

STRATEGIC COGNITION AND SPORT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA: AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Riski Syandri Pratama

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Lampung, Indonesia

e-mail: riskisyandri@gmail.com

*(Corresponding Author indicated by an asterisk *)*

ABSTRACT

The development of Saudi Arabia's sports tourism is increasingly important in supporting economic diversification through Saudi Vision 2030. However, previous literature still tends to discuss investments, destination competitiveness, imagery, stakeholder support, and legacy events separately, while the cognitive mechanisms that translate vision into outcomes have not been adequately explained. This research aims to develop an integrative conceptual framework that connects strategic attention, interpretation, reframing, collective sensemaking, organizational learning, resource mobilization, stakeholder coordination, destination competitiveness, and event legacy. The method used was an integrative-conceptual literature review of 47 selected articles from Scopus for the period 2019 until April 2026 as well as foundational works, which were analyzed descriptively, thematically, and conceptually. The results of the study resulted in a micro–meso–macro multilevel model and six propositions that affirm that vision and investment do not automatically lead to destination success. Success depends on the quality of cognitive, institutional, implementation, barrier control, and adaptive learning translation. This framework expands the application of Cognitive School to the transformation of national destinations and provides an empirical validation agenda.

Keywords: Strategic Cognition; Sports Tourism; Collective Sensemaking; Legacy Event

INTRODUCTION

In an open economic system, comparative advantage only becomes a competitive advantage when resources are able to be managed, combined, and directed to create value. In tourism, natural resources, culture, geographical location, and funding capacity require support for infrastructure, connectivity, services, human resources, and effective governance (Farida & Setiawan, 2022; Krugman et al., 2022). Therefore, the success of a destination is not enough to judge by the number of visits, but by its ability to build a competitive, inclusive, and sustainable ecosystem.

Saudi Arabia has historically been known as a religious tourism destination, but Saudi Vision 2030 is expanding its portfolio into cultural, nature, entertainment, and sports tourism. By 2025, the country will record around 123 million domestic and foreign tourists with an expenditure of around SAR304 billion; 29.3 million of them are international tourists (Ministry of Tourism, 2026). This development shows a change in the structure of tourism as well as the increasing ambition of Saudi Arabia to build a global destination.

Sports tourism is one of the important instruments of this transformation through the implementation of Formula 1, boxing, golf, football, marathons, and electronic sports. International-scale events can increase visits, spending, connectivity, regional regeneration, employment, and destination image. However, these benefits are accompanied by the risk of congestion, environmental pressure, price increases, fiscal burdens, economic leakage, and low utilization of facilities after the event. Therefore, sports investments need to be assessed based on net social benefits, opportunity costs, integration with local economies, and the sustainability of legacy events, not just the number of events or media exposure (Bazzanella et al., 2023; Knott, 2021).

Saudi Vision 2030 puts sports and tourism within the framework of economic diversification, improving the quality of life, community development, and strengthening institutional capacity. Programs such as the Quality of Life Program, Public Investment Fund Program, Qiddiya, and Sports Boulevard show that these policies are strategic portfolios that connect destinations, transportation, accommodation, human resources, the private sector, and communities. Sports investment is also used as an instrument of sports diplomacy, soft power, and national image formation. However, international news and sportswashing criticism show that visibility does not automatically result in legitimacy or a positive reputation (Almahraj, 2023; Skey, 2023).

