

European Sport Management Quarterly

ISSN: 1618-4742 (Print) 1746-031X (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/resm20

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To cite this article: Ricardo F. Ramos, Rui Biscaia, Kiki Kaplanidou & Husni Kharouf (2026) Place branding through sport events: a systematic review and future directions, European Sport Management Quarterly, 26:3, 363-392, DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2025.2552688

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2025.2552688

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EUROPEAN SPORT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY
2026, VOL. 26, NO. 3, 363–392
https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2025.2552688

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Place branding through sport events: a systematic review and future directions

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ABSTRACT

Research question: While the benefits of place branding through sport events (PBtSE) are often highlighted in literature, research to date is disjointed, lacking in theoretical grounding and established connections between place branding and sport events as tourism products. This study provides a comprehensive review of the PBtSE literature and sets a research agenda to advance the field.

Research methods: Following PRISMA guidelines, this review comprises 540 peer-reviewed articles published between 1984 and 2023 (*Scopus* and *Web of Science*). We employed co-word analysis to examine thematic relationships within the PBtSE literature, followed by a review protocol capturing and assessing the application of theories-contexts-characteristics-methods (TCCM).

Results and findings: Four clusters of thematic relationships were identified, and most PBtSE studies lack clear theoretical lenses. Europe is the most studied region, while the Olympic Games are the most common event. Numerous variables related to the hosts and events have been examined, and most studies rely on questionnaire data.

Implications: This study provides a roadmap of the state of PBtSE and sets the basis for future developments. By uncovering relationships within PBtSE research, theories, contexts, characteristics and methods, this study identifies strengths and weaknesses in the literature and provides new directions to expand knowledge of PBtSE and guide managerial practices.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 3 December 2024
Accepted 21 August 2025

KEYWORDS
Sport events; place branding; sport consumers; tourism; systematic reviews

Introduction

This study reviews the literature on place branding through sport events (PBtSE), critically analysing existing research and proposing a new agenda. The link between place branding

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Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2025.2552688.

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and sport events has captured significant attention in the literature (An & Yamashita, 2024; Rein & Shields, 2007). Place branding refers to the development of brands for geographical locations (e.g. cities, countries or communities) with distinctive meaning among relevant audiences (Swain et al., 2024), and its effectiveness often relates to stakeholders' involvement and dialogue (Kavaratzis, 2012). Relatedly, sport events frequently serve as tools to help set, advance or maintain the competitiveness of place brands among internal and external audiences (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). The effects of sport events on the hosts vary by event size and type, and can either be positive or negative (Müller, 2015). To capture this variation, the current study focuses on the events' nature as either temporary or permanent, single or multi-sport events with (inter)national profile.

While destinations are regarded as places that tourists aim to visit, places should be understood more holistically as locations where people also live, study and work (Reynolds et al., 2022). Rather than a visitor-facing destination branding approach (i.e. solely tourists), a broader notion of place branding that considers a web of stakeholders (i.e. tourists, residents, event organisers, companies, etc.) is adopted in the current study (Zenker et al., 2017) to better understand the linkages between places and sport events. Place brands leverage sport event hosting from various perspectives that include an additional brand attribute to attract tourists (Funk et al., 2007), enhance global visibility (Duignan, 2021), generate business opportunities (Merendino et al., 2021), stimulate infrastructure development (Yao & Schwarz, 2018), favour community development (Kaplanidou et al., 2013), and gain residents' support (Yamashita & Hallmann, 2024). Additionally, sport events could become pilgrimage sites given the symbolic value attributed to places such as the Olympic Games (OG) host cities (Kaplanidou et al., 2016), and are used to target audiences locally and globally (Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012). However, societal demands, growing scepticism, fewer host city bids (Müller et al., 2023), and new sustainability models (e.g. IOC Agenda 2020) highlight the evolving dynamics between sport events and host places, making it crucial to understand the intertwining between these two parties.

Article	Gaudette et al. (2017)	Ferreira et al. (2018)	Richelieu (2018)	Roult et al. (2020)	Tomino et al. (2020)	Knott and Tinaz (2022)	Chen et al. (2023)	Mair et al. (2023)	Present review
Context	Winter Olympics	Summer Olympics	Sports	Formula 1 events	Outdoor sport events	Large-scale sport events emerging nations	Leisure sports and sport attractions	Mega-events (sport and non-sport)	All international sport events
Aim of the review	Urban and tourism impacts	Economic and tourism implications	Sport-oriented place branding strategy	Urban and tourism impacts	Impacts and planning elements for achieving sustainability	Types of legacies anticipated or realized	Determinants of sport tourists' decision-making	Social costs and benefits	Place branding through sports events
Time frame	2000-2016	1992-2017	2006-2018	1981-2019	2002-2019	2005-2022	2007-2021	2000-2020	1984-2023
No. of papers	47	57	100	40	77	97	40	107	540
Summary findings	- Catalyst for urban renewal and tourism; - Long-term benefits (infrastructure and image enhancement); - Challenges of sustainable investment; -Underutilisation of facilities post-event.	Advantages: - Economic boost, sport infrastructure development, and increased tourism activity. Disadvantages: - Short-term economic and tourism benefits.	- Sport (e.g., attending and participating in events, visiting attractions) can be used as a strategic tool for branding cities, regions, and countries.	- Differences between claimed and obtained benefits; - Formula 1 can renew and enhance city image.	- Sustainability dependent on social, cultural, organisational, logistic, communication, economic, tourism, and environmental dimensions.	- Social development, politics, soft-power and sport-for-peace; - Economics of tourism, image and branding; - Infrastructure and urban development; - Sport development.	Nostalgia, motivation, behavioural intention, event quality, destination image, tourist satisfaction, value, future intention, destination loyalty, and place attachment.	- Resource-intensive, economic and social burden for residents; - Tourism benefits (e.g., destination branding, trade) - Diplomacy, community pride, connectivity.	---

Figure 1. Place and sport events review studies.

Given researchers' interest in relationships between sport events and place branding, various review studies have been conducted (Figure 1). These studies have provided insights about place branding strategies (Richelieu, 2018), sport tourists' decision-making (e.g. Chen et al., 2023), event sustainability (Tomino et al., 2020), and social, economic and tourism impacts (e.g. Gaudette et al., 2017; Mair et al., 2023). However, the depth of relationships and processes between place branding and sport events is still underdeveloped within the literature (Tasci et al., 2019). Past reviews focused on specific events (Ferreira et al., 2018), sports (Roult et al., 2020) or countries (Knott & Tinaz, 2022), with limited timeframes (Chen et al., 2023) only capturing a reduced number of existing publications. Despite the importance of past reviews to identify persistent issues and trends, existing information is fragmented, does not provide a coherent synthesis and analysis of the foundations of past PBtSE studies, and where it should be heading. The current study's purpose is to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive review for the entirety of PBtSE research to identify its foundational underpinnings, provide a platform for discussion, and highlight where research should be added to advance theory and practice.

This review follows PRISMA guidelines (data from *Scopus* and *Web of Science – WoS*). A co-word-analysis (Rojas-Lamorena et al., 2022) is then employed, followed by a Theory-Context-Characteristic-Methods (TCCM) review protocol (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019). This ensures a rigorous overview of the theoretical and empirical bases of PBtSE literature, helping address the limitations of traditional reviews (Paul et al., 2023). Consistently, the current study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What themes and relationships exist within the PBtSE literature and how are these advancing the field?

