

RESEARCH ARTICLE	Sports Tourism and Its Role in Attracting Tourists Through the Promotion of Recreational Physical Activities	
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Abstract		
Tourism planning is considered one of the most important tools of contemporary tourism development, as it effectively contributes to advancing development and the national economy. Attracting tourists, promoting tourism, and providing opportunities for visitors to engage in physical and recreational sports activities in relaxing and restorative environments such as parks and national reserves represents a new strategic approach that combines tourism and sports. This strategy aims to attract a distinguished category of tourists who engage in various recreational activities. This study aims to introduce the concept of sports tourism in general, and the practice of recreational physical and sports activities in particular. It also seeks to examine Algeria's capabilities and current reality regarding sports infrastructure that supports the success of sports tourism, which in turn plays a role in boosting national tourism and the national economy.		
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Introduction

Tourism is considered a social phenomenon aimed at recreational, leisure, educational, cultural, or commercial purposes. It involves the movement of an individual from their place of residence to a chosen tourist destination and has become an essential part of modern life. The tourism industry is one of the most important economic, cultural, and social activities. It is a comprehensive and multifaceted sector with clearly defined foundations and scientific principles in both study and practice. Tourism plays a significant role in both local and national economic development.

With the evolving preferences and lifestyles of tourists, a new approach has become necessary to attract and engage visitors—not only to appreciate the aesthetic beauty of a region but also to actively participate in experiences that enhance physical fitness through recreational sports activities.

Algeria enjoys diverse tourism assets, including natural beauty and environmental variety. It is characterized by a remarkable geographical diversity where sandy deserts meet coastal beaches and forested mountain ranges.

Therefore, in this research, we will attempt to address the practice of recreational physical and sports activities and their role in attracting tourists. We will also explore the reasons that have influenced the development of sports tourism. Based on the above, the central research question can be formulated as follows:

How can recreational physical and sports tourism activities contribute to attracting tourists?

This study aims to highlight the role that recreational sports activities play in the development of sports tourism in Algeria, through the utilization of the country's abundant tourist sites and natural locations. The goal is to transform these into important economic resources that contribute to national economic growth. We also aim to introduce the various recreational sports activities practiced across the national territory and explore ways to revitalize them for tourism promotion, as well as to highlight coastal, desert, and inland tourist areas. Furthermore, this study seeks to encourage individuals to travel and engage in tourism by practicing hobbies and recreational activities that provide physical, psychological, and social well-being.

The importance of this study lies in clarifying the role of recreational physical and sports activities in attracting tourists and in proposing strategies for the optimal use of tourism attraction factors. Consequently, coordination among the various relevant sectors is necessary to revive these activities and harness them to promote sports tourism and its diverse activities, which contribute to development and the advancement of the national economy.

1- The Concept of Tourism and Related Terms

• The Concept of Tourism:

Linguistically: The term *tourism* originates from the word *tour*, which is derived from the Latin word *torno*. The concept of *tourism* was first used in 1643 to indicate travel or movement from one place to another.

Terminologically: Tourism is a natural phenomenon of modern times, one of its main purposes being recreation, the appreciation of natural beauty, and the joy of enjoying scenic landscapes. (Mustafa Y., 2021, pp. 22–23) It is a multifaceted human phenomenon that consists of the activities and practices of individuals who travel to places outside their usual environment for a specific period. (Al-Azzawi, 2017, p. 21)

• The Tourist:

A) A tourist is defined as a person who leaves their usual place of residence to another location to engage in leisure and recreational activities, provided that they stay at least one night and do not exceed a stay of one year. This definition includes domestic tourism, international tourism, and seasonal tourism.

