

Brand Personality
and
The Evolution of Destination Kenya
during
The Colonial Period

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Abstract

This paper offers an intellectual discourse for destination managers by exploring alternative branding approaches used during the colonial period in Kenya, now that the image is under siege both internally through socio-economic instability and unprecedented levels of poaching, and externally through travel warnings, outright trafficking in big game trophies, the constant threat of terror attacks, and poor global rankings in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index. The paper conforms to the mission of thought and practice by identifying practical ways of promoting tourist destination Kenya through an in-depth analysis of historical experiences.

Key Words

Evolutionary Stages, Big Game Hunting, Brand Personality, Brand Image

Introduction

Colonial Kenya was a major attraction for both settlers and tourists seeking a break from their European homelands and other colonies. Tourism became a source of revenue in a colony which was increasingly perceived as incapable of self-sustenance due to losses incurred during the construction of the Uganda Railway, derogatively referred to as “the Lunatic Express”. The hunters promoted the Big Game Hunting (BGH) image as a unique selling proposition (USP) through adventures captured on film and literary works. Their subjugation of the rugged landscape and so called “prehistoric” wildlife defined the characteristics of brand personality as emblematic leisure.

This study demonstrates that the positive brand equity, the net worth tangible and intangible characteristics of a destination, which existed during the colonial period, stimulated the development of a vibrant tourism industry in Kenya during that period. It also shows that the exposure created by early big game hunters augmented the image of destination Kenya. Destination awareness developed from the many celebrities visiting the destination and from literary works produced on the colony. This publicity constantly reassured tourists of the

brand equity throughout the life of the colony. The destination image created guaranteed security and professionalism as a way of enhancing confidence and loyalty to the brand (Ritchie and Ritchie 1998, 19).

The brand image created by the colonial regime was one of paradise, where few human beings lived in a pristine environment with large numbers of prehistoric animals in perfect harmony, which affirmed one of the pillars of positive brand equity. The colonial government, keen on ensuring continued financial stability, projected a mystical destination image globally to potential visitors and investors as early as 1903. The image was first embraced by Boers from South Africa, followed by the Britons and wealthy Americans (Huxley 1935).

The colonial administrative structure boosted visitation by providing maximum security and assured experience. It upheld an idyllic environment by instituting ordinances that enhanced the leisure of white tourists and settlers, often at the expense of the other races. This brand image has progressively disintegrated due to challenges such as globalisation and trade liberalisation, deterioration of nature based products, unstable political leadership, increased competition from Kenya's neighbours, tired tourism infrastructure, demise of the BGH expeditions, and increasing human-wildlife conflict. This experience supports the view that brand image requires frequent evaluation by destination managers for successful brand marketing (Ritchie and Ritchie 1998, 26; Lynch and de Chernatony, 2004). The progressive attrition of destination Kenya image and the need for its restoration is, therefore, the main goal of this paper. Concrete strategies that drove the image and the industry during the colonial period are analysed.

The big game hunting (BGH) image supported by the colonial government underwent three key evolutionary stages which comprise the overall scope of this paper as follows:

1. Big game hunters up to 1934.
2. Professional big game hunters after 1934.
3. Big game conservators after the Second World War (WWII).

The study has used both secondary and primary data. Secondary data from literary works, biographies and historical texts were subjected to content analysis. Primary data were collected from the tourist circuit of Northern Kenya through in-depth interviews, with key

informants, combined with non-participatory observation. Observation was made at key attractions associated with the architects of the big game hunting image including Meru National Park, Samburu National Reserve and Shaba National Reserve which were initially part of the Northern Reserve. Larsen's Camp, Samburu Lodge and Shaba Serena Lodge, the Nairobi National Museum and the Karen Blixen Museums were also visited as part of the study. The study explored the impact of several personalities in the development of tourist destination Kenya during the colonial period.

Principles of Destination Branding

In marketing, the term brand is broadly defined as "...a distinguishing name and /or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of one seller, and to differentiate those goods or services from competitors who would provide goods that appear to be identical" (Aaker 1991, 7).

Branding entails a distinctive mark that makes a place different from similar or competing places, whereas mental or cognitive images inform travellers' choice of a destination in lieu of contrary information resulting from organic and/ or induced image (Keller 1998). The aim of branding is to incorporate the cognitive and affective attributes that induce a consumer's memory whenever s/he encounters the brand (Crompton 1979; Lindsay 2000).

A brand therefore is a set of cognitive associations held by the consumer of a product based on its perceived value, uniqueness or strength (Keller 1998). Brand names like Joy's Camp in Shaba, Karen Blixen's Camp in Masaai Mara and Hemingway Lounge in Nairobi evoke desirable associations that are emotional or mental (Keller 1998; Kapferer 2011). The ability of a brand to influence a consumer is based on its image and personality attributes and the relationships it evokes such as competence, quality and benefits (Kapferer 2011, 11). As such, names given to hospitality establishments may evoke mental associations and imagery that are appealing to potential tourists.

The practice of branding has been in existence for a long time. In Kenya, pastoral communities branded their cattle to distinguish them from those of their neighbours as a way of reducing conflict. Today, however, branding is a more sophisticated exercise that entices customers to a product, appeals to their taste, and ensures continued loyalty through

perceived quality of the product. Any product for which one can construct a mental inventory is therefore a brand (Van Ham 2008, 129). Destinations are brands differentiated by their identity, product offering, and unique setting. Any destination enjoys brand equity, whether created or spontaneous (Aaker 1991, 91). Destination brand equity is based on the quality of service and physical characteristics available to potential tourists in a number of dimensions as shown in Fig 1.

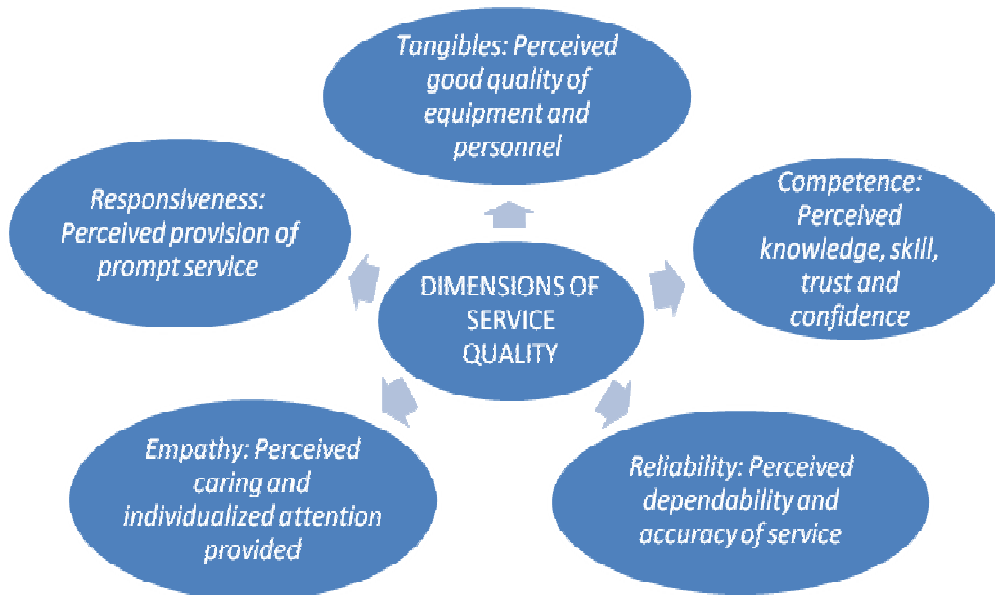


Fig. 1: Dimensions of perceived service quality (Source: Adapted from Aaker 1991, 91)

