

Analysis of the resilience, impact and adaptation strategies of Kariba Invitational Tiger Fish Tournament in a distressed destination context

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Abstract

Sporting event tourism has been embraced by tourist destinations to stimulate socioeconomic development at local level. Despite growing concerns about resilience of sporting event tourism as a strategy for socioeconomic development for sporting activities dependent on resources facing multiple stressors, there remains limited studies focusing on the resilience of localised sporting event tourism in small towns in Zimbabwe. This study examines the resilience, impacts and adaptation strategies of Kariba Invitational Tiger Fish Tournament (KITFT) in a distressed environment, in a developing country context. A qualitative approach was adopted. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 key informants purposively selected from event tourism stakeholders. Thematically analysed findings confirmed the resilience of the tournament against the disrupted angler market base, bad publicity, COVID-19 pandemic and a generally unstable political and economic environment. Furthermore, the study revealed that the negative impacts of climate change on Lake Kariba's water level, and depleted fish stock are significant threats to the resilience of the tournament. Overall, the KITFT provides employment to residents and accommodation, food and beverage service providers benefit through increased capacity utilisation. However, artificial inflation, surge in crime and pollution are issues of community-wide concern emanating from the event. The study gives sporting events tourism planners, and resource conservation entities insights to adopt resilient enhancement strategies and implement early resilient mechanisms to safeguard the event and livelihoods from multiple stressors. The study's originality lies in its application of the dynamic resilience lens to a recreational sporting event tourism in a distressed tourist resort destination.