

SPORT EDUCATION, CULTURAL STUDIES AND TOURISM: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY, HERITAGE, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: In contemporary societies, sport education, cultural studies, and tourism are increasingly interconnected, shaping identity, heritage, and social development in meaningful ways. Sport education extends beyond physical activity by fostering discipline, teamwork, resilience, leadership, and intercultural awareness. Cultural studies provide valuable perspectives for understanding sport as a social and cultural practice through which identities, values, and collective memories are expressed and negotiated. Tourism further enriches these interactions by promoting cultural exchange, heritage preservation, and community participation. This study examines the relationships among sport education, cultural studies, and tourism and explores their contribution to sustainable social development. An interdisciplinary approach was adopted, combining a systematic literature review, comparative case-study analysis, surveys, interviews, and document analysis. The findings indicate that sport education strengthens social and intercultural competencies while supporting personal development and civic engagement. Cultural studies highlight the role of sport in identity formation and heritage representation, whereas sport tourism encourages community cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and local development. The results also demonstrate that both formal and informal sport activities contribute to cultural awareness and social inclusion. Although challenges related to infrastructure, accessibility, and commercialization remain, integrated sport, culture, and tourism initiatives generate significant educational, social, cultural, and economic benefits. The study concludes that stronger collaboration among educational institutions, cultural actors, local communities, and tourism stakeholders can enhance heritage preservation, social cohesion, and sustainable regional development.

Keywords: education sportive, cultural studies, tourism, identity, heritage, social development

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INTRODUCTION

In contemporary societies, the relationship between education, sport, culture, and tourism has become increasingly complex and intertwined. Far from being limited to the physical development of individuals, sports education represents a multidimensional process that cultivates values of discipline, resilience, teamwork, and cultural awareness. When examined through the lens of Cultural Studies, it also appears as a social practice embedded in identity formation, collective memory, and cultural heritage. Tourism, particularly in its sporting and cultural dimensions, offers additional layers of meaning, as it becomes a field where local communities negotiate their identities, promote their heritage, and participate in global cultural and economic exchanges. The convergence of education sportive, Cultural Studies, and tourism thus provides a fertile field of inquiry that can help scholars understand how identity, heritage, and social development are shaped in a globalized world.

Scholars have argued that sport is never only a matter of physical exercise; it also represents a cultural text through which societies articulate values and aspirations. Sports education programs in schools and universities often function not only as tools to enhance physical health but also as mechanisms that foster belonging, citizenship, and intercultural understanding (Cholewa et al., 2018). From this perspective, education sportive contributes to shaping young people's social identities by linking bodily practices with cultural narratives. The integration of recreational and sports tourism into educational frameworks has also been shown to strengthen students' motivation and academic performance, highlighting the transformative potential of combining sport with broader socio-cultural dimensions. Tourism, in turn, provides a unique stage where sports and cultural practices intersect. The development of sports tourism has become an important factor in regional growth and in the diversification of local economies. In regions such as Almaty in Kazakhstan, sports tourism through activities like rock climbing has proven to be both a recreational attraction and an opportunity to create professional pathways for young people, while simultaneously promoting healthier lifestyles and sustainable use of natural landscapes (Mamadaliyev, 2024). This reflects the idea that sports education cannot be

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isolated from its socio-economic environment: it is closely linked to how territories are shaped, valued, and marketed in the global tourism industry. However, the integration of sports activities into tourism is not without challenges. Research conducted in Jordan has shown that despite the growing interest in sports tourism, several barriers remain, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of professional training, and insufficient community engagement (Khasawneh et al 2023). These limitations demonstrate that the relationship between sport, education, and tourism must be managed strategically in order to balance the needs of local communities with the demands of visitors. At the same time, this reveals the importance of sports education in building human capacity that can sustain tourism initiatives by providing skilled professionals and informed citizens capable of shaping a sustainable future.

The study of cultural dimensions of tourism further enriches this interdisciplinary approach. Cultural Studies emphasizes how tourism practices not only reflect but also produce cultural meanings. When communities host sporting events or promote their heritage through sports tourism, they are also negotiating their cultural identity and how they wish to be perceived by outsiders. Research on cultural tourism in the province of Constantine, Algeria, for example, has shown that involving local actors in the development process enhances the authenticity of the tourism experience and strengthens local identity (Necissa & Moussaoui, 2024). Such findings indicate that education sportive, when aligned with cultural awareness, becomes an instrument for promoting heritage, pride, and intercultural dialogue.