The aesthetics or marketing sensory experience proposed by Schmitt and Simpson (1997, 16) can be used in the organization of destination brand identity. The model sees a direct correlation between the attributes of a destination and its branding by appealing to the sensory experience of the product customer.

Schmitt and Simpson (1997, 22) acknowledge the tangible benefits of the model as a branding strategy that includes brand loyalty, premium pricing, and protection from competition in a cost effective way. However, the strategic importance of brands in economies of post-modern societies is a multi-disciplinary subject due to its complexity (Kapferer 2011, 94). Brand image and brand personality, which are interdependent variables are key components of brand strategy that appeal to the emotional dimensions of a tourist

(Patterson 1999; Ekinci and Sameer 2006; Hosney *et. Al.* 2006). Brand personality is defined as the humanlike attributes of a destination that motivate travel decisions.

In defining destination branding as opposed to common product branding, Ritchie and Ritchie (1998, 17) write:

A destination brand is a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience.

The branding strategy of a destination aims at reassuring prospective visitors, while the after travel experience helps in consolidating and reinforcing the memorable experience (Fig. 2) or aesthetics (Ritchie and Ritchie 1998, 18). Ritchie and Ritchie (1998, 18) noted that brand management is the process of creating awareness (identification); image and knowledge (differentiation); anticipation (preference and choice); and expectation (desire), to ensure the desired experience. Van Ham (2008, 129) contends that a positive place image can have a positive economic impact and self-image of its citizens, especially at highly distinguishable destinations. Each destination aims to “stand out from the crowd and capture a significant mind share and market share” which creates loyalty (Van Ham 2008, 129). Place brand strength can be determined by the brand’s competitiveness in the market, while brand value is measured in profitability. Kenya’s destination image has been associated with the colonial big game expeditions and the personalities involved.

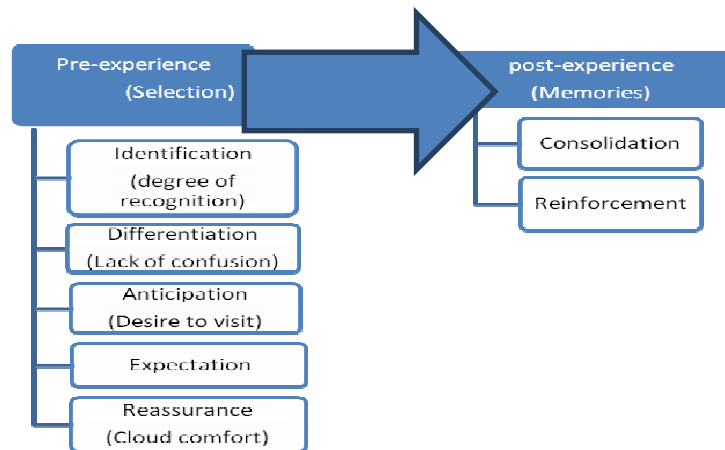


Fig. 2: The roles of destination brand (source: Adapted from Ritchie and Ritchie 1998, 18)

Hosney *et. al.* (2006) argue that brand personality gives human characteristics to a destination. Tourists subscribe to the self-image congruency theory by using brands that reinforce their own concept of self as per who they are and who they would like to be (De Chernatony *et. al.* 1994, 36). This implies that tourists visit destinations that are like them or express who they are (Aaker 1997; Hosney *et. al.* 2006). Aaker (1997, 348) categorised five dimensions of human-like brand personality (Fig. 3) while Hosney (2006) identified outstanding dimensions of brand personality as “sincerity, excitement and conviviality”.

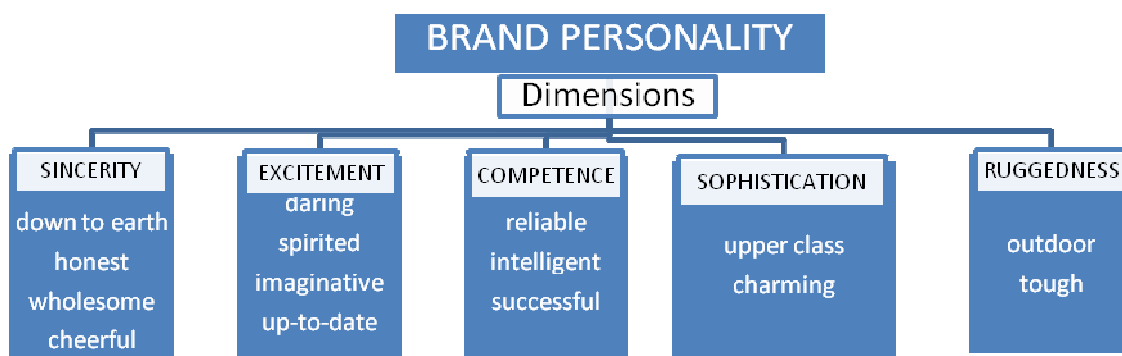


Fig. 3: Dimensions of Brand Personality (Source: Adapted from Aaker 1997, 31)

From the discussion thus far, the general consensus is that a link exists between the brand personality of a product and its consumers. A destination will thus attract tourists who share

brand personality traits with it. According to Kapferer (2011, 132), a celebrity becomes a brand when his or her national or global influence emanates from their personality and their life attracts others. In the colonial period, celebrities became brand personalities due to the level of publicity and interest generated from their exciting lifestyles. The big game encounters by such personalities, through literature and adapted movies, became a popular representation of destination Kenya globally, as shall be demonstrated in the course of this paper.

Destination managers strive to develop a strong brand image that appeals to the cognitive and affective brand image dimensions in order to benefit from the perception of low risk and high quality of their destination (Assael 1995; Erdem 1998). The image should convey the expectation of a memorable experience to enhance the emotional bond between the visitor and the destination (Blain *et. al.* 2005). The colonial government ably promoted a strong image in the form of Big Game Hunting (BGH) that spurred continued visits to the destination. In assessing the brand equity of tourist destination Kenya during the colonial period, we considered the evolution of the brand equity model (Gordon *et. al.* 1994).