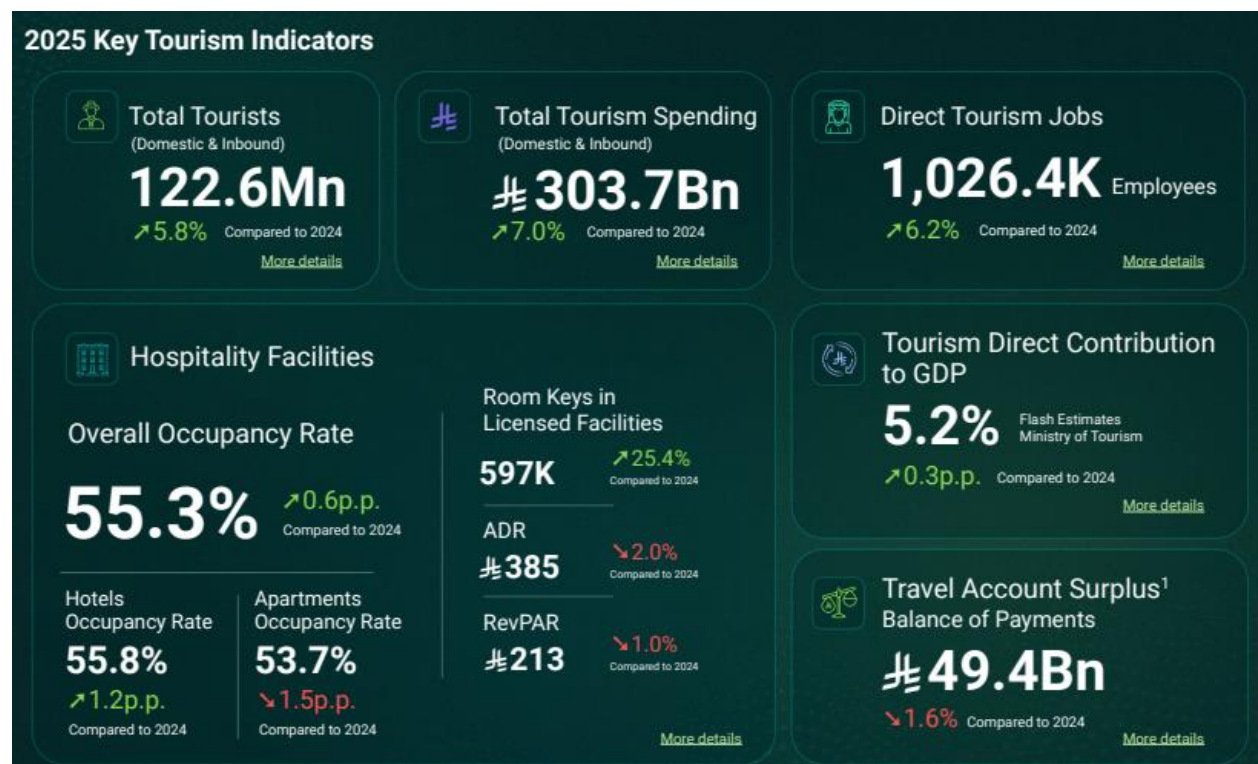


Figure 1. Key Tourism Indicators

Such complexity requires a perspective that explains not only the resources and outcomes, but also the cognitive processes that shape the strategy. Cognitive School views strategy as a mental construct that is influenced by perception, experience, intuition, learning, and interpretation. In the context of Saudi Arabia, this perspective helps explain how diversification opportunities gain strategic attention, are interpreted as opportunities, and are reframing into sports investment policies. The translation of the vision further relies on collective sensemaking, organizational learning, inter-agency coordination, and stakeholder involvement (Luoma & Martela, 2021; Mollah et al., 2021).

The research gap lies in the limited studies that integrate strategic cognition with the development of sports tourism at the national level. Previous literature has tended to discuss destination competitiveness, event legacy, image, stakeholder support, and sustainability separately, while the roles of strategic attention, interpretation, reframing, and sensemaking have not been adequately explained. This research aims to develop a conceptual model that connects these cognitive processes with organizational learning, resource mobilization, stakeholder coordination, implementation quality, destination competitiveness, and event legacy. The novelty lies in the explanation of the micro-meso-macro mechanism that translates vision and investment into destination results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive School in Strategy Formation

The Cognitive School views strategy not solely as the result of rational planning, but as a mental representation formed through the perceptions, experiences, beliefs, and interpretations of decision-makers (Mintzberg, 2020). Environmental information is selected into schemas and frameworks that influence action choices. This perspective is powerful in

explaining the formation of meaning, but mental processes are difficult to observe directly and are susceptible to heuristics, selective attention, confirmation bias, and pre-formed beliefs (Hodgkinson et al., 2023). In this article, the Cognitive School becomes a theoretical orientation; strategic cognition refers to attention, interpretation, and framing; Meanwhile, managerial cognition explains the process to individuals and groups of decision-makers. In Saudi Vision 2030, economic conditions, market opportunities, and resources do not automatically determine the direction of policy. Information about dependence on oil, the development of the global sports industry, changes in tourist preferences, investment opportunities, and the need to strengthen the country's image first pass strategic attention. The information is then interpreted and reframed as opportunities for economic diversification, destination development, and social transformation. The Cognitive School is used as an analytical lens, not as a claim that Saudi Arabian policymakers explicitly use Mintzberg's thinking.