RQ2: What are the dominant theories, contexts, characteristics and methods in the PBtSE literature and how are they being applied?

RQ3: What are the key directions for future PBtSE research?

Methods

PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) are employed to ensure a rigorous article selection process (Figure 2), transparency and reproducibility (Appendix A). This is followed by co-word analysis and a TCCM framework to answer the research questions and systematically organise, analyse, and synthesise the findings (Paul et al., 2023).

Search strategy and screening process

A search string was applied on the 3rd of January 2024 in *Scopus* and *WoS* to identify relevant articles, as these are two of the most relevant social sciences indexed databases (Rojas-Lamorena et al., 2022). The search included combinations of the terms *place branding* and *sport events*. Given the holistic notion of *place branding* (inclusive of destination brands; Reynolds et al., 2022), we used several variations including place brand, place image(s), destination image(s), destination brand, country image, or city image. Similarly, we used sport(ing) events, games, and specific event names such as OG, FIFA, UEFA, World Cup (WC).

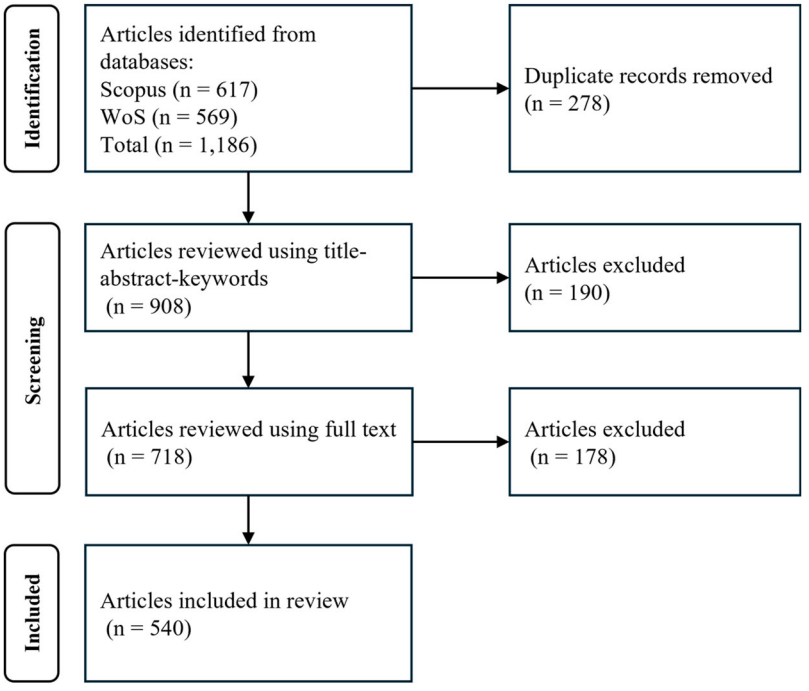


Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram.

Following past systematic reviews (Thompson et al., 2023), our inclusion/exclusion protocol included the keyword search restriction to title-abstract-keywords search field and English journal articles. Only journal articles were considered as they represent the most up-to-date knowledge and recognised academic value (Biscaia et al., 2024). The initial search identified 1186 documents (*Scopus* = 617, *WoS* = 569). A meta-data form was generated including author(s), keywords, citation count, source, and publication year from both databases. There were 278 duplicates, which were removed, leaving 908 sources. At the screening stage, each research team member independently analysed titles, abstracts, and text to confirm source relevance to PBtSE. Each of the authors provided their opinion grounded on the study's purpose and used three colours: green = 'related', yellow = 'discussion', and red = 'not related'. Articles classified as 'reds' by three or more researchers were excluded ($n = 190$), while those with three or more 'greens' were retained. Full texts that did not meet the criteria were reviewed and discussed by the team until consensus was reached, leading to the elimination of 178 articles. The final dataset comprised 540 articles. The articles were subject to a normalisation and debugging process (Rojas-Lamorena et al., 2022). This included normalising the author's keywords in plural and singular (e.g. event vs. events), and authors' names and journals due to different nomenclatures in *Scopus* and *WoS* (e.g. Kaplanidou K.K. vs. Kaplanidou K.).

Co-word analysis and TCCM framework

The bibliometrix package in R was used to perform the co-word analysis and answer RQ1. This is part of the science mapping (i.e. bibliometric technique to explore

relationships between research constituents) and reveals the frequency that two or more keywords appear together, allowing to map key themes and relationships (Donthu et al., 2021) within the PBtSE literature. To answer RQ2, we employed a TCCM framework (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019). This started with a systematic analysis of the theoretical foundations of PBtSE research. Then, the context in which PBtSE was carried out was reviewed (i.e. circumstances shaping the research setting; Paul et al., 2023), including the events' geographical location and sport event types (single sport: e.g. Football vs. multisport: e.g. OG). The characteristics were then reviewed by considering independent, dependent, mediating and moderating variables of quantitative studies, followed by the themes in qualitative studies. A review of the methods was subsequently conducted following Filo et al.'s (2015) categorisation of research types: primary (studies with fisthand data collection), secondary (studies relying on data collected by someone else for a different purpose) and conceptual (studies without drawing on empirical data). This review protocol and the co-word analysis represent the basis to answer RQ3.

Performance analysis in PBtSE literature

This section summarises the contributions of PBtSE research constituents (full details: Appendix B). Figure 3 illustrates trends in publications and citations. PBtSE research was sporadic until 2004, but a growing research activity was observed after that time, which may be related to the works of Kim and Morrsion (2005) and Lee et al. (2005) about the 2002 FIFA WC and South Korea's image. The 540 PBtSE studies generated 15,663 citations in *Scopus* and 8896 in *WoS*. The Journal of Sport & Tourism is the source with more publications ($n = 32$), but a range of journals across sports, tourism and business management published PBtSE articles, illustrating the interdisciplinary nature of this field. Kaplanidou is the most published author ($n = 15$), and the most cited article is Getz and Page (2016), with an aggregate of 742 citations.

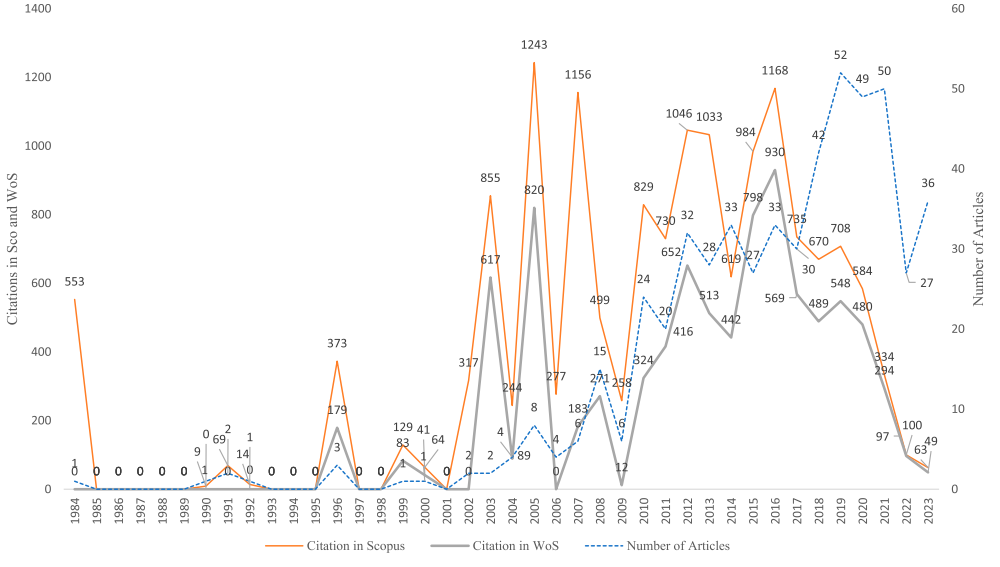


Figure 3. Publication trends and citation numbers.

