

The Barcelona Effect on Uganda's Sport Tourism Outlook: A Case of the 2015 Barcelona vs. Uganda Legends Match

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Abstract

Over the past decade, Uganda has hosted a number of sports events aimed at boosting sport tourism. In 2015, a football match between Barcelona and Uganda Cranes legends is a topnotch case. Whereas past studies have examined the development of tourism sector from other dimensions, this study orientates its focus on how sports events in particular have face-lifted the tourism sector. The study spotlighted huge impacts on legacy, media attraction, branding and promotion of tourism as the major phenomena. This author used interviews, files analysis, press briefs, sport investigations to gain theoretical support for addressing this issue.

Keywords: Barcelona; Sport tourism; Sports events; Tourism outlook

Background

After four decades of violence, political turmoil and economic collapse that started with the bloodthirsty reign of Idi Amin (the self-proclaimed President for Life, Conqueror of the British Empire), Uganda's Tourism officials embarked on a measures to reawaken the sector which was once the top African destination in the 1960's.

Tourism is recognized in the National Development Plan 2010/11-2014/15 as one of the fastest growing service sector of the economy and a major foreign exchange earner. It contributes USD 979 million per annum [1], directly 200,000 people and indirectly and additional 284,000 [2] indirectly and induced.

Recently, sports events are an instrument of destination marketing for host countries [3]. Uganda has also embarked on using sports as a mechanism of boosting its Sport-tourism industry. In December 2015, a Barcelona-Uganda Cranes legends football match was hosted in Uganda's Capital Kampala. The legacy of this event is believed to have an everlasting facelift on the country's tourism. The football match attracted Patrick Kluivert, Louis Garcia, Simao Sabrosa, Carles Puyol, Edgar Davids, Gaizka Mendieta and Gianluca Zambrotta, all of whom once played for Barcelona, one of the world's biggest football clubs.

An Analysis of the Development Effects of Barcelona on Sports Tourism Facelift in Uganda

Effect of the event legacy

A tourism impact is created by mega-sports events due to their appeal to a worldwide market and results in an immense advertising effect for the host city [4]. Apart from the social legacy, environmental legacy, economic and sporting legacy which all have a direct or indirect impact on country's tourism; the tourism legacy directly help to renovate tourism in the host destination. Only not only applies to major sports events, but also to mega sports events such as the

Olympic games, this is in line with the Olympic Games Study Commission, July 2003 which stated that:-

"As a responsible organisation, the IOC wants to ensure that host cities and their residents are left with the most positive legacy of venues, infrastructure, expertise and experience."

Effect on media attention and attraction

The profits from the publicity as the Barcelona football stars attract massive media and global attention internationally. The legends were accompanied by top foreign media houses and personal media attachés. For a developing country like Uganda, this represents a highest point of achievement not only on the international sporting stage, but also on the international tourism stage. The icons were turn out tweeting and face booking about gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, took pictures while at the Source of the River Nile in Uganda. Such promotion in the media could not leave the promotion of tourism in Uganda the same.

Effect on branding

FC Barcelona is not just one of the best teams in La Liga, it's also one of the preeminent clubs in the entire world. According to Forbes, Barcelona has managed to reach a brand value of \$437 million in 2015. Uganda's hosting of a sport event with a team with such a brand promotes the countries sports tourism. Sport tourism events are used by destinations to enhance their image [5], Destination marketers have focused on hosting sport tourism events as a strategy to enhance the destination image and differentiate its tourism products [6].

Effect on promotion abroad

According to UTB, the projected earnings of \$2bn (about Shs 5.3 trillion) per annum in the next few years from tourism are about a third of the 2015-16 annual budget, a figure which highlights the immense contribution the sector will have in the future, surpassing almost any sector, even before oil production begins. "As part of efforts to actualize the industry's full potential, the Barcelona legends tour to

different tourism destination would help to realise such figures, because these stars are nationals of different countries from Europe and South America". This will also see Uganda's tourism promoting abroad being boosted. The country can now be seen as one of the top sport tourism destinations in Africa.

Conclusion and Recommendations for further Studies

This paper emphasizes the need to create organizations or bodies that can specifically plan and organize sport tourism events, but with the top mission on developing a new sector of sport tourism. The author agitates for development of standard sports and tourism infrastructure in order to lift the countries chances of attracting mega-sports events such as the World Cup, Olympic Games, and Africa Cup of Nations, Commonwealth Games and All Africa Games among others. Hosting of such events can promote positive economic, social and environmental benefits to host countries and their residents [7]. However, the cost implications of hosting such events should be evaluated. A question in the overall preparation for developing countries to host mega-sports events needs to be addressed. The Cost-Benefit analysis of host the same event also needs to be studied among others.

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