

**COMPETITIVENESS OF THE NORTH RIFT REGION OF KENYA AS A
SPORTS TOURISM DESTINATION**

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by Candidate

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God Almighty for giving me the strength to see me through.

To my dear mother: Dr. Ruth Tubey, who has always been a great source of inspiration.

Mum, all those late nights you worked tirelessly so that we wouldn't lack, I cannot even

begin to understand the amount of sacrifice you put in. I owe my achievements to you

and I hope the successful completion of this work will make you proud and bring a

smile to your face. I love you.

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Thank you!

ABSTRACT

Trends in tourism over the last decade have shown that sports tourism has emerged as a very significant segment of the global tourism market. The participation of tourists in sports related activities is eminent in the International Visitor Survey (2004). There's a lot of potential for promoting this segment of the tourism industry. Sports tourism if properly developed and planned with the commitment of all relevant stakeholders should bring about economic, social, and community benefits (Zauhar, 2004). The priority segment for the North Rift region in Kenya is the sport-related type, and therefore, it is necessary to develop the existing athletics events in the region as well as develop others. Destinations with a wealth of resources may sometimes not be as competitive as a destination with lack of resources. The most important is the ability of the tourism sector to add value to its products. This study sought to determine the factors that influence the competitiveness of the North Rift region in Kenya as a sports tourism destination. The specific objectives were: To determine the core resources and attractions available for sports tourism; to determine the range and level of supporting factors available for sports tourism; to examine the destination management practices; and to establish the situational conditions existing in the North Rift region. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was guided by the integrated model for destination competitiveness by Dwyer *et al* (2004). The target population included all the athletics camps as well as the tourism facilities in Uasin Gishu and Nandi districts. Simple random sampling was used to select 25 athletics camps from which 50 athletics officials were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Simple random sampling was also used to select one manager from each of the tourism firms selected for the study, making a total of 35 tourism firm managers. Primary data was collected by use of structured questionnaires, while secondary data was collected through critical examination of public or private recorded documents that are related to the study. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques which included frequencies, means, modes, standard deviation and percentages and multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between the independent variables used in this study and the dependent variable and also test the hypotheses. The study found out that the North Rift was endowed with a good climate, natural wonders, flora and fauna, unspoiled nature as well as some national parks and reserves. There were improvements made in terms of infrastructure and availability of other services in the region such as banking, health facilities and so on. Further, the positioning and marketing activities of the destination were found to be poor. The region is losing the potential premium for the comparative advantages. The region received a fair rating in terms of the general business environment and a good review in terms of political stability and tourists' safety and security. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be useful to tourism policy makers and other interested stakeholders in designing strategies and policies, as well as support them to make relevant decisions regarding the North Rift region as well as sports tourism. The methods used in this research can be replicated to other destinations, or even to the North Rift region itself, when investigating other types of tourism or source markets.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xii
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	6
1.3 Main Objective.....	9
1.3.1 Specific Objectives.....	9
1.3.2 Research Questions	9
1.4 Hypotheses	10
1.5 Significance of the Study	10
1.6 The Scope of the Study	11
1.7 Conceptual Framework.....	11
CHAPTER TWO	21
LITERATURE REVIEW	21
2.1 Introduction.....	21
2.2 Sports Tourism.....	21
2.3 The Origins of Destination Competitiveness.....	23
2.3.1 The Concept of Destination Competitiveness.....	27
2.4 Destination Competitiveness Models	29
2.4.1 Ritchie and Crouch’s Model of Destination Competitiveness	29
2.4.2 Heath’s Model of Destination Competitiveness.....	31
2.4.3 Hassan’s Model of Destination Competitiveness.....	35
2.4.4 Integrated Model of Competitiveness	36

2.5 Factors Determining Competitiveness	38
2.5.1 Core/Endowed Resources	39
2.5.2 Created Resources	40
2.5.3 Supporting Factors and Resources	44
2.5.4 Destination Management.....	47
2.5.5 Situational Conditions	58
2.6 Summary of Literature	69
2.6.1 Focus of Literature and Related Studies	69
2.6.2 Gaps in Literature.....	73
2.7 Conclusion	74
CHAPTER THREE	75
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	75
3.1 Introduction.....	75
3.2 Research Design.....	75
3.3 The Study Area	75
3.4 Target Population.....	76
3.5 Sampling Design.....	76
3.6 Data Collection	78
3.6.1 Primary Data	78
3.6.2 Secondary Data	78
3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments	78
3.7.1 Validity of the Research Instruments	79
3.7.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments	79
3.8 Ethical Considerations	80
3.9 Data Analysis	80
CHAPTER FOUR.....	82
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION	82
4.1 Introduction.....	82
4.2 General Information.....	82
4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents	82
4.2.2 Age of the Respondents.....	83
4.2.3 Education Level of the Respondents.....	83
4.2.4 Work Position of Tourism Stakeholders	84
4.3 Competitiveness of the North Rift Region as a Tourist Destination	84

4.4 Core Attractions and Resources	85
4.4.1 Natural Resources	85
4.4.2 Culture and Heritage	86
4.5 Created Resources	87
4.5.1 Tourism Infrastructure	87
4.5.2 Range of Tourism Activities	88
4.5.3 Entertainment	89
4.6 Supporting Factors	89
4.6.1 Infrastructure	89
4.6.2 Quality of Service in the Study Area	90
4.6.3 Accessibility of Destination	91
4.6.4 Hospitality	92
4.6.5 Market Ties	93
4.7 Destination Management Practices	94
4.7.1 Destination Management Organizations	94
4.7.2 Destination Marketing Management	95
4.7.3 Destination Policy, Planning and Development	95
4.7.4 Human Resources Development	96
4.7.5 Environmental Management	97
4.8 Situational Conditions	98
4.8.1 Competitive Environment	98
4.8.2 Global Environment	99
4.8.3 Price Competitiveness	100
4.8.4 Safety and Security	100
4.9 Results of the Regression Analysis	101
4.10 Correlation Matrix	102
4.11 Multiple Regression Equation Coefficients	103
4.12 Testing the Hypotheses	104
CHAPTER FIVE	107
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	107
5.1 Introduction	107
5.2 Discussion	107
5.2.1 General Information on the Respondents	107
5.2.2 Core Resources and Attractions	108

5.2.3 Range and Level of Supporting Factors	111
5.2.4 Destination Management Practices	113
5.2.5 Situational Conditions	116
5.3 Conclusion and Recommendations	118
5.4 Suggestions for Further Research	120
REFERENCES	122
APPENDICES	127
Appendix I: Introductory Letter	127
Appendix II: Questionnaire for Tourism Stakeholders	128
Appendix III: Questionnaire for Sports Officials.....	134

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Gender of Sports Tourism Stakeholders	82
Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents	83
Table 4.3 Education Level of the Respondents	83
Table 4.4 Tourism Stakeholders' Responses on Work Position.....	84
Table 4.5 Sports Officials' Responses on Work Position.....	84
Table 4.6 Competitiveness of North Rift Region	85
Table 4.7: Natural Resources in the Study Area.....	85
Table 4.8: Culture and Heritage.....	86
Table 4.9 Tourism Infrastructure	87
Table 4.10: Range of Tourism Activities.....	88
Table 4.11 Entertainment Facilities	89
Table 4.12 Infrastructure.....	90
Table 4.13 Quality of Service	91
Table 4.14 Accessibility of the Destination.....	92
Table 4.15 Hospitality.....	93
Table 4.16 Market Ties	93
Table 4.17 Destination Management Organization	94
Table 4.18 Destination Marketing Management	95
Table 4.19 Destination Policy Planning and Development	96
Table 4.20 Human Resource Development	97
Table 4.21 Environmental Management.....	97
Table 4.22 Competitive Environment.....	98
Table 4.23 Global Environment.....	99
Table 4.24 Price Competitiveness.....	100
Table 4.25 Safety and Security	101
Table 4.26: Correlation Matrix	102
Table 4.27: Multiple Regression Equation Coefficients.....	103

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness	13
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework: Factors influencing competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.....	18
Figure 3: Ritchie and Crouch's Model of destination Competitiveness	31
Figure 4: Heaths model of destination competitiveness	34
Figure 5: Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness.....	37

LIST OF ACRONYMS

GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
NTO:	National Tourism Organization
STIC:	Sports Tourism International Council
SWOT:	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UN:	United Nations
UNCTAD:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNWTO:	United Nations World Tourism Organization

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Competitiveness : A destination's ability to create and integrate value added products that sustain its resources while maintaining market position relative to competitors. It is measured by; tourism attractions and resources, tourism supporting factors, destination management practices and situational conditions.

Core Resources and Attractions: Primary elements of a destination that appeal and motivate a tourist to visit a destination. They may be inherited or created.

Destination Management Practices: factors that can enhance the appeal of core resources and strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the supporting factors. It includes; activities of destination management organizations, destination marketing, policy planning and development, human resource development and environmental management.

Situational Conditions: These are forces in the wider external environment that impact upon destination competitiveness either positively or negatively. They relate to the micro and macro environment, price competitiveness and safety and security in the destination. Sports

Tourism : All form of passive and active participation in sporting activities, participated in a casual or organized way, which are organized for business or non-business purposes which require the participant to travel.

Supporting Factors : Elements and resources that exert a secondary effect by providing a foundation in which a successful sports tourism industry can be established. They Include; general infrastructure, quality of service, hospitality and market ties.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and provides the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, hypotheses, justification of the study and finally the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism's economic influence and opportunity was first realized in the 1950s and 1960s by countries like France, Spain, Italy, Greece, UK, Ireland, Australia and the USA who used it as part of an integrated development strategy to fuel urban regeneration, develop transport systems, finance rural development, and catalyze private sector development through employment and economic growth (De Knop, 2004). As travel became cheaper and accessible to more people, developing countries offered the prospect of exotic destinations and products attractive to the fast expanding market-driven foreign travel companies.

Mann (2005) notes that tourism's role in development has evolved considerably in the past fifteen years. It is increasingly considered a stimulant not just for foreign exchange, economic growth and employment, but also an opportunity for host community participation in biodiversity conservation, urban growth, and infrastructure overhaul and planning, rural development, environmental restoration, coastal protection and cultural heritage preservation. In this vein, the United Nations "State of the Environment" report, *Our Common Future* was reinforced at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 where Agenda 21 was formally adopted. The adage for tourism development was "... to maximize the potential of tourism for eradicating poverty by developing appropriate strategies in cooperation with all major groups, including indigenous and

local communities" (Agenda 21 Declaration). This ideology put a whole new spin on development activities as they related to tourism, moving away from solely economic gain to emphasizing environmental protection, community involvement, and greater cooperation.

Today, one of the most interesting tourism subsets is sports tourism. A connection between tourism and sports created a new type of tourism entertaining individuals in their leisure time as well as creating spiritual and physical freshness. (Gibson *et al*, 2006) define sport tourism as travel from one's residence to a particular place in order to participate in a competitive or leisure sport activity, to spectate a sport activity or to visit sport attractions such as stadia. (Daniel *et al*, 2001) note that sport tourists are visitors traveling from their residence for at least twenty four hours with the aim of participation in a sport event (sport events, sport attractions, medical sport and recreational sport). Sport derives its root definition from disport, meaning to divert oneself. It carried the original implication of people diverting their attention from the rigors and pressures of everyday life by participating in the mirth and whimsy of frolic in some physical activity (Zauhar, 2004). Today, however, sport is often anything but diversion to its active and passive participants.

Travelling in order to participate in sport is not a phenomenon that has only made its appearance in recent years. Services to attract tourists were developed as early as the ancient Greek Olympics, as for other sporting festivals, namely the Pythian Games, the Isthmian Games, and the Nemean Games. Historical records refer to tens of thousands of visitors, but not merely participants (Yiannakis, 2009). Thus the development of services such as food, drinks, souvenirs, guided tours, and transport made their appearance not only at the sports venue but also on the roadways. Thus, making one of the constraints of travelling of that time seem easier (Zauhar, 2003). Although this type

of tourist attraction has existed for more than a millennium, it was not until recent years that attention was paid to the true potential of such a trend. Kenya may be one of the countries in more need for the development of such special interest products, since the country's tourism movement suffers from seasonality, dependence on tour operators, monolateral development of the touristic product, and the need for development of niche tourism products (Vision 2030 Report, 2008).

Traditionally, destinations have responded to a decline in visitor numbers by increasing their marketing expenditure (Buhalis, 2000; Ritchie and Crouch, 1993). This strategy seems not to be working as more and more destinations are spending more on marketing, with limited results.

In the new millennium, tourism has become the most important economic activity on a worldwide scale. International arrivals in 2002, for the first time in history, reached the 700 million mark (World Tourism Organization, 2003).

The contribution of the travel and tourism industry to the world economy is significant. Although the growth in global tourism appears to continue at rates comparable to other industries, tourism is in a mature stage, leading to increasing competition among destinations. Buhalis (2000) and Morgan et.al (2002) point out that 70% of all tourists visit the ten major world tourist destinations (France, United States, China, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany, Malaysia and Mexico), leaving the rest of the world sharing the remaining 30% of tourists. This indicates the intensity of competition for the other less known destinations. For the tourism industry to be a profitable industry now and in the long-term, its development and management should be according to a new competitiveness paradigm (Ritchie and Crouch, 1993). Competitiveness is now

widely accepted as the most important factor determining the long term success of organizations, industries, regions and countries (Kozak and Rimmington, 1999).

In the past, destinations believed that it was enough to have only the tourists, destination resources, low salaries and attractive exchange rates for them to compete and be successful in the international tourism industry (Bordas, 1994). This approach gave rise to the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies that aimed mainly at stimulating tourist volumes. In most cases results have not been as expected, leading to questioning of this strategy. Empirical evidence has shown that to secure long-term profits and continued patronage, it is essential to have competitive advantages (Poon, 1993).

A competitive advantage can be achieved if the overall appeal of any tourism destination is superior to that of an alternative destination open to potential visitors (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The attractiveness of a destination reflects the feelings and opinions of its visitors about the destination's perceived ability to satisfy their needs. The more a destination is able to meet the needs of the tourists, the more it is perceived to be attractive and the more the destination is likely to be chosen. Mayo and Jarvis (1980), define attractiveness as, 'the perceived ability of the destination to deliver individual benefits'. This ability is enhanced by the attributes of a destination, that is, those components that makeup a destination. This is a demand side perspective of the destination. The importance of these attributes help people to evaluate the attractiveness of a destination and make relevant choices.

Tourist Destination Competitiveness and Attractiveness (TDCA) is defined by Vengesayi (2003), as the ability of a destination to provide social, physical and economic benefits to the destination population as well as a satisfying experience to the

tourist. Studies of destination attractiveness have centered on the needs of the tourists and what attracts them to various destinations, (Formica, 2001; Hu and Ritchie, 1993), while those on destination competitiveness have focused on the ability of organizations to produce products that are accepted internationally (Kozak and Rimmington, 1999; Newall, 1992).

While there are many tourism products, sports tourism has increasingly become one of the most popular. In order for any country to benefit from sports tourism, it needs to have the necessary conditions that can make the industry to flourish. As a country, Kenya is known for its sports activities starting from athletics, deep sea fishing, golfing, football, cricket, hockey, rugby and so on. However, Kenya is particularly recognized internationally due to her excellent performance in middle and long distance races. Kenyan runners, and especially those originating from the North Rift, have dominated international middle- and long-distance running for over forty years, prompting significant interest in the factors contributing to their success. Pitsiladis et al (2004) cite several explanations including environmental factors, psychological advantage and favorable physiological characteristics, which may be genetically conferred or environmentally determined. Running is inherent within local Kenyan tradition and culture, and the Kenyan way of life, which involves many outdoor activities and pastimes in addition to mostly unfavorable living conditions, is conducive to enhanced distance running performance. Pitsiladis *et al* (2004) reiterate that despite economic deprivation, Kenya has produced world and international running champions repeatedly over the past few decades; these champions have become role models for the younger generations, who take up running in the hope of a better future for themselves. Favorable environmental conditions such as altitude, diet and anthropometry, in addition to the motivational and socio-economic factors mentioned above, have all been

proposed as possible reasons for the unsurpassed achievements of Kenyan distance runners. The North Rift which has continued to produce majority of the country's middle and long distance runners, has tended to become a centre of interest for many people from various corners of the world. This study therefore, sought to explore the factors that influence the competitiveness of sports tourism in North Rift Kenya. Since athletics is the most popular sport in the region, the study focused more on its potential of attracting more sports tourists to the region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by countries of the United Nations and bilateral and multilateral development agencies has encouraged the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), national tourism administrations and some development agencies to adopt new approaches to tourism development, focusing on local economic impacts, and in particular, on poverty alleviation (Goodwin,2006). Kenya's Vision 2030, sets its tourism targets for the year 2012 as the development of niche tourism products, one of them being sports tourism and further elaborates on the importance of tourism benefitting the community both socially and economically. Standeven and De knop (2004) define Sports Tourism as all the forms of passive and active participation in sporting activities, participated in a casual or organized way, which are organized for business or non-business purposes which require the participant to travel. Although sports tourism is a newly-introduced trend on the tourist market, it is characterized by fierce competition due to its developmental potential.

According to the conclusions at the World Conference for Sport Tourism held by the World Tourism Organization and the International Olympic Committee in 2001 in Barcelona, it is expected that sports tourism will exhibit one of the most important

growth rates, as the share of all forms of sport tourism in the overall tourism market is estimated to be 32% according to the Sports Tourism International Council (STIC). Sport tourism development is a strategy carried out more and more by tourism destinations, especially by large consolidated ones. The aims of such a strategy are manifold: product differentiation, enhancement of competitive advantages and, ultimately, the promotion of socio-economic development (Higham & Hinch, 2002).

Trends in tourism over the last decade have shown that sports tourism has emerged as a very significant segment of the global tourism market. The participation of tourists in sports related activities is eminent in the International Visitor Survey (2004). There is a lot of potential for promoting this segment of the tourism industry. Sport events not only attract tourists; they attract media attention, increase community profile, contribute to economic development, enhance local sport development, increase participation in sport, help to improve and develop facilities and contribute to community pride. Social and health benefits are also important outcomes of a strong sport tourism sector. Sports tourism if properly developed and planned with the commitment of all relevant stakeholders should bring about economic, social, and community benefits (Zauhar, 2004).

The priority segment for the North Rift region in Kenya is the sport-related type, that is, athletics, and therefore, it is necessary to develop the existing athletics events in the region as well as develop others. Currently sport tourists are attracted to the region by annual athletics events such as the annual Tecla Lorupe Run for Peace held every November. Small events include Chepkoilel Cross Country, Discovery Kenya, Paul Boit Memorial Eldoret Marathon, Athletics Kenya National Championship and the Safaricom half Marathon, (Kiprop, 2007).

Despite the wealth in resources such as the high altitude climate and local talent found in the North Rift, poverty in the region has continued to be a severe problem. Specifically, hunger continues to rear its head from time to time. The Economic Survey (2009) indicates that poverty levels in the Rift Valley province were at 48.7% for the people living below the poverty line. Between one quarter and half of the population earns less than \$1 US each day, while the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is around \$360 US.

At this point it's important to point out (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999) who argued that; Destinations with a wealth of resources may sometimes not be as competitive as a destination with a lack of resources. A destination that has a tourism vision, shares the vision among all the stakeholders, has management which develops an appropriate marketing strategy and a government which supports tourism industry with an efficient tourism policy, may be more competitive than one that has never asked what role tourism is to play in its economy. They posit that; the most important is the ability of the tourism sector to add value to its products. The primary attractiveness can be a source for higher value added, but the value is only created through performing activities. It can happen that the comparative advantage is lost due to the uncompetitive secondary tourism supply. The support of tourism stakeholders is essential for successful development and sustainability of tourism and could help to improve destination competitiveness. As a result, the tourism destination will receive many benefits from enhanced tourism destination competitiveness.

For this reason it is important that for the North Rift region is to market itself as a leading sports tourism destination, it should be able to identify its strengths and weaknesses, measure its competitiveness and thereby develop their future strategies.

This study therefore sought to determine the factors that influence the competitiveness of the North Rift region in Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

1.3 Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to examine the factors that influence the competitiveness of North Rift Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the core resources and attractions available for sports tourism in North Rift Kenya.
- ii. To determine the range and level of supporting factors available for sports tourism in the North Rift region of Kenya.
- iii. To examine the destination's sports tourism management practices in North Rift
- iv. Kenya.
- v. To establish the sports tourism situational conditions existing in the North Rift region

1.3.2 Research Questions

- i. What are the core resources and attractions available for sports tourism in North Rift Kenya?
- ii. What is the range and level of supporting facilities available for sports tourism in North Rift Kenya?
- iii. Which destination management practices are carried out in North Rift Kenya?
- iv. What situational conditions prevail in North Rift Kenya in relation to sports tourism?

1.4 Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between availability of core tourism resources and the competitiveness of the North Rift region of Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the range and level of supporting facilities and competitiveness of the North Rift region of Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the destination management practices in North Rift Kenya and its competitiveness as a sports tourism destination.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between the situational conditions prevailing in the North Rift region and its competitiveness as a sports tourism destination.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Destination competitiveness is a very recent topic that has been gaining attention due to the increasing competitive environment that tourism destinations have been facing; so far it has been investigated mainly on a generic basis and more situation-specific studies are needed.

The findings and recommendations of this study should be of use as a relevant body of information to tourism policy makers and other interested stakeholders. This can assist them in designing strategies and policies, as well as support them to make relevant decisions regarding the North Rift region with regard to sports tourism. The information presented in this study can be used to derive other conclusions, make other type of comparisons or serve as a reference for the development of further studies on destination competitiveness. From the academic point of view, the study has certainly contributed to the reasonably scarce tourism competitiveness literature in Kenya. The

methods used in this research can be replicated to other destinations, or even to the North Rift region itself, when investigating other types of tourism or source markets. The findings in this study may also be implemented by players in the tourism industry to improve tourists' arrivals in the North Rift.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

The study was concerned with examining the factors that influence the competitiveness of sports tourism in North Rift Kenya and was conducted between March 2010 and October 2010 by carrying out a survey on athletics as a sports tourism production the Kenyan North Rift region. The Kenyan North Rift region is made up of eight districts in the Rift Valley Province, namely; Turkana, West Pokot, Marakwet, Keiyo, Trans Nzoia, Baringo, Nandi and Uasin Gishu districts.

