# TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENCE BUILDING
# IN SPORT EVENT TOURISM IN THE DEVELOPING CONTEXT

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**Abstract:** This paper adds to the existing body of knowledge on sport event tourism by proposing the development of a framework for resilience This paper adds to the existing body of knowledge on sport event tourism by proposing the development of a framework for resilience building and sustainability. The proposed framework draws on previous research on sport event tourism and resilience. Grounding the study is a multidimensional conceptual framework based on the sport tourism framework, stakeholder theory and resilience theory. Using a mixed methods approach, phase 1 of the research gathered in depth qualitative data from 28 key informants in sport event tourism on crisis management and resilience building in the sector. The second phase of the study utilised quantitative methods, gathering responses from 1002 sport event tourists to determine their future sport event tourism behaviour, requirements and willingness to attend future sport events. The proposed framework presented in the study provides guidelines on how resilience can be achieved in sport event tourism. It also illustrates that external shocks can be used as tools to develop and enhance resilience in sport event tourism through sophisticated stakeholder engagement, the development of guiding policy that addresses resilience capacity building, and the reconsideration of the sport event tourism product as one that is adaptable and dynamic. The findings of the study show that the resilience of the sport event tourism sector is dependent on a product that is adaptable and flexible, meets the needs of changing demands, and which is developed through collaborative efforts. Stakeholders must be willing to adapt their previous offerings by using new innovations and developing new relationships along the sport event tourism value chain

**Keywords:** sport event tourism, resilience, developing context, sustainability, South Africa, stakeholder collaboration

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## INTRODUCTION

Sport event tourism is defined as travel for attendance, participation or to spectate at a sport event (Delpy, 1998). The hosting of sport events as a catalyst for tourism growth and development is a notion that has grown substantially over the last decade, gaining recognition amongst academics, governments and event practitioners (Nyikana & Tichaawa, 2020; Vassiliadis et al., 2021). This has been the case due to the potential that these events have to stimulate tourism-related activities, generate profits, promote the development of tourism services, attract international investment, create employment opportunities and encourage urban development and regeneration (Chaigasem & Leruska, 2020; Daniels & Tichaawa, 2021). Hemmonsbey & Tichaawa (2018, 2019) note that in the context of the developing world, destinations have used the hosting of sport events to lure tourists and for destination branding opportunities, as was seen in the hosting of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and the 1995 Rugby World Cup, 2003 Cricket World Cup and 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. The hosting of these events act as a catalyst for these destinations to reap benefits beyond the traditional triple bottom line in terms of improved destination brand awareness, and the cultivation of positive and unique tourism brand messages that stimulate memorable travel experiences (Hemmonsbey & Tichaawa, 2020).

Despite the widely acknowledged impacts of crises and external events such as the COVID 19 pandemic on the global sport event tourism sector, Baum (2020) suggests that these events are merely an amplification of what is considered normal practice in the sector, but that the rapid onset of the pandemic further illuminated the potential negative impacts of these norms. Pandemics, crises and catastrophic events are not new and will continue to be experienced. For the negative impacts of these to be mitigated and to ensure future sustainability, these events should be considered as opportunities for the sport event tourism sector to rebuild, innovative and reinvent itself in order to become more resilient (Prayag, 2020).

Where higher levels of resilience can be achieved, this would result in a sport event tourism sector that is able to adapt to external impacts, coping with these changes without losing the essence of its structure and functions (Adger et al., 2002; Daniels & Tichaawa, 2023). In order to achieve these elevated levels of resilience, this paper presents a framework for resilience building in sport event tourism. The framework, built upon primary data collected for the purposes of the study, as well as the sport tourism framework, the stakeholder theory and the resilience theory, offers a flexible approach which

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can be applied and adapted by the various stakeholders involved in the sport event tourism sector in a range of contexts in order to ensure resilience building. The framework can also be used as a guide for future researchers to further investigate the concept of resilience within sport event tourism development and management.

### The sport tourism framework

Early definitions of sport tourism simply combined those of sport and tourism, such as that proposed by Standeven & DeKnop (1999:12), stating that "sport tourism is all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or for business/commercial reasons, that necessitate travel away from home and the work locality".

Although definitions such as these are useful, they incorporate almost all tourism and sport related activities, with little focus being placed on events. To address this, Kurtzman & Zauhar (2003) suggested five categories of sport tourism, namely: sport tourism attractions; sport tourism resorts; sport tourism cruises; sport tourism tours; and sport tourism events. Within these categories, sport event tourism is based around sport activities that attract high numbers of sport tourists for either participation in, or attendance at, a sport event (Getz, 1991). In the sport tourism model presented by Deery et al. (2004), sport events are considered the foundation of sport tourism, encompassing attendees, competitors or officials, all with varying intentional motivations for travel. In this context, sport event tourism is defined as tourism where individuals travel as spectators, fans, supporters or casual observers of a sport event (Gibson, 2006).