Destination Branding in the Colonial Period

As earlier noted, the history of tourist destination Kenya was intertwined with that of the Big Game Hunting (BGH). The destination's brand personality thus evolved under the influence of the game hunters and related safari adventures. During the colonial period, destination Kenya's big game image became the worldwide image of Africa, with its vast open pristine lands covered in documentaries, books and movies as summarised by Storey (1991,167):

To many people who knew little about Africa ...the idea of Kenya has formed their image of the continent. Dominating the image is the picture of vast land inhabited by nature's great beast: the lordly lion, elephants, rhinoceros and uncounted millions of antelope. Hunting served as an extension of imperial domination where bloody execution of big game compared to the brutal cultural domination of the colonised societies.

According to Winston Churchill who visited the destination on a hunting expedition in 1907, the link between settlers and the big game was so strong that:

Nothing causes the East African colonialist more genuine concern than that his guest should not have been provided with a lion. The knowledge preys upon his mind until it becomes a veritable obsession. He feels some deep reproach is laid upon his hospitality and the reputation of his adopted country (Churchill 1908, 20).

Based on Steinhart's (1989) thesis, the BGH image during the colonial period can be divided into four evolutionary categories (Fig. 4). Three distinct evolutionary and overlapping phases representing changing international perceptions of big game can be clearly outlined from this discussion (Fig. 5).

The colonial government perpetuated the image of BGH by creating an ideal environment for the hunters, especially after 1930s. However, as early as 1900, the colonial government created two major reserves for the East African Protectorate. The Kenya Southern Game Reserve covered the present Nairobi National Park and the area continuing southwards to the Kenya-Tanzania border, while the Northern Game Reserve encompassed the mountains and deserts of the Northern Frontier Province (Orr 1970, 29). Hunting was not allowed in these two areas, though only the local populations were affected by this discriminatory policy: the foreign big game hunters continued pursuing their dream hunts oblivious of the demarcations and existing ordinances (Ouma 1970). The so called conservation reduced non-white races to poachers (Steinhart 1989). The concept of a manageable National Park was born in the 1930s, but was only realised after World War II, between 1946 and 1966, through the then Director of National Parks, Colonel Mervyn Cowrie (Orr 1970, 28).

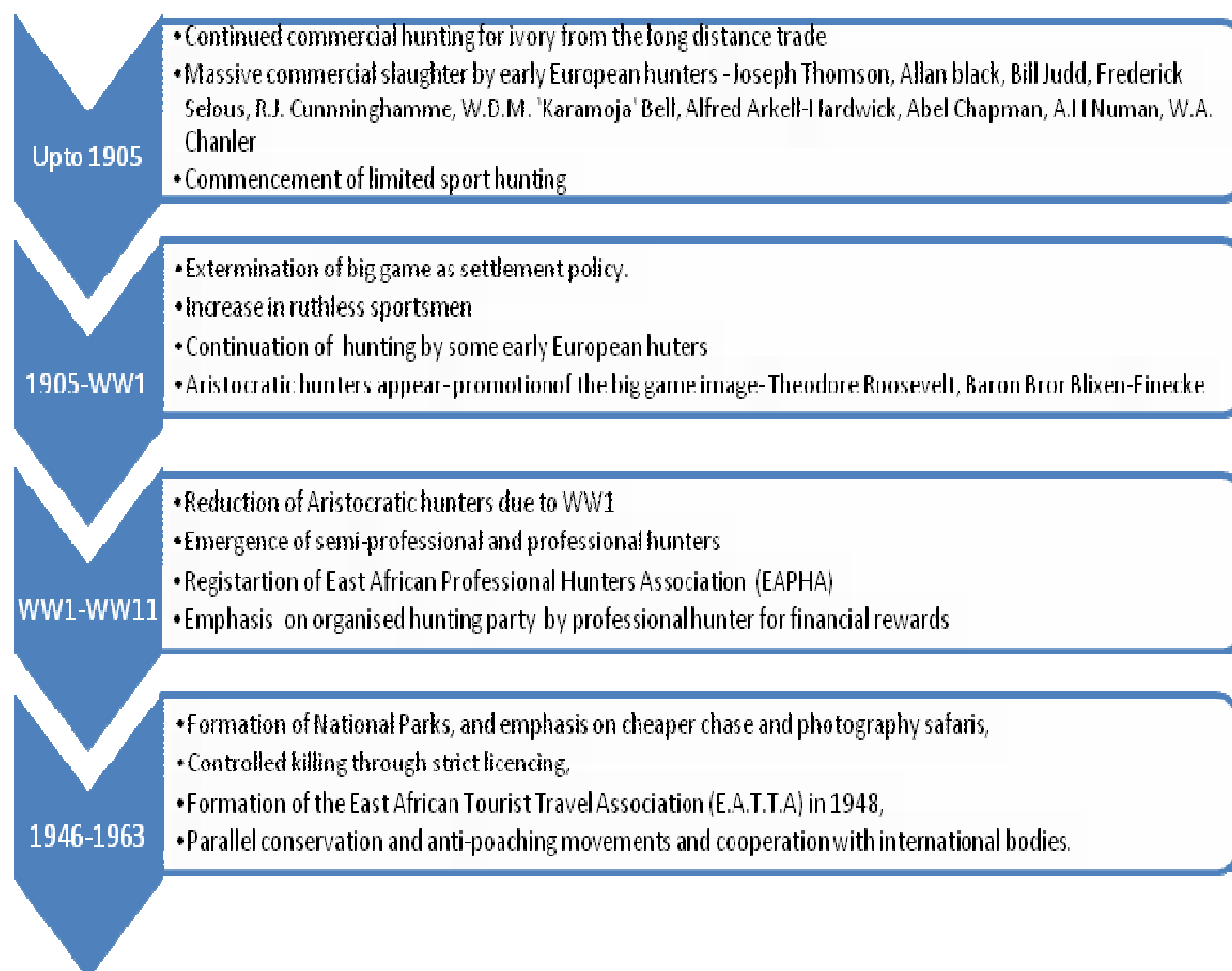


Fig. 4: Evolution of colonial tourism destination Kenya image (Source: Authors)

The colonial government improved infrastructure and security to make the destination and its attractions easily accessible to prospective hunters. In this regard Huxley writes:

East Africa's big game shooting had become renowned and rich men and women arrived to chase lions, elephants, rhino, buffaloes and dozens of different kinds of antelopes (Huxley 1935, 250).

Reliable transportation was provided through the construction of the Uganda Railway, followed by road transport which was easily available in different forms from 1904 (Mills 2010). For the security of the Western tourists, Africans were isolated by allocating Indian residences between the two races in areas such as Ngara, Pangani, Eastleigh and Parklands, all in Nairobi. The Africans were relegated to the poorer and swampy lowlands of Nairobi, the Europeans occupied the opulent and well drained areas such as Muthaiga and Upper

Parklands, while the Indians occupied the buffer zone between the two areas. This reduced the physical contact between the Africans and the Europeans (Lonsdale 2002; Achola 2002).

