

Forecasting the socio-economic and tourism impacts of AFCON 2027 on Tanzania: implications for stakeholder preparedness -A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

The Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 will be jointly hosted by Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, presenting a strategic opportunity to stimulate socio-economic growth and tourism development. The aim of this study was to forecast the potential socio-economic and tourism-related effects of AFCON 2027 in Tanzania, and the level of preparedness of key stakeholders in the management of the event. A systematic review of 16 empirical studies published between 2018 and 2025 was conducted. The studies were based on published journal articles, books, and theses which focused on the effects of mega sporting events, AFCON, sports tourism, socio-economic effects, stakeholder preparedness, and the event's legacy. The data was analyzed using thematic content analysis, guided by the Event Impact Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Sports Tourism Development Theory. The results show that AFCON 2027 is expected to create significant socio-economic spin-offs, such as short-term job creation, income for local enterprises, and capacity-building programs. The event is also expected to positively impact the tourism industry in Tanzania, as it is expected to increase the number of tourist arrivals from other countries, improve hotel occupancy rates, and raise the global profile of the country's tourism industry. However, the research points out that there could be challenges, such as disparities in the distribution of spin-offs and the lack of human resource capacity in some of the cities that will host the event. The research stresses the need for effective planning, stakeholder engagement, marketing, and legacy creation to ensure that the positive impacts of AFCON 2027 are fully realized.

Keywords: AFCON 2027, Mega-Sporting Events, Tanzania, Tourism Impacts, Socio-Economic Benefits, Stakeholder Preparedness, Pamoja Co-Hosting

I. INTRODUCTION

Mega sporting events have been increasingly identified in literature as major drivers of tourism and economic activities in host countries (Çetin, 2023; Zouni et al., 2021). These sporting events have been known to draw massive crowds of fans, tourists and visitors, alongside media and international coverage, hence a major source of potential tourism flows and economic activities if properly harnessed within country strategies for development (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022). Although studies have been conducted based upon sporting events such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup, current research is focusing upon the implications of continental sporting competitions such as AFCON, CHAN especially within emerging economies that have tourism as one of their economic bases and a major mean of international promotion.

The Africa Cup of Nations, commonly known as AFCON, is considered the most prestigious football event in Africa. Empirical studies pertaining to AFCON hosting cities and countries tend to show that such events influence destination images, tourist demand, and have socio-economic impacts when respective stakeholders leverage opportunities offered by such events. For instance, Swart et al. (2018) analyzed stakeholder perceptions on sport tourism development in Gabon after AFCON 2012 and concluded that AFCON 2012 contributed to gaining insight into leveraging sport tourism for development purposes, including tourism diversification and engagement with local business. In like manner, Tichaawa and Hemmonsbey (2022) proved that destination branding for AFCON-hosting countries is useful for shaping visitors' perceptions towards an improvement in national image after the event.

Notwithstanding increasing scholarly focus on the subject, there remain disputes on the strength and longevity of event hosting effects in terms of tourism impact. Related studies on other forms of mega-sport events implicitly indicate that although certain events do register positive and statistically identifiable increments in tourist inflow, the strength and scales differ significantly based on the type of event and particular features and/or unique attractions found in the host country geared by the event implementation scenario (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022; He, 2024). The measure of positive influence related to tourist inflow in aggregate terms on an average basis and across different types of events may be only marginally positive; for instance, only 4% on an average across different types of events. This underscores the importance of contextual forecasting and stakeholder preparedness for deriving optimal outcomes from AFCON 2027.

Situated at the strategic juncture, Tanzania is co-hosting AFCON 2027, together with Kenya and Uganda as part of the East African Pamoja bid, thereby placing the country in a better position to maximize the tournament as a catalyst for socio-economic development and tourism growth. While less studied than single-host arrangements, research on sports tourism and event hosting indicates that collaborative hosting can disperse infrastructural demands, enhance regional marketing, and create broader economic linkages when public, private, and community stakeholders co-ordinate effectively (Dickson et al., 2021; Mhanna et al., 2019; He, 2024). Without systematic preparedness frameworks, however, host nations risk under-capitalizing on potential benefits, especially in contexts where tourism systems and event management capacities remain developing.

Studies focusing on the recipients of the AFCON tournaments have verified the local feelings concerning the impacts felt by hosting the continent's major tournaments. For example, the cross-sectional study by Acha-Anyi (2023) covered the local perceptions regarding the economic impacts in the areas where the 2022 AFCON took place in Cameroon; the findings indicated the local inhabitants' perceptions concerning the hoped-for positive impacts in terms of economic activities; however, the perceptions entailed sustainability concerns. Moreover, the study examining the social impacts of the AFCON events in Cameroon indicated the local perceptions of the events are affected by the local sociocultural settings and activities entailed in the events; thus, the social study required the involvement of local stakeholders in the events' activities in order to fully exploit the potential events' impacts (Acha-Anyi, 2023). These findings imply the need for the projection regarding the potential impacts of the 2027 AFCON events in Tanzania to be addressed from the perspectives encompassing the economic and social aspects in order to prepare the local stakeholders appropriately in accordance with the local hopes (Swart et al., 2018).