Thematic relationships within the PBtSE literature (RQ1)

Figure 4 presents a co-word analysis. The point-size edge is reflected by the number of times the keyword is used, the thickness of the lines reflects the co-occurrence frequency between keywords, and each colour represents a keyword cluster. Four clusters were identified. The blue cluster highlights (mega)sport events (e.g. OG, FIFA WC) as common contexts for exploring destination branding and diplomacy (e.g. Football, Brazil). These events represent opportunities to shape a country's (inter)national perceptions, showcase attributes, and enhance global reputation (Dubinsky, 2021), often driving tourism and economic gains (e.g. foreign investment; Grix & Houlihan, 2014). The green cluster emphasizes residents' role in event success, as they influence tourist experiences, place attachment and long-term reputation (Oshimi & Harada, 2019), favouring place branding efforts that can foster destination loyalty and future participation (Kaplanidou et al., 2012). These two clusters lie at the centre of the map, highlighting their importance in PBtSE research.

The red cluster focuses on studies exploring co-branding, culture, and identity. Sport events can act as platforms to showcase cultural traits among global audiences, thus enhancing place branding (Duignan, 2021). Strategic event-destination alignment (Yu et al., 2023) and stakeholder collaboration (Pinello et al., 2022) have also been suggested to help attract tourists and create lasting impressions. The purple cluster explores place image and social impacts of sport events for hosts (Ribeiro et al., 2021). Both clusters are peripheral, highlighting opportunities to connect more closely with the green and blue clusters.

TCCM framework (RQ2)

Theories

A total of 119 theories were mentioned in past research. Social exchange and schema theories were the most common. Notwithstanding, many studies allude to theories

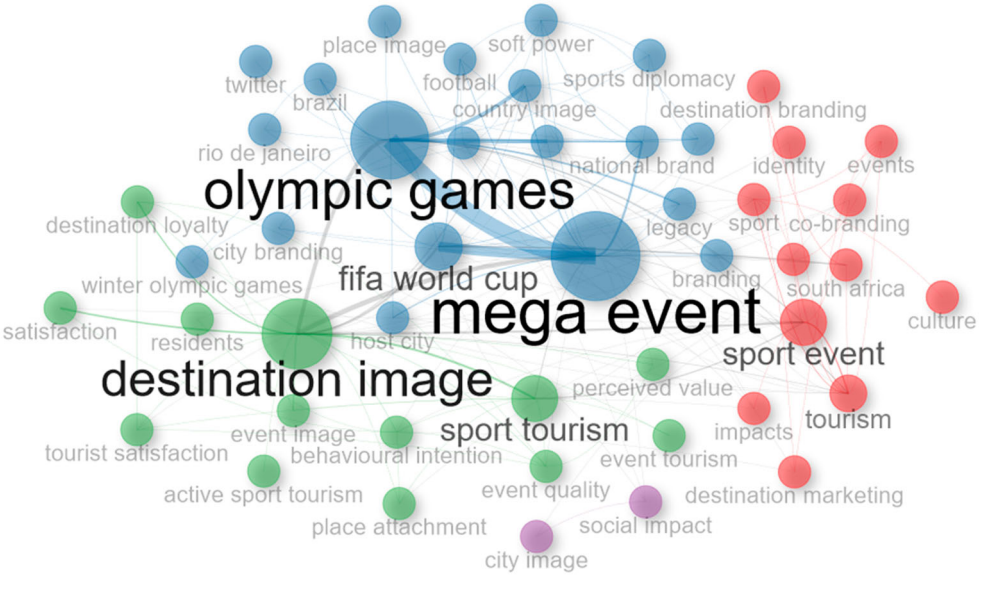


Figure 4. Co-word analysis.

tangentially without discussing their usefulness to develop hypotheses or explain findings. Also, over half of the studies do not refer to any theories. These studies are mainly qualitative and/or follow an inductive reasoning to research (e.g. Brewster, 2010), which might explain the lack of concrete theoretical lenses. Generally, the relationships between constructs are drawn from existing literature without exploring their underlying rationale, limiting theoretical advancements in PBtSE and broader contributions. Table 1 summarises the most frequently used theories.

Social exchange and schema theories

Social exchange theory (SET) is used to explain the exchange within dyadic relationships. It assumes that individuals implement a subjective cost–benefit analysis of events, implying that (1) there is a desire to increase gains and avoid losses during the exchange, (2) the exchange is based on mutual dependence, and (3) the mutual benefits imply long-term cooperation (Chen et al., 2021). This was the most employed theory ($n = 34$) as a foundation to explain nuanced residents' reactions towards sport event and tourism stimuli (Getz & Page, 2016). The underlying assumption is that benefits received from tourism development associated to sport events will favour the community due to social, economic and environmental returns (Chen & Tian, 2015). This is vital because residents are an important part of the tourism business, and place branding efforts should take them into consideration (Kavaratzis, 2012).

For example, using SET Kim and Walker (2012) explored host residents' psychic income from a mega-sport event, identifying positive outcomes such as community pride, excitement, attachment, and support for urban redevelopment. Similarly, Liu et al. (2014) examined the 2008 Beijing Olympics' legacy, finding that Chinese residents' perceptions differed from literature in Western contexts and emphasising the need to sustain perceived events' legacy over time.

Schema theory (ST), the second most used ($n = 17$), posits that people's memory is shaped by past experiences and cognitive networks. A schema is an organised knowledge structure that guide the processing and retrieval of information (Fiske & Linville, 1980). It helps explain how evaluations of one stimulus (e.g. sport event) associate with another stimulus (e.g. destination) (Chalip & Costa, 2005).

Table 1. Theories most employed.

Theory	No. articles	%	Example studies
Social exchange theory	34	6.3	Chen and Tian (2015)
Schema theory	17	3.2	Chalip and Costa (2005)
Theory of planned behaviour	12	2.2	Whitehead and Wicker (2018)
Stakeholder theory	11	2.0	Knott et al. (2015)
Other theories	115	21.3	Heslop et al. (2010, attribution theory); Prayag and Grivel (2018, social identity theory); Yao and Schwarz (2018, social representation theory)
No guiding theory	303	56.1	Boukas et al. (2013)

Notes: Theories listed: 119. Some articles draw on more than one theory (e.g. Chen & Tian, 2015); others do not refer to any theory; Relative frequencies based on the 540 articles.

PBtSE studies used ST to understand the meaning of sport event experiences (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2010), image transfer between sport events and destinations (Lai, 2010), impacts, and future destination visits or recommendations (Liu et al., 2014). These studies have often suggested that the meaning attributed to event experiences by active sport tourists evolves around social, emotional, environmental, organisational and physical activity aspects (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2010). Also, it has been advised that host cities incorporate the event's image into place branding strategies (Ramos et al., 2023), given that event-city congruence favours spectators' image transfer (Xing & Chalip, 2006), positive attitudes and recommendations (Zhang, Byon, et al., 2020).