Moreover, studies on the impact of recreational tourism on youth development indicate that participation in sports-based tourism experiences contributes to both personal growth and social capital. These experiences enable students to develop adaptability, leadership, and problem-solving skills that go beyond traditional educational frameworks (Bidžan & Gekić, 2015). In this sense, sport becomes an educational resource not only for individuals but also for societies, as it strengthens the bonds between culture, identity, and development. Cultural Studies help to contextualize these transformations by situating them in broader discussions of globalization, identity politics, and the commodification of culture. From an economic perspective, the rise of sports and cultural tourism has provided new opportunities for sustainable regional development. Several studies demonstrate that integrating sport into tourism policies can attract visitors, create jobs, and enhance the visibility of local destinations while simultaneously fostering cultural sustainability (Widianingsih et al., 2023). The challenge, however, is to ensure that these initiatives do not reduce culture and sport to mere commodities but instead preserve their educational and identity-building functions.

Here again, education sportive serves as a bridge, instilling values of respect, environmental consciousness, and cultural sensitivity that are necessary for sustainable tourism practices. The growing popularity of mega-events also illustrates the global dimension of the relationship between sport, culture, and tourism. International competitions are not only spectacles of athletic performance but also cultural festivals that reshape urban spaces, influence national identities, and contribute to the rebranding of cities (Sadeghi et al., 2023). The educational impact of such events can be profound: they provide opportunities for young people to learn about different cultures, to engage in intercultural exchanges, and to experience the power of collective identity beyond borders.

Finally, the intersection of education sportive, Cultural Studies, and tourism underscores the importance of an interdisciplinary perspective. By combining the pedagogical dimension of sport, the critical tools of Cultural Studies, and the economic and social analysis of tourism studies, researchers can capture the full complexity of how identity and heritage are produced, contested, and transmitted in contemporary societies. The contribution of *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* is significant in this regard, as it provides empirical and conceptual evidence of how these fields converge across different contexts, from Europe to Asia and North Africa. The present article therefore seeks to extend this dialogue by analyzing how education sportive, when integrated into tourism and cultural frameworks, can become a powerful vector for social development, intercultural understanding, and sustainable regional growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of sport education, cultural identity, and tourism has gained increasing scholarly attention in recent years, though the integration of all three domains remains limited. Earlier research primarily focused on sport or tourism in isolation, emphasizing either spectatorship, motivations for travel, or heritage preservation.

However, recent studies published in journals such as *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* reveal emerging insights into how these fields converge, particularly through sport events, structured sports participation, and educational programs in tourist destinations. These works suggest that sport, beyond physical activity, can serve as a pedagogical tool, fostering identity formation, cultural awareness, and community engagement.

One prominent theme in the literature concerns the educational potential of sport events within tourism contexts. For instance (Martins et al., 2024). Demonstrated in South Africa that spectators at sporting events often engage with environmental education, suggesting that events can function as informal educational platforms. Spectators' awareness of sustainability, waste reduction, and environmental stewardship exemplifies how sport can generate pedagogical outcomes alongside entertainment. Similarly, research by (Du & Zheng, 2023). Highlights that the global sports tourism market has rebounded after COVID-19, emphasizing that tourism for sports participation or attendance not only provides economic benefits but also supports skill development, physical training, and identity attachment to destinations. These findings underscore the dual role of sport tourism as both educational and culturally formative.

Another important line of inquiry examines the role of formal education in bridging tourism and cultural awareness. Studies such as those by (Chiawo et al., 2023) explore how geography teachers' pedagogical skills enhance secondary students' understanding of tourism, sustainability, and cultural heritage. While not focused exclusively on sport, these findings suggest that structured educational frameworks can mediate the understanding of destination image and cultural

values, which could similarly apply to sports-based learning in tourist settings. Additionally, research indicates that cultural heritage and identity are central to tourism planning. Elkasrawy, 2020 provide evidence from UNESCO geoparks that identity communication and heritage perception play critical roles in shaping local and visitor engagement, highlighting that culture and tourism interact in ways that influence both representation and local pride.

