Luca & Paolo 2020) The covid-19 pandemic diseases have also spread to 196 countries and territories in all the continents in the world. Since then, there has been a concerted effort to curtail the spread of this contagious infection which is believed to be transmitted from human to human. This disease has greatly slowed down the sporting activities and economic activities across the world with many countries under partial or total lockdown (Centre for study of Economics of African 2020). The massive impact of Covid-19 pandemic has resulted into shutdowns and total disruptions of sports events which has cripple the economic sectors across the globe in a manner that was never expected. It is projected that, the spread of covid-19 pandemic

will have serious humanitarian challenges to the countries of the world and especially Africa and Nigeria in particular. Economically the effects have already been felt as travelling restrictions and closure of all borders was announced by the Nigerian government, also the total shutdown of sports facilities such as stadium and closure of all hotels and even sport shops across the world has really hindered the economic growth and the sports tourism. (Yudakeem, Bell & Van Rensburg 2020). Some of the measures put in place by the Nigeria government in its efforts to curtail the further spread of covid-19 pandemic include physical / social distance and staying at home policy in which players / athletes are not allow to train as a team in the stadium, suspension of as a team in the stadium, suspension of football league, workers are expected to work from their individual home and other public or social gatherings of all kinds were banned. This policy imposed has bring about limitations in spending which result in decline of consumption of goods and services especially in the area of viewing centers of showing English premier league on television which serve as a means of livelihood to some people (Oruonye & Ahmed 2020). Hotels and other recreational centers have responded by shutting down or cut down the wages and salaries of their workers. The potential effect of this, may constitute to high rate of unemployment and increase in poverty level in Nigeria (Ozil & Arun, 2020). The organization of sports events that was on-going before the ravage of covid-19 pandemic such as professional football league across the globe, and even preparation for World Olympic champion that is Tokyo 020 and National Sports festival in Nigeria which is known as the largest sports event in Nigeria had to stop during the lockdown and the implication of this is that no income would be generated as a result of this cancellation.

However, sports tourism is associated with the hotels business and accommodation of players as a tourist during the league and other recreational sports centre across the state usually enhance economic growth. Moreso, it is certain that covid-19 pandemic would have significant impact on sports tourism and the potential effects would be felt on the economic growth in the society sports tourism together with arts and recreation relies extensively on human contact and as such this would be affected by the pandemic. (Lucas & Paolo 2020). Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destructions outside their normal places of residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations with availability sports facilities put in place and services render to cater for their needs during the visitation that brings about comfortability (Vijaya 2016).

Collins-Kreiner and Wall (2015) observed sports tourism as the movement or travelling abroad of people from one destination to another for a short period of time which involves the experiences of the tourist. Tourist also tends to give support to local handicrafts and cultural activities both in urban and rural areas. The expenditure of the tourist usually have a multiplier effect on economy and it also generates. Considerable tax revenue for local economy. Tourism has become a major and an integral part of nation economy in term of social and physical development through sports. The constituents of the tourism industry are varied ranging from small scale business operating at local levels to multinationals. Furthermore, those different components are closely linked to each other. The tourism industry consists of the following: (1) the hotel and hospitality; this includes lodges, resorts, tourist home, guest houses, restaurants and eatery among others. (2) transportation services which includes air, water, road, rail and foot. (3) entertainment services that entails social halls and sports gathering. (4) government agencies that includes Yankari game reserve, Obudu resorts and various National park in Nigeria (Olalekan 2020).

