

Literature Review: An economic overview of the U.S. pickleball boom and tourism

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Abstract

There is a “not so new” entrant into the American sports tourism market, and it's changing the way tourism and destination players approach and see their business today; that sport is Pickleball.

Named the fastest growing sports in the U.S. in 2024 according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), this exploratory literature review journeys across the world of Pickleball tourism to understand how much academic literature there is on this growing business, the opportunities within the sports' growth in the country and also the challenges tourism destinations face in integrating pickleball into their main attraction for visitors.

We also tried to understand the impact of Pickleball's challenges on the everyday American who might want to adopt the sport as the current model leaves an “elitist perception” of the sport even with a very low barrier of entry.

The last five years have seen an increasing number of participation in the sports but research is showing that court availability and accessibility needs to match the incredibly high demand for involvement in the sport

Keywords: Pickleball; Sport Tourism; Sports business; Sport economy

1 Introduction

Pickleball is a sport played on a rectangular court with paddles and a perforated plastic ball. It was developed in 1965 by Washington State Congressman, Joel Pritchard, from a combination of tennis and badminton (USA Pickleball Association [USAPA], 2013), and it has since grown into a professional sport, with regular competitions played in the US (PickleballTournaments.com, 2025). Pickleball is currently the fastest growing sport in the US (Pangarkar, 2024) with a fast growing 4.8 million players of the sport in 2021. Up to 8.9 million players participated in Pickleball in 2022, marking an 86% increase from the previous year, and a 39.3% growth in two years (Sports and Fitness Industry Association [SFIA], 2022). By 2023, the number of players had surged to 13.6 million (Pangarkar, 2024), and as of 2024 it had risen to 19.8 million (SFIA, 2025). In contrast, 23.8 million people played tennis in the US as of 2024 (Bowers, 2024) and among sports of similar nature, played within a rectangular shaped court, this sport borne out of necessity is garnering enough popularity to compete with tennis in the US. Life even gets better for Pickleball as Major League Pickleball is projecting an estimated 40 million players by 2030 (Jiménez, 2023).

Tourism refers to the activity of traveling away from home for pleasure (Camilleri, 2018). This may involve visiting places of interest abroad, called international tourism, or within one's own country, called domestic tourism (Kim & Hyun, 2024). The travel and tourism industry holds serious economic importance, which has been recognized by governments and private stakeholders around the globe and Pickleball's growth in America is adding an extraordinary

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value to this sector. The Tourism industry not only generates substantial revenue for states, but also directly connects to other important sectors such as transportation, entertainment, hospitality, construction, and agriculture (Thommandru et al., 2021). Tourism is particularly connected to the hospitality industry, which involves businesses that provide comfortable and enjoyable experiences for people seeking to spend some time away from home (Dogru et al., 2023).

Pickleball's integration into the US hospitality industry holds the potential to become the leader in sport tourism in the country with its light-speed growth and adoption. Hotels, resorts, and small businesses have embraced the growing trend of the sport's franchise and tournament expansion as an attraction for guests, which may serve the dual goal of increasing guest satisfaction and driving revenue growth (Beeman, 2019; DeMelo, 2022). This trend also holds the potential to serve as an economic boost for small business owners and local economies (Melo et al., 2021) especially in states where several Pickleball Pro or semi-pro tournaments are held. This paper explores the interplay between pickleball and the travel and tourism industry, with a focus on the direct and indirect economic impacts of the sport on the sector.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The goal of this paper is to draw attention to the economic benefits of pickleball's tourism, while also highlighting the challenges that must be overcome in order to scale the sport into a greater productive enterprise in the industry. Given the increasing growth of pickleball in the US and its adoption in the travel and tourism industry (Beeman, 2019; DeMelo, 2022; Nix, 2023), it is both timely and relevant to explore the available literature and provide a clear and holistic understanding of the trend. This will generate preliminary insights while also serving as the basis for more in-depth research into future research areas around pickleball tourism..