The study area was narrowed down to Uasin Gishu and Keiyo districts as these districts represented the highest concentration of athletics facilities in the region. A sample of various stakeholders including, coaches and officials from the sports and tourism industries were selected and data collected using questionnaires and document analysis. The study specifically sought to determine the availability of tourism and attractions as well as the range and level of supporting facilities for sports tourism in North Rift Kenya. It also examined the destination management practices used in the North Rift region and finally examined the policy, planning and development strategies adopted in the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

As the basis for this present study, which aimed at identifying the factors influencing the competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination, the integrated model for destination competitiveness by (Dwyer *et al*, 2004) was employed.

The integrated model was developed as a general model of competitiveness to enable comparisons between countries and tourism sector industries. The indicators set in their model comprise both objective and subjective measures, and derived from extensive literature review and discussions at workshops held in Korea and Australia. Like (Ritchie and Crouch, 1999) the well-known researchers of tourism destination competitiveness, Dwyer and Kim (2003) also considered the theory of national and firm competitiveness and agreed on the fact that, in case of a tourism destination whose attractive resources do not necessarily suffer depletion, a competitiveness model must recognize the importance of considering both comparative advantage and competitive advantage. By consequence many of the elements contained in their model are similar to those identified by (Ritchie and Crouch, 1999).

The model displayed in figure 1 brings together the main elements of destination competitiveness as proposed by tourism researchers. The determinants are classified under six main headings: Inherited Resources, Created Resources, Supporting Factors and Resources, Destination Management, Situational Conditions and Demand Conditions.

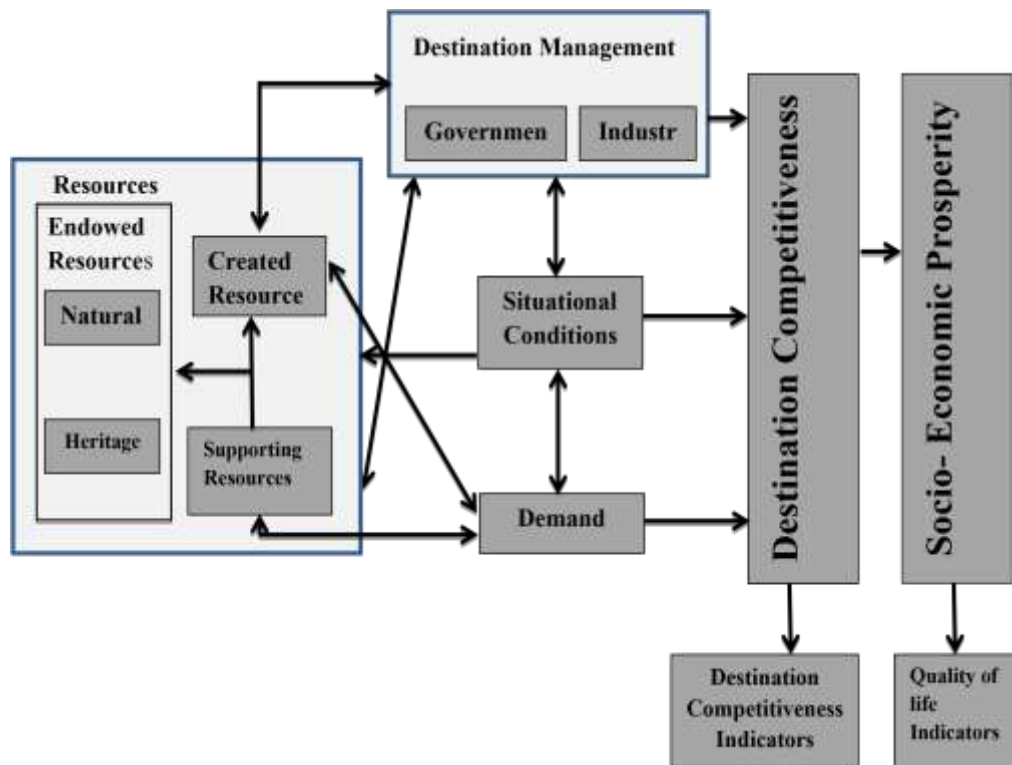


Figure 1: Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness

(Source: Dwyer *et al*, 2004)

The integrative model contains many of the variables and category headings identified by Crouch and Ritchie (1995, 1999) and Ritchie and Crouch (1993, 2000) in their comprehensive framework of destination competitiveness, but differ in some important respects. The present model explicitly recognizes *demand conditions* as an important determinant of destination competitiveness. It also explicitly recognizes that destination competitiveness is not an ultimate end of policy making but is an intermediate goal towards the objective of regional or national economic prosperity.

The *Resources* category is divided into two types: Endowed (inherited) and Created. Endowed resources, in turn, can be classified as Natural (mountains, lakes, beaches, rivers, climate etc.) and Heritage or Cultural (cuisine, handicrafts, language, customs, belief systems etc.). Created resources include tourism infrastructure, special events, and the range of available activities; entertainment and shopping. In this model,

supporting resources (or enabling factors) include general infrastructure, quality of service, accessibility of destination, hospitality and market ties. Endowed and Created Resources are each allocated their own box, as is Supporting Factors and Resources. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) state that, whereas the core resources and attractors of a destination constitute the primary motivations for inbound tourism, supporting factors and resources exert more of a secondary effect by providing a foundation upon which a successful tourism industry can be established.

The integrated model groups these three boxes within a larger box, indicating that destination competitiveness depends on the value added to core resources by these other factors.

Situational Conditions are forces in the wider external environment that impact upon destination competitiveness. Situational conditions relate to economic, social, cultural, demographic, environmental, political, legal, governmental, regulatory, technological, and competitive trends and events that impact on the way firms and other organizations in the destination do business, and present both opportunities and threats to their operations (David, 2001). These conditions correspond to the Qualifying and Amplifying determinants as identified by Crouch and Ritchie (1999).

Dwyer *et al.*, (2004), when designing the model regarded the situational conditions as falling within one of two interactive and interrelated contexts of organizations operating in the destination – the operating environment and the remote environment. The operating environments of the different private- and public-sector institutions in a destination are important because, to large extent, the conduct and performance of these institutions depends on the overall structure of the industry in which they are situated (McGee 1988; Porter, 1980 and 1990). The remote environment comprises those forces

and events outside the destination that constrain the strategic options of organization managers but over which management have no control (Johnson & Scholes, 1997; Tribe, 1999).

Destination Management factors are those that can enhance the appeal of the core resources and attractors, strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the supporting factors and resources and best adapt to the constraints imposed by the situational conditions (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

Unlike Ritchie and Crouch, the integrated model does not provide a separate box for Destination, Policy and Development, but subsumes this determinant type under Destination Management. The category includes the activities of destination management organizations, destination marketing management, destination policy, planning and development, human resource development and environmental management (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000). In the integrated model presented here, a distinction is made between destination management activities undertaken by the public sector and destination management undertaken by the private sector. Included among the activities of the public sector we would find the development of national tourism strategies, marketing by the National Tourism Organizations (NTOs), national and regional manpower programs, and environmental protection legislation. Included among the activities of the private sector we would find those of tourism/hospitality industry associations, industry involvement in funding of destination marketing programs, industry training programs, industry adoption of 'green' tourism operations and so on.

The model contains a separate box for *Demand Conditions*. This category comprises three main elements of tourism; demand-awareness, perception and preferences.

Awareness can be generated by various means including destination marketing activities. The image projected can influence perceptions and hence affect visitation. Actual visitation will depend on the match between tourist preferences and perceived destination product offerings. A destination's product must develop in a way that 'matches' the evolving consumer preferences, if the destination is to enhance or even maintain competitiveness.

The single direction arrows from Supporting Resources to Endowed Resources and Created Resources indicates that the mere existence of such resources is insufficient to generate visitation to a destination in the absence of tourism infrastructure (accommodation, transportation, restaurants), organized activities, entertainment, shopping and so on which enable or facilitate visitation. Such attributes represent 'value added' by organizations in the destination to the overall tourism product.

There are two-directional arrows linking both Created Resources and Supporting Resources to Demand and to Destination Management. These arrows indicate a two-way causal link. Thus, specific features of Created Resources and Supporting Resources influence Demand, whilst the nature of Demand Conditions, specifically tourist preferences and motives for travel, influence the types of products and services developed within a destination. In similar vein, specific features of Created Resources and Supporting Resources influence Destination Management to achieve and maintain sustainability whilst the activities of public- and private-sector tourism organizations influence types of products and services developed.

The box representing Destination Competitiveness is linked backwards to the various determinants of competitiveness and forwards to one representing Socioeconomic Prosperity, indicating that destination competitiveness is itself an intermediate goal

towards more fundamental aim of socioeconomic well-being for residents. Each of these objectives is associated with a set of indicators. Indicators of destination competitiveness are many and varied and comprise both subjective attributes (destination 'appeal', 'scenic beauty') as well as those that are more objectively determined (destination market share, foreign exchange earnings from tourism). Indicators of Socioeconomic Prosperity relate to key macroeconomic variables including productivity levels in the economy, aggregate employment levels, per capita incomes, rate of economic growth and so on (Dwyer and Kim, 2004).

From a perspective of this study, this model was the most relevant. It brings together the main elements of destination competitiveness, it provides a realistic display of the linkages between the various elements, the distinction between inherited and created resources which is useful, includes all relevant determinants that shape and influence a destination's competitive strength. This eventually enabled the researcher to formulate a conceptual model for the study, schematically presented in the figure below, which indicates the factors that may determine competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.

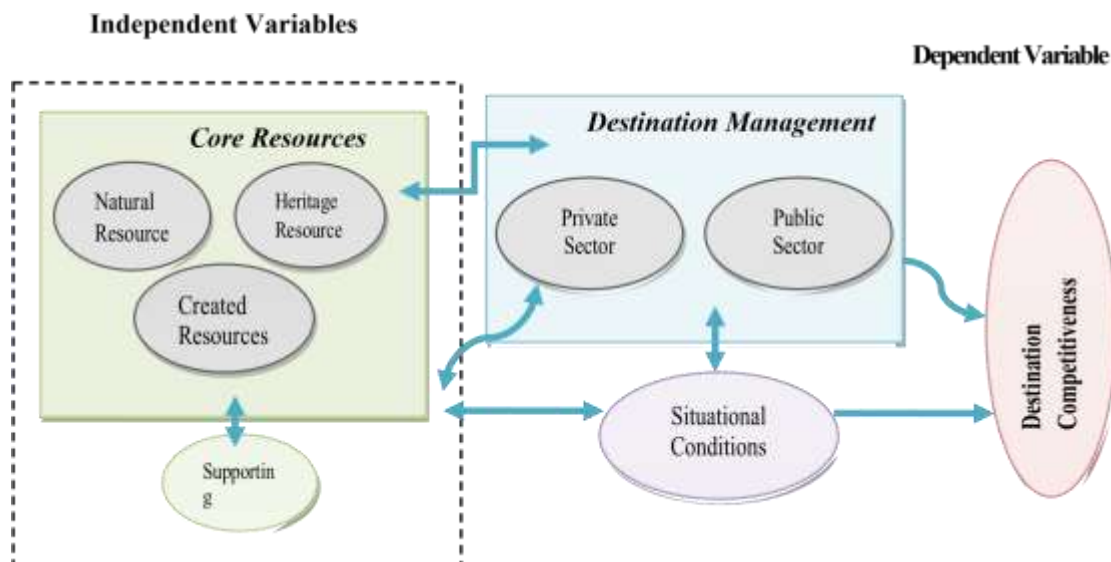


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework: Factors influencing competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.

Source: Adapted from the integrated model of competitiveness by Dwyer et al (2004)

The model is conceptualized such that; Inherited and Created Resources are the core resources that a destination is naturally endowed with and thus provide various unique characteristics of a destination that make it attractive to visit and therefore they are all placed in the same box. Inherited resources can be classified as Natural and Heritage. The Natural Resources include physiographic, climate, flora and fauna and so on. The culture and heritage, like the destinations' history, customs, architectural features, and traditions enhance the attractiveness of a tourism destination. Created Resources include tourism infrastructure, special events, entertainment, shopping and any available activities. These resources were visualized as greatest determinants of the competitiveness of the Kenyan North Rift region when promoting sports tourism.

The category of Supporting factors and Resources provides the foundations for a successful tourism industry and underpin destination competitiveness. Private and public sector organizations 'supporting' tourism activity that possess a collection of specific skills not easily imitable by rivals can be an important source of sustained competitive advantage (Barney *et al*, 1990). They include general infrastructure, quality

of services, hospitality, and accessibility of destination. For this reason, they are placed in the wider box together with the core resources with the single tailed arrow representing the fact that the core resources cannot on their own provide a sustainable tourism environment.

Destination Management includes factors that enhance the attractiveness of the inherited and created resources and strengthen the quality of the supporting factors and those which best adapt to the situational conditions (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). The category includes the activities of Destination Management Organizations, Destination Marketing Management, Destination Policy, Planning and Development, Human Resource Development and Environmental Management. These functions are carried out by both the government and firms within the tourism industry.

There are two-directional arrows linking both Core Resources and Supporting Resources to Destination Management. These arrows indicate a two-way causal link. Thus, specific features of Core Resources and Supporting Resources influence demand, whilst the nature of demand conditions, specifically tourist preferences and motives for travel, influence the types of products and services developed within a destination. In a similar vein, specific features of Created Resources and Supporting Resources influence Destination Management to achieve and maintain sustainability whilst the activities of public- and private-sector tourism organizations influence types of products and services developed.

The factors of Situational conditions can moderate, modify or even mitigate destination competitiveness. This can be a positive or unlikely negative influence on the competitiveness. There would seem to be many types of situational conditions that influence destination competitiveness. These are Destinations' micro and macro

environment; the strategies of destination firms and organizations, security and safety and the political dimension. It is important to note that, this conceptual model does not capture demand conditions. The awareness, perception and preferences are three main elements of the tourism demand. These were not included in the study as the study focused more on what the destination offered rather than the views and perceptions of tourists.

All these factors are visualized as having a role to play in the competitiveness of the North Rift region of Kenya as a sports destination.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the literature review of the study. The aim of the literature review is to define what sports tourism is, give a brief history of sports tourism, the resources necessary for the development of sports tourism in a destination and the factors affecting the development of sports tourism as advanced by different authors.

2.2 Sports Tourism

Sport can be defined in many ways and from different viewpoints or distinctive perspectives. (Zauhar, 2004) states that sport derives its root definition from disport, meaning to divert oneself. He goes ahead to describe that it carried the original implication of people diverting their attention from the rigors and pressures of everyday life by participating in the mirth and whimsy of frolic of some physical activity. Today, however, sport is often anything but diversion to its active and passive participants.

Vinoker (1988) defines it as follows:

A sport contest is a voluntary, agreed upon, human event in which one or more human participants oppose at least one other human to seek the mutual appraisal of the relative abilities of all participants to move mass in space and time by utilizing bodily moves which exhibit developed motor skills, physical prowess, physiological and psychological endurance, and socially approved tactics and strategy.

In the past decade or so, sport has become a social phenomenon of great importance and magnitude and, perhaps, complex. Sport permeates any number of levels of contemporary society and it touches upon and deeply influences such disparate elements as status, race relations, business life, automotive design, clothing styles, and the concept of hero, languages and ethical values (Fox, 1982).

According to Standeven and De knop (1999), Sport Tourism is defined as:

All the forms of passive and active participation in sporting activities, participated in a casual or organized way, which are organized for business or non-business purposes which require the participant to travel.

Weed (2006) argues that such a definition, while allowing an inclusive approach to the study of sports tourism, does little more than combine widely-accepted definitions of sport and tourism and as such, it is really no definition at all as it doesn't add anything to an understanding of the area that couldn't be established from definitions of sport and of tourism as it simply identifies tourism activity involving sport.

However, as Weed & Bull (2004) argue, sports tourism is a synergistic phenomenon that is more than the simple combination of sport and tourism. As such, it requires an understanding of both sport and tourism, but it needs to be conceptualized in a way that is not dependent on definitions of sport and of tourism, and which allows its synergistic elements to be understood. Inevitably, sports tourism may be 'confused' with both sport and tourism, particularly by participants who are familiar with the concepts of sport and of tourism, but less likely to be familiar with the idea of sports tourism.

According to Neirotti (2005), an approach capturing the distinctive and synergetic aspects of the sport tourism phenomenon is one which incorporates three domains of this form of human travelling: 1) Actively participating, 2) Spectating, and 3) Visiting.

Similarly Gibson (1998) labels the three categories as: a) Active Sport Tourism, b) Event Sport Tourism, c) Nostalgia Sport Tourism. The first, respectively, refers to actively participating in a given sport, the second to spectatorship of an event, and the third to visiting and perhaps paying homage.

Likewise Gammon and Robinson (1997) classify sport tourists as either "hard" or "soft", a "hard" tourist being a person who travels with the intention of actively or passively participating in competitive sport, thus making sport the prime motivation for

travel, while a “soft” sport tourist is someone participating in sport in a recreational manner.

Consequently sport tourists are people travelling with the pursuit of involvement in a sporting activity, but also people participating in sport in a more casual manner while on vacation either actively or passively. It is not just a professional’s right to say he or she is physically active, but also that of an individual, in the context that sport is not his primary occupation or pursuit but a secondary or leisure activity (Yiannakis, 2009).

Accordingly, an appropriate definition of sport tourism can be the following:

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 (Gibson, 1998).

Elsewhere sport tourism is presented as a subset of overall tourism encircling contributing categories such as adventure tourism, health tourism, competitive tourism, recreational tourism, educational tourism, and business tourism (Neirotti, 2003).

Sport tourism development is a strategy carried out more and more by tourism destinations, especially by large consolidated ones. The aims of such a strategy are manifold: product differentiation, enhancement of competitive advantages and, ultimately, the promotion of socio- economic development (Higham & Hinch, 2002).

2.3 The Origins of Destination Competitiveness

Ritchie and Crouch (2000) stress that the fundamental tourism product is the destination or destination experience. Tourism competition therefore, is centered on the destination.

Kozak and Rimmington (1999) similarly stress that tourist destinations are central elements of the tourism system. There are thus a range of definitions that attempt to define the components of this experience. Hall (2000), Murphy et al (1999) and Davidson and Maitland (1997) define a destination as an amalgam of tourism products

and services that provide an integrated experience to consumers. Furthermore, they regard destinations as being well defined geographical areas such as a country, a town, an island or a region. Buhalis (2000) stresses that destinations are also a perceptual concept, which can be treated subjectively by consumers depending on their cultural background, purpose of visit, educational background, past experience and their travel itinerary. He stresses that branding is thus a critical element of a destination and indicates that a destination is an amalgam of tourism products and services which are consumed under a brand name. A tourism destination can be regarded as a combination of all experiences, services and products in a particular area. He furthermore indicates that destinations can be classified in several categories in terms of their principal attractiveness. For example, there are urban, sea side and rural tourism destinations. Butler (2006), states that a destination or 'tourism area' has a definite lifecycle and that the life span of a destination can be extended through good destination management practice and competitive strategies.

The increasingly competitive nature of tourism destinations, and Porter's seminal work (1985; 1996) on competitive strategy, inspired tourism researchers to consider the concept of destination competitiveness seriously. This was further reinforced by Poon's (1993) groundbreaking thesis 'Tourism Technology and Competitive Strategy'. Porter (1985; 1996) stressed that competitive strategy is the search for a favorable competitive or distinctly different position in an industry or market. It is aimed at establishing a profitable and competitive position against the forces (factors or bases) that determine industry competition. In order to do so, enterprises need constantly to be monitoring their environment in terms of the bargaining power of suppliers and consumers; the threat of new providers; threat of substitutes and rivalry between firms (Porter, 1979).

The UNWTO (2007) refers to this process as a situational analysis to determine competitive position and indicate that the most common method to do so is through a SWOT analysis. This distinguished position is also known as competitive advantage, or as Evans et al (2003) state, is the ability to outperform competitors – an ability which can be measured in terms of superior profitability, market share or other similar performance measures. In the case of nations, Porter (1990) is of the view that competitiveness is influenced by four factors, namely: factor conditions – physical, human, capital, infrastructure and knowledge resources, market structure, organization and strategies, demand conditions, and related and supporting industries. In addition, he indicates that government and chance events can influence any of these four factors.

Poon (1993) stresses that tourism destinations and enterprises need to be more strategic in their orientation. They should strive to be permanently innovative to adapt to the constant change that is occurring in tourism and which is far more dynamic than is the case with manufactured goods and many services. The author is of the view that ‘New Tourists’ are fundamentally different from the ‘old’. They are more ‘green’, flexible, independent, more quality conscious and demanding. New tourism is flexible, segmented, customized to tourism needs and diagonally integrated. By contrast, old tourism was rigidly packaged and standardized. Competitive strategies which put the customer first, apply the principals of service quality and are radically innovative are thus critical for the sustainability of destinations.

Some of the most notable and earliest examples of tourism research regarding the concept of destination competitiveness were Go’s (1994) application of Porter’s model to the Hong Kong hotel industry; Pearce’s (1997) application of competitive theory to Sarawak, Borneo; Smeral’s (1998) study of the impact of globalization on tourism SMEs; Faulkner et al’s (1999) competitive analysis of South Australia’s core

attractions; Kozak and Rimmingtons (1999) work on developing consumer competitive sets to evaluate the competitiveness of Mediterranean destinations; D' Hauteserre's (2000) case study of the destination's competitive lessons that can be gleaned from Foxwoods Casino Resort; Dwyer et al's (2000) study of destination price competitiveness and; Mihalic's (2000) paper regarding the significance of environment management as a destination management competitiveness factor. This in turn led to the publication of Hassan's (2000) and Ritchie and Crouch's (1999; 2000) initial destination competitiveness models. Heath's (2003) competitive destination model and constructive criticism of Ritchie and Crouch's initial model and Dwyer et al's (2000) unpublished model of destination competitiveness, encouraged Dwyer (2003) to refine and publish the 'Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness. Furthermore, Ritchie and Crouch (2003), through constant introspection, continued to increase the comprehensive nature of their model.