Sectoral scholarship also highlights the role of destination branding and tourism image effects wrought through sports events, in particular, where events are framed as part of wider tourism development strategies. Tichaawa and Hemmonsby (2022) investigated destination branding effects at the 2021 AFCON held in Cameroon and found evidence that the hosting of high-profile football events provides a platform for rebuilding negative perceptions and strengthening national brand identity for international visitors. These findings support a more generalized assertion that strategic event hosting, where allied with destination branding and tourism marketing, may result in medium to long-term tourism impacts which transcend the immediate competition period. In this regard, given that Tanzania is already one of East Africa's primary tourism markets, the potential of AFCON 2027 to complement extant resources in the nation-state in the form of wildlife, cultural, and beach-based tourism reflects an opportunity for diversification and global re-positioning.

Equally, existing research on mega-sporting events warns of overstating the economic importance of such initiatives singularly. In particular, the generic body of sport tourism research has highlighted that not all sporting initiatives contribute to increased tourism development (Avdellas, 2019). Profoundly, economic outcomes remain subject to extended factors of a non-economic character such as infrastructural development preparedness, marketing success, or policy integration (Achu et al., 2022; Shipway, 2024). Current information explains that stakeholder development readied by planning processes remains a key to unlocking perceived economic outcomes (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022). In essence, therefore, it remains necessary to look forward to provide information for policy success for AFCON 2027.

In light of this interplay, this study aims to predict the socio-economic and tourism effects of AFCON 2027 on the United Republic of Tanzania and its preparedness implications. Through the synthesis of knowledge derived from previous AFCON host cases and mega sport events impact studies, this research seeks to advance new knowledge for the literature on sport tourism effect predictions as informed for better event planning and management practices and implications for related stakeholders. In this regard, this research study fills a critically noted literature gap concerning the absence of forward looking and data informed analyses on the effectiveness of mega sport events like AFCON in developing co-hosting nations' socio-economic and tourism elements, based on Africa's evolving economies.

1.1 Research Objectives

- i. Forecast socio-economic and tourism impacts.
- ii. Assess stakeholder preparedness across policy, infrastructure, HR, and coordination.
- iii. Propose strategies to maximize sustainable legacy

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Event Legacy Theory

Event Legacy Theory provides a basic framework for approaching mega sporting events' longevity beyond the immediate economic benefits of these events. Preuss (2019) explains that event legacy refers to all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created by a sport event that remain after the event

has ended. The contemporary application of the theory emphasizes that these legacies are not automatic; they come because of early planning by institutions and readiness from stakeholders. Empirical investigations reveal that host nations that embed event legacy planning earlier in event preparation tend to realize sustainable socio-economic and tourism outcomes more often (Byers et al., 2020)

Given the scale of investments involved in infrastructure, tourism facilities, and human capital, especially in the context of AFCON 2027, Event Legacy Theory becomes an important case for Tanzania. According to this theory, "improved transport systems, destination image, and tourism institutions will accrue only if event stakeholders strategize event objectives consistent with national development and tourism policies." In a co-hosting event such as the Pamoja bid, where benefits may be unevenly distributed across countries, the importance of legacy planning increases due to inadequate coordinated preparedness and strategies post events (Preuss 2019).

2.1.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory unveils how various stakeholders impact the success and results of mega events. This theory was developed by Freeman and many other researchers have applied this theory to the tourism events and sports events context to cover the interactions between government and non-government stakeholders, as well as other stakeholders such as communities and other foreign bodies (Freeman, 1994). Current research reveals that stakeholder engagement leads to an improvement in efficiency and success of events and also to an improvement in the balance of socio-economic benefits (Mahajan et al., 2023)

With regard to mega sporting events in Africa, stakeholder theory suggests that there is a need for inclusive governance. In a study carried out by Tichaawa and Moyo (2019) lack of cooperation between government agencies, tourism businesses, and communities hindered the achievement of benefits from sporting events. Using the context of AFCON 2027, stakeholder theory suggests that there is a need for readiness in all Tanzanian stakeholders such as governments at different levels, tourism and hotels, transport, security bodies, and local communities. Using the Pamoja initiative, stakeholder theory suggests there is a need for cooperation between Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya to ensure a common approach to ensure coherent planning, marketing, and service delivery.

2.1.3 Sports Tourism Development Theory

There is a theory regarding sports tourism development, where sporting events are considered stimulators of tourist development growth, diversification of tourist destinations, and entry into new international markets. According to Zarotis (2019), large sporting events act as "temporarily spatialized tourist attractions that drive demand, destination promotion, and destination loyalty under appropriate investment in tourism infrastructure." Contemporary empirical studies verify that sports tourism events do exert significant influence upon tourist movement, especially in new tourist destinations aiming at improved positions within international tourist circulation (Chang et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the theory also states that tourism benefits are also subject to stakeholder readiness in terms of tourist bed capacity, transport infrastructure, and destination branding. According to Çetin (2023) without sufficient stakeholder readiness, the tourism outcomes of mega events have a short lifespan. In this regard, for the Republic of Tanzania, Sports Tourism Development Theory indicates that AFCON 2027 provides a potential for Tanzania to expand its tourism product offerings, which are now primarily based on wildlife products, through integrating them with Sports Tourism, thereby positioning the country for a positive "destination branding" advantage in the East African region based on its mega sporting event potential.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Forecast Socio-economic and Tourism Impacts

Various empirical research carried out on mega-sporting events suggests that mega-sporting events have the potential for creating certain socio-economic advantages. However, the extent of these advantages depends upon specific hosting situations. Various pieces of research carried out in African environments have identified that mega-sporting activities result in job creation in the short run, increased economic activities, and development of infrastructural facilities in particular cities. For example, a study carried out by Achu et al. (2022) identified that the holding of a women's major sporting event in Africa led to increased economic activities in the region. In a similar study carried out by Acha-Anyi (2023) on AFCON 2022 host cities in Cameroon, it was identified that there were increased economic advantages in the form of increased trading activities.