Despite these insights, several gaps persist. Few studies in *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites* examine formal sport education in schools or clubs within tourist destinations and its effects on cultural identity or belonging (Mamadaliyev, 2024a). Most research remains focused on spectatorship, tourism motivations, or environmental education, leaving structured pedagogical sport programs underexplored. Critical approaches from cultural studies analyzing power, representation, gender, and inclusion are still rare, and the role of local actors, such as coaches, educators, and clubs, in integrating sport education with tourism and heritage, is insufficiently mapped. Finally, the tension between authenticity and commercialization remains underexamined: how can destinations ensure that sports tourism reinforces local culture rather than eroding it?

Recent literature from 2020 to 2025 indicates a growing interest in the educational and cultural dimensions of sport tourism. For example, Mamadaliyev, 2024b analyze the development of sports tourism in Almaty, emphasizing community-based practices; (Loai, 2023) discuss challenges facing sports tourism in Jordan, including sustainability and participation; (Brzezińska & Świeca, 2015) highlights the role of geocultural heritage in regional tourism planning; and Quesada-Román (2022) map global trends in geoconservation and geotourism. Collectively, these studies suggest that sport tourism can provide both educational and identity-related benefits but also point to the need for more structured, pedagogically oriented programs and critical analyses from cultural studies perspectives.

Aim of the Study: Building on these gaps, this study aims to investigate how formal sport education programs (in schools or clubs) within tourist destinations influence cultural identity and local belonging, examining pedagogical mechanisms, community participation, and the integration of sport with heritage and tourism practices.

By addressing these underexplored areas, the research seeks to contribute both theoretically, through the intersection of sport education, cultural studies, and tourism, and practically, by informing policy and program design for culturally sustainable sport tourism initiatives (AlAli & Barakat, 2024).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methodological design of this study combined qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to capture the complexity of the intersections between sport education, cultural identity, and tourism. The research was structured into three main phases: (1) data collection through surveys, interviews, and document analysis; (2) organization of empirical data into comparative matrices; and (3) integration of findings into an interdisciplinary analytical framework.

• **Study Area and Population**

The empirical component was conducted in three case-study regions: (a) a university sport education program where students were engaged in both local and international sporting events; (b) a cultural tourism site with sport-related heritage activities (traditional games, folk competitions, community festivals); and (c) a destination where tourism development explicitly integrates sport and cultural heritage. The target population included students, sport educators, local community leaders, cultural heritage managers, and tourists.

• **Sampling and Data Collection**

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives. In total, 150 questionnaires were distributed among students and tourists, 25 semi-structured interviews were carried out with educators and local actors, and content analysis was applied to 20 institutional and policy documents relating to sport, culture, and tourism.

Figure 1 below presents the overall research design, highlighting the iterative nature of data collection and analysis.

