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# Sport tourism as a developmental initiative in the economy of Mafikeng

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## Abstract

Sport plays an important role in the economic and social growth of a nation. The aim of this research was to assess and identify the difference Sport Tourism can make as a developmental initiative in the economy of Mafikeng. The research method employed in this study was restricted to the descriptive-quantitative approach. The purpose of this quantitative approach was to examine the role between sport tourism and its impact on the economic activity of Mafikeng. The findings from the exploratory survey support the role of sport tourism to a city like Mafikeng and illustrate that it can improve its economic activity through the hosting of regular or small sport tourism events. It is recommended that small or regular sport tourism events should be hosted using existing facilities that do not require substantial financial investments.

**Keywords:** Mafikeng, sport, tourism, sport tourism, hallmark events, mega-events, small events



Source: <http://media-cdn.tripadvisor.com/media/photo-s/01/ea/a3/22/leopard-park-golf-course.jpg>

## Introduction

A number of initiatives have been put in place by the South African government aimed at the diversification of the national and local economies away from the historic dependence on mining and agriculture, such as the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) and Local Economic Development strategies. Apart from diversification, these policies have also been aimed at creating jobs and poverty alleviation. This has resulted in the promotion of new economic growth activities, predominantly in the service sector such as tourism (Binns & Nel, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of Sports Tourism in the economic activity of Mafikeng, the administrative capital of the North West province of South Africa. The province has an international border with Botswana, and neighbours four other provinces i.e. Gauteng, Limpopo, Northern Cape and the Free State provinces. The North West province is mainly rural and reliant on government and agriculture sector for employment.

The compelling reason for pursuing tourism as a development strategy is its positive contribution to the local and regional economy (Oppermann & Chon, 1997:109). Harrison, Jayawardena & Clayton (2003) study show that tourism can help an economy in reviving the local and regional economy of a country.

Although Mafikeng offers a variety of tourist attractions, activities and experiences to the visitor (Prinsloo & Pelsler, 2015), there is a lack of adequate sport tourism and supplementary facilities like accommodation in Mafikeng. This is due to lack of knowledgeable, skilled and qualified administrators. This has impacted badly on the community and the development of sport tourism activities. The majority of the facilities do not have sufficient amenities such as stadia, swimming pools, parking and recreation amenities to adequately support sport tourism activities.

Many economic and social challenges can be addressed by sporting activities like Sport Tourism (Merchant, Griffin & Charnock, 2007). This is not the case with Mafikeng. Mafikeng continues to suffer social and economic setbacks because of the inability to assess the effective contribution that can be generated from varied economic activities such as Sport Tourism.

## Literature review

Sport has always been an integral part of the culture of South Africa. It has increasingly taken a significant position in the economy of the country (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005). Thus, sport plays an important role in the economic and social growth of a nation. According to Getz (2008:403) sporting events open up new opportunities for national economies, and are an additional source of employment and revenue. Tourism on the other hand contributes directly to tourism related industries such as accommodation, transport, as well as cultural and recreational services. Tourism contributes indirectly to the services, retail trade, construction and manufacturing sectors (North West Parks and Tourism Board, 2008:5).

The development of sport tourism has been important both at international and local levels (Pillay & Bass, 2008). Despite this, sport tourism is a comparatively new concept although its scope of activity is far from recent (Tassiopoulou & Haydam, 2008). Tourism and sport have largely been developed independently in terms of structure and recognition (Swart & Bob, 2007). Recognition of the community development potential of Sport Tourism has resulted in the increased interest in demonstrating the economic impact of sports events, which involve measuring the net effect of a non-resident spending beyond what should be expected in the region if the event was not held (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004).

