



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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**EXAMINING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE DOMESTIC TOURISM IN UGANDA IN THE
POST COVID ENVIRONMENT**

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M21B63/005

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF BACHELOR
IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY.**

MAY, 2024

DECLARATION

I, **TASHOBYA MERCY**, hereby declare that this is my original work, it is not plagiarised and has not been submitted to any other institution for any award.

TASHOBYA MERCY /...../2024.

Student's name

Signature.

Date

APPROVAL

I hereby confirm that this dissertation, authored by **TASHOBYA MERCY (M21B63/005)**, was conducted under my supervision and is now ready for submission.

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Date...../...../2024

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my cherished parents, whose unwavering support and love have been my constant motivation. I also dedicate this work to my siblings who helped me on my academic journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

According to Canh & Thanh (2020), traveling within a nation for pleasure, recreation, or business is known as domestic tourism. Instead of traveling abroad, it entails seeing locations, events, and lodging within one's own country. One of the main features of domestic tourism is the presence of resident tourists, who go on leisure or recreational trips exploring locations inside their region, province, or nation. In contrast to foreign tourism, domestic tourism is limited to travel within a single nation and can include visits to various states, towns, cities, rural areas, and natural landmarks. Travel can be done for a variety of reasons, such as business, education, sports tourism, cultural experiences, family vacations, leisure, and wellness. The economic impact of domestic tourism is substantial since it generates income for several sectors, opens up job opportunities, and supports local enterprises and industries. Additionally, it promotes social cohesion, cross-cultural understanding, and the preservation of regional cultural identities and customs by facilitating cultural interchange (Nurox et al., 2021).

In many nations, including Uganda, domestic travel was a rapidly expanding sector of the travel economy prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Affordability, practicality, cultural and recreational attractions, and marketing initiatives all played a part in its appeal. But the epidemic severely halted this trend, costing tourism-related firms money through cancellations and closures. Domestic travel started to increase as nations relaxed regulations and took action to stop the COVID-19 virus from spreading. Because it was more practical and safer than traveling abroad, locals began to travel domestically. Promotional campaigns, stimulus packages, and government measures all served to increase demand and promote domestic travel (Moya Calderón et al., 2022). Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, there have been travel restrictions, lockdowns, and quarantine procedures that have severely hampered domestic tourism. Many passengers have been deterred by health and safety concerns, which has diminished their trust and reluctance to participate in domestic tourism. There have been closures of tourism-related firms, which has led to a reduction in service availability, job losses, and financial difficulties. People's capacity to afford domestic travel has been impacted by the economy,

which has resulted in a drop in reservations and revenue. Transportation, lodging, and other tourism-related services have been disrupted by global supply chain disruptions and logistical difficulties, making it more challenging for domestic tourists to organize and book excursions. Traveler preferences have changed, with an emphasis on outdoor activities, cleanliness, and safety. Travelers were reluctant to make plans or reservations because of the unpredictable and unknown nature of the pandemic. Reviving domestic travel and assisting in the tourism industry's recovery requires effective mitigation measures, immunization campaigns, and well-coordinated recovery programs (Nunkoo et al., 2022).

Domestic travel patterns varied after COVID-19 as nations adjusted to the new normal and placed a higher priority on sustainability, safety, and health. Ugandan and global domestic tourism trends were influenced by variables like immunization rates, travel laws, consumer confidence, and economic recovery (Nunkoo et al., 2022). However, it was anticipated that domestic travel would continue to be a robust and significant part of the travel industry, providing chances for locations to recover, diversify, and prosper in the wake of the epidemic. The promotion of sustainable development is yet another advantage of domestic travel. It lessened the negative effects of tourism on the environment, encourages ethical travel, and supports conservation initiatives. Additionally, it enables travel destinations to lessen their reliance on foreign travel and to diversify their services while lowering the dangers brought on by outside variables (Canh & Thanh, 2020).

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Even with Uganda's rich and varied natural and cultural heritage especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic tourism is still highly underdeveloped there. Insufficient infrastructure, limited information availability, and low knowledge are the main reasons Uganda's own people are unable to discover and enjoy its charms. To fully fulfil domestic tourism's immense potential for promoting community development, economic advancement, and cultural preservation, it is necessary to implement targeted strategies that support and encourage it. This study aims at exploring how we can use Uganda's distinctive natural and cultural resources to promote community empowerment and economic recovery while reviving and maintaining domestic tourism.

1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This study aims to increase Ugandans' knowledge of interest in, and involvement in visiting the nation's many tourist attractions in order to boost domestic tourism in the post-COVID era.

1.3.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- i. To assess the state of domestic tourism in Uganda post Covid-19.
- ii. To assess the key factors influencing tourists' decision-making process.
- iii. To assess the effectiveness of existing strategies aimed at promoting domestic tourism in Uganda.
- iv. To assess the challenges faced in the promotion of domestic tourism post Covid-19.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What is the current state of domestic tourism in Uganda in post Covid-19?
- ii. What are the key factors influencing tourists' decision-making process?
- iii. How effectiveness are the already existing strategies aimed at promoting domestic tourism in Uganda?
- iv. What are the challenges faced in the promotion of domestic tourism post Covid-19 era?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- i. This study is important because it has the potential to solve important issues and open doors for Uganda's domestic tourist industry to flourish and be sustainable. Through comprehending the elements impacting the involvement of locals in domestic travel, interested parties can create focused approaches to surmount obstacles and encourage greater involvement.
- ii. In addition, domestic travel has been a crucial part of the tourism sector since the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a lifeline for places trying to rebuild and recuperate. The study's conclusions can therefore be used to guide decision-making and the distribution of resources for projects that promote tourism-based community development, job creation, and economic stimulation.

- iii. Finally, this study has the potential to improve the resilience and sustainability of Uganda's tourism industry overall by promoting a culture of domestic travel and inspiring locals to discover and value the nation's natural and cultural assets.

1.6. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY:

- i. There are several reasons why the study on increasing domestic tourism in Uganda after COVID-19 is warranted. It may encourage socio-cultural advantages, broaden travel options, jumpstart the economy, and advance sustainable development. Domestic travel has the potential to boost local economies, provide income, create jobs, and stimulate the travel-related industries. Additionally, it can lessen Uganda's reliance on outside variables and market swings by helping it diversify its products and services outside foreign markets. Additionally, it may strengthen a feeling of pride in Uganda's identity and natural and cultural assets, as well as promote social cohesiveness and cultural interchange.
- ii. It is possible to promote the tourist industry sustainably by encouraging ethical travel, aiding in environmental preservation, and reducing negative environmental effects. In addition to preserving biodiversity and encouraging environmental care for future generations, this can safeguard natural resources. The significance of resilience and adaptation in the tourist sector has been brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic. Uganda may create plans to increase resilience, reduce risks, and effectively handle any future crises or disruptions by analysing the potential and difficulties confronting domestic tourism in the post-COVID age.
- iii. Increasing domestic tourism also requires the cooperation of stakeholders. Involving stakeholders in the research and decision-making process helps provide a coordinated and inclusive strategy for increasing domestic travel, optimizing the effects of interventions, and guaranteeing long-term results. All things considered, the research on increasing domestic tourism in Uganda after COVID-19 is warranted as it tackles important issues, seizes chances, and advances the nation's socioeconomic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability.

1.7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.7.1. Geographical scope

The study will pay particular attention to the domestic tourism market inside Uganda's borders. It will cover a wide range of locations, points of interest, and attractions across the nation, mainly focusing on the western region of Uganda.

1.7.2. Time scope

The study's primary focus will be on the post-COVID era, with an analysis of the present domestic tourist landscape and recommendations for development and revival methods. Nevertheless, in order to offer context and insights into long-term patterns and developments, it might also incorporate a retrospective examination of domestic travel trends before to the outbreak.

1.7.3. Contextual scope:

A comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and policy-related elements impacting domestic tourism in Uganda will be conducted. Along with the consequences for tourism stakeholders, businesses, and local communities, it will take into account how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected domestic tourist trends and habits. The study will also focus on some of the measures that have been used to promote domestic tourism in Uganda.