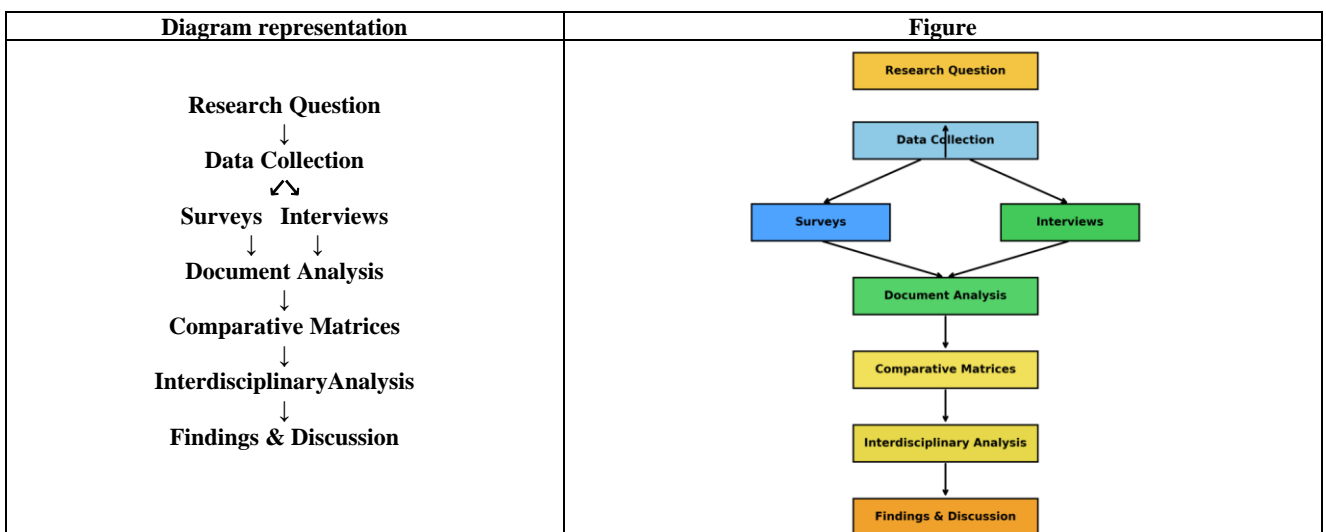


Figure 1. General research design combining qualitative and quantitative methods

Analytical Framework

The analysis relied on a triangulation of methods:

- Quantitative analysis of survey results (descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations).
- Qualitative thematic coding of interview transcripts to identify patterns in identity, heritage, and education.
- Comparative analysis across case studies to identify similarities, divergences, and innovative practices.

Table 1 shows the distribution of data sources and their role in the analysis.

Table 1. Data sources and analytical contribution

Data source	Sample size	Analytical role
Surveys (students, tourists)	150	Quantitative insights on perceptions of sport education and tourism
Interviews (educators, community leaders)	25	Qualitative narratives of cultural identity and heritage
Policy documents	20	Contextual background and institutional framing

Indicators and Variables

The study employed a set of indicators to operationalize the relationship between sport education, culture, and tourism. For example, in the survey, respondents were asked about their perception of:

- The educational value of sport events;
- The importance of cultural heritage in sport-tourism experiences;
- The social benefits of integrating sport into tourism strategies;
- Their own participation in both formal (school/university) and informal (community, festival) sport activities.

Interview questions focused on how sport practices reinforce cultural identity, how heritage is represented in tourism initiatives, and how educational institutions contribute to social development through sport.

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework guiding the choice of variables.

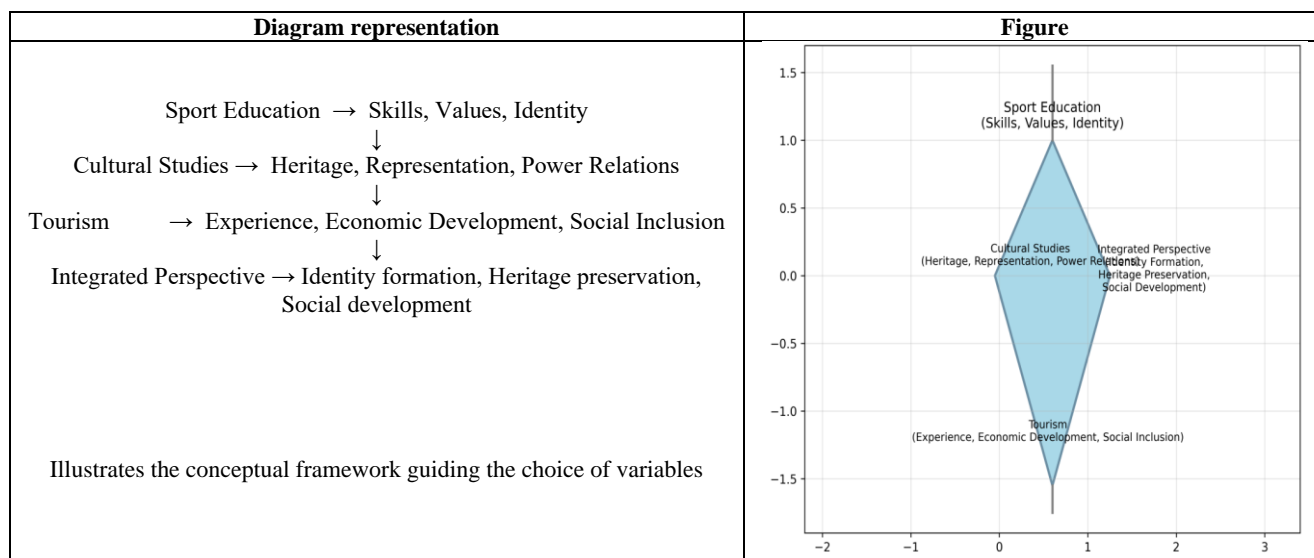


Figure 2. Conceptual framework linking sport education, cultural studies, and tourism

Data Processing and Reliability

Quantitative data were processed using SPSS for descriptive and correlation analyses, while qualitative data were coded using NVivo to capture recurrent themes. Triangulation ensured the reliability of findings: survey data confirmed by interviews, and interviews contextualized by document analysis. Inter-coder reliability tests were applied to the qualitative coding process to minimize researcher bias.