Delpy (1998) adds that sport event tourism refers to sporting activities that attract large numbers of visitors or spectators. The type and number of visitors attracted depends on the nature of the sport event, as some are more spectator-driven than are others. In terms of economic impacts, sport event tourism is noted for having the highest impact on host destinations. Many destinations have developed a portfolio of sport events that are held throughout the year to attract visitors and to capitalise on the positive impacts on sport event tourism. The development of a sport event portfolio has a range of potential benefits, such as promoting the sustainability of events, linking a variety of events of varying scale and nature, reaching diverse market segments, increasing the size of the event market, responding to different community issues and concerns, and appealing to different interests (Ziakas & Coasta, 2011; Ziakas, 2020; Salgado-Barandela et al., 2021).

### The stakeholder theory and sport event tourism

The stakeholder theory was first introduced by Freeman during the 1980s, at which time a stakeholder was defined as "any individual or group who can affect a firm's performance or who is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives". Since then, the theory has evolved to incorporate various groups and individuals, who could potentially affect an organisation, as well as the behaviour of management in response to these groups and individuals (Lewis, 2006; Presenza & Iocca, 2012; Crane, 2020; Lechner & Solberg, 2021). In the identification of stakeholder groups, Tichaawa & Bob (2018) states that employees, customers, persons, groups, neighbourhoods, organisations, institutions, societies and natural environments can be considered as actual or potential stakeholders. Within the domain of sport event tourism, stakeholder theory has often been applied in relation to strategic planning and in terms of the development of sustainability initiatives in the management of tourism destinations (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000; Hardy & Beeton, 2001; Simpson, 2001).

Garrod et al. (2012) note that the stakeholder theory has been incorporated into various tourism planning and policy development activities, and in various collaborative efforts, particularly in the field of destination marketing (Parent, 2019; Lechner & Solberg, 2021). In the domain of sport event tourism, stakeholder theory is clearly a necessity, not only due to the large number of stakeholders involved in the industry, but also due to it being ever changing and requiring a future-ready approach to adaptability to the changing of environmental, social and economic conditions (Lechner & Solberg, 2021; Mollah et al., 2021). Within this context, a sport event tourism stakeholder can be defined as "anyone who is impacted on positively or negatively by a development such as a sport event tourism project" (Aas et al., 2005).

The importance of stakeholders in sport event tourism is presented by Mossberg & Getz (2008), who emphasise that, without effective stakeholder engagement and communication, sport tourism, and particularly sport tourism events, cannot be successfully hosted. Agha et al. (2012), as well as Chang et al. (2020), add that successful sport events are those that demonstrate effective synergy between all stakeholders, so that they can assist each other in achieving their objectives.

In keeping with this, Ruhanen (2004) states that, without meaningful and concerted engagement with all sport tourism stakeholders, including the community, the industry and the relevant authorities, achieving sustainable development in sport event tourism will not be achieved, and that this requires a participatory model to agree on planning direction and goals. Various authors (Hinch & Higham, 2001; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Currie et al., 2009) support this, by stating that, without stakeholder support, sustainable development in sport event tourism would be extremely challenging, particularly when recovering from crises and external shocks.

### Defining resilience

According to Walker et al. (2006) resilience can be defined as the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks. The concept of resilience is largely based on the understanding of responses to external shocks that push a system towards change and ultimately innovation, surviving the change and becoming more sustainable (Williams & Vorley, 2014; Hamel & Valikangas, 2003; Fiksel, 2006; Williams & Vorley, 2014). The resilience theory was first proposed by C.F. Holling in 1973, on the basic principle that systems do not evolve in a linear fashion, but, rather, according to a cycle or a loop. The phases of the cycle or loop are often repeated, but the characteristics at each stage are not the same. The theory also states that the speed of recovery from a destabilising or critical event depends on the adaptive capacity of the system, which is

directly related to the amount of capital accumulated during the previous phases. The resilience theory posits that systems fluctuate within domains (Holling, 1973), valleys (Gunderson, 2000) and basins of attraction (Walker et al., 2004). The point at which the system is the strongest is the bottom of the basin. On either side of the basin is a margin, in which systems can fluctuate without losing their inherent function. Within these margins, the degree of instability can be changed without the essential workings of the system becoming impaired. The margins are also considered the adaptive capacity of the system, with the resilience of the system depending on how long it takes to return to its original condition (Cochrain, 2015). f a stress event occurs, the system will override the margins of its basin and change into a different state, where negative outcomes might occur. Understanding how these shifts occur can assist role-players in mitigating negative impacts (Gunderson, 2000). In terms of the adaptive capacity of the system, this can be used as a determinant of its vulnerability.

If a system has a low adaptive capacity, it is considered vulnerable. Despite this, having a high adaptive capacity does not mean that a system is necessarily immune to disruption or disturbance, as this also depends on the nature of the incident concerned (Adger & Vincent, 2005). One of the biggest challenges when considering the adaptive capacity of a system is that it may be latent, and only realised when the system is exposed to a disturbance (Adger et al., 2005; Lemos et al., 2007).