The economic impact of covid-19 on sports business are as follow, closure of sports facilities such as stadium and suspension of football league which gives room for people to go into stadium by buying ticket to watch live matching are no longer in existence due to this pandemic. Also traveling of people who deals with sports products as a medium of business or market entity across the globe through flights to move sports product from one destinations to another had been shut down due to embargo place on airline traffic and closure of all borders by the government, this also cripple has the economic growth of a community (Oyebade, 2020). The traveling of people from one destinations to another are key players in the tourism sector in term of teams traveling to honour away matches and even hosting of major football tournament that would pave way for people to traveling from one country to another and in turns, it often boost the economy of the host community (Olalekan, 2020). The hotel business is one of the major revenue earners which have the potential of creating thousands of jobs annually. The hotels and hospitality sector of the sports tourism have also had their own share of the challenges from the covid-19 lockdown policy of the government of Nigeria with government pronouncement of stay-at-home syndrome policy and social distancing, movement restrictions, suspension of football league, closure of al borders and sports centers across the country pose a threat on the nation's economy (Ozil & Arun 2020).

During this lockdown, many hotels have recorded decline in bookings due to the covid-19 guidelines protocol that must be strictly adhere to as it was announced by the government. Hotels across the globe witnessed booking cancellations worth billions of dollars and hotel business had to seek for \$150 billion bailout (Nicholas, 2020). The hotel and hospitality industry was enormous. However, the impact of covid-19 pandemic will make it extremely difficult for many of the tourism industry of the tourism industry's players to continue to pay their staff with a drastic drop in sales and income resulting in loss of job.

Some hotels are already close down due to low patronage and inability to pay their workers salary and electricity bills (Oruonye & Ahmed 2020). While many have already reduced their staff strength and others have slash their workers' salaries by 50 percent as it was adopted in the sports industry especially in football where the sports administrators cut down the salaries of football players.

The recent outbreak of covid-19 and total lockdown policy as a stringent measure put in place by the government has really pose a threat on Nation's economy especially in the sports tourism business. The implication and impact of Covid-19 pandemic on sports tourism is as a result of no income generated through gate fees ticket from football fans across the country during the league matches and also total closure of sports centers in order to avoid crowd gathering in the community which in turns has affected the people life's especially those who earn their living through sports.

Sports business has also witnesses tremendous fall-out due to the fact that sports shops had to be close down in term of buying and selling of sports product whether within or outside the stadium. The researchers also observed that, the stringent measures of staying at home policy and closure of interstate border has direct impact on business in the study area, all the hotels were shutdown and this has prevent people from patronizing them during this lockdown. Increased in shutdown of hotels and traveling bookings has resulted in millions losing their jobs in the tourism sectors. This and many more motivates the researchers to investigate economic implications of covid-19 pandemic on sports tourism in Kwara State, Nigeria.

METHOD

Descriptive research design of survey type was employed for this study. This research design is considered appropriate for the study because of the relative

characteristics of the respondents with the view to examine the economic implications during covid-19 pandemic on sports tourism. The population consists of 100 respondents. The sampling techniques used for this study were stratified, purposive and random sampling techniques. Stratified sampling technique was used to group the respondents into 3 strata, hoteliers, sports marketers and staff of sports council. Randomly, 64 registered hoteliers in the study area that consist of hotel managers, receptionists, gym instructors and cashier were sampled while purposive all the 30 sports marketers in the stadium were sampled. Purposively the Director of sports, Stadium manager, F.A Chairman and Secretary and the two Accountants in the Sports Council were sampled.

In all 100 respondents were sampled for this study. Researchers structured questionnaire was used to gathered data for the study. The instrument was validated by two lecturers in the department of Human Kinetics Education University of Ilorin and two lecturers in the department of Human Kinetics & Health Education Kwara State University Malete. The instrument was found reliable and correlation coefficient of 0.068 was obtained. The administration of the instrument was done online through whatsapp. The data collected were analysed using inferential statics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the postulated hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between income generated on sports events and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table 1.

Pearson analysis on relationship between income generated on sports events and sports tourism

Variable	No	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	Cal.r value	Critical p.value	Remark
Income generated on sports event	100	24.8	10.2	98	18.50	0.00	
Sports tourism		15.24	7.34				

P < 0.05

Table 1 revealed the calculated r-value of 0.00 computed at 0.00 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated “r” value is greater than the critical p-value, hence the null hypothesis that stated that, there is no significant relationship between income

generated on sports events and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state was hereby rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between income generated on sports events and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between closure of hotels and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state, Nigeria.