2 Methodology

This literature review paper uses scoping to explore the existing knowledge and data related to pickleball economics and tourism in the US while describing the depth of research done in the field so far. The current body of scholarly work has focused on the physical and psychological benefits of pickleball as a sporting activity, particularly among the elderly (Cerezuela et al., 2023; Greiner, 2019; Heo & Ryu, 2023). Studies have explored the physical requirements and health risks associated with the sport (Cheng et al., 2024; Prayudho et al., 2024) with a reasonable number of publications around the social aspects of pickleball and its ability to serve as a community-building activity (Manthou, 2023; Riffée et al., 2023). However, there is a dearth of scholarly work on the interplay between pickleball and sports tourism. This is due to the newness of pickleball as an emerging feature in tourism or sport tourism as the case maybe. With academic literature lacking on the subject, this paper will rely much on secondary data from news publications and organizational reports. The review incorporates data in the form of industry journalism and media reports that feature interviews and commentary from a broad group of industry leaders, including executives at hotels and resorts, club managers and owners, and other primary stakeholders. The qualitative insights gleaned from these individuals may include subjective and anecdotal viewpoints, but sheds light on the current state of pickleball tourism. This review can stimulate deeper research into the topic.

3 Trends and Growth of Pickleball Tourism

Pickleball has been the fastest growing sport in the US so far in the post-pandemic era (USAPA, 2025; Yogerst, 2023). Less than 50% of the largest US cities had organized pickleball courts in 2017, however, less than a decade later in 2024, over 3000 courts had been established across the 100 largest cities (Trust for Public Land, 2024). These include courts found in local parks as well as country clubs, fitness centers, and the barrage of nationwide franchises. Various spaces, including former tennis courts, have been converted into pickleball courts visited by players in their thousands (Maese, 2023). Many of these were underutilized courts and properties that have been redeveloped. Pickleball had been garnering attention in the US for years before COVID-19, but the pandemic sparked much more widespread interest in the sport (Koss-Feder, 2022). During lockdown, it emerged as a way for individuals, particularly senior citizens, to reclaim some active lifestyle within their residential areas (Manthou, 2023) for a sport that can be played both indoors and outdoors. After lockdown particularly, it served as a sport to be enjoyed while observing social distancing and coping with other public restrictions. Pickleball is a relatively low-contact sport that offers an opportunity for group interaction, while also providing an outlet for physical activity. Since then, the sport has continued to grow remarkably. According to Forrester (2020), senior citizens identified the sport as a way to stay active without the greater health risks of tennis and badminton. A study conducted by Weiss et al. (2021) within a period of 10 years from 2010 to 2019

showed that tennis players over the age of 60 received more than twice the number of injuries compared to pickleball players of the same age bracket.

While pickleball's active population initially consisted largely of retirees, its growing popularity means that people of all ages now actively engage in it (Orfield, 2023) and with a boom in various professionally organized tournaments and tours like the Professional Pickleball Association (PPA), Association of Pickleball Players (APP), Major League Pickleball (MLP) among other internationally recognized bodies. The players of different categories enjoy the sport and have highlighted various perceived benefits, including physical, psychological, and social health (Riffie et al., 2023). Players have also embraced the sport due to what is described as a low barrier of entry, namely the relative ease of acquiring paddles, balls, and nets (CNBC, 2022). Though professional tours have continued to soar, raising the sport's tourism, thousands of its current active players remain amateurs. Manthou (2023) maintains that pickleball in fact has an initial psychological barrier to entry due to the perception that it is mainly for seniors, or that it is not a serious sport due to its name or its optics. Other sports names ending in -ball, such as football, basketball, or volleyball, are plain and informative; pickleball, on the other hand "conjures up images of a rather slimy, phallic fruit-vegetable" (Manthou, 2023, p.50) that has no connection with the actual sport. However, players who overcome this initial psychological barrier to entry quickly fall in love with the sport and are eager to engage in pickleball tourism.

The growth of the sport has sparked the trend called "pickleball vacation", in which Americans travel to locations where they can engage in friendly pickleball competitions with other enthusiasts (Yogerst, 2023).

Organizations in the travel and tourism industry are leveraging these trends and the growing number of professional tournaments. In previous times, this role has been dominated by tennis, with golf also very popular (Beeman, 2019) in this context. However, hotels and resorts now feature pickleball as a central attraction, and tour companies organize trips focused on travelers interested in the sport (Pohle, 2023). This interest to play has seen a massive increase in requests to convert tennis and basketball courts into pickleball courts with hotels and resorts fielding several of such requests each year (Koss-Feder, 2022). For example, the travel and hospitality company Margaritaville, which manages a portfolio of hotels and resorts across the country, has announced that it is aiming to have at least one pickleball court in all of its locations (Margaritavilleresorts.com, 2024). The organization was the title sponsor of the US Major League Pickleball in 2023 (Major League Pickleball, 2022). Similarly, the cruise line Holland America Line has installed at least one pickleball court on all ships in its fleet (Pohle, 2023). The organization is also a major sponsor of the Professional Pickleball Association, which travels to various locations to hold tournaments for professional players.

