



Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Research and Development Centre

1st International Conference and Exhibition on Research, Innovation and Development (ICERID 2026)

Proceedings URL: <https://iauejournals.com/index.php/ICERID>

Website: <https://icerid.online>



ISBN: 978-978-63205-1-9

June 2026; Page No. 309-314

Personality Traits Associated with Successful Sports Tourism Management in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the role of personality traits, such as compassion and enthusiasm, in sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of five hundred (500) employees from the Ministry of Sports, Rivers State. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured, validated questionnaire with a modified Likert scale. The instrument's reliability coefficient of 0.80 was attained using Cronbach's alpha, which was deemed acceptable. The data collected were analysed using simple regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed a strong positive correlation between sports tourism management and compassion ($r = 0.755$), and sports tourism management and enthusiasm ($r = 0.729$). The findings of a simple regression analysis reveal that compassion in sports contributes approximately 57% and enthusiasm contributes 53.1% to the promotion of sports tourism in Rivers State, which has a significant impact on sports tourism development. Consequently, the study recommended, amongst others, that policymakers at various levels of government should take into account the influence of personality traits on sports tourism management. Policies should be designed to support the development of these traits among sports managers and stakeholders.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Sports Tourism, Management

Introduction

The promotion and sustainability of sports tourism can be influenced by meticulous planning, well-trained staff with strong personality traits, and the sports-related administrative abilities of administrators/managers of sports. Compassion indicates the ability to recognise the needs, concerns, and emotions of others and respond with care and support. In sports tourism management, compassion is increasingly recognised as an important predictor of tourist satisfaction, service quality, loyalty, revisit intentions, and positive destination image. Compassionate management practices help create meaningful experiences for sports tourists, athletes, spectators, and event participants. Weaver and Jin (2016) explained that compassion is a powerful motivational force that encourages positive interactions, ethical behaviour, and sustainable tourism outcomes. They argue that compassionate attitudes among tourism stakeholders enhance visitors' experiences and strengthen long-term destination competitiveness (Weaver & Jin, 2016). In sports tourism settings, compassion is often expressed through empathy, individualised attention, responsiveness to visitor needs, and emotional support. It was suggested that staff who understand and respond to tourists' emotional and physical needs contribute significantly to customers' satisfaction and retention. Compassionate employees provide individualised attention and care, which improves perceived service quality.

Emotional support and understanding during sporting events, competitions, or recreational activities reduce stress and improve overall satisfaction. Compassionate interactions create memorable experiences that strengthen emotional

attachment to destinations (Weaver & Jin, 2016). Research in sports tourism indicates that positive emotional experiences influence behavioural intentions, including repeat visitation and recommendation behaviour. Compassion contributes to these positive emotions by fostering trust and connection between tourists and service providers (Gao et al., 2026; Manosudhikul, 2024). Emotional engagement is a major determinant of successful sports tourism events. Recent studies show that emotional cues significantly influence participants' attitudes and behaviours. Compassionate event management can therefore enhance participant engagement and event success (Zhang et al., 2026).

Compassion encourages responsible decision-making, inclusiveness, and community support. Managers who prioritise compassionate practices are more likely to balance visitor satisfaction with community well-being and environmental sustainability (Weaver & Jin, 2016). Compassion could serve as a significant predictor in sports tourism management because it influences service quality, tourist satisfaction, emotional engagement, loyalty, and sustainable destination development. Sports tourism organisations that cultivate compassionate leadership and employee behaviour are more likely to achieve competitive advantage and long-term success. Compassion is a crucial predictor of success in sports tourism management. It drives organisational resilience, employee engagement, and high-quality guest interactions. In environments often defined by intense competition and physical strain, managers who exhibit compassion build trust, reduce resistance during change, and elevate destination loyalty.

Studies by Liu and Wang (2025) found that tourism organisers with high engagement/enthusiasm tend to offer tiered activity options for different skill levels, e.g., leisure hiking to high-intensity workouts, introduce interactive technologies like AR/VR sports and smart fitness devices, and organise regular events such as marathons, team games, and group challenges to foster interpersonal engagement. The moderating role of personality traits means enthusiastic managers also tailor experiences to extroverted vs. introverted tourists, designing socially engaging team activities or serene solo programs accordingly. Enthusiasm predicts HR practices in sports tourism events, especially volunteer management. Research shows intention to continue volunteering is directly influenced by the quality of the experience, social interactions, and support received during the event. Sevilmiş et al. (2023) emphasise that a positive work environment with minimised stress, driven by enthusiastic leadership, leads to more satisfying volunteer experiences and fosters retention. Sevilmiş et al. (2023) further found that in the tourism and sports industries, relationships with superiors and the nature of the job are major predictors of employee satisfaction. Enthusiastic managers display personal attachment to roles and colleagues, which improves these predictors. Enthusiasm also predicts marketing and demand-stimulation practices. Wang et al. (2025) note that “targeted promotion activities should be carried out to improve public awareness and stimulate consumers’ enthusiasm for participation, to create a favourable environment for the sustainable development of sports tourism”. Al-Mulla et al. (2023) assessed community excitement as a dimension of “psychic income” generated by sport events, and found it correlates with resident support for future events. Managers who show enthusiasm amplify event excitement, which then strengthens destination image and revisit intentions.