The adaptive capacity can be strengthened and enhanced by investing in information and knowledge; encouraging collaboration; increasing levels of resources and education; and ensuring effective institutional arrangements (Yohe & Tol, 2002). Mithani (2020) posits that the adaptability of a system is affected by several 'modes' that directly contribute to this. These modes are either avoidance, absorption, elasticity, learning or rejuvenation. Absorption is the capacity to deflect shock and divert threats when an event has a high possibility of occurring. The system can remain unharmed by carefully facilitating the disruption or by identifying an alternative path. In the case of reoccurrence, the mode can be initiated immediately once the threat has been experienced. Absorption is when a system is left unharmed by maintaining the status quo.

In this mode, the system absorbs the shock, maintaining its form and functionality. This is most likely to happen with shocks that have a narrower impact as the response takes place immediately once the threat is experienced. Elasticity refers to a system's ability to bounce back from a shock, promptly returning to its previous state. In this mode the status quo is not maintained at all times and recovery only takes place after the displacement of the equilibrium. Elasticity is most commonly experienced in response to events that cannot be avoided or absorbed. The learning node takes place when there are modifications to a system as a result of a threat and its impacts. These modifications include the development of new interactions and relationships. Learning is experienced most commonly for threats that occur frequently and where these threats have resulted in damage to or failure of the system. Finally, the rejuvenation mode occurs after a system has undergone complete desolation of its form and functionality. This does not imply that the system has become incapacitated, but corresponds with the recovery of the system, including its relaunch and redevelopment (Reid & Botteril, 2013).

When considering the adaptive capacity of its system, the various modes and its recovery from external threats, Holloday & Powell (2013) suggest that this be considered within the context of the various domains of resilience, namely the social, governance, economic, and ecological contexts. The key themes of resilience can therefore be summarised as adaptive capacity, adaptive governance and resilience, adaptation in collaboration, adaptational readiness, resilience strategies, resilience indicators, disaster planning and management and resilience index. These themes can be used to identify the level of resilience of a system, as well as its adaptive capacity. These can then be used in resilience planning, and in ensuring the sustainability of the system in the face of future crises and events.

Resilience and sport event tourism has largely been overlooked by previous studies in the field. Existing literature on resilience in sport event tourism largely focusses on the link between sustainability and resilience, viewing resilience as a dimension of sustainability (Filimonau & De Coteau, 2019; Espiner et al., 2017). These studies also present that to achieve resilience in the sector, there is a need for extensive stakeholder collaboration for building both internal and external levels of resilience. In tourism studies, many researchers have used the resilience theory to analyse the industry's recovery from crises (McKercher, 1999; Russel & Faulkner, 1999; Faulkner, 2001; Folke et al., 2002; Larsen et al., 2008; Lepp, 2008), particularly as it is extremely vulnerable to destabilising forces. Despite this vulnerability, the recovery of the global sport event tourism subsector following the impacts of the pandemic indicate that it does already possess a certain level of resilience (Knott & Hemmonsbey, 2023; Kennelly, 2022). This indication highlights the need for studies such as the current research that focus on building and strengthening this resilience and contribute to the limited body of knowledge on resilience and sport event tourism. Prayag (2020) suggests that when considering tourism and resilience and how this can be enhanced, three levels of resilience should be investigated, namely, macrolevel resilience, mesolevel resilience and microlevel resilience. Macrolevel resilience refers to the entire tourism system including its components, structures and relationships; the tourism destination itself and tourism dependent communities in terms of their vulnerability and sustainability. Mesolevel resilience refers to tourism organisations (their size and who owns them), tourism NGO.s, public institutions involved in tourism and other tourism networks.

Finally, microlevel resilience refers to those working in the tourism industry, tourists and local residents residing at a destination (Prayag, 2020). Daniels & Tichaawa (2024) add that in order to effectively achieve resilience within sport event tourism, these levels of resilience must be considered through collaboration between multiple stakeholders involved in the sector with a goal of developing relevant supportive policies and intervention strategies for practical implementation.

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The current study makes use of a mixed methods research approach which was adopted using a qual-quant sequence as proposed by Creswell & Clarke (2011). The quantitative inquiry built on the results garnered through the qualitative data collection process to support and triangulate these. This mixed methods approach was selected for the study as it