Besides security, increased vehicular transport, especially from 1920s onwards made the big game safaris easier to manage. It enabled higher levels of luxury without losing site of the rugged experience sought by visitors. The introduction of air transport in the form of charter planes, and the birth of Nairobi's Wilson Airport in 1929, enhanced the experience for wealthy hunters such as Meryl Makham and Denys Finch Hutton who used the opportunity to package airborne game spotting and hunting safaris (Nicholls 2005, 139).

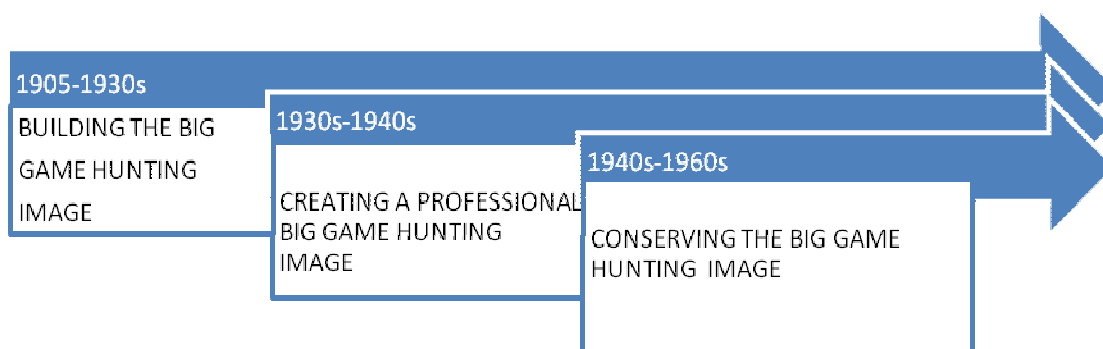


Fig.5: Evolution of the Big Game Hunting image (Source: Authors)

In addition, hotels perpetuated the image of comfort by offering the comforts of ‘home’ to the big game hunters. Notable establishments included the Norfolk, Stanley Hotel, and Muthaiga Club, that provided classy accommodation and entertainment. In 1928, Buxton (1928, 19, 174) intimated that “You can stay in a delightful upcountry hotel and almost believe you are in England again ... the suburbs of Nairobi with their palings and gates are like the suburbs of a small English town.”

This assured visitors that life at the destination, though rugged, was interspersed with European luxuries. The colonialists organised their businesses in line with the alignment theory by ensuring that their facilities were relevant to the destination image (Dimanche 2007). They also adopted names such as Princess Elizabeth Way (Uhuru Highway), Victoria Street (Tom Mboya Street) and Delamere Avenue (Kenyatta Avenue) to extend the visibility of the image. The character of the city of Nairobi was so homely that “no one who has ever tasted Kenya life is ever the same again” (Orr 1970, 10).

Brand Personality and the Big Game Hunting Image

Some of the great hunters who elevated the image of colonial Kenya, due to their popularity at home, included the former American president, Theodore ‘Teddy’ Roosevelt, 1909, and a distinguished writer, Ernest Hemingway in 1933 and 1950s. The two invested heavily on their expeditions leaving long-lasting impressions that complemented the image created by earlier hunters such as Rider Haggard, Allan Black, Bill Judd, Frederick Selous, Karamoja Bell, Frank Allen and John Hunter (Orr 1970, 79). The hunters wrote extensively on their exploits, thereby opening up the destination to the rest of the world.

Roosevelt came to Kenya on invitation by Big Game Hunter, Sir Alfred Pease, who also wrote two early accounts on game hunting titled *Hunting Reminiscences* (1898) and *The Book of the Lion* (1911). Roosevelt’s massive expeditions contributed to mass killings of big game, with some of the trophies being donated to the Smithsonian Institution and the American Museum of Natural History. This slaughter of big game was part of what had come to be known as “the vigorous living”, which the symbolic essence of imperialism was, as expressed by Orr (1970, 79):

... the sniff of danger has a spice of its own ... To pit wits, experiences and sinew against dangerous game on its home ground, to seek out, stalk and finally capture a fine trophy after hours of grinding patience is ultimate fulfilment.

Storey (1991, 136) perceives hunting as an expression of imperialism in the following words: “...the basic underlying structures of the hunts symbolised the triumph of culture over nature and of the colonist over the colonized.”

These perceptions promoted the Kenyan brand personality based on the excitement trait (Aaker 1997, 31). The destination had a reputation for having the best selection of game and professional safari operators who were fully equipped for any logistical needs (Storey 1991, 155). This made hunting much easier, besides the fact that in “...the early days there was more game ...” (Orr 1970, 87). This perception, rallied through literature and film, was critical in cultivating a positive cognitive image for prospective hunters. It assured visitors of an exciting and rugged experience while enhancing the brand equity, increasing client numbers and subsequently expanding the colonial economy (Van Ham 2008, 129).

Besides other factors, Roosevelt's expedition in 1909, commencing in the formative stage of the protectorate, contributed to an increase in the number of wealthy visitors from Britain and America, especially after 1911, in contrast to the poor settlers from South Africa who were dominant in the earlier periods (Huxley 1935). It also gave BGH an aristocratic appeal, as a sport for the gentlemen, thereby introducing the dimension of sophistication and aspiration lifestyle (Steinhart 1989, 253; Van Ham 2008, 130). It is no wonder then that the BGH image was embraced by the wealthy, upper classes and royal families (Huxley 1935, 250; Mills 2010).

Roosevelt was a renowned conservator, highly respected by scholars for his work in heritage protection in North America. Harbaugh (1967, 139) intimated that Roosevelt's conservation policies such as the fight against indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, land reclamation and preservation of river systems endeared him to the American society. His conservation record includes the creation of five national parks, big game refuge and enactment of conservation laws (Harbaugh 1967, 156). This record notwithstanding, Roosevelt and his son Kermit shot over 500 animals between 1908 and 1910 during their Kenyan expedition as an extension of the perception of vigorous living and subjugation (Staples 2006, 392).

The BGH expedition associated with Roosevelt impacted on the image of the destination in many ways. For example, succeeding hunters like Hemmingway, who visited over 20 years later, in the 1930s, were mainly inspired by Roosevelt's trip to the destination. The production of two movies, based on the expedition titled "Hunting Big Game in Africa" (1909) and "Roosevelt in Africa" (1910), by Cherry Keaton, exposed Americans to the big game and changed their perception of the destination (Staples 2006, 394). Two other classic movies of the time, "Lassoing Wild Animals in Africa" by Cherry Keaton (1911) and Paul Rainey's "African Hunt" (1912) augmented the destination image.

