

Integrating the Role of Sports Associations in the Promotion of Sports and Recreation Tourism at the Destination Level: Creating a Partnering Framework for Kenya

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ABSTRACT: In Kenya, tourism is the second most important earner of foreign exchange after agriculture. It has had a great impact in the direct employment of local population as well as in generating opportunities for other business activities such as accommodation, food service, transport, retail, and other auxiliary services. In the recent past, Kenya's tourism has faced numerous challenges which may have slowed tourist arrivals and growth considerably. The challenges have been driven by climatic and environmental changes that maybe interfering with the ecosystem. Kenyan tourism faces significant challenges also from intense regional competition, political instability, poor governance, corruption, negative travel advisory by the governments of source markets, poor security at the destination, dilapidated infrastructure within the destination, poor product/ service innovation, and inadequate market and customer value perception of the destination. In this regard, a need to examine possible ways of reinvigorating and diversifying Kenya's tourism offerings has emerged and one area that holds a great potential is Sports and Recreation tourism. This paper therefore carries out an

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exploratory assessment of the awareness of the members of the various sports associations regarding the significance of sports tourism to Kenya's economy. Club representatives duly registered within ten selected sports associations that represent popular sports in Kenya were surveyed to achieve this objective. This research proposes an integrated approach to the creation of a partnering role amongst sports associations to help promote sports and recreation tourism in Kenya.

Keywords: Kenya Tourism; Destination competitiveness; Sports and recreation; Industry associations; issues and challenges.

Introduction

Lying along the Indian Ocean to its southeast and at the equator, the Republic of Kenya is bordered by Somalia to the northeast, Ethiopia to the north, Sudan to the northwest, Uganda to the west and Tanzania to the south. Its economy is the largest by GDP in East and Central Africa and its capital, Nairobi is a major commercial hub. The tourist industry in Kenya is the second largest source of foreign exchange revenue followed by agriculture. Tourism accounts for close to 10 per cent of Kenya's GDP and 9 per cent of total formal employment (Ministry of Tourism, 2010). Kenya has registered an impressive performance in the tourism sector since 2002, increasing the total number of annual tourist arrivals (both regional and long haul) from an estimated 1 million in 2002 to 1.6 million in 2006. Major tourist origin countries to Kenya are the UK (16%), USA (10%), Italy (7.8%), Germany (5.3%), and France (4.8%). Around 2.8% of international inbound tourists to Kenya are from the neighboring Uganda. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism were US\$800 million in 2006. By December 2009, tourism had raked in an estimated Kshs 62.46 billion compared to 2007's Kshs 65.4 Billion and 2008's Kshs 52.71 Billion. As such, these revenues show an improvement of 18.5% compared to 2008 and a deficit of 4.5% as compared to 2007. The statistics taken between January-August, 2010 show tourists' arrival as 701,691 which is 14% increase from the 611,674 realized in 2009. A significant contribution to this growth has been attributed by the Kenya Vision 2030, (2007) report to strategic international advertising by the Kenya Tourist Board. The main product of Kenya's tourism has been nature and wildlife. Due to its many linkages to other sectors (including agriculture, manufacturing, sports, banking and finance, wildlife, entertainment and handicrafts), tourism has great

potential to generate employment and wealth (Valle and Yobesia, 2009).

The 20th century has been marked by significant rise in the demand for sports tourism throughout the world with focus shifting from the health and fitness benefits of sports to increased use of sports to market destinations (Weed, 2009). The attraction toward sports tourism has gained momentum with Gratton and Henry (2001) indicating that sports is being recognized as having the potential to make a significant contribution to contemporary society while Emery (2002) suggests that major sports events have the potential to offer significant benefits to any city that hosts such events. The same view is taken by Bunce (1995) who observes that world cities are increasingly choosing sports events as a potential growth strategy and a means of achieving strategic corporate objectives. In the face of this realization, many countries and especially cities have been bidding to host special events like the Olympics, World Cup events, Motor rally and special marathons.

The use of sports events in tourism strategies is a comparatively recent trend in many parts of the world (Henderson, Foo, Lim, and Yip, 2010). While such practices have been successfully tested in the Western European and North American contexts, differences in socio-political, cultural, and economic milieu might make the same problematic for a country like Kenya (Palmer and Bejou, 1995). At the same time, integrating sporting events into the mainstay of tourism offers myriad opportunities for stimulating the State's tourism industry. The role of Government in development of sports tourism has been overly exemplified over sporting association's contribution (Bunce, 1995; Emery, 2002). The present paper examines the awareness of sports associations as an important stakeholder group in sports tourism, and proposes a sport tourism strategy based on collaboration amongst these associations.