Enthusiasm predicts the adoption of sustainable and inclusive management practices. Rangkuti et al. (2025) argued that sports tourism must integrate cultural heritage with sustainable destination management, and enthusiastic stakeholder engagement is critical to avoid treating citizens as impediments. The European Parliament (2025) stressed that policies must promote a “sustainable and inclusive form of sports tourism” and that success requires “greater involvement of local and regional authorities, sport organisations, tourism operators, and businesses”. Enthusiastic managers are more likely to design inclusive experiences for both extroverted and introverted tourists and to involve communities authentically, which supports long-term sustainability. Across recent literature, enthusiasm functions as an affective predictor. High enthusiasm among managers/staff predicts proactive experience design, better volunteer/staff management, targeted marketing that stimulates tourist enthusiasm, and more inclusive, sustainable planning. Sports managers must possess certain personality attributes, including empathy, enthusiasm, compassion, morality, zeal and competence. The development of a sustainable sport tourism sector depends on these characteristics. As a result, personality traits like compassion are crucial to the development of sports tourism. A person has compassion when they are faced with the pain of another and are moved to try to end that suffering. It is when the desire to assist is present in those thoughts and sentiments. It holds significant importance for the creation of sustainable employment opportunities, especially within the sports sector, and contributes to the overall economic growth of nations with a serious commitment to this endeavour, as highlighted by Nwaogu (2020). Consequently, this research undertakes a comprehensive investigation into the role of personality variables as predictive factors in sports

tourism management within Rivers State, Nigeria. By exploring the nexus between personality traits and the quality of sports tourism management, this study aspires to offer valuable insights for the development of this industry, thereby contributing to the broader socioeconomic advancement of the region.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate some personality traits as predictors of sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Ascertain the extent to which compassion predicts sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Examine the extent to which enthusiasm predicts sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. Compassion is not a significant predictor of sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Enthusiasm is not a significant predictor of sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology

Study setting: The study area was Rivers State, which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria, with its headquarters at Port Harcourt. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of this study was 500 sports personnel from the Rivers State Ministry of Sports and Youth Development. The sample size of the study comprised the sports directors (65), deputy directors (85), assistant directors (100), organising secretaries (100), and coaches (150), totalling 500, using a systematic random sampling method. This is because the population was within the reach of the researcher; hence, it was adopted for this study. A self-administered, validated questionnaire titled “Personality Traits as Predictors of Sports Tourism Management (PTCSTM)” was used to gather data. The researcher used a validated questionnaire with response choices based on a modified Likert scale. The data generated in this study through the questionnaire were simple, in an ordinal scale, presented in table format, and analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple regression analysis for inferential statistics on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS version 27.0. The data analysis was based on 486 retrieved instruments from the 500 questionnaires administered, given a return rate of 97.2%.

Results

Table 1. Summary of ANOVA associated with simple regression for hypothesis testing the link between compassion and sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	748.959	1	748.959	69.956	.000 ^b
	Residual	5192.478	485	10.706		
	Total	5941.437	486			

The findings of the study in Table 1 should undergo regression analysis to establish the relationship between compassion and sport tourism management in Rivers State. The study established a significant relationship between compassion and sports tourism ($p = 0.00$). The null hypothesis, which states that compassion will not significantly predict sports tourism, was therefore rejected.

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA associated with simple regression for hypothesis testing the link enthusiasm and sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2348.459	1	2348.459	317.008	.000 ^b
	Residual	3592.979	485	7.408		
	Total	5941.437	486			

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to establish the extent to which enthusiasm could predict sports tourism in Rivers State in Table 2. A significant regression was found ($F(df\ 1,485=317.0; p=0.00)$) between integrity and sports tourism. The null hypothesis, which states that integrity is not a significant predictor of sports tourism management, was rejected.

Discussion

From the study, the respondents agreed that compassionate managers can achieve greater success in sport tourism development, showing that empathy for staff can lead to sport tourism development, a positive relationship between managers and subordinates can promote sport tourism development, a compassionate manager would bring positive productivity to sport tourism development, and compassion is a key factor in sport tourism development. A strong correlation exists between compassion and sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is substantiated by the finding that 57% of the variance in sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria, can be attributed to compassion, while the remaining 43% can be ascribed to unexamined variables not considered in this study.

