THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS TOURISM IN KENYA

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Abstract

Policy and institutional mechanisms need to be put in place to encourage local participation in the design, implementation and management of tourism projects and local use of tourism resources. To this end, a study was carried out to determine the factors influencing the development of sports tourism in Kenya. It was conducted in the North and South Coast, Nairobi and the Rift Valley. It was noted that most officials support sports and value the sector as very significant in Kenya. This could be because of job creation to majority of jobless citizens, a source of income to many and tax to the government, a good way of relaxing after heavy work schedules and a way of overcoming vices in the communities such as theft, irresponsible killings and ethnic conflicts. According to the study, those who agreed consisted 40.4%, no opinion 2, 4.3% and disagree 7, 15.2%. This study suggests that there is also need for the government to re-evaluate the role of multinational corporations in the development and management of Kenya's tourism industry. In this regard, the government should establish alternative tourism development strategy whose main aim is to minimize external control and dominance of multinational corporations on Kenya's tourism industry.

Introduction

In order to promote tourism, Kenya has undertaken various strategies over the years. After realizing that the diverse arrays of African savannah wildlife had great potentials for tourism development, the government of Kenya started to formulate and implement various legislation aimed at the protection of Kenya's unique wildlife resources, and promotion of outdoor organized recreational activities (Achiron & Wilkinson, 1986). It can be argued that, in recent years, there has been a "mismatch" between the nature of the Kenyan tourism product and the existing global market (Akana, 2005). Over the years, Kenya has been offering an undifferentiated and limited tourism product that is based on beach and wildlife tourism. However, the manner in which people chose holidays, particularly between 1945 to the early 1970s was quite different from that of the period between the 1980s to the present. Further, the age factor in the tourist has significantly changed. This factor would account for the fluctuation in the number of tourists visiting Kenya.

It is important to note that though tourism has continued to be a crucial income generating opportunity for Kenya, much of it has focused more on wildlife and beach tourism. Other forms of tourism such as sports tourism, slum tourism, religious tourism, adventure tourism and cruise tourism have not received equalled attention, yet they are popular in other countries such as South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda (Achiron & Wilkinson, 1986).

Problem

Kenya's tourism has fluctuated never quite meeting its potential from the early 1980 to the present. Before the post-election violence in 2007, there was already a steady fluctuation in the number of tourists visiting Kenya. This fall in numbers gave indications that Kenya was no longer the popular destination it had been in the 80s and 90s. This argument suggests that the Kenya tourism market had become ambiguous. The destination had been marketed in
only one particular format, without diversifying the tourism products. Further as the social-economic activities of the world as a global village develop a completely new tourist has emerged. Is Kenya ready to compete for this tourist? (Akama, 1999 and Kieti, 2004).

Objective of the Study
The objective of the study was to determine if sports could be one of the pull factors that interest tourists who visit Kenya.

Theoretical Framework
The study was based on a modified theory of tourist life cycle by Butler in Akama (1999). This theory explains that tourists are attracted to a destination due to maturing travel needs, and these improve through experience. The owners of these destinations therefore have an opportunity to attract tourists as they seek the experience.

This theory is summarized in Figure 1 below:

![Modified Butler's Tourist Life Cycle Theory (Akama, 1999)]

Figure 1: Modified Butler's Tourist Life Cycle Theory (Akama, 1999)

Literature Review
Sports activities are important in any economy. Alongside this is a tourist who is involved in sports either as a participant or as a spectator. Sports tourism is one of the tourism products that can play a crucial role in increasing the revenue earned from tourism, and it is the responsibility of the stakeholders in the sports and tourism industries to ensure that this potential is exploited. Much of the studies that have been conducted in Kenya have focused more on nature-based tourism than other forms of tourism products. For instance, Akama (1999), Kieti (2000) and Odunga(2005) conducted studies that focused on nature-oriented aspects of tourism. Reviewed studies in sports tourism by Aman (2007), Kutzaman and Zauha (1994) and Green and Chalip (1998) were conducted outside Kenya. However, the current study focused on the development of sports tourism in Kenya.
The figure shows that the biggest fraction of respondents (230, 31.5%) was 31-40 years, while those over 60 years (34, 4.5%) were the least. This shows that a big proportion of tourists under the 31-40 years category are interested in sports-related activities thus create time for them. Other research studies indicate that sports tourism in the US maintain different levels based on gender, class, race and level of education for instance, those with university education are believed to be the typical active sports tourism participants (Yang, 2009).

