

## Sports in Advancing Diplomacy in Kenya

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### Abstract

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Sports diplomacy has achieved great strides in achieving international, regional and local unity, but little is still known about its influence in developing countries. This research examines the means of incorporating sports in diplomacy in Kenya. The study adopted exploratory research design. The primary data were obtained through structured questionnaire and analyzed through frequency distribution, and thematic analysis. Sporting events in athletics and volleyball improved diplomacy and restored peace in several areas of Kenya. Peace was promoted through sports by respecting human rights, rule of law, and equality among the conflicting groups. Sports also enhanced unity, trust, loyalty, friendship and team building among the conflicting communities. This study recommends that sports should be used to enhance diplomacy since it is less used in this field. Further, the government is also encouraged to appoint more sports ambassadors with proper diplomacy knowledge to help in diplomatic relationships. The role of academicians in sports diplomacy was found to be minimal where academicians should be at the forefront as the 21<sup>st</sup> century diplomats be incorporated into sports to be local ambassadors. Further studies are required in Kenya's on sports diplomacy and foreign policy on areas such as multilateralism and digital diplomacy.

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**Keywords:** Sports, Diplomacy, Sports diplomacy, International peace, Conflict management

### 1. Introduction

Sport involves physical exertion and skills where individuals or teams compete against another or others for entertainment (Hughes, 2019). The physical activity during sports confer numerous benefits to humans allowing the individual to improve their physical, psychological, mental, emotional and social wellbeing (Lundqvist, 2011). It is the power of sports to bring different people together across the national and international boundaries that makes it unique. Subsequently sporting events are becoming more common worldwide social trend, which is increasingly attracting more participants, organizers and fans (Kasemsap, 2014). This ability of sports to congregate people, allows it to be a useful tool in resolving underlying problems of diplomacy among humanity.

The concept of sport and diplomacy happen to exist together in more recent years (Abdi, Talebpour, Fullerton, Ranjkesh, & Jabbari Nooghabi, 2018). Sports diplomacy has been applied to influence diplomatic exercises social, economic and political activities, on behalf of various state, individual and group actors (Bolçay, 2018). The use of sports as a soft power for states and governments has become obvious, repetitive, and sometime clichéd (Houlihan & Zheng, 2015). This is shown by the critical importance of emerging global interest on the issues affecting the rate of sports diplomacy. However, the degrees of using sport as valuable instrument of public diplomacy are still at its infancy stage in several countries across the world. Thus, it is important to instigate further discussion from the realm of sports and sports diplomacy to generate sustainable and realistic connection between these variables.

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Kenya is a very sportive country standing tall among many nations especially in athletics, cricket, rugby and volleyball (Byron & Chepyator-Thomson, 2015). Locally, marathons and football are very popular. Kenyan fans flood the stadia to support their teams, sometimes accompanied by prominent personalities in government. There have been a number of advocacies to use sports in diplomacy. However, there are fewer studies available linking the role of sports in diplomacy in Kenya. Therefore, this study determined the means of incorporating sports into diplomacy in Kenya.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Theoretical review**

Soft power theory introduced by Professor Joseph Nye enlightens the new geopolitical formations that were taking place with the decline of the Soviet Union (Nye, 2021). Joseph Nye stated: "...soft power could be used in getting others to do one's bidding by being attractive to them in one form or another". Accordingly, in soft power theory, there is ability of actors to exert a pull on something but not to force, coerce or bully into submission (different from hard power). Simply put, soft power involves the power of appeal to profile their inclinations and emotions. They can be accomplished by culture attribution, political values, and diplomatic methods (Sun & Harris, 2020).

This study employed Soft Power theory which proposes that to achieve diplomacy and international peace, there is need for the actors to attract and co-opt, but not coerce people into action. Soft power in this aspect is supposed to appeal to emotions so that engagement can be done in natural way. During the study there was an inherent need to establish ways of relating sports to diplomacy and achieve some beneficial effects geared towards enhancing sports diplomacy in Kenya. While sports unite people across all the divisions of religion, race, and region, it has the ability to attract and persuade thus achieving diplomacy in a rather "soft way". Therefore, this framework was useful to build the relationship between sports and diplomacy which was the objective of this study.