B) Tourists are temporary visitors who remain in the destination country or region for no less than 24 hours and no more than one year, for the purpose of recreation, practicing sports, or taking a vacation... (Mustafa Y., 2018, p. 208)

Figure 01: The Relationship Between Tourism and the Duration of Stay



• **Sports Tourism:** Sports tourism refers to tourism motivated by the desire to practice specific types of sports, such as water sports, boat racing, and swimming competitions. (Ahmed Fawzi, 2007, p. 52) Sports tourism is considered an important and effective means of attracting tourists, as people travel to specific destinations to participate in scheduled sports activities, whether for training or competition.

• **Recreation:** Looking at the term *recreation*, it literally means “re-creation.” It consists of two parts: the prefix *re-* meaning “again” and *creation*, meaning “to create.” Some also interpret recreation as refreshment or renewal. Kraus and Barberts (1987) define recreation as an activity, an emotional state, and an experience that manifests in the individual during their participation in leisure-time activities driven by personal motivation. Tehani Abdel Salam (1993) views recreation as a way of life and a lifestyle that involves various forms of activity, whether intense or calm. Many scholars point out that competitive recreational activities allow individuals to express their tendencies and inclinations, satisfying their psychological needs. Through practicing these activities, individuals are able to express themselves, their personalities, and interests, resulting in comfort and psychological satisfaction. (Mustafa, 2023, pp. 49–50)

Definition by Rah Naj Hussein Ahmed: Sports recreation is considered one of the most important foundational recreational programs due to its significant role in providing enjoyment to the individual. In addition, it plays a key role in enhancing and developing the individual’s personality—physically, mentally, health-wise, and socially. Among these activities are swimming, walking, cycling, and running. (Ahmed, 2016, p. 29)

Table 01. Illustrates the concept of tourism through usage.

Author/Year	Content
De Tonp	Sports tourism is defined as an individual on vacation who engages in a specific sport.

(1987)	
Eadmond (1990-1991)	There are three types of usage: - Attending a sports event. - Participating in sports activities. - Tourists of cultural-sporting events (e.g., museums, landmarks, famous figures in sports memory).
De Konp (1990)	There are three forms of sports participation during holidays: - Ludo-sportive activities during the weekend holiday. - Participation in sports or <i>ludo sportif</i> using available facilities and services related to the holiday. - Participation in unorganized sports events or <i>ludo sportif</i> linked to holidays.
Hall (1992)	There are two types: - Travel to participate in a sporting or <i>ludo sportif</i> activity. - Travel to spectate.
Nogunra et al.	There are three types: - Travel for a sports event. - Travel to attend a sports performance. - Travel to participate in organized sports activities.

Table 02. Explains the concept of sports tourism through its specific products.

Concept of Sports Tourism Through Its Specific Products	
Tusrtzman & Zaubert (1997)	There are five main categories of sports tourism products:
	- Sports tourism aimed at sporting attraction (e.g., museums, sports lectures, sports shows and matches, private aquatic sports clubs, golf resorts, ski resorts...)
	- Sports tourism in leisure or sports preparation centers or areas
	- Trips with a sporting purpose, such as attending a sports match or visiting sports-related areas
	- Sports tourism travel for exercising or engaging in physical activities, such as tennis, walking, or recreational tours
	- Sports tourism on the occasion of a sporting event, whether local, national, or international (e.g., the Olympic Games)

(pigeassou, 2003, p. 06)

Table 3. Illustrates sports tourism through the type of experience.

Sports Tourism Through Experience	
Staudever (1998)	- Sports tourism as a cultural experience
	- The sports activity itself
	- The location where the activity takes place

2- Forms of Sports Tourism: Sports tourism has become one of the most important factors attracting tourists to many countries, as tourism is no longer limited to historical sites only. Sports tourism is often called adventure tourism. This type of tourism has grown thanks to major sports events such as the Olympic Games and global competitions like rallies, major races, and serves as a means to promote tourist attraction. It should be noted that it is an industry that generates significant economic development in the regions that host it. Below, we will learn about its types and importance:

2-1 - Long-distance walking and running sports: Long-distance walking and running are considered an interesting option. These sports require wide spaces to enjoy, such as forest trails, rural paths, deserts, and coastal areas.