Effectiveness of marketing sport tourism was investigated from different tourists. Most tourists indicated that marketing was useful as a tool for promoting sports tourism.
Research Design
The descriptive survey research was used in this study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) and Berg and Latin (1994), a descriptive survey is useful when collecting information about peoples' opinions by administering interviews and questionnaires to a sample of individuals.

Location of the Study
The study was conducted in the eight designated tourism regions in Kenya. The designated areas include Nairobi, North Coast, South Coast, Malindi, Lamu, North Rift, South Rift, and Western (Republic of Kenya, 2008). Information was gathered from local and foreign tourists in starred hotels and athletic high altitude training centers within the eight regions.

Target Population
The subjects targeted for information included local and international tourists residing in both the high altitude training centers in Kenya and starred hotels in the eight designated tourism regions in Kenya. Government officials in the Ministry of Tourism at the headquarters and provincial offices also constituted the target population. Others included Sports Officers in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports at the headquarters and provincial offices.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size
Purposive sampling was used to select the proportion of the designated tourist regions because coast province has four regions.

Instruments
Two questionnaires, one for tourists and the other for Ministry officials were used to collect data for this study.

Presentations of the Findings and Discussion
The number of respondents in the sports tourism centers

![Tourist centres](image)

Figure 2 Distribution of Respondent's Tourism Centres

Out of the 730 respondents, the largest proportion was from Rift Valley high altitude training centers and South Coast both comprising 200, (27.4%). Nairobi hotels had the least number (150, 20.5%).

Age Distribution
Tourist respondents were distributed in terms of age under six categories. The distribution is presented in Figure 3.
Development of high altitude training centers

High altitude training centers also promote sports tourism. Agree (334, 45.8%), no opinion (295, 40.4%) and disagree (100, 13.7%). This is true since majority of athletics events are normally held in high altitude areas in Kenya. The situation is different from low altitude training centers. According to this centers, majority had no opinion when asked to rate this category. The results showed no opinion (378, 51.8 %), disagree (194, 27.1 %) and agree (154, 21.1%). Assessing if high altitude training centers promoted sport tourism by officials, the results showed agree (29, 63%), no opinion (9, 19.6%) and disagree (8, 17.4%).

Promotion of Cultural Sports Activities

An investigation for promotion of cultural events showed that an average of 347 (49.5%) respondents agreed, 290 (31.9%) had no opinion and 93 (24%) disagreed. The reason could be due to neighboring communities around tourist sites who value their cultures in Kenya. Cultural sports activities include
bull fighting and traditional games, “boda boda” (cycling) and camel derby. Results for rating cultural sports showed that 22 (47.8%) agreed, 14 (30.48%) disagreed and 9 (19.6%) had no opinion while rating beach sports showed that 13 (28.3%) agreed, 24 (52.2%) disagree and 8 (17.4%) had no opinion.

Summary of the Findings
There were slightly more male tourists respondents (485, 66.7%) than the female tourists respondents (243, 33.3%) but in the Ministry officials there were more female respondents (32, 70%) than males ones (14, 30%). There was a significant difference concerning the views of tourists and ministry officials on the development of high altitude training centers. For instance, (334, 45%) of the tourists agreed that the high altitude training centers had been developed to promote the growth of sports tourism while (29, 63%) of the government officials agreed.

Conclusions
The following conclusions were made:
Most tourists and government officials felt that marketing was effective although a good number had no opinion, while a good percentage of the tourists felt that marketing was not effective.
Most tourists and government officials felt that the development of high altitude centers in Kenya was fully explored for the development of sports tourism, but when it came to low altitude training centers most tourists had no opinion or idea if they existed in Kenya. Most government officials felt that they were not fully explored for the development of sports tourism.
A large proportion of government officials agreed on the promotion of cultural activities for the promotion sports tourism to thrive. A bigger fraction of tourists had no opinion on this. There was a slight difference between the tourists and the government officials on the issue of cultural activities.