The main objectives of this study were therefore to critically examine the adequacy of Kenya's effort to attract international sports events into the country. It was also meant to identify the factors that maybe influencing the suitability of Kenya as a possible sports destination and to evaluate the role of sports associations in helping Kenya to attract and host international sporting events. Finally this paper endeavored to propose an integrated framework that can support growth of sports tourism from the platform of sports associations.

Literature Reviews

The Sports Events Concept

Numerous definitions of sports have been proposed; Coaxley (1994, pg.21) defines sports as “institutionalized competitive activities that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of internal and external factors”. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1992) defines sports as an athletic activity requiring skill or physical prowess and often of a competitive nature. In defining sports Emery (2002) notes that the Council of Europe (1993) in its European Sports Charter suggests that “Sports means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relations or obtaining results in competition at all levels”.

According to Torkilsden (1994) a major sports event encompasses the following characteristics; a clear cut starting and finishing points, fixed and absolute deadlines, one-off organizer, large risks and many opportunities. These characteristics allows for identification of major sporting activities as including athletics, soccer, basketball, boxing, cricket, cycling, golf, weightlifting, horse racing, motor racing, netball, rugby, tennis, volleyball, martial arts and squash. The most popular sporting activities in Kenya include; soccer, athletics, motor sport, cricket and rugby. Athletics particularly has put Kenya in the world map, and acts as a major impetus of attracting tourist.

This paper adopts the approach that a sporting activity is competitive or non-competitive and must as suggested by Kelly (1991, pg. 181) be characterized by “*acceptable regulatory measures and forms in which physical effort is related to those of others in some relative measurement to others.*”

Sports Tourism and its Economic Impacts

In the view of Ritchie and Adaire (2004), sports tourism can be defined as “travel to participate in passive sports e.g. (sports events and sport museums) sport holiday or active sport holiday e.g. (scuba diving, cycling and golf)”. Graham et al., (2001) adds by noting that Ritchie and Adaire (2004) left out active sporting in their definition and they provide an alternative definition of sports tourism as “a three-dimensional concept involving travel away from home to play sport, watch sport or visit a sport attraction and include

competitive and non-competitive activities (i.e. recreational hiking and biking)". Sinclair (2005) observes that sports tourism also encompasses travel for such activity as can be regarded as sports supportive. For example travel for planning, organizing or officiating at a sports event is considered as sports tourism. This therefore means that sports tourism is travel generated by a sporting event or activity. In a more recent definition, Kapareliotis et al. (2010) chose the term eco-tourism to refer to tourist activities related to nature, including sports, or other more simple activities like camping by the river.

Sports tourism widely impacts on the economic performance as noted by Holder (2003, p.2). He is cited by Sinclair (2005) as stating that, "The economic benefits of such movements of people are considerable, involving transportation, construction, renovation of facilities, creation of employment, cultural exchanges, specific service range of commercial activity involving sports cruises, tours, attractions, use of resorts etc." In the same context, Graham et al. (2001) concurs that the expected economic gains have prompted many cities to enter the arena of sports tourism. Ritchie (2004) adds by saying that to maximize on those benefits, there needs to be a close and ongoing collaboration between the sports and tourism organizations. That by working together the organizations can reduce marketing cost while increasing their fan attendance and supporter base and boosting tourism during off or shoulder seasons.

Some of the major sports organizations in Kenya include; Athletics Kenya, Kenya Tennis Association, Kenya Hockey Association, Kenya Football federation, Kenya Volleyball Association, National Swimming Association, Golf Kenya, Motor Sport Association, Cricket Kenya and Kenya Rugby Association. These sports association are expected to play the following roles; locally promote the sports activities, exercise effective management of the sport and competition, develop and maintain of sports facilities, development and maintain infrastructure, lobby skills to obtain government support, lobby skills to attract and host international tournaments/events, uphold internationally acceptable practice while hosting leading international sports personality, promote Kenya as an appealing destination for the sports, attract superior and adequate accommodation facilities at the destination, seek corporate sponsorship and funding and be involved in creating a sound partnering framework between sports to tourism. The Kenya Vision 2030 report (2007) identifies sporting associations as key participants in galvanizing the success of sports tourism. The high brand equity already enjoyed internationally by Kenya from sporting activities including athletics, cricket, rugby and Safari Rally, will

act as a foundation for the sports association in collaboration with the GoK to promote various types of sports tourism.