4 Tourist Demographics

A recent report from Sport & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) showed that over 70% of pickleball players are White, with only 7% of players African American and an even lower proportion (5%) of Asian American players. Up to 45% of players have an annual income of at least \$100,000, and 76% have an annual income of at least \$50,000 (SFIA, 2021). This shows that a significant proportion of Americans in high-income brackets play pickleball, making inclusion of the sport into core activities appealing to hotels, resorts, and clubs. However, with over 30% of players earning between \$50,000 to \$99,000 and just under 25% earning less than \$50,000, the sport is nevertheless not exclusive to the rich. Furthermore, according to the United States of America Pickleball Association (USAPA, 2022), 50% of core pickleball players, defined as those who play pickleball up to eight times in a year, in 2021 were aged 55 or older. This suggests that the sport may tend towards an older demographic, and that has commonly been presumed to be the case by younger potential entrants (Manthou, 2023). However, the younger segment of pickleball players is fast growing, with the vast majority of casual players aged below 55, and the under-24 population proving to be the most rapidly increasing demographic (USAPA, 2022). As of 2022, the average age had in fact gone down two full years to 38.1, reflecting this trend (SFIA, 2022). Additionally, more men (60.5%) participate in the sport than women (39.5%) but in recent times, more women (17.6%) are joining the sport than men (13%), which suggests that the gender participation gap is narrowing (SFIA, 2022). The gap is also accentuated by professional tournaments, where there are more men participating than women. In informal play and tourist destinations, there is very little gender difference and it is common to see a 50-50 split between men and women (Manthou, 2023).

5 Direct and Indirect Economic Impacts

The global pickleball market was valued at \$1.47 billion as of 2022, with North America accounting for nearly half of that. By 2030, the figure is projected to reach \$3.85 billion (Pangarkar, 2024). These numbers clearly show that the market is growing; hence, new entrants are likely to continue to emerge and compete for market share particularly in the franchise space. The rise of pickleball has led to a simultaneous growth in demand for pickleball equipment like

paddles, balls, apparel and more, which has led to a booming product sector (Fradata, 2024) with brand presence which includes Engage, Selkirk, Paddletek, JOOLA, Gearbox, and ONIX. It's key to note that some of these are sporting brands that expanded their product line offerings to meet the growing demand, while others were created specifically for pickleball and are still focused entirely on the sport.

The growth of pickleball has generated considerable interest in the sport for various reasons, including for leisure, socialization, health, and as a way of maintaining an active lifestyle (Chen et al., 2021; Riffie et al., 2023). As a result, various hotels and resorts have adopted pickleball as a central feature of their activity offerings to attract the increasing population who want to engage with the sport (Nix, 2023). Up to 200 indoor pickleball clubs have sprung up across the US (Boss, 2024; Fradata, 2024). understandably, the sport is specifically attractive to business because of its low entry barrier. Costs of basic pickleball equipment, comprising paddles, balls, and nets, are also reasonably affordable for the value it provides in return. Businesses also appear to choose converting existing tennis courts into pickleball courts, which reduces investment cost and saves time of building new courts from the ground-up since pickleball courts are much smaller, with four able to fit within a standard-size tennis court. (Pohle, 2023). Additionally, pickleball is regularly played in doubles, in contrast to tennis, which is mostly played in singles and this means that businesses can get 14 extra players with each conversion from a tennis court to pickleball courts. This gets a lot more guests involved at a time, meaning that the business can acquire more revenue than before (Beeman, 2019) with little creativity. Cost of maintenance is also relatively low as worn-down nets and balls can be quickly replaced because they are cheap compared to tennis equipment. Managers of hotels and resorts also report that pickleball courts are easier to maintain than golf courses and outdoor pools (Koss-Feder, 2022) which is great for enterprises. These advantages may be significant factors boosting adoption of the pickleball tourism trend. Generally, there is likely to be widespread adoption of trends when they are easy to implement, have low cost for trial, appeal to the consumer, and show clear observable benefits for the organization (Cloughton, 2020). While some studies have suggested that 5% of hospitality organizations have pickleball amenities (Koss-Feder, 2022), this might reflect the growing nature of the sport's tourism in America and partly also down to the nearly 200 indoor pickleball hubs across the country where players feel more sense of association.