1.8. THEORETICAL/ CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY:

The goal of the study is to increase domestic tourism in Uganda after the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this, a theoretical framework comprising ideas like destination management, visitor behaviour, sustainable tourism, destination competitiveness, crisis management and resilience, and stakeholder engagement and collaboration is employed. Strategic planning, development, and promotion of tourist sites are all part of destination management, which aims to increase their allure and competitiveness. Using theories from psychology, sociology, and consumer behaviour, tourist behaviour investigates the preferences, motives, and decision-making processes of domestic tourists. Sustainable tourism places a strong emphasis on ethical behaviour that maximizes socioeconomic gains and minimizes detrimental effects on the environment, local communities, and culture. Destination competitiveness takes into account elements like image, branding, infrastructure quality, service quality, cost, accessibility, and pricing to place destinations strategically and set them apart from rivals. Resilience and crisis

management deal with methods for controlling and lessening the effects of emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we can solve shared difficulties and accomplish sustainable tourist development goals through inclusive decision-making, shared responsibility, and group action through stakeholder involvement and collaboration (Cheer et al., 2021). The study can offer a comprehensive understanding of domestic tourism dynamics and provide guidance for the creation of strategies and actions to increase domestic tourism in the post-COVID environment by integrating these theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION:

This chapter discusses topics, studies and findings related to the topic. The post-COVID-19 dynamics of domestic tourism in Uganda are examined in this literature study, with an emphasis on the industry's potential for fostering local development, economic expansion, and cultural preservation. It looks at patterns prior to the pandemic, evaluates the effects of COVID-19, and makes recommendations for future growth and recovery plans. The assessment delves into the possibilities of domestic tourism for sustainable development and provides policymakers and stakeholders with recommendations.

2.2. DOMESTIC TOURISM IN UGANDA

Domestic tourism in Uganda involves residents visiting various destinations, attractions, and accommodations within the country for leisure, recreation, business, or other purposes. It includes exploring different regions, cities, rural areas, cultural sites, and natural landmarks. This type of tourism extends beyond travel to include engaging with local communities, participating in cultural events, and supporting local businesses. It also contributes to the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and traditions among different regions and ethnic groups, enriching the country's cultural tapestry and fostering social cohesion (Kabote et al., 2017).

Uganda's economy and culture depend heavily on domestic tourism, which promotes expansion, advancement, and cultural preservation. It creates income, boosts the demand for products and services, and supports industries like retail, hotel, and transportation. Additionally, it stimulates business, generates employment possibilities, and encourages investments in infrastructure and facilities associated to tourism. Domestic travel encourages cultural interchange as well, helping Ugandans recognize the richness of their background. It gives inhabitants the chance to immerse themselves in other cultures and learn about other customs and languages (Busey, 2014). Additionally, it is in favour of preserving historical places, cultural heritage sites, and customs in order to preserve Uganda's distinct character for future generations. Uganda may seize fresh chances for cultural enrichment, community empowerment, and economic progress by utilizing domestic tourism (Lepp & Harris, 2018).

The success and growth of the domestic tourism sector has been favoured by the beautiful and scenic tourist destinations in Uganda. For example, a well-liked domestic travel destination in Uganda, is Queen Elizabeth National Park, well-known for its varied wildlife, boat safaris, chimpanzee tracking, breathtaking scenery, and opportunities for cross-cultural interactions. The park is home to the Kazinga Channel, a naturally occurring canal that links Lake Edward and Lake George and provides tourists with up-close views of hippos, crocodiles, and a variety of bird species. In the Kyambura Gorge, guests may travel through the lush forest habitat and witness habituated chimpanzee groups. They can also partake in chimpanzee tracking excursions there. Elevated vantage points such as the Mweya Peninsula and the Ishasha River give panoramic views of the park's magnificent grandeur, which includes the Rwenzori Mountains, crater lakes, and rolling grasslands. Along with housing a variety of ethnic groups, the park offers cultural tourist experiences including village visits and community walks. These communities include the Bakonjo, Banyabindi, and Basongora. All things considered, Queen Elizabeth National Park is a top choice for domestic and foreign tourists looking for a unique African safari experience (Ayikoru, 2015).

2.3. PRE-COVID TRENDS IN DOMESTIC TOURISM

Uganda's domestic tourism industry has changed throughout the years as a result of a number of variables, including shifting consumer tastes, government regulations, infrastructural development, and economic growth. Even though there is a lot of emphasis on foreign travel, domestic travel has been more popular recently, particularly as the middle class in the nation grows and disposable incomes rise. There have been many significant periods in Uganda's domestic tourist growth trajectory. Early Development (Pre-Independence to 1980s), although there was a little amount of domestic travel, government measures to promote travel for leisure and education were successful. Decline and Stagnation from the 1980s to the Early 2000s, civil turmoil, economic difficulties, and political instability hindered the expansion of domestic tourism (Adiyia et al., 2017). Deteriorating infrastructure, a lack of funding for tourist marketing, and worries about safety discouraged visitors from both within and outside of Uganda from experiencing the tourism experiences. Rebirth and Growth (Mid-2000s to Present), beginning in the mid-2000s, political stability improvements, economic reforms, and a rise in

spending on marketing and infrastructure for tourists all contributed to Uganda's tourism industry's renaissance. Ugandans are traveling more within their own country thanks to the country's tour operators, travel agencies, and internet booking platforms. The country's middle class is expanding along with rising salaries and urbanization (Lepp & Harris, 2018).

Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, stability in the economy, agricultural productivity, and foreign investment propelled Uganda's economic growth, which raised disposable incomes and fuelled the expansion of the middle class. Due to this wealth, there was an increased desire for domestic travel, which made the middle class more approachable. Road networks, airports, and public transit systems are examples of infrastructure development that has greatly increased accessibility to tourist sites while cutting down on expenses and travel times. Additionally, this made it easier for services linked to tourism to grow in previously unreachable places. Through programs like the Uganda Tourism Board's "Tulambule" campaign, which aims to increase awareness of the nation's assets and foster exploration of its legacy, the Ugandan government encouraged domestic tourism (Nakabuye & Christopher, 2023).

The government emphasized the advantages of domestic travel while showcasing Uganda's varied tourist offers through advertising campaigns, marketing initiatives, and collaborations with regional partners. By educating domestic visitors about their nation's history, customs, and cultural heritage, Uganda's rich cultural and heritage attractions like the Kasubi Tombs, Uganda Museum, and cultural festivals drew them in. These encounters encouraged Ugandans from many origins to interact, appreciate, and understand one another's cultures. For domestic travellers, Uganda's varied landscapes and plentiful animals provide a range of leisure opportunities, such as hiking, birding, safari drives, and water-based experiences. The nation's abundant biodiversity, which includes well-known animals like mountain gorillas, lions, and elephants, draws tourists who like the outdoors and wildlife (Nakabuye & Christopher, 2023).

2.4. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DOMESTIC TOURISM

Domestic tourist operations and activities in Uganda have been severely interrupted by the COVID-19 epidemic, resulting in severe disruptions throughout

the industry. Strict travel restrictions and lockdown procedures were put in place by the Ugandan government, which also closed hotels, tourist attractions, national parks, and other businesses that catered to tourists. Due to uncertainties, health and safety concerns, and budgetary restrictions, many people canceled or postponed their vacation plans, which resulted in a dramatic fall in domestic tourism and earnings (Altuntas & Gok, 2021). Due to a decline in visitor numbers and a drying up of bookings, firms in the tourism industry suffered a large loss of revenue, which had an effect on jobs, livelihoods, and the national economy. The infrastructure and services supporting the tourism industry were negatively impacted by the closure of tourist destinations and the halting of travel, posing operational and financial difficulties for hotels, lodges, and other lodging establishments. Due to decreased demand and logistical challenges, transportation companies found it difficult to continue operating, which caused supply chains for products and services connected to tourism to become disrupted (Nunkoo et al., 2022).

Many domestic visitors were discouraged from going or engaging in tourism-related activities due to health and safety concerns. Tourism establishments had to put strict health and safety precautions in place to reduce the danger of COVID-19 transmission. These efforts included mandatory mask use, temperature checks, improved cleaning and sanitization methods, and physical distancing standards (Nunkoo et al., 2022). Some tourism operators and institutions innovated their offers and services, such as creating virtual tours, online booking systems, and contactless experiences, in response to the obstacles presented by COVID-19. In an effort to broaden their product offerings and draw in local tourists, domestic tour operators and community-based tourism projects investigated alternate sources of income such as agricultural tourism, ecotourism, and cultural experiences (Škare et al., 2021).

Uganda's domestic tourist industry suffered greatly as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, with considerable financial losses and employment losses. The downturn in reservations and revenue for tourism enterprises such as hotels, lodges, tour operators, and transportation providers was caused by the closure of tourist attractions, travel restrictions, and a decrease in demand for domestic travel. This

resulted in operational difficulties and budgetary hardship. The decline in tourism had an impact on jobs as well; several companies had to lay off employees or cut personnel as a result of lower demand and income. Due to operational and financial limitations, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) ran the risk of closing, which would have worsened the situation of unemployment and economic misery (Wemesa et al., 2021).

