SPORT TK-EuroAmerican Journal of Sport Sciences

https://sportk.eu Online ISSN: 2340-8812

Received: **13/01/2026.** Accepted: **15/05/2026.** Published: **31/10/2026**

Components of the sports tourism industry in light of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Vision 2030

Jassim Sowaid[1*], Amin Gaafar[2*], Ezzeldin Ahmed Ali[2]

[1]Department of Sports and Recreational Management, College of Sport Sciences and Physical Activity, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.

[2]Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.

* Correspondence: Jassim Sowaid; jassim2311@gmail.com and Amin Gaafar; a.gaafar@squ.edu.om

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the key components required to build a sustainable sports tourism industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain in alignment with its Economic Vision 2030. Using a descriptive survey approach, data were collected from 267 stakeholders in the tourism and sports sectors. The findings reveal that Bahrain combines natural, human, material, and financial resources conducive to sports tourism development. Human resources emerged as the most influential factor, supported by professional expertise and a strong volunteer culture in Bahraini society. Natural assets including Bahrain's strategic geographical location, islands, and heritage further enhance its tourism appeal. Bahrain's expanding infrastructure and strong high-level leadership support reinforce its position as a regional sports tourism destination. However, despite this strong backing, the study found variation in respondents' views regarding budget allocations, reflecting differences between the funding of major and smaller events. This pattern underscores the need to revisit investment strategies to maximize the sustainable economic benefits of sports tourism and further diversify the sector. The study also contributes to the regional literature by providing actionable insights for policymakers and sports institutions across Bahrain, the Gulf region, and international stakeholders.

KEYWORDS

Sport Events; Sports Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Event Management; Bahrain

1. INTRODUCTION

Sport has become a significant economic industry and a source of soft power, recognized by nations for its capacity to drive change and innovation. It has evolved beyond its traditional role in entertainment and recreation to become an important economic sector that attracts substantial investment through sponsorships, broadcasting rights, and international sporting events. According to Heydari et al. (2022), sport tourism represents one of the most important components of the broader sport industry.

The development of a successful and sustainable sport tourism industry relies on several key factors, including natural resources, human capital, infrastructure, and financial resources. Sport tourism plays an important role in promoting sustainable destination development by generating economic, environmental, and social benefits, particularly in regions that encourage active lifestyles (Morfoulaki et al., 2023). In this context, Cheng (2023) highlighted the importance of quality infrastructure, adequate financial resources, qualified human capital, and a supportive environment for sport tourism development. Furthermore, effective event management, stakeholder coordination, and sustainable policy frameworks have been identified as essential elements supporting the contribution of sport tourism to regional economic development (Raso & Cherubini, 2023).

Empirical studies have further highlighted the growing importance of sport tourism in destination planning and promoting local community participation. Zare et al. (2020) found that nostalgic sport tourism among football fans plays a significant role in shaping their willingness to attend future sporting events. Furthermore, residents' favorable attitudes toward sporting events contribute to their support for urban tourism development, as these events enhance the host city's image and create economic opportunities (Li & Liang, 2024). Similarly, Alguacil et al. (2016) found that satisfaction with event management increases the likelihood of recommending the host city as a tourism destination. Collectively, these findings underscore the strategic importance of sporting events in promoting tourism and enhancing destination attractiveness, which aligns with the Kingdom of Bahrain's vision of developing a sustainable sport tourism industry.

In the Gulf region, Ishac et al. (2024) examined major sporting events in Qatar and highlighted the role of stakeholder collaboration in enhancing social sustainability and strengthening the tourism legacy of these events. Similarly, Alsandi et al. (2025) found that strategic agility in Omani sports organizations depends on the effective coordination of human and organizational resources, a principle that is also relevant to the management of sport tourism resources. In a broader

context, strategic communication has been identified as an important element in sustainable sport tourism development, particularly through transparency, collaboration, and environmental stewardship (Mazza, 2023). Furthermore, Karinda et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of integrating resource-based strategies with active stakeholder participation in developing national sport tourism policies. Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of integrating natural resources, human capital, infrastructure, and financial resources with stakeholder engagement and sustainability principles to support the development of the sport tourism industry in line with the Kingdom of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, particularly Bahrain, have invested extensively in motorsport and the broader automotive industry over the past decade. These investments are reflected in the Kingdom's direct budgetary support for major motorsport events as part of its efforts to diversify national revenues and reduce reliance on oil. Bahrain's large-scale urban development projects, particularly in Manama, further illustrate its strategic interest in positioning itself as a leading regional destination for tourism and sporting events (Amara & Bouandel, 2023). This growing interest in hosting sporting events is also reflected in the positive attitudes toward organizing diverse sporting events in the Kingdom of Bahrain, highlighting their potential to strengthen the country's position as a regional sports tourism destination (Sowaid et al., 2025).