In his review, Holder (2003), itemized the economic impact of sports tourism as encompassing the following: it is a powerful tool for destination promotion, it generates new industry and stimulus for infrastructural development, it creates increased employment, it increases government revenue from regulatory fees and taxation, it increases sport and recreation facilities for the local communities leading to improved social interaction, it elevates the level of national pride and the morale of citizens when success attends the effort of locals teams, it brings economic benefits as hobbyist and spectators arrive and spend money across the society and it brings together the various elements of the society public and private sector to work for the common good and the society. The itemization proposed by Holder (2003) is incredible in highlighting the significance of sports tourism, but fails to demonstrate the roles of the sporting association in fostering this economic impact.

Shannon (1991) observed that the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics provided a big boost for sports marketing and is credited as being the first Olympics that attracted immense corporate sponsorship and was profitable. The work of Shannon (1991) emphasizes the leading role of corporate sponsorship and ignores the sports association who might have been critical in the event organization. Mega sports events such as the Olympics is reported by Kapareliotis et al. (2010) as offering the stage on which a city builds its global brand status. These events repackage old with new infrastructure, which are left at the disposal of the city after the events. That tourism stands to benefit directly and indirectly from the Olympics through economic and employment's spin offs. The authors further note that the Olympic tourism build strong tourism infrastructure, where the term infrastructure defines the improvement of existing hotels, public places or other installation related to tourism or the building of new ones. In their conception, Kapareliotis et al. (2010) focused more on the aftermath of the Olympics and ignored the significance of the organizers of this event, the sports associations. In light of the preceding literature the study was guided by a general objective of seeking to propose an integrated framework that can support growth of sports tourism from the platform of sports associations.

Method

During the first stage, this study adopted an exploratory design using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to collect primary data. According to Malhotra (2004) exploratory design is a design whose primary objective is to provide insight and incisive comprehension of the research problem confronting the researcher. To facilitate the setting up of FGD teams, the sports clubs in Kenya were stratified depending on the sporting event and the top ten national sports associations identified. To facilitate generalization of the findings, a probability based sampling procedures was employed (Burns and Bush, 2010). A simple random sampling procedure was applied to select 5 club representatives from each association. 10 FGD teams were thus set up, each made of 5 participants resulting in a sample size of 50 respondents. The participants who turned up for the FGD were 44 representing a response rate of 88%, which was considered adequate for the study. Data was collected through interviews and open ended questionnaires administered to the FGD. The instrument was subjected to a face validity check through a pilot test among select marketing experts and adjustments made to it. Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) was used to determine reliability of the instrument. The instrument yielded an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient $\alpha = 0.876$ which was interpreted as acceptable and hence the instrument qualified as reliable. The open ended questionnaires administered to each FGD sought answers to three main research questions:

- Is the country significantly involved in attracting international sports events in Kenya?
- What are the factors that maybe influencing the suitability of Kenya as a possible sports destination?
- What role can the sports association play in order to help the country attract and host many international sports events successfully?

The returned questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively. Descriptive statistics were generated and used to describe the research variables. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed in identifying the critical role played by sports association in promoting tourism. The components with the highest factor loadings were presented as most critical in determining the role of sports and recreation tourism in boosting the economic performance in Kenya.

Results

Data Analysis

The first FGD discussion point was relatively straight forward and attracted a near unanimous response as shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Country's contribution to sports

Item	The Sports Association	FGD Unit	Response
1	Athletics Kenya	5 Member Group	The country is not doing enough
2	Kenya Tennis Association	3 Member Group	The country makes very little effort
3	Kenya Hockey Association	5 Member Group	The country is doing nothing
4	Kenya Football federation	5 Member Group	Country only play politics with sports
5	Kenya Volleyball Association	4 Member Group	The country is not doing enough
6	National Swimming Association	5 Member Group	The country is not doing enough
7	Golf Kenya	4 Member Group	The country is doing nothing
8	Kenya Motor Sport Association	4 Member Group	The country makes very little effort
9	Cricket Kenya	4 Member Group	The country is doing nothing
10	Kenya Rugby Association	5 Member Group	The country makes very little effort

Table 1 above provides a reflection that the country, namely the government and its people are not significantly involved in promoting Kenya as a sports destination. This initial finding created a platform upon which the next two questions were discussed.