Empirical evidence further shows that mega-sporting events have an impact on tourism performance and destination competitiveness. Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2022) used cross-national panel data to establish that mega-sport events are associated with increases in international tourist arrivals, particularly during and immediately after the event. At the same time, however, their findings also put great stress on the fact that such gains in tourism do indeed depend on other investments that are complementary in transport, accommodation, and destination marketing.

2.2.2 Assess Stakeholder Preparedness across Policy, Infrastructure, HR, and Coordination

At the same time, however, their findings also put great stress on the fact that such gains in tourism do indeed depend on other investments that are complementary in transport, accommodation, and destination marketing. In support of this argument, Mhanna et al. (2019) have indicated that in the absence of strategic planning, there is a tendency for tourism flows to be kept within the confines of host cities, with limited spillover benefits to other regions. The foregoing observations imply that the tourism gains Tanzania will expect from AFCON 2027 will be determined by the level to which stakeholders will prepare to integrate the events into broader tourism circuits and national tourism strategies.

Empirical research identifies stakeholder preparedness, governance, and community support as crucial elements that influence event outcomes. For instance, Swart et al. (2018) examined the coordination between government institutions, tourism businesses, and local communities in relation to AFCON in Gabon and determined that partial coordination at the institutional level limited potential tourism development despite significant investment in infrastructure. In this vein, Chang et al. (2020) show that residents' support for sport tourism development is essentially fostered by perceived economic benefit and substantial involvement in planning. These findings are further supported by Byers et al. (2020), who contend that the process of legacy delivery within mega-sport events is particularly complex and requires early planning with multi-stakeholder coordination.

2.2.3 Propose Strategies to Maximize Sustainable Legacy

Destination image and branding have additionally been identified as important empirical considerations for the literature on sports mega-events. As observed, the positive impact of hosting AFCON on destination branding and foreign image was empirically supported when the event hosting was incorporated into the national tourism promotion efforts, as indicated by the study conducted by Tichaawa and Hemmonsbey (2022).

In the same context, the study conducted by Zouni et al. (2021) exposed that event-based marketing enhanced the competitiveness of the destination and motivated return visitation, and as such, AFCON 2027 offer Tanzania the chance to improve its tourism image abroad, which is dependent on the co-hosting readiness of all relevant stakeholders involved within the context of the Pamoja co-hosting arrangement.

The foregoing observations imply that the tourism gains Tanzania will expect from AFCON 2027 will be determined by the level to which stakeholders will prepare to integrate the events into broader tourism circuits and national tourism strategies. These empirical insights collectively suggest that Tanzania's capacity to maximize socio-economic and tourism benefits of AFCON 2027 depends highly on the conditions of stakeholder preparedness, coordination, and inclusive governance before the actual event.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative systematic reviews and forecasting design to investigate the expected socio-economic and tourism impacts of the AFCON 2027 on Tanzania and the associated implications for stakeholder preparation within the context of the co-hosting agreement, 'Pamoja', involving the nations of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. In the selection of the study design, a qualitative approach is employed because the event has not yet occurred, and hence its direct impacts could not be measurable (Byers et al., 2020; Preuss, 2019). In particular, the study is based on the view laid down within the Interpretivist school that seeks an interpretation and understanding of patterns, meanings, and relationships indicated from current empirical evidence and theory.

3.1 Research Design

The study is based on a systematic literature review approach and Scenario Forecasting (Ahmad, 2023). The systematic literature review approach will help the author to identify, assess, and synthesize empirical evidence from the previous AFCON tournaments and similar mega sporting events, while the scenario forecast will help the writer predict the future outcomes during the AFCON 2027 tournament based on observations from similar events (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022). The approach has often been used when studying the area of sports tourism and event tourism, specifically when planning for the future (Byers et al., 2020).

3.2 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The study has been based entirely on secondary data obtained from excellent academic sources in a bid to inject rigour and validity into the findings. The sources of the secondary data entailed peer-reviewed articles in professional journals, academic books, doctoral theses, and book chapters all of which were produced during the period 2019 to 2025. The reason for choosing the most recent literature in mega-sporting events, sports tourism, and the preparedness of mega-sporting events stakeholders is the dynamic mega-sporting events environment in the fields of governance, legacy, and co-hosting.

The literature search employed various academic databases or repositories that find usage in tourism, sport management, and development studies. For that reason, the literature searched targeted Scopus-indexed journals and Web of Science-indexed journals, and then proceeded to seek publications by some renowned academic publishing firms like Springer, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, Edward Elgar, and Channel View Publications. The literature thereby sought a focus encompassing keywords such as mega sporting events, Africa Cup of Nations, sports tourism, mega sporting events legacy, and socio-economic impacts.