Other theories

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and stakeholder theory were the third and fourth most used ($n = 12$ and $n = 11$, respectively). TPB, which explains behaviours individuals can self-control (Ajzen, 1991), has been applied to understand intentions to (re)visit and recommend places or events. Studies driven by TPB note past event attendance predicts future related-behaviours and revisits of the place for vacation (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012; Whitehead & Wicker, 2018). Past behaviours of visiting the destination have also been associated with intentions to revisit that destination and participate in sport tourist activities (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007), while attitudes towards event and destination have been associated to intentions to revisit and recommend both event and destination (Zhang, Byon, et al., 2020).

In turn, stakeholder theory is based on the premise that sport events have an array of stakeholders, and event success largely depends on the ability to identify and satisfy key stakeholders (Ageeva & Foroudi, 2019). Past studies have identified residents, sport infrastructures, city resources, hospitality, and event organisations as key stakeholders collaboratively affecting events' success (Brochado et al., 2022). It is further noted that benefits to the hosts are often short lived (Lu & Lin, 2020), and that the host place branding legacy results from a combination of opportunities generated by the event (e.g. media exposure), event-host co-branding, and other strategic activities of private and public stakeholders (Knott et al., 2015).

Context

Table 2 summarises the contexts in PBtSE research. As the term context refers to circumstances shaping the research setting (Paul et al., 2023), we report the countries and sport event types (single or multisport).

Sport event type

Our analysis reveals a balance between single-sport ($n = 297$) and multi-sport events ($n = 267$). Single sport events studies mainly focus on football ($n = 105$). This is likely due to the sport's popularity, nations' competition to host the FIFA WC and media coverage (Snape, 2023), making football an appealing context to explore sport-tourism linkages. Studies focused on the FIFA WC have highlighted its contribution to place branding and associated tourism benefits (Walker et al., 2013), political strategies (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015), urban regeneration (Friendly & Walker, 2022) and residents' quality of life over time (Kaplanidou et al., 2013).

Table 2. Type of events and countries.

Context	No. articles	%	Example studies
Single sport			
Football (e.g. FIFA World Cup, UEFA Euro)	105	19.4	Gursoy et al. (2017)
Running	38	7.0	Funk and Bruun (2007)
Car racing	24	4.4	Liu and Gratton (2010)
Other sports (e.g. Baseball, Cycling)	130	24.1	Whitehead and Wicker (2018)
Multisport			
Olympic Games (Summer and Winter)	182	33.7	Brown et al. (2016)
Universiade	9	1.7	Lu and Lin (2020)
Commonwealth Games	9	1.7	Jin and Cheng (2020)
Other multiport events (e.g. Asian Games)	67	12.4	Lai (2010)
Sport and/or event not explicitly stated	38	7.0	Ritchie (1984)
Africa			
South Africa	31	5.7	Walker et al. (2013)
Kenya	1	0.2	Njoroge et al. (2017)
Europe			
United Kingdom	19	3.5	Liu et al. (2014)
Germany	18	3.3	Hallmann et al. (2015)
Spain	17	3.2	Parra-Camacho et al. (2020)
Other countries (e.g. Russia, Greece, Italy)	132	19.1	Bazzanella et al. (2022)
North America			
USA	43	8.0	Kim and Walker (2012)
Canada	12	2.2	Deccio and Baloglu (2002)
Mexico	6	1.1	Puente-Díaz (2018);
Cuba	1	0.2	Hasbani et al. (2021)
South America (Brazil)	40	7.4	Rojas-Méndez et al. (2019)
Northeast Asia			
China and autonomous regions	78	14.4	Liu and Gratton (2010)
South Korea	34	6.3	Kim and Morrsion (2005)
Japan	16	3.0	Duignan (2021)
Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia)	9	1.7	Watanabe et al. (2018)
West Asia (India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan)	7	1.3	Osborne et al. (2016)
Middle East and Central Asia			
Qatar	11	2.0	Griffin (2019)
Israel	6	1.1	Dart (2016)
Other countries (e.g. Iran; United Arab Emirates)	11	2.0	Allameh et al. (2015)
Oceania			
Australia	21	3.9	Funk and Bruun (2007)
New Zealand	6	1.1	Hall and Amore (2019)
Country not reported	37	6.9	Ritchie (1984)

Notes: Number of sports (single sport; multisport): 564 (some articles include data from more than one sport and/or event; Sánchez & Broudehoux, 2013); Number of countries: 493 (some articles include data from more than one country; e.g. O'Reilly et al., 2016; others do not refer to it). Relative frequencies based on the 540 articles.

The OG (winter and summer) dominate multisport event studies ($n = 182$). Despite the decline of bidding cities, it continues to generate global appeal and numerous research opportunities that were further boosted by the IOC's Agenda 2020. Studies related to the OG covered various aspects relevant to place branding, including residents' support for event bidding and hosting (Ribeiro et al., 2021), stakeholder activities, media coverage (Knott et al., 2015), cultural identity (Duignan, 2021), environmental strategies (Bazzanella et al., 2022), event and tourism experiences (Ladhari & Souiden, 2020), social impacts, urban development and political objectives (Sánchez & Broudehoux, 2013). This reflects the web of intertwined stakeholders that contribute to place branding (Kavaratzis, 2012).

The focus on the FIFA WC and the OG highlights the role of such events for place brand recognition and appeal among internal and external audiences (Zenker et al., 2017). Other events were used sporadically. Additionally, 38 studies do not explicitly

state the sport event context (Hemmonsbey & Tichaawa, 2019) or refer to general events or sport event portfolios (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2016).

Countries

Europe ($n = 157$) and Northeast Asia ($n = 128$) were the most frequently studied regions. For country-wise analysis, there is a dispersion in European countries, which may relate to the variety of large sport events hosted in Europe throughout the last decades. China was the biggest contributor ($n = 78$), followed by the USA ($n = 43$), Brazil ($n = 40$) and South Korea ($n = 34$). This may be explained by the fact these countries hosted the OG and/or the FIFA WC in the last decades, and all have a history of hosting sport events for achieving domestic and international goals.

Most studies were conducted in a single country (Kaplanidou et al., 2013), with only 22 exploring PBtSE in multinational contexts (O'Reilly et al., 2016) or using multi-country samples (Ramos et al., 2023). This focus on individual countries may be because the events drawing more attention are only hosted every four years (OG; FIFA WC), and co-branding opportunities are often shaped by the event-host place ecosystem (Heslop et al., 2010). However, one should note the rise of co-hosted events (e.g. FIFA WC 2026, 2030) in response to societal sustainability concerns (Walzel & Eickhoff, 2023), and potential image spill-overs between hosts (Florek, 2009).

Characteristics

This section provides an overview of independent, mediating, moderating and dependent variables in quantitative studies, grouped according to the object they relate to (e.g. event-related, host-related, tourism experience-related, other variables), along with themes emerging from qualitative studies.

Quantitative studies

Most independent variables in PBtSE studies were host-related ($n = 209$) and event-related ($n = 204$) (Table 3). Event-related factors are mainly focused on event quality assessments, consumer experiences (i.e. spectators and participants), and event brand (e.g. perceived image). These factors have been frequently associated to tourism benefits and positive place brand perceptions (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). For example, the quality of events' core product influence intentions to attend future events and revisit the place (Watanabe et al., 2018), and there are positive spill-over image effects from events to hosts (Lai, 2018).