6 The Pickleball Business Model

A study by Fradata (2024) identified two major business models in the pickleball industry: the court-focused model and the entertainment-driven model. Various services and franchises have been developed across the US to cater to pickleball players who prioritize sports and fitness; also known as the recreational "picklers". Typically, businesses operate with the same model as gym centers, looking to drive up memberships by creating an appropriate fitness environment. With these pickleball franchises' revenue highly dependent on court occupancy and membership fees, they try to develop as many pickleball courts as possible. In some franchise models, there is reduced or no attention to entertainment, food, and social activities but on keeping fit and social connections through the sport. On the other hand, there is a palpable attention to a mixed blend of social, food and entertainment add-ons particularly with resorts, hotels and peculiar franchise chains, creating an enjoyable experience for guests and members alike (Boss, 2024; Chickennpickle.com, 2023). This model is popular among guests who are simply looking for leisurely activities and are solely interested in the entertainment and socialization that pickleball can provide as opposed to pure health benefits.

7 Case Studies and Regional Trends

Various cases exemplify how the pickleball boom across the US has spurred growth and innovation in hospitality, recreation, and retail. These situations, in which businesses embrace the sport and introduce or reconfigure their services to cater to the growing base of pickleball enthusiasts, illustrate the sport's economic potential. The following examples show how pickleball is reshaping businesses and revitalizing regional economies in the country.

The organization, Pickleball Central has developed a retail business centered around selling balls, paddles, nets, accessories, and all kinds of pickleball equipment to the public. Founded in 2006, the company has grown with the increasing popularity of the sport (Pickleballcentral.com, 2013). As a privately held business, it does not disclose sales figures, but Killingstad (2022) reports that Pickleball Central increased sales by more than 40% in the post-pandemic period, and according to data from Grips Intelligence (2025), the company made \$1.6 million in revenue in February 2025.

The Tennis and Pickleball Club at Newport Beach, California, which claims the title of the world's first pickleball club, has seen pickleball outgrow tennis as its main attraction. Founded in 1966 as the Irvine Coast Racquet Club, the enterprise has gone through several name changes and adaptations, finally becoming the first private pickleball club in

the world in 2020 following the growing trend of the sport due to the pandemic (Newportbeachttc.com, 2025). As of 2025, it has twice as many pickleball courts (31) as tennis courts (15), and it organizes events, both on-site and travel, for its growing membership. The club's primary offering is an exclusive and quality playing experience with the benefit of social engagement and a sense of community.

The Doubletree by Hilton hotel in Sonoma, California had operated tennis and basketball courts for years until it responded to the growing demand for pickleball in 2022. It scrapped courts for both sports due to requests from corporate travel agents, replacing them with eight pickleball courts with reservations of \$10-\$12 for two-hour periods. As of 2025, pickleball games continue to serve as a primary attraction activity for the hotel (Hilton.com, 2025). The Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel also embraced the sport, introducing it as a core offering. It developed six courts on its site for both guests and professional players, and has described this offering as a significant driver of revenue (Koss-Feder, 2022).

The largest operator of pickleball courts in the US is Life Time Group, which combines a business model of entertainment and fitness to emphasize the social and health benefits of pickleball. According to the group, pickleball brings a significant portion of its membership (Life Time, 2025). As a result, it has substantially increased investment into the sport, estimating figures in expenditure rising up to \$100 million. The business joined the pickleball trend when engagement with the sport rose after the COVID-19 pandemic, introducing its first pickleball court in 2021. By 2022, it had opened a location exclusive to pickleball players in Chanhassen, Minnesota. Growing with the sport, the business had built over 500 permanent pickleball courts and seen an 841% increase in pickleball visitors as of 2022. Further, Life Time Group's 2025 report showed that it had established over 700 dedicated pickleball courts and seen 5.2 million pickleball participation in 2024 (Life Time, 2025). The business now partners with professional pickleball in order to increase attention to the sport and attract more businesses (Golden, 2024a).

Restaurant chain Chicken N Pickle has created an entire hospitality brand that revolves around a unique experience with pickleball (Hamstra, 2023). Guests include families and people across all demographics. Although founded in 2016, before COVID-19, the company experienced a growth spurt after interest in the sport rose during the pandemic. It has since expanded to 10 locations across the US and receives over 700,000 visitors annually (Chickennpickle.com, 2023).