The search strategy employed Boolean operators to combine key terms, including:

"AFCON" OR "Africa Cup of Nations"

"mega-sporting events"

"sports tourism"

"event legacy"

"socio-economic impacts"

"stakeholder preparedness"

An example of a search string used in Scopus: ("AFCON" OR "Africa Cup of Nations") AND ("sports tourism" OR "mega-sporting events") AND ("socio-economic impact" OR "stakeholder preparedness")

The selection procedure involved a systematic and tiered screening procedure. In the beginning, 65 studies were located making use of key wording and database filtering as it shown in the Figure 1. Following the elimination of the duplicate studies (10 studies), the search involved screening studies title and abstract for inclusion and exclusion criteria, after which it resulted in the elimination of 25 studies for reasons including the absence of focus on mega sporting events, tourism-related issues, or related preparation among stakeholders or sources lacking an academic inclination like newspaper or opinion editorials. At this level, the remaining 30 studies were then subjected to evaluation based on method quality, and its adherence to the context of the study, including its subject matter and geographic location specificity concerning Tanzania or other Africa-related settings, after which only 16 studies made it to the list as the selected final sample for this study, which consisted of 10 journal articles, four chapters of a publication, and two doctorates theses.

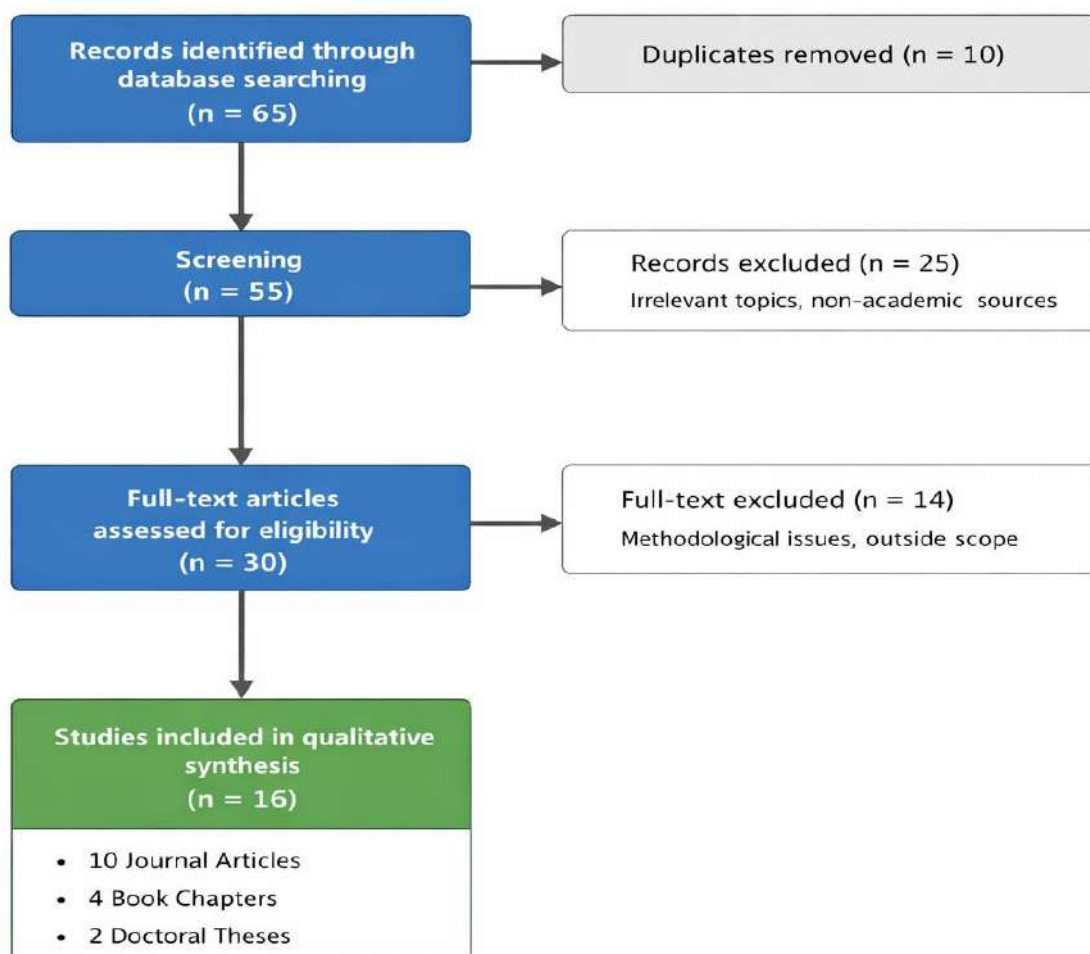


Figure 1
PRIMA flow Diagram



3.3 Data Analysis Technique

The selected data for this review was analyzed using thematic content analysis. This is because thematic content analysis is one of the most common methods of approaching systematic reviews in order to determine patterns and dominant themes from various studies. The selection of mega-events in sports and forecasting future possibilities based on such mega-events, such as the AFCON 2027 championship, requires an apt use of thematic content analysis to incorporate theoretical perspectives from various studies into one meaningful piece of literature.

The five fundamental analytical themes employed in this analysis are based on the socio-economic consequences, tourism consequences, and level of preparedness among stakeholders, governance and coordination frameworks, and outcomes in event legacies. The analytical themes adopted an inductive and deductive approach from the theoretical frameworks related to this study; that is, Event Legacy Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Sports Tourism Development Theory (Preuss, 2019; Freeman, 1994; Higham & Hinch, 2019). Various studies on the phenomenon in question have been compared and contrasted for the purposes outlined earlier.

From thematic synthesis, a scenario forecast method was employed to forecast the possible socio-economic and tourism-related impacts of AFCON 2027 in Tanzania. The method entailed inferring the observed trends from the previous cases of AFCON events and similar mega sporting events in general and embedding them in the framework of the Tanzanian tourism system and the Pamoja co-hosting agreement with the neighbour countries of Kenya and Uganda. The method of scenario analysis facilitates the study in determining the possible impacts based on the level of preparedness of the stakeholders concerned in the forecasted outcome in the study.