## **Tourism**

Tourism plays an important role in the economy of South Africa in general, and the North West province in particular (North West Parks and Tourism Board, 2008). Internationally, tourism is a sector that has performed well and has continued to be an important component that has shaped the economy of the world (Williams, 1998 as cited in Binns & Nel, 2002). Several countries now see tourism as a catalyst to development (Williams 1998; Dann, 2002: 236, all cited in Binns & Nel, 2002). Tourism is an alternative for the diversification of many economies. Tourists that visit destinations and compelled to buy other goods and services, which is different from other export earning opportunities (Kaplan, 2004). Tourism has progressed in the growth of wealth, employment and jobs for countries (Neto, 2003). Binns and Nel (2002) observe how inexpensive tourism can be as a strategy for the generation of foreign exchange, just by showing off local culture and the environment.

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) asserts that every tourist injects at least 1000 dollars into economic and employment cycle (Esfahani, Goudarzi & Assadi, 2009:136). The amount of earnings expected from tourism has made it a competitive industry. The level of service and professionalism, as well as the level of innovation offered, are key variables that determine a country's success in attracting and growing its share of the tourism market (Kaplan, 2004). South Africa has managed to stay above this and ranked as one of the most preferred destinations in Africa (Rogerson & Visser, 2011:77). The sector has experienced growth domestically and internationally with a strong marketing impetus (Groenewald, Prinsloo & Pelsler, 2014:525).

## **Sport**

Comparable to tourism, the recreation and leisure market is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the global

economy. The size of the industry serves sporting activities listed under serious leisure fields such as golf, tennis, fishing, and downhill skiing (Lamont and Dowell, 2008). Sport sectors have commercialised and carefully reformed over the past 30 years. The restructuring of the sector has taken the objective of profit generation (Cornelissen, 2007:241). Rogerson (2012) observed the evolution of sport and its increasing role within the globalisation process and in the regeneration of national, regional and local identities in the postcolonial and global age.

Sport has been used as an economic strategy and it has been observed for instance in the British context that most of the cities following this strategy of using sport for economic regeneration have been industrial cities, not normally known as major tourist destinations (Gratton, Shibli, & Coleman, 2005; Cornelissen, 2007).

There has been a growing scepticism over the extent to which hosting mega-events potentially results in economic growth. This includes scepticism on the significant developmental impacts as compared to smaller events (Humphreys & Prokopowicz, 2007; Esfahani, et al., 2009).

Sports and sporting events have become integral components of a global political economy (Rogerson, 2012:28). The use of sport as an economic and social remedy of issues, targeted by politics, such as poverty alleviation and job creation require the careful development of skills and infrastructure in order to attain competitiveness internationally (Kaplan, 2004).

The use of sport in tourism can generate a competitive advantage for tourism (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004). The linkages between sport and tourism have increased over time, mutual benefits to both fields have become evident as the concept, and practice of sport tourism has developed. Sport is a tourism generator (Lamont & Dowell, 2008).

## **The relationship between Sport and Tourism**

Rogerson & Visser (2011) found a growing recognition of sport tourism as both a popular leisure experience and important economic activity. Worldwide, events have been recognised as a strong component of sport tourism that draw people from different places (Getz, 2008), and is becoming an integral and major part of tourism development and marketing strategies (Tassiopoulou & Haydam, 2008). Marketing of sport events brings social, physical and economic benefits to the host community or nation.

Recently, sports and tourism have been used as forces to revive economies (Esfahani, et al., 2009). Sport and tourism have become significant economic activities both in the developed and developing world. In 2001, the World Tourism Organisation estimated that sport's average contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) was 1-2 per cent, while tourism's contribution was 4-6 per cent (Swart & Bob, 2007).

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) emphasised the importance of sports tourism as a target market. In 2004, they announced their commitment to reinforce their partnerships on collaboration in the sports and tourism domain. They stated that tourism and sport are interrelated and complementary and that both are powerful forces for development, stimulating investment in infrastructure projects such as airports, roads, stadiums, sporting complexes and restaurant-projects that can be enjoyed by the local population as well as tourists who come to use them (Tassiopoulou & Haydam, 2008).