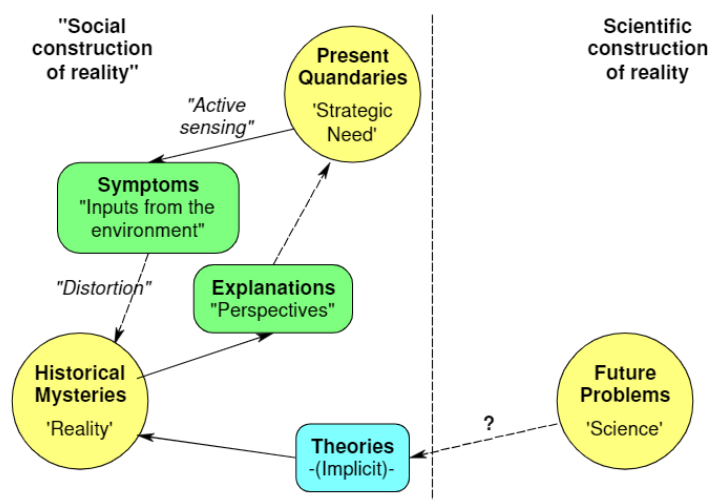


Figure 2. Cognitive School Knowledge Network

Functions of Supporting Theories

Economic theory, Resource-Based View, dynamic capabilities, and stakeholder theory are used as supporting perspectives. Economic theory describes the potential multiplier effect, externalities, opportunity costs, and macro consequences. However, the increase in visitors has not proven a causal relationship with growth as the impact depends on length of stay, additional expenditure, local content, domestic supplier capacity, benefit distribution, and import leakage (Özer et al., 2022; Barandela et al., 2022). The evaluation also needs to include water and energy pressure, emissions, waste, congestion, fiscal burden, and utilization of post-event facilities. The integration of supporting theories is not intended to build infinite eclecticism. Each perspective has a specific function in the order of explanation: economics and institutions provide context, cognition explains the formation of choices, sensemaking translates choices into collective understanding, RBV and dynamic capabilities explain capacity development, while stakeholder theory explains the coordination and distribution of influence. This division of functions maintains parsimony while preventing overlapping concepts.

RBV explains resources that can support the excellence of destinations, such as sports infrastructure, capital, connectivity, technology, data, hosting rights, cultural heritage, and international networks. Strategic value only emerges when these resources are combined with

marketing capabilities, event management, security, tourist services, workforce development, and institutional coordination (Moradi et al., 2022). Because destination resources are scattered among governments, investors, event organizers, airlines, hotels, federations, communities, and local businesses, resource mobilization is an economic, social, and cognitive process, not just asset ownership.

Dynamic capabilities describe updating resources through sensing, seizing, and transforming. Sensing includes the ability to recognize changes in demand, technology, and sustainability risks; seizing includes investment allocation and partnership formation; Meanwhile, transforming includes regulatory reform, workforce development, and the integration of sports with the tourism ecosystem. Cognitive School provides a micro-foundation because sensing abilities are influenced by what gets attention and how information is framed, while dynamic capabilities explain interpreting translation into resource and institutional changes (Murray et al., 2022).

Stakeholder theory describes coordination among governments, destination management organizations, sports federations, investors, airlines, hotels, local businesses, communities, media, and tourists. Collaboration requires clear goals, role sharing, knowledge exchange, trust, and conflict resolution. However, collective sensemaking is not always harmonious because actors have different authority, legitimacy, information, resources, and bargaining capacity. Therefore, collective meaning needs to be understood as a negotiation process that can involve domination and marginalization.

Micro–Meso–Macro Mechanisms

The model uses three levels of analysis. At the micro level, strategic attention, interpretation, and reframing shape the way decision-makers understand opportunities and risks. At the meso level, interpretation is communicated, negotiated, and codified through collective sensemaking, organizational learning, resource mobilization, capability development, and coordination. At the macro level, translation quality results in destination competitiveness, event legacy, reputation, local business development, employment, social legitimacy, and sustainability. Interlevel relationships are bidirectional: communication and institutionalization connect micro–meso; services, product integration, labor, and benefit distribution connect meso–macro; Meanwhile, the evaluation of results flows back through knowledge renewal and reframing. The multilevel approach also avoids the mistake of directly linking a leader's cognition to national outcomes. Micro-influences towards meso take place through communication, policy documents, budget decisions, and routines; The influence of MESO towards macro takes place through service quality, destination products, workforce development, and benefit distribution. In contrast, macro outcomes only affect cognition when they are collected, interpreted, and reincorporated into organizational processes.