The Directorate of Tourism and Handicrafts of Tissemsilt Province participated at the National Madad Park in the National University Mountain Walking Sports event on 19/11/2022 under the slogan "Healthy sport in a clean environment," organized by the University of Tissemsilt. This was done by organizing a tourist walking tour for participants within the National Park of Théniet El Had, introducing the ecological and environmental trail located within its territory, which is included in the thematic tourist routes on the national tourist routes platform. (Al-Taqleedi, 2022)

2-2 Mountain Climbing: One of the most important types of sports tourism, it is an adventure in itself. This sport is suitable for people who have a certain physical ability to face challenges. Some of the most prominent areas for this sport are "Picos de Europa" or "Las Medulas," and there are many other places suitable for practicing this beautiful sports tourism activity. (Al-Arabi, 2022)

The Algerian Federation of Skiing and Mountain Sports is one of the oldest federations in the country, established in 1963, a year after independence. It joined the International Ski Federation in 1965 and the International Federation of Mountain Climbing Associations in 2001.

2-3 Winter Sports: This is a tourism activity limited to the winter season, driven by snowy or sunny regions with logical time boundaries, as snow is essential. Skiing remains the king of this type of sport. Locations designated for this sport are cities where snow falls most days of the year, with specific skiing areas, such as the Alps in Europe and the Pyrenees Mountains. (Al-Azzawi, 2017, p. 23)

2-4 Water Sports: These are a group of activities that utilize aquatic environments during their practice, differing in their form, equipment, or location. Water sports are considered competitive activities but at the same time recreational, providing enjoyment and fostering a spirit of cooperation and harmony among participants. They help individuals achieve self-fulfillment, improve their health, and enhance all aspects of the individual, whether physiological, psychological, mental, social, or physical.

This type of tourism depends on the presence of water (seas or lakes). The duration tourists spend practicing various marine sports varies, such as diving, water skiing, and swimming, boat rowing races, and surfing... (Mostafa Y., 2018, p. 40). It is considered one of the most enjoyable and thrilling types in the tourism industry.

2-5 Cycling Sports: Cycling is among the most important types of sports tourism worldwide, attracting many people interested in biking. Cycling is practiced in all countries that have large areas with bike paths.

According to the statement of the Director of the National Cedar Park to the daily newspaper *El Bilad*, the "Madad" forest has become over the past three years a preferred destination for mountain sports enthusiasts, especially mountain biking alongside motorbikes, attracting visitors from various provinces across the country. He added that during the last three years, the "Madad" park has welcomed more than 1,000 young people belonging to mountain biking and motorcycling clubs, who have organized many initiatives and events aimed at promoting mountain tourism in this attractive forest and raising awareness about it. (Abdullah, 2018)

3- Activating Sports Tourism and Its Role in Boosting Algerian Tourism: To activate sports tourism and invigorate the national tourism sector, it is essential to enhance the appeal of sports destinations and provide unique experiences for visitors by developing infrastructure, improving and building sports facilities such as stadiums and tracks, and working to organize and schedule local, regional, and national sports events to attract athletes and fans, with the aim of contributing to the promotion of the tourism sector.

- In addition to launching marketing campaigns and advertisements targeting athletes and sports enthusiasts to highlight the sports tourism destination.
- Providing high-quality services to visitors, including hotels, sports equipment, and recreational facilities in areas designated for sports and leisure activities.
- Algeria possesses significant natural resources that greatly contribute to environmental balance, including 11 national parks covering 100,000 hectares, which serve as major tourist destinations. Eight of these parks are located in northern Algeria, including Théniet El Had Park in Tissemsilt in the west of the country, spanning an area of 3,425 hectares. Established in 1936, it is a favorite spot for adventure lovers engaged in activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and climbing (Mostafa Y., 2021, p. 252).