City Pickle is a community in New York City founded in 2022 amid the pickleball trend (Ranahan, 2024). It has since grown to establish pickleball facilities and clubs in various locations in New York City as well as Philadelphia and New Palm Beach, Florida, attracting external investment (Avenue Capital Group, 2024). The brand hosts hundreds of events each year across various seasons, with up to 74,000 people making reservations through their app (Golden, 2024b). Prices range from \$5 per hour to as much as \$120 per hour during peak times. These cases reflect the diverse ways pickleball is both shaping and reshaping the economy and tourism offerings across the US. As interest in the sport grows, its economic footprint is likely to expand even further.

8 Community Role

Beyond financial benefits for the owners, many of these businesses have revitalized much of their surrounding communities. The addition of pickleball to recreation centers and public parks have increased the number of annual visitors. In some communities, the growth of the sport has led to the revitalization of moribund public spaces, attracting new activity and creating new sources of revenue (Boss, 2024; Frandata, 2024). While continued investment and expansion is likely to enhance sustainable growth that would benefit both private and public stakeholders, its important to bring into this publication the immense role that USA Pickleball has played since 2017 with its "Pay it Forward Grant" of \$50,000 for communities to build courts for the sport or convert already existing ones.

Peak locations of pickleball in the US include the states of Florida and California, although the cities of Louisville, Kentucky; Madison, Wisconsin; and Honolulu, Hawaii have the most courts per capita (Trust for Public Land, 2024). Florida, due to its weather, is a top destination for pickleball tourism in the US, also bringing in international visitors who come to play or watch the sport. The city of Naples, called the pickleball capital of the world, hosts the annual pickleball US Open, which saw 50,000 fans troop into the city in the 2024 edition (Usopenpickleball.com, 2025). More recently in January of 2025, the city of Fort Lauderdale open the first pickleball stadium called "The Fort". This state of the art facility is made up of 43 professional pickleball courts with 14 of those being weatherproof and hosts professional pickleball tournaments from the APP which also has the facility as its headquarters.

9 Challenges and Barriers in Pickleball Tourism

There are several challenges and barriers evident in pickleball tourism. Despite its growing popularity, pickleball interestingly still struggles with infrastructure to match demand, and could also risk developing a reputation of being a “sport for the rich” due to its association with exclusive hotels, resorts, and country clubs. For Americans of the low to mid income demographic, there are not enough courts (Sprecher, 2024). As of 2021, there were 38,000 pickleball courts in the US, which had to meet the demand of nearly 5 million players, both professional and non-professional (USAPA, 2022); though the situation has tremendously improved since then. Also, courts can be accessed by players who can afford to patronize establishments of relatively high cost, but for a significant population of players, there is often difficulty accessing quality or comfortable facilities (Riffee et al., 2023). This means that medium-income earners who want to spend a few days on vacation playing pickleball are often unable to play with the comfort they seek (Riffee et al., 2023). Studies suggest that up to \$900 million in investment, or 25,000 courts, is needed immediately to satisfy the current demand (Orfield, 2023). With a projected total of 40 million pickleball players by 2030, there would need to be an estimated 280,000 courts to meet the demand. Some local establishments and public spaces have emulated hotels and resorts to convert some tennis courts to pickleball courts in order to keep meeting this high demand. However, outside of establishments with exclusive private property, this is causing tensions between players of the two sports (Nix, 2023). Hence, making space for new courts has become a big contention in the sports ‘growth span. Communities and new businesses seeking to venture into the sport have also met significant pushbacks from local parks, and other entities who claim that it is interfering with existing activities (Burney, 2022). For instance, in New York City, the office of urban park service and public programs at the city’s Department of Parks and Recreation, despite heavy demand, impeded the expansion of pickleball courts in the city in order to maintain recreational spaces for other activities (Berkman & Ackerman, 2022). These issues show that if pickleball tourism is to expand in the US and make an even bigger economic impact, there may need to be significant investment into improving infrastructure and accessibility.

Another significant challenge is the issue of nuisance and noise disturbance. Critics of pickleball have highlighted the noise that it generates (Sprecher, 2024) as a problem. Pickleball generates much more noise than other activities featured in hotels and resorts such as golf or swimming. It is also much noisier than other sports played on a court, such as tennis or basketball. There is a significant, high-pitched noise that the hollow, perforated plastic ball with which it is played makes as it is struck by wooden bats. With pickleball also regularly fielding doubles, in contrast to tennis where players often prefer singles, the noise is further increased. This can cause significant inconvenience to individuals in the nearby environment, including other guests in the case of hotels and resorts, and residents in the case of local residential areas or communities. Consequently, businesses embracing the sport as a hotel or resort offering would need to consider the location of their courts. Other establishments in local communities may have to contend with pushback from residential spaces and individuals engaged in other activities (Burney, 2022) though there is a growing research interest to improve this challenge for Pickleball for the better.