Dwyer et al (2003) has indicated that his model requires further refining. He is of the view that more research needs to be undertaken regarding the relative importance of the different dimensions and attributes of destination competitiveness. There is also a need to explore the different indicators relevant to the different contexts or levels in which the model can be applied. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) have similarly stated that their model is a conceptual one and more research is required to build this model. These sentiments encouraged researchers in the last decade to apply these models. Good examples of this work have been attempts by Enright and Newton's (2004; 2005) to apply empirically Ritchie and Crouch's model to Hong Kong and other key Asian destinations; Jones and Haven Tang's (2005) work on Tourism Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Service Quality and Destination Competitiveness; Gomelezelj and

Mihalic's (2007) application of destination competitiveness models to Slovenia and Wilde's (2008) attempts to link destination competitiveness to the destination life cycle model and the concept of destination development.

2.3.1 The Concept of Destination Competitiveness

Traditionally, the concept of competitiveness was adapted from economic theory and applied to the general firm or company (Porter, 1990; World Economic Forum, 1995). The debate on destination competitiveness within tourism research has not yet settled on a widely accepted concept of destination competitiveness. The concept of destination competitiveness is very broad, but there have been a number of important attempts to clearly define it. D'Hautesserre (2000) defined it as the ability of a destination to maintain its market position and share and/or to improve upon them through time. Hassan (2000) stresses the significance of sustainability in her definition of destination competitiveness. She defines this concept as being a destination's ability to create and integrate value-added products that sustain its resources while maintaining market position relative to competitors. Buhalis (2000) states that;

Destination competitiveness is the effort and achievement of long term profitability, above the average of the tourism industry within which it operates, as well as above alternative investment opportunities in other industries.

This definition includes the concept of opportunity cost and illustrates that successful tourism destinations should not only compete within their particular industry, but also against other investment opportunities. This definition also includes the sustainability of local resources for ensuring the maintenance of long-term success as well as the achievement of equitable returnson-resources utilized to satisfy all stakeholders. Dwyer et al (2000) on the other hand view;

Destination competitiveness as a general concept that encompasses price differentials, coupled with exchange rate movements, productivity levels of various components of the tourist industry and

qualitative factors affecting the attractiveness or otherwise of a destination.

Heath (2003) provides a practical synopsis of the definitions of destination competitiveness that had been developed up until the end of 2002. His perception of destination competitiveness is:

It is the ability of a destination to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destinations on those aspects of the tourism experience considered to be important by tourists. A large number of variables are linked to the notion of destination "competitiveness". These include objectively measured variables such as visitor numbers and market share and subjectively measured variables such as "richness of culture and heritage", "quality of the tourism experience.

He goes on to support Ritchie and Crouch's (2000) statement that "competitiveness is illusory without sustainability". He stresses that, to be competitive, a destination's development of tourism must be sustainable, not just economically and not just ecologically, but socially, culturally and politically as well. The most competitive destination is the one that most effectively creates sustainable wellbeing for its residents. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) point out that;

Destination competitiveness is the ability of a destination to increase tourism expenditure, to attract increasing numbers of visitors while providing them with satisfying memorable experiences, and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of such an area for future generations. They stress that destination competitiveness is a multi-dimensional concept and is derived from the political, economic, environmental, social and technological wealth of a destination. It is also determined by tourism specific factors as well as a range of broader macro environmental factors.

Enright and Newton (2005) and Wilde (2008) caution that the factors that determine destination competitiveness can vary by type of destination and the life cycle stage of a destination. There is thus a need for a tailored approach in developing a competitiveness strategy for a destination.

2.4 Destination Competitiveness Models

A competitive advantage can be achieved if the overall appeal of any tourism destination is superior to that of an alternative destination open to potential visitors (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

A number of authors have provided some inputs into the understanding and practical research of competitiveness in the area of tourism destinations (DeKeyser & Vanhove, 1994); Evans & Johnson, 1995; Hassan, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Mihalic, 2000; Ritchie & Crouch, 1993; Sirse & Mihalic, 1999; Thomas & Long, 2000). For instance, Go and Govers (2000) define the integrated quality management of a tourism destination and price-based promotions as a value-increasing strategy. Pearce (1997) points out destination evaluation techniques and methods that can systematically analyze and compare the diverse attributes of competing destinations within a planning concept. Mihalic (2000) studied destination competitiveness from an environmental perspective.

Several models of competitiveness have been conceptualized over the last decade with basic similarities as well as differences. The models have been presented below.

2.4.1 Ritchie and Crouch's Model of Destination Competitiveness

According to the well-known tourism competitiveness researchers Ritchie and Crouch (2000), a destination's competitiveness is a country's ability to create added value and thus increase the national wealth by managing assets and processes, attractiveness, aggressiveness and proximity, and thereby integrating these relationships within an economic and social model that takes into account a destination's natural capital and its preservation for future generations. In 2003 they presented the most recently improved version of their competitiveness model: a Conceptual Model of Destination Competitiveness. It has five key determinants, namely; destination policy, planning and

development, destination management, core resources and attractors, and supporting factors and resources. It also points out the importance of the environment surrounding the destination: the global macro environment and the competitive micro environment. Some of the variables identified by Ritchie and Crouch have been included in the integrated model by researchers in Korea and Australia, Dwyer and Kim (2004).

Crouch and Ritchie (1999) have conducted one of the most remarkable studies in destination competitiveness. They investigated tourism competitiveness by taking into account many dimensions which influence the ability of a country to compete and in their own words, 'multidimensional strengths of a tourism destination' such as economic, social, cultural, political, technological and environmental. They developed a destination competitiveness framework which has been widely cited in the competitiveness literature. The foundations for the construction of the framework are the concepts of comparative advantage and competitive advantage. Their model recognizes that destination competitiveness is based upon a destination's resource endowments (comparative advantage) as well as its capacity to deploy resources (competitive advantage). The model also acknowledges the impact of global macroenvironmental forces (such as the global economy, terrorism, cultural and demographic trends, and so on) and competitive micro-environmental circumstances that impact the functioning of the tourism system associated with the destination. The factors of destination competitiveness are represented in the model clustered into the five main groups. In total, the model identifies 36 destination competitiveness attributes. The model also considers the impact of global macroenvironmental forces as well as competitive micro-environmental circumstances that impact the tourism system of the destination, as shown in figure 3 below.



Figure 3: Ritchie and Crouch's Model of destination Competitiveness
(Source: Ritchie and Crouch, 2007)

2.4.2 Heath's Model of Destination Competitiveness

A model of destination competitiveness has been developed by Ernie Heath (2003) who claims that existing models do not appear to adequately provide an integrated treatment of the various issues surrounding the concept of 'competitiveness' and do not place sufficient emphasis on the key success drivers (people) and the vital linkages (such as communication and information management) that need to be considered when developing a comprehensive framework of sustainable destination competitiveness. Heath's model is presented in the form of a house with foundations, cement, building blocks and roof which he describes below:

The Foundations: these provide an essential base for competitiveness. These include: providing and managing the key attractors (for instance history, culture, climate, events, entertainment, and so on) optimizing the comparative and competitive advantages; addressing the fundamental non-negotiable (such as

personal, safety and health issues); providing the enablers (including, infrastructure (airports, roads, signage, and so on), managing capacity); capitalizing on the 'Value Adders' (for instance location, value, and destination linkages); ensuring appropriate facilitators (for example, appropriate airline capacity, accommodation and distribution channels); focusing on the experience enhancers (including, hospitality, service excellence, authentic experiences).

The Cement binds and links the respective facets of competitiveness. These include continuous and transparent communication channels; balancing direct and indirect stakeholder involvement and beneficitation; information management, research and forecasting and managing competitive indicators and benchmarks.

The Building Blocks on the other hand, refer to the necessary elements for the functioning of tourism in a destination. These include a Sustainable Development Policy and Framework (policy and legislative framework, organizational and financing framework, resources and capabilities, investment climate, sustainable environmental principles) and a Strategic and Holistic Destination Marketing Framework and Strategy (destination image and branding, competitive positioning, target marketing/demand management, innovative marketing strategies, and visitor satisfaction management).

The Roof which refers to the key success drivers comprises the 'people' part of destination competitiveness. These include a shared tourism vision and leadership, guiding values and principles, placing strategic priority on the 'people' factor (political will, entrepreneurship, community focus and human

resources development). This can be translated into a common vision and leadership in tourism, guiding values and principles, placing strategic priority in human-related issues.

Heath's model shares many common factors as identified by Ritchie and Crouch (1999) and Dwyer and Kim (2003) which he adapted to tailor a model from a Southern African perspective. However, the most remarkable characteristic of this model is that more emphasis is placed on the human-related factors (the 'Roof').

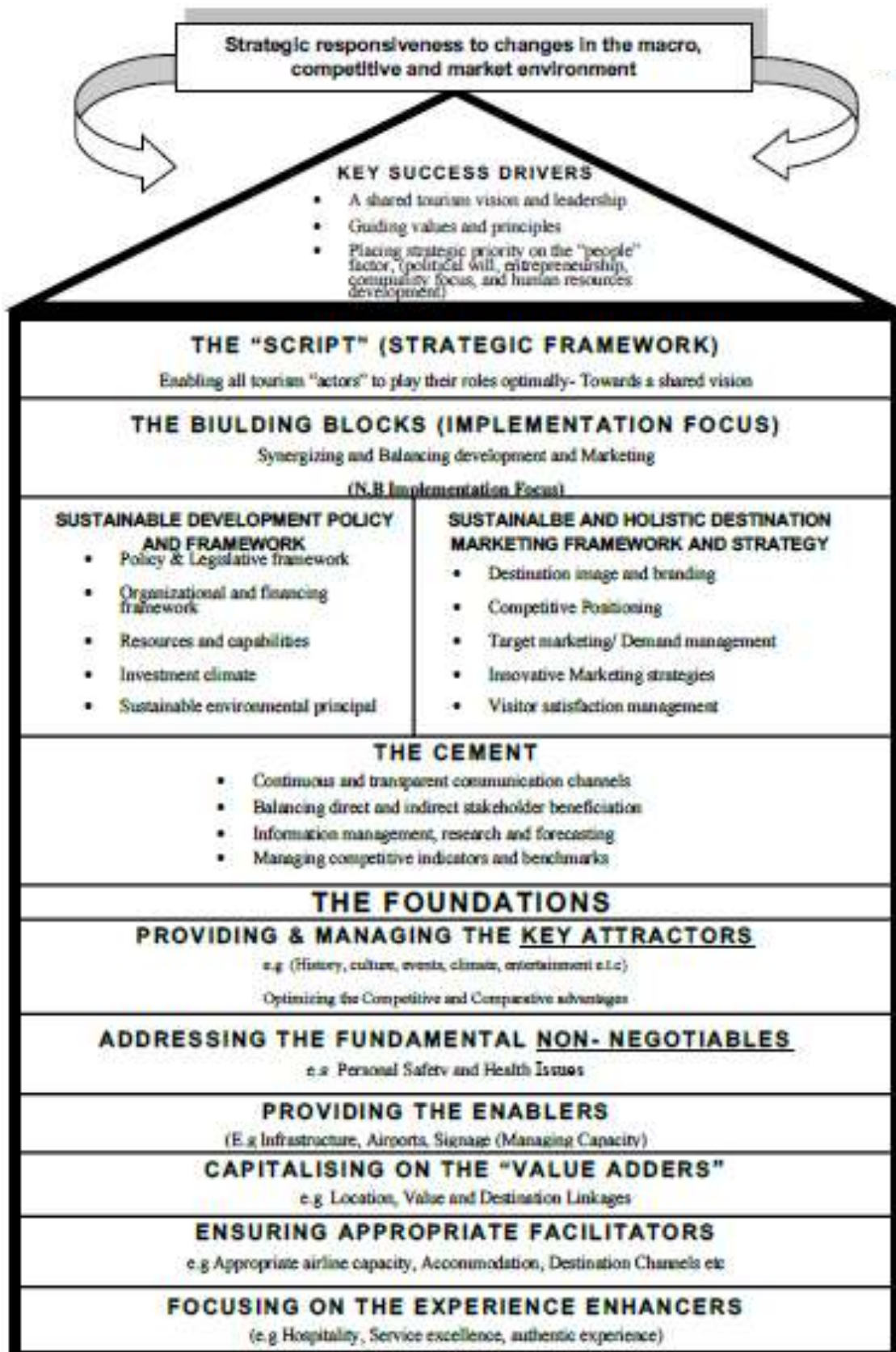


Figure 4: Heaths model of destination competitiveness

2.4.3 Hassan's Model of Destination Competitiveness

The model introduced by Hassan (2000), on the other hand, focuses on environmental sustainability factors associated with tourism destinations in opposition to previous researches which were mainly based on indicators associated with the market performance. While the author agrees that performance indicators like market growth and market share are relevant to competitiveness, he states that analyzing only these factors limits the determination of a sustained future direction. In this sense, the author combines the more common market performance approach with the sustainability factor. A market-oriented vision of sustainable competitiveness is proposed, by affirming that the destination should focus on sustainably keeping its resource-based attributes (examples include; climate, natural resources, indigenous culture, infrastructure) and respond to the constant changes and trends of the demand side (mostly remarkably, the increasing awareness and importance given to environmental, ecofriendliness aspects of the destination by tourists). He posits that the tourism sector, in which various industries take part, demands therefore involvement and cooperation of all stakeholders to achieve a sustainable development and to successfully target travel segments with similar environmental concerns. The model focuses on four main determinants of market competitiveness:

- 1) Comparative advantage which he describes as concerning the macro and micro environment factors that are critical to market competitiveness, such as climate, location, culture, heritage, safety, health, infrastructure, global and regional alliances.
- 2) Demand orientation, representing the ability of the destination to respond to the constantly changing demand characteristics, such as motivations of travel,

environmental awareness, demographic and psychographic profile, among others.

- 3) Industry structure, regards the existence or absence of an organized tourism-related industry that enables the destination to compete, including industry suppliers (for example, banks, health and telecommunication services), core services providers (for example, hotels, tour operators, transportation, leisure attractions) and stakeholders (investors, NGO's, local citizens, public enterprise and environmentalists).

The model defined a destination's commitment to the environment as one of the four determinants of tourism competitiveness and includes also comparative advantage, industry structure and demand factors. By demand factors, he understood the ability to respond to the changing nature of new tourism demand.

2.4.4 Integrated Model of Competitiveness

The integrated model was developed by Dwyer et al (2004) as a general model of competitiveness to enable comparisons between countries and tourism sector industries. The indicators set in their model comprised both objective and subjective measures, and derives from extensive literature review and discussions at workshops held in Korea and Australia. Like Ritchie and Crouch, they also consider the theory of national and firm competitiveness and agree on the fact that, in case of a tourism destination whose attractive resources do not necessarily suffer depletion, competitiveness model must recognize the importance of considering both comparative advantage and competitive advantage (Dwyer and Kim, 2003). By consequence many of the elements contained in their model are similar to those identified by Ritchie and Crouch.

The model brings together the main elements of destination competitiveness as proposed by tourism researchers. The primary elements of the model include resources comprising endowed resources, both ‘natural’ (such as, mountains, coasts, lakes, and general scenic features) and ‘heritage’ (including, handicrafts, language, cuisine and customs.) created resources (such as tourism infrastructure, special events and shopping.); and supporting resources (such as general infrastructure, accessibility and service quality.). Destination management is the second core component of their model comprising government and industry. Their model then shows resources and destination management interacting with tourism demand and situational conditions to influence destination competitiveness and socio-economic prosperity.

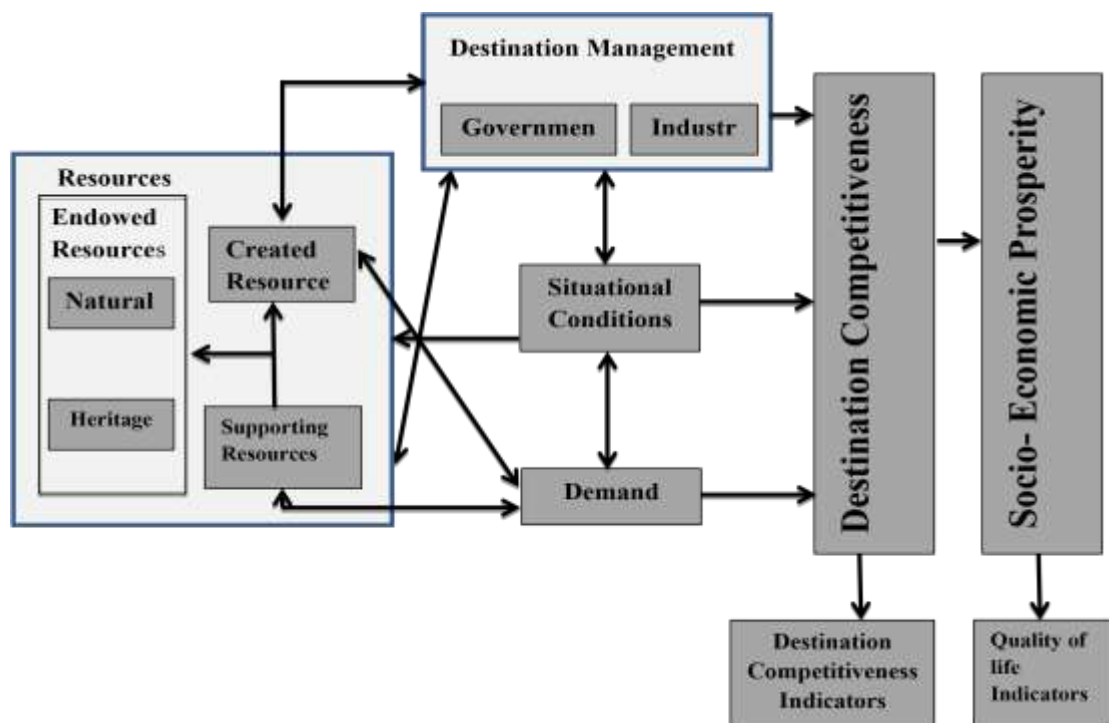


Figure 5: Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness

(Source: Dwyer *et al*, 2004)

This model contains many of the variables and category headings identified by Crouch and Ritchie (1995, 1999) and Ritchie and Crouch (1993, 2000) in their comprehensive framework of destination competitiveness, but also differs some important respects.

The integrated model explicitly recognizes *demand conditions* as an important determinant of destination competitiveness. It also explicitly recognizes that destination competitiveness is not an ultimate end of policy making but is an intermediate goal towards the objective of regional or national economic prosperity.

2.5 Factors Determining Competitiveness

According to Porter (1990), the competitive performance of a country in a given industry results from the articulated action of four determinants that shape the environment in which companies compete, encouraging or preventing the creation of competitive advantages. These determinants are: (i) the factor conditions: allocation of a country in production of factors such as expertise or infrastructure, required for the competitive activity of a given industry; (ii) the strategy, business structure and rivalry: conditions in the country that regulate the creation, organization and management of business and the nature of domestic rivalry; (iii) the demand conditions: characteristics of domestic demand for a particular good or service, namely the presence of sophisticated and demanding customers; (iv) the existence of related and supporting industries: the existence or not of supplying industries and/or related that are competitive in international markets. This determinant includes the issue of agglomeration economies and its effect on competitiveness. To these attributes, Porter (1990) adds the government action and the change (events beyond the companies' control).

The body of research recognizes that no universal set of tourism-specific items that may affect destination competitiveness exists (Enright and Newton, 2004), although among all the variety of items considered by different researchers in this field, it is possible to identify that some are common. This is especially the case for the set of factors identified by Ritchie and Crouch (2003), based mainly on destination comparative and

competitive advantage, and those by Dwyer and Kim (2003), who made a significant contribution by incorporating demand condition factors into their model. Dwyer et al (2004) emphasized that there is no single or unique set of competitiveness indicators that apply to all destinations at all times. For any given factor underlying destination competitiveness, any number of indicators may be employed as measures and for any given destination, different indicators of competitiveness will be relevant. They go ahead to indicate that at best the investigator can highlight certain indicators for discussion. The following indicators are relevant to determining destination competitiveness as described by various authors and presented below.

2.5.1 Core/Endowed Resources

Included under this category are various characteristics of a destination that make it attractive to visit. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) regard core resources and attractors as the primary motivation for destination appeal. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) regard the primary elements of destination appeal as the key elements that motivate visitation to the destination. They posit that different resources have different appeal to different tourists and that tourist motivations can be classified in several ways, and core resources are only a 'pull factor' for some types of tourism. Resources can be divided into two types: endowed (inherited) resources and created resources (Dwyer *et al*, 2004).

Natural Resources

The natural resources of a destination define the environmental framework within which the visitor enjoys the destination. They include physiography, climate, flora and fauna, scenery and other physical assets. While Porter and others have emphasized 'factor creation' as a source of competitive advantage, a destination's endowment of natural resources is crucial for many forms of tourism and visitor satisfaction (Buckley, 1994; Dunn & Iso-Ahola, 1991).

While in the context of manufacturing competitiveness emphasized by management theorists resource disadvantages can be overcome by adding value to the goods and services produced, in the tourism context natural resources have a substantial capacity to attract visitors, regardless of any 'value added' by human providers (Dwyer & Kim 2003).

Heritage and Culture

The heritage and culture of a destination, its history, institutions, customs, architectural features, cuisine, traditions, artwork, music, handicrafts, dance and others, provides a basic and powerful attracting force for the prospective visitor (Cohen, 1988; Murphy *et al*, 2000; Prentice, 1993). Past research has examined the great number of dimensions of culture that enhance the attractiveness of a tourism destination (Ritchie & Zins, 1978). Similarly, there may be differences between the ways in which industry views the 'richness' of culture as opposed to how consumers perceive it. As Ritchie, Crouch and Hudson (2000) point out in an example, merely counting of museums and historic sites, may help in measuring a destination's heritage endowment, this may well mask the quality of these attractions.

2.5.2 Created Resources

Porter (1990) and others note that strengths in other parts of the diamond can overcome factor disadvantages. The literature search undertaken in the present study reveals the importance of 'created resources' in determining firm or national competitiveness. There would seem to be at least five types of 'created' or 'built' resources that influence destination competitiveness: tourism infrastructure, special events, range of available activities, entertainment and shopping.