Saudi Arabia's Sports Tourism Context

The context of Saudi Arabia shows that sport has been reframing from recreational activities to economic assets, tourism products, instruments of diplomacy, and drivers of social transformation. However, attention to the number of events, investments, visitors, and exposure can override fiscal costs, benefit distribution, community revenue, and environmental impacts. Community support in Riyadh and Al-Juhfa also depends on benefits, costs, economic access, control over local resources, and the protection of social values and cultural heritage (Algassim et al., 2023). International reputation also depends on consistency between communication, the traveller experience, governance transparency, and verifiable social-environmental practices.

Large investments and long-term commitments can create institutional lock-in when strategies are embedded in contracts, budgets, infrastructure, routines, and success narratives. Under these conditions, evidence of rising costs, low facility utilization, economic leakage, or environmental pressures does not necessarily result in policy corrections. Therefore, the development of sports tourism requires independent evaluation, openness to alternatives, scenario analysis, periodic review, and learning mechanisms that test dominant assumptions (Simoens et al., 2022).

Table 1. Definition and Position of Constructs in Conceptual Models

Construct	Conceptual definition	Analysis level	Roles in models	Key references
<i>Strategic attention</i>	The process of selecting issues and information that gains the focus of decision-makers in complex situations	Micro	Early cognitive mechanisms	(Hodgkinson et al., 2023)
<i>Interpretation</i>	The process of giving meaning to information, opportunities, and strategic threats	Micro	Mechanism of interpretation	(Luoma & Martela, 2021)
<i>Reframing</i>	Changes in the framework used to understand a problem or opportunity so as to result in different alternative strategies	Micro	Reframing mechanism	(Luoma & Martela, 2021)
<i>Collective sensemaking</i>	The process of communication, negotiation, and the formation of mutual understanding among stakeholders	Meso	Social translation mechanism	(Mollah et al., 2021)
Organizational learning	The process of turning experience and knowledge into procedures, routines, and policy adjustments	Meso and feedback	Institutionalization and adaptation	(Mollah et al., 2021)
Resource mobilization	The process of identifying, allocating and combining resources to execute the strategy	Meso	Implementation mechanism	(Moradi et al., 2022)
<i>Dynamic capabilities</i>	Ability to recognize opportunities, make decisions, and transform resources through <i>sensing</i> , <i>seizing</i> , and <i>transforming</i>	Meso	Capability development	(Murray et al., 2022)
Stakeholder coordination	The process of aligning goals, roles, information, and resources between actors	Meso	Collective implementation mechanism	(Mollah et al., 2021)

Quality of implementation	The level of integration of sporting events with services, supply chains, labor, people, and destination products	Meat-macro	Connecting to results	(Bazzanella et al., 2023)
<i>Destination competitiveness</i>	The ability of destinations to create valuable experiences, maintain demand, and build relative superiority	Macro	Strategic results	(Moradi et al., 2022)
<i>Event legacy</i>	Long-term benefits and consequences that persist after the event ends	Macro	Long-term results	(Bazzanella et al., 2023)
Barriers to strategy translation	Cognitive and institutional barriers that reduce the quality of strategy translation	Cross-level	Inhibiting factors	(Hodgkinson et al., 2023)
<i>Institutional lock-in</i>	Conditions when strategies are difficult to correct because they are embedded in investments, contracts, routines, and political commitments	Meat-macro	Feedback inhibitors	(Simoens et al., 2022)

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an integrative-conceptual literature review to synthesize the literature on strategic cognition, Cognitive School, strategic management, sports tourism, destination development, and Saudi Vision 2030. Literature was searched through Scopus for the period 2019 to April 2026, while foundational works were identified through citation searches. Keywords include strategic cognition, managerial cognition, strategic attention, reframing, sensemaking, sport tourism, destination competitiveness, event legacy, and Saudi Vision 2030. Articles are selected based on the relevance of the construct or context, the availability of the full text, and the credibility of the source; Policy documents are used to explain context, not to deduce mental processes or causal relationships.

An initial search yielded 1,237 documents; After the deletion of duplicates there are 1,227 documents left. A total of 293 articles were filtered by titles and abstracts, 50 were assessed in full, and 47 were included in the final synthesis. Data are extracted based on theory, design, level of analysis, constructs, findings, and limitations. The analysis is carried out descriptively, thematically, and conceptually through deductive coding and iterative refinement of the theme. The results were used to construct micro–meso–macro mechanisms and six propositions that require empirical validation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the synthesis show that the development of Saudi Arabia's sports tourism cannot be explained through the direct relationship between economic conditions, investments,

events, and destination outcomes. Economic theory explains potential benefits and externalities; RBV identifies resources; dynamic capabilities describes capability updates; While stakeholder theory explains the coordination and distribution of influence. However, this perspective does not fully explain how opportunities gain attention, interpret and translate into institutional action. This article places the Cognitive School as the main framework and develops the architecture of strategy translation through cognitive, social, and institutional mechanisms.