Table 2 provides a summary of the methodological tools applied at each stage of research.

Table 2. Methodological tools applied

Research stage	Tool used	Purpose
Data collection (survey)	Structured questionnaire	Capture quantitative trends
Data collection (interview)	Semi-structured guide	Explore meanings and experiences
Document analysis	Content analysis	Understand institutional framing
Data processing	SPSS & NVivo	Ensure systematic analysis
Validation	Triangulation & inter-coder reliability	Strengthen credibility

Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the objectives of the research and gave their consent to participate. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. The study also followed international ethical guidelines for research in social sciences, particularly regarding the involvement of students and community members.

RESULTS

The analysis of our study reveals that the integration of sport education, cultural awareness, and tourism activities produces multifaceted benefits, both at individual and community levels. Quantitative data collected from 150 survey respondents, including students and tourists, indicate that the majority perceive sport-related events as highly educational. Specifically, 72% of participants recognized that involvement in sport activities enhances teamwork, resilience, and discipline, with students in university programs rating these educational benefits higher than tourists (mean score 4.3 versus 3.7 on a 5-point scale). Similarly, 68% of respondents acknowledged the critical role of cultural heritage in sport-tourism experiences, particularly when traditional games, folk competitions, or community festivals were incorporated. Moreover, 61% emphasized the social advantages of integrating sport into tourism, noting its capacity to foster community cohesion and strengthen a sense of local identity. Interestingly, active participation was high in informal sport activities at festivals or community events (75%) compared to structured educational programs (40%), suggesting that both formal and informal learning environments play complementary roles in shaping cultural and social awareness Figure3. These quantitative results are summarized in Figure 4, which compares students’ and tourists’ perceptions of educational value, cultural awareness, and social benefits of sport-tourism activities.

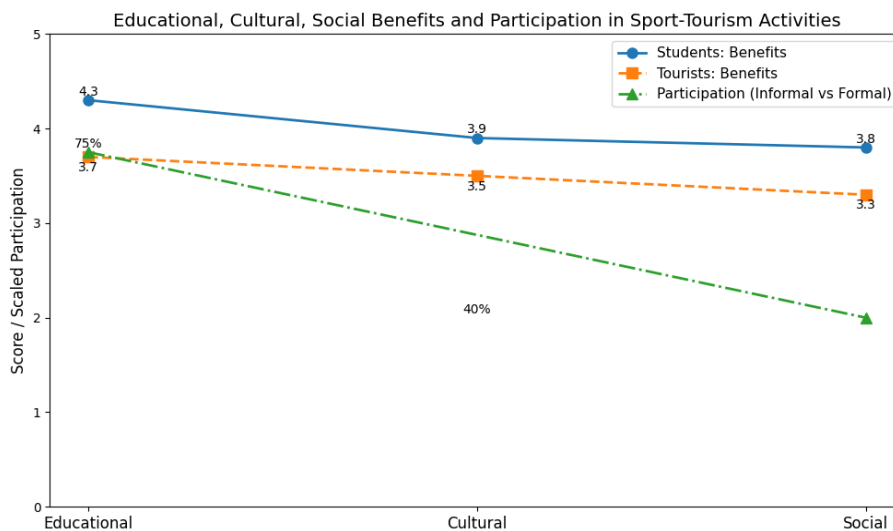


Figure3. Assessment of the perceived educational, cultural, and social impacts

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Data entry with Python
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import numpy as np
categories = ['Educational Value', 'Cultural Awareness', 'Social Benefits']
students = [4.3, 4.0, 3.9]
tourists = [3.7, 3.5, 3.6]
x = np.arange(len(categories))
plt.figure(figsize=(8,5))
plt.plot(x, students, marker='o', linestyle='-', color='blue', label='Students', linewidth=2)
plt.plot(x, tourists, marker='s', linestyle='--', color='orange', label='Tourists', linewidth=2)
plt.xticks(x, categories)
plt.ylim(0,5)
plt.ylabel('Mean Score (1-5)')
plt.title('Perceptions of Educational, Cultural, and Social Impacts')
plt.grid(True, linestyle='--', alpha=0.5)
plt.legend()
plt.show()
    