Within the framework of implementing the Ministry of Youth and Sports' action plan in the field of youth exchanges and tourism, and on the occasion of the winter holiday, several operations related to youth exchanges and twin-city youth tourism were launched nationwide.

This initiative, which aims to strengthen cohesion and closeness among youth, involved more than 7,700 young people from 58 provinces. Additionally, 218 youth hostels with a total capacity of 10,900 beds were allocated to accommodate them in suitable conditions and to facilitate exchanges between different regions of the country, including promoting and reinforcing the practice of citizenship among young people.

Several new residential neighborhoods in the province of Algiers witnessed part of the events organized under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in coordination with the Directorate of Youth, Sports, and Recreation of Algiers province, and in cooperation with the Youth Leisure Activation Association. (Sports, 2022)

3-1 Examples of Algerian Sports Tourism: Although the tourism sector in Algeria still faces various obstacles that have hindered its progress and development, there remains a range of natural sports and physical activities in which individuals participate to enhance fitness and health. These vary according to regions and the interests of the practitioners. Below are some examples of natural sports practiced in Algeria:

3-2 Sports Tourism in the Tikjda Area: The Tikjda area, located in the heart of the Djurdjura Mountains in Bouira Province, is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Algeria, known for its inspiring green natural landscapes. It was classified as a "national park" in 1983 and attracts tourists from different provinces of the country as well as many from around the world to practice various sports such as mountain climbing and snow skiing on the "Akoukour" trail at an altitude of 2,000 meters above sea level.

In addition to Agoulmim Lake, which is considered one of the most important areas for ice skiing during the winter season, covering an area of three hectares. The lake is recognized by UNESCO as the highest lake in Africa, situated at an altitude of 1,745 meters above sea level. (Ma'rouf, 2019)

The area possesses diverse natural features, especially the snow in winter, making it a destination for various sports practiced by both amateur and professional participants. Tourism agencies, such as the "Tikjda Sports Tourism Development Association," show significant interest in this specialty, attracting many to practice various outdoor sports activities throughout the year. (Abdelkader, 2018)

3-3 Beni Abbas-Taghit Desert Crossing Race Festival: Continuing the activities of the Algerian Sports Federation and its work for various national competitions, a three-day program was planned including several sports, recreational, and tourism activities aimed at introducing the history and cultural and archaeological heritage of the

country. This was achieved through organizing the first edition of the Desert Crossing Race from October 22 to 29 between the areas of Beni Abbas and Taghit, covering a distance of 100 km.

Two competitions were scheduled for this first edition: a 100 km race between Beni Abbas and Taghit, and a 23 km running race in Taghit. (Sports, 2022)

As for the second edition, which was planned to take place from October 23 to 30 of the current year, it was postponed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, represented by the General Directorate of Sports, due to developments occurring in the occupied Palestinian territories. It was decided to postpone all scheduled sports competitions and events until a later time. (Sports, 2023)

3.4- Algeria International Rally 2015 - Algeria of Rally International

In its second stage of the Algeria International Rally "Discover Algeria" for motorcycles - Mostaganem 2023 - this edition was distinctive compared to previous ones, featuring a record participation of 28 athletes representing four Arab countries: Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During this stage, riders covered the route between the cities of Mostaganem and Oran, a distance of 260 km, much of it along National Road No. 11, which is known for its stunning and pristine natural landscapes starting from the Golden Sands Beach (Sablata).

The first stage of this tourist rally, organized by the Algerian Federation of Motor Sports in coordination with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, covered a distance of 260 km between the cities of Tipaza and Mostaganem.

The third stage started from the city of Oran heading towards the capital Algiers via the East-West Highway, covering a distance of 410 km. The fourth and fifth stages of this event were held to allow participants, especially foreigners, to discover Algeria's infrastructure and tourism attractions. Tourist tours, a motorcycle accessories exhibition, and a display of more than 1,000 motorcycles were organized.