### **2.2 Empirical Review**

#### **2.2.1 Sports**

Sport derived its name from an old Latin word '*deportare*' meaning to have fun. Based on dictionary.com definitions, sport is defined to mean an athletic activity which requires skill or physical prowess (Education Special, 2012). Merriam Webster dictionary on the other hand defined sports as physical activity engaged in for pleasure. According to the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (UNIATFSDP), sports is "all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games". Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that sports involve a physical activity, there should be some skills involved, there is fun or pleasure involved and it involves more than one person and can include multitude of people.

The earliest recognized through historical records dates to approximately 3,000 years ago with more meaningful records dated to 700 to 450 BCE in ancient Greece (Pope & Nauright, 2009). In Greece, sports was training for war, mainly through throwing of spears, archery, shot-puts, and rocks and seeing how the opponents react to it (Defrance & Chamot, 2008). To prepare the combatants, some forms of sports held were boxing, footrace, long jump, javelin, wrestling, pentathlon (five events held in sequence), the pankration (wrestling and boxing), horse racing, and chariot races. According to these antiquity records the first Olympic Games was held in 776 BC, from where sports as described in the primeval times spread to the entire world in a formal way. These games continued into early Christian times, inspiring the modern games.

Between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, sport was more popular in the middle-class population, in Europe followed by other rest of the world (Summerley, 2020). Owing to this democratization of sport, many spectators started demanding an elitist competition where the level of competition can be recognized as 'best' at the global front. The dawn of the modern Olympics game by early sportsman Baron de Coubertin in 1896 and the organization of the World Cup soccer (originally referred to as football) event in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are some of the symbolics of the process. Currently, sporting events is global, involve bigger and more sophisticated infrastructure and has economic activities linked to it.

In Africa, the advent of modern sporting occurred during the colonial period (Chipande & Banda, 2018). Sports such as cricket, football, and hockey were spread by European Colonialists as part of their civilizing and conquering programs. Although the Europeans appeared to have started sports in Africa, the continent also had its own unique sports that were at variant with the Europeans sports. This is notwithstanding the fact that the African people had their own sporting events (Burnett, 2018). Sports in Africa were categorized into three broad areas: team sports including football, basketball, cricket, rugby and hockey; individual sports which includes athletics, cycling, golf, tennis, etc.; and combat sports that comprise boxing, judo, taekwondo.

In Kenya, before the British colonial rulers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the native took part in a number of physical exercise, as part of the life daily routine (Njororai, 2016). Meanwhile there were tremendous developments in the sphere of sports over the years. There were a number of traditional sports expressed in material ability. More competitive games included wrestling, running (athletics), stone throwing (shotput), mountain climbing, swimming, canoe racing, and with mock fights occurring among herders. Riding on animal backs was also common form of sport in those olden days. The successful sportsmen in the Kenyan sporting setup were accorded high status, where the winners were admired, well recognized and respected. Kenyans participated in sports as pastime resulting in participation of few sportsmen and women. As times went by - several countries in Africa attained independences, there was more recognition of African in the international events and this further spurred sports development in Kenya (Mwangi, 2016). The development of continental level sporting mega-events such as All African Games further allowed more Kenyans to partake sports and the number of spectators subsequently grew further. This saw development of Kenya as sports powerhouse and other sports were introduced at commercial level such as athletics, boxing, cricket, cycling, safari rally, football, rugby, archery, volleyball, basketball, swimming and diving, handball, netball, rounder, baseball, karate, kickboxing, judo, and taekwondo, lawn tennis, table tennis, squash, mountain sports, badminton, golf, canoeing, chess, goal ball, equestrianism, polo, weightlifting, wrestling and roller sports (Bale & Sang, 2013).