The interruption of tourism-related activities also had an impact on supply chains for associated goods and services, as suppliers suffered lower demand and financial losses that negatively impacted their operations and means of subsistence. Overall, Uganda's tourist sector has been significantly impacted by the epidemic on both an economic and social level. The worldwide financial crisis in the tourist industry has had serious social repercussions, such as job losses, pay reductions, and company closures. These events have left individuals and families that depend on tourism-related revenue with unstable finances. Communities that depend on tourism, especially those close to protected areas and tourist attractions, have seen economic losses and population relocation. Guides, vendors, artists, and service providers have all been impacted by this; they are now without jobs or other sources of income. The reduction in domestic tourism has caused disturbances to festivals, cultural events, and customs, which has an impact on the preservation of Uganda's rich cultural legacy. Additionally, the epidemic has caused psychological anguish and social isolation, which has made people's emotions of anxiety, sadness, and loneliness worse for both individuals and groups (Škare et al., 2021).

2.5. STRATEGIES FOR REVIVING DOMESTIC TOURISM POST-COVID

The Ugandan government has been developing a multimodal strategy to boost domestic travel after the COVID-19 pandemic. This entails initiating focused marketing efforts and promotional activities, putting in place incentives and subsidies for tourists, investing in infrastructure related to tourism, examining and updating current rules, and providing industry players with training and capacity-building programs. The aforementioned programs seek to increase cognizance about domestic tourist prospects and locations, enhance accessibility to domestic tourism places, and bolster the modernization of lodging, amenities, and

attractions. In order to expedite procedures and lower obstacles to the growth of domestic tourism, the government also intends to examine and amend current license, permission, and regulatory requirements. Additionally, it would offer incentives to tourism-related enterprises to implement sustainable practices, quality standards, and health and safety procedures (Woyo, 2021).

Travelers' and tourist workers' safety will be guaranteed by well-defined policies and procedures for COVID-19 prevention and response. Training and capacity development initiatives will be made available to improve abilities in digital marketing, sustainable tourist management, hygienic standards, and customer service. Through networking events, seminars, and workshops, these initiatives will encourage cooperation and knowledge exchange among tourist industry experts. To foster professional development and skill enhancement, collaborations between government agencies, trade groups, and academic institutions will be encouraged (Sharma et al., 2021). It will be essential to involve and include the community. To guarantee their engagement and ownership of tourist efforts, the Ugandan government should involve local people in the planning, development, and administration of tourism. In addition to assisting locally owned tourist businesses that promote social inclusion, local economic growth, and environmental preservation, they ought to enable communities to cultivate and exhibit their customs, cultural heritage, and genuine experiences (Akoijam et al., 2024).

In Uganda and throughout the world, marketing tactics and promotional efforts are crucial for increasing demand, spreading awareness, and drawing tourists to local tourist attractions. Campaigns in Uganda that are specifically aimed at particular demographics might include family-friendly travel spots, adventurous activities, cultural events, and eco-tourism programs. Reaching domestic travellers using digital marketing that makes use of search engines, social media platforms, and online travel agents may be economical and successful. The effectiveness of promotional efforts depends on partnerships between local communities, tourism boards, businesses, and government organizations. Integrated marketing initiatives have the potential to entice domestic passengers with appealing packages and discounts (Ndung'u, 2010). Uganda's rich cultural legacy and many ethnic groupings may be emphasized through cultural and heritage promotion. Uganda's cultural

richness and attempts to preserve its past may be highlighted through community-based tourism projects, cultural exchange programs, and cultural tourism initiatives. To instill confidence and trust among domestic passengers, advertising ads should prioritize safety and health messages. These can highlight adherence to health procedures, cleanliness standards, and safety precautions at tourism attractions (Nakabuye & Christopher, 2023).

A key component of international marketing tactics is destination branding, which focuses on giving a place a distinct identity and a prominent place in passengers' thoughts. It entails emphasizing experiences, natural beauty, cultural legacy, and distinctive selling characteristics. Globally, content marketing including blogs, articles, videos, and social media draws in and keeps passengers. The message of sustainable tourism places a strong emphasis on dedication to cultural preservation, community involvement, and environmental conservation. In the worldwide tourist sector, personalization and customisation are becoming increasingly commonplace. Data insights are used to customize experiences and marketing messages to individual interests. Global marketing campaigns frequently involve collaborations between travel destinations, travel businesses, influencers, and media outlets. These partnerships enable the parties to access new markets, capitalize on each other's advantages, and optimize return on investment (Ndung'u, 2010).

PPPs, or public-private partnerships, are essential to Uganda's post-COVID domestic tourism growth. These partnerships between public and commercial sector actors have the potential to improve infrastructure, increase demand, and advance environmentally friendly travel strategies. When it comes to building and maintaining tourism infrastructure, such as highways, airports, transit networks, visitor centres, and facilities at tourist destinations, PPPs may be quite important (Kumar et al., 2022). They may close infrastructural gaps, increase accessibility, and improve tourist experiences by combining resources and expertise. In the tourism industry, PPPs may also spur innovation and product development, enabling the development of fresh experiences, attractions, and services catered to the needs of domestic tourists. They can boost advertising and marketing

campaigns to increase public knowledge of Uganda's domestic travel locations and experiences (Woyo, 2021).

PPPs may help with capacity building and training initiatives for small company owners, tour guides, and other hospitality personnel, among other players in the tourist sector. This has the potential to improve the standard of travel experiences and services provided to domestic tourists. PPPs may help with regulatory changes and policy support by removing regulatory obstacles, expediting permit procedures, and offering financial incentives for investment. PPPs have the potential to foster community empowerment and involvement by incorporating local people in the planning, decision-making, and benefit-sharing phases (Kumar et al., 2022). The tourist industry can benefit from risk distribution and resilience development, especially in the event of external shocks like pandemics or natural catastrophes. Public and private partners can collaborate to minimize vulnerabilities, adjust to changing conditions, and recover by sharing financial, operational, and reputational risks.

FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Numerous socioeconomic factors impact the behaviours of traveler inside a country. The two most important variables are affordability and income. Those with more discretionary income can travel more frequently and extensively, while those with less money may put more emphasis on necessities. Travel expenses, encompassing lodging, food, transportation, and activities, can impact traveler choices. The capacity to take time off for domestic travel is also influenced by employment status and time restrictions; people with more flexible schedules or paid time off tend to have more chances. Travelers' decisions are also influenced by knowledge and awareness of domestic tourism locations. Travel behaviour is also influenced by lifestyle choices, hobbies, and values. While some people prioritize leisure and relaxation, others go for adventure, cultural immersion, or encounters in the outdoors. Travel decisions are also influenced by demographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, and family structure. Comprehending these variables is essential for formulating customized products and advertising plans (Kyriakaki et al., 2020).

There are a number of perceived Risk and safety concerns in domestic tourism also that tend to dictate the choices made by tourists. Because travel decisions are heavily influenced by perceptions of infectious illnesses, sanitation standards, and health regulations, the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked worries about health and safety in domestic tourism. Destination safety factors, such as political stability, crime rates, and the likelihood of natural disasters, influenced traveler's propensity to travel to particular areas. Travel planning and booking may be discouraged by government-imposed travel restrictions, quarantine regulations, and border closures (Shaikh et al., 2020). Travelers' preferences to visit particular sites may be influenced by crowding and congestion at famous tourist spots. Building confidence among passengers requires trust in tourism stakeholders, including companies, lodgings, tourism boards, and government organizations. Travelers' perception of danger and willingness to go are also influenced by travel insurance policies that cover cancelation, medical fees, and emergency evacuation. Transparent communication, trustworthy information, and obvious safety precautions all contribute to the development of trust among tourist stakeholders (Liang & Latip, 2018).

Numerous psychological factors and incentives influence domestic travel. The main incentives are relaxation and escapism, providing a brief reprieve from the routines of everyday life. Another motivating factor is exploration and discovery, which enables people to learn about different places, customs, and experiences right in their own nation. The excitement of unearthing hidden treasures, sampling novel gastronomy, and fully engaging with indigenous customs inspires tourists to undertake domestic journeys. An additional motivating element is the spirit of adventure, as it offers chances for daring pursuits like hiking, trekking, camping, and water sports (Liang & Latip, 2018). Engaging in cultural events such as attending plays, touring museums, and mingling with local people enhances the trip experience and promotes an awareness of many cultures.