In this context, Bahrain's commitment to hosting the Formula 1 Grand Prix through 2036 reflects its continued success in hosting international sporting events. This commitment also highlights the Kingdom's potential to develop a sustainable sport tourism industry capable of generating economic benefits and contributing to Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. Several factors are essential for developing this industry, including natural resources, destination characteristics, infrastructure planning, promotion, transportation, technology, security, international relations, and socioeconomic conditions (Haghighat et al., 2022). Moreover, the diversification of sport tourism activities and sporting events can contribute to generating additional sources of national income and promoting long-term economic sustainability (Sowaid, 2026).

The Kingdom of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, launched in 2008 under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, outlines an integrated, long-term economic development plan aimed at enhancing national competitiveness, promoting fairness and sustainability, and improving the quality of life for all citizens (Al Zayani et al., 2023). In this regard, Ahmed et al. (2022) highlighted the role of sport in improving quality of life, encouraging healthy lifestyles, and supporting social innovation within the framework of Bahrain's Economic Vision

2030. Beyond these contributions, hosting major sporting events can also generate social and cultural benefits by fostering community engagement, promoting cultural exchange, and strengthening social cohesion, thereby supporting the broader objectives of sustainable development (Sowaid & Al-Salawi, 2026).

Despite these efforts, a gap remains in the regional and Arab literature regarding the comprehensive examination of the key components of the sport tourism industry, particularly natural, human, material, and financial resources. Previous studies have addressed various economic, social, and organizational aspects of sport tourism and sporting events. However, limited attention has been given to examining these four components within an integrated framework, particularly in the context of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the key components supporting the development of the sport tourism industry in alignment with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. By assessing the current state of these components, the study aims to provide insights that support strategic planning and enhance Bahrain's competitiveness as a regional sport tourism destination. Accordingly, this study addresses the following central question: What are the key components of the sports tourism industry in light of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030?

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants

This study employed a descriptive survey design, deemed appropriate for the nature of the research, its context, and the objectives it seeks to achieve.

The study community consists of employees in the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, the General Sports Authority, the Bahrain Olympic Committee, and sports federations in the Kingdom of Bahrain, totaling (811). A simple random sampling technique was adopted for participant selection to enhance representativeness and minimize selection bias. To ensure the statistical validity of the results, the minimum required sample size was calculated using the formula proposed by Serdar et al. (2021) for survey-based research, which yielded 260 respondents. The final sample consisted of 267 participants, thereby exceeding the recommended threshold and ensuring adequate representation of the study population (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample and the exploratory sample

Entity	Study Population	Study Sample	%	Exploratory Sample	%
Ministry of Tourism	120	48	18.0%	3	12.5%
Ministry of Finance and National Economy	388	97	36.3%	4	16.7%
Supreme Council for Youth and Sports	54	22	8.2%	2	8.3%
General Sports Authority	97	39	14.6%	3	12.5%
Bahrain Olympic Committee	53	21	7.9%	2	8.3%
Bahrain Football Association	38	15	5.6%	2	8.3%
Bahrain Volleyball Association	14	6	2.2%	2	8.3%
Bahrain Handball Association	22	9	3.4%	2	8.3%
Bahrain Basketball Association	15	6	2.2%	2	8.3%
Bahrain Bodybuilding Association	10	4	1.5%	2	8.3%
Total	**811**	**267**	**100%**	**24**	**100%**

2.2. Research Instrument, Validity, Reliability, and Administration Procedure

Face validity (apparent validity) was employed by presenting the questionnaire to 13 experts specializing in sports management, sports psychology, and tourism and hospitality management from Sultan Qaboos University and several international institutions. Based on their feedback, minor modifications were made to improve clarity and alignment with the study axes. The acceptance rate of the items ranged between 84.6% and 92.3%.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed by calculating Spearman's correlation coefficients between the score of each item and its corresponding axis, given that the data from the exploratory study did not follow a normal distribution. This assumption was confirmed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, which indicated that the data were non-normally distributed ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, Spearman's rank correlation was used (Table 2), and the analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23.

Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficients between the statements and the axes to which they belong ranged between (0.821-0.494), and these correlations were statistically significant at the level of (0.01) and (0.05), which indicates that the questionnaire has appropriate validity indicators.