bridges the gap between siloed research and everyday practice in meaningful ways (Mertens, 2012), transcends the conclusions arrived at by either qualitative or quantitative approaches alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), producing more sophisticated and robust results than would otherwise be obtained (Greene, 2007). A summary of the methodology process is illustrated in Figure 1 below.
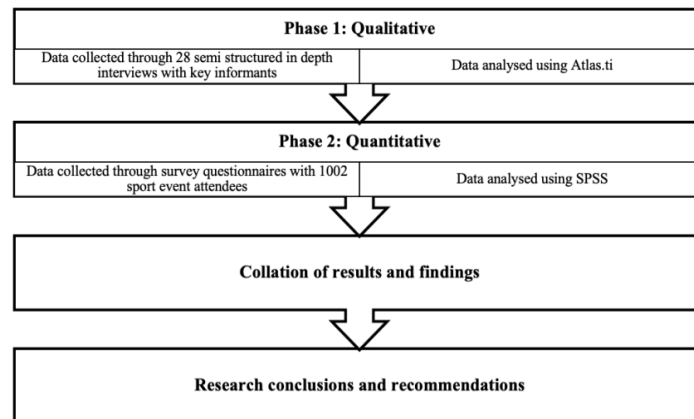
| Phase 1: Qualitative | |
|---|---|
| Data collected through 28 semi structured in depth interviews with key informants | Data analysed using Atlas.ti |

| Phase 2: Quantitative | |
|---|---|
| Data collected through survey questionnaires with 1002 sport event attendees | Data analysed using SPSS |

| Collation of results and findings |
|---|

| Research conclusions and recommendations |
|---|

Figure 1. Research methodology

**Phase 1: Qualitative**
**Data collection and analysis**

Qualitative data for the study was collected through semi structured in depth interviews with key informants involved in sport event tourism in South Africa. These key informants were specifically selected based on their knowledge and experience in the subsector. In selecting key informants to be interviewed, both purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to reach a sample of 28 respondents. Key informants interviewed included representatives from various spheres of government, sport federations and organisations, sport event organisers and destination marketing organisations (See Table 1). Interviews were conducted both face to face and online using Microsoft Teams using a semi structed interview schedule containing questions relating to topics identified through a review of literature on sport event tourism and the theories underpinning the study. The overall focus of the interview schedule was on crisis management and sport event tourism, with more specific questions framed on resilience building and the development of a resilience building framework for sustainability. Each interview was recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams. Using Atlas.ti, the data was coded, producing 15 codes which were later grouped according to emerging themes.

Table 1. Interviewed stakeholders

| Participant code | Organisation represented by participant | Location |
|---|---|---|
| KI1 | Representative from the Western Cape Sport Federation | Cape Town |
| KI2 | Representative from the Stormers | Cape Town |
| KI3 | Representative from the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs | Durban |
| KI4 | Representative from the National Department of Tourism | National |
| KI5 | Representative from Durban Tourism | Durban |
| KI6 | Representative from Cape Town Tourism | Cape Town |
| KI7 | Representative from SAT | National |
| KI8 | Representative from the City of Johannesburg Sport and Recreation | Johannesburg |
| KI9 | Representative from SAIL Corporate and Sport Event Management | Johannesburg |
| KI10 | Representative from the Cape Town Sport Council | Cape Town |
| KI11 | Sport event organiser | Cape Town |
| KI12 | Representative from the KZN Sport Confederation | Durban |
| KI13 | Representative from the Blue Bulls Rugby Union | Johannesburg |
| KI14 | Sport and Recreation Western Cape, Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport | Cape Town |
| KI15 | Representative from the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) | Johannesburg |
| KI16 | Representative from the Gauteng Cricket Board | Johannesburg |
| KI17 | Representative from the Moses Mabhida Stadium | Durban |
| KI18 | Representative from the Cape Town Stadium | Cape Town |
| KI19 | Representative from Western Cape Events | Cape Town |
| KI20 | Representative from the KZN Cricket Union | Durban |
| KI21 | Sport marketing agency | Durban |
| KI22 | Sport tourism tour organiser | Durban |
| KI23 | Representative from Stadium Management South Africa | Johannesburg |
| KI24 | City of Cape Town Destination Development | Cape Town |
| KI25 | Representative from The Blue Bulls Rugby Company | Johannesburg |
| KI26 | Representative from Cricket South Africa | National |
| KI27 | Representative from TOM | Cape Town |
| KI28 | Representative from Stadium Facility Management | Johannesburg |

**Phase 2: Quantitative**
**Quantitative data collection and analysis**
Survey questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from sport event attendees at two major sporting events in South Africa. The survey questionnaire, which was developed online using Google Forms, consisted of four sections. Section A of obtained demographic information including age, province of origin and employment status. Section B focused on tourism behaviour relating to sport events, including attendance at sport events prior. Section C focused on the impact of a crisis on tourism behaviour relating to sport events, including on participation in events during this time.

Finally, section D focused on resilience relating to sport events in terms of resilience building strategies, the willingness to attend future sport events in South Africa and the requirements for attendance. The development of the survey instrument was informed through the analysis of the qualitative data gathered during Phase 1 of the study by means of in-depth document analysis and literature review and semi-structured key informant interviews. Along with the closed and open-ended questions, the survey also used a five- and four-point Likert scale. The five-point Likert scale included the options of 'strongly agree' (SA), 'agree' (A), 'neutral' (N), 'disagree' (D) and 'strongly disagree' (SD), whereas the four-point Likert scale included the options of 'extremely important' (EI), 'important' (I), 'neutral' (N) and 'not important' (NI).