Kyriakaki et al., (2020), further state that another compelling reason to travel domestically is the opportunity it provides for deepening relationships and sharing experiences with loved ones, friends, and other passengers. Important social motives for travel include establishing shared tales, forging memories, and

bolstering relationships. Traveling domestically may be a crucial means of pursuing personal improvement and self-discovery. Taking risks, taking on new tasks, and adjusting to strange surroundings help people become more resilient, independent, and self-assured. After domestic travel, people frequently return with fresh insights, increased self-awareness, and a sense of personal fulfilment. Benefits to wellness and health are yet another important facet of domestic travel. Enjoying leisure activities, being outside, and spending time in nature all support mental and physical well-being. They help relieve stress and encourage mindfulness, renewal, and general health and wellness.

2.6. EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING STRATEGIES IN PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM

In order to assess the efficacy of domestic tourist marketing plans, data analysis, stakeholder interaction, and a thorough examination of previous campaigns are required. This entails assessing the goals, intended audience, messaging, distribution methods, and results of these initiatives. Key stakeholders, including representatives from the tourist sector, government agencies, destination management groups, and local authorities, can be consulted for advice and comments on previous and current initiatives. Furthermore, trends, patterns, and correlations may be found in tourism data analysis, including visitor arrivals, expenditures, lodging occupancy rates, and travel patterns, which can be used to guide the creation of future strategies. This all-encompassing strategy guarantees the efficient and long-lasting marketing of domestic travel.

Metrics such as return on investment, reach, engagement, and conversion rates may be used to evaluate how well marketing efforts and incentives work to promote domestic travel. The effect that incentive programs have on traveler behaviours, booking patterns, and destination preferences should be the basis for evaluation. Analysis of market segmentation is essential to comprehending consumer preferences, driving forces, and reactions to incentives and marketing initiatives. Maximizing efficacy and relevance may be achieved by customizing offerings, experiences, and message for distinct market segments. The efficacy of

a campaign may be evaluated using surveys, digital analytics, and customer feedback.

2.7. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON TOURISM MARKETING POST COVID-19.

As part of a larger initiative to lessen the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the travel and tourism sector, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) introduced the "Rediscover Singapore" campaign in July 2020. The campaign's goal was to increase demand for domestic travel by working together with government organizations, travel companies, and industry partners. It was scheduled carefully to fall in line with Singapore's reopening of attractions, restaurants, and lodging facilities as well as the progressive lifting of lockdown regulations. Encouragement to explore the city-state and support local tourism enterprises, attractions, and hospitality industries was the main goal of the "Rediscover Singapore" campaign (Singapore Tourism Board, 2020).

The campaign's objectives were to increase domestic traveler spending, draw people into travel-related businesses, and create jobs in order to support the industry's recovery. According to Ward, (2022), the campaign brought Singapore's natural beauty, rich cultural legacy, and varied tourist options to the attention of locals who might not have had the opportunity to see their own nation to the fullest before. Discounts, offers, and packages for Singapore's top attractions, restaurants, lodging options, and experiences were among the campaign's main features. In order to encourage domestic travel, participating companies and attractions worked with STB to provide special deals and value-added packages.

To highlight Singapore's outdoor areas, cultural richness, and hidden treasures, special themed itineraries, carefully selected experiences, and guided excursions were established. Public relations initiatives, social media, digital marketing, and conventional media were some of the platforms used to promote the campaign. To create excitement and encourage interaction with the intended audiences, STB partnered with bloggers, influencers, and content producers. The campaign's main goal was to encourage responsible and safe travel behaviours that adhered to government-issued health regulations and recommendations (Singapore Tourism Board, 2020).

2.8. POLICIES IN PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM POST-COVID

Promoting domestic travel after COVID necessitates addressing a number of important policy issues. Roads and transit systems are examples of infrastructure that must be developed if domestic tourism attractions are to be more accessible. Improving connection via the road, rail, and aviation networks can make it simpler to reach these locations. Inclusive domestic tourism necessitates accessibility for a range of requirements, including those of the elderly and those with impairments (Odiara Kihima, 2015).

According to (Chebli et al., 2021), gaps in knowledge and ignorance of domestic travel options are also significant. To give current information on sights, events, and travel possibilities, governments can create extensive information campaigns, websites, and digital platforms. Putting in place educational initiatives in colleges, universities, and local communities may help cultivate a culture of respect and knowledge about domestic travel. Collaborations with travel bloggers, media organizations, and social media influencers can increase public knowledge of domestic travel experiences and destinations. In order to inspire domestic travellers, governments might work with influencers to produce interesting material and distribute travelogues.

Concerns about cultural and environmental sustainability are also quite important. Encouraging eco-friendly travel strategies is essential to protecting cultural and natural treasures in domestic travel destinations. To encourage tourists and tour providers to behave responsibly, governments might create and implement rules, policies, and accreditation schemes. Sustainability of the environment and culture also depends on community empowerment and involvement. For long-term viability, funding conservation and preservation initiatives is essential. Governments may foster an atmosphere that is conducive to sustainable domestic tourist development, economic growth, and cultural preservation by tackling infrastructural and accessibility challenges, filling in information gaps, and resolving sustainability concerns (Kang et al., 2014).

2.9. LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES' POST-PANDEMIC TOURISM RECOVERY

The tourist industry in Uganda can benefit greatly from studying other nations' post-pandemic rehabilitation initiatives. Analysing the relative effectiveness of community involvement, infrastructure spending, and domestic tourism recovery plans might yield insightful information. Travel agencies can be supported and demand can be increased by policy responses including stimulus packages, advertising campaigns, and regulatory changes. Rehabilitation may be aided by infrastructure expenditures such as enhancing tourist amenities and transit systems. The resilience and sustainability of tourism may be facilitated by stakeholder collaboration and community involvement.

Diversification of products, digital transformation, and sustainable tourism efforts are among the best practices in post-COVID tourism growth. Enhancing tourist engagement and promoting tourism recovery may be achieved via utilizing digital technology, online platforms, and virtual experiences. Initiatives for sustainable tourism can strike a balance between environmental preservation, cultural preservation, and economic recovery. Offering diversification can stimulate the creation of new products and advertising campaigns.

To achieve tourist resilience, adaptation and resilience are crucial in the tourism industry globally. To achieve resilience, one must be adaptable, agile, and creative. The development of resilience and readiness for shocks in the future can be influenced by risk management techniques. Promoting cooperation and information exchange among interested parties can help to exchange creative ideas and best practices for the rehabilitation of the tourist industry after a pandemic. In conclusion, Uganda's tourist industry may benefit greatly from a comparative study of domestic tourism recovery plans, best practices in post-COVID tourism growth, and lessons learned from adaptation and resilience initiatives.

2.10. INNOVATIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES AS A WAY OF BOOSTING DOMESTIC TOURISM

Through bettering tourist experiences, making information more accessible, and bolstering destination marketing initiatives, innovation and technology integration

play a critical role in boosting domestic tourism. The usage of mobile applications and travel platforms, social media and influencer marketing, data analytics and customization, and virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) experiences are a few examples of these linkages (Marino & Pariso, 2021). Prospective tourists may digitally experience sites like Murchison Falls National Park or Bwindi Impenetrable Forest thanks to virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies. For instance, the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) and digital companies may collaborate to create a virtual reality tour of well-known tourist spots like Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and Murchison Falls National Park. Visitors would be encouraged to travel by viewing animals and learning about conservation initiatives through this virtual experience.

With capabilities like itinerary planning, real-time updates, and location-based services, mobile applications and tourist platforms make it simple to access information, book services, and receive tailored suggestions. For instance, the Uganda Tourism Mobile App may offer thorough details on all of the nation's tourist destinations, lodging choices, food establishments, and transportation services. Social media platforms are effective tools for promoting travel destinations and word-of-mouth advertising. They let companies and tourist boards offer interesting material, interact with followers, and work with influencers to reach a larger audience (Tyan et al., 2020). For instance, UTB can collaborate with travel influencers to highlight Uganda's undiscovered attractions, cultural exchanges, and adventurous pursuits on social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

Tourism marketers may target particular audience segments with tailored suggestions and marketing tactics by using data analytics technologies to get insights into tourist behavior, preferences, and trends. Uganda may establish itself as a competitive and appealing vacation destination by utilizing these methods and tactics, which will draw more domestic tourists and stimulate economic growth in the travel industry (Marino & Pariso, 2021).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION:

The research methodology section serves as a manual for doing the study, giving a general summary of the approach, methods, and procedures used to successfully address the research questions or objectives. This chapter provides an overview of the procedures for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data while enhancing the transparency and legitimacy of the research process.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study examines post-COVID domestic tourism promotion techniques in Uganda using a mixed-methods methodology. With important stakeholders, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and content analysis are all part of the qualitative component. The quantitative part monitors the economic impact of domestic tourism and evaluates the efficacy of current policies. The economic advantages, such as revenue generation, job creation, and market diversification, will be quantified by surveys, economic research, and statistical data on tourist revenues and expenditures. This strategy successfully addresses the research goals by offering a thorough examination of the cultural significance, financial ramifications, and social repercussions of domestic tourist marketing.