Sport represents an attraction category within the broader tourism industry. Other attractions in tourism that are similar to sport include culture, environmental and social (Swart & Bob, 2007). Special sport events are powerful tools to target desired segments of tourism markets as well as

spreading industry geographically and seasonality (Van der Watt, 2013).

This was also affirmed by Cornelissen (2007), by noting the connection of tourism to infrastructural preparations toward sport event based around provide the opportunity to invest in the infrastructures connected with them as well as other equipment and attractions (Cornelissen, 2007). Such infrastructure and equipment provide opportunities for long-term profits such as tourist attractions. When cities host sport and cultural events, fairs and festivals, they can improve their equipment to attract tourists (Esfahani et al., 2009; Van der Watt, 2013).

Radikonyana, Heath, Fairer-Wessels, Prinsloo & Pelsier (2015) proposed a marketing framework that can facilitate the relationship between sport and tourism. This framework sees the sport marketing strategy as the engine that is critical for driving marketing initiatives related to sport mega-events, while at the same time enabling sport marketers to respond to the macro-environmental factors that impact on marketing initiatives for sport mega-events and to keep pace with the developments related to sport and tourism marketing in South Africa.

In October 1997, South Africa launched South Africa Sports Tourism (SAST), an international theme to attract foreign visitors. Under SAST, sport tourism had a strategic role to play in achieving the aims of the reconstruction and development program, aimed at uplifting South African society economically (Swart, 2005; Swart & Bob, 2007).

The hosting of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 African Cup of Nations, the 1998/9 All-Africa Games, the 2003 Cricket World Cup, and the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup™ (2010 FSWC™). These events highlighted South Africa's enthusiastic participation in the staging of various mega-events (Radikonyana et al., 2015:437).

## **Impact of Sport Tourism on Economic Development**

Recognition of community development potential of sport tourism has resulted in the heightened interest in demonstrating the economic impact of sport event, which involves measuring the net effect of a non-resident spending beyond what should be expected in the community if the event was not held (Daniels, 2007; Van der Watt, 2013). Sport mega-events have the potential role in promoting economic and developmental agendas (Swart & Bob, 2007). Sports tourism is a lucrative business that has been valued as high as \$ 51 billion or around 10 per cent of the total global tourism market valued because sport tourists spend, more than ordinary tourists do and are often from the privileged 'AB' demographic (L'Etang, Falkheimer & Lugo, 2006).

In the United States for instance, event sport tourism generates an estimated \$27 billion a year (Travel Industry Association of America, 2010) where more than 75 million American adults (two-fifths of the population) reported attending a sports event either as a spectator or as a participant (L'Etang et al., 2006:70).

Cornelissen (2007:241) further suggests the economic significance of sport tourism resulting from economic benefits of the movements of people that involve transportation, construction, and renovation of facilities, creation of employment, cultural exchanges, specific services and a range of commercial activity involving sports cruises, tours, attractions, and use of resorts. This entails a major catalyst for development and job creation, and a growing generator of foreign exchange (Swart & Bob, 2007).

Tourism and advertising revenues generated by mega-sport events have become a major boost to the economies of hosting nations. The contribution to real GDP is estimated to be in excess of R10 billion, with thousands of jobs being created by the construction of new venues and

upgrading of existing infrastructure (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005). The gains generated by sport tourism includes urban redevelopment, resulting from stadium construction. This creates benefits which 'trickle down' from property developers, sports teams, and stadium operators to the wider community largely in the form of employment growth (Jones, 2001).

Other economic benefits associated with sport tourism include construction or renovation of facilities, employment generation, cultural exchanges, regional awareness and commercial activity, be it tours, attractions, resorts or events. Sport tourism also provides opportunities for all levels of society to work together toward a common goal, particularly organisers, promoters, volunteers and entrepreneurs (Lamont & Dowell, 2008).

Cities staging major sports events have a unique opportunity to market themselves to the world (Gratton, Shibli & Coleman, 2005). Harnessing such economic swings can have significant potential for areas that are seeking to regenerate their local economies because of economic change (Binns & Nel, 2002). Events have entertainment value that provides economic benefits specifically for local businesses. They promote community pride and act as regional catalysts (Swart & Bob, 2007).