In selecting a quantitative sample for the study, probability sampling was used, as it is based on random selection, ensuring that every case in a population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Shorten & Moorley, 2014). From the two sporting events, a total of 1002 valid responses were received (Table 2 for profile of respondents).

Table 2. Profile of survey participants (n=1002)

| Variable | Group | % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 51.5 |
| | Female | 47 |
| | Other | 1.5 |
| Age range | 18-25 | 22.2 |
| | 26-35 | 30.2 |
| | 36-45 | 24.5 |
| | 46-55 | 14.8 |
| | 56-65 | 5.9 |
| | >65 | 2.5 |
| Racial classification | White | 34.6 |
| | Black African | 33.8 |
| | Coloured | 21.3 |
| | Asian/Indian | 3.3 |
| | No response | 7 |
| Province of residence | Western Cape | 70.4 |
| | Gauteng | 12.6 |
| | KwaZulu-Natal | 4.8 |
| | Eastern Cape | 4 |
| | Mpumalanga | 2.2 |
| | Free State | 2 |
| | Limpopo | 1.8 |
| | Northern Cape | 1.8 |
| | North West | 0.5 |
| Highest level of education | Certificate/diploma | 32.4 |
| | Postgraduate degree | 27.2 |
| | Undergraduate degree | 22 |
| | Secondary schooling completed | 13.2 |
| | Other | 1.8 |
| | No formal schooling | 1.7 |
| | Primary schooling completed | 1.7 |
| Employment status | Employed full time | 55.3 |
| | Self employed | 14.3 |
| | Unemployed | 13.2 |
| | Employed part time | 9.5 |
| | Retired/pensioner | 4.6 |
| | Other | 2.2 |
| | Home executive | 1 |

**RESULTS**
The findings of the study are presented according to the themes which emerged from the data collection and which informed the development of the proposed framework. The first subsection presents the findings linked the impact of crises and external shocks on the sport event tourism sector, followed by resilience and crisis management in South African sport event tourism policy and strategy and finally linked to resilience building in the sport event tourism sector.

**Theme #1: The impact of crises and external shocks on the sport event tourism sector**
Interviews conducted revealed that sport event tourism stakeholders agree that crises and external shocks have

significant and far reaching negative impacts across the tourism value chain as they often result in the shutting down of the sector. This sentiment was articulated by an official working for a national sporting organisation who stated that:

All sport events are cancelled in times of crises. All of these events have a huge international following that visit the city and the country, because the people don't just come for the event. They then stay over for another 14 days, and visit. The fact that we cannot host events impacts [on] the country in a huge way, as well as [on] the peripheral businesses. The tourism impact and the economic impact is then felt right through the value chain. (K26).

Respondents collectively voiced that the impacts of crises and external shocks on the sport event tourism sector are not felt within the sector alone but also influence the economy, unemployment rates, the broader tourism industry, the sports industry in terms of sponsorship and exposure, individual's physical and mental health and social cohesion within the locations where sport events are hosted. This illustrates the large number of stakeholders who are affected by these crises and who should be engaged in recovery there from. The findings of the qualitative data show that during times of crises such as the COVID 19 pandemic, sport event tourism stakeholders have demonstrated unprecedented levels of collaboration with a respondent sharing that: During the last crisis we faced, which was the COVID 19 pandemic, we developed a very sophisticated stakeholder engagement approach, where we would have regular stakeholder engagement sessions online or in person if possible. During this time we would all be able to explain our exact circumstances, exactly where we stood at the time, and what we needed from each other in terms of information and support. We became very good at communicating early and often. There is a new positive synergy in the way we, as stakeholders, interact with each other, which previously did not exist. Even though we had the same issues, previously we did not speak to each other, because we were scared that we would steal each other's ideas. I have now met industry partners that I didn't know of before, and there has been a lot of excellent communication and interaction between us. I think this is because we were forced to work together, as we were all in trouble, and we needed to make things work (KI8).

According to Hammerschmidt et al. (2021), such management of stakeholder relationships is essential in times of crises, to ensure the supply of continuous, long-term support. Mollah et al. (2021) add that for crisis management and resilience building in sport event tourism, collaboration is an essential strategy for purposes of the design and implementation of recovery plans for a sustainable industry. External crises and shocks also influence the behaviour of sport event tourists who are key stakeholders in the sector. When asked how long following a crisis they would wait to once again start attending sport events, most respondents indicated that they would attend a sport event immediately (62.1%), within 2-4 weeks after the crisis (15.5%), within 1 to 2 months after the crisis (10.1%), within 3-6 months after the crisis (7.3%) or after 6 months (4.2%). Only 0.8% of respondents stated that following a crisis they would not consider returning to attending sport events. This result is significant in that is demonstrates the high levels of willingness of sport event tourists to continue attending these events following a crisis.

