



## **The Role of Competence and Intellect in Promoting Sports Tourism in Rivers State**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated the role of competence and intelligence in promoting sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria. A correlational survey design was adopted. A sample size of five hundred (500) workers from ministry of sports was gotten using the purposive sampling procedure. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The instrument that was used for data collection was a validated questionnaire with a modified likert scale. The instrument's reliability coefficient of 0.80 was attained using Cronbach Alpha, which was deemed acceptable. The data collected was analysed using simple regression analysis, at the 0.05 level of significance. The results showed a strong positive correlation between sports tourism promotion and intellect ( $r = 0.792$ ), sports tourism promotion and competence ( $r = 0.809$ ). The findings of a simple regression analysis reveal that intelligence in sports contribute approximately 63% and competence contributes 65.4% to the promotion of sports tourism in Rivers State which has a significant impact on sports tourism development. Consequently, the study recommended amongst other that, professional development programs should be designed to focus on enhancing the identified personality traits, training initiatives that can help individuals in the sports tourism sector improve their decision-making, leadership, and collaboration skills.

**Keywords:** Competence, Intelligence, Sports Tourism, Sports Managers, Rivers State.

### **Introduction**

The advancement of every firm, especially the sports industry, depends greatly on management. According to Uwagbale (2011), management is the control and consideration of all operations inside an organization in order to combine all efforts toward realizing organizational goals. Management is also the guiding of human behavior towards attaining a specific aim or target. The author went on to say that managers use ongoing interactive activities, also known as the underlying management process, to carry out the PODSCORB-E (Planning, Organizing, Directing, Staffing, Coordinating, Ordering, Reporting, Budgeting and Evaluation) goals and objectives of an organization. Ayeni (2003) defined management as the process of utilizing the assets of an organization to accomplish goals and objectives through the operation of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Sport is a lucrative industry and a significant component of the tourism sector. Recent events have demonstrated that sport tourism is emerging as a major contributor to the economic prosperity of many nations worldwide, making substantial contributions to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creating employment opportunities for their citizens. Consequently, sports and sports tourism play a pivotal role in a country's financial revenue. Sports tourism entails the active or passive involvement of individuals or groups in competitive or recreational sports while traveling to and/or residing in unfamiliar environments (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). This form of tourism has become a global phenomenon, attracting international visitors to various destinations across the globe. In 2008, sport tourism accounted for a staggering \$600 billion, representing more than 10% of the international tourism market (Twining-Ward et al., 2018). The industry's capacity to generate revenue, stimulate job creation, revitalize urban infrastructure, and enhance a destination's local and global appeal has led cities, regions, and even entire countries to increasingly rely on visitors who travel specifically for sporting purposes. As a result, sport tourism has evolved into a highly competitive niche within the tourism industry, with only the most effectively managed destinations likely to thrive (Chi et al., 2025). This compelling statistic underscores the significant growth in scholarly research on sport tourism in recent years

(Shipway & Jones, 2007). However, despite its prominence among researchers, several academic efforts have displayed a limited focus on sport tourism research, primarily concentrating on those who travel for the purpose of spectating sport (Trail & James, 2001), as well as service quality and customer satisfaction issues, while neglecting organizational matters, employee behaviour, and leadership styles.

Scholars, such as Midland and Kington (2013), and Hengenberg et al. (2016), have observed that one noteworthy trend in the tourism sector is the rise of adventurous and active sports vacations. Building upon this insight, it becomes evident that the development of the sport tourism industry in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, is facing significant challenges. This issue may be attributed to a lack of political commitment in harnessing the potential of the region's skilled workforce, which possesses innovative capabilities. There is a missed opportunity to leverage the abundant human and material resources available to transform the sport tourism industry into a substantial source of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). Sports managers must possess certain personality attributes, including empathy, morality, zeal, intelligence, optimism, and competence. The development of a sustainable sport tourism sector depends on these characteristics. According to Holzman and Philip (2020), personality refers to a distinctive manner of thinking, feeling, and acting. Holzman and Philip (2020) contends that personality encompasses feelings, attitudes, and beliefs and is most obviously displayed in social interactions. He stated that it encompasses behavioral traits, both innate and learned, that set one person apart from another and can be seen in how people interact with their surroundings and social groups.