3.3. SAMPLE SIZE AND POPULATION:

The study will consider 70 participants considered, and a total of 10 individuals will be selected as key informants. The study will also target individuals actively involved in tourism such as stakeholders, tourism operators, as well as community members that stay near the tourist attraction sites.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

i. Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews with important players in Uganda's tourism sector, such as public servants, tour operators, local leaders, and citizens, will be carried out. The interviews will offer comprehensive perspectives on the present condition of domestic tourism, significant obstacles, and prospects for advancement.

ii. Focus Groups:

To investigate domestic visitors' opinions, driving forces, and decision-making procedures around visiting Ugandan tourism sites, focus groups will be held. These talks will assist in determining the variables affecting travelers' decisions and evaluating the efficacy of current marketing tactics.

iii. Surveys:

To collect quantitative information on the travel habits, preferences, satisfaction levels, and knowledge about Ugandan tourist destinations, a survey questionnaire will be issued to a representative sample of domestic visitors. The purpose of the survey is to measure the important factors that have been defined in the particular objectives and research questions.

iv. Secondary Data Analysis:

To give context and background information on domestic tourism trends in Uganda before to and following COVID-19, secondary data sources, including tourism statistics, reports, and publications from government agencies, tourist boards, and industry groups, will be examined.

3.5. SAMPLING STRATEGY:

Purposive sampling is used in this study to choose participants who have relevant experience and knowledge about Ugandan culinary tourism. Representatives from local governments, travel agencies, legislatures, and cultural organizations will be included in the sample. The main goal is to look at Ugandan food tourism with an emphasis on first-hand experience. Participants must possess knowledge, opinions, or insights pertinent to the goals and questions of the study. Because of the specialized nature of the research and the requirement to concentrate on certain players in the culinary tourism industry, purposeful sampling was selected. It is anticipated that using this method would produce more insightful and instructive data for analysis (Obilor, 2023).

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS:

In order to examine data and find themes and subjects pertinent to the study's goals, the research will employ document analysis and interviewing techniques. The quantitative findings on traveler choices, economic ramifications, and

demographics will be presented using descriptive statistics. Regression analysis and correlations are examples of inferential statistical techniques that will be used to evaluate hypotheses and look into relationships between variables. To ensure a full comprehension of the study topic, qualitative and quantitative data will be triangulated using a mixed-method approach (Peck et al., 2020). By confirming and corroborating results, this method seeks to improve the validity and dependability of the findings. With the integration of many perspectives and data sources, this mixed-method approach offers a thorough evaluation of domestic tourism promotion initiatives in Uganda during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.7. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

This research employs suitable methods for data collection and analysis to guarantee internal validity. Member checking confirms the interpretation of qualitative data, while triangulating data sources improves dependability and reduces bias. Purposeful sampling is used to address external validity, choosing participants with a variety of backgrounds and experiences to capture a range of perspectives pertinent to boosting domestic tourism in Uganda after COVID-19. For the study of qualitative data, strict coding criteria and independent coding by several researchers are adhered to. Test-retest reliability and pilot testing are used to evaluate the dependability of quantitative data. The research design is painstakingly created and carried out, adhering to exact guidelines. By recognizing and confronting their own prejudices, suppositions, and preconceptions, researchers can preserve reflexivity while promoting critical self-awareness and transparency. The study's results are reinforced by the triangulation of data from several sources, and data management procedures are meticulously documented (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020). Together, these metrics strengthen the validity and dependability of the research findings when it comes to investigating post-COVID domestic tourist promotion tactics in Uganda.

3.8. VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

i. Dependent variables

Domestic tourist arrivals

Utilization of tourism infrastructure

Environmental sustainability

Cultural preservation and promotion

ii. Independent variables

Domestic tourism

iii. Outcomes of the study:

Increased tourist volumes and traffic

Low customer turnover

Sustainable tourism practices.

3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Participant Consent and anonymity:

In addition to being informed about the objectives, procedures, and potential risks of the research, participants are asked to take part willingly. Informed permission is requested from all participants, including those in surveys and interviews. It is assured that attendance is completely voluntary and that withdrawals are accepted at any time without repercussions. The study preserves participant anonymity by withholding participant names and safeguarding private information. Study materials, including transcripts, are safely stored, and participant privacy is maintained by deleting any personally identifiable information. Data access is limited to team members who have been approved.

Adherence to Ethical considerations:

The study obtains consent from the relevant authorities before beginning data collection, in accordance with the moral guidelines set out by institutional review boards and ethical committees. Researchers respect beneficence, fairness, and autonomy in order to protect participants' rights and welfare. The research team has received training on ethical protocols. The relevant authorities have granted ethical approval prior to the commencement of the research. In order to complete the institution's requirements for the completion of the undergraduate degree, this attempted to demonstrate that the research complied fully with the specified norms and standards for the study.

3.10. LIMITATION

- i. The study's generalizability may be impacted by sampling limits, especially if important participants in culinary tourism are either eliminated or underrepresented. This might have an effect on the representation of more players in Uganda's food tourism industry.
- ii. Time and budgetary constraints may limit the study's scope, data collection, and analysis, which might have an impact on the study's ability to explore certain research topics deeper and produce more thorough results.
- iii. Some of the respondents could shy away or be less willing to share information due to fear of being misunderstood, reported, or failure to understand the essence of the research study.
- iv. Respondents may give answers they feel are appropriate due to social desirability bias, which can lead to participants giving answers that do not accurately reflect their opinions

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

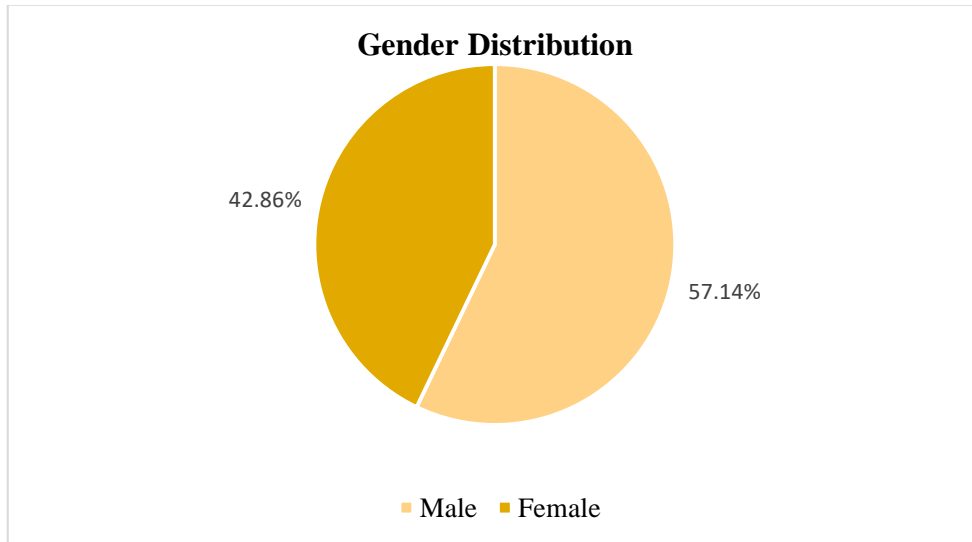


Figure 1: Gender distribution of the respondents.

In this sample, the percentage of men is larger (57.14%) than that of women (42.86%). This pattern may indicate that men are more interested in or involved in the tourist industry or associated fields. As an alternative, it could point to disparities in accessibility or involvement in surveys or research pertaining to tourism based on a person's gender.

