

The Socio-economic impacts of Sport Tourism in West Pokot County: Lessons from Tegla Loroupe Peace races in Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the socio-economic impacts of Sport tourism in West Pokot County, North Rift region of Kenya. Kenya, one of Africa's success stories in terms of tourism development has over a long period of time relied on beach, Safari and conference tourism products; most of which are already tired and sterile (World Bank, 2010). The geographical location of these three tourist products have over time determined the distribution of tourism benefits in the country, with regions endowed with these resources benefiting from tourism, while areas with no such resources being left behind in terms of tourism benefits. However, the clarion call in Kenya for the need to diversify her tourism products has resulted in regions and destinations venturing into the development of alternative forms of tourism. One such product is sport tourism. The North Rift region, the cradle of Kenya's athletic prowess has witnessed increase in sport related excursions, participations and involvements; and one such unique sport that has gained currency in West Pokot County is the annual Tegla Loroupe peace race. Founded by Tegla Loroupe (appearing as Tecla Lorupe in some sections of the media), a Marathon icon, Tegla Loroupe peace races has been held in the county since the year 2003 with the main aim of not only building peace among the warring pastoralist communities but also to introduce new socio-economic alternatives to pastoralism that is facing tremendous decline as a result of shrinking pasture fields, drought, animal epidemics and frequent cattle rustling. Cattle raids among the pastoralist communities have hindered development in the area and dented the region's image before the investors who have shied away from the area. The study employed a mixed methods approach to undertake an in-depth study to examine the socio-economic impacts of sport tourism in West Pokot County. A total of 200 questionnaires administered to members of the local community out of which 154 were dully filled and returned, representing a 77% return rate. Both descriptive and inferential data analysis techniques were employed in analyzing the respondents' feelings about the socio-economic impacts of sport tourism in the region. The findings indicate that sport tourism is viable tool for socio-economic development and cultural transformation among communities living in rural areas such as West Pokot County. Specifically, the study established that sport tourism has a high multiplier effect on traditional economic sectors such as agriculture, pastoralism, cultural extravaganza, local trade, arts and crafts among others. The study recommends for the creation of adequate sports infrastructure in rural and peripheral areas so as to stimulate more sport participation among the local communities.

Keywords: Sport tourism; Socio-economic development; Tegla Loroupe peace races; West Pokot County.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a flourishing industry in terms of growth and economic importance worldwide, especially in developing countries such as Kenya that has embraced tourism as a vehicle to socio-economic prosperity and community development. However, because of the dynamic nature of tourist needs, tourist products keep on evolving, and one such new tourist product is sport tourism. Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing market segments in the tourism industry and is receiving increased attention for its social, environmental, and economic impacts upon destinations (Hritz and Ross, 2010). It has developed from among the few privileged individuals in the 19th century to a significant social, economic and cultural phenomenon in the twenty-first century (Weed & Bull, 2009; Wäsche and Woll, 2010). Due to the high demand for various forms of sports tourism, it has become a substantial element in almost every tourist region and an important part of socio-economic regional development agenda in many regions, especially in rural areas that rely on sport tourism (Tuppen, 2000). Defined as a 'whole competitive and non-competitive active pursuits that involve skill, strategy and/ or chance in which human beings engage, at their own level, simply for enjoyment and training or to raise their performance to levels of publicly acclaimed excellence' (Standeven and Knop, 1995), sport tourism is a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide and has become a dominant and defining force in the lives of millions of people globally (Martin, 2007). Sports and tourism are distinct but interrelated socio-cultural events of a society. There are different kinds of sports, both outdoor and indoor sports. They include golf, tennis, surfing, swimming, mountain climbing, skiing, hunting, fishing, hiking, prospecting, ball games, and athletics among others (McIntosh and Goeldner, 1990). Sport is a catalyst for economic development. When several sports are combined together into a single strategy, it is possible to achieve additional economic gains because of the resultant synergies. Providing development opportunities will help fight poverty. The sports industry, as well as organization of large sports events creates opportunities for employment. Sports tourism is therefore a specific travel outside the usual

environment for either passive or active involvement in competitive sport where sport is the prime motivational reason for travel and the touristic or leisure element may act to reinforce the overall experience (Tourism review.com, 2010).