Staff competency is one of the most crucial indicators of job qualification in a profession. Amy (2005) defined competence as the collection of abilities needed to carry out a role successfully. Emery (2009) further defined competence as qualities linked to excellent or successful performance. Competence establishes the qualities needed for various tasks and successful performance under various circumstances. Competence's primary goal is to identify the knowledge and abilities needed to carry out a work, and one method of preparing qualified applicants for job applications is to identify the crucial requirements for the position through study. Competence calls for the abilities, know-how, and personality traits required for effective job performance. In order to better understand how sports tourism is managed in Rivers State, Nigeria, the researcher set out to conduct this study.

All organizations, including sport organizations, must have successful leadership effectiveness in order to be successful. It is imperative to acknowledge intelligence as a fundamental trait of an individual's personality, which can be closely tied to their effectiveness as leaders. Intelligence encompasses a range of capabilities, including logical thinking, comprehension, self-awareness, continuous learning, emotional intelligence, sound reasoning, strategic planning, creative thinking, critical analysis, and problem-solving. Scholars have characterized intelligence in various ways, highlighting its multifaceted nature. Intelligence plays a pivotal role not only in the management and growth of the sports tourism sector but also in facilitating effective development within the sports tourism industry. Nwaogu (2014) indicated that there 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.

In Nigeria, a nation brimming with an abundance of talent, cultivated in every nook and cranny, and steeped in rich cultural heritage that naturally encompasses various sporting activities, it is evident that the full potential of sports tourism has yet to be realized. This underachievement can be primarily ascribed to the limited investments made by the government and other key stakeholders in essential sporting infrastructure, institutions, events, and related ventures." (Mathew, 2023). Furthermore, it hinges on the cultivation of a cadre of skilled sports managers capable of innovation and resource optimization. In this context, it is imperative to examine how personality traits within sports managers influence their capacity to think creatively, adapt, and harness available resources optimally. Consequently, this research undertakes a comprehensive investigation into the role of competence as predictive factors in promoting sports tourism within Rivers State, Nigeria.

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the role of competence and intelligence in promoting sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study specifically sought to:

1. Ascertain the relationship between competence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between intelligence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between competence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between intelligence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria?

## Hypotheses

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

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between competence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between intelligence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## Methods and Materials

The study adopted the correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted of all employees in the state government's ministry of sports. The sample size for this study was 500 to 500 respondents on the role of competence and intelligence in the promotion of sports industry. The study employed the purposive sampling technique. A self-developed questionnaire was used for eliciting data for this study. The researcher used a validated questionnaire with response choices based on a modified Likert scale which was used to administer questionnaires. The data generated in this study through questionnaire were presented in table format and analyzed using simple regression analysis.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between competence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria?

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between competence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Showing the relationship between competence and sports tourism promotion in Rivers State, Nigeria.**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
R=.809, R-Square=.654, F=295.093, p-value=.000						
<b>1</b>	Regression	3884.707	1	3884.707	916.057	<b>.000<sup>b</sup></b>
	Residual	2056.730	485	4.241		
	Total	5941.437	486			

Table 1 displays the results of a simple regression analysis examining the relationship between competence and sports tourism promotion in Rivers State, Nigeria. The computed regression coefficient (R) is 0.809, indicating a strong and positive correlation between competence and sports tourism promotion. The coefficient of determination (R squared) is 0.654, signifying that approximately 65.4% of the variability in sports tourism promotion can be explained by competence. This result highlights the substantial role that competence plays in the promotion of sports tourism in Rivers State. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to establish the extent to which competence could promote sports tourism in Rivers State in Table 2. A significant regression was found (F (df 1,485= 916.06; p=0.00) between competence and sport tourism. the null hypothesis which states that competence is not a significant promoter of sports tourism management was rejected.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between intelligence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria?

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between intelligence and successful sports tourism in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Showing the relationship between intelligence and sports tourism promotion in Rivers State, Nigeria.**

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
R=.792, R-Square=.627, F=295.093, p-value=.000						
<b>1</b>	Regression	1439.475	1	1439.475	155.076	<b>.000<sup>b</sup></b>
	Residual	4501.962	485	9.282		
	Total	5941.437	486			

Table 2 presents the outcomes of a simple regression analysis conducted to examine the relationship between intelligence and sports tourism promotion in Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a reliability coefficient ( $r = 0.792$ ) which indicates a strong relationship between intelligence as a personal variable and sports tourism promotion. In addition, the result showed that intelligence explains 62.7% of the variance in sports tourism promotion ( $r^2 = 0.63$ ). This result highlights the substantial role that intelligence plays in the promotion of sports tourism in Rivers State. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to establish the extent to which intelligence could promote sports tourism in Rivers State in Table 2. A significant regression was found ( $F (df 1,485 = 155.08; p = 0.00)$  between intelligence and sport tourism. the null hypothesis which states that intelligence is not a significant promoter of sports tourism was rejected.