The movies on Roosevelt's expedition set the tempo for the BGH by portraying an irresistible image. The films "depicted East Africa as a kind of western frontier ripe for touristic discovery and consumption" (Staples 2006, 406). Some tourists aspired to retrace the journeys and spirit of their heroes, while many others were scrapping for a piece of the action and excitement. The destination became popular for its abundant animal species from the

number of animals slaughtered and samples donated to various scientific institutions. The protectorate became the destination of choice through continued reassurance of successful hunts in a “rugged and pristine landscape”, as seen in the movies.

Roosevelt’s wanton destruction of game in Kenya and his conservation efforts in America, though disconcerting, enhanced the mystery of the destination. His depiction of Kenya as a prehistoric paradise of abundance, a view held by Churchill, gave the destination a unique appeal. Churchill capped this dimension of mysticism in his description of a Rhino as “... not a twentieth century animal at all, but an odd, grim straggler from the Stone Age” (Churchill 1908, 14).

Another important member of the hunting set was Baroness Karen von Blixen-Finecke, who lived in Kenya between 1914 and 1931. Her reputable book titled *Out of Africa* (1937), written in her pen name of Isak Dinesen, was adapted for the screen to become an instant hit by winning 7 out of 11 Academy Awards of 1985 as the greatest movie ever made in Kenya (Mulli 2012, 17). This success was an indication of continued attachment to the story line of the BGH image and the brand personality trait of sophistication (Aaker 1997). The book and the adapted screenplay both serve to re-live a dream and create an alluring tourist destination of repute. Her personality represented sincerity, adventure, unceasing leisure and rugged BGH experiences.

Karen Blixen was married to a big game hunter, Baron Bror Blixen-Finecke, who was described as “... an extravagant, freckles and incorrigible philanderer” (Huxley 1985, 62). Bror Blixen was the author of a book titled *African Hunter* (1938). According to Huxley, “Bror Blixen possessed much charm but no money, was living a kind of gypsy life in the bush”, which helped him to escape the wrath of his creditors (1985, 62). Despite his shortcomings, Bror Blixen, jointly with his associate Denys Finch Hutton, organised the Prince of Wales’ expedition, which gave a royal dimension to the destination image (Huxley 1985, 64).

Karen’s personal life and suffering was associated with the romantic and licentious lives of the hunters she associated with. It was common for women to fall in love with their white hunters on safari, and Karen Blixen was not spared from this spin of romance (Nicholls 2005, 152). Her coverage of the happy valley’s promiscuous whites and her own experience

recorded in *Out of Africa* made her a heroine in her home country of Denmark. In the book, Karen nostalgically recounts the BGH experience, the white hunters and Kenya highlands, by stating that "... the highlands were in very truth the happy hunting grounds" (cited in Dinesen 1937). This helped to boost the personality of the destination. In a litany of broken dreams, including the loss of her close friends and the coffee farm, Karen's love of Kenya remains intact. This further enhanced the destination's brand personality of excitement. Her impact was so strong that the Danish government bought off what was left of her land and converted her matrimonial home into a museum, the Karen Blixen Museum, in her honour. The museum was donated to the government of Kenya after Independence. The Museum, one of the most popular in Kenya, depicts the position of a lady in the colonial period.

Trzebinski (1986) describes the brand personality and confidence built around the character of the big game hunters such as Karen Blixen as follows:

Of the thousands of tourists who travel to Kenya each year, many have been inspired to do so after reading the classic *Out of Africa* by Karen Blixen ... It does not matter to them that everything she described has been unceasingly compromised. Her ability to observe with the eye of a painter, to write with the sensibility of a poet, has insured that the fundamental beauty of the book remains untarnished.

Blixen wrote about a friend, Denys Finch Hatton, who came to Kenya in 1911 as a farmer cum trader but finally embraced the adventures of the BGH (Mills 2010, 227). In spite of his noble upbringing and assured comfort, Hatton found greater passion in professional hunting and the safari experience which he constantly shared with Karen in a jointly operated professional safari outfit for the rich big game hunters (Nicholls 2005, 153). Their noncommittal love affair is captured in Karen's book, *Out of Africa*, with a lot of passion. Hatton died in 1931 and Karen buried him at Ngong Hills, a site visible from her coffee farm, where his obelisk still stands (Mills 2010, 227). This represents the affective dimension of the brand image, which motivates tourists to visit destinations with significant emotional attachment.

The Finch Hatton Luxury Tented Camp in Tsavo West is a constant reminder of Hatton's name and love for exclusive leisure. A book on Denys Finch Hatton, authored by Sara Wheeler, titled *Too close to the Sun: the Life and Times of Denys Finch Hatton* (2006), recounts his exploits. The book reflects the brand personality of excitement and continued

interest in the big game which transcends time and space. Denys Finch was a romantic friend to an aviatrix and big game hunter Beryl Markham who was a global celebrity. Markham also entertained a number of aristocrats who visited the country in the 1920s and 1930s (Mills 2010, 253). Some of her business partners included Bror Blixen, Lord Delamere's son Tom and the Duke of Gloucester (Mortimer 2009).

Markham is celebrated as the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic from east to west in 1936, and her exploits are captured in her book titled *West with the Night* (Trzebinski 1993). Until her death in Nairobi in 1986, Markham spent most of her life in Kenya (Trzebinski 1993; Mills 2010, 253). Her legendary status as “the bush pilot” who spotted big game for hunters from the air and conquered the Atlantic positioned destination Kenya as a home of leisure and unceasing adventure (Mills 2010, 253).

Another celebrated big game hunter was John Alexander Hunter, who came to Kenya in 1908. He is remembered for killing many animals, including 1000 buffaloes in Makueni area (Orr 1970, 81). Besides hunting, he supplied faunal specimens to the Natural History Museum of London. In 1956, he built the Hunters Lodge in Makindu where he later died in 1963, leaving behind a collection of hunter's legend including “... walls hung with photographs of hunting parties holding towering tusks, and even a dinner gong is mounted between polished ivory” (Orr 1970,81). His expeditions and those of fellow hunters are captured in a number of his autobiographical works including *Hunter* (1952), *Hunter's Tracks* (1957), *White Hunter* (1938) and *Tales of the African Frontier* (1954). Hunter epitomised the transformation of the BGH image from the time he entered the protectorate in 1908 to his death in 1963. In his sunset years, he served as Honorary Game Warden, which brought him face to face with the possibility of big game extinction due to the sophisticated hunting methods used by his friends and the need for conservation (Kenya Gazette 1958, 286). Besides his appointment, Hunter's conversion to conservation was also influenced by increasing international awareness campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s.

Hemmingway, a rich American writer, visited the colony in 1933 inspired by big game hunters such as Roosevelt to pursue BGH. His contribution is felt through his literary works including *The Green Hills of Africa* (1935), *Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1933) and *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* (1933). The latter was adapted for the screen under two titles *The Macomber Affair* (1947) and *the Great White Hunter* (1990).