The model works on three levels. Economic and institutional conditions are processed at the micro level through strategic attention, interpretation, and reframing. At the meso level, cognitive outcomes are translated through collective sensemaking, organizational learning, resource mobilization, dynamic capabilities, and stakeholder coordination. The quality of implementation then links that capacity to destination competitiveness, event legacy, and sustainability at the macro level. Macro results are back into input through evaluation, knowledge updates, bias correction, and strategy adjustments.

Table 2. Synthesis of Literature Streams and Position of Article Contributions

Literature Flow	Dominant Focus	Main Explanations	Limitations Found	The Mechanism That the Article Offers	Related Propositions
Tourism economy	Investments, demand, and multiplier effects	Explain the potential macroeconomic benefits	Lack of explanation for why an opportunity is given priority	<i>Strategic attention, interpretation, dan reframing</i>	P1
<i>Strategic cognition</i>	Perception and formation of strategy choices	Explain the selection and meaning of information	More frequent stops at the individual or organizational level	Micro-meso translation through <i>collective sensemaking</i>	P1–P2
RBV	Strength-building resources	Describe the strategic resources of the destination	Lack of explanation of how resources are selected and integrated	Mobilization of resources and implementation capacity	P3–P4
<i>Dynamic capabilities</i>	<i>Sensing, seizing, dan transforming</i>	Describe resource adaptation and transformation	The cognitive foundations and institutionalization process have not always been explicit	Cognition as a microfoundation and learning as a link	P3 and P6
Stakeholder theory	Collaboration and coordination	Explain collective action	Collaboration is often seen as too harmonious	<i>Collective sensemaking</i> , power, and distribution of influence	P2, P3, and P5
<i>Event legacy</i>	Long-term impact of the event	Explain the post-event results	Inheritance is often treated as the end result	Quality of implementation and feedback-based learning	P4 and P6

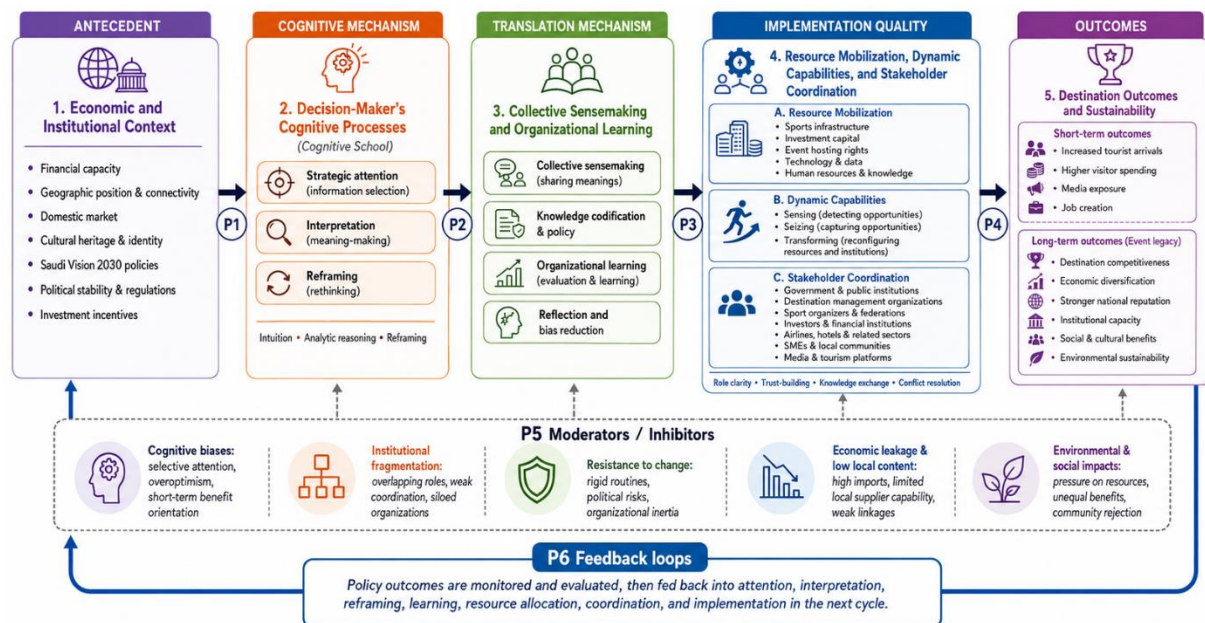


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Strategic Cognition and Sport Tourism Development