Sport tourism is a new form of tourism and is believed to contribute directly to a nation's economic prosperity (Homafar *et al.*, 2011). Through these sporting activities, peoples' propensity to travel away from their homes to other parts of the country or region hosting these sports have greatly increased, thus leading to increased travel in the area. In Kenya, the frequencies of sporting activities have been on the rise with some sports such as the standard chartered marathon, Kayaking, Lewa marathon, Rhino charge, the IAAA held in Mombasa in March 2007, ShoeO4 peace race, Camel race, KCB Safari rally, the cricket, Rugby safari sevens and golf among others attracting a multitude of participants and spectators, (Ng'oriarita, 2009). School games are also gaining prominence in the country, same for local football leagues. Apart from these local games, Kenyans are travelling from upcountry to watch games played overseas especially by elite European clubs. The establishment of the ministry youth and sport has further boosted the local sporting activities in various counties.

Within Kenya, the North Rift occupy a significant position in sport tourism development map, with the region playing host to a number of domestic and international athletes who camp in the area for training, thanks to the high altitude training camps in the region. The camps and the ever increasing frequency of recreational sports present the region with a unique opportunity to develop sport based tourism that would further boost the region's sporting prowess.

West Pokot County has over the last ten years hosted a unique sporting activity: the annual Tegla Loroupe peace races, which has significantly attracted participants and spectators alike from within and without the country. Though inceptioned for purposes of peace making among the warring pastoralist communities, the peace race has touched the socio-economic fabric of the local communities (Ng'oriarita, 2009). The aim of this study was therefore to examine the socio-economic impacts of Tegla Loroupe peace race among communities of Pokot County, Kenya. Specifically, the study purposed: to assess the feelings of the local community on the significance of Tegla Loroupe to their livelihoods; to examine the perceptions of the local community on the impacts of sports tourism among the marginalized groups in society (women & youths); to examine the social impacts of sports tourism among the host communities; and to examine the economic impacts of sport tourism among the local communities living in West Pokot County.

2. Literature review

2.1 Meaning of Sport Tourism

The world has over the years witnessed an exponential growth in the relationship between sport and tourism, and this growth has since been documented. Gibson (2003) and Brown *et al.*, (2010) defines sport tourism as 'leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities'. According to Standeven & De knop (1999), sport tourism is "all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locality". Sport tourists therefore are individuals who are more likely to travel long haul, stay more days, stay in costlier accommodations, and spend more per day, (Standeven & Deknop, 1999). Sport tourism is therefore the use of sports as a vehicle to promote tourism endeavors; and includes all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activities, participation in casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locally (Encyclopedia for Tourism, 2000).

2.2 Types of Sport Tourism

Literature on sports tourism identifies four types of sports tourism segments namely: Spectator sports tourism, Participation sports tourism, Incidental sports tourism and Nostalgia sports tourism (Walmsley, 2008). Spectator sports tourism is the highest profile of the four market segments, thanks to the media coverage its top tier properties attract; Participation sports tourism is numerically the largest market segment and also the most varied in its composition, spanning individual 'lifestyle' sports participation, competition for "kids aged eight to 80", team travel and training for professional athletes and clubs; Incidental sports tourism is characterized more as 'tourism sport' than 'sports tourism': i.e. participation or spectating that is not the main purpose of the trip (Walmsley, 2008). Direct economic impacts are typically low, but indirect ones can be significant through adding value to the overall destination package, for example, while Nostalgia sports tourism centres on museums, stadia and 'fantasy camps' cuts across all three other sectors and has a significant domestic tourism day trip market. But it also has many indirect benefits such as brand building and raising facility utilization rates'.