Of course, many cultural/heritage attractions of a destination may be ‘created’ or ‘built’ (examples include, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal), but these historic sites are more appropriately regarded as comprising elements of destination (inherited) culture and heritage, (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

Tourism Infrastructure

Dwyer et al (2004) cite tourism infrastructure to include features such as accommodation facilities, food services, transportation facilities, themed attractions, fast food outlets, taverns/bars and receptive tourism plant, tour wholesalers, tour operators, travel agents, car rental firms, local convention and visitor bureaus. Tourism also relies on the provision of numerous ancillary services. Related services infrastructure includes retail shopping facilities, food stores, garages (car maintenance, petrol stations), pharmacies, bookstores/newsagents/kiosks, laundries, hairdressers, administration offices (police, courts and so on). In the eyes of many tourists, and certainly for so-called ‘mass tourism’, destinations function more effectively when these services are abundant. Mo et al. (1993) have argued that destination service infrastructure is, after destination environment, the most important factor in an international tourist’s experience of the destination product. Murphy et al. (2000) found that the level or lack of infrastructure affects tourist experiences and that tourism infrastructure is an important predictor of both destination ‘quality’ and perceived trip ‘value’. This does not, of course, deny the existence of those forms of tourism (nature-based, cultural/heritage and adventure tourism), in which the tourism experience is enhanced by the lack of created tourism infrastructure.

Special Events

This category is intended to capture those happenings where the visitor tends to be highly involved as a participant (for instance, the Olympics, the World cup, Wimbledon

tennis and so forth) or those events where simply 'being there' is significant (royal weddings, papal coronations, the investiture of a world leader,). The capacity of special events to generate tourism expenditure is well documented although the economic impacts and net benefits are often exaggerated (Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr & Ho, 2003). Festivals and events are recognized internationally as making a valuable economic contribution to tourism destinations, and also as having significant growth potential.

Economic impacts include the contribution to employment and income, nationally and regionally. Events tourism is also regarded as associated with a range of other benefits (and costs) of a more 'intangible' nature that impact on local communities as well as entire regions. These include associated social and cultural benefits to a destination, the exchange of ideas, fostering business contacts, providing fora for continuing education and training, facilitating technology transfer and so on (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis & Mules, 2000).

Range of Available Activities

The mix of possible activities within a destination is an important tourism attractor. These can include recreation and sports facilities, summer facilities (golf, tennis among others); winter facilities (skiing) water sports (swimming, boating, and fishing); night clubs/night life; facilities for special interest visitors such as adventure tourists, ecotourism, cultural/heritage tourism and biking trails.

The more diversified a destination's portfolio of tourism products, services and experiences the greater is its ability to attract different tourist market segments. A climate of competition stimulates improvement and discourages stagnation. For example, the continuing development and expansion of Las Vegas casinos and more recent diversification beyond gambling to encompass a broader range of entertainment

and family-oriented activities has enabled Las Vegas to continue to evolve and develop as a tourist destination. Moreover, a destination's seasonal constraints may be partly overcome when tourism enterprises expand the range of seasonal experiences available.

Entertainment

This category primarily encompasses behaviors where the visitor assumes a rather passive 'spectator' role such as the theatre and film festivals (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). Entertainment can be found in many forms. From a consumer perspective, the amount of entertainment available at a destination is probably less important than its perceived quality or uniqueness. Even more important for destination competitiveness is the degree to which the entertainment offerings are 'appropriate' to the destination. Ritchie, Crouch and Hudson (2000) cite the Oberammergau Passion play as uniquely associated in the consumer's mind with the destination, even though it could be staged practically anywhere. They thus claim that the competitiveness value of this event exceeds its entertainment value as a mere 'religious' event.

Shopping

Shopping can be regarded as a form of entertainment or, possibly, a necessary chore for many tourists. For some cultures, such as the Japanese and Koreans, gift giving upon returning home is an important element of the entire travel experience (Hobson, 1996). In various parts of the world, the opportunity to shop for duty-free items has provided, in itself, a major motive for travel. For many tourists, the opportunity to shop in an exotic location, or 'duty free', is an important 'pull factor' of outbound travel. Destinations such as Hong Kong and Singapore have at times marketed themselves as 'shopover' destinations. Over 50% of visitor expenditure in Singapore is on shopping items (Singapore Tourism Board, 2000). Given the importance of shopping in tourist expenditure generally and in the purchasing behaviour of Asian tourists in particular,

this category is identified separately in Ritchie and Crouch's destination competitiveness model.

2.5.3 Supporting Factors and Resources

Supporting factors and resources underpin destination competitiveness. Private- and publicsector organizations 'supporting' tourism activity that possess a collection of specific skills not easily imitable by rivals can be an important source of sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990).

General Infrastructure

A destination's general infrastructure includes road networks, airports, train system, bus system, water supply, telecommunications, sewerage, health-care facilities, sanitation, the electricity generation system, financial services, and computer services. Smith (1994) claims that service infrastructure is housed within the larger macro-environment or 'physical plant' of the destination, while Watson and Kopachevsky (1994) have argued that tourist experiences cannot be properly understood unless we take into account the larger context and setting in which these encounters take place. Consumer research on service experiences also confirms this notion (Bittner, 1990).

Quality of Service

The service dimension of the tourism experience is vital. Efforts must be made to ensure quality of service and there is now recognition of the need to take a total quality of service approach to visitor satisfaction (Go & Govers, 2000). Provision of reliable and responsive visitor services enhances a destination's competitive advantage. Initiatives to enhance the quality of the experience provided by a tourism destination include: establishment of standards for tourism facilities and performance of personnel; programmes to objectively and subjectively monitor the quality of experiences

provided; and monitoring of resident attitudes towards visitors and towards development of the tourism sector.

Some researchers stress the relevance to destination competitiveness of the concept of the integrity of visitor experiences (Go & Govers, 1999). This concept is intended to convey the idea that the quality of the experience actually provided should be appropriate to the situation and the price charged. It also implies that the service provider delivers the quality of experience that is promised to a given situation since different levels of quality may well be appropriate for a given cost level in different situations or settings.

The perceived quality of tourism services appears to be crucially linked to the context of service experiences (Johns, 1993). In consumer settings, both the focal (service) and the contextual (environmental) dimensions of a product play a significant role in determining quality (Gotlieb et al., 1994). These findings support the view that both the destination's macro-environment and its service dimension affect tourist perceptions of quality. Murphy et al., (2000) found that 'destination environment' in terms of climate, scenery, ambience, friendliness and, to a lesser extent, cleanliness, is a key predictor of destination 'quality'. Destinations have become increasingly reliant on the delivery of quality products and services. Since meeting visitor needs and achieving business goals are increasingly inseparable, a commitment to quality by every enterprise in a destination (public or private) is necessary to achieve and maintain international competitiveness (Go & Govers, 2000). Indeed, it has been argued that the quality of service production and delivery deserves 'a comprehensive approach and a definitive integration among its key stakeholders (residents, visitors and traders) and an in-depth knowledge of their needs and expectations' (Go & Govers, 2000). The need for integration relates to the network of different organizations that require interaction to

cater effectively and efficiently to consumer needs and expectations and to minimize the potential negative sociocultural, economic and ecological impacts on the host community.

Accessibility of Destination

McKercher (1998) demonstrates the link between market access and destination choice. The accessibility of the destination is governed by a variety of influences including the frequency, ease and quality of automobile, air, bus, train, sea access; aviation regulations, entry permits and visa requirements; route concessions; airport capacities; competition among carriers and so on. Visas may be expensive in terms of monetary outlay and/or inconvenient to procure, thus deterring visitation. Countries may also impose restrictions on outbound travel by residents.

Prideaux (2000) notes that tourists' choices between alternative destinations are influenced by inefficiencies in the transport system such as uncompetitive practices, safety concerns, comfort levels and journey time. Ease of access to a destination may be facilitated through upgraded distribution channels or through developing a more extensive network of sales contacts. Improving inter-modal linkages among transportation systems contributes to destination competitiveness. Following the Asian currency crisis in late 1997, Ansett Australia, Qantas and Air New Zealand suspended services to Korea, demonstrating the effect of external variables on destination accessibility (Dwyer *et al*, 2000)

Hospitality

Hospitality relates to the perceived friendliness of the local population and community attitudes towards tourists. It includes: warmth of reception by local population; willingness of residents to provide information to tourists; attitudes towards tourists and

the tourism industry. Tourist guidance and information, including good signage, is important to visitors feeling 'valued' by residents of destination. Resident support for tourism development fosters a competitive destination. The perceived hospitality of residents is a major social factor forming part of the macro-environment (Canestrelli & Costa, 1991; Machlis & Burch, 1983).

Market Ties

This category includes several dimensions along which a destination establishes and builds linkages with people in origin markets. It includes ethnic ties underlying Visiting Friends and relatives (VFR) travel business ties, and trade links underlying business tourism (Dwyer *et al.*, 1995) economic and social ties including ongoing trade relationships, membership of professional and trade associations, historical and recent immigration flows, common culture and language, common religion. Some tourism destinations have a dependency on others that is competitive or complementary in nature (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000). They give an example of how Macau tourism relies on tourism flows through Hong Kong, and tourism to Monaco is very dependent upon tourism numbers to the French and Italian Riviera. Similarly, international tourism to Tasmania is associated with visitor numbers to Australia. This type of dependency can also be considered as a form of market tie.

2.5.4 Destination Management

Five types of destination management activities have a potentially important influence on destination competitiveness: destination marketing management; destination planning and development; destination management organization; human resource development; and environmental management (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

Destination Marketing Management

When implementing their marketing activities, destination management organizations (DMOs) can contribute to the achievement of sustainable tourism through various actions depending on whether their focus is a promotional or facilitation strategy. The marketing activities of DMOs are mainly centered on the promotion of the destination as a whole. However, a natural extension of such efforts is a facilitation role that typically includes collecting, analyzing and disseminating market research data, establishing a representation in the main target markets of origin, participating in trade shows, organizing and coordinating familiarization trips and supporting the private sector in the production and distribution of literature such as information relating to analysis of characteristics of key travel markets related to travel volume and associated spending (Lewis *et al.*, 1995).

Hassan (2000) argues that to maintain tourism competitiveness, destination management should focus on a systematic examination of unique comparative advantages that provide a special longterm appeal to the target travel customer segments. He points out that ‘destinations are winning competitive battles by careful analysis and response to the core values and needs of the segmented market place’ (Hassan, 2000).

An important function of destination marketing managers is to create a destination image, which is ‘the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place’ (Kotler *et al.*, 1993). Recent research has focused on the meaning and measurement of ‘destination image’ (Balogh & Brunberg, 1997). Uysal *et al.* (2000) show the importance of positioning, branding, image and awareness, as determinants of destination market share and overall destination competitiveness. They claim that the challenge of destination marketing is that it is made up of many suppliers and service

producers. Marketing a tourism region involves complex and coordinating action among the central attractions (both public and private) that draw tourists to a region, the transportation network to connect visitors to a variety of attractions, the hospitality services to fill basic needs while away from home, and information to help tourists meet needs and find their way in a new environment (Uysal *et al.*, 2000).

Enhancing the appeal of a destination involves a programme of marketing efforts designed to influence the decision process of prospective visitors. These efforts may focus on increasing awareness of the existence of the destination or improving the perceptions of the features of the destination to different demographic, psychographic and behavioral market segments. Relevant activities include: development of a strong destination image; creation of a high level of destination awareness and awareness of the destination's specific products and service offerings; identification of high yield customer bases; development of strong links with tourism wholesalers and retailers; development of attractive, price competitive tour packages tailored to customer needs.

Destination Policy, Planning and Development

Tourism planning takes place on many levels: site, region, national, and international. Planning is carried out by different agencies, organizations, and businesses for different purposes and at different scales, possibly with the aid of external consultants. In order to protect ecosystems and economic benefits and to distribute the latter equitably, tourism must be developed and managed within a hierarchy of controls, ranging from the local to the territorial or provincial, to the national, and even to the international level. The responsibilities at each level of control must be clearly identified and a process of accountability must be implemented. Tourism planning requires an understanding of the meaning of sustainable development and the guiding values for promoting sustainable tourism. It requires that communities be made to be sufficiently

aware of, and to understand, the tourism industry and its impacts as well as the various processes to integrate and engage in participatory planning, consensus building, and conflict resolution among all stakeholders. It is important to consider which sustainable development principles can be implemented through community control and which need to be implemented through controls at higher level.

Hassan (2000) maintains that the diversity of industries involved in destination planning and development requires the use of a competitiveness model that examines the relationships among all stakeholders involved in creating value added products to sustain resources while maintaining a market position relative to other competitors. Sustainable development outcomes should be pursued by tourism businesses, governments, local communities and other stakeholders. The integration and cooperation of organizations and individuals is complex which is why planning at a holistic level is required. The outcome can be a balance between needed development and economic benefits and social and environmental protection. Destinations require strong, committed, and effective leadership by business, government and community leaders at all levels. A pro-active role, rather than a passive one, is required to ensure that environmental and heritage values are fully sustained. A sustainable tourism industry requires a commitment by all involved to sustainable development principles at all stages of development. Only through such widespread commitment can the prerequisite holistic emphasis necessary for long-term integration of social, environmental, and economic objectives be attained (Dutton & Hall, 1989).

The destination 'vision' provides a direction for development. According to Newsome *et al.* (2002) 'the basic task of planning is to visualize the area, that is the product, as visitors and managers wish it to be in the future'. Visioning is an important step in formulating a tourism plan. In the visioning step, community members attempt to look

into the future and imagine what they would like their community to be. Such an effort involves identifying what is really valued or desired and including those elements in the shared image of the community. The image can help community leaders decide among alternatives that are likely to lead to the desired future and those that are likely to lead away from it. It helps community decide how much of any type of development will fit within its vision and determine what levels of change are acceptable (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

Once stakeholders have formulated a destination vision they must undertake a critical analysis, or audit, of the destination's existing tourism resources and capabilities, as well as the current functioning of its tourism operations (Inskeep, 1991). The tourism audit covers the supply side (tourism products and supporting factors and resources), the demand side (tourist preferences) as well as community attitudes to tourism development. This type of audit is necessary to determine, in the light of market trends, the strengths and weaknesses of the present state of the industry, and to highlight opportunities for tourism development, and the challenges that must be met for the destination and its component firms to achieve and maintain competitive advantage.

The actions of various industry associations, such as, air transport associations, hotel associations, tour operator associations and restaurant associations, affect the deployment of tourism resources. These associations may differ in their perceptions of the ecological, social, and cultural impacts of tourism development. Tourism resources are likely to be used more effectively when the different associations and industry groups share a common view regarding a destination's strategy for tourism development (Inskeep, 1991).

Pechlaner (1999) stresses the need to undertake a 'future-oriented' evaluation of a destination's development. He lists several 'destination potentials' including destination reputation for responsiveness to tourism demand, and preparedness for product and market changes.

Destination Management Organization

Various areas and levels of government are involved in the promotion, regulation, presentation, planning, monitoring, maintenance, coordination, enhancement and organization of tourism resources. As Buhalis (2000) notes, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), which include convention and visitor bureau, national and regional tourism organisations, 'have overall responsibility for the entire destination product and through incentives and policies facilitate the development of products, and create local partnerships for the delivery of seamless experiences' (Buhalis, 2000). Many of the factors underlying destination competitiveness are 'public goods' and thus government has an important role to play in achieving and maintaining destination competitiveness (Bueno, 1999; Dwyer & Forsyth, 2000). According to Mihalic (2000) 'a carefully selected and well executed program of destination management can serve to improve the tourism competitiveness of a destination'. Three aspects of destination management organization are especially important to competitiveness. These are: coordination, the provision of information, and monitoring and evaluation.

Coordination

There is increasing recognition of the importance of broad community participation, of effective coordination and support between all involved parties as crucial to achievement of sustainable tourism and hence destination competitiveness. The primary function of the DMO is to serve as a coordinating body for them any public and private-sector organizations involved in tourism (WTO, 1979). In some cases the

DMO will also provide the leadership necessary to provide overall direction for tourism development within the destination. In all cases the function is to enable the many parts of the tourism sector to work together, and thus compete more effectively, design and implement public consultation techniques and processes in order to involve all stakeholders in making tourism-related decisions. The DMO can improve the management and development of tourism by ensuring coordination and cooperation between the different agencies, authorities and organizations concerned at all levels, and that, where such institutions exist, their jurisdictions and responsibilities are clearly defined and complement each other. It can also help to raise awareness of sustainable tourism and its implementation by promoting the exchange of information between governments and all stakeholders on best practice for sustainable tourism, and promote broad understanding and awareness to strengthen stakeholder attitudes, values and actions that are compatible with sustainable development.

Provision of Information

Destinations that gather and use information effectively can improve their competitive position. An effective use of information systems can provide managers with the information required for understanding customer needs, and for appropriate new product development and marketing by tourism organizations in both the private and public sectors. Two categories of information are important; first, information that is internal to the destination provides an ability to better manage the performance of the destination's product. The better the system of information management, the greater the ability of firms in a destination to manage different aspects of the destination product (Faulkner, 1997). Second, research results provide the information basis to enable a destination to adapt to changing market conditions through its marketing strategy such as visitor statistics on patterns of tourist behavior, performance measures which identify

problems, tourist satisfaction studies which identify problems and opportunities, economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism development, information which monitors and tracks the attitude of the local population towards the tourism. Such information can enhance the ability of tourism stakeholders to forecast demand to aid long-term planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Strategic scanning and monitoring of the competitive environment is an integral part of policy and strategy formulation, including the need to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of major policies and strategies that have been previously implemented in efforts to enhance destination competitiveness. Faulkner (1997), emphasizing the importance of more rigorous and comprehensive approaches to evaluation to provide a more solid foundation for strategic decision making, stresses the importance of the role of market share analysis in the evaluation process as a central indicator of the extent to which national tourism organization objectives are met (Faulkner, 1997). Faulkner recommends the exploration of better ways to communicate research findings to enhance their usefulness to decision makers.

Human Resource Development

The human resource function is critical to the performance of any organization. Human resources management (HRM) should be an integral part of corporate strategy and not just remain a functional strategy (David, 2001). The perspective of organizations as knowledge stocks reinforces the importance of considering all employees as making up the organizational brain. The resource-based perspective has begun to emphasize increasingly the role that organizational knowledge can play in sustaining a firm's competitive superiority (Narasimbha, 2000). In a tourism context, Bueno (1999) argues that 'since competition between firms is determined by skills, human resources are a

central factor in achieving competitiveness because of the new opportunities brought about by new technologies and the importance of consumer loyalty in maintaining high demand (Bueno, 1999).

Workers in organizations that seek to be competitive must be highly skilled, reliable, educated individuals (Duffey, 1988). They must be able to understand and use the new forms of information technology and the information being made available, adapt to rapidly changing organization forms, and work well with others. The links between knowledge creation and use and effective management of the firm's human resources need further examination. Training has an important role to play in the development of the three dimensions of organizational knowledge: breadth/depth of knowledge, competence, and exploratory/exploitative knowledge (Narasimbha, 2000). A combination of several different resources may create a sustained advantage in a way that cannot be located in those individual resources. The sustained advantage comes from the expertise in combining them or co-locating one or a few vital resources in a combination with readily available ones such that it becomes difficult to identify and duplicate the advantage (Prahalad & Hamal, 1990). The lessons for tourism stakeholders include the need to understand the HRM practices that strengthen the organizational knowledge – sustained competitive advantage relationship, to find out the obstacles that organizations face in implementing those practices, and to formulate programmes to educate and train all tourism stakeholders.

Environmental Management

As noted above, destination environment in terms of climate, scenery, ambience and friendliness has been found to be a key predictor of destination 'quality' (Murphy *et al.*, 2000). Resource stewardship is an increasingly important function of destination managers in both the private and public sectors. This recognizes the importance of long-

term 'sustainable competitiveness' that acknowledges the stewardship of ecological, social and cultural resources. In the wider general management literature it is recognized that a firm's environmental performance is linked to its economic performance (Porte & Van der Linde, 1995). When economic interests are broadened to include the interests of other parties, especially future generations, the opportunity to create aggregate value becomes more apparent. An intergenerational perspective enables us to see that in the long run, economic and environmental interests often converge as resources are transferred across generations (Wade-Benzoni, 1999).

The rationale for taking an 'intergenerational perspective' to preserve environmental resources appears to be particularly compelling in the context of stakeholder strategies to achieve destination competitiveness. Resources must be maintained in an appropriate way to guard against undue deterioration and facilitate their sustainability. As Hassan (2000) notes, 'sustainable development is critical to the conservation of nature and the preservation of indigenous culture'. According to Hassan, it is critical for future destination development plans to be compatible with environmental integrity for the tourism industry to maintain its economic viability. All tourism stakeholders have an important role to play here. As the WTTC notes,

Sustainable travel and tourism development relies upon policies which support harmonious relationships among travelers, local communities, the private sector and governments to balance natural, built and cultural environments with economic growth and stability (WTTC, 2001).

Mihalic (2000) notes that destination attractiveness (appeal) and its competitiveness can be increased by proper management of the environmental quality of a destination. She argues that destination competitiveness can be enhanced through such initiatives

as codes of conduct, selfdeveloped environmental practice, certified or award-based best practice and accreditation schemes.

Mihalic (2000) argues that; in many cases environmental objectives and practices must be incorporated into the current attitudes, management strategies and methods in order for destinations to stay competitive. Maintaining a high level of overall environmental quality is important for the competitiveness of most types of tourism destinations and thus a primary concern for destination managers.

While a concern for the environment may require that the firm redirects its resources from other profitable opportunities which can lead to a rise in costs and prices and a loss of markets, there is an alternative view that an environmental policy improves competitiveness by pushing firms into developing more efficient ways to produce and therefore reduces costs. Some would go so far as to argue that stringent environmental policy is a potent form of industrial policy, and that it provides a double dividend whereby it improves the environment and competitiveness (Esty & Porter, 2001; Wade-Benzoni, 1999). In the tourism industry all firms benefit from environmental preservation, and the costs of environmental policy to tourism firms individually may well be substantially below the benefits obtained through additional visitor expenditures generated as a result of maintenance of a clean environment.

It has become increasingly recognized in the general management literature that achieving sustainable business activity requires a shift of management thinking from a 'compliance' or 'reactive' environmental stance to a more active 'compliance plus' strategy whereby the environment is placed high on the business agenda and environmental concerns are integrated into company culture (Wade-Benzoni, 1999).

Given the great reliance of tourism stakeholders on environmental preservation, this strategy would seem to be particularly appropriate for firms in the tourism industry.