Proposition 1: Economic and Institutional Conditions as Inputs for Strategic Cognitive Processes

Saudi Arabia's conditions, such as its historical dependence on oil, the country's financing capacity, connectivity, domestic markets, cultural heritage, the economy of experiences, and Saudi Vision 2030, provide opportunities for diversification as well as destination development. However, these conditions do not determine priorities directly. New opportunities have strategic consequences when they gain attention and are considered relevant by decision-makers. Strategic attention selects information on the growth of the sports market, changing tourist preferences, destination competition, non-oil revenue generation, and international exposure. Interpretation gives meaning as an opportunity or a threat, while reframing transforms sports from a recreational activity into an industry, a tourism product, an instrument of diplomacy, and a driver of social transformation. Due to limited attention capacity, visible indicators can dominate life-cycle costs, economic leakage, benefit distribution, and socio-environmental pressures (Hodgkinson et al., 2023; Luoma & Martela, 2021). The placement of conditions as antecedents also prevents the model from making deterministic claims that financial capacity or geographical position by itself generates investment decisions. Two countries may face similar opportunities, but choose different responses because the attention, experience, beliefs, and indicators used are not the same. In the context of public policy, this process also determines which sectors are prioritized, the type of events chosen, the scale of investment, the form of partnership, and the balance between economic, social, and reputational goals. Thus, the quality of the strategy starts from the quality of selection and interpretation of information before resources are allocated.

P1: Economic and institutional conditions shape sports tourism strategies through their influence on strategic attention, interpretation, and reframing of decision-makers.

Proposition 2: Translating Strategic Cognition into Collective Sensemaking

Individual or group interpretations do not automatically become national policy because strategies involve organizations with different mandates, knowledge, resources, and interests. Collective sensemaking becomes a micro-meso mechanism when strategic frames are

communicated, negotiated, and codified through coordination meetings, working groups, data exchanges, policy documents, indicators, and responsibility sharing. This process forms a common language as well as priorities, but it is not always neutral. Actors who control regulation, funding, legitimacy, and information can better determine the goals and measures of success, while communities and small businesses have limited influence. Collective sensemaking is therefore distinguished from coordination: the former forms a shared understanding, while the latter aligns actions once an understanding begins to form (Mollah et al., 2021; Murray et al., 2022). In practice, the formation of mutual understanding can take place through the preparation of cross-agency plans, destination planning forums, event evaluations, and alignment of performance indicators. The mechanism is important because terms such as success, event heritage, local content, or sustainability can be interpreted differently by ministries, investors, organizers, local governments, and communities. Misunderstandings of meaning can result in overlapping programs, conflicts of priorities, and operational successes that are not in line with destination development goals. Therefore, the quality of sensemaking needs to be assessed from the disclosure of information, representation of actors, the ability to convey alternative views, and the clarity of the relationship between national goals and organizational actions.

P2: Articulation and communication of strategic frames encourage the formation of collective sensemaking among organizations involved in the development of sports tourism.

Proposition 3: Institutionalizing Understanding through Learning and Implementation Capacity

A common understanding is not enough if it is not translated into procedures, budgets, division of roles, and capabilities. Organizational learning transforms experience and knowledge into indicators, policies, routines, and coordination structures. In the feedforward stage, learning connects collective sensemaking with institutional implementation capacity which includes resource mobilization, capability development, and coordination. Within destinations, resources are spread across many organizations so they need to be identified, allocated, and combined. Dynamic capabilities support this process through sensing for change, seizing through investments and partnerships, and transforming through regulatory updates, human resources, and industrial ecosystems (Murray et al., 2022). Learning at this stage demands more than just experiential documentation. Knowledge needs to be disseminated across organizations, translated into budget decisions, service standards, data systems, workforce competencies, and accountability mechanisms. Net partnering, net visioning, and net orchestration are relevant because no one actor controls all of the destination's resources. Implementation capacity also needs to be dynamic so that organizations can change event portfolios, facility configurations, marketing strategies, and procurement patterns as demand or risk changes. Without such institutionalization, a shared understanding risks ceasing as a normative vision that does not result in operational change.

P3: Collective sensemaking institutionalized through organizational learning increases the capacity of institutional implementation which includes resource mobilization, capability development, and stakeholder coordination.