Participants in this event, which combines sports and tourism, included riders from the National Gendarmerie and the General Directorate of National Security. The technical committee of the rally set the discipline rules and an average speed between 50 and 60 km/h, along with regulations related to respecting traffic rules, maintaining distance, and prohibiting overtaking to ensure full compliance with the law and road safety—measures that were carefully observed.

Although this event did not achieve the desired goals nor great success within the sports community compared to other sports activities, such global events still carry several political, economic, and social dimensions. The state should therefore pay greater attention to them due to the significant tourism and economic development they offer.

Conclusion

Sports tourism is considered one of the most prominent fields of modern tourism, as it has gained a distinguished position in the economies of many countries due to the direct and indirect financial returns it generates, as well as its role in activating tourist movement and promoting the destination. Algeria has witnessed a commendable experience in this field, represented by organizing the Algeria International Rally and the Algerian Desert Crossing race, in addition to several sports events with a touristic nature. Through these initiatives, Algeria has realized the significant economic and tourism benefits that can be gained, especially by boosting both domestic and international tourism, given that sports tourism is closely linked to other sectors such as transportation, communications, and hospitality.

However, what is noted in this context is that sports tourism in Algeria has not yet received sufficient attention from the Ministry of Tourism, as it has not yet been included as a priority within its strategies, which constitutes a shortfall in exploiting this emerging and profitable type of tourism. Developing sports tourism is not limited to organizing events only; it requires a comprehensive vision aimed at attracting a qualitative segment of tourists, especially enthusiasts of sports and challenges.

Algeria possesses all the natural elements necessary for practicing various sports and tourism activities. It is characterized by extensive coastal beaches, a vast desert that represents the largest in Africa, in addition to diverse forest cover that provides great potential for organizing multiple sports festivals and competitions. Alongside this, Algeria has other tourist attractions such as cultural and historical diversity. All these factors give Algeria a competitive advantage in the field of sports tourism compared to many countries. If these capabilities are exploited systematically, and the necessary infrastructure, human and material services are provided, along with professional promotion of the Algerian destination, Algeria will be able to join the ranks of leading countries in sports tourism globally.

Given the importance of sports tourism and its active role in stimulating the national economy, diversifying income sources, and enhancing Algeria's image as a multi-dimensional tourist destination, a set of proposals can be offered to contribute to the development of this vital sector.

First, sports tourism must be included among the priorities of tourism development within the strategies of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and efforts must be made to move beyond the traditional view that limits tourism to cultural or recreational types. Sports tourism is one of the most prominent modern global trends, and it is essential to give it the attention and planning it deserves.

Second, it is essential to provide comprehensive tourism services that support and accompany various recreational physical activities, with these services designed to suit the capabilities and needs of the tourist, thereby enhancing

their comfort and encouraging them to repeat the experience. This includes improving accommodation services, transportation, healthcare, and sports and tourism guidance.

Third, special attention must be given to the marketing aspect of the Algerian product in the field of sports tourism, by developing well-studied strategies aimed at attracting tourists from within Algeria and abroad, especially those who show a passion for practicing sports in natural environments such as the desert, mountains, and forests.

Fourth, it is advisable to motivate athletes participating in sports tourism events by offering symbolic prizes and moral rewards, which contributes to creating positive memories and strengthens their desire to participate again in the future, thereby supporting the sustainability of this type of event.

Fifth, awareness and educational programs should be prepared to introduce sports tourism to different segments of society, through designing media and educational content that meets the needs of tourists, highlights the advantages of sports tourism, and encourages participation either as practitioners or spectators.

Finally, it is proposed to work on preparing a national annual or seasonal agenda dedicated to sports tourism programs and events, supervised by a specialized national committee that coordinates among various stakeholders from the sectors of tourism, youth, sports, and media, to ensure effective and well-planned organization that gives Algeria credibility in this promising field.

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