It is evident that cities and towns across South Africa recognise the importance of hallmark events to the development and expansion of urban development. However, Gibson, Willming & Holdnak (2003:181) argue that small sport events like college sports events have the potential to increase city revenue and community spirit, while increasing traveller's awareness of the local community. Sport Tourists spent money on food and shopping while attending games, but their main motivation was to see the game (Gibson et al., 2003). The foregoing suggests small-scale event conveniently measures up to that of mega-events. This raises the predicament on whether small

towns like Mafikeng ought to lobby small events or mega-events.

### Research methodology

This paper adopted a quantitative research approach and was explorative in nature. The aim of this study was to examine the role of sport tourism and its impact on the economic activity of Mafikeng. The following research questions are presented below:

- Does sport tourism have an impact on the role of the socio-economic activity of Mafikeng?
- Does sport tourism have negative or positive socio-economic effects on the town?
- Can the sport tourism facilities available in Mafikeng host a mega-event or small event?

### Population and sample

Babbie, Halley & Zaino (2003:112) describe a population for a study as that group about whom the researcher wants to draw inferences. However, with limited time and money, researchers are unlikely to study the entire body of relevant facts about the whole group of people under investigation.

The population of concern to this study is all decision makers and managers in government departments directly or indirectly relegated to sport, tourism and the economic affairs of Mafikeng. The other part of the population consists of all owners, managers, instructors and supervisors of sport facilities within Mafikeng. By using Krejcie and Margan's (1970) pivotal guidelines, the appropriate sample size (S) based on the population (N) for this particular study  $N = 150$  therefore  $S = 108$ . This entails that the sample size will require of a minimum of 108 completed questionnaires in order to draw an expressive conclusion from the data collected in the survey.

The survey restricted itself to the:

- Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.
- Department of Economic Development and Tourism.
- North-West Parks Board (Mafikeng).
- Mafikeng Municipality.
- District Municipality.
- Civic Centre, Leopard Park Golf Club, North-West University (Mafikeng).

Only selected officials in the departments/units formed part of the survey. These included decision makers such as directors and managers. The target respondents from the sporting facilities included managers and administrators.

### Measuring instrument

Data in this survey was collected by a structured questionnaire and distributed via email to all the respondents. The questionnaire was divided in three sections. The first part concerns permission to use the respondent's answers for academic research. The second section aims at collecting biographical data on the respondents such as age, gender and qualifications. The third section contains specific questions pertaining to the role of sport tourism and its impact on the economic activity of Mafikeng.

The survey employed a combination of variables. For identifying participants, nominal and ordinal variables was used. The nature of questions asked determined the variables applied for the survey questions, which vary from ordinal to ratio variables.

There were 200 questionnaires distributed and 151 questionnaires were completed and returned. That means an effective response rate of 76%.

### Findings

The importance of diversifying local economies away from the historic economic activities of mining and agriculture is being encouraged by the Government of South Africa. Sport tourism is seen as one such

activity that will enhance the economic diversification of remote places like Mafikeng. The findings of the study is presented below.

### **Demographic results**

Out of the 151 respondents, 125 (83%) were African. Distribution on the race of the respondents was requested because this would indicate the common culture of the respondents. This is vital because it will assist the researcher in understanding the perception of the respondents on the dominant social activity pursued in the area. The high number of African responses may have a bias towards the African perception on the study.

Out of the 151 respondents, 81 (54%) were males and 68 (45%) females. The difference in the gender is nearly even. This implies that organisations have an equal employment policy. This may be because of Government initiatives that are promoting gender equality especially of women in employment. Certain sporting or social activities are mainly restricted to gender. Therefore the results are encouraging because views from both gender are well represented concerning the role of sport tourism on the economic activities of Mafikeng from both sides.