Proposition 4: Quality of Implementation and Destination Outcomes

Investment, facilities, technology, and hosting rights do not automatically result in competitiveness and legacy events. Strategic value is formed when events are integrated with transportation, accommodation, culture, culinary, entertainment, technology, security, service, local supply chains, and post-event programs. The quality of implementation also includes

workforce development, knowledge transfer, MSME access, local content, distribution of expenses, and utilization of facilities. Therefore, the operational success of the event needs to be distinguished from the success of the destination. Destination competitiveness includes accessibility, safety, quality of facilities and services, reputation, local identity, and the ability to sustain demand; Event legacy includes facility utilization, skills, institutional capacity, local ventures, sports participation, reputation, and long-term socio-environmental benefits (Bazzanella et al., 2023; Knott, 2021). The important implication is that performance measurement must differentiate between outputs, outcomes, and legacy. Outputs include the number of events, attendees, tickets, and exposure; Outcomes include additional expenses, length of stay, satisfaction, employment, and business activities; While legacy includes capabilities, reputation, behavior change, facility utilization, and lasting social-environmental benefits. This distinction helps prevent claims that successful implementation automatically equals successful development. Heritage planning should also begin before the event through the design of multifunctional facilities, local procurement strategies, knowledge transfer programs, event calendar development, and post-event use plans.

P4: Resource mobilization and stakeholder coordination improve destination competitiveness and event legacy through quality implementation that integrates sports events with the tourism ecosystem and local economy.

Proposition 5: Cognitive and Institutional Barriers

The translation of strategies can be weakened by cognitive and institutional barriers. Selective attention, availability bias, confirmation bias, and managerial overconfidence narrow the information under consideration and encourage overly optimistic estimates of demand, cost, and benefit. Fragmentation of authority, power inequality, conflicts of interest, resistance, and institutional lock-in hinder coordination and policy correction. The two groups of barriers can reinforce each other when indicators of events, visits, and exposures are embedded in targets, budgets, contracts, and success narratives. As a result, information regarding life-cycle costs, environmental pressures, benefit distribution, or low facility utilization may be available but not gain attention or result in no change (Hodgkinson et al., 2023; Simoens et al., 2022). Institutional barriers can also transform the participation process into mere formal consultation without substantive influence. When dominant actors control data, funding, and indicators, information that differs from the official narrative can be overlooked. Lock-ins are even stronger when the termination or change of the project incurs high political, reputational, and financial costs. Therefore, the model places the barrier as a cross-level condition, rather than a single variable. Distinguishing between cognitive and institutional barriers is important so that solutions are not only directed at improving individual capabilities, but also at improving authority structures, data transparency, evaluation design, and accountability mechanisms.

P5: Cognitive and institutional barriers weaken the relationship between cognitive processes, collective sensemaking, implementation quality, and sports tourism development outcomes.

Proposition 6: Organizational Learning as Feedback and Adaptation

The development of sports tourism is a cyclical process. Implementation produces information on visits, expenses, use of facilities, local business involvement, quality of work, public perception, reputation, and environmental impact. Learning has a feedforward function when understanding is institutionalized into action and a feedback function when results are used to correct assumptions, attention, interpretation, reframing, resource allocation, coordination, and implementation quality. The mechanisms include post-event evaluation, sports tourism statistics, knowledge repositories, data exchange, scenario analysis, independent reviews, and red teams. However, learning requires data openness, evaluation independence,

stakeholder engagement, and the ability to acknowledge results that do not meet expectations so that information is not used selectively to maintain a narrative of success (Murray et al., 2022). Effective feedback requires consistent indicators across agencies and are available throughout the event cycle. The data must distinguish tourists from local visitors, new spending from expenses that are simply moving, temporary jobs from increased labor capacity, as well as media exposure from changing reputations. The evaluation also needs to compare the results with the initial targets, opportunity costs, and policy alternatives. In this way, failure is not only seen as an operational problem, but as a source of knowledge to improve strategic attention, update demand assumptions, change investment portfolios, and design more realistic and inclusive legacy events.

P6: Organizational learning from implementation results strengthens strategy adaptation through assumption correction, knowledge update, resource allocation adjustments, and policy reframing in the next period.