Age distribution

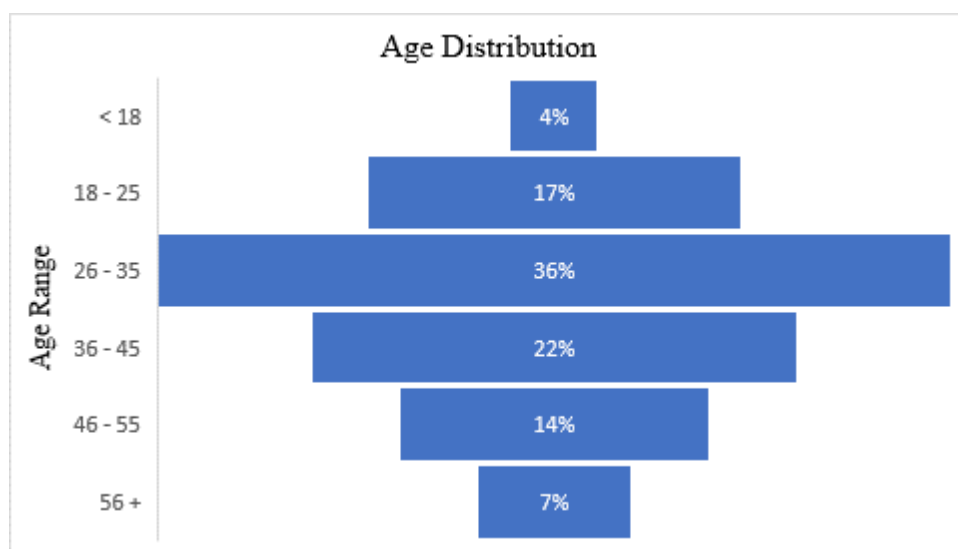


Figure 2: The age distribution graph

The most represented age group (36%), which is 26-35, suggests that young adults are more engaged in or interested in travel. Age-related decreases in involvement are most pronounced in the age groups under 18 and over 56. This pattern may be a reflection of young adults' greater mobility and discretionary money as compared to older adults and teens. Additionally, in their quest for novel experiences, young adults could be more interested in learning about domestic travel after COVID-19.

Region of Residence Distribution:

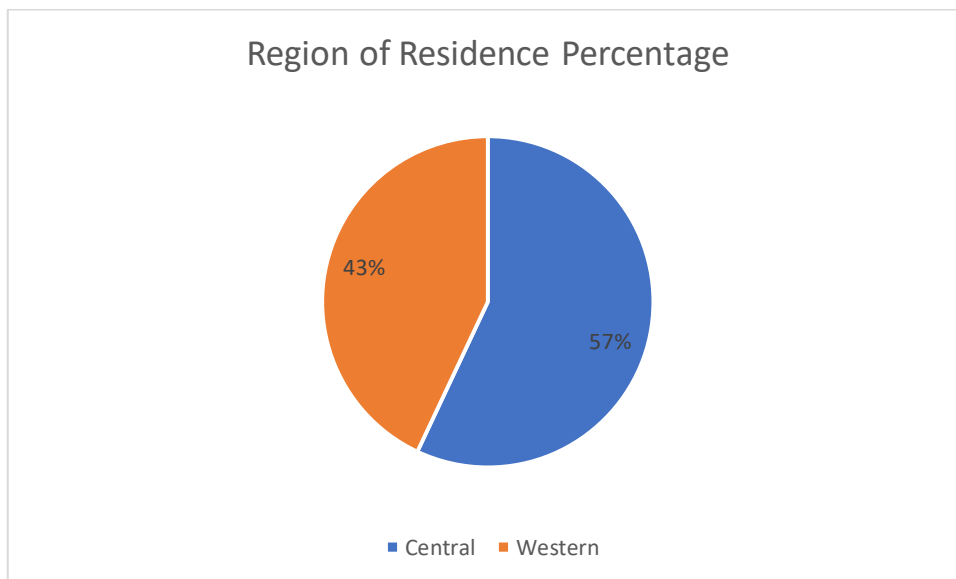


Figure 3: A pie chart showing the distribution by region.

There is a minor skew in the sample, with 57% of participants coming from the Central area and 43% from the Western region. Better infrastructure, increased knowledge, and more focused efforts to promote tourism in the Central region which contains Kampala, the country's capital could all be contributing factors. Even though it is significantly underrepresented, the Western area nonetheless has a sizable participation rate, which may be attributed to its well-known tourism destinations, such as national parks and cultural heritage sites.

4.2. THE CURRENT STATE OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN UGANDA POST COVID-19.

Frequency of Travel Within Uganda for Leisure or Recreation

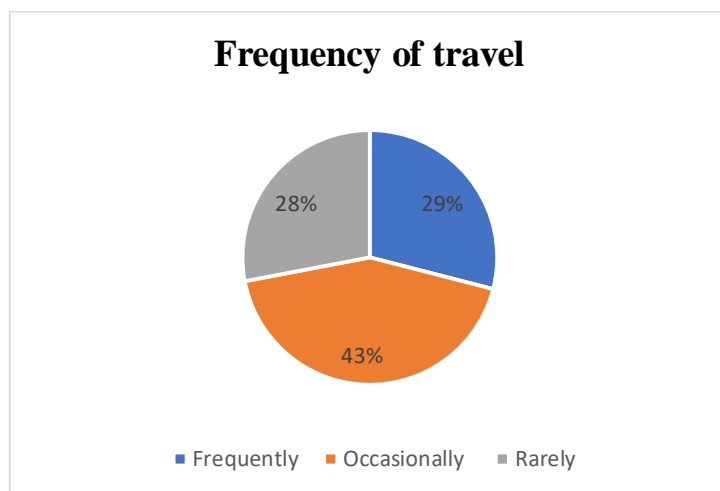


Figure 4: Pie chart showing the frequency of travel distribution.

The bulk of participants (43%) indicate a moderate degree of interest in domestic tourism, with most traveling occasionally. Additionally, a sizable fraction (29%) travel regularly, indicating the existence of a committed community of domestic travellers. The same amount (29%) travels seldom, which may be a sign of obstacles like restricted spare time, lack of knowledge, or financial limitations.

Changes in Domestic travel patterns post-COVID-19.

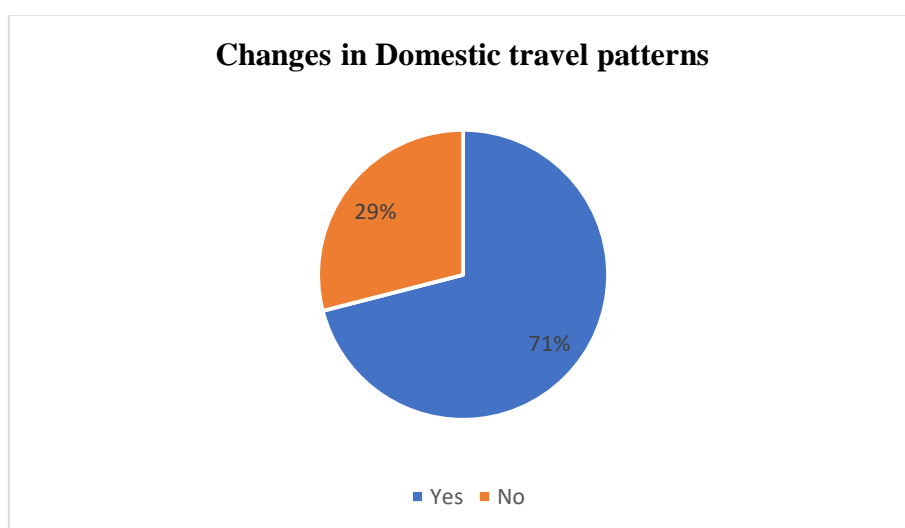


Figure 5: Changes in Domestic travel patterns

Since the pandemic ended, a sizable portion of respondents (71%) have seen changes in their domestic travel habits. This suggests that travel within Uganda has been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

Trend of changes Observed

According to the survey, 50% of participants decreased their travel frequency because of post-pandemic financial hardships, health issues, or personal priorities, whereas 30% of participants increased their frequency of travel as a result of foreign travel limitations. A notable trend toward local travel destinations is noted, with 70% selecting locations that are nearby and easier to get to. The most obvious shift is the increased awareness of health and safety, which implies that tourists are more circumspect and favour locations with strict health regulations. Adjusting for changing family demands, the flexibility of working remotely, or shifting transportation choices are other concerns. The most popular locations are urban areas (14%), cultural and historical sites (29%), and nature and wildlife reserves (57%). Uganda's rich cultural legacy and history are explored at Cultural and Historical Sites, while wide spaces, scenic beauty, and outdoor activities make Nature and Wildlife Reserves the favoured option. Urban locations are less desirable because of possible overcrowding and health issues.

4.3. THE KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The main factors influencing your decision to travel within Uganda

The majority ranked affordability as the most crucial component, demonstrating that travel plans are greatly impacted by the cost of transportation, lodging, and activities.

Accessibility: For passengers, the quality of the infrastructure, the ease of accessing locations, and the availability of transportation are essential.

Cultural Attractions: Festivals, historical landmarks, and Uganda's rich cultural legacy all draw large crowds.

Natural Attractions: Uganda's national parks, animals, and natural vistas are all appealing.

Safety and Health Concerns: In the post-COVID-19 period in particular, concerns over personal safety and health standards.

These rankings show that, for domestic visitors, accessibility and affordability are the most essential factors, followed by the attractiveness of cultural and natural landmarks. Safety and health are also significant factors, although they are not as high on the priority list as cost and convenience.