2.3 Sport Tourism and its socio-economic impacts

Scholars investigating the role of sport tourism in socio-economic development have affirmed that sport tourism is not only one of the largest and fastest-growing segments of the travel and tourism industry (Standeven & De Knop, 1999; Hritz and Ross, 2010), but also one that is receiving increased attention for its social, environmental and economic development opportunities (Hritz and Ross, 2010). However, although sports tourism is a

widespread phenomenon with significant social, economic and ecological impacts, it is a relatively new field of research in academic level; and as a consequence, there is a relative dearth of work on theoretically informed explanations of the sports tourism phenomenon (Wäsche and Woll, 2010). According to Higham (1999) and Turco *et al.* (2003); major sporting events such as sport tourism contribute significantly to the economic development and tourist traffic in a city or region; and are a vital component of the marketing mix for tourist destinations (Getz, 1998; Hritz and Ross, 2010). In their study on the economic impact of sport tourism in the United Kingdom (UK), studies in disparate disciplines to present an overview of the economic impacts of the sport-tourism link in the UK (Weed & Bull, 2004) placed the value of sport tourism to the local economy at about £2.5 billion annually.

Hritz and Ross (2010) in their study of Indianapolis residents established that the positive social and economic benefits of sport tourism lead to increased support for additional development. In their study on the impact of Red Bull Big Wave Africa on the host community, (Ntloko and Swart, 2008) established that the event has entertainment value; provides economic benefits for local businesses; promotes community pride and act as regional showcase while at the same time causing minimal disruption to local residents including use of public facilities, mainly for residents in close proximity to the event.

2.4 The Annual Tegla Loroupe Peace Races

These are peace races organized by the Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation among various communities within the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA). The peace races are peace building initiatives used by the foundation to build trust among warring communities (Ng'orianita, 2009). The peace races are meant to bring together warring communities and clans from the Greater Horn of Africa through sports. Warriors, political/administrative leaders, elite athletes, men, women, children and youths run together as a sign of solidarity towards peace in the region as the foundation believes in the power of sports as a unifying factor. The peace races seek to promote peace among communities in conflict within the greater horn of Africa; to provide a platform for leaders from warring communities and societies to declare their desire for peace, to advocate for peace and development for these communities and societies; to showcase sport as an alternative livelihood for the youths in communities experiencing conflict as well as identifying talents ; to give youths from the warring communities the opportunity to appreciate each other and value peace and co-existence; to give the communities the opportunity in the pre-race conferences to undertake analysis of the conflicts among them and generate proposals for its reduction and transformation (Ngorianita, 2009). The foundation holds peace races in the conflict areas as it seeks to find a lasting solution to the problem of armed conflict. Annually, the foundation holds races in Kapenguria, West Pokot.

3. Research methodology

The basis of this study was a survey of residents of the four districts of West Pokot County namely: West Pokot, Pokot South, Pokot Central and North Pokot districts. The study population was the entire inhabitants of the county, a total of 512,690 according to the 2009 national population census survey. Cluster sampling was employed when selecting the different categories of respondents for the study (Table 1), and then simple random sampling was applied when selecting individual respondents from the clusters identified. West Pokot County was purposively chosen for the study because it has hosted the event a record 10 times unlike other destinations within the country. Although questionnaires were mainly used to collect the primary data, additional information for this study was obtained through review of secondary data as well as through focus group discussions with elite athletes and officials of the Tegla Loroupe peace foundation. Questionnaires were administered during peace race day. The collected data was organized, coded and analyzed using computer statistical packages for social scientist (SPSS) version 16.

Table 1: Categories of respondents for this study and the number of questionnaires distributed

Category of respondents	No. Distributed	No. Returned	% return rate
Athletes training camps & coaches	10	9	90
Sport spectators	35	24	69
Sport participants	25	21	84
Hotel managers	25	22	88
Business enterprise owners	30	25	83
Accommodations managers (lodgings)	25	18	72
Transport operators	20	14	70
Successful Sporting personalities	15	12	80
County sports associations	5	3	60
Sporting sponsors (Corporate & individual)	10	6	60
TOTALS	200	154	77

4. Results

4.1 Characteristics of the respondents

From the findings, 73.7% of the respondents were male, 50.7% were married, while 53.9% were from West

Pokot district, 24.4% from Pokot South, 21.1% from Pokot Central while 2.6% were from North Pokot. In terms of livelihood source, majority of the respondents (36.6%) rely on business for survival (Table 2).