3.4 Measurement of Stakeholder Preparedness

For the purpose of this study, stakeholder preparedness is defined as the capacity and readiness of key actors to plan, coordinate, and implement measures that maximize the socio-economic and tourism benefits of AFCON 2027. Since the event has not taken place yet, preparedness cannot be directly measured; thus, it is being indirectly measured through secondary data garnered from peer-reviewed studies and theoretical frameworks of Event Legacy Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Sports Tourism Development Theory. Swart et al. (2018), Byers et al. (2020), and Preuss (2019) identify four dimensions of preparedness, which are policy and institutional readiness, infrastructure and service capacity, human resource capability, and stakeholder coordination mechanisms.

First, the policy and institutional dimension address the relevant tourism policies, governance frameworks, and formal agreements within the Pamoja co-hosting arrangement that ensures a correlation between AFCON objectives and national socio-economic and tourism development goals. Infrastructure and service capacity involves weighing the sufficiency of stadiums, transport, accommodation, and hospitality services that can handle visitors, while human resource capability looks into the required skills and expertise among personnel tasked with event preparation, logistics, and service provision.

The fourth dimension of stakeholder coordination mechanisms focused on assessing the level of collaboration of the government of Tanzania with private tourism companies, the involvement of the local community, as well as regional stakeholders. The main idea here is effective communication for planning. According to Mahajan et al. (2023) and Swart et al. (2018), effective planning for stakeholders is critical for the success of the AFCON project. By casting a comprehensive view on these four aspects of the study, it is possible for the research to analyze Tanzania's current level of preparedness and possible lapses that may impede the actualization of AFCON 2027.

3.5 Research Integrity and Ethical Considerations

Although the present study is purely based on secondary data, the ethical principles were adhered to in the strictest sense, maintaining the integrity and transparency of the research. Only reliable sources, peer-reviewed articles, books, and doctoral theses were used to ensure the reliability and credibility of the study. The entire process, from the selection and screening of the data to the analysis, was meticulously recorded to ensure replication and verification of the results. Proper citation and referencing of the sources, as per APA 7th edition guidelines, were maintained to ensure intellectual honesty. The study also adhered to the principles of academic integrity, being absolutely free from plagiarism and misrepresentation of the existing body of knowledge. Thus, the present study, through its emphasis on transparency and integrity, adheres to the ethical principles required in the systematic review and secondary data analysis in the social sciences and tourism disciplines.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Forecast Socio-Economic and Tourism Impacts

The impact of the hosting of the AFCON 2027 would be felt in the socio-economic spheres for the country of Tanzania, especially the urban areas that stand to benefit as host cities in the continent-wide showpieces like Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Zanzibar. Mega events in the world of sports have come to be understood as giving rise to short-

term benefits in the way of economic activities in urban areas through the utilization of the infrastructure in the form of a “boost in local employment, business activity, and urban infrastructure use,” as cited by Achu et al., 2022; Acha-Anyi, 2023. The benefit in the form of the provision of temporary but important jobs in the areas concerned with the running of the events can be seen from the history of events like the previous AFCONs to the level of creating income for the local vendors known as the “AFCON 2022 in Cameroon increased income for informal traders ...and provided work opportunities for local service providers,” as cited by Acha-Anyi in 2023 for the impact the sports events would create in the concerned urban areas in the country of Tanzania.

Beyond immediate employment, hosting AFCON 2027 is expected to drive significant income for local businesses, including SMEs. Empirical studies have shown that income generation filters into the earnings of retailers, caterers, transportation services, and entertainment provided to visitors, enabling SMEs to expand activities and profit during the event phase of the tournament. Such additional income trickles down to informal markets, be they food vendors, artisans, or local transportation operators, where increased demand does not only boost household incomes but also adds up to larger economic activity. These advantages are all the more basic in developing economies, where temporary surges in demand may provide liquidity to some and boost the resilience of certain local businesses.

Another area where socio-economic value can be realized is through the increased use of infrastructure within the city. Organizing the AFCON tournament requires the extensive use of infrastructure such as stadium infrastructure, transport infrastructure, and accommodation and utilities infrastructure. Research has shown that the impacts of infrastructure upgrades and the expansion of infrastructure for the event add value both directly and indirectly through the increased ability of the city to host future events and tourists (Byers et al., 2020; Achu et al., 2022). In the case of Tanzania, the impacts could add value through the improvement of the efficiency of the country’s transport services, the improvement of stadium infrastructure, and the improvement of the services offered within the hotels, which will add value to the tourism and services sectors of the country respectively.

Organizing AFCON 2027 brings about opportunities for skills building and human capacity building. Temporary employment in event management, hospitality, and logistics allows local staff to gain experience, hence boosting their skills (Dickson et al., 2021; Byers et al., 2020). Learning from past events, there is evidence that these skills can be transferred in the long run, especially when training programs are incorporated in addition to event delivery. For Tanzania, enhancing local staff in terms of skills will help build capacity in the tourism industry, hence assisting in Tanzania’s socio-economic agenda.