Table 2. Spearman's correlation coefficients between the score of each dimension and the statement to which it belongs (N24)

Natural Resources			**Human Resources**		
Phrase number	**Correlation Coefficient**	***p***	**Phrase number**	**Correlation Coefficient**	***p***
1	.786**	0.000	**7**	.493*	0.014
2	.638**	0.001	**8**	.729**	0.000
3	.641**	0.001	**9**	.821**	0.000
4	.656**	0.000	**10**	.800**	0.000
5	.757**	0.000	**11**	.748**	0.000
6	.619**	0.001	**12**	.634**	0.001
Material Resources			**Financial Resources**		
Phrase number	**Correlation Coefficient**	***p***	**Phrase number**	**Correlation Coefficient**	***p***
13	.758**	0.000	**20**	.811**	0.000
14	.713**	0.000	**21**	.716**	0.000
15	.494*	0.014	**22**	.701**	0.000
16	.793**	0.000	**23**	.732**	0.000
17	.527**	0.008	**24**	.711**	0.000
18	.603**	0.002			
19	.475*	0.019			

The researchers employed the test-retest reliability method to evaluate the consistency of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered twice to a pilot sample of 24 individuals who were not part of the main study sample, during the period from January 14 to February 18, 2024. The correlation coefficient between the initial and repeated applications was calculated. Table 3 presents the reliability results based on the test-retest method and Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 3. Application and reapplication – reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha, ICC, and Kappa

Stability coefficient ICC	**Significance level at 95%**	**Factor KAPPA**	**Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient**	***p* value**
0.888	0.740 - 0.952	0.675	0.821	0.00

As shown in Table 3, the results confirm that the questionnaire has a high level of reliability. The ICC value of 0.888 indicates strong test-retest agreement, while the Kappa coefficient of 0.675 reflects acceptable stability across questionnaire items. Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.821 demonstrates strong internal consistency. These results suggest that the instrument is statistically reliable and suitable for application to the study sample.

2.3. Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize participants' responses. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was applied to assess the correlations between individual questionnaire items and their corresponding domains. The Chi-square test was used to examine the distribution of responses across the questionnaire items. Relative weights were calculated to determine the importance of each domain and establish their respective rankings. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the study findings based on the participants' responses to the research questions, as follows: *What are the components of the sports tourism industry in light of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Vision 2030?*

To answer this question, the overall Chi-square values were calculated based on the responses of the study sample to the items in all dimensions of the study. The following tables present the obtained results. The components of the sports tourism industry in light of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Vision 2030 were summarized under the first main dimension, which was divided into sub-themes for analysis and discussion as follows:

3.1. Domain One: Natural Resources

Table 4 presents the participants' responses regarding the Natural Resources domain as a component of the sports tourism industry in light of Bahrain's Vision 2030.

Table 4. Chi-square values and response percentages for the items in Domain One: Natural Resources (n = 267)

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-square Value	*p* value
1	The Kingdom of Bahrain has a strategic geographical location that contributes to boosting various forms of sports tourism.	117 (43.8%)	131 (49.1%)	19 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	83.685	< 0.001**
2	Bahrain has a	7 (2.6%)	124	90	46 (17.2%)	0 (0.0%)	117.135	

	moderate climate, which is an attractive factor for developing sports tourism.		(46.4%)	(33.7%)				< 0.001**
3	Bahrain possesses islands with suitable tourism characteristics to receive tourists.	57 (21.3%)	118 (44.2%)	67 (25.1%)	25 (9.4%)	0 (0.0%)	66.888	< 0.001**
4	Bahrain has high-quality coastal areas for organizing and managing sports events and activities.	51 (19.1%)	133 (49.8%)	77 (28.8%)	3 (1.1%)	3 (1.1%)	224.330	< 0.001**
5	Bahrain has safe roads with distances that facilitate easy access to sports tourism activities.	37 (13.9%)	144 (53.9%)	56 (21.0%)	30 (11.2%)	0 (0.0%)	124.625	< 0.001**
6	Bahrain enjoys a natural and cultural heritage that supports the development of the sports tourism industry.	116 (43.4%)	115 (43.1%)	21 (7.9%)	15 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	142.693	< 0.001**

It is evident from table 4 that the overall Chi-square values for respondents' answers to the six items related to the domain of natural components were all statistically significant at the level of ($p < 0.00$). This indicates the presence of natural components at varying levels among the study participants. The percentage of responses ranged between 0.0% and 53.9%, while the Chi-square values ranged from 66.888 to 142.693. The highest agreement level, "Strongly Agree," was observed for Item (6), whereas Items (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) received the highest frequency of responses in the "Agree" category.