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic factors	Description	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age bracket of the respondent	<15	9	5.8
	15-24	50	32.3
	25-35	70	45.2
	35-44	16	10.3
	45+	9	5.8
Gender	Male	112	72.7
	Female	42	27.3
Marital Status	Married	79	51.3
	Single	75	48.7
District of residence	West Pokot	82	53.2
	Pokot South	34	22.1
	Pokot Central	33	21.4
	North Pokot	5	3.3
Livelihood sources	Crop farming	29	18.8
	Business	56	36.5
	Pastoralism	40	26
	Ranching	1	0.6
	Sports	5	3.2
	Other (s)	23	14.9

4.2 Overall perception of the residents of West Pokot county on Tegla Loroupe peace races

In general, the residents of West Pokot County had a positive perception towards Tegla Loroupe peace race with 77.3% confirming that the peace races positively impacted on their socio-economic wellbeing, 6.5% disagreed, while 16.2% remained reserved their comments (Table 3).

Table 3: Local communities' opinion on the socio-economic impacts of Tegla Loroupe Peace races in West Pokot County.

Support for Tegla Loroupe peace race	n	Percent
Favour the role of Tegla Loroupe peace races in socio-economic development	119	77.3
Neutral (neither support nor oppose)	25	16.2
Disagree or do not believe Tegla Loroupe peace races impact on their economy	10	6.5

4.3 Feelings of the local community on the significance of Tegla Loroupe Peace races to their livelihoods

As pointed out above, peripheral regions such as the West Pokot County suffer from decline in traditional livelihood sources such as pastoralism and subsistence agriculture. This therefore means that key livelihood sources are declining, hence the need for alternative livelihood source to cushion these problems associated with decline of livelihood. About 65.8% of the respondents agreed that sports tourism contribute to creation of employment opportunities; 70.3% confirmed that sports tourism aid in diversification of their livelihoods; 65.8% confirmed that their living conditions have been improved courtesy of sports tourism in the area; 86.9% agreed that sports tourism stimulate investment opportunities in the county, and 82.9% of the respondents confirmed that sports tourism has positive local infrastructural development (Table 4).

Table 4: Local community's feelings on the significance of sports tourism to the livelihoods

Statements ^{a, b}	S (%)	N (%)	NS (%)	χ^2 Value	P-value
Creation of Employment	65.8	19.1%	15.2%	65.22	0.000
Diversification of livelihoods	70.3	14.5	12.5	81.224	0.000
Improvement of living conditions	65.8	17.7	16.5	52.079	0.000
Stimulates investment	86.9	7.2	5.9	202.000	0.000
Stimulation of local infrastructure	82.9	12.5	4.6	134.842	0.000

Source: Survey data, 2012

^aStatement asked: In your opinion, what is the impact of sports tourism on the following:-

^b Scale provided: 1=Significant, 2= Neutral and 3= not significant

4.4 Local community's perception on the impacts of sports tourism among the marginalized groups in society – women and youth

Majority of the respondents (92.8%) agreed that sports tourism increase women's access to leadership positions, 90.8% confirmed that sports tourism reduce men's negative perception, 70% agreed that sports tourism lead to increased income for women, 82.9% of the respondents agreed that sports tourism was a gateway to asset acquisition by women, 86.9% confirmed that sports tourism created an avenue for highlighting social ills such as gender violence, 88.1% of the respondents agreed that sports tourism was well placed in aiding campaigns for

women enlightenment, and 86.2% confirmed that sports tourism is an excellent avenue for mobilizing resource to support infrastructural development in any community/society/region (Table 5).

