

The impact of COVID-19 on sport & physical Education

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Abstract

The research paper is an analysis of sport participation impacts from sport events that have been sporadic. This scoping review assesses the current state of literature that addresses impacts, legacies, and leveraging of sport events for sport participation outcomes and the gaps in terms of study context and research designs. The research paper focuses especially on how sport organizations have responded to concerns about sport-related environmental problems, and the range of inequities that are associated with environmental issues more generally. Positive impact to the society includes Generating employment, National unity, Role model, Never give up attitude, Upliftment, Boosting the economy, Team spirit, Learning continues and Emotions. It also analyses that the health expenditures are also improving air quality by lowering environmental degradation so, it is mandatory to inspect the different forms of health care spending and to certify that all are commensurate with the green economy policy.

The paper also identifies a large range of sustainable management practices, covering the five aforementioned sustainability dimensions, which may be useful to the managers of sports tourism companies and for the sustainable development of sports tourism destinations. Sports tourism is viewed as an ideal tool for supporting the livelihood of the host communities in developing countries. As an alternative way of involving the host community in tourism activities, sports tourism aims to enable the hosts to earn income from tourism. Sports tourism events have been hosted in the country for decades but still facing challenges that have hindered its growth process. Findings indicate that major challenges facing the hosting of sports tourism events are; poor planning, policy issues and security and the main opportunities for sports tourism events are boosting of domestic tourism, diversification of tourism products and marketing of host cities.

Introduction

Sport is a major contributor to economic and social development. Its role is well recognized by Governments, including in the Political Declaration of the 2030 Agenda, which reflects on “the contribution sports make to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities, as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

Since its onset, the COVID-19 pandemic has spread to almost all countries of the world. Social and physical distancing measures, lockdowns of businesses, schools and overall social life, which have become commonplace to curtail the spread of the disease, have also disrupted many regular aspects of life, including sport and physical activity. This policy brief highlights the challenges COVID-19 has posed to both the sporting world and to physical activity and well-being, including for marginalized or vulnerable groups. It further provides recommendations for Governments and other stakeholders, as well as for the UN system, to support the safe reopening of sporting events, as well as to support physical activity during the pandemic and beyond.

The impact of COVID-19 on sporting events and the implications for social development

To safeguard the health of athletes and others involved, most major sporting events at international, regional and national levels have been cancelled or postponed – from marathons to football tournaments, athletics championships to basketball games, handball to ice hockey, rugby, cricket, sailing, skiing, weightlifting to wrestling and more. The Olympics and Paralympics, for the first time in the history of the modern games, have been postponed, and will be held in 2021.

The global value of the sports industry is estimated at US\$756 billion annually. In the face of COVID-19, many millions of jobs are therefore at risk globally, not only for sports professionals but also for those in related retail and sporting services industries connected with leagues and events, which include travel, tourism, infrastructure, transportation, catering and media broadcasting, among others. Professional athletes are also under pressure to reschedule their training, while trying to stay fit at home, and they risk losing professional sponsors who may not support them as initially agreed.

In addition to economic repercussions, the cancellation of games also impacts many social benefits of global and regional sport events, which can cement social cohesion, contribute to the social and emotional excitement of fans, as well as their identification with athletes leading to greater physical activity of individuals. Sport has long been considered a valuable tool for fostering

communication and building bridges between communities and generations. Through sport, various social groups are able to play a more central role towards social transformation and development, particularly in divided societies. Within this context, sport is used as a tool for creating learning opportunities and accessing often marginal or at-risk populations.

Major sporting organisations have shown their solidarity with efforts to reduce the spread of the virus. For example, FIFA has teamed up with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and launched a 'Pass the message to kick out coronavirus' campaign led by well-known football players in 13 languages, calling on people to follow five key steps to stop the spread of the disease focused on hand washing, coughing etiquette, not touching one's face, physical distance and staying home if feeling unwell. Other international sport for development and peace organizations have come together to support one another in solidarity during this time, for example, through periodic online community discussions to share challenges and issues. Participants in such online dialogues have also sought to devise innovative solutions to larger social issues, for example, by identifying ways that sporting organisations can respond to problems faced by vulnerable people who normally participate in sporting programmes in low income communities but who are now unable to, given restriction to movement.