### **2.2.2 Sports diplomacy**

The definition of term sports diplomacy is mired in controversy among different proponent. By definition, diplomacy refers to the statements and contacts by states, individuals, societies, communities, policymakers to realize favorable picture of the country and eventually accomplish foreign policy objectives (Bjola & Kornprobst, 2018). Traditional form of diplomacy entails the influence of governments on each other by persuasions. In addition to negotiation the use of message, knowledge gathering, propagation, illustration and reduction of abrasion in international affairs is also observed. The practice of traditional diplomacy rarely employs unconventional strategies to intensify its point (Manor, 2019). Basing on the foregoing, sports diplomacy refers using sports for improvement of inter-state program that is significant in improving diplomatic relations. Over the past few years, sports and diplomacy have developed into an exciting field of inquest pertinent to several opinionated stakeholders. Being at the crossroads of numerous fields (social, political, and economic relations, organizations, and, nation-states in global affairs), they raise elemental questions of diplomacy politics, and statecraft (Pamment, 2019). Antecedents of sports diplomacy enable diplomatic actions to be carried out by sportspersons at the behest of and in concurrence through the state or governments. In attempting to advance diplomacy, many actors have now recognized that sport plays significant part of the worldwide discourse.

In Kenya, sports open opportunities for cooperation between people, communities and regions who otherwise would not meet. There are numerous marathon, football, rugby and Safari rally across different parts of Kenya that bring people together on regular basis (Njororai, 2016). Locally there are several studies in Kenya in which sports diplomacy has been used to advance Kenya's national interests such as political tranquility, minimizing political tension, and development agenda (Bukhala, 2018). More specifically the sports diplomacy in Kenya has been used by the country to enhance national pride, by hoisting of the national flag, it allows Kenya to showcase herself in the international arena as a country of peace. There are studies on the role of sports diplomacy in promoting Kenya's foreign policy goals (Mutisya, 2019). Sports diplomacy has also been used in Kenya to advance the African international relations (Busolo, 2016). However, studies on the role of sports diplomacy in encouraging environmental security are absent.

Sports diplomacy apply the collective enthusiasm for sports to allow for the people from all walks of life with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and different languages and beliefs (Murray, 2020). By means of sports, the state image may be modified in the eye of the public, enclosed and inappropriate. The use of sports in diplomacy is appealing since all those involved would leave to see the end of violence in the world especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, concern is raised at the low number of independent studies on sports diplomacy in many countries of Africa including Kenya.

### **3. Research Methodology**

Research methodology consists of many formal procedures in designing the study, data collection and final analysis (Nayak & Singh, 2021). Therefore, research methodology clearly illustrates the need for choosing a particular research method. This study consists of research design, target population, sampling design and sample size, research instruments, validity of the instruments, reliability of the research instrument, data collection procedure and concludes with data analysis procedure.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted exploratory research design to investigate how sports in advancing diplomacy in Kenya. Exploratory research is useful to examine an issue that is yet to be well defined (Nattrass, 2020). This design allows for conducting research to expand much better facts of the problem being explored, but the results will remain inconclusive. The researcher begins by exploring the basic thought and employs this research to recognize matters useful for future research focus.

#### **3.2 Target Population**

The target population comprised anybody in the field of sports and diplomacy. They included the diplomats, environmental envoys, members from athletics Kenya, marathoners, coaches, sports officials, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials, Environmentalists, KFS, KWS, NEMA, Water Resources Authority (WRA), Kenya Water Towers Agency (KWTA) officers, Multi- Security Agencies Officers, policy makers, environmental advocates and other relevant stakeholders.

#### **3.3 Sampling Design and Sample Size**

It is worth noting that since the target population was not easy to determine due to changes in the rate of sports persons involved and wider stakeholders involved in sports and diplomacy, within a short time framework, the sample size was determined using purposive and snowballing techniques. The researcher strived to cover as many stakeholders as possible from a cross-section of the targeted population.