3.2. Second Domain: Human Resources

Table 5 presents the participants' responses regarding the Human Resources domain as a component of the sports tourism industry in light of Bahrain's Vision 2030.

Table 5. Chi-square values and response percentages for the items in Domain Two: Human Resources (n = 267)

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-square Value	*p* value
7	The Kingdom of Bahrain has qualified leaders capable of organizing and managing sports events.	118 (44.2%)	139 (52.1%)	10 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	107.663	<0.001 **
8	Bahrain has experts in the field of sports tourism.	64 (24.0%)	103 (38.6%)	67 (25.1%)	33 (12.4%)	0 (0.0%)	36.865	<0.001**
9	Bahrain has qualified personnel to work in the sports tourism industry.	93 (34.8%)	130 (48.7%)	44 (16.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	41.820	<0.001**
10	Personnel working in sports tourism in Bahrain are proficient in English.	78 (29.2%)	171 (64.0%)	12 (4.5%)	6 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)	264.910	<0.001**
11	Bahrain has volunteers to organize sports events and related activities.	156 (58.4%)	98 (36.7%)	10 (3.7%)	3 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)	243.097	<0.001**
12	Bahrain has qualified personnel to provide logistical services during sports events (e.g., transportation, maintenance of sports facilities and equipment, etc.).	97 (36.3%)	150 (56.2%)	20 (7.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	96.022	<0.001**

Table 5 reveals that the total Chi-square values for the participants' responses to the six items under the Human Resources domain were all statistically significant at the level of ($p < 0.00$), indicating the presence of human resource components at varying levels among the study participants. The percentage responses ranged from 58.4% to 0.0%, while the Chi-square values spanned from 41.820 to 264.910. The results favored the "Strongly Agree" option for item (11), whereas items (7, 8, 9, 10, and 12) leaned toward the "Agree" response.

3.3. Third Domain: Material Resources

Table 6 presents the participants' responses regarding the Material Resources domain as a component of the sports tourism industry in light of Bahrain's Vision 2030.

Table 6. Chi-square values and response percentages for the items in Domain Three: Material Resources (n = 267)

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-square Value	*p* value
13	The Kingdom of Bahrain has high-level beach stadiums for all sports suitable for hosting sports events.	7 (2.6%)	121 (45.3%)	61 (22.8%)	63 (23.6%)	15 (5.6%)	156.315	<0.001**
14	Bahrain has conference halls equipped with the latest technology for delivering seminars, scientific research, or training courses in the sports field.	119 (44.6%)	98 (36.7%)	18 (6.7%)	20 (7.5%)	12 (4.5%)	194.292	<0.001**
15	Bahrain has model sports institutions that support sports camp tourism.	29 (10.9%)	134 (50.2%)	64 (24.0%)	40 (15.0%)	0 (0.0%)	99.936	<0.001**
16	Bahrain is distinguished by the quality of hotel and resort services provided to sports tourists.	97 (36.3%)	141 (52.8%)	29 (10.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	71.551	<0.001**
17	Bahrain has a world-class racing circuit capable of hosting Formula 1 rounds.	205 (76.8%)	40 (15.0%)	22 (8.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	228.607	<0.001**
18	Bahrain has an international airport capable of receiving many sports tourists from around the world.	179 (67.0%)	66 (24.7%)	22 (8.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	147.393	<0.001**
19	Bahrain enjoys high-quality sports facilities that qualify it to host	23 (8.6%)	124 (46.4%)	62 (23.2%)	55 (20.6%)	3 (1.1%)	159.648	<0.001**

	events and organize accompanying activities.							

It is evident from table 6 that the total chi-square values for the participants' responses to the items related to Material Resources, consisting of seven statements, were all highly significant at the level of ($P < 0.00$). This indicates the presence of material resources at varying levels as perceived by the study sample. The percentages ranged from 0.0% to 76.8%, and the chi-square values ranged from 71.551 to 228.607. The results favored the "Strongly Agree" option for items (14, 17, and 18), while for items (13, 15, 16, and 19), the responses favored the "Agree" option.

3.4 Fourth Domain: Financial Resources

Table 7 presents the participants' responses regarding the Financial Resources domain as a component of the sports tourism industry in light of Bahrain's Vision 2030. It is evident from table 8 that the total chi-square values for the participants' responses to the five items related to financial components were all statistically significant at the level of ($p < 0.00$). This indicates the presence of financial enablers to varying degrees among the study sample. The percentage values ranged from 56.6% to 0.0%, while the chi-square values ranged between 78.004 and 265.715. The responses favored the option "Agree" for items (21, 22, 23, and 24), while item (20) leaned toward the "Neutral" response.