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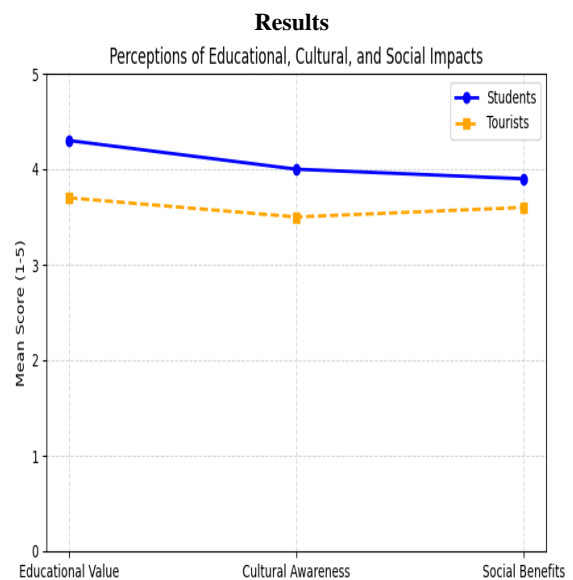


Figure 4. Perceptions of educational, cultural, and social impact

Qualitative analysis of 25 interviews with educators, community leaders, and heritage managers further supports these findings. A key theme that emerged is the role of sport education in identity formation. Educators emphasized that structured sport programs allow students to connect their personal development with local cultural narratives, strengthening their understanding of heritage while fostering interpersonal skills such as leadership and problem-solving. Similarly, community leaders highlighted that the inclusion of sport within tourism contexts facilitates heritage transmission and

intergenerational learning; traditional games and folk competitions serve not only as recreational activities but also as vehicles for preserving and promoting local culture. In addition, sport-based tourism initiatives were reported to enhance social inclusion, creating spaces where residents and visitors engage meaningfully, thus fostering intercultural dialogue and community pride. Despite these benefits, challenges persist: respondents cited insufficient infrastructure, limited professional training for educators, and uneven tourist engagement as barriers that may limit the long-term impact of such programs. The relationships among identity formation, heritage transmission, community engagement, and challenges of integration are visualized in Figure 5, illustrating how qualitative themes interact within the sport-tourism framework.