#### **3.4 Research Instruments**

This study utilized primary and secondary data. Primary qualitative data was gathered using an questionnaires and interview schedule (Helleiner, 2018). Interview schedule was basically a list having a set of structured questions organized to serve as a guide for interviewer(s), researchers and investigators to gather data about a specific topic or issue under consideration. Secondary data was collected through published articles, published interviews, books, journal, databases and periodicals.

#### **3.5 Validity of the Instruments**

The researcher developed the research instruments to ensure it has optimal validity. Validity of an instrument is enhanced by expert judgment (Shen & Kou, 2014). Experts are asked their opinion on whether the intended concept is measured by an instrument. In this study, content validity of the instruments was sought by incorporating expert advice from the supervisors and other experts from the Department of Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS) of University of Nairobi reviewing the items.

#### **3.6 Reliability of the Instruments**

Reliability involves the degree to which the researcher can comfortably rely on the information collected for analysis from various data sources (Mohajan, 2017). In order to successfully test the research tool for reliability, research undertook a pilot study on a selected separate set of research participants and consulted other experts. This was purposely done to ascertain the research tools construct and content reliability.

The experts examined the content and construct reliability in order to determine whether items to be measured are as they are supposed to be determined. They established whether the numbers of items (study indicators) are adequate for the purpose of the intended research.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

Before the data collection, the respondents were contacted in advance and asked to organize their time. The researcher personally administered the instruments. The researcher made prior visits to the study area to assist in defining timings and distribution of research instruments.

### **3.8 Data analysis and Presentation**

All interviews were captured electronically following participants' consent and transcribed verbatim (Loubere, 2017). The interview questions were in the form of audio-recording, where transcription, re-familiarization with the collecting data, and the phased coding procedures and finally introduction of the narrative were involved in the analysis.

### **3.9 Ethical Issues and Considerations**

Participation in the study relied on the ethical principle of anonymity, informed consent and confidentiality. Anonymity was encouraged by not gathering information including individuals' real identity. Informed consent for full participation in the study was obtained from the study participants. Confidentiality was guaranteed by not divulging the identity of the respondents or their organizations. These measures are believed to be enhanced by the willingness and objectivity of the respondents.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Participant response rate**

The researcher distributed a total of 100 questionnaires from which a total of total of 92 questionnaires were successfully completed. After only considering the dully filled and completed questionnaires there were 90 questionnaires used, 2 questionnaires were incomplete, which resulted in a response rate of 90%. A response rate of 90%, is quite high and thus sufficient since it is generally agreed that a response rate of over 70% validate any survey based studies (Hendra & Hill, 2019). Response rates can be influenced by mode of distribution, incentive provided, respondents loyalty, demographics etc (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). High response rate may have been due to methods of distribution personally by the researcher and respondents' loyalty but not incentives which was not provided.

### **4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

This section presented data and discussed the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The socio-demographic considered were: gender, age, level of education, and work experience. The data were summarized using frequency distribution and percentages. The results are presented in Table 1. According to the results males were dominant (n = 75, 83.5%) compared to (n = 15, 16.7%). Dominance of males in sports and diplomacy activities was expected in Kenya where females are still not accorded full opportunities as males in various fields. Highest number of participants were in age range 25-35 years at (n = 27, 30%) followed with 25-35 years (n = 23, 25.6%) indicating young sportsperson and diplomats. Majority 42 (46.7%) of the respondents attained secondary levels of education, followed by primary level (n = 21, 23.3%) indicating low levels of literacy among the sportspersons. Majority (23.3%) of the respondents were from sports, followed by those from academia (15.6%) and then those from KFS (14.4%). The table shows that most targeted participants were subject matter experts, thus they were considered viable and fit for the research study.