### Discussion

The study findings indicate that the respondents were in agreement on several key points. Firstly, they acknowledged that the sports tourism industry would greatly benefit from having competent sport tourism managers. Additionally, they recognized that providing support for learning new skills can lead to fresh perspectives and ideas in sports tourism management. Respondents also believed that exposure to new ideas among sports personnel would better prepare them to address leadership challenges within the sport tourism industry. Furthermore, it was affirmed that competence in the sport tourism industry can be nurtured and sustained through exposure to novel techniques. Lastly, competence was identified as a prerequisite for the development of sport tourism. Moreover, the study revealed that a substantial proportion of the variance in sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria (65.4%) can be attributed to competence, while the remaining portion (34.6%) is influenced by unexamined variables not considered in this study. This underscores a significant and meaningful relationship between competence and sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Elendu (2013) conducted a study addressing sports tourism as a potential instrument for Nigeria's 21st-century development, highlighting challenges and potential solutions. The study identified issues such as security concerns, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, and challenges in sports management as significant obstacles. In essence, it emphasized that addressing these challenges is essential for Nigeria to harness the developmental potential of sports tourism. This aligns with the findings of the present study, which underscore the importance of competence in promoting development in sports tourism management. In essence, competence is deemed necessary for the proper advancement of sports tourism in Nigeria.

Similarly, Duclos-Bastías et al. (2021) conducted a study validating the Sports Managers Competency Scale (COSM) in Chile. Their findings indicated that utilizing this instrument can facilitate the assessment of competencies in sports managers. This assessment serves as a basis for planning contextually relevant training strategies aimed at enhancing skills and knowledge related to professional work. This highlights the significance of competence in sports tourism management, emphasizing the importance of skills, knowledge, and personality traits necessary for successful job performance, especially in the context of sport tourism management.

Aaker (1997) conducted an analysis on brand personality dimensions, concluding that there are five primary dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. The creation of a brand personality is found to enhance consumer trust and loyalty. While this finding aligns with the outcomes of the present study to some extent, it diverges in the sense that the present study specifically links competence to sports tourism management. From the study, the respondents agreed that exchange of ideas will enhance sport tourism development; intelligence will expose members of an organization to new techniques in sport tourism management, intelligence is needed for effective service delivery, intelligence is needed for effective sport tourism development and intelligence promotes mutual relationship among members of an organization. Also, 62.7% change in sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria can be explained by intelligence, while 37.3% was accounted by other variables not considered in this study, which implies that there is a significant relationship between intelligence and sports tourism management in Rivers State, Nigeria. Ijaz et al. (2015) looked into how emotional intelligence of leaders affected employee engagement in the Sialkot sports industry. In order to understand how leader behavior affects employee commitment to their firm, this research made a contribution to the field of management. Therefore, intelligence is not only important for managing and developing the sports tourism industry, but it is also important for effective sports tourism development, which is essential for creating long-term jobs, particularly in the sports industry, which would boost the GDP of any serious nations (Nwaogu, 2014). This study agrees with the findings of the present study and implies that

there cannot be visible development in the sport tourism sector without a great intelligence on the part of sport tourism managers who has the responsibility to be creative in the face of gloomy circumstances.

Conversely, Sayfollahpour et al. (2013) delved into the correlation between the personality traits of football referees and their performance. Their study aimed to explore how referee performance related to personality factors such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Their findings unveiled a significant association between the methods of judgment and certain personality traits. Notably, flexibility and superior judgment were positively linked. Furthermore, the study revealed that neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and judgment quality showed no meaningful relationships. In terms of variables, the outcomes of this research diverge from those observed in the present study.

### Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that an organization's effectiveness is significantly influenced by the caliber of its personnel. The managers of the sport tourism industry must have a high level of intelligence and the ability to think creatively in the face of challenging situations if there is to be any discernible growth in the sector. Additionally, competence calls for the abilities, know-how, and personality traits required for effective job performance, particularly in the administration of sport tourism.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered:

1. Organizations and institutions involved in sports tourism management in Rivers State should consider implementing personality assessment tools as part of their recruitment and selection processes. This can help identify individuals with the desired personality traits for effective management roles.
2. Sports personnel should be encouraged to go for trainings that can enhance their skills and improve their competence for sports tourism management.
3. Governments and private sector entities should invest in developing human resources with the right personality traits for sports tourism management. This investment can lead to long-term economic growth and job creation.

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