In 1954, Hemmingway made a second trip to Kenya, Belgium Congo and Rwanda during which he suffered two airplane accidents. His fearlessness and hunting skills made him the doyen of BGH adventure. His books also propelled the image of big game exploits, culminating in his winning the Nobel Prize in literature in 1954. He is particularly remembered for the publicity he generated for the big game image late in history when there were global concerns for conservation. Like Roosevelt, his visit was comparatively long and well covered by the international press due to his international reputation as a writer. Hemmingway's near death experiences during the trip also generated global publicity and enhanced the brand personality dimensions of ruggedness. His misadventures are summarized by Lee (1971, 221) as follows:

Hemmingway had become a hard-boiled character from his own fiction ... Indeed notoriety and headlines had long insisted that he was a 'character' a hell and a glory dare-devil who seemed to taunt death on every occasion only to resurface at each encounter ...

Hemmingway committed suicide in 1961. His exploits were imprinted in various establishments including Hemmingway's Resort Nairobi, Hemmingway Ole-Seki Mara luxury tent, Hemmingway Hotel Watamu, Hemmingway Expeditions, Hemmingway lounge and bar, Safari Park, Nairobi, Hemmingway Museum, Cuba, Marina Hemmingway, Cuba and The Hemmingway Museum, Florida. All these establishments convey the spirit of adventure and extension of brand personality associated with Hemmingway.

Another hunter, Frank Maurice 'Bunny' Allen, a hunting partner of Denys Finch and Bror Blixen, also contributed to the image. Allen spent most of his life in Kenya as a professional hunter. His contribution to the image of the destination is mainly seen in his works which include *First Wheel: A White Hunter's Diary 1927-47*, *Second Wheel: A Professional Autobiography*, and *The Wheel of Life and Bunny Allen: A life of Safaris and Romance*. The writings dealt with his escapades as a hunter, the rugged nature of a hunter's life and also his professional work as a safari operator for the rich and famous of the time.

Besides professional hunting, Allen also assisted in the production of movies such as *King Solomon's Mine*, a classic Hollywood production and *Magambo*, shot at a scene in Nanyuki in 1952. *Magambo* gave an optimistic image of the destination in spite of the obvious

concerns over the Mau Mau insurgency, serving as a reassurance that all was well. The beginning of the insurgency (1952) also coincided with Princess Elizabeth's visit to the Aberdare Tree-Top Hotel for a commanding view of the big game. This visit was cut short by the subsequent death of her father, King George VI, making her the automatic successor to the throne as Queen. This was the origin of the joke on "a princess who went up a tree and came down as queen" (Orr 1970). The hotel still commemorates the event and key dates in the Queen's calendar as a branding strategy based on the personality trait of sophistication. Subsequent visits to Kenya by the royalty, including Prince William's much publicised engagement to his fiancée, Kate Middleton, at a remote Rutundu log cabin on the slopes of Mt. Kenya, on 20th October, 2011, have firmed up Kenya's destination image of sophistication.

Some of the big game hunters from the royalty had tainted characters, but served the destination image well. In 1941, Josslyn Victor Hay, the 22nd Earl of Errol was shot dead in Kenya in mysterious circumstances during a hunting expedition. He became the subject of a book titled *White Mischief* (1982), adapted into a movie in 1988 and a BBC television drama series, "The Unhappy Valley" in 1987 (Woods 2007). These few instances added to the mystery and intrigue of the image rather than negating the brand equity, while also firming up the rugged side of the image. The social standing of the Earl of Erroll and the murder mystery attracted extensive coverage. Tweedie (2002) describes Josslyn as follows: "Erroll was a member of the happy valley set, an exclusive, tightly knit and promiscuous circle which had found in colonial Kenya the perfect antidote to the austerity and constraints of wartime Britain." Publications have been continuously churned out with speculations on the possible motives and potential suspects including "Solved: the Mystery of White Mischief" (Tweedie 2002) and "Revealed: White Mischief Murderer" (Woods 2007) appearing in *The Telegraph*. These controversies have kept the mystique of tourist destination Kenya alive.

Creating a Professional Big Game Hunting Image

Professionalism came into the BGH in 1934 with demands on the hunters to exercise restraint in the killing of big game, observe existing ordinances, and procure relevant permits before conducting expeditions. Professionalism created a form of brand personality where individual characters, as seen in movies or written in books, were associated with a particular destination's specialised experiences in line with Aaker's brand personality scale (1997).

Philip Percival, a reputable professional hunter, was instrumental in the formation of the East African Professional Hunters Association (EAPHA) in 1934. The EAPHA was charged with the responsibility of ensuring sanity in the BGH in line with global trends of heritage conservation. It, for example, banned the killing of female animals and hunting at night, which had hitherto made big game extremely vulnerable. Its slogan, “Neither Fear nor Foolhardiness”, was a marketing gimmick meant to boost confidence in prospective hunters bent towards the rugged dimension of the destination. EAPHA remained in force until 1977 when a total ban on hunting was imposed in Kenya (Adams and McShane 1992, 70).

Philip Percival, founder of EAPHA, took a lot of pride in his safari work and its concomitant dangers (Nicholls 2005, 152). He accompanied celebrities such as Roosevelt, Hemmingway, Baron Rothschild, George Eastman, Actor Gary Cooper and the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. Hemingway included Percival as a character ‘Pop’ in his book titled *The Green Hills of Africa*. This popularised the character of Percival internationally, and gave prominence to the professional side of the BGH image. Philip Percival’s manuscripts were posthumously published in 1997 into a book titled *Hunting, Settling and Remembering*, evoking memories of professionalism in BGH. Philip’s brother, Blayney Percival, who was the first ranger in the protectorate, was also a great hunter who was inspired by the prospect of hunting lions on horseback. Blayney Percival died in 1961. The drive for BGH appears to have been so strong that rangers charged with the responsibility of protecting animals usually became part of the privileged hunters.

It is notable that the same ‘bloody’ hunters of the yester years joined hands to promote sanity in the Big Game Hunting. The practice also provided the much needed revenue to the government, which was reeling from the Depression of the 1930s, through permits. It was through the effort of professional hunters that the safari became associated with a combination of controlled Big Game Hunting, chase and photography. This meant that the purely consumptive hunting tradition was tempered with more conservative forms of leisure.

The EAPHA founder members were important in publicising the destination through professionalism and literary works. For example, Major G.H. ‘Andy’ Anderson wrote a classic book on hunting expeditions titled *African Safaris* (1946), while Donald Ker authored *African Adventure* (1957). Anderson begun his career in 1903 and accompanied the Duke and

Duchess of York (later King George VI and the Queen Mother) in 1924 as a professional hunter when a buffalo hunt almost claimed the life of the future King of England, generating extensive publicity in the international press (Nicholls 2005, 153-4). This kind of publicity gave the rugged image of the destination a boost by elevating the level of adventure and curiosity.