Importance of promotional campaigns:

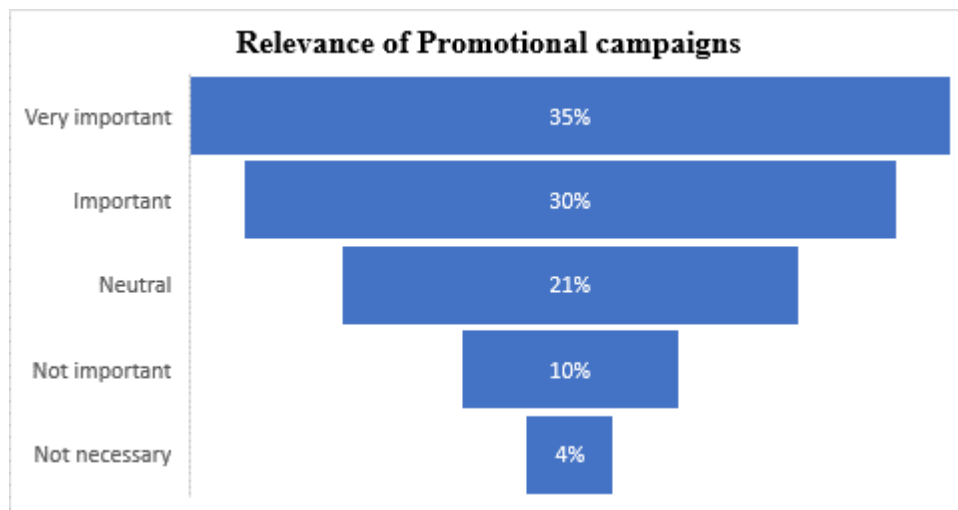


Figure 6: Relevance of promotional campaigns

Effective marketing can highlight attractions, increase awareness of destinations, and offer special deals or discounts, all of which can encourage travel. Of the respondents, over half (29%) find promotional campaigns to be influential. A smaller group, 21 percent, is indifferent to promotional campaigns, implying that other factors may have a greater influence on their decision-making. A minority, 10 percent, views promotional campaigns as not important at all (4%) and Not Important (10%), views them as less significant.

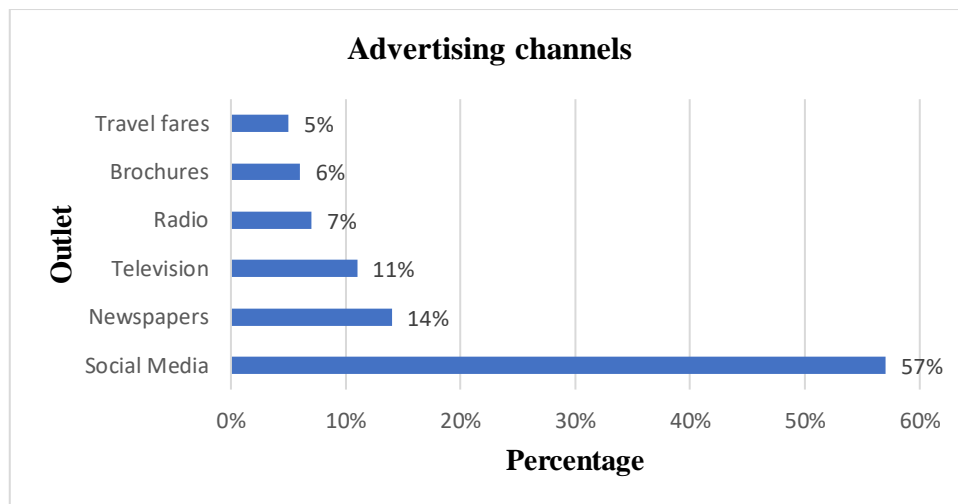


Figure 7: Outlets commonly used to promote tourism activities.

Social media (57%): When it comes to advertising tourism destinations, social media platforms have the greatest sway since they provide an interactive and visually appealing media. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are useful for reaching a large audience, particularly younger tourists.

Newspapers (14%) and television (11%): These are two examples of traditional media that continue to have some impact, particularly with elderly audiences who might choose them over digital sources.

Radio (7%) and Brochures (6%): These media are more regionally focused and might be useful in particular situations.

Travel Fairs (5%): Although they are less frequent, travel fairs provide participants individualized information and direct engagement, which may be quite compelling.

With social media's enormous reach, using digital marketing techniques to engage prospective travellers with interactive material, virtual tours, and user-generated content may be quite successful. Retaining a presence in traditional media may assist in reaching a variety of audiences and guaranteeing that information on travel opportunities inside the country is extensively shared.

4.4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING STRATEGIES AIMED AT PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM IN UGANDA.

Initiatives aimed at promoting Domestic Tourism:

- i. Governmental initiatives like Let's Tour, or "*Tulambule*"
- ii. Reductions offered by hotels and travel firms as part of private sector promotions
- iii. The Uganda Tourism Board's initiatives to promote regional travel destinations
- iv. Social media initiatives endorsing lesser-known sights
- v. Cultural events planned to draw visitors from the area
- vi. Upgrades to the infrastructure, such improved routes to popular tourist destinations

60% of those surveyed are aware of programs designed to boost domestic travel. This knowledge suggests that the public and private sectors are making significant progress in reaching a large audience, but more work has to be done to guarantee that information is distributed more widely. Of the participants, half of them, (Effective (36%) and Very Effective (14%)) think the programs are successful, indicating that the present tactics are having an effect.

A sizeable percentage (Neutral - 21%) of people are still unimpressed, indicating that even although they may be aware of the activities, they have not been adequately inspired or impacted by them. Approximately 30% of the participants see the efforts as ineffective (17%) and very ineffective (12%), suggesting potential areas for improvement concerning reach, relevance, or implementation.

Reduced Travel Packages (71%) and Better Infrastructure (64%), these two factors are the main drivers of increased domestic travel. These elements support earlier research showing that accessibility and price play a significant role in travel choices. Increased Safety Measures (50%) and Improved Information Availability (57%) are also responsible for increasing domestic tourism, and these require stressing safety procedures and offering thorough and easily available information. Festivals & Cultural Events (43%) putting together and advertising cultural events may draw travellers by providing them with interesting and distinctive experiences.

4.5. THE CHALLENGES FACED IN THE PROMOTION OF DOMESTIC TOURISM POST COVID-19

Following COVID-19, the biggest obstacles to increasing domestic tourism in Uganda are: inadequate infrastructure; scarcity of information; low knowledge of tourist destinations; financial limitations; health and safety worries; insufficient marketing and promotional activities; inadequate rural tourism facilities and services; absence of government support and incentives; demand fluctuations during the year; and environmental degradation and conservation issues.

Poor road networks and a lack of transportation choices are two infrastructure issues that make it difficult to reach tourism sites, particularly in rural regions. Insufficient information availability makes it difficult to organize and make decisions about travel, which lowers interest in domestic travel. Economic factors that limit people's and families' capacity to pay for travel expenditures include unemployment and low disposable income, which lowers demand for domestic travel.

Concerns about health and safety have also affected people's inclination to travel, as people are becoming more circumspect and giving these issues first priority when planning their itineraries. Fear of becoming sick or being exposed to health hazards can be a major deterrent for people to participate in domestic tourism, which lowers demand and desire to travel.

Uganda requires coordinated efforts by governmental organizations, stakeholders in the tourist industry, and the business sector to address these issues. These efforts should focus on enhancing information distribution, improving accessibility, removing financial obstacles, and putting in place strong health and safety protocols. Uganda may realize the full potential of its domestic tourist sector, promoting community development, economic progress, and the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage, by addressing these challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1. DEMOGRAPHICS

The tourist business has undergone a substantial shift in demography following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a greater interest from males than from women. Gender-specific economic recovery patterns, more possibilities, and participation-influencing cultural norms might all be contributing factors. This discrepancy in tourism participation may have been exacerbated by the economic effects of the pandemic on women, who may have had higher job losses or more domestic duties. The age distribution is noteworthy as well; young individuals (36%) travel more frequently than other age groups. Age-related declines are especially noticeable in the under-18 and over-56 age groups. After COVID-19, young individuals could be more mobile, have more spare cash, and be more curious to learn about domestic travel. Their predominance in tourist involvement is attributed to post-COVID variables such as resilience, adaptation, pent-up demand, flexibility in remote work, and views of health and safety.