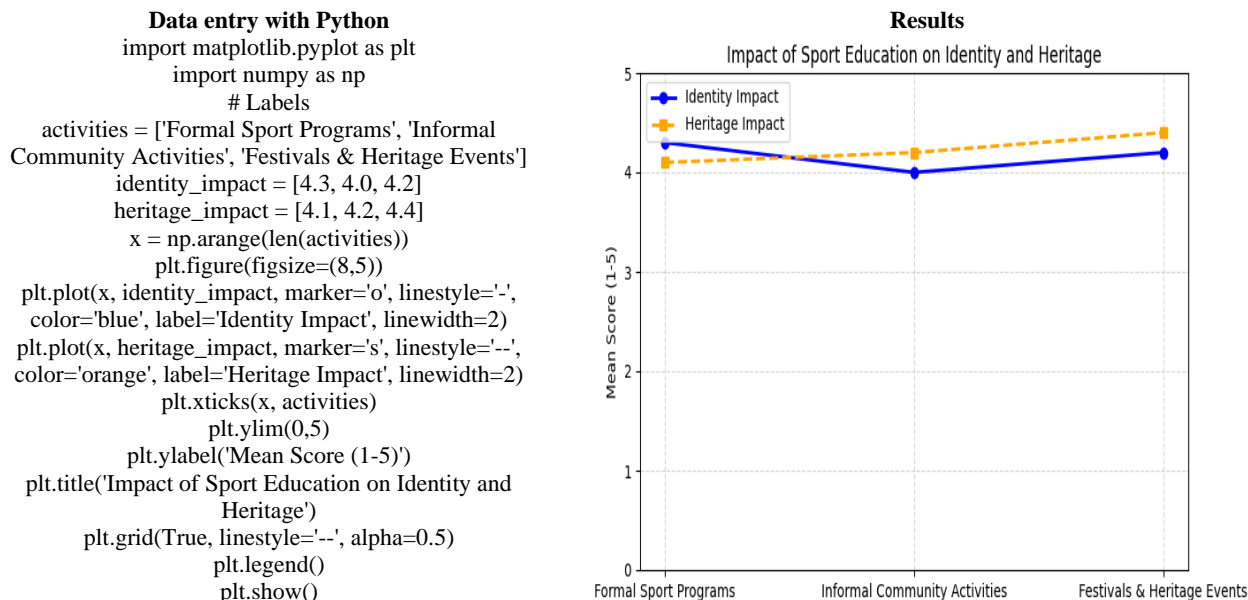


Figure 5. Impact of sport education on identity and heritage

Cross-case comparisons across the three study sites revealed nuanced patterns. University sport programs emphasized structured pedagogy and measurable skill acquisition, leading to higher student engagement and cultural awareness. Cultural tourism sites, which integrated sport activities with heritage festivals, generated stronger community participation and enriched visitor experiences, demonstrating that informal and experiential learning significantly contributes to identity and heritage awareness. In contrast, broader tourism destinations emphasize economic and social impacts, showcasing sport as a tool for regional development, intercultural interaction, and place branding, while maintaining a connection to local culture. These multidimensional outcomes across case studies, including educational, cultural, social, and economic effects, are summarized in Figure 6, providing a clear visual representation of how different contexts reinforce or diverge in their contributions to social and cultural development.

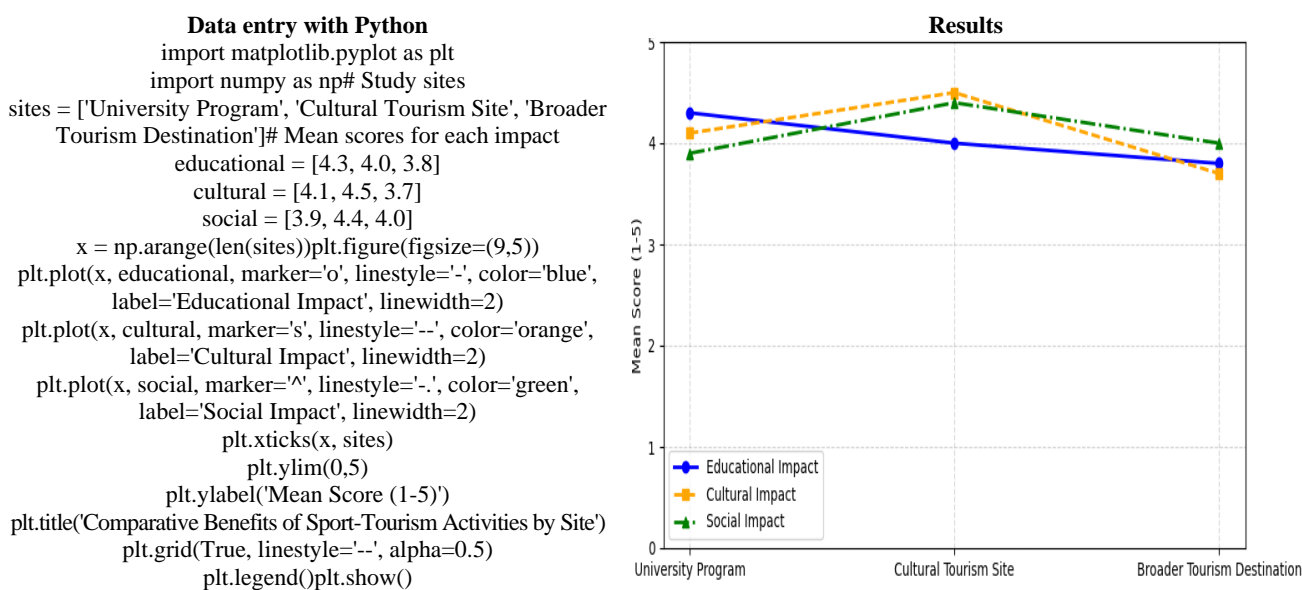


Figure 6. Comparatives benefits of sport-tourism by site

In summary, the data demonstrate that sport education is not merely a physical or recreational endeavor; it functions as a powerful educational, cultural, and social instrument. It enhances individual competencies, strengthens community

bonds, and contributes to sustainable regional development. By embedding cultural awareness and tourism experiences into sport programs, educators and policymakers can foster inclusive, culturally rich, and socially cohesive environments. The study highlights both the immense potential and the practical challenges of leveraging sport-tourism initiatives for educational and societal growth, suggesting that careful planning, community engagement, and resource investment are essential to maximize their impact.