A study on the correlation between personality qualities and athletic performance was conducted by Mirzaei et al. (2013). The results showed that only conscientiousness, among personality traits, had a substantial positive association with sports performance. This is connected to the findings of the current study; the present study took into account personality characteristics (compassion), which have a strong connection to sport tourism management, whereas the previous study focused on personality traits. This study differs from the current study in that it was more concerned with personality traits and performance, whereas the current study looked at the connection between compassion and sports management. This finding implies that using a compassionate approach in sports tourism mimics the highest manifestation of humanity and emphasises people's reliance on and respect for one another. Additionally, the efficacy of managing sports tourism will increase when the appropriate people in the appropriate roles are involved. Sports organisations can achieve their short- and long-term objectives through developing empathetic skills.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Muhammad et al. (2019) in Pakistan, it was discovered that personality traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness played a substantial role as predictors of sports performance. Notably, their findings align with the present study, as they also found that only neuroticism was not a significant predictor in their multiple regression model, while the other personality traits were. In the context of the current research, the investigated personality factors were found to make significant contributions to sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria. These results suggest that, regardless of the personality traits used, there will likely be a substantial contribution to the growth of sports in every nation, not only Nigeria.

Applying multiple linear regression, Jan et al. (2023) discovered that there are both adverse and favourable connections between different personality traits, executive function performance, and the impact of expertise and gender. The average coefficient of determination for all the variables was 23%; however in the current study, the lowest coefficient of determination for a personality component was integrity, which was around 51%. The disparity in findings between the two studies may be attributed to the fact that Jan et al. (2023) incorporated additional variables into their research, including executive function performance, the impact of expertise, and gender, in conjunction with the personality variables.

From the study, the respondents agreed that a happy and enthusiastic manager can achieve rapid sport tourism development; a motivated workforce is a prerequisite for sport tourism development; a well remunerated work force will drive the development of sport tourism positively; availability of material resources will trigger enthusiastic tendencies in the workforce which will eventually lead to sport tourism development; and enthusiasm is germane to sport tourism development. Also, the 53.1% change in sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria can be explained by enthusiasm, while 46.9% was accounted for by other variables not considered in this study, which implies that there is a significant relationship between enthusiasm and sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study of Dragoş et al. (2019) agreed that motivating employees within sports organizations an essential facet of managerial policy. From the perspective of workplace motivation within sports organisations, both managers (57%) and employees (52%) concur on the significant importance of recognising and rewarding employee merits over time. It's worth noting that these rewards need not be solely material in nature. This study differs from the present work because the previous study was particular about motivating employees in sports organisations, while the present study

focused on how enthusiasm is related to sport tourism management. In a related study, Chao-Chin (2015) looked at the variables impacting sport visitors' choice of destinations in Taiwan, which shows total agreement with the present study. Sport tourists' motivation, experiences, perceptions of danger, and personality factors were favourably correlated with the locations they chose. The motivation, experiences, risk perception, and personality factors of sport tourists were found to account for 82.5% of the variation in the destinations they chose. Among these, motivation was the one that contributed the most to the variance's explanation (78.5%). This study's conclusions are different from those of the current study.

Okala (2025) observed that as sports organisations embrace interactive learning and incorporate other technological advancements, focus on major competitions, enhance their outreach to target markets, rekindle connections with traditional consumers, employ innovative financial strategies, and prioritise efficiency, the future surge in sport tourism will necessitate a heightened level of enthusiasm and sophistication beyond what is presently seen. This implies that when staff within sports ministries are motivated, their dedication to advancing sports tourism is likely to be reinforced.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that employing a compassionate approach in sports tourism exemplifies the highest form of human expression and underscores the interdependence and respect individuals have for each other. In addition, the study highlights the significance of enthusiasm; it suggests that when employees within the sports ministry are motivated, their dedication to the development of sports tourism is likely to be strengthened, leading to more effective outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Efforts should be made by both government and sports stakeholders to motivate employees at all levels in the sports ministry. This will increase their enthusiasm towards sports tourism management.
2. Professional development programs should be designed to focus on enhancing the identified personality traits. Training initiatives can help individuals in the sports tourism sector improve their decision-making, leadership, and collaboration skills.
3. Policymakers at various levels of government should take into account the influence of personality traits on sports tourism management. Policies should be designed to support the development of these traits among sports managers and stakeholders.
4. Encourage collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders in the sports tourism industry. The study suggests that individuals with specific personality traits may be more inclined to collaborate effectively, which can lead to better management practices

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