Table 1: Respondents gender

Variable	Characteristics (n = 90)	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	75	83.3
	Female	15	16.7
Age	<25	9	10.0
	25-35	27	30.0
	36-45	23	25.6
	46-55	22	24.4
	>55	9	10.0
Level of education	None	2	2.2
	Primary	21	23.3
	Secondary	42	46.7
	Tertiary	20	22.2
	University	5	5.6
Organization	Academia	14	15.6
	Sports	21	23.3
	Aviation	5	5.6
	Defence	5	5.6
	Diplomats	5	5.6
	Foreign Affairs	4	4.4
	Kenya Forest Service	13	14.4
	Kenya Wildlife Service	4	4.4
	Kenya Water Towers Agency	8	8.9
	Others	11	12.2

*Source:* Field data analysis by Author, 2021

### 4.3 Means of incorporating sports in diplomacy

The researcher determined from the respondents how long they have been in sports industry in any capacity (Table 2). There were a total of 29 respondents (32.2%) involved directly with sports showing more respondents were directly involved in sports consistent with other studies in Kenya (Byron & Chepyator-Thomson, 2015). Majority of these were involved in sports management (12%) even though some of the sports managers were later determined to have been involved in sports. The occurrence of high number of managers can be possible due the fact that sport is taken as a major event in Kenya and there are management officials from the ministry of sports and youth affairs, from the county governments as well as private based management officials. However, given that the respondents were being selected purposively the results should be interpreted with caution. Based on actual sporting categories, majority of the respondents were in athletics (n = 7, 7.8%), followed by those involved in football (n = 4, 4.4%). There were also respondents from other sports fraternity such as handball, hockey, golf and volleyball. This concurs with other studies in Kenya which may suggest that most of the sportspersons in Kenya are in involved in athletics or football considering that it is the most successful sports in Kenya (Otieno & Omidia, 2020).

Table 2: Length of the respondents in sports

Sports industry category	Frequency	Percent
Athletics	7	7.8
Football	4	4.4
Handball	2	2.2
Hockey	2	2.2
Golf	1	1.1
Volleyball	2	2.2
Sports management	11	12.2
Total	29	32.2

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

The respondents involved in sports (n = 29) were further asked how successful the sporting events have been over the last 10 year. Highest rating of sports success in Kenya was for athletics followed by volleyball and golf with those in hockey and football decrying lack of any success. Athletics is successful in most of the regions in the North Rift, also volleyball is quite popular with Kenya often winning the African championships. Such can be seen from the following verbatim:

*“In June of 2015, Kenya women’s volleyball team and the coaching staff led by David Lungabo ... did the country proud by winning the African volleyball championships in grand style. They overpowered every team including arch-rivals Cameroon, Algeria and Tunisia, winning every match without losing a set. It was one of the most dominant performances ever by this team and they deserve the support of everyone”*

(<https://kenyapage.net/commentary/kenya-sports-commentary/taking-kenya-volleyball-to-next-level/>).

The study also determined how successful sports events have been in the last 10 years (Table 3). The respondents indicated that the most successful aspect of the sports in Kenya was athletics (mean = 3.57/5.00), volleyball (mean = 3.5/5.00) and golf (mean = 3.00/5.00). According to these results athletics and volleyball can be described as successful but cautioned is urged against making the same for golf which had only one respondent who had very high regard to golf. The success of athletics in Kenya cannot be downplayed given the major honours Kenya has earned over the last 50 years in that sporting event. During the interview the following were obtained from the interview:

*“Kenya has been participating in the Olympic Games since 1956 and over the same time period....eh... the country has won (Olympic) medals in two major areas: In boxing in 1987 and athletics [Marathoner 1, Athletics coach 1]. Looking at the history, athletics account for 79 of the 86 medals won by Kenyans....” [Marathoner 1, AK official]. Kenya has also achieved world records in long-distance running mainly in 800 m, 1500 m, 5000 m and 10,000 m and marathon [Long distance Athlete 1, Marathoner 2 and AK official]. I remember in Rio 2016 Olympic Games a Kenyan female called Jemina Sumsong won (her) a gold medal in the female marathon [Athletic coach 2].”*