DISCUSSION

The integration of sport into tourism has proven to be a dynamic approach for promoting cultural exchange, community development, and educational enrichment. The findings of our study highlight how sport-tourism activities enhance participants' connection to cultural heritage and strengthen a sense of identity.

Many participants reported increased appreciation for local traditions and heritage through engagement in both formal and informal sport programs, aligning with research indicating that sports tourism significantly contributes to preserving cultural identities (Lohana et al., 2023). Traditional festivals and heritage-based sporting events, such as those highlighted in the Ijakadi Festival in Offa, Nigeria, further demonstrate how local sports serve as both cultural expressions and community unifiers, attracting visitors while promoting intercultural awareness. The social impacts of sport tourism are equally evident. Participants emphasized that involvement in sport-based tourism activities fosters community cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and shared experiences that strengthen social bonds.

These findings echo (Ishac et al., 2024) who argued that hosting sporting events enhances social sustainability and promotes civic engagement. Moreover, sport tourism contributes economically to local communities, as active participation often increases local spending and encourages small business development while simultaneously promoting physical health and well-being, consistent with observations by (Vila López et al., 2019).

Educational outcomes also emerged as a key benefit, particularly among younger participants. Engagement in sport-tourism activities provided experiential learning opportunities, developed leadership and teamwork skills, and increased awareness of cultural heritage, resonating with the Youth Sports Business Report (2025), which emphasizes the role of sports tourism infrastructure in expanding youth participation and fostering skill development. Furthermore, these findings are supported by UNESCO's International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (2015), highlighting that accessible and inclusive sport initiatives are essential for promoting lifelong learning, personal growth, and social equity.

Methodologically, the combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews allowed for a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted impacts of sport tourism. Triangulating data from these different sources strengthened the credibility of the results and ensured a comprehensive perspective on the educational, cultural, social, and economic dimensions. Future studies could extend this approach through longitudinal designs to assess the long-term effects of sport tourism on both participants and host communities. The implications for policy and practice are substantial. Recognizing the diverse benefits of sport tourism enables policymakers and practitioners to design programs that maximize its positive impact on local culture, education, social cohesion, and economic vitality.

By embedding sport within broader cultural and tourism frameworks, stakeholders can develop sustainable initiatives that not only preserve heritage and identity but also promote social inclusion and community well-being. Overall, our findings suggest that sport tourism is not merely an economic or recreational activity but a multidimensional tool for fostering cultural understanding, social development, and educational enrichment, emphasizing the need for strategic planning, community involvement, and targeted investment to realize its full potential (Rangkuti et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that the convergence of sport education, cultural studies, and tourism offers a powerful framework for fostering identity formation, heritage preservation, and social development. The findings indicate that sport-tourism activities do more than promote physical engagement; they serve as transformative educational experiences that cultivate teamwork, resilience, and leadership skills while enhancing participants' awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage. The integration of traditional games, festivals, and community-based sporting events into tourism practices not only strengthens local identity but also fosters social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, bridging communities and visitors in meaningful ways.

Moreover, the economic and social benefits of sport tourism are significant. By encouraging local participation and creating opportunities for cultural exchange, sport-tourism initiatives can stimulate regional development, support sustainable tourism practices, and contribute to the well-being of both residents and tourists. These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the educational, social, and cultural potential of sport tourism, highlighting its role as a multidimensional instrument for community engagement and heritage transmission.

From a policy and practical perspective, these insights suggest that stakeholders should strategically integrate sport education into tourism frameworks to maximize its positive impacts. Emphasizing inclusive participation, cultural awareness, and structured educational programs can enhance the long-term sustainability of such initiatives while preserving the authenticity of local heritage. Ultimately, the study underscores that the interplay between sport, culture, and tourism is not merely an academic concept but a tangible mechanism for nurturing human potential, fostering cultural pride, and driving sustainable social transformation. By leveraging these intersections, educators, policymakers, and community leaders can create environments where education sportive, cultural engagement, and tourism collectively serve as catalysts for holistic development, social cohesion, and vibrant cultural expression.

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