Some of the early professional hunters included the Cotter family, associated with the Cottar safari outfitters. Charles Cottar visited the protectorate in 1909, inspired by Roosevelt's expedition, and finally settled in 1915 and started a long chain of Cottar family members' involvement in the BGH business. The family has operated luxury tented camps since 1919 in different parts of the country, including Tsavo and Maasai Mara (Orr 1970, 82). Such tented camps could be moved with ease to areas with high concentration of the big game and away from human crowds for privacy. This permanently imprinted the idea of luxury tented camps in destination Kenya. Luxury tents have been branded after personalities whose exploits in the BGH are exemplary. Presently, the Cotter's Luxury Camp located in the Masai Mara is an extension of a rugged brand personality which straddles the colonial and post-colonial period.

Professional hunters also competed over control of hunting space. Professional hunters Donald Ker and Sydney (Sid) Downey opened up the Masai Mara in the 1930s by each hiving off large chunks of the reserve for themselves and their clients (Cullen 1989). However, after World War II, the two formed a joint tour company, Ker and Downey Limited, which became a major safari outfit in the world of big game expeditions (Cullen 1989). They were later joined by Harry Selby to form the Ker, Downey and Selby Safaris (Hemsing 1989). The brand personality attribute of competence was being ingrained into the destination brand strategy by employing professionalism in destination management (Aaker 1997).

Big tours were organised by professional hunters for leisure and as a source of income. By the 1930s, the safari outfits were equipped to meet basic hunting needs including tents, trackers, four wheel drive vehicles, and other luxuries for the client at a cost of about £1500 per month (Orr 1970, 78). These safari operators gave a sense of security and assurance to prospective big game hunters. For example, the great adventurer and writer Robert Ruark would always pick Harry Selby, one of the associates in the Ker, Downey and Selby

safaris, on his hunting expeditions in the 1950's. This attribute further illustrated the competence brand personality trait of the destination, which is part of tourist destination Kenya brand strategy.

Throughout the Safari, Ruark gathered materials for his book titled *Horn of the Hunter: The Story of an African Hunt* (1953), which popularised the destination and Selby as one of the characters in the book under the name Mckenzie. Ruark also wrote *Something of Value* (1955) influenced by Selby's childhood years in the East Africa Protectorate. The book gave succinct descriptions of the life of a big game hunter, based on Selby's experience, in locating game, supervising the kill and undertaking administrative duties depicting a personality trait of competence (Nicholls 2005, 153). At the prime of his career in 1962, Selby relocated to Botswana in search of wild adventure with the contention that overregulation was stifling the BGH experience in Kenya (Underwood 1968). By then, there was an increasing movement towards conservation in Kenya, and his other colleagues were becoming more attracted to photo and chase safaris (Cullen 1989). Though professional in his work, Selby was one of the big game hunters who were unable to conform to the evolving brand image of conservation.

The Safari companies took the brand image into the chase and photography stage marked by empathy as a key dimension of service quality (Aaker 1991, 91). This non-consumptive and service oriented image opened flood gates to a greater number of big game enthusiasts leading to a systematic rise in mass tourism which continued into the post-colonial period. In the 1960s, most of the big game hunters were slowly accommodating the international image of big game conservation. For example, Sydney Downey popularised conservation through a book co-authored with Anthony Cullen titled *Saving the Game* (1960) as a reflection of changing attitudes towards the BGH image. The big game safaris and associated celebrities began attracting big donations for the conservation of big game, which was globally perceived to be endangered.

Conserving the Big Game Image

By the 1930s, there was a general feeling that the animals needed protection through ordinances to reduce their massive destruction (Storey 1991, 172). Despite the concern, serious conservation only came into effect after World War II. In reality, however,

conservation was never a replacement of BGH which continued until 1977, when hunting, as a sport, was totally banned in Kenya.

By the 1950s, celebrities attracted large donations to sponsor wildlife conservation projects. An example is the American actor, William Holden, who visited Kenya on many occasions on documentary shooting expeditions. Holden was President Ronald Reagan's best man in 1952 and the winner of the Academy Award for best actor in 1954. He jointly owned the Mt. Kenya Safari Club, and adjoining Mt. Kenya Game Ranch in Nanyuki, with Don and Iris Hunt in the 1950's (Orr 1970, 105). As an actor he shared the screen with iconic American actors like John Wayne and Humphrey Bogart (Bennet 2008). Holden used his Game Ranch for conservation of the bongo antelope, and his efforts were supported by the colonial government which was awakening to the fact that big game was the future of Kenya's tourism industry. After his death in 1981, the William Holden Wildlife Foundation was established by his wife Stefanie Powers, a renowned actress. His Mt. Kenya Safari club, constantly referred to as the Mecca for international jet set, hosted a list of who is who in the film industry such as Sean Connery, Charlie Chaplin, Bing Crosby and former US President Lyndon Johnson. Holden promoted big game conservation in line with the international trend of the time.

Joy and George Adamson transformed the history of conservation in the colony by devoting their lives to the conservation of game in the vast and rugged Northern Kenya Reserve. Besides wildlife, Joy Adamson extended her work into the conservation of flora through elaborate paintings currently housed in the Nairobi National Museum and the Elsamere Conservation Centre. George was a Senior Game Warden in Northern Kenya during the colonial and early post-colonial periods. In *Born Free* (1956, 15), Joy gives the job description of her husband as "... many duties such as enforcing the Game Laws, preventing poaching and dealing with the dangerous animals that have molested the tribesmen."

The work of Joy and George Adamson was epitomised by their domesticated lion, Elsa, which featured prominently in the international media. The cat was the main character in Joy's three celebrated literary works, *Born Free: A lioness of two worlds* (1956), *Living Free* (1961) and *Forever Free* (1962). *Born Free*, the most popular of the three works, was translated into many Western languages and adapted into movie in 1966, which scooped two Oscar awards (House 1993). *Living Free* and *Forever Free* were also adapted into movies

(Neimark 1999). These movies perpetuated the intrinsic brand personality qualities of the destination and communicated the image sincerity and ruggedness after the BGH.

The Conservation work initiated by the Adamson family led to continued interest in the wildlife of the Northern Reserve, generally classified as a complete wilderness and highly susceptible to poaching due to its geographical proximity to conflict zones. Their original camp by the banks of the Uaso Nyiro River and areas within their conservation interest such as Samburu, Shaba, Buffalo Springs, Meru and Kora National Parks are major tourist attractions due to the brand personality of ruggedness and exclusiveness associated with the couple. This has led to the establishment of luxury hotels and camps along the scenic banks of the Uaso Nyiro River such as the famous Samburu Lodge, the Larsen's Camp, Elephants Bedroom, Sarova Shaba Lodge, Samburu Intrepids and Samburu Serena Lodge, all exploiting the rugged image associated with the couple.