Theoretically, the model extends the use of the Cognitive School from the context of individual and organizational decisions towards the transformation of national destinations. Its contribution lies in cross-level mechanisms that link cognition, collective meaning, learning, implementation capacity, and destination outcomes; the distinction between the success of the event and the success of the destination; as well as the placement of obstacles and learning as elements that make the model dynamic.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that the success of Saudi Arabia's sports tourism does not depend directly on Saudi Vision 2030, investment, infrastructure, or the ability to host international events. These conditions provide opportunities and resources, but the results depend on the ability of decision-makers and institutions to select information, give meaning, and reframing, then translate it into collective sensemaking, learning, resource mobilization, capabilities, coordination, and integrated implementation. The theoretical contribution of the research lies in a multilevel model that links strategic cognition at the micro level, institutional translation at the meso level, and destination outcomes at the macro level. Six propositions explain the formation of strategic cognition, collective meaning, institutionalization through learning, the role of implementation quality, the influence of cognitive and institutional barriers, and adaptive feedback. The model expands the Cognitive School from individual and organizational decision-making to the transformation of national destinations. Practically, sports tourism needs to be managed as a destination development portfolio. Governments and related organizations need to align goals and indicators, connect events with local services and supply chains, develop the workforce, expand access to MSMEs, and plan legacy events from the event selection stage. Evaluations must move beyond the number of events, investments, visitors, and exposures by considering local content, distribution of benefits, life-cycle costs, community revenue, socio-environmental impact, and facility utilization. Independent evaluations, cross-agency data systems, scenario analysis, and post-event reviews are necessary to reduce bias and institutional lock-in. The limitations of the study stem from its integrative-conceptual nature so that the model and the six propositions have not proven a causal relationship. Policy documents are also not enough to reconstruct the perceptions and mental frameworks of policymakers. Future research needs to use interviews, multi-resource surveys, network analysis, comparative studies, longitudinal design, process tracing, and mixed

methods to test cross-level mechanisms and differentiate the impact of sports tourism from tourism growth in general.

REFERENCES

- Algassim, A. A., Saufi, A., & Scott, N. (2023). Residents' emotional responses to tourism development in Saudi Arabia. *Tourism Review*, 78(4), 1078–1091. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-10-2021-0457>
- Almahraj, Y. A. (2023). British press coverage of international sports events hosted by Saudi Arabia: Content analysis study in light of country concept model. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02266-w>
- Barandela, J. S., Barajas, A., & Sanchez-Fernandez, P. (2022). Implications for tourism management of including uncertainty in the estimation of the economic impact of sports events. *Sport, Business and Management*, 13(2), 181–194. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SBM-11-2021-0138>
- Bazzanella, F., Schnitzer, M., Peters, M., & Bichler, B. F. (2023). The role of sports events in developing tourism destinations: A systematized review and future research agenda. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 27(2), 77–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2023.2186925>
- Farida, I., & Setiawan, D. (2022). Business strategies and competitive advantage: The role of performance and innovation. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(3), 2–16. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8030163>
- Hodgkinson, G. P., Burkhard, B., Foss, N. J., Grichnik, D., Sarala, R. M., Tang, Y., & Van Essen, M. (2023). The heuristics and biases of top managers: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Management Studies*, 60(5), 1033–1063. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12937>
- Knott, B. (2021). *Sport and development in emerging nations*. Taylor & Francis Routledge.
- Krugman, P., Obstfeld, M., & Melitz, M. (2022). *International economics: Theory and policy*. Pearson.
- Luoma, J., & Martela, F. (2021). A dual-processing view of three cognitive strategies in strategic decision making: Intuition, analytic reasoning, and reframing. *Long Range Planning*, 54(3), 2–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2020.102065>
- Ministry of Tourism. (2026). *Annual Statistical Report Tourism Statistics 2025*. Ministry of Tourism Saudi Arabia.
- Mintzberg, H. (2020). *Strategy safari: The complete guide through the wilds of strategic management*. FT Publishing International.
- Mollah, M. R. A., Cuskelly, G., & Hill, B. (2021). Sport tourism collaboration: A systematic quantitative literature review. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 25(1), 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2021.1877563>
- Moradi, E., Ehsani, M., Saffari, M., & Hosseini, R. N. S. (2022). Developing an integrated model for the competitiveness of sports tourism destinations. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 26, 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2022.100743>

- Murray, N., Lynch, P., & Foley, A. (2022). Strategic nets in tourism destinations: Investigating the learning processes underpinning dynamic management capabilities. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 106, 363–375. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2022.09.004>
- Özer, M., Küçüksakarya, S., & Maiti, M. (2022). Nexus of tourism demand, economic growth, and external competitiveness in leading tourist destination countries. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 42, 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100965>
- Simoens, M. C., Fuenfschilling, L., & Leipold, S. (2022). Discursive dynamics and lock-ins in socio-technical systems: An overview and a way forward. *Sustainability Science*, 17(5), 1841–1853. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-022-01110-5>
- Skey, M. (2023). Sportswashing: Media headline or analytic concept? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 58(5), 749–764. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221136086>