Host-related factors predominately capture the city or country's perceived brand, social and economic effects, and cultural and environmental features, aimed at understanding residents' support, place brand changes and tourism outcomes (Kenyon & Bodet, 2018). Residents' perceived impacts vary before, during and after the events, and these changes affect their perceived quality of life (Kaplanidou et al., 2013) and event support (Ribeiro et al., 2021). Tourists' image of the place often varies before and after the event (Kim & Morrsion, 2005), with this being partially explained by event involvement and exposure to event features (Rojas-Méndez et al., 2019).

Mediating variables were examined in 96 studies (total of 126 mediators total), focusing mainly on host-related ($n = 58$) and event-related ($n = 56$) factors. Event-wise,

Table 3. Variables in quantitative studies.

	No. articles	%	Example studies
Quantitative studies			
Independent variables			
Event-related			
Event quality	63	22.7	Watanabe et al. (2018)
Spectator/participant experience	58	20.9	Ladhari and Souiden (2020)
Event brand	37	13.3	Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007)
Others (Event connection; Planning)	46	16.5	Vierhaus (2019)
Host-related			
City/country brand	81	29.1	Rojas-Méndez et al. (2019)
Overall social impact	30	10.8	Kaplanidou et al. (2013)
Economic effects	25	9.0	Whitehead and Wicker (2018)
Others (Culture and community; Urban development & infrastructure)	73	26.3	Yao and Schwarz (2018)
Tourism experience	58	20.9	Funk and Bruun (2007)
Other variables (e.g. Event-host fit; Political aspects)	79	28.4	Choi et al. (2019)
Mediating variables			
Event-related			
Event experience	23	8.3	Brown et al. (2016)
Connection with event	16	5.8	Zhang, Byon, et al. (2020)
Others (Event brand; Sponsor reactions)	17	6.1	Yu et al. (2021)
Host-related			
Host brand	31	11.2	Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007)
Connection to host	14	5.0	Raggiotto and Scarpi (2021)
Others (Quality of life; Negative impact)	13	4.7	Kaplanidou et al. (2013)
Tourism experience	12	4.3	Swart et al. (2018)
Moderator variables			
Event-related (Event authenticity; Event type)	13	4.7	Xu et al. (2022)
Sociodemographic (e.g. age; gender)	11	4.0	Toudert and Bringas-Rábago (2018)
Other variables (e.g. Media coverage; Tourism experience)	15	5.4	Rojas-Méndez et al. (2019)
Dependent variables			
Event-related			
Future intentions to attend/participate	44	15.8	Kaplanidou and Gibson (2012)
Future intentions to recommend	29	10.4	Zhang et al. (2019)
Support the event	15	5.4	Kaplanidou et al. (2013)
Others (e.g. Event experience; Event image)	28	10.1	Custódio et al. (2018)
Host-related			
City/country brand	83	29.9	Chen et al. (2014)
Future intentions to visit city/country	55	19.8	Hallmann and Breuer (2010a)
Economic development	45	16.2	Lu et al. (2020)
Others (e.g. Recommend city/country; Negative impacts; Urban development)	88	31.7	Kim and Walker (2012)
Tourism-related (Experience; Outcomes)	24	8.6	Liu et al. (2021)
Other variables (e.g. Political outcomes; Host-event fit)	15	5.4	Hallmann and Breuer (2010)

Note: Frequencies based on 278 articles employing quantitative methods ($n = 249$ quantitative; $n = 29$ both quantitative and qualitative data). Conceptual articles excluded due to not including data.

consumer experiences and event connection (i.e. attachment) were the most common. For example, Brown et al. (2016) found satisfaction with event experiences mediates the relationship between event attachment and future intentions to visit the sport venue and other city attractions. For host-related factors, the host brand was the most used mediator with past studies indicating that city image mediates the relationship between event image and spectators' event satisfaction (Lee et al., 2019) and intentions to revisit the host city (Kaplanidou, 2006). Raggiotto and Scarpi (2021) found event location attachment is influenced by sensation seeking and self-enhancement, which then affects event revisit intentions.

Only 32 studies examined moderating variables (total of 39 moderators). The most frequent moderators are event-related. For example, Xu et al. (2022) observed that event types partially moderate the effect of event value on tourists' perceived place image. Wang et al. (2019) noted age was the only sociodemographic characteristic moderating the effect of perceived grassroot event impacts on residents' event support. Specifically, residents up to 25 years-old favoured more city image benefits, between 26 and 45 were concerned with environmental impacts, and the older ones had more interest in the event's cultural effects on the city. These findings highlight the importance of considering both tourists and residents in place branding strategies (Kavaratzis, 2012).

Regarding dependent variables, most studies focused on host-related factors ($n = 271$). These studies mainly consider the effects of sport events on host brands ($n = 83$). Chen (2012) noted event images tend to be associated with those of the host country among domestic and international audiences. Chen et al. (2014) further noted that affective (individual's feelings towards the place) and conative (intention to (re)visit) destination image may decay over time among sport tourists, but the same does not hold true for cognitive destination image (beliefs and knowledge about place attributes). The intentions to (re)visit ($n = 55$) and recommend ($n = 19$) the place are common benefits for hosting both participatory (Hallmann & Breuer, 2010a) and spectator sport events (Walker et al., 2013). Economic development of the place ($n = 45$) also gathered attention. Macro-economic data often indicate sport events' importance to boost local economy (Lu et al., 2020), but studies with residents highlight the need to measure changes in life quality derived from sport events as this determines perceptions of economic development (Caiazza & Audretsch, 2015). Event-related factors are also frequently studied as dependent variables ($n = 116$). Tourists' future intentions to attend (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012) or participate in the event (Whitehead & Wicker, 2018) are the most studied outcomes, followed by their intentions to recommend it (Kaplanidou et al., 2012). Specific tourism-related factors (e.g. city attraction; Liu et al., 2021) have also been common dependent variables, and these variables are often intertwined with economic benefits generated for the place brand (e.g. opportunities for local businesses; Mackellar & Reis, 2014), and potential negative impacts among residents (e.g. increased traffic or lack of security; Chen & Tian, 2015).

Qualitative studies

Our review shows PBtSE qualitative studies have mainly highlighted host-related themes ($n = 293$), particularly the impact of host brands ($n = 134$) (Table 4). Past studies investigated opportunities sport events provide for city and nation branding (Duignan, 2021), noting that stakeholder coordination, media messages and mobilisation of local residents generate place branding benefits beyond increased awareness and short-term image perceptions (Knott et al., 2015). Culture and community benefits ($n = 33$), economic impacts ($n = 31$) in host and non-host cities have also been explored. For example, Boukas et al. (2013) found host cities may benefit from social cohesion and human capital enhancement. This highlights the central role residents may play in the place experience and, by extension, of the tourists' experiences (Zenker et al., 2017). Also, residents often perceive an economic boost from tourism flows and increased local business activity during sport events, but a common criticism is that these effects are not long-lasting (Lu & Lin, 2020).

Table 4. Themes in qualitative studies.