Peric et al. (2021) propose that it is essential for sport event tourism stakeholders to understand the perceptions of sport event attendees regarding the impacts of a crisis on the hosting of sport events, as they will now have to take the attendees' mindset into consideration, when the events are hosted once again. Based on this, respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of a crisis on the sport event tourism sector, the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Sport event attendee perceptions of the impacts of a crisis on the sport event tourism subsector

| V no. | Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|-------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| V1 | The sport event tourism sector is negatively impacted by crises | 1.6 | 1.8 | 4.4 | 26.4 | 65.8 |
| V2 | The impacts of a crisis on the sport event tourism sector also negatively impact the economy | 1.1 | 1.5 | 5.2 | 37.4 | 54.8 |
| V3 | In times of crisis it is right to cancel all sport events | 5.4 | 7.8 | 21.5 | 33.9 | 31.4 |
| V4 | The impacts of a crisis result in unemployment in the sport event tourism sector | 1.3 | 2.8 | 10.0 | 38.3 | 47.6 |
| V5 | The impacts of a crisis on the sport event tourism sector also negatively impact the broader tourism industry | 1.3 | 2.3 | 8.8 | 34.8 | 52.8 |
| V6 | The impacts of a crisis on the sport event tourism sector also negatively impacts the broader sport industry | 1.1 | 3.3 | 16.8 | 39.0 | 39.8 |
| V7 | The cancellation of sport tourism events has a negative impact on social cohesion | 1.9 | 3.6 | 16.6 | 37.3 | 40.6 |
| V8 | The cancellation of sport tourism events has a negative impact on the physical well-being of individuals | 1.7 | 4.9 | 15.1 | 37.8 | 40.5 |
| V9 | The cancellation of sport tourism events has a negative impact on the mental well-being of individuals | 1.7 | 4.4 | 14.9 | 39.0 | 40.0 |
| V10 | The cancellation of sport tourism events has meant that local communities are less interested in sport than they used to be. | 5.6 | 12.5 | 21.9 | 32.0 | 28.0 |
| V11 | The cancellation of sport tourism events has affected my desire to attend these events in the future. | 11.8 | 19.0 | 18.5 | 28.9 | 21.9 |

Notes: Based on a 5 point Likert Scale where SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, N = neutral, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

The results presented in Table 3 reveal that sport event attendees share the sentiments of key informants that the impacts of crises on the sport event tourism sector are far reaching, negatively impacting the economy, employment rates, the broader tourism industry, social cohesion and the mental and physical well-being of individuals. Sport event attendees, as key stakeholders in the sector, demonstrate a high level of willingness to return to engaging in sport event tourism related activities following a crisis, which is essential for swift recovery, crisis mitigation and resilience building.

**Theme #2: Resilience and crisis management in South African sport event tourism policy and strategy**

The overarching theme in key informant responses regarding resilience and crisis management in South African sport event tourism policy and strategy was that this is not effectively addressed, with a respondent from a tourism body stating:

There are no real policies in place to actually deal with the nature of what a crisis brings to sport event tourism. There are also no means available to support stakeholders in these kinds of unexpected events, helping them recover and to prepare for similar situations in the future. (KI5).

This response illustrates the need for guidance, such as that provided in the framework proposed in the current study to address issues of crisis management, recovery and resilience. Despite this, an interview respondent from a national rugby union added that while crisis management strategies do exist in sport event tourism policy and strategy, these are often overlooked and ignored, stating that:

The irony is that South Africa has two overarching pieces of legislation. The first one is the Safety at Sport and Recreational Events Act, which governs the safety and security of attendees at sport events. This places a statutory obligation on venues and event organisers to undertake risk assessments, where necessary. Along with this, mitigation measures have to be put in place to address all risks identified. The second piece of legislation is the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which is exactly the same, except that it governs the workplace environment. This Act looks after workers and places an obligation on the event organiser to identify all potential risks, including [those of] communicable diseases, and then put in place necessary measures. That Act, if it is allowed to continue, would simply see sport events conducting risk assessments, identifying the risks, and taking appropriate responses. (KI13).

This response suggests that while guidelines for crisis management do perhaps exist, these are not being successfully implemented in times of crises and these still do not address the ssue of resilience building in terms of future crises. For there to be one unified response to crises, there is a need for collaboration, particularly in terms of decision-making and the development and implementation of policy and legislation.

**Theme #3: Resilience building in the sport event tourism sector**

What is essential for future resilience building is collaboration between stakeholders. The importance of this was stated by a respondent a provincial sport council in that: One of the most significant changes we need to make to build resilience in the subsector is that, as stakeholders, we need to reach out to each other a bit more, because, all of a sudden, we are all in the same boat in times of crises. In the past, we might have viewed each other as competition, but we must realise that this is not a competition, and that we can actually help each other grow and be better through challenging stages. (KI10).