Environmental performance has been found to vary systematically with the quality of a country's environmental regulatory regime (Esty & Porter, 2001). As noted above, destination environment in terms of climate, scenery, ambience, friendliness has been found to be a key predictor of destination 'quality' (Murphy *et al.*, 2000). Of course, we must remain mindful that it is not so much the real but the perceived environmental quality (Mieczkowski, 1995) or environmental image (Okoroafo, 1995) that influences the buying decisions of the potential visitor. In the tourism context, there is a much more intimate relationship between environmental quality and consumer perceptions of the quality of the product purchased than is to be found in other industries. Policymakers have long come to realize that environmental commitment makes good economic sense for the tourism sector. Thus Hassan (2000) notes that 'environmental commitment will be the forefront issue for the economic revitalization of the tourism industry'.

2.5.5 Situational Conditions

According to Dwyer & Kim (2003) classification of situational conditions falls within a destination's operating (industry) environment or remote environment. The conduct and performance of constituent institutions depends on the overall structure of the industry in which they are situated (McGee, 1988; Porter, 1980, 1990). The remote environment comprises those forces and events outside the destination that constrain the strategic options of organisation or destination managers but over which they have no control (Johnson & Scholes, 1997; Tribe, 1999). Situational conditions may enhance or reduce destination competitiveness (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

Destination Location

Destination location determines the physical distance from markets and must affect travel time from origin markets, even allowing for changes in transportation technology. A destination's location, particularly from major source markets, has much to do with its ability to attract visitors. McKercher (1998) notes that, more proximate destinations exhibit a competitive advantage over destinations that offer a similar product but are more distant.

Competitive (micro) Environment

This includes the components that shape the immediate industrial environment within which firms in the tourism industry must adapt in order to compete.

A competitive destination depends in part on a local tourism industry consisting of numerous alternative suppliers that must survive on the basis of services that are either unique or superior in some way, or available at a lower cost. Competition among firms creates an environment for excellence. For a destination to develop in a sustainable way, business operations must be sustainable. Sustainable development for business means 'adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future' (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1994).

The competitive (micro) environment can be classified in several ways. One useful set of distinctions is that between (1) the capabilities of destination firms and organizations, the strategies of destination firms and organizations, including alliance formation, and (3) the competitive environment of firms and organizations in the destination.

The Capabilities of Destination Firms and Organizations

A firm's capabilities can be classified in terms of each of the major functional business areas management, marketing, finance, production/operations, research and development (David, 2001; Dwyer & Kemp, 2003). Pechlaner (1999) emphasizes that core products and services based on core competencies are a good basis for destination competitiveness. The core competencies of suppliers and decision makers, their knowledge and their developed skills, are those that are difficult to imitate. The appropriate combination of these competencies and skills contributes to a destination's competitiveness.

In order to maximize the potential strengths of its capabilities, the firm needs to attend to the organizational culture. Aaker (1989) suggests that management must identify cultural forces that affect employee roles to achieve organizational effectiveness. The importance of organizational culture as a determinant of organization performance has been highlighted in studies of the strategic management of resort hotels (Dwyer *et al.*, 1998, 1999; Kemp & Dwyer, 2001).

The Strategies of Destination Firms and Organisations

The health, vitality and sense of enterprise, entrepreneurship, and new venture development in a destination contribute to its competitiveness in a variety of ways. Gilbert (1990), Poon (1993), Porter (1990) and Porter *et al.* (2001) all emphasize how a firm can achieve 'value-competitive advantages'. A healthy system of enterprise ensures that market gaps and unmet needs remain unrecognized and unfilled for only a short period of time. The sustainable business has interdependent economic, environmental, and social objectives and understands that long-term viability depends on integrating all three objectives in decision making. Rather than regarding social and environmental objectives as costs, a sustainable enterprise seeks opportunities for profit

in achieving these goals. A firm can enhance its competitiveness through specialization, innovation, investment, risk taking, and productivity improvements (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).

This is described below.

- (1) *Specialization*: There is a growing industry trend in many countries towards differentiated new product strategies by tourism organisations to capture different market segments. Ideally, each firm in the tourism industry will seek to develop new products while focusing on its core competencies and expertise. Buhalis (2000) argues that the utilization of new technology provides the opportunity to customize products according to customers' specific requirements. Concentrating on core functions and outsourcing all peripheral activities to networks of virtual cooperatives should enable destinations and enterprises to innovate and to adapt to the needs of consumers constantly.
- (2) *Innovation*: Local businesses must continue to seek out and implement new technologies to improve their productivity (Porter *et al.*, 2001). Poon (1993) argues that 'flexible specialisation' or 'permanent innovative and ceaseless change' provides for the demands of the 'new tourism'. Developments in information and communications technology have greatly increased the potential for collaboration between businesses by making it much easier to integrate and coordinate network activities. These changes in technology have made possible the development of virtual organizations and with them, enhancement of competitive advantage (Evans *et al.*, 2003), but it is on the initiative of operators that new technologies are adopted.

- (3) *Investment*: A diversified portfolio of tourism products, services and experiences can enhance destination attractiveness and therefore competitiveness. Investment in new products and services, matched to visitor needs, may help to overcome seasonality constraints. Foreign investment may enable faster growth of the destination tourism industry to the benefit of local stakeholders (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1993, 1994). Key determinants of foreign investment in tourism include ownership, internalization and location advantages. Ownership advantage relates to the market power of multinational companies. Internalization refers to market failures in trading of intangible goods such as knowledge and brands – hence the need to retain direct control of these goods and services in a foreign market through some form of ownership. Location advantages include the attractiveness of an investment area in terms of local physical and human resources, host government support for inward investment, costs for employing local factors of production, and the fit between local strategic assets and the foreign firm’s global pool of resources (Dunning, 1992, 1993). Ideally, investors should have a strong commitment to environmental quality and sustainable development (Hassan, 2000).
- (4) *Risk taking*: A nation’s competitiveness is strengthened in the course of struggles by entrepreneurs to overcome high risks and maximise returns to achieve competitive advantages over rivals. Risk taking by entrepreneurs is essential if an economy is to move from being Investment Driven to a more evolved stage of being innovation driven. As Porter *et al.* (2001) argue, at this innovation stage of economic development, global competitiveness is critically linked to high rates of social learning.

- (5) *Productivity*: Following Porter *et al.* (2001) we can identify ‘productivity variables’ as another set of factors that contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of a destination. These include variables that are hypothesized to develop skills and/or conditions that are likely to increase the quantity and quality of output of tourism ‘experiences’ for a given level of resource input. These variables relate to improving the quality of the people providing the experience as well as the facilities and equipment that assists them in their efforts. Improved training and better relationships between management and labour form the basis for increased flexibility of labour that is a critical component in today’s rapidly changing environment.
- (6) *Ethical Business Behaviour*: Management theorists argue that a healthy corporate culture should cultivate a basic respect for all individuals, and emphasises honesty, fairness, openmindedness, team spirit, loyalty, dedication, frank and full communication, life-long learning and constant improvement (Dwyer *et al.*, 1998; Ford & Richardson, 1994). Business operations rest upon a foundation of shared interests and mutually agreed rules of conduct. Competition takes place in a society that business presumably both serves and depends on, and it is only within the bounds of mutually shared concerns that competition is possible. The purpose of business has been defined as the satisfaction of public demand; the introduction of innovative, more efficient, more cost-effective products to fill a need; and the optimal, on-going relation between producer and consumer. For business competition to make sense, the larger interests of the consumer and the society must be kept in mind (Ford & Richardson, 1994).

(7) *Alliance Formation*: Strategic alliances can enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the member organisations (Lewis, 1990; Porter *et al.*, 2001). Go and Govers (1999) posit that ‘partnerships, including private and public sector collaboration between destinations, is a prerequisite to maintaining destination competitiveness’. Buhalis (2000) states that partnerships between public and private sector and close cooperation between all local suppliers is the key to the ability of destinations to offer quality products. The WTTC strongly advocates partnerships between the private and public sectors as the most effective means of achieving competitive travel and tourism development (WTTC, 2001). In the tourism context, the multiplicity of industries involved in creating and sustaining destinations requires the development of a competitiveness model that examines the extent of cooperation needed for the future of competitiveness (Hassan, 2000). He advocates a relationship approach to promoting destination competitiveness through building capacities for partnerships among three key constituencies: the private sector, the public sector and non-governmental organisations including citizen groups (Hassan, 2000). Tourism stakeholders now place on carefully chosen strategic alliances (TIA, 1999). Ideally, the DMO will also provide the leadership necessary to provide overall direction for tourism development within the destination. In all cases, the function is to enable the many parts of the tourism sector to work together, and thus compete more effectively (UNWTO, 1979). The interdependence of business and mutual self-interest in the success of the destination encourages inter-firm cooperation, e.g. marketing alliances, sectoral associations and management structures (McDougall *et al.*, 1994; Porter *et al.*, 2001). Collaborative

arrangements of various types have become an increasingly important strategic method of development, particularly in the travel sector of the industry (Evans *et al.*, 2003). As the tourism industry becomes increasingly global, it has become necessary for individual firms, as well as destinations, to establish strategic alliances with other organisations and destinations (Heath, 2003). Thus, for example, many national and international airlines seek to enhance their ability to compete by forming a broad range of working relationships with airlines that complement their route structures as well as their marketing and technical capabilities. The European Tourism Commission conducts joint research on behalf of its members. The cities of Calgary and Fort Worth have established a direct working linkage to jointly market their similar products in foreign markets as have Prague, Budapest, and Vienna (Ratz & Puczko, 2000). The issue of the interdependencies between enterprises and their role in the destination tourism system is underresearched (Shaw & Williams, 1990). So also is appraisal of the specific and unique managerial challenges in tourism, particularly of the small firm. Alliances differ in their motives, their scope, their structures their objectives and the ways in which they are managed (Evans *et al.*, 2003). Research is needed on the information needs of small firms and the ways in which government and industry associations could assist. Unfortunately, very little is known about the effectiveness of industrial policy in stimulating the desired behaviour of entrepreneurs in tourism.

The Competitive Environment

Competition among firms creates an environment for excellence (Porter, 1990). A competitive destination depends in part on a local tourism industry consisting of

numerous alternative suppliers who must survive on the basis of services that are either unique or superior in some way, or available at a lower cost.

The relatively low entry barriers, few skills required, and few restrictions or regulations imposed in the tourism industry encourage the proliferation of small firms (Sinclair & Stabler, 1997). Small firms tend to display a lack of appreciation of the importance of staff training. Owner managers make bad investment decisions.

Many have little understanding of how to finance their business decisions. Many fail to recognize their dependency on the competitiveness of the destination as a whole. It appears likely that future economies will consist of 'virtual corporations' involving a network of smaller enterprises. This will have enormous implications for destination competitiveness that will depend on the strategic alliances between individual firms.

Global (macro) Environment

Tourism is influenced by a range of global forces including laws and regulations, growing concern for the environment, restructuring of economies, shifting demographics of the marketplace, the increasingly complex technology–human resource interface, including computerization. Such forces represent both challenges and opportunities to the tourism industry.

Kotler *et al.* (1996) propose that six environmental factors shape the (destination) marketplace: demographic, economic, natural, technological, political and cultural factors. These forces are claimed to impinge upon visitor experiences and sense of a destination. Some researchers use the acronyms PEST or STEEP to classify the political, economic, environmental, sociocultural and technological elements of the external or remote environment (Dwyer & Kemp, 2003; Evans *et al* 2003).

The political dimension is a key factor that contributes to the nature of the destination product. For example, the political stability, foreign policy or government policy on important issues such as human rights or democratic elections can determine tourist perceptions of behaviour (Murphy *et al.*, 2000). The political dimension can also influence the nature and form of heritage displays.

Pechlaner (1999) argues that political regulations have an effect on destination competitiveness. Governments need to streamline and coordinate regulation to support medium to long-term development and ensure that the growth of the industry is not inhibited by broader policy developments (WTTC, 2001).

An important economic variable impacting on destination competitiveness includes the exchange rate, with a direct effect on destination price competitiveness (Dwyer *et al.*, 2002). Other important economic variables include interest rates that affect the amount of investment undertaken to respond to changing patterns of tourism demand. The government macroeconomic policy stance can affect the economic contribution of tourism demand (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000).

Sociocultural and demographic changes have a profound influence on the travel motivations of people. A necessary requirement for destination competitiveness is that there be a 'fit' between tourist preferences and the destination's product offerings (Kelly, 1978).

Technological forces represent major opportunities and threats that must be considered in formulating strategies (Poon, 1993). Technological change can, *inter alia*, create new markets, change relative cost positions in an industry, reduce or eliminate cost barriers between businesses, create shortages in technical skills, result in changing values and expectations of employees, managers, customers, and create new competitive

advantages. Taking advantage of new technologies and the Internet can also enable destinations to enhance their competitiveness (Buhalis, 2000). E-commerce capabilities can help boost a destination's competitiveness because of the efficiencies gained through Internet technologies. Technology can improve the efficiency of local suppliers and also provide tools for the development and delivery of differentiated tourism products. Technology can be accessed through licensing, joint ventures, foreign direct investment and imitation (Porter *et al.*, 2001). One of the major benefits of information technology is the reduction of the dependency of firms on intermediaries for the distribution of tourism products (Buhalis & Jafari, 1997). The new information technology tools enable smaller players, to compete on an equal footing with larger players thereby increasing their competitiveness. With new technology and communications, operational costs are reduced and flexibility, interactivity, efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness are enhanced (WTTC, 2001). The macro competitive strategy of a country either reinforces or nullifies the competitive edge of the companies in that destination. Thus there is a very close relationship between the micro and macro competitive strategies in a country.

Security and Safety

Safety and security within a destination can be a critical qualifying determinant of its competitiveness. Elements include: political instability/unrest, probability of terrorism, crime rates, record of transportation safety, corruption of police/administrative services, quality of sanitation, prevalence of outbreak of disease, quality/unreliability of medical services, and availability of medication (Crotts, 1996). The current world downturn in tourism following the terrorist attacks of September 11 is affecting both the volume and pattern of tourism flows. Particular destinations, including the USA and countries in the Middle East, are experiencing greater turndowns in visitors than others because of

visitor safety and security considerations. Issues of security and safety are now firmly established as key elements of destination competitiveness.

Price Competitiveness

The financial cost of a tourism experience, in its broadest terms: (including transportation costs to and from destination as well as costs incurred within the destination), influence travel decisions. Price competitiveness indices can be constructed given information on purchasing power parities and exchange rates (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000; 2002). Some costs are driven by larger socioeconomic and global forces, others by government actions (such as taxes), while others can be managed within limits. The price competitiveness of a destination depends on the respective prices of the goods and services that cater to tourists needs (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000). The perception of value is important, however. By itself, price is a meaningless indicator if not taken in context with the corresponding quality of a product. Visitors may be prepared to trade quality of experiences for lower prices (Buhalis, 2000). Providing value for money is one of the key challenges facing any tourism destination. A wide range of pricing techniques are available to tourism firms and organisations, but regardless of what actual prices may be, it is ultimately visitor perceptions of those prices and of value that count.

2.6 Summary of Literature

2.6.1 Focus of Literature and Related Studies

Barney (1991) and Ma (2000) note that competitive advantage is based on resources that are rare, valuable, inimitable, non-tradable, non-substitutable, and firm and region-specific. In fact, Ma claims that a region may possess multiple competitive advantages that are compounded to make the region the most efficient producer of a good or service, thus providing the region an absolute advantage in its production. Therefore,

at the regional level, competitiveness is based on the principle of absolute advantage (Camagni, 2002; Malecki, 2004). A region's firms must be the most efficient producers of exported products because sub-national governments have little or no control over their wages or exchange rates. In essence, regions compete to attract investment and labor and to identify a productive role for the region within the international economy (Camagni, 2002). Under a principle of absolute advantage based on competitive advantages, Camagni refutes the premise that each region will always be afforded some specialization and role in international trade. However, proponents of competitive advantage propose that countries and regions can develop their competitive positions and capture a share in global markets by specializing in unique economic activities and by fostering novel market interactions (Budd and Hirmis, 2004; Kitson *et al.*, 2004).

This study attempted to set a definition framework on the study through literature review. Trends in tourism over the last decade have shown that sports tourism has emerged as a very significant segment of the global tourism market. The participation of tourists in sports related activities is eminent in the International Visitor Survey (2004). There is a lot of potential for promoting this segment of the tourism industry.

Sport events not only attract tourists; they attract media attention, increase community profile, contribute to economic development, enhance local sport development, increase participation in sport, help to improve and develop facilities and contribute to community pride. Social and health benefits are also important outcomes of a strong sport tourism sector. Sports tourism if properly developed and planned with the commitment of all relevant stakeholders should bring about economic, social, and community benefits (Zauhar, 2004). However, there is seemingly a lack of empirical studies on sports tourism destination competitiveness.

Competitiveness is increasingly being seen as a critical influence on the performance of tourism destinations in competitive world markets. At a general level, industry competitiveness has become an established topic for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners, having expanded considerably. Without doubt, the most comprehensive framework so far has been developed by Ritchie and Crouch. It appeared in several publications over a period of 10 years (Crouch and Ritchie 1994, 1995, 1999; Ritchie and Crouch 1993, 2000, 2003; Ritchie, Crouch, and Hudson, 2001). The strengths of this generic system, which distinguishes comparative and competitive advantages on five different layers (qualifying and amplifying determinants; destination policy, planning and development; destination management; core resources and attractors; and supporting factors and resources), is its ambition to include all important factors that may characterize the tourism competitiveness of a destination. Ritchie, Crouch, and Hudson (2001) aim at developing operational measures for a rich assortment of the components covered by destination competitiveness as suggested by Ritchie and Crouch (2000). They develop a comprehensive list of indicators combining subjective consumer measures and objective industry measures for each of 32 destination competitiveness components. The itemization is considered to be a first step leading toward a composite destination competitiveness index and a subsequent tool for simulating destination performance.

Similar to Ritchie and Crouch, Dwyer and Kim (2003) introduce another holistic approach of determinants and indicators that define destination competitiveness. Their indicators, which are categorized into subgroups labeled endowed resources, supporting factors, destination management, situational conditions, demand factors, and market performance indicators, were generated during workshops with tourism industry stakeholders in Australia and Korea. Unfortunately, the authors refrain from

expressing unmistakably whether their comprehensive system of indicators is meant to be reflective and therefore intended to operationalize destination competitiveness, or propose formative indicators or first-order factors preceding competitiveness in an either definitional or causal sense. The conclusion then that “there are myriad of indicators that can be employed at any given time” could be ambiguous. Dwyer *et al.* (2004) factorized 81 competitiveness items of the Dwyer and Kim (2003) list to extract 12 principal components. In their study, the database consists of the ratings of Korea by Australians and of Australia by Korean tourism industry stakeholders. So the exploratory study reveals how these criteria are tied together in the respondents’ minds, and these inferences can be drawn on the suitability of the indicators for explaining the destination competitiveness phenomenon. This study was based on such inferences.

Enright and Newton (2004) aim at determining the relative importance of tourism attractors and business features of a destination’s competitiveness. The authors conduct an importance performance analysis for Hong Kong involving a sample of practitioners in the tourism industry. It would certainly be intriguing to compare such direct importance judgments of destination competitiveness indicators with indirect measures expressing the strength of their influence on destination competitiveness consequences.

Enright and Newton (2005) discuss a follow-up study of their 2004 paper exploring the importance of 15 attractors and 37 business factors determining the relative competitiveness of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Bangkok as tourism destinations. Factors regarding core resources (attractors) appear to arouse greater disagreement between destination-specific judgments than business factors do.

Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto (2005) discuss the Competitiveness Monitor (CM) based on an initiative of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and a comprehensive data collection effort. The authors condense 23 CM criteria into summary indices for

each of the eight main indicators (price, economic and social impact, human resources, infrastructure, environment, technology, openness, and social development). Aggregate indices are first constructed for each of the eight main indicators. The weights of the main indicators are then determined with confirmatory factor analysis for a sample of 93 countries. By estimating these weights ranging between .220 and .003, the authors pave the way for building a composite index for overall competitiveness. In their subsequent analysis they did not employ a composite index of competitiveness. Rather, they prefer using the whole set of the eight main indicators for constructing country clusters of similar competitive strengths. There is a fundamental problem inherent in such an attempt to capture competitiveness, as causes and effects of competitiveness are mixed up to achieve a purely descriptive classification. For example, the “sum of tourist arrivals and departures as a ratio of the population of the destination country” is incorporated into the “human tourism indicator” (Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto 2005).

2.6.2 Gaps in Literature

The destination competitiveness models of Crouch and Ritchie or Dwyer and Kim appear to be systems of definitional rather than cause-effect relationships. Dwyer *et al* (2004) distinguish 30 subareas of competitiveness indicators (derived from main elements) organized in 7 areas and totaling 165 individual items. The Ritchie, Crouch, and Hudson (2001) system comprises 251 consumer and industry measures. The competitiveness criteria put forth occupy very different levels or strata in potential cause-effect chains. As that, they are not made explicit. A thorough discussion of definition versus causation has been avoided so far.

Destination competitiveness theorists have paid little attention to how business researchers have learned to assess the competitive position of individual companies or business units. This may be a reason why direct (subjective) judgments of factor

importance are still propagated (Enright and Newton 2004), while indirect measurements employed in business portfolio analysis have largely been ignored.

There seems to be consent that destination competitiveness is regarded as an antecedent to economic welfare and prosperity of the resident population. It is, however, open to discussion whether external criteria for destination competitiveness, such as destination market share or sustained relative growth, may be characterized as indicators, or whether these variables are better considered to be effects within the overall causal chain.

2.7 Conclusion

According to the sports tourism destination competitiveness research literature surveyed, theoretical considerations led to a rich pool of indicators of competitive advantage—enabling or facilitating factors on the supply side, and preference building factors on the demand side. It remained an unresolved question, however, what kind of mechanism channels all these factors into a construct called destination competitiveness. Therefore, this study made this mechanism explicit by: interpreting competitiveness factors and destination competitiveness itself as formative latent constructs, and introducing sports tourism performance criteria as dependent variables. Without these dependent variables a destination competitiveness system gets stuck in a stage of definition.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology section presents the research design, the study area, the methods for data collection, as well as data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. It thus constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such a research design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and operational implications to the final analysis of data (Kothari, 2005). This study utilized survey research design, which according to Mugenda (2008) is a process of collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. Survey research is therefore a self-report study which requires the collection of quantifiable information from the sample. The study was concerned with determining the competitiveness of sports tourism in the North Rift and such issues are best described through a survey.