The closure of education institutions around the world due to COVID-19 has also impacted the sports education sector, which is comprised of a broad range of stakeholders, including national ministries and local authorities, public and private education institutions, sports organizations and athletes, NGOs and the business community, teachers, scholars and coaches, parents and, first and foremost, the – mostly young – learners. While this community has been severely impacted by the current crisis, it can also be a key contributor to solutions to contain and overcome it, as well as in promoting rights and values in times of social distancing.

As the world begins to recover from COVID-19, there will be significant issues to be addressed to ensure the safety of sporting events at all levels and the well-being of sporting organizations. In the short term, these will include the adaptation of events to ensure the safety of athletes, fans and vendors, among others. In the medium term, in the face of an anticipated global recession, there may also be a need to take measures to support participation in sporting organizations, particularly for youth sports.

The impact of COVID-19 on physical activity and well-being

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has resulted in closure of gyms, stadiums, pools, dance and fitness studios, physiotherapy centres, parks and playgrounds. Many individuals are therefore not able to actively participate in their regular individual or group sporting or physical activities outside of their homes. Under such conditions, many tend to be less physically active, have longer screen time, irregular sleep patterns as well as worse diets, resulting in weight gain and loss of physical fitness. Low-income families are especially vulnerable to negative effects of stay at home rules as they tend to have sub-standard accommodations and more confined spaces, making it difficult to engage in physical exercise.

The WHO recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week. The benefits of such periodic exercise are proven very helpful, especially in times of anxiety, crisis and fear. There are concerns therefore that, in the context of the pandemic, lack of access to regular sporting or exercise routines may result in challenges to the immune system, physical health, including by leading to the commencement of or exacerbating existing diseases that have their roots in a sedentary lifestyle.

Lack of access to exercise and physical activity can also have mental health impacts, which can compound stress or anxiety that many will experience in the face of isolation from normal social life. Possible loss of family or friends from the virus and impact of the virus on one's economic wellbeing and access to nutrition will exacerbate these effects.

For many, exercising at home without any equipment and limited space can still be possible. For those whose home life can involve long periods of sitting, there may be options to be more active during the day, for example by stretching, doing housework, climbing stairs or dancing to music. In addition, particularly for those who have internet access, there are many free resources on how to stay active during the pandemic. Physical fitness games, for example, can be appealing to people of all ages and be used in small spaces. Another important aspect of maintain physical fitness is strength training which does not require large spaces but helps maintain muscle strength, which is especially important for older persons or persons with physical disabilities.

The global community has adapted rapidly by creating online content tailored to different people; from free tutorials on social media, to stretching, meditation, yoga and dance classes in which the whole family can participate. Educational institutions are providing online learning resources for students to follow at home.

Many fitness studios are offering reduced rate subscriptions to apps and online video and audio classes of varying lengths that change daily. There are countless live fitness demonstrations available on social media platforms. Many of these classes do not require special equipment and some feature everyday household objects instead of weights.

Such online offerings can serve to increase access to instructors or classes that would otherwise be inaccessible. However, access to such resources is far from universal, as not everyone has access to digital technologies. For individuals in poorer communities and in many developing countries, access to broadband Internet is often problematic or non-existent. The digital divide has thus not only an impact on distance banking, learning or communication, but also on benefitting from accessing virtual sport opportunities. Radio and television programmes that activate people as well as distribution of printed material that encourages physical activity are crucial in bridging the digital divide for many households living in precarious conditions. Young people are particularly affected by social and physical distancing, considering sport is commonly used as a tool to foster cooperation and sportsmanship, promote respectful competition, and learn to manage conflict. Without sport, many young people are losing the support system that such participation provided. Currently some organizations, and schools have begun using virtual training as a method for leagues, coaches and young people to remain engaged in sport activities while remaining in their homes.