The responses provided by key informants indicate that for the sector to reach an acceptable level of future resilience it is pertinent is that previous and new sport event attendees are attracted to attend future events through the use of new and innovative methods, strategies and marketing techniques, addressing how the attendee experience can be improved in light of changing consumption patterns. Further to this, a key informant from a provincial sport federation suggested that:

Going forward, we need to constantly be working to instil destination confidence in sport event tourists. We are moving towards a more client-focused perspective. We need to show them that we will support them in times of crises and [that we] will be truthful and honest with all information that we share with them, although they might not always like what they hear. (KI2).

The change that need to take place in order to achieve resilience, as presented above, clearly demonstrate that what is required is a renewed focus on the sport event tourist. Stakeholders and role-players involved in sport event tourism need to ensure that such tourists are receiving accurate information on all aspects of the sport event experience, from travel to the event to the event itself. Where misinformation is spread, this needs to be mitigated efficiently and effectively, to rebuild traveller confidence in the destination. Slovic (1992) found that, if tourists are well-informed of a potential risk, they tend to have increased perceptions of their control of that risk, with them being more likely to travel. Along with the above, the changing needs of the sport tourist must be clearly understood by the stakeholders to ensure that all their needs are met, resulting in visitor satisfaction and potential repeat visitation.

**DISCUSSION**

Drawing on the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative inquiries of the study, presented above and underpinned by the conceptual framework a framework for resilience building in sport event tourism is proposed and is presented in Figure 2 below. As presented in Figure 2, although sport, events and tourism have previously operated largely individually in siloes, sport event tourism must be considered holistically within the broader tourism industry.

When viewed through the lens of the resilience theory, the framework proposes that the sport event tourism sector is in fact dynamic and must therefore be open to constant change and adaptation based on lessons learned from previous experiences. This will allow for the development of a new and innovative sport event tourism product that is suited to the changing needs and demands of the sport event tourist. For this product to successfully be developed, the stakeholder theory suggests that there must be a high level of stakeholder engagement through a sophisticated engagement and communication network for the sharing and dissemination of information and for the provision of financial, bureaucratic and structural support in times of crisis. The need exists not only for improved collaboration between stakeholders, but also for these relationships to be formalised and consolidated. A key stakeholder group that is often overlooked within sport event tourism, but which is key in achieving resilience is local communities who must be suitably prepared to deal with future crises. In engaging with the local communities, a bottom-up approach should be employed, focusing on sport event tourism organisations and events, and the community that is involved in sport event tourism activities.

Further to this, the role of sport event tourists as a stakeholder group should not be overlooked as crises and external shocks often result in significant changes in tourist behaviour, demanding the development of new products, offerings and experiences. For resilience to be achieved, this new sport event tourism product should be all-encompassing and readily adaptable to future changing behaviour. The product should be authentic, allowing for sport event attendees to develop and form new connections with like-minded groups and individuals, to immerse themselves in a sport event, to enjoy local products and services, to feed their interests and to use technology to facilitate ease.
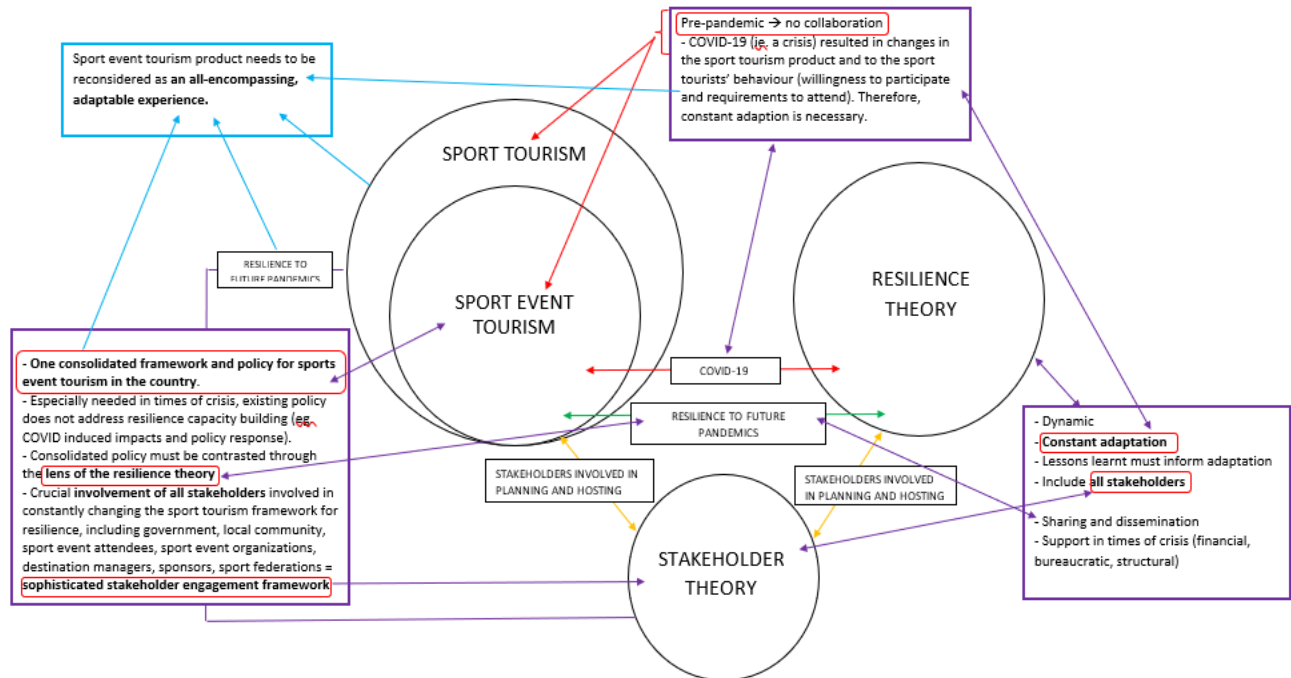