Table 7. Chi-square values and response percentages for the items in Domain Four: Financial Resources (n = 267**)**

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Chi-square Value	*p* value
20	Institutions and bodies responsible for tourism allocate a dedicated budget for the sports tourism industry.	26 (9.7%)	76 (28.5%)	121 (45.3%)	44 (16.5%)	0 (0.0%)	78.004	<0.001**
21	Sponsoring companies are available to support various types of sports tourism in the Kingdom of Bahrain.	14 (5.2%)	125 (46.8%)	100 (37.5%)	28 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	131.577	<0.001**
22	The current financial resources are adequate to	10 (3.7%)	141 (52.8%)	89 (33.3%)	23 (8.6%)	4 (1.5%)	265.715	

	meet the needs of the sports tourism industry in Bahrain.							<0.001**
23	Bahrain has a sports media industry capable of effectively promoting sports tourism economically.	36 (13.5%)	122 (45.7%)	78 (29.2%)	31 (11.6%)	0 (0.0%)	80.940	<0.001**
24	The top leadership in Bahrain supports the sports tourism industry with the necessary financial resources to ensure excellence in tourism events.	59 (22.1%)	151 (56.6%)	57 (21.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	64.809	<0.001**

3.5. Summary of the Ranking of Sport Tourism Industry Components in Light of Bahrain's Vision 2030

Table 8 shows the relative importance and perceived strength of the four main components of the sports tourism industry, based on responses from 267 participants. the second domain, “Human Resources”, ranked first with the highest relative weight of 84.4%, indicating it is the most prominent enabler of sport tourism development in the Kingdom of Bahrain. In contrast, the “Financial Resources” domain ranked last, with a relative weight of 71.6%.

Table 8. Relative weights and rankings of the four domains of the sports tourism industry (n = 267)

No.	Component	Sample Size	Relative Weight	Rank
1	Natural Resources	267	77.6%	3
2	Human Resources	267	84.4%	1
3	Material Resources	267	79.4%	2
4	Financial Resources	267	71.6%	4

4. DISCUSSION

The Kingdom of Bahrain possesses highly diversified natural resources that enable the development of sustainable sports tourism in alignment with its Economic Vision 2030. Strategically located, endowed with a rich heritage, and offering a diverse coastline and tourism infrastructure, Bahrain stands out within the Gulf region. These findings are consistent with studies such as Karinda et al. (2024); Nanda et al. (2023), which highlight how the complementarity of cultural and natural resources enhances economic sustainability through sport tourism. Similarly, Askarian et al. (2015)

underscored the central role of natural assets such as rivers, climate, and scenery in constructing sports tourism in Iran's Aras Free Zone. Zhao (2023) further demonstrated that integrating natural and cultural features into tourism planning promotes local economic growth and sustainability.

Bahrain has also demonstrated strong human resource capacities in advancing its Economic Vision 2030 for sports tourism development. This is evident in the availability of trained experts and professionals capable of coordinating and managing large-scale sporting events. Government investment in training initiatives and capacity-building programs has improved service delivery and strengthened the nation's competitiveness as a regional sports tourism hub. Moreover, Bahrain's dynamic culture of volunteerism significantly enhances event management and fosters community engagement, further reinforcing the strength of its human capital.

This finding aligns with global literature emphasizing the critical contribution of individuals to establishing sustainable sports tourism. Ronaghi et al. (2024) noted that the growing demand in the sports tourism sector necessitates strategic workforce planning that incorporates technology adaptation, population dynamics, and sustainability approaches. Likewise, Liu et al. (2024) highlighted that the tourism and sport sectors are inherently people-based industries requiring continuous human resource capacity development to meet evolving tourist needs. In addition, empowering women in sports enhances participation, social inclusion, and community engagement, contributing positively to the quality and sustainability of sports tourism programs. At the same time, it fosters leadership skills, improves health outcomes, and creates economic and educational opportunities for women, thereby strengthening the overall social and economic development of the community (Gaafar et al., 2024). Without sustained investment in specialist personnel, service quality can decline, thereby compromising the long-term viability of the industry. Accordingly, Bahrain's emphasis on human development emerges as a key pillar in achieving its vision for a regionally competitive and dynamic sports tourism industry.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also demonstrates its commitment to sport tourism through substantial investment in high-quality sports facilities, world-class stadiums, and specialized institutions under its Economic Vision 2030. Such infrastructure supports the provision of high-quality services, attracts regional and international sporting events, and contributes to economic development and tourism growth. The continuous hosting of the Formula 1 Gulf Air Grand Prix since 2004 further reflects Bahrain's established position in international sport tourism, while the multiple awards earned by the Bahrain International Circuit reinforce its status as a leading sporting venue. These findings are consistent with those of Sowaid et al. (2026), who found that the quality of

services provided at sporting events in the Kingdom of Bahrain contributed to a positive destination image, particularly through the quality of sports facilities, infrastructure, and other tangible aspects of service delivery.