Qualitative studies	No. articles	%	Example studies
Event-related			
Planning & Management	20	9.1	Singh and Hu (2008)
Event quality	12	5.5	Divandari et al. (2014)
Others (e.g. Event image; Stakeholders)	24	10.9	Dionísio et al. (2022)
Host-related			
Host brand	134	60.9	Knott et al. (2015)
Culture and community	34	15.5	Hoff and Leopkey (2021)
Economic impacts	31	14.1	Jenkins and Rios-Morales (2013)
Other themes (e.g. Urban development; Legacy)	95	43.2	Friendly and Walker (2022)
Tourism-related (e.g. Outcomes; Experience)	35	15.9	Duignan (2021)
Political-related	32	14.5	Won and Chiu (2020)
Media-related	17	7.7	Sobral et al. (2022)
Sport promotion	10	4.5	Whigham et al. (2021)
Other themes (e.g. Education; Volunteering)	20	9.1	Carlsen and Taylor (2003)

Note: Frequencies based on 220 articles employing qualitative methods ($n = 191$ qualitative; $n = 29$ both quantitative and qualitative data).

Event-related themes were the second most studied ($n = 56$), mainly planning and management ($n = 20$) issues. Researchers highlighted hosting sport events should be complemented by policy development to generate benefits beyond the event staging (Singh & Hu, 2008), and that event portfolio strategies favour cities' image and regional development (Liang et al., 2022). Our analysis also identifies the importance of themes specifically related to tourism ($n = 35$) and politics ($n = 32$). Researchers note improvements in tourism infrastructure and services, increased tourist flows (Knott et al., 2017) and competitive advantages for the host city as a destination brand (Singh & Hu, 2008) are often driven by the biddings and hosting of (mega)sport events. Also, sport events often help address domestic and international political agendas (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015).

Methods

Table 5 summarises research types. Most studies rely on primary data ($n = 348$), with questionnaires being the dominant data source ($n = 217$), and residents and tourists being the primary respondents. Studies with residents have predominantly focused on

Table 5. Research types.

Research types	No. articles	%	Example studies
Primary			
Questionnaires	217	40.2	Brown et al. (2016)
Interviews	82	15.2	Knott et al. (2017)
Experiments	14	2.6	Xing and Chalip (2006)
Others (e.g. Focus groups; Ethnography)	37	6.9	Rocha & Fink (2017)
Secondary			
Reports and Archives	66	12.2	Brown (2020)
Media coverage	44	8.2	Sobral et al. (2022)
Statistical data	32	5.9	Perna and Custódio (2008)
Others (e.g. social media; Government information)	60	11.1	Chen (2012)
Conceptual (e.g. Critical reviews; Frameworks)	68	12.6	Ritchie (1984)
Primary and secondary data (e.g. Interviews; Document analysis)	25	4.3	Hoff and Leopkey (2021)

Notes: Number of research types: 636 (some articles include more than one type or both primary and secondary data; e.g. Chen, 2012). Relative frequencies based on 540 articles.

understanding perceptions of sport events' impacts (e.g. Chen & Tian, 2015) on both host cities (Kim & Walker, 2012) and non-host cities (Liu et al., 2014), changes in quality of life, and support before and after the event (Kaplanidou et al., 2013). In turn, questionnaires applied to tourists have examined event experiences (e.g. sport tourists: Hallmann & Breuer, 2010b), and how events shape place image perceptions (Chen et al., 2014), intentions to revisit and recommend the host city (Hallmann et al., 2015) and/or the event (Whitehead & Wicker, 2018).

Interviews were the second most used data source ($n = 82$). Studies with interviews targeted various stakeholders (e.g. residents, tourism agents, event owners, sport facility managers, government agencies) to get a granular understanding of event portfolios' importance (Liang et al., 2022) and strategic planning processes to generate place legacies (Duignan et al., 2023).

Secondary data have also been important ($n = 202$). Studies grounded on reports and archival data derive from the analysis of bidding files, press releases, event brochures (Pereira et al., 2015), commissioned impact studies, official tourism and event reports (Hoff & Leopkey, 2021), often complementing stakeholder interviews (Liang et al., 2022) to develop a robust understanding of the planning and staging of sport events and tourism legacies. Media coverage have also been an important data source ($n = 44$), with studies mainly focusing on media framing of sport events and how it help the hosts' political agenda (Sobral et al., 2022) and/or shape their place brand among international audiences (Gutierrez & Bettine, 2022).

Our review also revealed 68 conceptual articles. These studies often review and theorise the management of event-place congruence (Florek & Insch, 2011), the impacts of sport events, and offer guidance for future research and practice (Ritchie, 1984). While conceptual papers are important to set the foundations for future empirical studies (Jaakkola, 2020), existing studies with disjointed ideas not fully integrating past knowledge and design justifications may lead to misrepresentations and undermine theoretical and practical contributions. It is also worth noting that 25 articles combined primary and secondary data (e.g. Chen, 2012).

Future research directions (RQ3)

This section draws on the review of PBtSE literature to advance new research directions summarised in Table 6. These directions are organised according to the TCCM to encourage researchers addressing persistent issues in extant literature and look beyond the domain boundaries.

Theories

Over half of PBtSE studies is not grounded on any theory or cite theories without clarifying their application to research models and/or how findings add to those theories. As new insights (e.g. what is new? why so?) related to theories used previously often represent theoretical contributions (Henderson et al., 2004), future research should deepen how/if past findings add to the most used theories and their implications for stakeholders contributing to place branding. Also, most studies use single theories centred on individuals' evaluations of cost-benefits (social exchange theory), information

Table 6. Future research directions.

Dimensions	Research questions
Theories	
Most used theories	What insights do past studies offer on the theories underpinning PBtSE research, and what are their implications for place branding drivers?
Multi-theory	To what extent can the application of multi-theoretical lenses help elucidate the complexities of place branding through sport events?
Paradoxes	How do the management of different paradoxes during the planning and hosting sport events help develop equilibrium models that favour PBtSE?
Systems thinking	How can systems thinking help reinforce relationships between tourism constituents for the benefit of places and sport events?
Creation of shared value	How can the actors involved in planning and delivery of sport events cooperate to generate benefits for them and simultaneously address societal challenges in the host places?
Clarification of concepts	How to differentiate and measure sport event legacy, leverage and impact, and how each affects host place brands?
Tourist experiences	How can new theoretical lenses such as memorable tourist experiences, consumer fun or customer value co-creation and co-destruction help understand tourism experiences and expand PBtSE research?
Knowledge transfer	What insights can information exchange and/or situational crisis communication theories provide to favour knowledge transfer among organisations for the benefit of PBtSE strategies?
Context	
Sport event type	To what extent does the appeal of multi-sport vs. single-sport, frequent vs. one-off, and participatory vs. spectator sport events affect place branding strategies differently?
Culture	How do place branding perceptions through sport events differ according to Western and non-Western consumers and media?
Previous events	How do previous sport events shape perceptions and behaviours towards new related sport events and places?
Sport facilities	How do sport facilities where sport events occur affect place brands?
Co-hosts	How is each place brand perceived in co-hosted sport events?
Digital environments	To what extent are new digital ecosystems and technologies shaping relationships between sport events and place brands?
Characteristics	
Politics and Media	How are tourists and residents' perceptions of sport events and places affected by media frames and political strategies?
Event's core product	How do event athletes and teams, and competition success (e.g. win-loss), affect tourists' perceptions of host places?
Tourist experiences	How can feelings of groundedness, civilised behaviours or gamification strategies contribute to understanding tourist experiences and develop PBtSE strategies?
Sustainability	How the increased adoption of sustainable practices to create ecological footprints affects place brands and sport event success?
Controls	How can control variables (e.g. demographics, tourism experiences) elucidate the complexity of sport events and place brands?
Other place drivers	How are place brands affected at micro-, meso- and macro-levels by sport events and other place drivers such as museums, galleries or festivals?
Methods & Limitations	
Study design	To what extent can longitudinal designs combining primary and secondary data advance knowledge to promote sustainable benefits for sport events and place brands?
Analysis	What complementary methods are more adequate to address analyses' limitations and advance PBtSE theory and practice?
Generalisability	How can researchers and practitioners cooperate in collecting data from representative samples to enhance knowledge transfer between sport events and hosts?
Experimental designs	How can laboratory experiments such as assessing the growing availability of images in online platforms, and the use of new techniques such as neuroimaging methods, help advance PBtSE?
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	How can AI be used to better communicate, create regular and appealing content to generate insights for sport events and places? How should concerns with AI such as legal and ethical issues or the interplay humans-technology guide future PBtSE research?