Table 3: How successful have the sporting event been over the last 10 years

Sports category	Very successful		Successful		Moderate		Not successful		Means	SD
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Athletics	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	0	0.0	3.57	0.13
Football	0	0.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	1.75	0.06
Handball	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	2.50	0.09
Hockey	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100	1.00	0.04
Golf	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.00	0.11
Volleyball	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.50	0.13
Sports management	2	18.2	5	40.3	2	18.2	2	18.2	2.64	0.10

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

The respondents were asked whether they are familiar with concept of sports related diplomacy for which 73.4% attested that they are aware of sports diplomacy. This support the notion that sports diplomacy is well known concept in Kenya among various personalities which concurs with some of the few published studies (Bukhala, 2018). The results showing whether sports has improved diplomacy in Kenya among the respondents showed varied results (Table 4). The results showed that 53.3% of the respondents were aware of sports advanced diplomacy. In one of the previously published work, it was established that sports can to some extent improve diplomacy by promoting Kenya's foreign policy goals and advancing national interests of Kenya (Bukhala, 2018; Mutisya, 2019). Most of the respondents from diplomacy, Kenya Forest Service, sports and aviation attested that indeed sports enhanced diplomacy in Kenya perhaps due to the fact that these respondents were directly involved in sports and its outcomes.

Meanwhile respondents from the academia, KWS and KWTA did not seem to concur with sports in Kenya enhancing diplomacy which could be interpreted to mean that although sports can advance diplomacy less was being done to advance sports diplomacy in Kenya and thus sports diplomacy has not been fully realized in Kenya. The following statement(s) seems to concur with the results of the interview:

*“Sports in Kenya is not well funded by both the county governments and national government and therefore its full potential and role in Kenya is below par compared to some of the countries where potential of sports is a well-developed industry [Academia 1]. In fact when you see Kenya athletes win gold medals in Olympics, Common Wealth Games, All African Games and World Championships..... it all boils down to individual hard work, commitment and dedication coupled with very rigorous training... the government has very little input, how then does such neglect of sports improve diplomacy [Ex footballer, AK coach 2]. If you look at football, you can see that it is not an individual sport and the government has refused to support it so how can it advance diplomacy [Academia 2, Kenya Water Tower Agency official 1, Footballer 1]”.*

Once again since the KWS was represented by only a single respondent, while Kenya Water Towers Agency had only two respondents so caution is urged when presenting their view since two few respondents may suffer from statistical power of a test (Dziak, Dierker, & Abar, 2020).



Table 4: Responses on sports advancement of diplomacy among the respondents

Sports category	Freq.	%
Academia	4	28.6
Sports	14	66.7
Aviation	3	60.0
Defence	1	20.0
Diplomats	4	80.0
Foreign Affairs	2	50.0
Kenya Forest Service	10	76.9
Kenya Wildlife Service	1	25.0
Kenya Water Towers Agency	2	25.0
Others	4	36.4
Total	48	53.3

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

Responses on whether sports advance diplomacy in over the past years among the sportspersons was also determined (Table 5). The responses indicate that most of the respondents from athletics, golf and volleyball were affirmative that sports advance diplomacy in over the past years in Kenya. Success of athletics in advancing diplomacy has been highlighted in the past studies. Given that these were also some of the most successful sports in Kenya, it is plausible to suggest that most of the people in Kenya who participate mainly in athletics and volleyball believe that advancing diplomacy using these sports and the sportsperson was being done albeit silently in Kenya.

According to the interview:

*“When you see children from war ravaged areas like West Pokot and Turkana putting their differences aside to participate in sports like football, athletics and volleyball then what evidence do we need that sports is not achieving diplomacy in Kenya? [Marathon 2, Athlete 1, Academician 2]”.*

Table 5: Responses on sports advancement of diplomacy among the sportspersons

Sports category	Freq.	%
Athletics	6	85.7
Football	2	45.0
Handball	1	50.0
Hockey	1	25.0
Golf	1	100.0
Volleyball	1	50.0
Sports management	5	45.5
Total	17	58.6

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

The respondents involved in sports (n = 29) were asked to rate degree of sports influence on diplomacy over the last 10 years (Table 6). Highest rating of sports advancement in Kenya over the said period occurred among sportspersons from Sports management (mean = 3.09/5.00), volleyball (Mean = 4.00/5.00), and athletics (mean = 2.57/5.00). Again, these outcomes are not surprising and concur with previous studies.