This conclusion validates research identifying infrastructure as one of the primary sources of competitive advantage in sports tourism. Caraka et al. (2023) emphasized that transport and hospitality infrastructure are crucial for attracting tourists and enhancing their overall experience. Boroujerdi et al. (2023) added that upgraded infrastructure not only accelerates the hosting of international events but also encourages local community involvement. Similarly, Heebkhoksung and Sriboonlue (2023) called for increased investment in tourist facilities, while Karinda et al. (2024) observed that upgraded facilities improve international visibility and competitiveness.

In parallel, the Kingdom of Bahrain has established central financial mechanisms that drive the growth of its sports tourism sector in line with its Economic Vision 2030. These include enhanced government focus on the sector's economic contribution, particularly through budget allocations and marketing campaigns designed to position Bahrain as a leading global sports destination.

These results are consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of government-sponsored branding and investment in sports tourism. Fan & Ge (2013); Gelbman (2019) highlighted that marketing campaigns during sporting events enhance visibility, improve a country's image, and increase tourist participation, while Karinda et al. (2024) suggested that linking infrastructure investment with high-level marketing elevates tourism revenues. Interestingly, 45.3% of respondents selected a neutral response regarding whether institutions allocate specific budgets for sports tourism. This neutrality likely reflects differences in event scale and transparency: major events such as the Formula 1 Grand Prix are visibly well funded, whereas smaller events may receive less publicized or less transparent budget allocations, leading to greater uncertainty among respondents. Neutral responses on budget items may thus signal disparities in investment visibility across different scales of sports tourism events.

For example, Alamri (2025) reports that in Saudi Arabia, investment in sports infrastructure and facilities is concentrated more heavily in certain regions and for major sporting events, while smaller or less-visible events often receive less transparent budget allocations a pattern supporting our interpretation of neutral responses among respondents who may not always be aware of institutional budgeting for smaller-scale initiatives. Similar points are made by Temnyk (2017) and

Weed (2020), who argue that global sporting success depends not only on sponsorship but also on logistics, security, and sustained infrastructure investment. Bahrain's continued investment in high-level sports competitions such as Formula 1 exemplifies a long-term strategy aimed at establishing a robust and internationally credible sports tourism sector.

As per the relative weight analysis, human resources emerged as the most influential enabler of sports tourism development in the Kingdom of Bahrain under its Economic Vision 2030. This reflects the country's large pool of skilled workers capable of managing and hosting mass sporting events, as well as its vibrant culture of volunteerism, which serves as a key driver of social inclusion and supports the national sport agenda. These findings reinforce the argument that human capital remains central to the success of sports tourism operations: natural landscapes, material infrastructures, and financial resources cannot be effectively leveraged without expert human input. This result contrasts with Askarian et al. (2015), whose study of Iran's Aras Free Zone concluded that natural resources were the primary catalyst for sports tourism development, highlighting how context-specific policies and national priorities can shift the relative importance of tourism enablers across countries. In line with this, Gaafar et al. (2024) indicate that embedding a culture of strategic vigilance among employees, allocating adequate resources, and establishing specialized committees enhances the efficiency of both human and financial resources, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of sports institutions. This suggests that strategic management practices can complement existing resource capabilities to achieve sustainable development in the sports tourism sector.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study addressed its central research question by identifying and analyzing the key components of the sports tourism industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain under its Economic Vision 2030. While human resources emerged as the most influential enabler reflecting the country's investment in developing qualified national cadres and cultivating a sports volunteering culture the findings also confirm the importance of other components. Bahrain's strategic geographical location and rich natural assets enhance its attractiveness for hosting international events, while its growing material infrastructure including stadiums, specialized venues, and transport and hospitality facilities supports the delivery of high-quality services and strengthens its hosting capacity. In parallel, the availability of financial resources and high-level leadership support provides a solid platform for sustained growth. However, the study also reveals disparities in budget allocations between major

and smaller events, suggesting that revisiting investment strategies for smaller-scale activities could yield significant financial returns and further diversify the sports tourism sector.