Nevertheless, there is unanimity in literature with regards to mega-event benefits being distributed asymmetrically. Although host cities continue to derive enormous economic benefits, peripheral regions continue to derive little or no benefits at all for mega-event host countries such as those highlighted by Mhanna et al. (2019); Acha-Anyi, 2023). Nevertheless, this aspect further widens economic disparities between regions if systematic policies aimed at ensuring inclusive growth become unavailable. In this case, systematic policies aimed at ensuring AFCON 2027 facilitates balanced socio-economic growth within Tanzania may include developing surrounding SMEs beyond major cities. The Table 4.1 below summarizes the key socio-economic themes identified in the literature and the empirical studies supporting each theme:

Table 1

Summarize Literature Anticipated Socio-Economic Impacts of AFCON 2027

Socio-Economic Theme	Key Empirical Findings	Supporting Studies
Short-term employment	Temporary jobs in event management, security, hospitality, and logistics	Acha-Anyi (2023); Achu et al. (2022)
Income generation for local businesses	Increased revenue for SMEs, informal traders, and service providers	Acha-Anyi (2023); Fourie & Santana-Gallego (2022)
Urban infrastructure utilization	Increased use of stadiums, transport systems, and accommodation facilities	Achu et al. (2022); Byers et al. (2020)
Skills development	Opportunities for local workers to gain experience in professional event services	Byers et al. (2020); Dickson et al. (2021)
Unequal benefit distribution	Concentration of economic gains in major urban centers, limited impact in peripheral areas	Mhanna et al. (2019); Acha-Anyi (2023)
Policy and planning implications	Need for targeted interventions to ensure inclusive socio-economic outcomes	Preuss (2019); Swart et al. (2018)

4.2 Projected Tourism Impacts

The potential impacts expected from hosting AFCON 2027 in Tanzania are enormous in terms of its effects on tourist arrivals, destination image, and global exposure. From past experiences with AFCON, there is clear evidence of a substantial positive impact on tourist inflow, positive accommodation and food, transport, and entertainment expenditures, alongside an expansion in related tourist services (Tichaawa & Hemmonsby, 2022; Zouni et al., 2021).

For example, AFCON 2021 in Cameroon generated a 15% increase in tourist inflow during the event, with a noticeable positive contribution to the related sectors of the economy (Acha-Anyi, 2023). With projections based on such experiences in Tanzania, there is expected to be a substantial flow of visitors from neighboring countries such as Kenya and Uganda based on the Pamoja co-host arrangement of AFCON 2027.

Apart from the direct effect of attracting a larger number of visitors during the event period, mega sports events such as AFCON may have further effects on awareness of the destination. Larger sports events such as these continue to enhance awareness of the international sports stage with regard to the hosting country, which aims at marketing (promoting) awareness of the destination (Tichaawa & Hemmonsbe, 2022; Zouni et al., 2021). To Tanzania in particular, such an event is an avenue to open up a different dimension of tourism in addition to wildlife and cultural visits, such as sports tourism, city tour visitation, or event visitation. Different studies carried out by authors such as Çetin (2023) highlight the positive potential of sports event tourism when effectively organized with a supporting marketing campaign to attract consistent future visitation.

These tourism benefits of AFCON 2027, however, depend on whether the infrastructure and services are in a state of preparedness. Various studies indicate that low hotel capacity, coupled with poor transport networks and unprepared visitor services, and may hinder some host cities from taking full advantage of tourism demand created by mega-events (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022; Higham & Hinch, 2019). While large cities such as Dar es Salaam and Dodoma have relatively well-developed tourism and transport infrastructure, smaller host cities may be overwhelmed by the number of visitors. It is thus important to ensure high standards in the reception and hospitality services offered by the hotels, transportation, and event logistics if the expected tourism benefits are to be achieved.

Besides the economic gains, AFCON 2027 holds great potential for regional tourism integration under the arrangement of Pamoja co-hosting. Coordinated marketing strategies and cross-border transport and hospitality planning could boost the circulation of tourists within Tanzania and its neighbors, Kenya and Uganda. This is supported by empirical evidence that suggests such integration can enhance regional tourism networks, leading to competitiveness and fairer distribution of tourism benefits amongst multiple destinations. Such evidence has been provided in works such as Swart et al. (2018) and Mhanna et al. (2019). In the case of Tanzania, Pamoja co-hosting can also be used in knowledge transfer regarding the management of event tourism and the development of better stakeholder collaboration across sectors.

Finally, it is relevant to note that impacts from tourism are not automatic or positive. In this light, some possible risks entailing overcrowding, pressure on local services and price inflation, as well as the increasingly uneven distribution of revenues from tourism, decrease overall visitor satisfaction and community support (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022; Acha-Anyi, 2023). Various strategic interventions will thus be required-analytical capacity building, stakeholder harmonization, and community involvement-that mitigate these risks and ensure AFCON 2027 delivers some sustainable tourism outcomes for Tanzania. The Table 4.2 below summarizes the projected tourism impact themes and supporting empirical studies

Table 2

Empirical Evidence on Projected Tourism Impacts of AFCON 2027 in Tanzania

Tourism Impact Theme	Key Empirical Findings	Supporting Studies
Increase in tourist arrivals	Higher domestic and international visitor numbers during the event	Tichaawa & Hemmonsbe (2022); Acha-Anyi (2023)
Boost in hospitality and service revenue	Increased hotel occupancy, restaurant sales, and transport usage	Fourie & Santana-Gallego (2022); Zouni et al. (2021)
Destination branding and visibility	Improved international profile and tourism recognition	Tichaawa & Hemmonsbe (2022); Çetin (2023)
Regional tourism integration	Cross-border travel and collaborative tourism promotion	Swart et al. (2018); Mhanna et al. (2019)
Infrastructure dependency	Tourism gains depend on adequate transport, accommodation, and service capacity	Higham & Hinch (2019); Fourie & Santana-Gallego (2022)
Potential negative impacts	Risks of overcrowding, inflated prices, and unequal benefit distribution	Acha-Anyi (2023); Fourie & Santana-Gallego (2022)