The study used EFA to establish the factors that maybe influencing the suitability of Kenya as a possible sports destination. This was undertaken in two stages; Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and varimax with Kaiser Normalization method. Preceding the factor analysis was the KMO Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The variables of interest yielded KMO statistics of 0.823 which was good enough for the study to proceed with factor analysis. PCA was used to decompose the variations in the multivariate data set into a set of components such that the first component accounts for as much of the variations in the data as possible The initial PCA resulted in 5 components with Eigenvalues ≥ 1 that explained the greatest variations. A varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization revealed additional components giving rise to 10 components that explain variations in suitability of Kenya as a possible sports destination. Using the resulting factor loadings, 10 critical factors were extracted.

These factors were ranked in order from 1-10 depending on the strength of the factor loading as shown in Table 2 below. The variable with highest factor loading was underdeveloped and dilapidated infrastructure within the

destination. In all the groups, members understood infrastructure to include roads, airport, rail, stadia and other sports facilities. This was followed by poor culture of governance and corruption in Kenya which has found its way into the management of sports. Together with poor marketing of sports, negative travel advisory, and visitors’ negative value perception of Kenya, these make up the five most critical factors that maybe influencing Kenya’s suitability as a popular sports destination.

Table 2. Factors influencing the suitability of Kenya as a possible sports destination

Item	Extracted Factors	Factor Ranking
1	Underdeveloped and dilapidated infrastructure within the destination	1
2	Poor governance and corruption culture in Kenya	2
3	Poor marketing of sports and Kenya as a destination	3
4	Negative travel advisory by governments of source markets	4
5	Visitors’ negative value perception of Kenya as destination	5
6	Intense regional competition to host sports events	6
7	Poor safety and security for international visitors to Kenya	7
8	Lack of service/product innovation	8
9	Political instability	9
10	Climatic and environmental changes that maybe interfering with the ecosystem	10

The questionnaire also required members of the 10 FGDs to carry out intra group enquiry and propose possible roles that the sports association can play in order to help the country attract and host many international sports events successfully. Using EFA, 12 critical factors were revealed and ranked from 1-10 depending on the factor loadings associated with each component as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Roles that the sports associations can play

Item	Roles that the sports associations can play in order to help the country	Factor Ranking
1	Local promotion of the sports activities and its patronage	1
2	Good management of the sport and competition	2
3	Lobby for Development and maintenance of the Sports facilities	3
4	Lobby for Development and maintenance of general infrastructure	4
5	Good management and leadership of sports association	5
6	Lobby internationally to attract and host international tournaments/events	6
7	Provide exceptional hospitality to visiting international sports personalities	7
8	Market the destination for the various sports	8
9	Lobby to obtain government support	9
10	Seeking corporate sponsorship and funding	10
11	Actively linking sports to tourism	11
12	Help attract superior and adequate accommodation facilities at the destination	12

From the Table 3, the factor analysis implies that local promotion of the sport and its patronage are keys to attracting sports tourism. During the focus groups, participants argued that so long as a sport is popular in a country, attracting international events into the country could definitely be easier. This finding is supported by the quantitative results of the factor analysis. The analysis also singles out the importance of good management of the sport and competition. Lobbying for better sports facilities and superior infrastructure followed these two. With proper determination and incentives, these actions are not unachievable; by doing so, sports associations can help the country attract and host international sports events successfully.

A Framework for Sports Tourism Partnership

The findings of this study are in line with the position taken by Lynch and Jenson (1984) and Emery (2002), that the conviction of local authority in supporting major sporting events remains questionable. The study concludes that Kenya as a country is not actively involved in activities that can attract major sporting events and by extension attract sports tourist. None of the stakeholders perceive this as an opportunity of building a cutting edge for marketing the country, yet contrary to this position empirical literature (Graham et al., 2001; Holder, 2003 and Kapareliotis et al., 2010) reflects the significant influence sports tourism has on stirring economic growth. The study identifies underdeveloped and dilapidated sporting infrastructure as the greatest deterrence toward attracting sports tourist. Finally the study surmise that the sports association hold a fundamental position in helping Kenya attract and host many international sports events successfully particularly by fronting the local promotion of the sport and its patronage not only locally but globally as well.

The study thus proposes the need for Kenyans to have a sports association's convergence effort (Forum), where deliberation on attracting and hosting major sports events can be conceived and collectively executed. The sporting association ought to work together with authorities in charge of tourism development to marry the gains of sports and tourism. The emerging relationship between sports and tourism be supported by the government policy framework and legislation. These premises can be captured in the proposed conceptual partnering framework given below in Figure 1.