processing (schema theory) and subsequent behaviours (theory of planned behaviour), or the role of stakeholders on event planning, hosting and place branding (stakeholder theory). As multiple elements may concurrently contribute alongside sport events for one's evaluation of places, multi-theoretical perspectives are needed to better understand

the complexities of place branding. For instance, combining SET with institutional theory could help understand how residents' perceptions align with institutionalised event rules and policies. Also, signalling theory (Connelly et al., 2011) could complement ST to help understand how/if signs from events and hosts may reduce uncertainty and guide residents and/or tourist mental schema formation.

Forward-looking, new theoretical lenses are encouraged to explore ways to develop sustainable relationships between places and sport events. As multiple stakeholders with different aspirations are involved in the planning and management of sport events and tourism experiences, there are often paradoxes (i.e. contradictions between interdependent elements; Schad et al., 2016). For instance, although positive legacies are part of sport event bidders' narrative, public referenda have rejected hosting various events (Müller et al., 2023), which affects the place brand. Future research could thus apply paradox theory, because paradoxical tensions between stakeholders may be better addressed as interrelated contradictions and solutions to paradoxes rather than analysis of gains and losses (Ozanne et al., 2016). Concurrently, given the complexity and dynamic nature of place branding (i.e. multiple stakeholder interests; Zenker et al., 2017), system thinking paradigm offers a lens to expand PBtSE research as it considers individual constituents of the place brand, but also their connections, interdependencies, and tensions (Roxas et al., 2020).

Stemming from SET and our review, studying strategic processes through which stakeholders could simultaneously generate benefits for them and address societal challenges (i.e. creation of shared value; Cook et al., 2023) could help explore additional place benefits derived from sport events. Relatedly, while it is beyond this study's scope to differentiate legacy, impact, and leverage, it was evident in our review that these concepts were often used interchangeably. Places' strategic approach on how to use event resources to achieve desired outcomes is on the basis for differentiating legacy from other concepts (Misener, 2015). Future research could advance theory by identifying guidelines to differentiate and measure impact, leverage and legacy of sport events on place brands.

In addition, despite sport tourist experiences being a determinant of future reactions towards places and associated products (Mainolfi & Marino, 2020), consumer-specific theories are understudied in PBtSE research. Furthermore, tourists interactions with other tourists, citizens or destination management organisations can either serve as value co-creation or co-destruction sources (Kim et al., 2020). The lenses of consumer fun theory (Oh & Pham, 2022), memorable tourism experiences (Kim et al., 2024), or value co-creation and co-destruction (Kim et al., 2020) are thus relevant to expand PBtSE research by capturing multiple interactions and helping design spaces for optimising engagement with sport events and places over time. Furthermore, the adoption of information exchange theory (Troyer et al., 2007) or situational crisis communication theory (Coombs, 2022) is encouraged, given that those involved in planning and delivering sport events accumulate knowledge that benefit future events and hosts (Werner et al., 2015), but knowledge transfer processes in PBtSE research are yet to be understood.

Context

There is a balance of studies focusing on single-sport (e.g. UEFA Euro) and multi-sport events (e.g. Asian Games). Still, these events often appeal to different audiences and have

different reach, making it important to examine if they affect place brands differently. Similarly, although hosting recurring sport events (e.g. Tour de France) has been suggested to favour a sustainable customer base (Kaplanidou et al., 2012), further research is needed to understand if they produce more place branding benefits than events hosted in different cities every year (e.g. Laver Cup). Moreover, PBtSE studies have highlighted the importance of both spectator (Watanabe et al., 2018) and participatory sport events (i.e. marathon; Hallmann et al., 2010a), but whether consumer experiences during these events affect places differently should be examined to help decision-making regarding prospective event hosting.

Several countries have served as context for PBtSE studies. However, place brand perceptions had been mainly based on Western (prospective) tourists (Kim & Morrsion, 2005) and media organisations (Sobral et al., 2022). As cultural values predict tourists' behaviours (Hsu et al., 2013), future research could compare Western and non-Western lenses to understand how culture shapes perceived impacts of sport events on host places. For instance, Schwartz (2006)' three cultural value dimensions could be used to help explain PBtSE effects across prospective tourists and media outlets from different countries. Additionally, despite social comparisons often influence individuals' reactions to tourism destinations (Liu et al., 2019), this has not been considered in PBtSE studies. Assessing how previous events hosted in certain cities and countries shape the perceptions of subsequent related events and place brands is thus warranted.

Sport facilities also deserve more attention given their contribution to place branding. Some sport events (e.g. OG) are salient markers of our lives, and associated facilities become a shrine for sport followers (Gammon, 2004). For example, Beijing's Olympic Village was still among the city's top10 tourist attractions in 2023 (Civitatis, 2024). Thus, we encourage examining the role of the sport facilities where events occur on place brands to deepen the events' impacts on places beyond the hosting stage. Additionally, the trend of co-hosting sport events should be considered. While initial evidence of this strategy's social value is emerging (e.g. lower costs and residents' support; Walzel & Eickhoff, 2023), whether co-hosting favours place brands over time is yet to be examined.

Another untapped research avenue relates to digital environments. New digital ecosystems (e.g. metaverse) provide consumers' dynamic experiences with places and sport events (Qian & Seifried, 2023). Also, virtual reality is making digital consumers an important segment for event organisers and tourism providers (Kharouf et al., 2020). For example, the 2022 FIFA WC organisers created a digital gateway to the host cities allowing immersive visitor experiences in stadiums and other emblematic city locations (Qatar, 2022).

Characteristics

Past studies comprehensively overview host-related and event-related factors, but political (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015) and media aspects (Sobral et al., 2022) were predominantly explored in qualitative studies without capturing residents and tourists' lenses. Follow-up quantitative studies with these key actors are encouraged to prevent a partial understanding of how media frames and political strategies affect PBtSE. In addition, little is known about how events' core product attributes (i.e. teams, athletes, competition quality) shape place brand outcomes. Attendance of an event with good performers may

instil favourable place memories and intentions to revisit it, while poor performances may have the opposite effect. Similarly, evidence is emerging that athletes can be important place ambassadors (Hautbois et al., 2025), but how they influence the associated events is yet to be known. Examining the role of events' core product attributes in future research is thus warranted.