4.3 Stakeholder Preparedness and Governance

The success of AFCON 2027, to a considerable extent, will depend on the readiness and preparedness of all stakeholders involved to coordinate and implement event-related activities. The preparedness of all event stakeholders, including government, tourism, transport, security, and host communities, as argued and shown through empirical research by previous mega sporting events in Africa, has been identified as critical for positive socio-economic and tourism impacts (Swart et al., 2018; Mahajan et al., 2023). A failure to adequately coordinate the preparedness of all event stakeholders will lead to resource waste and inefficient delivery of event-related services and benefits. The

Stakeholder Theory can then be applied to fully grasp this aspect and the need for all event-related stakeholders to have roles and responsibilities aligned for mutual event success (Freeman, 1994; Byers et al., 2020).

In Tanzania, the preparation levels among stakeholders can be assessed using four levels: policy and institutional readiness, infrastructure and service readiness, human resource readiness, and coordination and collaboration readiness. Policy and institutional readiness entail the availability of event policies, and the agreement of various institutions for the success of event planning and control measures. Findings from the AFCON 2022 event in Cameroon have established that countries with effective event policies and governance are less challenged operationally and have high levels of collaboration among stakeholders (Swart et al., 2018; Acha-Anyi, 2023). In Tanzania, therefore, there is a need for the earliest possible setting up of policy guidelines, governance, and institutional coordination within the framework of co-hosting through the Pamoja initiative.

Other critical aspects of preparedness pertain to infrastructure and service capacity. It has been observed that inadequate stadium facilities, limited transport networks, and insufficient accommodation detract from event delivery and reduce visitor experiences (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022; Higham & Hinch, 2019). For instance, in Tanzania, even though the two major urban centers, such as Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, have relatively better infrastructure than other places, smaller cities may be strained if huge volumes of visitors were to be accommodated. Improvement in infrastructure and reliability of utilities, transport, and communication networks would have a direct consequence on the tourism and socio-economic benefits that are to be accrued from the tournament.

Capability in human resources is a third crucial factor. Mega events need human resources that have expertise in event management, hospitality, security, or logistics. Evidence has shown that when the human resources in a country are competent, there will be increased efficiency in events, along with event quality (Dickson et al. 2021; Byers et al. 2020). In regard to Tanzania, training human resources in relation to staff, volunteers, and service provision will have a lasting impact on event management and tourism in Tanzania.

Lastly, the factor that determines the level at which different stakeholders coordinate their efforts is the coordination mechanisms at the stakeholders' disposal. Available literature demonstrates instances where organized coordination committees, collective planning meetings, as well as community outreach programs have increased efficiencies while also securing balanced benefit flows respectively (Swart et al., 2018; Mahajan et al., 2023). For the successful co-hosting arrangement in the Pamoja project, cross-border coordination is also critical in coordinating the various marketing activities, transportation aspects, as well as security aspects respectively where poor coordination can result in "duplicated efforts, unmet expectations, and stakeholder complaints. The Table 4.3 below summarizes the key dimensions of stakeholder preparedness, associated indicators, and supporting empirical evidence.

Table 3

Key Dimensions of Stakeholder Preparedness for AFCON 2027 in Tanzania

Dimension of Preparedness	Indicators	Supporting Studies
Policy and Institutional Readiness	Existence of national policies, inter-agency agreements, legal frameworks	Swart et al. (2018); Freeman (1994); Acha-Anyi (2023)
Infrastructure and Service Capacity	Adequacy of stadiums, transport, accommodation, utilities	Fourie & Santana-Gallego (2022); Higham & Hinch (2019)
Human Resource Capability	Trained personnel in event management, hospitality, security, logistics	Dickson et al. (2021); Byers et al. (2020)
Stakeholder Coordination Mechanisms	Joint committees, communication protocols, community engagement	Swart et al. (2018); Mahajan et al. (2023)

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Projected Tourism Impacts

Based on the anticipated impacts on tourism that come with AFCON 2027, it is evident that there are tremendous opportunities for the tourism industry of Tanzania, especially with regard to tourism arrival numbers and earning potential. From previous empirical research undertaken at various AFCON matches and other mega events that take place at an organizational and continental level, it is clear that such events and matches are bound to attract numerous levels of foreign and domestic tourists (Tichaawa & Hemmonsby, 2022; Zouni et al., 2021). In this regard, regions of Tanzania that will experience enhanced levels of gains from such tourism arrival and exposure include Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Mwanza cities.

Other than the direct concept of visitor attraction and financial creation, AFCON 2027 is also envisioned to promote Tanzania's global reputation as a tourist destination. Research conducted in the field of sports tourism and mega-events indicates that the actual effect of hosting major sports events with global appeal has been the increase in the destination/image of the country, long before and long after the events take place (Tichaawa & Hemmonsby, 2022; Çetin, 2023). This explains the Sports Tourism Development Theory, emphasizing the relevance of incorporating major sports events in the development of their respective destinations. Applying this to the case of Tanzania, the use of

AFCON 2027 to market not only the infrastructure of the country but also its ecotourism attraction could make the destination more sustainable in terms of visitor appeal.