3.3 The Study Area

The study was conducted in Kenya's North Rift region. The North Rift is known as the home for Kenya's top athletes and therefore appropriate for providing the focal point for the study of sports tourism in Kenya. The North Rift is in the Rift Valley Province and comprises of eight districts namely; Turkana, Nandi, West Pokot, Keiyo, Trans-Nzoia, Baringo and Uasin Gishu districts. The North Rift can be categorized into four broad zones which include Uasin Gishu which covers the Western part, Keiyo which comprises of Iten town representing areas along the Kerio valley such as Rimoi,

Baringo District and finally Kitale to Turkana which cover the Northern part of the North Rift region including areas such as Cherangany, the entire Pokot all the way to Turkana. Uasin Gishu and Nandi Districts were selected purposively as the areas of data collection. This is because these districts represent the areas with highest concentration of athletics camps in the region (Kiprop, 2007). Nandi district occupies a total area of 2,899 Sq. Km. with nine Administrative Divisions namely; Kipkaren, Kibiyet, Kosirai, Kapsabet, Kibiwoni, Aldai, Kaptumo, Nandi Hills and Tinderet. Uasin Gishu district covers an area of 3,218 square kilometers and lies at an altitude of 0° 03' North and 0° 55' East.

3.4 Target Population

A population is the entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics. A target population is that population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study (Mugenda, 2008). The target population included all the athletics camps as well as the tourism facilities in Uasin Gishu and Nandi districts. As per the statistics from the regional sports office in (Uasin Gishu, 2009), there were 57 registered athletics camps within the two districts. There were 285 athletics officials in all the registered athletics camps in the two districts. As per the North Rift Tourism Guide (2009), there were 35 tourism firms in the two districts. The tourism firms targeted included hotels, tour firms and game parks.

3.5 Sampling Design

The term sampling design refers to that part of the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation, while sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study (Kombo, 1999). Sampling is thus a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire

group (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). As noted by Cohen (2003), factors such as expenses, time and accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population. Therefore, there is need to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study.

The target population for this study was categorized into subgroups using the stratified simple random sampling method that is; officials in the athletics training camps and personnel in the tourism facilities. Stratified random sampling helped to identify groups in the population and the proportions in which they appeared. A stratified random sample is a useful blend of randomization and categorization, which enables both quantitative and qualitative process of research to be undertaken (Cohen, 2003). The advantage in stratified proportionate random sampling is that it ensures inclusion in the sample of subgroups which otherwise would be omitted entirely by other sampling methods because of their small numbers in the population. In this study, simple random sampling was then used to select 25 athletics camps from which 50 athletics officials were selected using simple random sampling techniques. This represents 18% of the total number of athletics officials in the 57 athletics camps in the two districts. This agrees with Kerlinger (1986) who notes that a sample size of between 10% and 30% will be a good representation of the entire population. Simple random sampling was also used to select one manager from each of the tourism firms selected for the study. This implies that 35 tourism firm managers participated in this study.

3.6 Data Collection

Both secondary and primary data were collected for the study.

3.6.1 Primary Data

The collection of primary data was done by use of structured and semi-structured questionnaires. A questionnaire is an instrument used to gather data, which allows measurement for or against a particular viewpoint. This study used questionnaire because it had the ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick space of time. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher on the basis of relevant literature, and was validated by experts and researchers at Moi University, department of Tourism Management. Research assistants helped in the collection of data. The questionnaires were administered to the managers in tourism firms and athletics officials in Uasin Gishu and Nandi Districts.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected through critical examination of public or private recorded documents that are related to the study. This was to enable the researcher to obtain information that may shed more insight to the study. The information gathered through secondary data was obtained from published and refereed journals as well as government documents on issues pertaining to sports tourism development. The information was used to make comparisons between theory and information obtained from primary data.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

This sub-section presents details on how validity and reliability of the research instruments used for this study were determined.

3.7.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

Validity is concerned with whether the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure or it is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. Mugenda (2008) notes that validity has to do with how accurate the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study and is a true reflection of the variables, it is only then that inferences based on such data would be accurate and meaningful. Therefore, validity in this study essentially referred to content validity which is a non-statistical method used to validate the content employed in the questionnaire. To ascertain validity of the questionnaire, the researcher consulted experts and experienced personnel in the research methodology from Moi University who made criticism and comments on the content and format of the instruments. Their comments were incorporated in the questionnaires before the final administration of the instruments on the participants of the study. Also, during the pilot study the researcher freely interacted with the subjects. The friendly atmosphere enabled the researcher to discover some short-comings in the research instruments and, therefore, made necessary adjustments before using them for the actual study.

3.7.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Data collection instruments must be reliable. That means they should have the ability to consistently yield the same results when repeated measurements are taken of the same individuals under the same conditions. Best and Kahn (1989) define reliability as a degree of competency that an instrument or procedure demonstrates. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out in the neighboring Keiyo District and this is because of its homogeneous characteristics that are similar to the

various districts under study. For example, the topography and economic activities of the people in the two districts are the same.

The research instruments were administered to the same pilot group twice after one month and the results were compared. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.77 was obtained from the analysis of the two sets of data, which implied that the research instruments were reliable and therefore the researcher adopted the research instruments. Orodho (2005) points out that a correlation coefficient of 0.75 and above is good enough to test reliability.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The respondents were assured that the responses they gave will be used in complete confidentiality and for the purpose of the research study only. The researcher also took individual responsibility for the conduct and consequences of the research by adhering to the time schedule agreed upon with the respondents. The researcher was open and honest when dealing with respondents whose consent was sought to voluntarily participate in the study. The respondents were also assured of getting the feedback from the research if they needed it after the study. This was aimed at securing co-operation from them.

3.9 Data Analysis

This refers to the examination of the coded data critically and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). In this study, data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The descriptive statistical techniques included frequencies, means, modes, standard deviation and percentages. Multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between the independent variables used in this study and the dependent variable and test the hypotheses. Data was analyzed

with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was presented in frequency tables.

Regression analysis is an advanced analytical technique with the ability to consider many different variables that might explain something. Regression analysis is a procedure for estimating the outcome of a dependent variable based upon the value of an independent variable. Regression follows the same concepts of relationships, then takes it to the next level. Multiple regression does four things: Provides an overall measure of the predictive strength of the model: the R-square; Predict the dependent variable based on the summed contributions of the independent variables; Determines the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable while controlling for the other variables (these are the partial regression coefficients); and determines the relative strength of each of the independent variable using the beta weights. Multiple regression analysis was suitable for this study since the study sought to examine the factors that influence the competitiveness of North Rift Kenya as a sports tourism destination. It was used to show the strength and relationship between core resources and attractions, range and level of supporting factors, the destination's sports tourism management practices and sports tourism situational conditions on competitiveness of North Rift Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results and interpretation of the findings using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple regression analysis showing relationships between independent and dependent variables are also given. Results are presented according to objectives and hypotheses.

4.2 General Information

Background information on gender, age, level of education, work position of the respondents and period of involvement in the tourism as well as sports industry was sought. Results are presented in subsequent sections.

4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

Responses on this variable are presented in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Gender of Sports Tourism Stakeholders

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	45	56.3
Female	35	43.7
Total	80	100.0

As indicated in Table 4.1, over half (56.3%) of the respondents were male and 43.7% (35) were female. This implies that there were more male respondents as opposed to female respondents.

4.2.2 Age of the Respondents

Table 4.2 shows the responses on age categories of the respondents.

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
less than 30 years	13	16.3
30 - 50 years	45	56.3
50 years and above	22	27.5
Total	80	100.0

As shown in Table 4.2, 56.3% (45) of the respondents were aged 30-50 years. Another 27.5% (22) were above 50 years old, while 16.3% (13) were less than 30 years old. Majority of the respondents were in their most active stage of life (30-50 years). Some were owners of tourist facilities and others were sports officials.

4.2.3 Education Level of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the education level of the respondents. Table 4.3 shows a summary of the responses on this item.

Table 4.3 Education Level of the Respondents

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	40	50.0
Undergraduate	35	43.8
Masters	5	6.2
Total	80	100.0

Majority of the respondents in both tourism and sports industries were Diploma holders 50% (40), while 43.8% (35) of the respondents were degree holders. Only 6.2% (5) were holders of Masters degrees. This implies that most of the respondents were educated though further studies would be necessary for them to be able to manage the tourism and sports industries effectively to the greater heights.

4.2.4 Work Position of Tourism Stakeholders

The tourism stakeholders were asked to state their position at their places of work. The responses are tabulated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Tourism Stakeholders' Responses on Work Position

Position	Frequency	Percent
Tourist agency managers	4	13.3
Hospitality sector managers	14	46.7
Tourism service managers	12	40.0
Total	30	100.0

From results in Table 4.4, 46.7% (14) and 40% (12) of the tourism stakeholders who participated in this study were hospitality sector managers and tourism service managers respectively. Tourist agency managers were 13.3% (4). This implies that the tourism stakeholders who participated in the study were composed of hospitality sector managers, tourism service managers and tourist agency managers. On the other hand, the sports officials included camp managers 40% (20), coaches and trainers 50% (25) as well as sponsors 10% (5) as indicated in the Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Sports Officials' Responses on Work Position

Position	Frequency	Percent
Coach/Trainers	25	50.0
Camp Managers	20	40.0
Sponsors	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0

4.3 Competitiveness of the North Rift Region as a Tourist Destination

Respondents were asked to state how competitive the North Rift Region was as sports tourism destination compared to other sports destinations. Responses were in a 5 point rating where 'very good' was rated as 5, 'good' as 4, '4' as 3, 'poor' as 2 and 'very poor' as 1. Results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Competitiveness of North Rift Region

	Competitiveness
Mean	4.3
Std. Deviation	0.943
Minimum	2
Maximum	5

From Table 4.6, majority of the respondents rated the competitiveness of the region as being ‘good’ as compared to other sports destinations. This was shown by a mean of 4.3 and standard deviation of 0.943 among respondents. This could be attributed to the dominance of the region in athletics than any other region in the country.

4.4 Core Attractions and Resources

These were represented by natural resources, culture and heritage resources and created resources. To gauge respondents’ views about them, they were asked to rate them on a 5 point likert scale. Results are given in subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Natural Resources

The study sought to assess the competitiveness of natural resources as tourism attractions. The results using a 5 point rating scale are given in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Natural Resources in the Study Area

	Comfortable climate for sports tourism	Cleanliness/ sanitation	Natural wonders	Flora and fauna	Unspoiled nature	National parks/reserves
Mean	4.67	3.97	4.83	4.67	4.53	3.83
Std. Deviation	.479	.765	.379	.479	.507	.648
Minimum	4	3	4	4	4	3
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5

As shown in Table 4.7, natural resources were measured using climate for tourism, sanitation of the area, natural scenery, flora and fauna, was spoiled nature and natural parks. From Table 4.7, it is evident that there is comfortable climate for sports tourism as indicated by a mean of 4.67 with standard deviation of 0.479. This implies that

majority of the respondents rated the climate for sports tourism as being ‘good’. Further, cleanliness/ sanitation of the area was good as shown by a mean of 3.97 with standard deviation of 0.765. Results in Table 4.7 also indicate that natural wonders/scenery were very good as indicated by a mean of 4.83 and a standard deviation of 0.379. Flora and Fauna was rated as ‘good’ with a mean of 4.67 and standard deviation of 0.479 while other natural resources such as National parks and nature reserves were rated as being ‘good’. As shown by a mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 0.648. Majority of the respondents also stated that there was unspoiled nature in the study area that was meant to boost sports tourism in the area of study.

From the results, it can be inferred that due to the presence of natural resources like climate, sanitation, natural scenery, flora and fauna, unspoiled nature and national parks, the region boasts of a positive attribute that contributes to the development of sports tourism in the area of study as indicated by a group mean of 4.42

4.4.2 Culture and Heritage

Culture and heritage was considered as one of the resources that would promote the development of sports tourism in North Rift region. The aspects covered under culture and heritage were heritage sites and museums, architectural features, traditional arts, variety of cuisine and cultural precincts and villages. The opinions of the respondents on this item are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Culture and Heritage

	Historical/Heritage sites and museums	Architectural features	Traditional arts	Variety of cuisine	Cultural precincts
Mean	3.00	2.60	3.00	2.87	2.83
Std. Deviation	.947	.932	.947	1.008	1.053
Minimum	2	1	2	2	1
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4

It is instructive to note that heritage sites and museums were rated as being ‘fair’ with a mean of 3 and standard deviation of 0.947, while architectural features were rated as ‘fair’ with a mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 0.932. Further, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that competitiveness of traditional arts was fair as shown by a mean of 3 whereas the variety of cuisine was rated as ‘fair’ with a mean of 2.87. Cultural precincts and (folk) villages were reported to be good with a mean of 2.83, although the standard deviation is wide (1.053).

The result implies that culture and heritage was rated as fair as shown by an overall mean of 2.86. Therefore heritage sites and museums, architectural, feature, traditional arts, variety of cuisine and cultural precincts and villages were considered as being fair. There is therefore need to improve these resources since they are important in the development of the tourism and sports industries.

4.5 Created Resources

This was represented by tourism infrastructure, range of tourism activities as well as entertainment.

4.5.1 Tourism Infrastructure

Table 4.9 shows the responses of respondents concerning the state of tourism infrastructure in the area of study.

Table 4.9 Tourism Infrastructure

	Accommodation quality/ variety	Airport efficiency / quality	Tourist guidance/ information	Local transport efficiency /quality	Visitor accessibility to areas	natural	Convention / Exhibition facilities (capacity/ quality)
Mean	3.43	2.97	3.10	2.80		3.00	2.13
Std. Deviation	.504	.556	.662	.664		.000	.629
Minimum	3	2	2	2		3	1
Maximum	4	4	4	4	3	3	3

As indicated in Table 4.9, the quality and variety of accommodation available in the tourism facilities was fair as shown by a mean of 3.43 and standard deviation of 0.504. The quality and efficiency of airport facilities was considered as fair by the respondents who participated in this study as indicated by a mean of 2.97.

Further, Table 4.9 reveals that there was good guidance and release of relevant information to tourists. This is expected to boost the sports tourism in the area of study. The mean for this item was 3.10 with standard deviation of 0.662. Efficiency and quality of local transport and visitor's accessibility to places of interest were considered as being fair as indicated by means of 2.80 and 3.00 respectively. However, the respondents were of the opinion that the capacity and quality of exhibitions and food services were poor. This is shown by means of 2.13 and 2.27 respectively. This might affect negatively the development of sports tourism in the North Rift region. In general, the tourism infrastructure was rated as good with a mean of 2.81.

4.5.2 Range of Tourism Activities

The study sought to determine the opinion of the respondents on the range of tourism activities in North Rift Region. Their responses are as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Range of Tourism Activities

	Water based activities	Nature activities	Adventure activities	Recreation facilities	Sports facilities	Shopping experience
Mean	2.13	2.83	3.23	3.27	3.13	1.60
Std. Deviation	.629	1.177	.728	.450	.860	.932
Minimum	1	1	2	3	2	1
Maximum	3	4	4	4	4	3

From the results in Table 4.10, majority of the respondents rated water based activities as poor as indicated by a mean of 1.13 and standard deviation of 0.629. Nature based activities were rated as good with a mean of 2.83 and standard deviation of 1.177. This indicates that there was a wide disparity in the responses given by the respondents. As

for the adventure activities, recreation activities and sports facilities, the respondents rated them as good as shown by means of 3.23, 3.27 and 3.13 respectively. However the findings indicate that diversity of shopping experiences was rated as poor. This is an indication that there was no variety of shopping experience in the North Rift Region. In overall, the range of tourism activities was rate as being fair with a mean of 2.7.

4.5.3 Entertainment

Entertainment was one of the items that were investigated in this study. The respondents who participated in this study gave the following responses.

Table 4.11 Entertainment Facilities

	Amusement/theme parks	Entertainment quality/variety	Night life
Mean	1.83	1.57	2.27
Std. Deviation	.834	.504	.907
Minimum	1	1	1
Maximum	3	2	3

The components of entertainment were amusement/theme parks, quality and variety of entertainment and night life which includes discos, clubs and bars. Results indicate that theme parks, quality and variety of entertainment and night life were poor. This is indicated by means of 1.83, 1.57 and 2.27 respectively with standard deviation of 0.834, 0.504 and 0.907 respectively. The overall mean was 1.89. As established from the findings of the study, the entertainment facilities were not adequate. This is likely to impact negatively on the development of sports tourism in the North Rift Region.

4.6 Supporting Factors

4.6.1 Infrastructure

The infrastructure was assessed in terms of adequacy of infrastructure to meet visitor needs, medical facilities to serve tourists, financial institution and currency exchange facilities, telecommunication system for tourists, safety for visitors, local transport

system, waste disposal systems and electricity supply. The responses concerning the mentioned items are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Infrastructure

	Adequacy of infrastructure	Medical facilities	Financial institution	Telecommuni- cation system	safety for visitors	transport	Waste disposal	Electricity supply
Mean	2.53	3.57	3.73	4.00	4.00	3.40	3.00	3.17
Std. Deviation	.937	.504	.450	.000	.000	.770	.788	.834
Minimum	1	3	3	4	4	2	2	2
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

From results in Table 4.12, it can be noted that adequacy of infrastructure to meet visitors needs was rated as four with a mean of 2.53 and standard deviation of 0.937. Majority of the respondents rated the medical facilities to serve tourist as good with a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 0.504. Financial institution and currency exchange facilities, telecommunication system for tourists and security for visitors were considered to be good with means of 3.73, 4.00 and 4.00 respectively. Waste disposal systems, local transport system and electricity supply in North Rift Region was rated as fair with means of 3.00, 3.40 and 3.17 respectively by the sports tourism stakeholders. Destinations have become reliant on the delivery of quality services. Thus the region has to maintain as well as improve further in the provision of infrastructure should it desire to be a leading sports tourism destination. There exists a link between destination access and destination choice

4.6.2 Quality of Service in the Study Area

Respondents' rating of the quality of services in the North Rift Region are shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Quality of Service

	Performance standards	Industry appreciation	Training programmes	Speed of clearance	Attitudes of customs/immigration officials
Mean	2.73	2.57	3.27	2.57	2.40
Std. Deviation	.740	.504	.450	.504	.498
Minimum	2	2	3	2	2
Maximum	4	3	4	3	3

From the results in Table 4.13, it is clear that performance standard in service delivery of tourism/hospitality firms was rated as fair with a mean of 2.73. However, the respondents rated the attitudes of customs/immigration officials as poor. This means that the customs/immigration officials had a negative attitude and this could contribute to the slow development of the sports tourism in the region. The responses on this item had a mean of 2.4. It is further indicated that speed of clearance through customs and immigration, development of training programmes and industry appreciation of importance of service quality were rated as fair as shown by means of 2.57, 3.27 and 2.57 respectively.

In general, quality of service in the North Rift region was rated as fair by the respondents who participated in this study.

4.6.3 Accessibility of Destination

It was important for the study to rate the accessibility of destinations by tourists. This was done by looking at the distance and flying time taken by tourists to destination from key origins, direct and indirect flights to origins, direct and indirect flights to destination, ease/cost of obtaining entry visa, ease of combining travel to the destination with travel to other destinations and frequency/ capacity of access transport to destination. The responses on the aspects mentioned are presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Accessibility of the Destination

	Distance/ Flying time	flights to the area	obtaining entry visa	travel to the region and to other areas	Capacity of access transport
Mean	1.87	1.87	1.57	2.10	2.27
Std. Deviation	.629	.346	.504	.845	.691
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	3	2	2	3	3

The respondents rated the distance and time taken to the North Rift Region from key origins such as poor. This is shown by a mean of 1.87 and standard deviation of 0.629. This implies that the key origins were far from the destination and this is expected to impact negatively on the promotion of sports tourism in the North Rift Region. Direct/indirect flights to the North regions, ease/cost of obtaining entry visa, ease of combining travel to the regions with travel to other destinations in Kenya and frequency/capacity of access transport to the North Rift region were considered by the respondents to be fair. The means were 1.87, 1.57, 2.10 and 2.27 respectively. Overall, accessibility of destination had a mean of 1.94 which implies that accessibility of destination was poor. There exists a link between destination access and destination choice. The poor rating in accessibility is seen as an impediment to visitation and destination links with major origin markets to the region.

4.6.4 Hospitality

Another variable studied in this study was the hospitality of the people of the region in relation to sports tourism promotion. The components investigated include friendliness of residents towards tourists, resident support for tourism industry and ease of communication between tourists and residents. The results are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Hospitality

	Friendliness of residents	Resident support for tourism industry	Ease of communication
Mean	3.53	3.87	3.87
Std. Deviation	.776	.346	.346
Minimum	2	3	3
Maximum	4	4	4

As shown in Table 4.15, friendliness of residents towards tourists, resident support for tourism industry and ease of communication between tourists and residents were in the North Rift region were considered to be good with means of 3.53, 3.87 and 3.87 respectively. The standard deviation was 0.776, 0.346 and 0.346 respectively. The overall mean was 3.76 which implies that hospitality was perceived to be good. Hospitality relates to the resident and community attitudes towards tourists and towards tourism industry. Resident support for tourism development fosters a competitive destination. This is a high attribute in the development of sports tourism.

4.6.5 Market Ties

The results on this component were shown in Table 4.16

Table 4.16 Market Ties

	Business			
	ties/trade links with major tourist origin markets	Sporting links with major tourist origin markets	Religious ties with major tourist origin markets	Extent of foreign investment in local tourism industry
Mean	2.90	3.57	3.30	3.43
Std. Deviation	.662	.504	1.088	.971
Minimum	2	3	2	2
Maximum	4	4	5	5

Findings shown in Table 4.16 revealed that business ties with major tourist origin markets, religious ties with major tourist origin markets and extent of foreign investment in local tourism industry were rated as fair by the respondents. This was indicated by means of 2.90, 3.30 and 3.43 respectively. But sporting links with major

tourist origin markets was considered to be good as shown by a mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 0.504. The overall mean for market ties was 3.3 which imply that market ties in the North Rift were highly rated. This provides a ready platform for marketing sports tourism to generating countries.