Table 2.

Show Pearson “r” analysis on relationship between closure of Hotels and Sports tourism.

Variable	No	Mean	Standard deviation	df	Cal. r value	Critical p.value	Remark
Closure of Hotels	100	21.9	6.41	98	13.21	0.00	Hypothesis Rejected
Sports tourism		12.2	3.62				

P < 0.05

Table 2 indicated the calculated r-value of 13.21 and critical p-value of 0.00 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the critical p-value, hence the null hypothesis that stated that, there is no significant relationship between closure of hotels and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state was hereby rejected. This means that, there was a significant relationship between closure of hotels and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state, Nigeria.

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between sales of sports products and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state, Nigeria.

Table 3.

Revealed Pearson “r” analysis on relationship between sale of sports products and sports tourism.

Variable	No	Mean	Standard deviation	df	Cal.r value	Critical p.value	Remark
Sales of sports products	100	7.6	10.56	98	15.01	0.00	Hypothesis Rejected
Sports tourism		14.11	8.50				

P < 0.05

Table 3 show the calculated r-value of 15.01 and critical p-value of 0.000 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the critical p-value, therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between sales of sports products and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state was hereby rejected. This implies that, there was a significant relationship between

sales of sports products and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state, Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings from tested hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant relationship between income generated on sports events and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in Kwara state, Nigeria. This finding buttressed the view of Collins-Kreiner and Wall (2015) that asserted that tourism gives supports to local handicrafts and cultural activities both in rural and urban areas. The expenditure of tourist usually have multiplier effect on nation's economy. Similarly Vijaya (2016) stressed that the cancellation of football league in all the African countries has a negative effect on nations economic because the income generated from these league is enormous in term of sponsorship deal, T.v right and gate fees ticket which served as a considerable tax revenue for the government.

The findings from tested hypothesis two indicated that, there was a significant relationship between closure of hotels and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in the study area. This finding tallied with the view of Ozil and Arun (2020) who submitted that, the economic losses of the covid-19 pandemic on hotel business was enormous and that some hotels are already close down due to low patronage and inability to pay their workers salary and electricity bills. In the same view Aruonye and Ahmed (2020) pointed out that during the lockdown, many hotels have recorded decline in bookings due to the covid-19 pandemic guideline protocol that must be strictly adhere to and the implications of this on sports tourism is not encouraging. Also the hotels businesses of the sports tourism have their own share of challenges from the covid-19 lockdown policy and this also pose a threat on a nation's economy.

The finding from tested hypothesis three revealed that, there was a significant relationship between sales of sports product and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic in the study area. This result supported the findings of Oyebade (2020) who affirmed that sports tourism interm of traveling from one place to another, buying and selling of sport products such as sports equipment and facilities are business that some people engaged in to earn their daily living (livelihood) and the total lockdown and close of sports centers across the country has really affect sports business which has serious implication on our economy. Similarly, Yudakeen, Bell and Van Rensburg (2020) affirmed that economically, the effects of covid-19 has really been felt on nation's economy as

travelling restriction or closure of all borders, total shut down of sports facilities, closure of hotels and closure of sports shops.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn that there was a significant relationship between income generated on sports events and sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic, that there was a significance impact of closure of hotels and sales of sports products on sports tourism during covid-19 pandemic crisis in Kwara state, Nigeria. This implied that government should aid hostel and sports business in the state through palliatives measure by way of giving out soft loan so as to assist people in hotel business,

Suggestions

The study suggested that, the general public should be enlighten on the important of virtual participation in sports in order to encourage sports tourism. also people should be encourage to embark on digitalization on sports in term of sales of sports products online in order to promote effective participation in sports tourism.

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