Figure 2. Proposed framework for resilience building in sport event tourism

For successful stakeholder collaboration to take place, an urgent need prevails for the implementation of a consolidated sport event tourism strategy or policy to guide the sector in times of crisis, addressing issues of resilience, crisis management and capacity-building during such times. This policy or strategy should be developed through the lens of resilience, engaging all stakeholders including sport event tourists, local communities, event owners and organisers, private sector representatives, the public sector and various spheres of the government, so as to consolidate strategies, operations and plans, to develop a holistic strategic goal for the sector. This supportive policy environment should also allow for the development of innovative solutions to the challenges experienced during periods of crisis.

Due to the dynamic nature of the sport event tourism sector, these policies and guiding documents should be open for constant adaptation, ensuring that there can be a 'bounce back' in the face of future crises and external shocks (Holling, 1973). Along with these policies and guiding documents, what is pertinent for resilience building is to also develop dynamic contingency plans during times of stability and normal operations, so that the sector will already be established in times of crisis, rather than requiring development in response to a crisis that is already taking place.

In applying the proposed framework, resilience can be achieved if a resilience focussed approach is taken by all stakeholders. This will not only ensure resilience but also empower local communities and smaller scale organisations by facilitating sustainable development (Sharma et al., 2021).

It is recommended that the application of the proposed resilience building framework be done in a staged and controlled fashion, identifying measures that work well and improving on these in the process. For effective implementation, efficient coordination mechanisms are essential, as well as a range of crisis management techniques and relationship management tools.

From the proposed framework it is evident that the inextricable links that exist between sport event tourism, the stakeholder theory and the resilience theory cannot be underestimated or overlooked. The overlapping of these concepts provides valuable opportunities that can be further explored to promote the future sustainability of the sport event tourism sector. For this to be successful, stakeholders in their collaborative efforts must acknowledge the dynamic nature of the sector and be prepared for the ongoing adaptations that are necessary for resilience.

In adapting to changing circumstances and external impacts, lessons can be taken from previous crises, to be able to develop strategies that are proactive, rather than reactive, so as to lessen the effects of the potentially harmful and negative impacts. The development of such strategies must include the input and perspectives of all the stakeholders in the subsector who are involved in sport, event management and tourism.

**CONCLUSION**

External crises and shocks provide the sport event tourism sector with unique opportunities to reinvent and transform itself, enhancing level of resilience for the future. The objective of the current study was to present a framework for

resilience building in sport event tourism, developed through a conceptual framework grounded in the sport tourism framework, the resilience theory and the stakeholder theory, and guided by primary data collected from both key informants in the sport event sector and sport event tourists. For the sector to inherently possess an acceptable level of resilience in the case of future crises and destabilising events, according to the framework presented, there must be a significant level of preparedness, built on shared lessons learned from previous experiences which are incorporated into formalised strategic plans. These strategies should also include innovative and detailed recovery strategies in the case of events to ensure resilience building. The success of these strategies, the resilience of sport event tourism and its future sustainability is largely dependent on extensive stakeholder collaboration focussed on networking, relationship building, knowledge sharing and resilience capacity building. Through this collaboration, what is also required is the development of a new and innovative sport event tourism product that is dynamic and adaptable to the changing demands and needs of sport event tourists as a result of external shocks and crises.

In summary, the resilience of the sport event tourism sector relies on stakeholders developing a product that is adaptable and flexible, meeting the needs and requirements of sport event tourists whose behaviours can change significantly as a result of a crisis. In developing such products, stakeholders must be willing to adapt their previous offerings by using new innovations and developing new relationships along the sport event tourism value chain. It stakeholders in sport event tourism are unable to adapt and cope with change, there is a low likelihood that these organisations will survive in times of future crises. The current study draws on the case of South Africa. Although the sample is sufficient to be generalised, caution should be taken when doing so as the specific context in which the framework is being test should be taken into consideration, as this may yield different results in different contexts.

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