4.4.2 Infrastructure and Service Challenges

However, the discourse on the effects of tourism development points out important issues to contend with. Various research findings show the importance of mega-events, such as tourist development, being dependent on the infrastructure capacity, service, and coordination of relevant stakeholders (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022; Higham and Hinch, 2019). In Tanzania, although the bigger cities such as Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Dodoma have relatively well-developed hotel infrastructure, transportation, and service, the smaller cities may face challenges in handling a possible increase in the number of tourists visiting for their mega-events experience.

4.4.3 Equity in Tourism Benefits

Another key issue that should not be overlooked is the sharing of tourism benefits. Various findings have indicated that mega-events are likely to generate economic and tourism activities for a particular number of urban cities with minimal economic trickle-down effects for periphery regions (Mhanna et al., 2019; Swart et al., 2018). In the case of Tanzania, it could signify a situation where Dar es Salaam or Arusha experiences a majority of tourists visiting their towns but the periphery towns do not share a similar economic boom. Various interventions may therefore have to occur for a fair trickle-down trickle for tourists in these regions.

4.4.4 Skills Development and Socio-Economic Synergies

AFCON 2027 presents a chance to align tourism goals with other socio-economic agendas. From current research, mega-events present a successful platform to use tourism for larger socio-economic goals like developing skills in hospitality and managing events, engaging communities, and collaboration (Dickson et al., 2021; Byers et al., 2020). Specifically for Tanzania, involving communities in tourist activities, developing skills for managing events, and engaging communities to experience their cultures can enhance socio-economic benefits derived from tourism. Furthermore, a combined marketing platform through Pamoja co-hosting can build regional synergies across East Africa to ensure repeated visits to tourist destinations.

4.2.5 Co-Hosting Dynamics and Implications for Tanzania

A special feature of AFCON 2027 is the Pamoja co-hosting arrangement with Kenya and Uganda, which brings with it opportunities as well as challenges for Tanzania. There are indications that regional co-hosting of international sporting events, such as the AFCON tournament, is likely to enhance intra-regional tourist flows, shared costs, as well as improved regional linkages in terms of diplomacy and economic cooperation (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2022; Tichaawa & Hemmonsbe, 2022). Therefore, Tanzania can benefit from the co-hosting arrangement by promoting multi-destination tourism circuits, encouraging tourists to visit more than one country in the region, hence enhancing the average length of stay.

However, the co-hosting arrangement also brings with it the need for increased coordination among governments, private tourism sectors, as well as the community, in order to harmonize policies, standards, as well as strategies for the co-hosting arrangement. There are indications that the success of regional co-hosting, as was witnessed in the case of the AFCON tournament, may be undermined by differences in preparation as well as resource allocation in the host countries (Preuss, 2019). Therefore, the key to the success of the co-hosting arrangement for Tanzania will be the development of appropriate governance structures, as well as communication mechanisms.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The research evaluated the potential socio-economic and tourism effects of AFCON 2027 in Tanzania and preparedness levels among core stakeholders in relation to the East African Pamoja co-hosting agreement. The results show that AFCON 2027 has great potential for short-term job creation, increased financial gains for local entrepreneurs, and optimization in the utilization of urban infrastructure in cities that will be hosting events like Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Zanzibar. In addition, there is clear proof that Tanzania is in a better position to have its tourism industry developed, thereby gaining global recognition in addition to its branding, hence increased gains in the long run. This research has particularly emphasized preparedness among various stakeholders who are core in delivering these socio-economic benefits associated with AFCON 2027. Although Tanzania has moderate levels of preparedness in policy, infrastructure, and service delivery, there are serious shortcoming in relation to coordination, human resources expertise, and infrastructure in smaller cities that will act as hosts in AFCON 2027 events. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that, based on the findings, the Pamoja co-hosting format also poses challenges and opportunities. Indeed, some benefits of inter-regional cooperation may include potential amplified tourism and inter-regional marketing, and knowledge

acquisition in managing events. Nevertheless, a possible lack of synergy or resource equity between the three countries may pose a limitation or threat to efficiency and any beneficial legacies of the AFCON 2027.

5.2 Recommendations

From the findings obtained, the following are some recommendations that can help optimize the benefits of the AFCON 2027 event for the people and stakeholder readiness for its successful hosting in Tanzania. First, there would need to be improved stakeholder coordination and, towards it, a national committee comprising all levels of the governmental and tourism sectors, along with the involvement of the private sectors, would have to be formed, with clear playing roles and responsibilities, and appropriate communications for better coordination. Second, the infrastructure and services readiness, including the renovation of the stadium infrastructure, transport, accommodations, and services, would have to improve, especially the smaller host city infrastructure, along with the stand-by infrastructure for the event and its corresponding responses for the influx of visitors. Third, the human capital, which is one of the capital resources, would have to receive focussed training and programs for improving the efficiency of the event and builds the necessary long-term skills for the people of the event-hosting countries.

Furthermore, there is a need for efforts directed at ensuring the promotion of inclusive socio-economic benefits via support for SMEs, informal sectors, and peripheral regions, among others, while promoting local procurement and community outreach and tourism packages for ensuring that the benefits are shared. In addition, tourism promotion and tourism destinations should also receive key emphasis, including the promotion of the cultural, natural, and city tourism amenities of the country, via the co-hosting provided by the Pamoja mechanism for promoting tourism circuits within the region and encouraging return visits. Finally, there is a need for ensuring the planning for the long-term legacies for any infrastructure and skills and city amenities provided via the tournament for the promotion of the long-term economic and social growth within the country.

Declaration of Interest

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