Beyond these findings, the study offers important social and regional contributions by demonstrating how Bahrain and other Gulf Cooperation Council states can leverage their human, natural, material, and financial components together with networks of experienced stakeholders and industry leaders to develop more inclusive and sustainable sports tourism programs. This perspective provides actionable insights for policymakers, tourism planners, and sports organizations interested in expanding the sector, fostering cross-border cooperation, and enhancing the global appeal of sports tourism in the region.

Finally, the study recommends developing integrated policies that link human capacity building with infrastructure development, natural resource conservation, and strategic financing priorities. Such a holistic approach will strengthen Bahrain's long-term competitiveness, position it as a leading regional hub for sports tourism, and guide policymakers in planning future initiatives and research agendas to ensure sustainability and global appeal.

6. REFERENCES

1. Ahmed, N. S., Moosa, A., Hamdan, A., & Zahran, S. (2022). The impact of Bahrain's adaptive sports on quality of life. In *International Conference on Business and Technology* (pp. 333–338). Springer, Cham.
2. Al Zayani, M., Baher, M., Al Beeshi, S., Al Ajmi, H., & Alaghbari, M. (2023). The reality of SMEs and sustainable development from the perspective of innovative economic vision of the Kingdom of Bahrain 2030. *International Journal of Technology, Innovation and Management*, *3*(1), 28–33.
3. Alamri, N. M. (2025). The role of the sports sector in tourism development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a focus on the Eastern Region. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 14*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2025-0004
4. Alguacil, M., Pérez Campos, C., Aguado Berenguer, S., & Boquera, J. (2016). Does hosting a sport event promote the city as a tourist destination among athletes? *SPORT TK – Revista Euroamericana de Ciencias del Deporte, 5*(1), 123–136. https://doi.org/10.6018/254131
5. Alsandi, A., Sowaid, J. A., & Alzahli, K. B. (2025). Determinants of strategic agility in sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman. *An-Najah University Journal for Research-B (Humanities), 39*(9), 695–708. https://doi.org/10.35552/0247.39.9.2440
6. Amara, M., & Bouandel, Y. (2023). Motor sport in the Middle East: Regional rivalries, business and politics in the Arabian Gulf. In *The History and Politics of Motor Racing: Lives in the Fast Lane* (pp. 691–706). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22825-4_27
7. Askarian, F., Shojaei, M. K., & Yavari, U. (2015). Challenges in the development of sports tourism in Aras Free Zone according to managers and experts' opinions. *Nigerian Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, 62*(2159), 1–11.

8. Boroujerdi, S. S., Mansouri, H., & Asadi, S. (2023). Developing sports tourism destinations in emerging countries: The case of Zrebar Lake in Iran. *Polish Journal of Sport and Tourism, 30*(2), 22–29. https://doi.org/10.2478/pjst-2023-0010
9. Caraka, R. E., Wardhana, I. W., Kim, Y., Sakti, A. D., Gio, P. U., Noh, M., & Pardamean, B. (2023). Connectivity, sport events, and tourism development of Mandalika's special economic zone: A perspective from big data cognitive analytics. *Cogent Business & Management, 10*(1), 1-19.
10. Cheng, M. (2023). Analysis of coupled development of socioeconomy and tourism: Implications for sports tourism infrastructure. *Scientific Reports, 13*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-44025-6
11. Fan, J., & Ge, M. (2013). Impact study of the major sports events, the life cycle of tourist destinations and the competitiveness of urban tourism. *Journal of Applied Sciences, 13*(21), 4580–4584.
12. Gaafar A., Al Kitani M., Al Droushi A R, Al Yaaribi A., Sharshouh M., Alshamy A., & Altamimi M. (2024). The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Empowering Women in Sport. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, *30*(4), 11305–11313. https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i4.10049
13. Gaafar, A., Al-Droushi, A., Al Kitani, M., Al Yaaribi, A., & Sharshouh, M. (2024). Strategic vigilance in sports clubs: Insights and practices. *Journal of Ecohumanism, 3*(7), 3479–3486. https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i7.4479
14. Gelbman, A. (2019). Sport tourism and peace: Crossing the contested wall. *Tourism Geographies, 21*(1), 163–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2018.1519718
15. Haghighat, S., Saberi, A., Bagheri, G., & Khaksari, G. (2022). The future study of sports tourism in Iran: Using Scenario Wizard and COPRAS. *Sports Business Journal, 2*(2), 269–285.
16. Heebkhoksung, K., Rattanawong, W., & Vongmanee, V. (2023). Development of smart sport tourism model based on smart city integrated with sport tourism principles. In *2023 8th International Conference on Business and Industrial Research (ICBIR)* (pp. 627–631). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICBIR57571.2023.10147652
17. Heydari, R., Keshtidar, M., Dehghan Ghahfarokhi, A., Esfehani, M., Perić, M., & Oveysi Sani, F. (2022). Modeling the institutional factors affecting the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities in the sports tourism industry using an interpretive-structural approach. *Iranian Journal of Management Studies, 15*(2), 189–205.
18. Ishac, W., Abou Hamad, K., Al-Hazmi, M., & Nuseibeh, H. (2024). Examining sport tourism role in fostering social sustainability: Qatar youth perceptions. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 6*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2024.1388123
19. Karinda, K., Baharuddin, T., & Jermsittiparsert, K. (2024). Exploring global research trends in sports tourism policy: Formulating Indonesia's future policies. *Journal of Government and Civil Society, 8*(1), 1–20.
20. Li, L., & Liang, J. (2024). Analysis of residents' supportive attitudes toward interactive development of sports events and urban tourism (Changsha Zhuzhou Xiangtan, China). *SPORT TK – Revista Euroamericana de Ciencias del Deporte, 13*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.6018/sportk.620611
21. Liu, G., Li, H., & Feng, X. (2024). Research on the management of sports events in the context of sports tourism. *Transactions on Economics, Business and Management Research, 5*, 131–136.
22. Mazza, B. (2023). A theoretical model of strategic communication for the sustainable development of sport tourism. *Sustainability, 15*(9), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15097039
23. Morfoulaki, M., Naniopoulos, A., Kotoula, K., & Linardou, C. (2023). Sport tourism as a driving force for sustainable destinations. *Sustainability, 15*(3), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15032445