George and Joy Adamson continued with conservation into the 1980s when they were brutally murdered separately (Ray 2011). In a show of attachment to the image, Joy's ashes were buried at Elsa Kopje in Meru National Park, while George's body was buried at Kambi ya Simba (Kiswahili for "Lion's Camp") in Kora National Reserve, according to their wishes (Ray 2011). This enhanced the emotional dimension of the image.

Discussion

From the foregoing observations, it is clear that the big game destination image has dominated the history of tourism in Kenya. Key personalities have contributed significantly to its continuity through media such as books and films, carrying the spirit of the big game hunting (BGH) into the present and, most likely, into the future. The image has 'metamorphosised', with big game exterminators dominating the scene up to World War II, followed by moderate hunters, professionals and conservators.

The big game hunters drove the industry as an extension of imperialism at all levels of the image up to the time of Kenya's political independence in 1963. Their activities epitomised the form of rugged confrontation with 'prehistoric' beasts that had to be subdued (Churchill 1909). The bloody encounters between the domineering Western hunters and the subdued animals were an expression of the level of exploitation that the local African (human)

communities were constantly exposed to in the name of leisure. Furthermore, such activities culminated in the emergence of modern day tourism, which appears to feature similar discriminatory elements, particularly in the interaction between tourists and their hosts.

During the era of professionalism and conservation, there were spirited attempts to conform to global standards with a view to ensuring that the image retained its market appeal internationally. The professionals and conservators became drivers of brand personality by allowing a level of harmonious co-existence with nature. They managed chase and photo safari teams into an exciting world of leisure with unique dexterity that ensured safety and confidence despite the rugged destination. The professional hunters took charge of their clients' lives from the beginning of the trip, to the spotting of the animal and shepherding it to a convenient spot where the visitors would have a good chance of making a kill at minimum risk of harm to themselves.

The transformation that drove the big game image into modernity was conservation. This was done by devoted individuals who appreciated the possibility of extermination of the big game. This attachment to nature is best represented by the harmonious coexistence between the Lioness Elsa and Joy Adamson, depicting the emotional dimension of brand image. The culmination of the work of conservationists was the ban on hunting in Kenya in 1977.

It is also important to note that the hunting and conservation phases underwent major overlaps. Many hunters such as John Hunter, who started on a destructive footing, reformed into ardent conservators in their sunset years, even to the point of falling out with their former hunting partners. This represents a critical leap in the evolution model of the big game image which was shaped by personality and historical phases in a complex feedback relationship which culminated in the emergence of destination Kenya image (Fig.6).

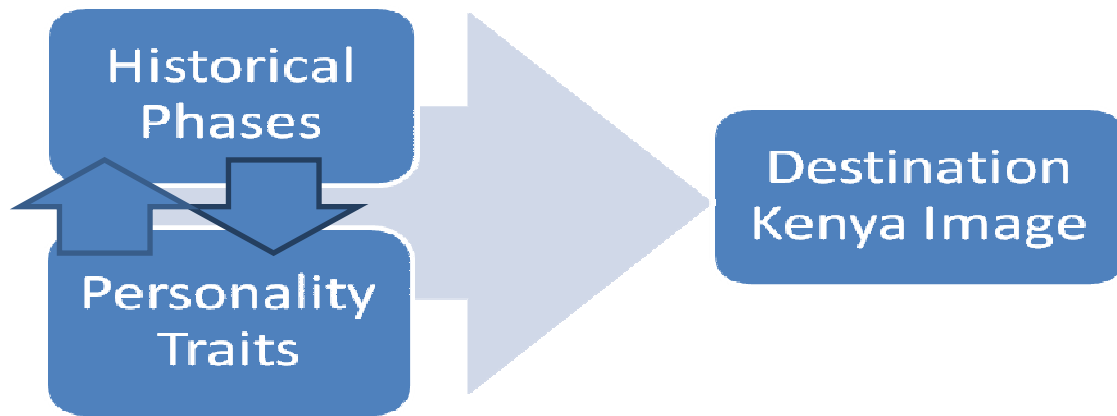


Fig. 6: The Evolution of Destination Kenya Model (Source: Authors)

Due to intense international place branding competition as well as the unfolding external and internal challenges facing most developing countries, the successful projection of Kenya's image as a tourist destination in the era of globalization is becoming increasingly difficult. Part of the problem is Kenya's inability to present itself favourably. In 1961, for example, there were 57,000 visitors to East Africa who spent 67% of their stay in Kenya, with the average duration of stay being 16.25 days (Colonial Office 1963, 151). The stay duration had reduced to 8.4 days by 2001 (WTO 2006). Kenya has also been sliding as a premier destination in Africa in terms of international tourist arrivals, taking 5th and 7th positions in Africa in 1995 and 2010 respectively (World Bank 2012). In 2010, it lagged behind South Africa, Egypt, Botswana, Tunisia, Morocco and Zimbabwe due to comparatively poor marketing, lack of a coherent and comprehensive tourism policy, and the inability of institutional and regulatory frameworks to handle increasing threats (WTO 2006; KIPPRA 2009).

Travel warnings issued by Western countries that comprise Kenya's key generators of tourism have considerably blurred her destination image. In addition, poaching has increased in National Parks such as Kora due to proliferation of small arms and overstrained security resources, while human-wildlife conflict is increasing in areas such as Kitengela, a major wildlife corridor close to Nairobi, due to declining resources and increasing human populations. Other social issues such as poor ranking in global indices also continue to plague the country's tourism industry, and, by extension, the destination image. Consequently, innovative thinking geared towards the creation of a brand image that will serve tourist

destination Kenya for another hundred years is a challenge for conservators. Of special interest is the effect of the ban on sport hunting in Kenya vis-a-viz practices in other countries in the region such as Tanzania and Botswana.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to show that strong brand equity was the key driver of tourism during the colonial period in Kenya. The methods used by the colonial government to promote the destination included enticement of potential visitors from Europe and America, improved infrastructure, racial segregation favouring the well endowed Western visitors, and provision of top notch security. While some of these methods may not be the most appropriate today, the solid foundation of the destination image developed over the years combined with innovativeness by the destination managers can salvage the country's tourism industry.

The amount of publicity generated for Kenya's big game hunting (BGH) image by individuals of international repute during the colonial period was immense. People of means and royal families provoked a lot of excitement in the international media through their elaborate expeditions. Others rose to sudden international fame through their escapades in the paradisiacal environment conceived by early hunters. Literature and film endeared big game hunters to a large audience and enticed more visitors to the destination, and helped define the brand personality for tourist destination Kenya, with a clear big game image. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that big game hunting, which opened doors to the future of tourism in destination Kenya, also served to entrench colonial rule and oppression. There is need for a concrete national policy on the protection of the destination image that is increasingly being compromised by security lapses leading to poor publicity in the international media, with the consequent negative brand equity.

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