The occupation of respondents was divided into managerial and non-managerial. The results show that there were 92 (61%) respondents who fell in the managerial category, while there were 59 (39%) who fell in the non-managerial category. The managerial category included supervisors, managers and directors. It was the study's intention to target respondents who were in decision-making positions. Respondents in this category are able to articulate more to sport tourism can play to the economic activity of Mafikeng.

Out of the 151 respondents, 138 (91%) of the respondents indicated that they understood what sport tourism was. There were only 13 (9%) indicated that they did not

have an idea about what sport tourism was. The results were encouraging considering that no prompts were given to any of the respondents. This indicates the importance attached to sport tourism with the communities. This is in line with the theory advanced in the literature, which states that tourism has a massive social, political and environmental impact on global, national and local locations, which in turn advances matters of community relations and social responsibility (L'Etang et al., 2006).

### **Response to research questions**

The main findings of this research in relation to each of the research questions will now be discussed.

*Does sport tourism have an impact on the role of the socio-economic activity of Mafikeng?*

Sport tourism is a popular leisure experience and important economic activity (Van der Watt, 2013). The economic significance of sport tourism resulting from economic benefits involve transportation, construction, and renovation of facilities, creation of employment, cultural exchanges, specific services and a range of commercial activity (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004). Sport tourism events open up new opportunities for community economies and are additional source of employment and revenues (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005).

The results of the survey shows that the majority of the respondents (59%) indicated that they strongly agree and 36% agree that sport tourism can contribute to development. The results imply that sport tourism has an impact on the role of the economic activity of Mafikeng. Economic benefits associated with sport tourism include construction or renovation of facilities (Lamont & Dowell, 2008). Great sport events improve tourism

infrastructures such as parks, jogging areas, sport equipment, public transportation, highways, tourist attractions and airports (Esfahani et al., 2009). Sport tourism can contribute to the diversification of the economic activities of Mafikeng, which predominantly is supported by Government departments and activities. This is because Mafikeng is the provincial capital of the North West province (Binns & Nel, 2002).

*Does sport tourism have negative or positive socio-economic effects on the town?*

Sport tourism has an effect of diluting cultural fibre of hosting communities. Some influences include the increase of negative vices such as prostitution and crime. Sport and tourism are key elements of today's culture and exerts a very specific influence on the behaviour of present day society (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005). The majority (63%) of the respondents were of the view that sport tourism events lead to negative effects.

Sixty percent of the respondents think sport tourism can lead to negative issues concerning the environment. Environmental concerns that can arise from sport tourism include littering, noise, overcrowding and radical environmental concerns arising out of clearing of land to allow building of sporting infrastructure. Other environmental concerns involve the displacement of human allowing for the development of sporting infrastructure. Sport tourism may result in administrative glitches, traffic congestion, and security breaches.

Eighty one percent of the respondents think sport tourism can lead to other negative issues such as resource problems. Major resource problems include financing infrastructure development in readiness for hosting sporting events. These include

building of infrastructure like roads, stadia and accommodation facilities. There is high cost associated with this kind of development. This may present a high opportunity cost of capital especially in a developing nation (Pillay & Bass, 2008).

The majority (73%) of the respondents think sport tourism can lead to financial problems. The size of the sporting event will normally dictate the kind of financial commitment required. Small or regular in contrast to mega or hall mark events are sport events that have negligible bidding expenses, little to no infrastructure development costs, a minimal burden on public funds, and a limited impact on local residents (Cornelissen, 2007; Binns & Nel, 2002). Hallmark events frequently result in enormous debts for host communities, likelihood of corruption during the bid process (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004).

*Can the sport tourism facilities available in Mafikeng host a mega-event or small event?*

It is considered that the development of international standard sporting facilities and related infrastructure upgrades create a head start for bidding of other major events (Binns & Nel, 2002). Such facilities require high investments whereas regular sport events or small sporting events have negligible bidding expenses, little to no infrastructure development costs, a minimal burden on public funds, and a limited impact on local residents (Cornelissen, 2007).