The schema in Figure 1 displays the convergence of Sports club management with the national organizing sports association in creating a forum

with significant influence over the success of sports tourism. The role of sports associations (predictor variable) was subsequently identified to be antecedent to economic growth (predicted variable). The relationship between the two is moderated by the influences and interventions of the Government in terms of its conscious desire to promote the sport within the country and at the international level.

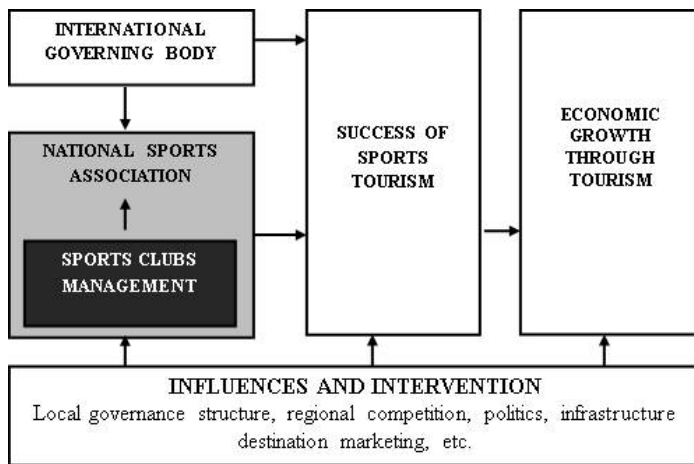


Figure 1. Relationship between sports clubs, national associations, sports tourism and economic performance

Figure 1 further show that all this is shaped by local governance structure, regional competition, politics, infrastructure and destination marketing. However it is envisioned that proper management of sports tourism is expected to positively influence national economic performance.

Discussion

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world today and has contributed immensely to the overall world GDP. The general growth in world economy has seen a steady growth in tourism earnings, too. The development of tourism sector is perceived as an imperative parameter in enhancing Kenya's economic achievement (Ondicho, 2003). The services sector in general and tourism in particular is an important economic activity

with potential to play an even bigger role in spurring output, incomes, and creating employment in Kenya. Over the years, tourists have come to Kenya with a primary goal of visiting the country's national parks and game reserves (Valle and Yobesia, 2009). However besieged with changing climatic conditions and illegal poaching, the country's wild life reserves are fast dwindling and to remain an attractive and competitive destination, Kenya must embrace sports tourism.

Tourism destination marketing involves the concerted action of multiple stakeholders. Marketing alliances are a natural response to the complexity and interdependence in tourism marketing at the destination level (Palmer and Bejou, 1995). Yet, beyond theory, marketing alliances rarely involve anyone other than direct and immediate stakeholders. At times, in order to maintain their centrality, these stakeholders do not encourage activism by stakeholders such as sporting associations. Probably, the definition of the term 'tourism industry' in singular (rather than 'tourism industries') itself is a ploy for the achievement of such conceited political objectives (Leiper, 2008). Many a time, sports associations do not even expect that they could play a key role in the development of sports tourism. However, the present study indicates certain degree of awareness among sports association members about the potential of promoting sports tourism and their role in it.

While the association members feel that not enough is being done, it can be understood as a positive statement: there is more scope. Yet, it must be noted that, among the factors that may be influencing the suitability of Kenya as a possible sports destination, only a few are within the control of sports associations. In fact, the only factors over which they have a significant degree of control are value perception, innovation, and marketing. While this paints a grim picture, change has to begin from somewhere and sports associations may well be one of the key agents of change when it comes to the promotion of sports tourism. As we saw in this research, this hope is not entirely unfounded. To our question on what sports associations could do to help change the state of affairs, the members highlighted factors such as local promotion, introduction of efficient management practices, lobbying, developing linkages with the corporate world, etc.

In fact, lobbying emerged as a common theme interlinking these factors. Some studies show that an increase in lobbying may improve welfare and growth even when motivated by self-interest (Mohtadi and Roe, 1998). If expected change cannot be brought in by a natural process within a reasonable time frame, lobbying might become the next viable alternative. In the 106 page

Tourism Bill of 2010 document (Ministry of Tourism, 2010) there is only a single mention of the word 'sports' and in the light of sheer neglect such as this, lobbying assumes vital significance.

This study adopted an exploratory approach in identifying the role of sports associations in spurring economic growth of a country. While this role was well identified, the data we collected was not adequate to determine the strength of the relationship. We have to indicate this as an important limitation of the study. Also, extensive interpretation of the results of this study should not be attempted without juxtaposing it with secondary data that might relate the contribution of sports associations with economic development. Unfortunately, in the Kenyan context, secondary data of this sort is scarce, if not unavailable.

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