Limitations and Recommendations

There is limited published research on pickleball tourism, with the topic still only an emerging area. As a result, this paper relied extensively on secondary data, news publications, and organizational reports, including reports involving interviews and commentary from stakeholders in the pickleball and tourism industry. There is a potential for bias in that only business investors who have seen positive growth have been interviewed in media reports and publications. While such reports can provide valuable insights, they may also highlight only businesses that have experienced growth from the pickleball boom while leaving other less successful ventures unaccounted for. Selection and reporting biases are the subjective collection, analysis, and publication of information relating to a trend, which threaten the validity and reliability of the data (van der Steen et al., 2019). In this paper, that may hinder a full and critical understanding of the impact of pickleball tourism in the US. However, more objective literature collected from industry body reports and organizational financial reporting, as well as academic literature on the motivations and challenges of pickleball tourists may increase the validity and reliability of this paper and future papers.

This exploratory literature review has shown that some businesses who implement pickleball attraction programs or invest in products and services necessary for playing the sport have seen increased revenue and growth over the last five years. In addition, there have also been significant advantages for local communities where pickleball tourism has developed. However, empirical research is needed to validate these observations and provide a more reliable and balanced assessment of the sport’s economic impact. Future studies should investigate the subject of pickleball tourism and the extent of its economic benefits, with the aim of researching not only success stories but also cases where investments in pickleball-related ventures have failed or underperformed. This may involve case studies or qualitative interviews of broader industry leaders. Future research may also examine the sustainability of pickleball tourism over

time, using sport economics theories to explore the trend and distinguish between short-term and long-term successes. This will contribute to a deeper understanding of the pickleball economy and sport tourism in the US.

10 Conclusion

Pickleball has expanded in the US post-pandemic period from a relatively unknown sport to one of the most popular in the country. From 4.8 million Americans who played the sport in 2021, it has exploded to a population of 19.8 million as of 2024 a total growth percentage of over 300% which has allowed it to begin competing with previously established sports such as tennis. This demonstrable growth and continued attraction of newer players to the sport holds the potential for sizable economic impact on the travel and tourism industry. It is clear that the sector must find new ways to maintain and increase guest satisfaction, while also maximizing net operating income. In addition, the ability to satisfy the demands of a growing population can lead to significant competitive advantage which can elevate some businesses ahead of others. Hence, the pickleball trend is a key economic variable that requires significant attention.

Guests have demanded the inclusion of pickleball in the activities of hotels and resorts. Large groups of players are interested in mini vacations where they can visit locations away from home and play pickleball (Manthou, 2023). This trend is fueled by an enjoyment of the sport, as well as a sense that it is easier to play, affordable, and has numerous psychological, social and health benefits. Among populations aged 65 or older, it is regarded as a form of maintaining an active lifestyle while avoiding health concerns associated with other sports. A number of businesses have reacted to the emergence of pickleball and an increasing population of players who want to engage in pickleball tourism. Hotels and resorts are meeting the demand by including pickleball as a core activity among their offerings, sometimes at the expense of sports like tennis. Small businesses and franchises have grabbed market share either by providing environments for pickleball or supplying equipment and accessories and this has added to the sports' economic viability. Organizations are also employing business models focused on health and fitness, where pickleball is emphasized as a sport that can cater to the health and lifestyle needs of consumers, or an entertainment-driven model that seeks to provide the pleasurable experience that guests are seeking.

However, pickleball tourism faces key challenges including the possibility of becoming more exclusive due to insufficient infrastructure and space for medium to low income earners, while high-income earners are able to play due to ease of access to courts in relatively high-cost hotels, resorts, clubs and other luxury experiences. The rapid expansion of pickleball has also led to conflict with other activities in local communities, with stakeholders worried about encroachment. Furthermore, both individuals and groups willing to invest in the pickleball economy and players who enjoy the sport must contend with its ability to cause nuisance in the environment due to the unique high-pitched sound emitted when it is played. Navigating these challenges is central to any efforts to leverage the growth of pickleball and the potential of the sport's tourism. The focus of this paper has been to conduct an exploratory review of the state of affairs regarding pickleball tourism. It is suggested that empirical research is needed to gain a much more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the topic and of the future of the sport's tourism growth.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

I, Chidiebere Anugwolu, being the sole author of this manuscript declare that there is no conflict of interest in this publication.

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