4.7 Destination Management Practices

4.7.1 Destination Management Organizations

The study sought to determine effectiveness of the destination management organizations.

Results are summarized in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 Destination Management Organization

	NTO's ability as a coordinating body	NTO's representation of views of all tourism stakeholders	NTO's liaison with private sector	NTO's provision of statistical information as input	NTO's strategic monitoring and evaluation
Mean	3.07	2.90	2.73	2.60	2.60
Std. Deviation	1.081	.995	.868	.724	.724
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	4	4	4	3	3

It is clear from Table 4.17 that majority of the respondents stated that the National Tourism Organization's (NTO) ability as a coordinating body for private and public tourism sectors was as good with a mean of 3.07 and standard deviation of 1.081. It is further revealed that NTO's liaison with private sector in tourism policy planning and development and NTO's provision of statistical information as input to tourism, policy, planning and development were taken to be satisfactory with means of 2.90, 2.73 and 2.60. An equal proportion of respondents (2.6) stated that NTO's strategic monitoring and evaluation of the nature and type of tourism development was fair. This implies that destination management organization in the North Rift region was rated as fair with mean of 2.78 however, there is more room for improvement in this area starting with

the establishment of functional regional tourism organizations to foresee the development of potential tourism products.

4.7.2 Destination Marketing Management

The tourism stakeholders' responses concerning destination marketing management is shown in Table 4.18

Table 4.18 Destination Marketing Management

	Reputation of NTO	Effectiveness of destination positioning	Strength/ Clarity of destination image	Monitoring of destination marketing activities	Packaging of destination experiences	NTO'S identification of target markets
Mean	3.00	2.30	2.13	2.17	2.30	2.27
Std. Deviation	.743	.466	.346	.379	.466	.450
Minimum	2	2	2	2	2	2
Maximum	4	3	3	3	3	3

Table 4.18 indicates that the reputation of the NTO was rated as fair with a mean of 3.00 and standard deviations of 0.743. Effectiveness of destination positioning, strength of destination, image monitoring of destination marketing activities, packaging of destination experience and NTO's identification of target markets were considered to be poor with means of 2.30, 2.13, 2.17, 2.30 and 2.27 respectively. The overall mean for the rating of destination marketing management was 2.36 implying that destination marketing management was rated as poor. This could be attributed to the little presence of the national tourist board in the region and the minimum effort they have put to marketing the region as a sports tourism destination.

4.7.3 Destination Policy, Planning and Development

The respondents were required to rate the destination policy, planning and development. Their results are recorded in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Destination Policy Planning and Development

	Existence of formal longterm 'vision'	Responsiveness of tourism development	Extent to which research findings are integrated	Inventory of significant attractors, facilities, services and experiences	Community support for sports tourism development
Mean	2.47	2.27	2.27	2.57	3.70
Std. Deviation	.507	.450	.691	.728	.466
Minimum	2	2	2	2	3
Maximum	3	3	4	4	4

The findings as shown in Table 4.19 indicate that existence of formal long term vision for the sports tourism industry development, responsiveness of tourism development to visitor needs and extent to which research findings are integrated into sports tourism planning and development were rated as being unsatisfactory by the respondents. This was indicated by means of 2.47, 2.27 and 2.27 respectively.

However, on inventory of most significant attractors, facilities, services and experiences offered in the North Rift and the community support for sports tourism development was rated as fair and good respectively as indicated by means of 2.57 and 3.70 respectively. A general mean of 2.66 was obtained for the destination policy planning and development implying that this was rated as fair in general.

4.7.4 Human Resources Development

The study sought the human resource development in the tourism sector in the North Rift Region. The responses are presented in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20 Human Resource Development

	Public sector commitment	Private sector commitment	Training/ educated responsiveness	Range/quality of tourism training programmes
Mean	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.30
Std. Deviation	.587	.587	.587	.466
Minimum	3	3	3	4
Maximum	5	5	5	5

It is worth noting that majority of the respondents who participated in this study rated human resources development in the North Rift Region as being good with a mean of 4.08. Public sector commitments to tourism education and training, private sector commitment to tourism education and training and training responses to changing visitor needs were rated as good with equal means of 4.00 respectively. The range of tourism training programmes was also considered to be good with a mean of 4.30 and standard deviation of 0.466. These findings provide a good foundation for establishing sports tourism facilities as relevant personnel are available.

4.7.5 Environmental Management

The management of the environment in the North Rift region was also investigated in this study in relation to the development of sports tourism in the region. The results are indicated in Table 4.21

Table 4.21 Environmental Management

	Public-sector recognition of importance of sustainable sports tourism development	Private sector recognition of importance of sustainable sports tourism development	Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage	Research and monitoring of environmental impacts of sports tourism
Mean	3.27	3.87	3.40	2.97
Std. Deviation	.450	.346	.498	.556
Minimum	3	3	3	2
Maximum	4	4	4	4

As shown in Table 4.21, both public sector and private sector recognition of the importance of sustainable tourism development were rated as fair and good with means of 3.27 and 3.87 respectively. Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage and research and monitoring of environmental impacts of sports tourism were rated satisfactory as indicated by means of 3.40 and 2.99 respectively. General environmental management was rated as good shown by a mean of 3.38. The tourism industry's performance depends on the industry's overall structure and the positive environment in which it is situated. This is necessary for the development of sustainable sports tourism.

4.8 Situational Conditions

4.8.1 Competitive Environment

The findings of the study on competitive environment are presented in Table 4.22

Table 4.22 Competitive Environment

	Domestic business environment	Management capabilities	Extent of competitive rivalry	Level of cooperation	Links between tourism/hospitality firms	Entrepreneurial qualities	Access to venture capital	Ethical operation of Tourism firms	Firms use of computer technology
Mean	2.77	2.70	2.57	2.57	2.30	2.70	2.53	3.27	3.00
Std.	1.040	.952	.504	.504	.466	.466	.730	.450	.587
Deviation									
Minimum	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
Maximum	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4

Table 4.22 shows that domestic business environment in the North Rift region was fair according to the majority of the respondents who participated in this study. The mean representing the general opinion of the respondents was 2.77 and standard deviation of 1.040. Management capabilities of tourism firms and organizations in the North Rift, extent of competitive rivalry between firms in domestic tourism industry were also seen as satisfactory with means of 2.7, 2.57 and 2.57 respectively. This implies that there was a fair level of co-operation between firms that are associated with sports tourism

in the area of study. Healthy competition among firms creates an environment for excellence.

Further, entrepreneurial qualities of local tourism stakeholders' access to venture capital in the region and ethical operation of tourism firms had means of 2.70, 2.53 and 3.27 respectively. This indicates that the variables were rated as fair by the respondents. It should be noted that there were poor links between tourism firms and firms in other industrial sectors. This is represented by a mean of 2.30 with standard deviation of 0.466. It is also revealed that firms' use of computer technology to achieve competitive advantage was fair as shown by a mean of 3.00 and standard deviation of 0.587. A proper environment for conducting business in the region should be encouraged. The findings reveal that the region has low investment levels as well as poor links between the sports and tourism industries. This raises alarm bells as more strategies and policies are needed to boost business and promote sports tourism development.

4.8.2 Global Environment

Other than micro-environment, the study sought to identify the competitiveness of global environment. The results are shown in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23 Global Environment

	Political stability in the region	Legal/Regulatory environment	Government policies	Economic conditions	Socio cultural environment	Investment environment	Adoption of technological changes
Mean	3.30	2.97	2.57	3.00	3.73	3.00	3.27
Std. Deviation	.466	.765	.728	.743	.691	.000	.450
Minimum	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4	3	4

As shown in Table 4.23, political stability in the region, government policies for tourism development and economic conditions in origin markets were rated as fair as shown by means of 2.97, 2.57 and 3.00 respectively. Social cultural environment was good whereas investment environment for tourism development and adoption of

technological changes were rated as fair with means of 3.00 and 3.27 respectively. The overall mean was 3.12 indicating that global environment was fairly stable, thus indicating a positive macro environment for the development of sports tourism in North Rift Region.

4.8.3 Price Competitiveness

Price competitiveness was measured in terms of value for money in sports tourism, exchange rate of local currency with foreign currency, air ticket prices from major origin markets, accommodation prices in the region and package tour prices in the region. Results are presented in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24 Price Competitiveness

	Value for money in sports tourism	Exchange rate of local currency	Air ticket prices	Accommodation prices in the region	package tour prices in the region
Mean	3.43	2.77	1.87	2.87	2.57
Std. Deviation	.728	1.040	.629	.346	.504
Minimum	2	1	1	2	2
Maximum	4	4	3	3	3

Table 4.24 reveals that value for money in sports tourism, exchange rate of local currency with foreign currency, accommodation price in the region and package tour prices in the region were considered by the respondents as fair with means of 2.77, 2.87 and 2.57 respectively. However, air ticket prices from major origin markets were poor. In general, price competitiveness was ruled as fair with mean of 2.7. In order to compete effectively the North Rift region should be able to get value for money from its sports tourism products.

4.8.4 Safety and Security

This was an important consideration in determining the development of sports tourism in the North Rift region. The results are presented in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25 Safety and Security

	Level of visitor safety in the destination	Efficiency of tourist police
Mean	4.03	3.40
Std. Deviation	0.556	0.498
Minimum	3	3
Maximum	5	4

The level of visitors' safety in destination was rated as good while efficiency of tourist police was considered as fair with means of 4.03 and 3.40 respectively. The overall mean was 3.72. The low rating on safety and security may be attributed to the political violence witnessed in the recent past. The recent concerns of terrorism and political upheavals around the world have contributed to tourists' decision making process. Tourists are more and more concerned about safety in the destinations they visit and thus the North Rift region needs to brand itself as safe destination for sports tourism.

4.9 Results of the Regression Analysis

A multiple regression equation was used to evaluate the relationship between selected independent variables used in this study and the dependent variable. The dependent variable (Competitiveness of the North rift region as a sports tourism destination(C) was considered as a function of core resources(X_1), supporting facilities(X_2), destination management practices(X_3) and situational conditions(X_4).

Therefore to achieve the objectives of this study the following multiple regression equation was used,

$$C = aX_1 + bX_2 + cX_3 + dX_4 + \epsilon,$$

Where a, b, c and d are the coefficients of proportionality in the linear equation.

Using SPSS computer programme, a multiple regression analysis involving the independent variables (core resources(X_1), supporting facilities(X_2), destination management practices(X_3) and situational conditions(X_4) and the dependent variable

(Competitiveness of the North rift region as a sports tourism destination(C) was used to determine the actual prediction equation and show the direction, collinearity and strength of the relationship among the variables.

The components of the multiple linear regression analysis are the Model Summary, the ANOVA Summary and the Table of Coefficients as presented in subsequent sections.

4.10 Correlation Matrix

Table 4.26 shows a simple correlation matrix showing the relationship between the variables used in this study.

Table 4.26: Correlation Matrix

	C	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄
C	1.00				
X ₁	0.197	1.00			
X ₂	0.438	0.311	1.00		
X ₃	0.371	0.273	0.344	1.00	
X ₄	0.333	0.285	0.182	0.304	1.00

Source: Computer printout from regression analysis (ENTER Method)

After running the multiple regression analysis, the output in Table 4.26 was extremely useful for getting a rough idea of the intensity of association between predictors and the outcome, and for a preliminary look for multicollinearity. As evidenced in Table 4.26, along the diagonal of the matrix, the values for the correlation coefficients are all 1.00 (showing a perfect positive correlation). The reason for this is that these values represent the correlation of each variable with itself, so obviously the resulting values are 1.

The Table further reveals that core resources had a positive coefficient of 0.197 with the dependent variable (competitiveness), meaning that core resources and competitiveness had a low degree of association. Supporting facilities had a correlation coefficient of 0.438 with the dependent variable, indicating an average degree of

association. The Table also shows that there was a fair positive correlation coefficient of 0.371 between destination management practices and the dependent variable (competitiveness of the North Rift Region as a sports tourism destination). There was a positive correlation of 0.333 between situational conditions and competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination. As evidenced in Table 4.26 the independent variables have a low degree of association among themselves, though significant.

4.11 Multiple Regression Equation Coefficients

Table 4.27 presents the coefficients used in the multiple regression equation, the t-statistics and the p-values derived after running the multiple regression analysis using SPSS.

Table 4.27: Multiple Regression Equation Coefficients

Variable	Coefficient	t-statistics	Sig.
X ₁	0.654	3.636	0.001
X ₂	0.559	2.052	0.046
X ₃	0.611	4.617	0.000
X ₄	0.501	11.840	0.038

Adjusted R² = 0.839

F-ratio = 324.143 with degrees of freedom of 3 and 58

Source: Computer printout from regression analysis (ENTER Method)

The Table shows the coefficients used in the multiple regression equation used in this study. This is where the actual prediction equation can be found. Substituting the coefficients in the multiple regression equation, we get:

$$C = 0.654X_1 + 0.559X_2 + 0.611X_3 + 0.501X_4$$

From Table 4.12, all the independent variables have positive coefficients implying that they are directly related with the dependent variable. However, it should be noted that core resources and destination management practices had high coefficients implying that they contribute a high percentage to the competitiveness of North Rift Region as a sports tourism destination.

In Table 4.27, Adjusted R^2 was 0.839. R^2 is the coefficient of determination which shows the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by variation in the independent variables. Therefore, 83.9% in the variation in competitiveness of North Rift region as a sports tourism destination can be explained by differences in the independent variables (core resources, supporting facilities, destination management practices and situational conditions). The remaining 16.1% variation in competitiveness can be explained by other variables not covered in this study. The Table also shows an F-ratio of 324.143 with degrees of freedom of 3 and 58, $p < 0.05$. In other words, the dependent variable can be predicted from the independent variables. This implies that there was a significant regression equation at 0.05 level of significance.

4.12 Testing the Hypotheses

This section deals with the testing of the hypotheses stated in Chapter One. This was done using the section of SPSS output labeled sig. in Table 4.27. SPSS can determine the exact alpha level associated with any value of a test statistic. Therefore, looking up a critical value in a table is not necessary. However, the basic procedure for determining whether or not to reject the null hypothesis has to change. When using SPSS, we reject the null hypothesis if the output value under sig. is equal to or smaller than 0.05 and fail to reject the null hypothesis if the output is larger than 0.05. Depending on the way

the hypotheses were stated, the value yielded by the significance test can either be positive or negative. The rejection level of the null hypotheses was ± 0.05 .

From Table 4.27, the results of the tested hypotheses were as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between availability of core tourism resources and the competitiveness of the North Rift region Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

The p-value that corresponds to core resources in Table 4.27 is 0.001. Therefore the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This implies that there is a significant relationship between availability of core tourism resources and the competitiveness of the North Rift region Kenya as a sports tourism destination. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, thereby implying that availability of core tourism resources was therefore a major predictor of the competitiveness of the North Rift region Kenya as a sports tourism destination. The North Rift region is regarded as above average in all attributes on this dimension. The highest rating was accorded to the unspoiled nature, flora and fauna, and attractiveness of climate. The relatively high rating given to the regions' natural resources is to be expected. It is well known that the region has areas of attractive natural resources, the nature is still unspoiled and the high altitude climate is really favourable for sports tourism especially athletics.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the range and level of supporting facilities and competitiveness of the North Rift region Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

The p-value that corresponds to supporting facilities in Table 4.27 is 0.046. The p-value is less than 0.05. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between the range and level of supporting facilities and competitiveness of the North Rift region Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the destination management practices in North Rift Kenya and its competitiveness as a sports tourism destination.

Table 4.27 indicates that the p-value for the destination management practices was 0.000. The null hypothesis was rejected since the p-value was less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), implying that there was a significant relationship between the destination management practices in North Rift Kenya and its competitiveness as a sports tourism destination. This implies that proper management practices enhance competitiveness of the North Rift Region as a sports tourism destination.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between the situational conditions prevailing in the North Rift region and its competitiveness as a sports tourism destination.

The p-value in Table 4.27 that corresponds to situational conditions is 0.038. This p-value is less than 0.05 and therefore we reject the null hypothesis. This means that there was a significant relationship between the situational conditions prevailing in the North Rift region and its competitiveness as a sports tourism destination. This implies that situational conditions were a major predictor of competitiveness of North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.

The findings of this study indicated that availability of core tourism resources, the range and level of supporting facilities, destination management practices and situational conditions prevailing in the North Rift region were found to be the main determinants of competitiveness of North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the discussion, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research based on study results. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence the competitiveness of North Rift Kenya as a sports tourism destination. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the discussion, the second part presents conclusions and recommendations, and lastly suggestions for further research.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 General Information on the Respondents

The study established that majority of the respondents were male and that they were of age between 30 and 50 years old. The study further found out that majority of the respondents in both tourism and sports industries were Diploma holders with a few being Degree and Masters holders. It was revealed that the tourism stakeholders who participated in the study were hospitality sector managers, tourism service managers and tourist agency managers. The sports officials included camp managers, trainers as well as sponsors.

In this study, the set of factors that influence competitiveness were constructed and divided into different headings mainly for methodological purposes. According to the sports tourism destination competitiveness research literature surveyed, theoretical considerations led to a rich pool of indicators of competitive advantage—enabling or facilitating factors on the supply side, and preference building factors on the demand side. It remained an unresolved question, however, what kind of mechanism channels all these factors into a construct called destination competitiveness. Therefore, this

study made this mechanism explicit by: interpreting competitiveness factors and destination competitiveness itself as formative latent constructs, and introducing sports tourism performance criteria as dependent variables. Without these dependent variables a destination competitiveness system gets stuck in a stage of definition. These are discussed in summary in the following sections.

5.2.2 Core Resources and Attractions

The importance of natural attractions and activities for a tourism destination are obvious. The natural resources of a destination signify the environmental framework within which the visitor enjoys the destination (Dwyer and Kim 2003). Mentioned in other destination competitiveness studies with different terminologies, they represent the 'core' of the destination. Some of them are just inherited by the country; these are the natural resources including culture and heritage, whereas others can be created. The variety and quality of nature a country possess have a direct influence on determining its competitiveness of a sports tourism destination.

This study sought to determine the existence, performance, range, level and contribution of natural resources to sports tourism in the North Rift region of Kenya. Natural resources were measured using climate for tourism, sanitation of the area, natural scenery, flora and fauna, unspoiled nature and natural parks and reserves.

The findings revealed that there was comfortable climate for sports tourism, this is shown by the majority of the respondents who rated the climate for tourism as being good. Further, cleanliness and sanitation, natural wonders and scenery, flora and fauna as well as national parks and natural reserves within the area were rated good. Majority of the respondents also stated that there was unspoiled nature in the area of study that was meant to boost sports tourism in the area of study.

Attractions are the primary elements of destination appeal. They are the key motivators for visitation to a destination, Crouch and Ritchie (1999). They are the fundamental reasons why prospective visitors choose one destination over another. The range of activities within a destination is an important pull factor and represents some of the most critical aspects of destination appeal. It is therefore important that the North Rift maintains and improves the natural resources the area is endowed with if it desires to attract more visitors to the region.

Culture and heritage was considered as one of the resources that would promote the development of sports tourism in North Rift region. The aspects covered under culture and heritage were heritage sites and museums, architectural features, traditional arts, variety of cuisine and cultural precincts and villages. The opinion of the respondents on the range and performance of culture and heritage sites, museums, architectural, features, traditional arts, variety of cuisine and cultural precincts and villages were considered as being fair and may need further improvement.

In relation to the state of tourism infrastructure in the area of study, the quality and variety of accommodation available in the tourism facilities was fair. The quality and efficiency of airport facilities was also considered as fair by the respondents who participated in this study.

Furthermore, the study reveals that there was good guidance and release of relevant information to tourists. Efficiency and quality of local transport and visitor's accessibility to natural resources were considered as being fair; however, the respondents were of the opinion that the capacity and quality of exhibitions and food services were poor. This might be a concern that stakeholders need to take into consideration in the development of sports tourism in the North Rift region. In general,

the tourism infrastructure was rated as good. These statistics imply that, despite the existence of these facilities, improvements were required in terms of performance, range and level of services offered therein.

The study sought to determine the opinion of the respondents on the range of tourism activities in North Rift Region. Generally, the range of tourism activities within the region was found to be wanting as there was no diversity. The study determined the lack of shopping facilities as well as water based activities despite the region boasting of several water bodies. There were some disparities of opinion concerning the existence, performance and range of tourism activities indicating the need to diversify these activities so as to improve the competitiveness of the North Rift as a sports tourism destination.

Other elements that are very important for the evaluation of a holiday destination are those related to entertainment and nightlife. This item refers in this study to activities the tourist can undertake such as visits to concerts, theatres, casinos, discos, bars, etc. The components of entertainment as indicated by the respondents suggest that theme parks, quality and variety of entertainment and night life were poor. This means that the North Rift region has not fully exploited this venture as a way of attracting potential sports tourists.

An efficient service is expected for check-in and check-out procedures at the destination airport along with accommodation facilities, food and beverage facilities. Since time is limited, tourists intend to have more experience in a shorter time rather than wasting time in queuing or complaining. A destination's competitiveness is sensitive to these components. The implementation of factor-creating mechanisms such as education, research and development and investment programmes are some of the most significant

tools for creating a sustainable competitive advantage for international tourist destinations. Eliminating bureaucratic barriers could further improve tourist services and quality, and reinforce the competitiveness of a destination (Keller and Smeral 1997).

5.2.3 Range and Level of Supporting Factors

This group comprises all the elements that serve primarily or secondarily for the development of tourism in a destination. These elements form a 'structure' whose function is to support, facilitate, enable or serve as a foundation for the tourism activity. The components under study included general infrastructure, quality of services, accessibility of the destination, hospitality of locals and market ties.

In terms of general infrastructure, it was instructive to note that adequacy of infrastructure to meet visitors' needs was rated as good; medical facilities to serve tourists, financial institution and currency exchange facilities, telecommunication system for tourists and security for visitors were considered to be good. Waste disposal systems, local transport system and electricity supply in North Rift Region were rated fair by stakeholders. This indicates that the area boasts of relatively good infrastructure and therefore positively influences the competitiveness of the North rift as a sports tourism destination.

The study sought to determine the quality of services in the tourism industry and the respondents were of the opinion that; performance standard in service delivery of tourism/hospitality firms was fair. However, the respondents rated the attitudes of customs and immigration officials were poor. This means that the customs/immigration officials had a negative attitude and this could contribute to low competitiveness of the region as a sports tourism destination. It is further indicated that speed of clearance

through customs and immigration, development of training programmes and industry appreciation of importance of service quality were still below par and needed improvement.