The impact of COVID-19 on physical activity and well-being

1. Supporting physical activity.

Governments should work collaboratively with health and care services, schools and civil society organizations representing various social groups to support physical activity at home. Enhancing access to online resources to facilitate sport activities where available should be a key goal in order to maintain social distancing. However, low-tech and no-tech solutions must also be sought for those who currently lack access to the internet. Creating a flexible but consistent daily routine

including physical exercise every day to help with stress and restlessness is advisable.

2. Research and policy guidance.

The United Nations system, through its sports policy instruments and mechanisms such as the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport,⁷ as well as through its research and policy guidance should support Governments and other stakeholders to ensure effective recovery and reorientation of the sports sector and, at the same time, strengthen the use of sports to achieve sustainable development and peace. Scientific research and higher education will also be indispensable pillars to inform and orient future policies.

3. Technical cooperation and capacity development.

Governments, UN entities and other key stakeholders should ensure the provision of capacity development and technical cooperation services to support the development and implementation of national policies and approaches for the best use of sport to advance health and well-being, particularly in the age of COVID-19.

4. Outreach and awareness raising.

Governments, the United Nations and the sporting community, including the sporting education community, should disseminate WHO and other guidance on individual and collective measures to counter the pandemic. Measures must be taken to reach communities that have limited access to the Internet and social media and that can be reached through cascading the sport education pyramid from the national/ministerial level down to the provincial/municipal level, from the national physical education inspector down to the teacher, from the national sport federation down to the clubs. In turn, escalating the pyramid provides for important feedback to identify needs and share specific solutions. Athletes, while deeply affected by the pandemic, remain key influencers to ensure that – especially young – audiences understand risks and respect guidance.

5. Promoting positive social attitudes and behaviour.

Sport education is a powerful means to foster physical fitness, mental well-being, as well as social attitudes and behaviour while populations are locked down. International rights and values based sport education instruments and tools, such as the International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, the Quality Physical Education Policy package and the Values Education through Sport toolkit remain highly relevant references to ensure that the many online physical activity modules that are being currently deployed comply

with gender equality, non-discrimination, safety and quality standards.

Methodology

Questionnaire Design

By using empirical methodology, questionnaire surveys can serve as an effective research method for quantitatively analysing data and drawing scientific conclusions. Pricing approaches in the construction industry forms the basis of the current paper's empirical study. Therefore, the questionnaire method this paper adopts was applicable for investigating the significant factors that influence private partners' willingness to participate in SLCT PPPs. The questionnaire was designed for respondents whose occupational positions were at an average or high level within the enterprises for which they worked. The first part of the questionnaire focused on the respondents' demographic characteristics and included questions about their gender, age, education, professional title, personal hobbies, etc. For the second part of the questionnaire, the respondents were required to score the factors and their companies' willingness to participate in SLCT PPPs. This was achieved using a Likert 5 scale that ranged from 1 (extremely unimportant or disagree) to 5 (extremely important or agree). Finally, open-ended questions were provided so that respondents could list other key factors.

Analysis Data

Data analysis was driven by the framework established by research questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed along three phases of partnership governance formation, management, and outcomes. As a result, data findings were constructed according to an identical pattern. Lived experiences of participants were traced and summarized in results section. Predetermined criteria for potential study participants included that he/she worked for a municipality and had direct contact with youth sports programs. As a result, heads of the divisions of sport within local city municipalities were personally contacted and asked if they would be willing to participate. In case of inability to participate, they were asked to assign one of their subordinates, who would be best equipped for such a role. The territory of the Republic of Lithuania currently comprises of 10 counties and 60 municipalities. Municipalities from seven different counties were contacted for this study. Ten questionnaires were returned, but two of them were improperly completed.