Research on tourist experiences is also encouraged to build on the continuous progress of consumer-related knowledge. Emerging concepts such as feelings of groundedness (connection to place, people and past; Eichinger et al., 2022), perceived civilised behaviour by other tourists (complying with societal norms of visited places; Liu et al., 2024), or gamification strategies aimed at increasing engagement with events and place brands (Xu et al., 2017) are encouraged to advance PBtSE strategies. Furthermore, while sustainable practices are increasingly being adopted in events and tourism (Jørgensen, 2024), there is scant evidence of its effect in PBtSE research. Assessing the impact of new management policies aimed at making sport events and places more sustainable (e.g. IOC Agenda 2020) is thus imperative.

Despite statistical controls are important for accurate estimates of casual effects (Shiau et al., 2024), control variables were only considered in eight studies to help explain the role of sport events on place brands (Lai, 2018) and intentions to revisit the host and event (Whitehead & Wicker, 2018). We encourage researchers to add controls in future studies (e.g. event type, demographics, past experiences) to better understand the complexities of PBtSE. Further opportunities lie in the complementary analysis of sport events and other place branding drivers. Future studies could assess sport events and other place drivers (e.g. festivals, museums and galleries), and compare them at micro-level (i.e. tourist experiences), meso-level (i.e. organisational actors), and macro-level (i.e. place outcomes) (Huang et al., 2023).

Methods

Most PBtSE studies are cross-sectional, with only 28 combining primary and secondary data (e.g. Duignan, 2021). As reactions to places evolve over time (Rojas-Méndez et al., 2019), longitudinal studies combining different data sources are encouraged to deepen PBtSE, reduce concerns of common method bias in past research (Kock et al., 2021), facilitate triangulation and improve generalisability (Saunders et al., 2020). The use of multiple studies and data points could also help identify ways to extend benefits over time and address concerns that event benefits are short-lived (Lu & Lin, 2020).

Past studies have mainly used convenience samples, rarely examined PBtSE in more than one country or captured multi-country data. Researchers should work cooperatively with event organisers and places' stakeholders to gather representative samples and increase the robustness of existing PBtSE knowledge. Also, despite every sport event and place are unique, knowledge transfer between events-hosts is important to promote benefits within the ecosystem (Werner et al., 2015). Future studies analysing multiple editions of the same event in more than one country (e.g. FIFA WC) and different events hosted in the same region (e.g. Brisbane: 2026 BMX World Championships; 2032 OG) represent opportunities to advance PBtSE research.

Despite experimental designs help overcome the limitations of cross-sectional studies (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020), few experiments were run in PBtSE studies and these were

mainly based on student samples. Future research should employ laboratory and field experiments with tourists and residents, or combine both types, to deepen knowledge of cause-and-effect relationships and draw tangible recommendations for events and places. Laboratory experiments could mimic consumer experiences or explore the increased availability of tourism- and sport-related images on the Internet produced by consumers (e.g. travel experiences on social media), official media (e.g. news coverage), sport event organisers (e.g. athletes and event planning) and hosts (e.g. travel guidebooks). Also, adopting neuroimaging techniques would allow real-time responses and contribute to draw practical and theoretical insights (Lei et al., 2024). Complementarily, field experiments capturing behaviours while attending or participating in sport events, visiting other event zones or place attractions would provide a robust understanding of PBtSE.

Furthermore, advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are shaping the research landscape (Vorobeva et al., 2024) and cannot be ignored. Understanding AI analytical capabilities to generate insights from large amounts of data, synthetic data (i.e. created by GenAI models) and how (sport) consumers respond to AI are important directions for PBtSE research. Notwithstanding, there are legal and ethical issues with AI tools (e.g. manipulations and data privacy), and fears of human workers' replacement (Knani et al., 2022), suggesting that both dark and bright sides of AI should be considered in future PBtSE research.

These concerns underscore the value of mixed-methods to leverage diverse data sources for a comprehensive understanding of PBtSE. Relatedly, posts and comments from residents and tourists on social media provide a glimpse of public discourse (Marder et al., 2019), and could complement other secondary (e.g. government reports) or primary data sources (e.g. experiments). Mixed methods will also help address disjointed ideas from past conceptualisations and limitations related to analysis (e.g. not considering alternative models), thus stimulating theoretical and practical PBtSE advancements.

Conclusions

A review of PBtSE literature (1984-2023) was conducted and the foundations for future research were set. Structured insights on the thematic relationships and their importance within the PBtSE literature (RQ1) were provided through co-word analysis of 540 studies. Subsequently, a TCCM framework was employed to review studies' theories, contexts, characteristics, methods and limitations (RQ2), followed by the establishment of a research agenda (R3) to invigorate PBtSE literature and lengthen its future contribution to theory and practice.

Study contributions

This study provides important contributions to PBtSE literature. The analysis of thematic relationships helps researchers and practitioners make better use existing knowledge. The results suggest organic relationships among place brands and sport event consumers, residents and tourists that morph from social exchanges with the event place brand. These relationships may vary based on one's attachment to the event and place, along with past experiences with both entities. Also, place brands seem to be influenced long-term by the legacies sport events can bring to these places. Complementarily, the

TCCM review offers a comprehensive understanding of the foundations of PBtSE research, and helps setting the basis for future developments. This systematic review is therefore a vital contribution to the PBtSE literature by providing state-of-the-art knowledge and energising the field's progress.

Despite barriers between industry-academia often limiting research collaborations (Timming & Macneil, 2023), thematic relationships within PBtSE literature and insights from TCCM allow managers to build on existing scientific knowledge when planning place and event branding strategies. For example, our review indicates that perceptions of sport events and places are dynamic and may change over time (Kaplanidou et al., 2013), highlighting the importance of monitoring residents' and tourists' opinions of the place before, during and in different post-event moments. Relatedly, collaborative efforts by different stakeholders and differentiated strategies targeting sport and general tourists (Liu, 2013) are vital to sustain benefits beyond event delivery. Thus, the creation of standing working groups or advisory boards integrating all relevant stakeholders may contribute to more meaningful branding strategies.

Our review of PBtSE variables and themes also offers valuable insights for sport and tourism managers. For example, positive perceptions of event-related variables translate into place brand benefits (Lai, 2018), highlighting the importance of carefully planning event brand communications and delivering spectator and participant experiences. The recurring hosting of sport events allows corrections of any missteps and re-alignment of the place brand with the event experience by adding new elements to the event (e.g. celebrity openers) that have ties with the place brand. Similarly, factors such as the political and economic stability of the host, residents' support to the event or involvement of private and public stakeholders can lead to tourism benefits (Gholipour et al., 2020). These are vital for selecting sport event hosts and should be considered in candidature bidding files. This review's findings also benefit other practitioners (e.g. journalists), who can use the insights to develop content strategies driving audience engagement and contributing to public's informed opinions. This review offers a roadmap for practitioners to build upon their work, while the future research directions create opportunities to help bridge industry-academia.

Research limitations

As with all reviews, there are limitations that merit consideration. Despite the broad coverage of *Scopus* and *WoS*, relevant work may have been omitted, particularly those not published in English. Future research could broaden the filtering criteria and include publications in different languages to further improve the body of PBtSE knowledge. Also, although key themes and relationships were mapped through co-word analysis, future meta-analytic reviews are advised to assess the directionality and significance of PBtSE thematic relationships. Notwithstanding, this review empowers academics and practitioners with a comprehensive overview of the state of PBtSE literature and sets the basis for future developments.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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