Table 5: Local community's perception on the impacts of sports tourism among the marginalized groups in society (women & youth)

Statements ^{a, b}	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	χ^2 Value	P-value
Increased income for women	70.0	14.5	15.5	81.224	0.000
Reduce men's negative perception	90.8	5.3	3.9	116.092	0.000
Gateway to asset acquisition by women	82.9	12.0	5.3	116.092	0.000
Highlighting gender violence	86.9	7.2	5.9	202.000	0.000
Increases woman's access to leadership	92.8	5.9	1.3	133.947	0.000
Contribute to enlightening of women	88.1	6.6	5.3	150.105	0.000
Mobilize resources for infrastructural development	86.2	9.2	4.6	138.329	0.000

Source: Survey data, 2012

^a Statement presented to respondents: Rank the following statements on your perception of the impact of sports tourism among the marginalized groups in West Pokot (women, girls, youths & Children).

^b Scale provided: 1=Agree, 2= Neutral and 3= Disagree

4.5 The social impacts of Tegla Loroupe peace races on West Pokot residence

Respondents were presented with statements capturing the social impacts of sport tourism among communities of Pokot County. Most of the respondents agreed that sport tourism have positive social impact which include: opening up "hard to reach" areas (84.2%), assisting in mobilization of children for schooling (79.6%), assisting in both physical & mental development of children (86.3%), bringing peace and understanding (79%), introduces children to role models (92.7%), creates a good platform for percolating government policies (69.7%), provides a good platform for public health campaigns (66.4%), that sports tourism was an appropriate platform to undertake environmental awareness campaigns (71.1%), cultivates cooperation & partnerships (90.2%) and inculcates good values & skills to children (84.1%) (Table 6)

Table 6: The social impact of Tegla Loroupe peace races West Pokot residence.

Statements ^{a, b}	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	χ^2 Value	P-value
Opens up "hard to reach" areas	84.2	10.5	5.3	128.592	0.000
Aid in mobilization of children	79.6	10.5	9.9	102.934	0.000
Aid in physical & mental dev. of children	86.2	9.9	3.9	143.066	0.000
Brings peace & understanding	79.0	11.8	9.2	100.368	0.000
Introduces children to role models	92.7	5.3	2.0	116.092	0.000
Good platform for percolating government policies	69.7	13.8	16.5	75.763	0.000
Good platform for public health campaigns	66.4	15.2	18.4	75.250	0.000
Good platform for environmental awareness	71.1	8.5	20.4	61.684	0.000
Cultivates cooperation & partnerships	90.2	8.4	1.4	116.092	0.000
Inculcates good values & skills to children	84.1	13.2	2.7	131.224	0.000

Source: Survey data, 2012

^a Statement asked: On the following scale, please rank the following statements regarding the social impacts of tourism in your locality.

^b Scale provided: 1=Agree, 2= Neutral 3= Disagree

4.6 Impacts of Tegla Loroupe peace race on local socio-economic development

The local communities of West Pokot county were asked to comment on the impact of Tegla Loroupe peace race on different socio-economic sectors at their places of residence. Fourteen variables, namely: the place of Tegla Loroupe peace races on employment creation, promotion of public security, improving quality of life of local residents, diversification of livelihoods, creates trading opportunities, Promotion of person-to-person encounters, Positive force for childhood development, Catalyst for economic transformation, stimulation of infrastructural development, fosters inter-community understanding, improvement of county's image before investors, strong linkage with local economic sectors, building entrepreneurial culture.