The majority of the respondents (58%) indicated that sport tourism facilities in Mafikeng may not help host mega events such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics. This result was affirmed by the fact that despite Mafikeng being the provincial capital of the North West, none of



the FIFA 2010 World Cup games was hosted in Mafikeng.

Further results indicated that the majority (76%) of respondents indicated that Mafikeng does not have adequate sports facilities in Mafikeng, while only twenty five percent were of the view that the facilities were adequate.

Although, the results above imply that although Mafikeng may not have sport tourism facilities that can be used to host mega or hallmark events, it does have facilities that can host regular or small sport tourism events.

*Are the current sport tourism facilities being used effectively?*

For sport tourism to be successful, management is important, through the increased activity of 'event management' and is a fast growing professional field in which tourists constitute a potential market for planned events and the tourism industry has become a vital stakeholder in their success and attractiveness (Getz, 2008:403). Management of events raises issues for public relations concerns in relation to multi-cultural communication, ethics, safety, social responsibility and in some cases globalisation.

The results showed that the majority of respondents (86%) were of the opinion that the sport tourism facilities in Mafikeng are not adequately marketed. Most of the sporting facilities in Mafikeng belong to the municipality. The few private owned sporting facilities are located away from the general community (e.g. Leopard Park Golf Club). The municipality also has no deliberate policies that will encourage people to participate in sport.

The majority (82%) of the respondents, were of the opinion that sporting facilities in Mafikeng are not well maintained. To inspire images of individual cities, municipal authorities and affiliated agencies need to carefully selected images to further a city's tourism ambitions (Prinsloo & Pelsler, 2015).

### **Managerial guidelines**

The North-West Sport and Recreation Department policy makers together with the Tourism and Economic Development must ensure that sport tourism contributes to the enhancement of the economy of Mafikeng. According to the findings of this survey research, almost 60% of the respondents indicated that sport tourism can contribute to the enhancement of the economy of Mafikeng.

Existing sport tourism facilities in Mafikeng must be improved and well maintained. This is supported by the majority (82%) of the respondents. Furthermore 91% of the respondents indicated the need for new sport tourism facilities in Mafikeng. It was shown that there is a connection of tourism to infrastructural preparations, which provides the opportunity to invest in the infrastructures connected with them as well as other equipment and attractions

A comprehensive marketing strategy must be developed to market the city's sport tourism facilities. This was evident from the 86% of the respondents who indicated that they did not feel the sport tourism facilities in Mafikeng are adequately marketed. Worldwide, events have been recognised as a strong component of sport tourism that draw people from different places. Events are becoming an integral and major part of tourism development and marketing strategies. Marketing of sport events and sport tourism facilities brings social, physical

and economic benefits to the host community or nation. Sport tourism facilities helps communities to be attracted to hosting sport events to draw marketing benefits that will contribute to the success of the destination in the end by creating awareness, improving their image with visitors and attracting tourism business to generate future inbound travel.

More workshops and seminars on the role of sport tourism must be conducted to enlighten the Mafikeng community on the impact sport tourism can make in the socio-economic activity of the city.

Sound relationships with stakeholders (both direct and indirect) must be established in order to attract sponsorship. The lure of large and spectacular sport events is an expedient way to attract media interest in a host city, which translates into an influx of capital through tourism and new investment. Sport event generates diverse and heterogeneous flows of travellers that may include fans, athletes, coaches, media, team personnel, parents and family members.

## Conclusion

Governments of developing countries have struggled for many years to promote economic growth in places that are considered to be behind the mainstream national culture and economy. A number of initiatives have thus been put in place by the South African government aimed at the diversification of the national and local economies.

Sport has been used as an economic strategy and it has been observed that most of the cities following this strategy of using sport for economic regeneration. The use of sport in tourism can generate a competitive advantage for tourism. This research support the idea that sport tourism can play a role in the economic activity of Mafikeng.

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