Success of athletics in advancing diplomacy has been highlighted in the past studies (Bukhala, 2018). Being the most successful sports in Kenya, they are more likely to enhance diplomacy than the less successful sports like golf, handball and hockey rated the role of sports in advancing diplomacy. According to the interview:

*“The stakeholders of sports in Kenya from any non-athletics events such as hockey, golf, tennis, boxing...[maybe in the past]...badminton....(by the way I played badminton in secondary [school]....) are not serious in ensuring that these sports play their active roles in Kenya. So if they cannot attract Kenyans into them then they cannot be meaningful in diplomacy [Diplomat 1, Football player 1, Academician 1]. If they are to be nurtured to play meaningful role in diplomacy then the stakeholders and managers in those sporting events must wake up to the near reality [Ex-volleyball player 1].”*

Table 6: The degree of sports influence on diplomacy over the last 10 years

Sports category	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Means	SD
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Athletics	2	28.6	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	14.3	2.57	0.37
Football	0	0.0	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	2.25	0.56
Handball	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0	1.50	0.75
Hockey	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0	1.50	0.75
Golf	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	2.00	2.00
Volleyball	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.00	2.00
Sports management	5	45.5	3	27.3	2	18.2	1	9.1	3.09	0.28

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

The respondents were asked to state how sports are used to advance diplomacy in Kenya. One of the ways sports advanced diplomacy was through peace initiative. Peace was one of the pillars of diplomacy determined from several respondents. Therefore, the researcher determined from the respondents concerning how sports promote peace especially among the warring communities in Kenya. Summarized outcomes on the level of achievement gained in organized peace competitions in educating, sensitizing, creating awareness are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Responses on extent of success of the sport event for peace

Peace building advocacy statement	Mean	SD
Sports has been effective in educating communities to respect human rights	3.81	0.26
Sports has been effective in educating communities to respect the rule of law	4.23	0.25
Sports rules once communicated to the local communities they start to understand the importance of obeying the law	4.03	0.19
The sports has managed to bring out equality among participants to aid in building peace	4.44	0.21
Total		

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

According to Table 7 highest rating for sports was to bring out equality among participants to aid in building peace, which was followed by using sports in educating communities to respect the rule of law. This was followed by using sports rules once communicated to the local communities they start to understand the importance of obeying the law while the least of the role of sports is to be effective in educating communities to respect human rights.

It emerged from the interview that:

*“...athletic races are avenue for educating community members to allow them to respect outcome of the games. When the local respect the outcomes, they realize that they cannot win throughout or lose throughout and therefore it start to educate them that sometime life needs a compromise.... [Marathoner 1, Footballer 1]. Indeed one of the former victim of the conflicts in the North Rift Region stated: “When we were not interacting with members of the opposite community, I had this strong urge to kill anyone I meet with from that tribe but once the sporting event started organized by Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation (TLPF), we started feeling much closer and even friendship developed.... Something that was termed a taboo in the past...” [AK Official].”*

The respondents were tasked to express the magnitude of success of the sport events for sports for peace foundation (Table 8). The responses to all the statements on the success of the sport events for sports for peace yielded relatively high mean values ( $> 4.8/5.0$ ). The respondents ranked highly concerning rehabilitating warring communities (mean = 4.95/5.00).

Also, the rating of the respondents on how sports has encouraged reformed warriors to be ambassadors of peace was high (mean = 4.93/5.00). As well, the rating of the utilization of sports to encourage youths to shun drugs and other substances that can cause violent behaviour among warring communities was also high (mean = 4.81/5.00).