It was important for the study to rate the accessibility of destination for the tourists as it plays a critical role during the purchase decision making process. The respondents rated the distance and time taken to the North Rift Region from key origins as poor. This implies that the key origins were far from the destination and this is expected to impact negatively on the promotion of sports tourism in the North Rift Region. Direct/indirect flights to the North regions, ease/cost of obtaining entry visa, ease of combining travel to the regions with travel to other destinations in Kenya and frequency/capacity of access transport to the North Rift region were considered by the respondents to be fairly uncompetitive compared to other sporting destinations.

Another variable studied in this study was the hospitality of the region in relation to sports tourism promotion. friendliness of residents towards tourists, resident support for tourism industry and ease of communication between tourists and residents were in the North Rift region were considered to be good, which imply that hospitality of the locals was deemed positive and responsive towards development of sports tourism.

Business ties with major tourist origin markets, religious ties with major tourist origin markets and extent of foreign investment in local tourism industry were rated as fair by the respondents. The sporting link with major tourist origin markets was considered being good, a fact attributed to the brilliant performance of athletes during world championships. This was acknowledged as a strong marketing front for the region as well as a key factor in the development of sports tourism.

Overall, the ratings for the indicators of determinant supporting factors were considerably lower than for the core resources.

5.2.4 Destination Management Practices

This group refers to management activities and the tourism practices of the destination. Destination management should focus on a systematic examination of unique comparative advantages that provide a special long term appeal of the destination (Hassan 2000). Tourism planning takes place on many levels: destination, regional, national, international. Planning is carried out by different organisations and agencies. Most destinations depend on proper management practices to achieve success with their natural resources as well as supporting factors. Without proper management, these resources can be misused, degraded or even lost over time. In Kenya, this responsibility is accorded the National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) for example, Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), Kenya Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) etc.

Majority of the respondents stated the National Tourism Organizations' ability to coordinate private and public tourism sectors, NTOs' liaison with private sector in tourism policy planning and development and NTOs' provision of statistical information as input to tourism, policy, planning and development were taken to be fair. An equal proportion of respondents stated that NTOs' strategic monitoring and evaluation of the nature and type of tourism to be developed was satisfactory.

Under destination marketing management, the reputation of the NTO was seen as acceptable but still wanting, however, effectiveness of destination positioning, strength of destination, image monitoring of destination marketing activities, packaging of destination experience and NTO's identification of target markets were considered to

be poor. The respondents strongly believed that the tourism organizations in the country were not doing enough to promote and develop sports tourism in the region. This implies that the tourism marketing strategies put in place in North Rift Region are either not effective or are non-existent at all.

In terms of destination policy, planning and development, results indicate that existence of formal long term vision for tourism industry development, responsiveness of tourism development to visitor needs and extent to which research finds are integrated into tourism planning and development were rated as being poor by the respondents. Secondary sources as well as public records highlight the lack of a formal regional tourism policy that is designed to develop tourism in the North Rift.

However, inventory of most significant attractors, facilities, services and experiences offered in the North Rift and the community support for sports tourism development was rated as fair and good respectively. Stakeholders are therefore required to step in and invest more in sports tourism and establish facilities to cater for this industry.

It is worth noting that majority of the respondents who participated in this study rated human resources development in the North Rift Region as being good. Public sector commitments to tourism education and training, private sector commitment to tourism education and training and training responses to changing visitor needs were rated highly as well. The range of tourism training programmes was also considered to be good. This indicates that there is a visible trend of developing curricula and education programs that are geared towards tourism development. Human resources management (HRM) should be an integral part of corporate strategy and not just remain a functional strategy. Training has an important role to play in the development of the three dimensions of organizational knowledge: breadth/depth of knowledge, competence,

and exploratory/exploitative knowledge (Narasimbha, 2000). The lessons for tourism stakeholders include the need to understand the HRM practices that strengthen the organizational knowledge – sustained competitive advantage relationship, to find out the obstacles that organizations face in implementing those practices, and to formulate programmes to educate and train all tourism stakeholders.

Environmental management is necessary in order to successfully develop tourism in any destination. The study established that, both the public sector and private sector recognized the importance of sustainable tourism development which was rated as fair and good. Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage and research and monitoring of environmental impacts of tourism were considered satisfactory. This implies that environmental management in the North Rift region is highly regarded and therefore should be encouraged. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the role of NEMA in the protection of the environment.

Sustainable travel and tourism development relies upon policies which support harmonious relationships among travelers, local communities, the private sector and governments to balance natural, built and cultural environments with economic growth and stability (WTTC, 2001).

Mihalic (2000) asserts that destination attractiveness (appeal) and its competitiveness can be increased by proper management of environmental quality of a destination. She argues that destination competitiveness can be enhanced through such initiatives as codes of conduct, selfdeveloped environmental practice, certified or award-based best practice and accreditation schemes.

5.2.5 Situational Conditions

These are factors that can moderate, modify, mitigate and filter or strengthen, enhance and augment the impact of all other factors. Although destinations have little or no influence over these factors, the extent to which destinations act proactively towards the threats and opportunities represented by these factors has likely an influence in their competitiveness. This study examined these factors under the micro and macro environments.

The micro environment looked at the domestic business environment, competition and cooperation between firms, ethics, entrepreneurship and use of technology. The findings indicate that the domestic business environment in the North Rift region is attractive according to the majority of the respondents who participated in this study. Management capabilities of tourism firms and organizations in the North Rift, extent of competitive rivalry between firms in domestic tourism industry were considered fair with room for improvement. This implies that there was a fair level of co-operation between firms that are associated with tourism in the area of study. For a destination to develop in a sustainable way, business operations must be sustainable. Sustainable development for business means ‘adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future’ (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1994).

Further, entrepreneurial qualities of local tourism stakeholders’ access to venture capital in the region and ethical operation of tourism firms in the North Rift region was considered unattractive. It should be noted that links between tourism firms and firms in other industrial sectors were considered weak. It is also revealed that firms’ use of computer technology to achieve competitive advantage was fairly widespread. This

highlights the problems associated with putting up businesses in the region. High interest rates and lack of investment capital act as entry barriers to the sports tourism industry. In general, it was established that the micro environment could be conducive if the entry barriers were reduced, however, the level at which technology has been embraced is encouraging.

The macro environment under study included the political stability of the region, government policies for tourism development and economic conditions in origin markets which were rated as fair. Social cultural environment and adoption of technological changes were deemed acceptable. The t global environment was perceived to be fair, thus fairly contributing to the competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination. Tourism is influenced by a range of global forces including laws and regulations, growing concern for the environment, restructuring of economies, shifting demographics of the marketplace, the increasingly complex technology– human resource interface, including computerization. Such forces represent both challenges and opportunities to the tourism industry (Dwyer and Kim, 2003). The region is still struggling to reinvent their image as a safe destination for sports tourists following the aftermath of post elections violence in recent years. However, the region is slowly seeing an increase in confidence levels among potential investors and visitors signifying a positive trend albeit a shaky one.

Lastly, price is also an important element to be considered in destination competitiveness, but more than the actual cost it is more relevant to consider the cost-value of the destination. In other words, the extent to which the destination is worth the price paid for it. The findings in the study reveal that value for money in sports tourism, exchange rate of local currency with foreign currency, accommodation price in the region and package tour prices in the region were considered by the respondents as fair.

However, air ticket prices from major origin markets were deemed poor. In general, price competitiveness was ruled as fairly constrictive, indicating that there is still a long way to go to achieve price competitiveness of tourism products in the region.

An important economic variable impacting on destination competitiveness includes the exchange rate, with a direct effect on destination price competitiveness. Other important economic variables include interest rates that affect the amount of investment undertaken to respond to changing patterns of tourism demand. The government macroeconomic policy stance can affect the economic contribution of tourism demand (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000). It is with this in mind that the focus of the government in the region should focus on providing an environment that is conducive for investment and firms can get value for money.

5.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to determine the factors that influence the competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination in Kenya. There were four specific objectives which the study sought to achieve.

The first objective was to determine the range of core attractions and resources available for sports tourism in the region. The core attractions and resources were divided into natural and created resources. The study found out that the North Rift was endowed with a good climate, natural wonders, flora and fauna, unspoiled nature as well as some national parks and reserves. These are natural resources that play a key role in attracting tourists to the region and the high altitude climate is conducive for training of athletes. Culture and heritage was considered as one of the resources that would promote the development of sports tourism in North Rift region. The aspects covered under culture and heritage were heritage sites and museums, architectural features, traditional arts,

variety of cuisine and cultural precincts and villages. It was however noted that, this variable received a low rating compared to other natural resources and therefore important to preserve the heritage and cultural artifacts within the region. Of concern would be the poor rating exhibited by the created resources. Effort should be put in setting up more standard amenities and improvements made in service delivery as well as diversify the range of tourism activities in the region.

The second objective sought to determine the range and level of supporting factors available for sports tourism in the North Rift. It was encouraging to note the improvements made in terms of infrastructure and availability of other services in the region such as banking, health facilities and so on. It is prudent however, to recognize that these developments may not necessarily have come about due to tourism or geared towards tourism development in the region. Furthermore, these amenities are mainly found in urban areas and this still leaves room for improvement in the rural areas. The poor rating received by the attitudes customs and immigration officials requires urgent attention as does the cost and ease of obtaining entry visas into the country. On the same note, introduction of direct flights into the region will go a great way in opening up the North Rift to the world of sports tourists.

The third objective was to examine the destination management practices in the North Rift. According to the respondents, the positioning and marketing activities of the destination were poor. The main problem seemed to be the danger that because of the ineffectiveness in the phase of development and marketing of its tourism products, the region is losing the potential premium for the comparative advantages. This can be the reason for the diminution of the added value. It is possible that the tourism sector in the region doesn't benefit enough from government support for the planned development of the destination and that the marketing effort doesn't work in the desired direction.

However, ensuring an appropriate and dynamic organisational structure to manage the destination tourism process is a vital element of destination competitiveness. Government should be involved in the promotion, regulation, presentation, planning, monitoring, co-ordination and organisation of tourism resources. Worth noting is the high ratings received in terms of human resource management and environmental conservation which is a trend to be encouraged.

Finally the study set out to determine the situational conditions existing in the North Rift. Findings showed that the region received a fair rating in terms of the general business environment and a good review in terms of political stability and tourists' safety and security. Tourism can present an important factor in the internationalization of the economy; the favourable environment for foreign investment in the region's tourism industry represents an opportunity in maintaining or increasing the competitiveness and for faster development of sports tourism in the North Rift. This is particularly important for the segment of small and medium enterprises, which represent tourism business subjects. Ensuring a healthy investment climate is an essential ingredient of longer-term competitiveness. This goes hand in hand with a stable political climate as well as safety and security for the visitors.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

In an effort to fill up existing gap, more gaps emerged which need to be filled. The following are the areas that need further research:

- i. There is a need to explore the relative importance of the different dimensions of competitiveness. For example, how important are the natural resources compared to residents' hospitality, and/or how important is the

service quality compared to prices. Such researches must be prepared for the specific destinations and specific visitor market segments.

- ii. The study focused more on the supply side and therefore, there is need to investigate the demand side of the tourism cycle. There is a need for more detailed empirical studies of consumer preferences and the determinants of travel decision. The study listed some of the main dimensions and indicators only and therefore the need to delve deeper and thoroughly assess the competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination in Kenya.
- iii. The study did not address all the gaps cited in the literature review such as indirect measurements employed in business portfolio analysis. However, these should be adopted when conducting other studies on destination competitiveness. For instance exploit the almost Ideal Demand System (AIDS) model and hedonic pricing theory for evaluating the competitiveness destinations. The AIDS model provides us with price and income elasticities while the hedonic pricing theory then steps in to explore the potential reasons of low or high price competitiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter

Winnie Tubey,
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900-30100
ELDORET

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student at Moi University, pursuing a Masters of Philosophy in Tourism Management. As a partial fulfillment of the degree course, I am conducting a study on Competitiveness of the North Rift Region in Kenya as a Sports Tourism Destination.

The results of the study will be useful in policy formulation in the tourism industry and in diversification of the tourism products within North Rift region.

I have selected you to contribute to my research by answering the attached questionnaire. Your contributions and comments will be treated in utmost confidentiality and no names or personal information will be divulged.

Your assistance and cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Winnie Tubey

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Tourism Stakeholders

The destination competitiveness in tourism depends on various dimensions of the visitor tourism experience. As stakeholder in the tourism industry in North Rift Kenya you will have valuable insights which can assist me to achieve the objectives of this study. I would greatly appreciate if you could spend some time answering questions about North Rift Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age
 - i. Less than 30 years
 - ii. 30-40 years
 - iii. 41-50 years
 - iv. 51 years and above

3. Level of education
 - i. Diploma
 - ii. Undergraduate
 - iii. Masters
 - iv. PHD

4. Work position
 - i. Tourist agency managers
 - ii. Hospitality sector managers
 - iii. Tourism service managers
 - iv. Other

5. How long has your work been linked to the tourism industry?
- i. Less than 5years
 - ii. 5-10 years
 - iii. 10-15 years
 - iv. 15 years and above
6. In your opinion, how competitive is the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination compared to other sports destinations?
- i. Very poor
 - ii. Poor
 - iii. Fair
 - iv. Good
 - v. Very good
7. Indicate how each of the following determinants of competitiveness influences the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.
1. Very poor
 2. Poor
 3. Fair
 4. Good
 5. Very good

Endowed Resources	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Natural</i>					
Comfortable climate for tourism					
Cleanliness/Sanitation of the area					
Natural wonders/Scenery					
Flora and fauna (e.g. animals, birds, forests)					
Unspoiled nature					

National parks/Nature reserves					
<i>Culture/Heritage</i>					
Historic/Heritage sites and museums					
Artistic/Architectural features					
Traditional arts					
Variety of cuisine					
Cultural precincts and (folk) villages					
Created Resources					
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>					
Accommodation quality/variety					
Airport efficiency/quality					
Tourist guidance/information					
Local transport efficiency/quality					
Visitor accessibility to natural areas					
Convention/Exhibition facilities (capacity/quality)					
Food services quality/variety					
<i>Range of tourism activities</i>					
Water based activities					
Nature based activities					
Adventure activities					
Recreation facilities					
Sports facilities					
Diversity of shopping experience					
<i>Entertainment</i>					
Amusement/Theme parks					
Entertainment quality/variety(e.g. theatre, gallery, cinema)					
Night life (e.g. discos, clubs, bars)					
Supporting Factors					
<i>General infrastructure</i>					
Adequacy of infrastructure to meet visitor needs					
Health/Medical facilities to serve tourists					
Financial institution and currency exchange facilities					
Telecommunication system for tourists					
Security/safety for visitors					
Local transport systems					
Waste disposal systems					
Electricity supply					
<i>Quality of service</i>					
Performance standards in service delivery of Tourism/Hospitality firms					
Industry appreciation of importance of service quality					

Development of training programmes to enhance quality of service					
Speed of clearance through customs/immigration					
Attitudes of customs/immigration officials					
<i>Accessibility of destination</i>					
Distance/Flying time to the North Rift region from key origins					
Direct/Indirect flights to the North Rift region					
Ease/Cost of obtaining entry visa					
Ease of combining travel to the region with travel to other destinations in Kenya					
Frequency/Capacity of access transport to the North Rift region					
<i>Hospitality</i>					
Friendliness of residents towards tourists					
Resident support for tourism industry					
Ease of communication between tourists and residents					
<i>Market ties</i>					
Business ties/trade links with major tourist origin markets					
Sporting links with major tourist origin markets					
Religious ties with major tourist origin markets					
Extent of foreign investment in local tourism industry					
Destination Management					
<i>Destination management organization</i>					
National Tourism Organization's ability as a coordinating body for private and public tourism sectors					
National Tourism Organization's representation of views of all tourism stakeholders in tourism development					
National Tourism Organization's liaison with private sector in tourism policy, planning and development					
National Tourism Organization's provision of statistical information as input to tourism policy, planning and development					
National Tourism Organization's strategic monitoring and evaluation of the nature and type of tourism development					
<i>Destination marketing management</i>					
Reputation of National Tourism Organization					
Effectiveness of destination positioning					
Strength/Clarity of destination image					
Monitoring of destination marketing activities					
Packaging of destination experiences					

National Tourism Organization's identification of target markets					
<i>Destination policy, planning, and development</i>					
Existence of formal long-term 'vision' for tourism industry development in the region					
Responsiveness of tourism development to visitor needs					
Extent to which research findings are integrated into tourism planning and development					
Inventory of most significant attractors, facilities, services and experiences offered in the North Rift					
Community support for sports tourism development					
<i>Human Resource Development</i>					
Public sector commitment to tourism/hospitality education and training					
Private sector commitment to tourism/hospitality education and training					
Training/education responsiveness to changing visitor needs					
Range/quality of tourism/hospitality training programmes					
<i>Environmental management</i>					
Public-sector recognition of importance of sustainable tourism development					
Private sector recognition of importance of sustainable tourism development					
Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage					
Research and monitoring of environmental impacts of tourism					
Situational Conditions					
<i>Competitive (micro) environment</i>					
Domestic business environment in the North Rift region					
Management capabilities of tourism firms and organizations					
Extent of competitive rivalry between firms in domestic tourism industry					
Level of cooperation between firms in destination tourism industry					
Links between tourism/hospitality firms and firms in other industrial sectors					
Entrepreneurial qualities of local tourism stakeholders					
Access to venture capital in the region					
Ethical operation of Tourism/hospitality firms					
Firms use of computer technology to achieve competitive advantage					
<i>Global (macro) environment</i>					

Political stability in the region					
Legal/Regulatory environment					
Government policies for tourism development					
Economic conditions in origin markets					
Socio cultural environment					
Investment environment for tourism development					
Adoption of technological changes					
<i>Price competitiveness</i>					
Value for money in sports tourism					
Exchange rate of local currency with foreign currency					
Air ticket prices from major origin markets					
Accommodation prices in the region					
package tour prices in the region					
<i>Safety/Security</i>					
Level of visitor safety in destination					
Efficiency of tourist police					

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Sports Officials

The destination competitiveness of the North Rift region in Kenya depends on various dimensions. As athletics officials in North Rift Kenya you will have valuable insights as to the factors influencing the competitiveness of the region as a sports tourism destination which can assist me to achieve the objectives of the study. I would greatly appreciate if you could spend some time answering questions about North Rift Kenya as a sports tourism destination.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Gender Male Female

2. Age
 - i. Less than 30 years
 - ii. 30-40 years
 - iii. 41-50 years
 - iv. 51 years and above

3. Level of education
 - i. Certificate
 - ii. Diploma
 - iii. Undergraduate
 - iv. Masters
 - v. PHD

4. Work position
 - i. Coach/Trainer
 - ii. Camp Manager
 - iii. Sponsor

5. How long has your work been linked to the sports industry?
- i. Less than 10years
 - ii. 10-20 years
 - iii. 21-30 years
 - iv. 30 years and above

For each factor listed below, please indicate a rating for how they each influence the competitiveness of the North Rift region as a sports tourism destination.

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. Fair
4. Good
5. Very good

Endowed Resources	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Natural</i>					
Comfortable climate for sports					
Cleanliness/Sanitation of the area					
Local talent					
<i>Culture/Heritage</i>					
Variety of cuisine					
Created Resources					
<i>Sports infrastructure</i>					
Accommodation for athletes					
Airport efficiency/quality					
Local transport efficiency/quality					
Visitor accessibility to natural areas for training purposes					
Sports facilities (e.g. stadia, camps)					
<i>Range of sports activities</i>					
Local athletics events held in the region					
National athletics events in the region					
International athletics events in the region					
Diversity of sporting experience					
<i>Entertainment</i>					

Entertainment quality/variety(e.g. theatre, gallery, cinema)					
Night life (e.g. discos, clubs, bars)					
Supporting Factors					
<i>General infrastructure</i>					
Health/Medical facilities to serve athletes					
Financial institution and currency exchange facilities					
Telecommunication system for athletes					
Security/safety for athletes					
Local transport systems					
Waste disposal systems					
Electricity supply					
<i>Quality of service</i>					
Standards of athletics events held in the region					
Standards of athletics camps in the region					
Speed of clearance through customs/immigration					
Attitudes of customs/immigration officials					
<i>Accessibility of destination</i>					
Distance/Flying time to the North Rift from key origins					
Direct/Indirect flights to the region					
Ease/Cost of obtaining entry visa					
Frequency/Capacity of access transport to destination					
<i>Hospitality</i>					
Friendliness of residents towards sports tourists					
Resident support for sports tourism industry					
Ease of communication between sports tourists and residents					
Destination Management					
Linkages between the tourism and sports industries in the region					
Existence of a policy and planning document aimed at sports tourism development in the region.					
Effectiveness of destination positioning					
Efficient monitoring of destination marketing activities					
Effective packaging of sports tourism experiences					
Existence of formal long-term 'vision' for sports tourism industry development in the region					
Extent to which research findings are integrated into sports and tourism planning and development					

Inventory of most significant sports attractors, facilities, services and experiences offered in the North Rift					
Community support for sports tourism events					
<i>Human Resource Development</i>					
Public sector commitment to sports education and training					
Private sector commitment to sports education and training					
Training/education responsiveness to changing international sports programs					
<i>Environmental management</i>					
Recognition of importance of environmental management					
Existence of laws and regulations protecting the environment and heritage					
Research and monitoring of environmental impacts of sports tourism					
Situational Conditions					
<i>Competitive (micro) environment</i>					
Management capabilities of sports facilities					
Extent of competitive rivalry between sports facilities					
Links between sports facilities and tourism/hospitality firms					
Entrepreneurial qualities of local sports stakeholders					
Access to venture capital					
Use of computer technology/commerce to achieve competitive advantage by sports facilities					
<i>Global (macro) environment</i>					
Political stability in the region					
Legal/Regulatory environment					
Government policies for sports development					
Economic conditions in origin markets					
Investment environment for tourism development					
Technology changes					
<i>Price competitiveness</i>					
Value for money in sports tourism					
Exchange rate of local currency					
Air ticket prices from major origin markets					
Accommodation prices					
<i>Safety/Security</i>					
Level of athletes safety in destination					
Effectiveness of police in protecting the athletes					