Table 7: Local communities' mean response to Tegla Loroupe's Peace races positive socio-economic effects in West Pokot County.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev	S.E	χ^2 Value	P-value
Employment creation	4.22	0.86	0.07	172.013	0.000
Promotion of public security	4.21	0.89	0.07	139.250	0.000
Improving quality of life of local residents	4.10	1.03	0.83	101.816	0.000
Diversification of livelihoods	4.07	1.12	0.09	150.961	0.000
Creates trading opportunities	4.45	0.79	0.06	137.408	0.000
Promotion of person-to-person encounters	4.15	1.01	0.08	114.316	0.000
Positive force for childhood development	4.16	0.89	0.07	116.092	0.000
Positive force for childhood development	4.08	1.12	0.09	169.579	0.000
Catalyst for economic transformation	4.02	0.96	0.08	157.474	0.000
Stimulation of infrastructural development	4.29	0.86	0.07	150.105	0.000
Fosters inter-community understanding	4.15	0.92	0.07	143.066	0.000
Improvement of county's image before investors	4.21	0.99	0.08	128.592	0.000
Strong linkage with local economic sectors	3.92	1.07	0.09	94.118	0.000
Building entrepreneurial culture	4.16	0.97	0.08	116.316	0.000

Source: Survey data, 2013

Notes: The response was on a likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where; 1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agreed; 3=Undecided (Neutral); 4=Disagree and 5= strongly Disagree

5. Discussion

The findings from this study support the long held view that if well planned, tourism can significantly contribute to socio-economic development. The local community's opinion toward the Tegla Loroupe peace race affirms that sports tourism play a significant role in socio-economic transformation particularly in rural destinations. The tremendous support for Tegla Loroupe peace race among the local communities of West Pokot County is sufficient evidence that the local communities have felt the impact of sport tourism in the county. Though sports tourism is new in West Pokot and its inhabitants, the peace race fitted well to the local cultural extravaganzas that decorate various ceremonies in the Pokot culture such as *Sapana*, *Lapan* and a host of initiation ceremonies. In the recent times, West Pokot has proved her sporting might in school games where schools from the County has made to national level meaning the sporting culture in West Pokot is strong and needs to be harnessed. The athletics training camps in the area signifies the sporting potential of West Pokot County. Majority of the respondents (69.1%) favoured the socio-economic impact of Tegla Loroupe peace race in their region. Further, majority of the respondents confirmed that the peace races significantly help the marginalized groups economically. Such groups include women and the youth.

Regarding the social impact of sport tourism, the findings revealed that Tegla Loroupe peace race plays a pivotal role in building harmonious relations between communities in the County, an ingredient that is good for socio-economic prosperity. These findings support what Hritz and Ross (2010) found out in their study of urban residents. By creating direct, indirect and induced employment opportunities, sports tourism creates increased earnings hence contributing to reduction of poverty levels and hunger among these marginalized communities. In addition, the prizes worn by the athletes and teams contribute to increased earnings, and as a result introduction of sports tourism will broaden the economic base for these communities who have for a long time relied on pastoralism and subsistence agriculture. Sports tourism therefore aid in diversification of their livelihoods particularly of communities living in peripheral areas. In terms of stimulating investment opportunities, sports tourism was credited by majority of the respondents. This related to the opening up of the region to investors. Various local and foreign investors have made business explorations in the area since the commencement of the Tegla Loroupe peace races. This is further supported by the fact that many countries have experienced growth in their service sectors even when the more traditional agricultural and manufacturing sectors have been subject to stagnation or decline (Cooper *et al.*, 2008). On the social development, sports tourism opens up "hard to reach" for development. Sport tourism takes place in remote areas because it does not demand a lot in terms of infrastructure. When held in these remote destinations, sport tourism acts as eye opener to the local communities in terms of development. This not only contributes to the realization of schooling, but also aids the physical and mental development.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The results of this study indicates that among the residents of West Pokot County, there is a very strong support for sport tourism and further, the study indicates that the local community count on the peace race to deliver their socio-economic expectations. The fact that the annual peace race empower the marginalized groups such as women and youth to actively contribute to socio-economic development is a significant contribution of the peace initiative. The findings of this study indicate that if well planned and developed, sports tourism has huge potentials for directly and indirectly contributing to community's socio-economic development. Through its

social impacts, sports tourism can significantly aid in addressing the social challenges that afflict rural communities such as those living in West Pokot County. However, although the findings of this study are confirmed by findings of other scholars, there is need to investigate the socio-economic impact of other sports found in West Pokot County.

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