Table 8: Magnitude of success of the sport events for sports for peace foundation

Peace building advocacy statement	Mean	SD
Sports has been involved in rehabilitating warring communities	4.95	0.21
Sports has encouraged reformed warriors to be ambassadors of peace	4.93	0.15
Sports encourage youths to shun drugs and other substances that can cause violent behaviour among warring communities	4.81	0.11
Total	2.91	0.17

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

In terms of education, it emerged from the interviews that

*“...some of the children of the reformed warriors and orphans (resulting from the conflict) are taken to attend school at the sports for peace building Academy [Marathoner 1]. It is notable that the sports for peace-building were hitherto a training camp but was transformed into a school” [AK Official]”.*

A response on contribution of the sports events for peace foundation is presented in Table 9. The highest ranking was reported for the role sports had to minimize large scale conflicts warring communities, which was followed by using sports towards reducing ethnic raids among warring communities. The least was using sports to reduce the frequency of occurrence of ethnic conflicts among warring communities. These results suggest that the local communities were aware that sports for peace in the region were important tools for managing various forms of conflicts.

Table 9: Responses on contribution of the sports events for peace foundation

Peace building advocacy statement	Mean	SD
Sports has been significant contribution towards reducing ethnic raids among warring communities	4.31	0.32
Sports has reduced large scale conflicts warring communities	4.33	0.28
Sports has encouraged promotion of culture of peace tolerance among warring communities	4.01	0.23
Sports has reduced the frequency of occurrence of ethnic conflicts among warring communities	2.25	0.17

Source: Field data analysis by Author, 2021

The researcher gather that sports was incorporated in diplomacy in variables way.

First was through social, ethics and moral values/skills where it was revealed that;- *“...through powerful nature of the sport, communities were taught social, ethics and moral values. (KFS Official 1), they also learned social skills, life skills and other positive values [Volleyball Coach]. These activities improved their skills and they became more socially active [Academician 1]. It is difficult for uneducated young people to differentiate between ethical and unethical behavior, these activities taught them moral, ethics and social values which help to avoid involvement in harmful activities [Foreign Affairs official]”.*

The second way was through unity, trust, and team building. This came out clearly during the interview: "...trust promotes harmony which change group into a team [Marathoner 1]. During team-based sport for peace building actions the contestants remained united/together in the society [Marathoner 2] these games also brought people together [KFS Official 1]. The participant in some of sports for peace said: "...I learned unity, trust, and team-building in sport for peace building activities" [Athlete 2]".

Among the athletes, sports for peace were found to improve diplomacy when one of them stated: "...Participants felt importance as a member of the team which is a constructive feeling together they build trust with each other; it helps to work together and eliminate the risk of radicalization by extremist groups [Athlete 1]".

Sports for peace also encourage diplomacy through loyalty and friendship. This was clear when one of the facilitators of the sports for peace stated: "...participants learned and experienced loyalty and friendship during sport for peace building activities. Trust factor in a team for other teammates helped them to generate loyalty as a team for each other and trust helped them to make friends, which reduce the risk of isolation and radicalization [Athlete 2]"

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Sporting event in athletics and volleyball resulted to improved diplomacy in several areas of Kenya through strategies such peace initiatives among warring communities to reduce animosity among communities. Peace was promoted by sports through respect for the rule of law, and equality among the conflicting groups. It was also clear that sports bridged relationships across communities that were involved in conflicts. Sports also enhanced unity, trust, loyalty, friendship and team building among the conflicting communities. During the study based on the interviews with varied number of respondents, it was therefore clear that sports for peace improved diplomacy by inculcating constructive assessments which altered their deviant or negative behavior. The sports for peace programmes allowed for the promotion of peace and assisted to neuter the violent conflicts and thus one of the greatest forms of sports diplomacy in the local regions.

Sports diplomacy should be used in most of the regions in Kenya experiencing natural resources conflicts perturbations and the current strategies should be incorporated into the sports and diplomacy to solve the perennial challenges of natural and forest resources conflict in Kenya. The government is also encouraged to appoint more sports ambassadors with proper security and conflict management knowledge to help in diplomacy and peace building management.

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