24. Nanda, W. D., Widianingsih, I., & Miftah, A. Z. (2023). The linkage of digital transformation and tourism development policies in Indonesia from 1879–2022: Trends and implications for the future. *Sustainability*, *15*(13), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151310201
25. Raso, M., & Cherubini, G. (2023). Sport tourism and regional economic development: A systematic review. *Sporting & Regional Economics Journal, 3*(1), 108–121.
26. Ronaghi, S. S., Hosseini Semnani, A. S., & Saffari, L. (2024). Workforce planning for the future of sports tourism. *International Journal of Sport Studies for Health, 7*(4), 26–39. https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.intjssh.7.4.4
27. Serdar, C. C., Cihan, M., Yücel, D., & Serdar, M. A. (2021). Sample size, power and effect size revisited: Simplified and practical approaches in pre-clinical, clinical and laboratory studies. *Biochemia Medica, 31*(1), 27-53.
28. Sowaid, J. (2026). The impact of sports tourism industry types on economic sustainability. *Journal of Palestine Ahliya University for Research and Studies, 5*(2), 169–180. https://doi.org/10.59994/pau.2026.2.169
29. Sowaid, J., & Al-Salawi, A. (2026). The social and cultural impacts of hosting major sporting events. *Retos, 81*, 482–495. https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v81.119101
30. Sowaid, J., Alsandi, A., Al Qasimi, W., & Bait Saleem, Y. (2025). Attitudes toward hosting sporting events in the Kingdom of Bahrain: Preferences and motivations. *International Journal of Human Movement and Sports Sciences, 13*(6), 1246–1254. https://doi.org/10.13189/saj.2025.130609
31. Sowaid, J., Alsandi, A. K., Alzahli, K., Bait Saleem, Y., & Al Hashimi, S. (2026). The impact of service quality on destination image among sports event participants: Evidence from the International School Games (Bahrain 2024). *Journal of Physical Education, 38*(3), 2272–2286. https://doi.org/10.37359/JOPE.V38(3)2026.2411
32. Temnyk, I. O. (2017). Criteria and provisions for efficient implementation of macro-projects of international sport event tourism. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism, 8*(6), 1307–1321.
33. Weed, M. (2020). The role of the interface of sport and tourism in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Sport & Tourism, 24*(2), 79–92.
34. Zare, S., Zarei, A., & Tejari, F. (2020). Analysis of nostalgia sport tourism in football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League. *SPORT TK – Revista Euroamericana de Ciencias del Deporte, 9*(2), 103–108. https://doi.org/10.6018/sportk.431191
35. Zhao, Y. (2023). Impact of environment, culture, and sports tourism on the economy: A mediation–moderation model. *World Leisure Journal, 65*(1), 56–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2023.2222306

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding.

COPYRIGHT

© 2026 by the authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license, meaning that anyone may download and read the paper for free. The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms. These conditions allow for maximum use and exposure of the work, while ensuring that the authors receive proper credit.