Stakeholders and Roles of PPP in Sports Field

Stakeholders in public private partnerships in sports field, The Olympic and World Cup football stadiums, as well as urban large stadiums and sports centers, are mainly dominated by the government, and public subsidies are used for the construction and maintenance of new venues. It is a multi sector consortium, and the investors are mostly state-owned enterprises and banks with strong strength. Although the new construction of large stadiums has brought some competitions, there is a possibility of creating jobs, enhancing image and community pride. But taxpayers may resist public funding for sports facilities, especially if the amount of public subsidies is large. In the public-private partnership of sports promotion activities, it is worth noting that academia is the relevant party of PPP project implementation. This is because the academic community is mostly considered as a group of external stakeholders, which provides insightful policy guidance in the preparatory stage by using the research and experience of key decision-making project parties.

Challenges of Public private partnerships (PPP) in Sports Field

The goal of public sector stakeholders: the role of the state and the local; the public function of sports venues. If the construction and renovation of large stadiums and stadiums are "achieving political goals" and "political support". Then, when a large stadium is used to perform certain public functions that are not commercial or cost-effective, the main risk assessment of the project is also political. If the project fails, shield the private sector from criticism for locally elected officials. The above causes the challenge of developing / initiating partnerships. Private organizations are sometimes hesitant to initiate partnerships because they do not want to be seen as forming an alliance with the government for ideological reasons. The government has invested in the sports facilities used by professional sports teams, resulting in a series of tangible and intangible benefits. After making major commitments, communities often receive new requests for more subsidies. If these growing needs cannot be met, professional sports teams often move to other cities.

Findings

Public private partnerships in sports are mainly in sports infrastructure and sports promotion cooperation. Stakeholder analysis shows that the main stakeholders are government, for-profit private sector, non-profit private charities, autonomous institutions, diverse donor agencies, research and implementation personnel, users activity objects. According to the classification, the government and investors are still dominant. In the future, whether

the government can form a partnership with the alliance and raise the development of public benefits of sports facilities depends on the consensus among policies. The power of the dominant field needs to be used to protect the public interest.

Study of public-private partnership in youth sports delivery programs at the municipal level revealed important features that are significant in terms of public value recognition and interpretation at the national context. Firstly, while implementing strategic plans, municipalities traditionally develop sports activities in two directions elite level sports and physical activity. The promotion of partnership is not prioritized, but is being developed in all municipalities. Limitations of this research are obvious, as it only provides the view of one side of the partnership that of local government. These shortcomings are legit and in the process of being addressed, as the immediate follow up to this research involving participants from the private sector, is currently under construction. Future research should provide the perceptions of private sport program providers, as well as comparisons with those of public actors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic has had and will continue to have very considerable effects on the sporting world as well as on the physical and mental well-being of people around the world. The following recommendations seek to both support the safe re-opening of sporting events and tournaments following the pandemic, as well as to maximize the benefits that sport and physical activity can bring in the age of COVID-19 and beyond.

The impact of COVID-19 on sporting events

1. Sporting federations and organizations.

Governments and intergovernmental organizations may provide sports federations, clubs and organizations around the world with guidance related to safety, health, labour and other international standards and protocols that would apply to future sport events and related safe working conditions. This would allow all stakeholders to work cooperatively as a team with the objective to address the current challenges and to facilitate future sports events that are safe and enjoyable for all.

2. Professional sport ecosystem.

The sport ecosystem, comprising of producers, broadcasters, fans, businesses, owners and players among others, need to find new and innovative solutions to mitigate the negative effects of COVID19 on the world of sport. This includes finding ways to engage with fans in order to ensure

safe sport events in the future while maintaining the workforce, creating new operating models and venue strategies.

It contributes to the growing body of academic understanding about how partnerships in youth sport programs work by providing the perceptions of public institutions towards PPP. By using a critical realist approach this study detailed three phases of public-private partnership as it relates to youth sport delivery system: formation, management, and outcomes. Findings of this research also carry practical implications. First of all, it enables information dissemination between different municipalities, thus, enabling recognition of comparable patterns or problems and opening meaningful discussions. Second of all, it reinforces the notion of need for risk sharing as well as knowledge transfer and search for mutual long-term solutions in public-private partnership projects. Finally, the strengthening of the understanding of partnership concept helps to better understand the specificities of regional development through sport.

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