There is a little skew in the distribution of participants' regions of residence, with 43% of them from the West and 57% from the Central area. While more regional marketing initiatives and awareness campaigns may have more successfully expanded local tourism, the Central region's superior infrastructure and connections make it more accessible for tourism-related activities. Travelers may now feel more confident due to the health and safety precautions implemented in Central areas. The appealing factor of the West lies in its natural surroundings, which are in keeping with social distance and health regulations. Following COVID, tourists could choose for less congested, natural locations, encouraging a type of travel that complies with health and social distancing regulations.

Policymakers and tourism stakeholders may develop more effective measures to promote domestic tourism and guarantee sustainable growth in the post-COVID environment in order to solve the gender gap in the tourist industry. The gender gap in tourism may be lessened with the support of youth participation, gender-specific programs, and a regional focus. Providing inexpensive travel choices, remote business travel packages, and adventure tourism can increase domestic travel even more. Policymakers and tourism stakeholders may develop more

effective strategies to promote domestic tourism and guarantee sustainable growth in the post-COVID-19 era by comprehending these demographic data.

5.2. TO ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE OF DOMESTIC TOURISM IN UGANDA POST COVID-19.

According to the study, there has been a notable shift in the frequency of leisure or recreational travel inside Uganda following the conclusion of the COVID-19 epidemic. Most participants (43%) expressed a modest interest in domestic tourism, with the bulk of them taking infrequent trips. A sizable portion (29%) travel on a regular basis, suggesting a dedicated group of domestic travellers. The same percentage (29%) travels seldom, which might indicate barriers like limited free time, ignorance, or financial constraints. A dedicated group of frequent travellers serves as a basis for developing domestic tourism, with a moderate participation on tourism. Attempts to encourage those who don't travel much to go on more frequent trips might greatly increase domestic travel. tackling the challenges they encounter with focused campaigns and support to unlock the tourism potential of these areas.

Following COVID-19, a considerable proportion of participants (71%) reported alterations in their domestic travel routines, indicating that the pandemic has had a notable effect on travel within Uganda. This suggests that the tourist industry must adjust to the new standards and inclinations generated by the epidemic. Priorities related to health and safety are vital, and in order to draw visitors, travel locations and tour companies must successfully promote and convey their safety precautions. Increased travel (30%) owing to international travel restrictions; decreased travel (50%) owing to financial restraints, health issues, or personal priorities; preference for local destinations (70%) owing to increased health and safety concerns (80%); other factors (10%); and local destination focus (57%) are some of the types of changes noted.

With investments in local attraction marketing and infrastructure, the growing demand for local locations offers a chance for regional tourist growth. Putting a focus on health and safety precautions can draw in more health-conscious travellers. Meeting the requirements of those impacted by remote work or family

obligations can be accomplished by providing flexible and family-friendly travel choices. The most popular destination categories are metropolitan regions (14%), cultural and historical attractions (29%), and nature and animal reserves (57%). The allure of cultural and historical monuments may be increased by highlighting their natural surroundings and fauna, maintaining them, and enhancing visitor participation and accessibility. Additionally, urban area policies might increase the tourism appeal of these locations.

Based on the patterns shown, domestic tourism in Uganda is changing in the wake of COVID-19, mostly due to changes in travel choices, budgetary restrictions, and health and safety concerns. Uganda can promote economic recovery and community development by enhancing its domestic tourist sector and implementing specific policies to address these tendencies.

5.3. THE KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The study focused on the variables influencing travel choices and how advertising strategies help Uganda's domestic travel industry grow. Cost-effective travel alternatives are important since the majority of respondents regarded affordability as the most important factor impacting their travel preferences. In order to solve this, tourism industry participants should provide reasonable packages, rebates, and promotions. They should also work with lodging facilities, transportation providers, and nearby attractions to build travel packages that are inexpensive. For tourists, accessibility is crucial, and public transportation and roads are important components of this infrastructure. Planning and carrying out trips may be made easier with the help of improved infrastructure and clear information on accessible routes, transit alternatives, and services. Promotional campaigns should emphasize the importance of cultural and natural attractions for domestic travellers (Van-Tuan, 2021).

More interest may be generated by developing immersive experiences, such as interactive material and virtual tours that highlight Uganda's rich natural and cultural heritage. Moreover, planning celebrations and events may highlight these locations and offer distinctive travel opportunities. Health and safety issues are still crucial, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. It is essential to stress the

application of safety and health precautions in all contacts with tourists. Establishing and promoting approved "safe travel" programs and providing prospective passengers with clear information about these measures through marketing materials helps boost trust in domestic travel.

Over 50% of respondents believe that promotional programs have a big impact because they raise awareness of destinations, emphasize attractions, and provide incentives like discounts. Creating focused marketing efforts that highlight accessibility, cost, and distinctive attractions is essential. Narrative approaches should also be used to evoke strong feelings in prospective passengers. Since social media is the most powerful medium for advertising travel destinations, campaigns should make use of interesting material including images, videos, virtual tours, and content created by users. Newspapers and television are examples of traditional media that still have some sway, particularly with older audiences. Promoting regional audiences and local events and attractions to surrounding inhabitants may be accomplished by using local radio stations and strategically placing pamphlets (Van Tuan, 2021). Direct communication and tailored information are offered at travel fairs, and they may be quite appealing. In the post-COVID-19 age, Uganda may promote economic growth, community development, and cultural preservation by putting these principles into practice and growing its domestic tourist sector.

5.4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING STRATEGIES AIMED AT PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM IN UGANDA.

The survey's findings, which support the goal of assessing the scope and knowledge of current activities, reveal that 60% of participants are aware of several initiatives aimed at promoting domestic travel. Also, according to the study, 50% of participants think the efforts are effective or very effective, 29% think they are neutral, and 30% think they are ineffective or very ineffective. According to the report, lower travel packages (71%) and improved infrastructure (64%), among other things, are what encourage people to travel more within Uganda. The components of domestic tourist advertising that most appeal to respondents are highlighted by this data.

The survey's findings indicate that efforts by the public and corporate sectors are reaching a sizable segment of the populace in the post-COVID context, demonstrating advancements in the promotion of domestic travel. Policymakers and tourism industry stakeholders can benefit greatly from an evaluation of the perceived efficacy of current initiatives. This evaluation can point out areas of success, such as the impact of reduced travel packages and infrastructure upgrades, as well as areas for improvement, such as improving safety measures and information availability. The survey's results provide insightful information about the efficacy of current domestic tourism promotion strategies in Uganda. They also provide a thorough picture of the current status of domestic tourism promotion initiatives and point out areas that need improvement in the post-COVID era. Policymakers, tourist boards, and other industry players may use this information to help create more focused and effective measures that will support Uganda's domestic tourism sector's growth.

5.5. THE CHALLENGES FACED IN THE PROMOTION OF DOMESTIC TOURISM POST COVID-19

Following COVID-19, Uganda will encounter a number of obstacles in promoting domestic travel, including inadequate infrastructure, a lack of information, and budgetary limits. Poor road networks and few transit choices are examples of infrastructure problems that make it difficult for visitors to visit tourist destinations, particularly in rural regions. It is advised to make expenditures in infrastructure development, such as extending public transit networks and improving roads, to address these problems. Information centres, smartphone applications, and user-friendly websites can help alleviate the information scarcity that discourages travellers from visiting domestic places. In order to make domestic tourism more accessible and cheaper, financial restrictions including unemployment and low disposable income can be addressed by implementing subsidized travel packages, discount programs, and flexible payment alternatives.

Travel has decreased as a result of post-COVID-19 health and safety worries because people are afraid of becoming sick or being exposed to health hazards. Strict health and safety regulations that encourage good cleanliness practices should be put in place in tourism facilities to foster visitor confidence. Growth has

been hampered by limited knowledge of domestic tourist prospects as a result of insufficient marketing and promotional efforts. Increasing spending on advertising campaigns, digital platforms, and social media outlets is necessary to solve this. Furthermore, community-based tourism potential is restricted due to the lack of infrastructure and services for rural tourism in rural regions. In order to tackle these issues, it is recommended that incentives be offered to the private sector for their investments in rural tourist infrastructure, community-based tourism projects, and sustainable development practices in rural regions.

Possible solutions to the challenges faced:

It is advised to make investments in infrastructure development projects, especially in rural regions, to improve transportation and road networks, in order to boost tourism. This might entail creating amenities geared toward tourists, constructing new highways, renovating old ones, and launching dependable public transit systems. Strategies for guaranteeing travellers have access to thorough and reliable information on travel destinations, lodging options, and activities should be put in place to bridge the information gap (Saura et al., 2020). This might entail creating tourist information centres, working with local governments and tour companies, and creating user-friendly travel websites and mobile applications. Initiatives should also be launched to lower the cost of domestic travel and provide accessibility for a larger group of individuals, especially those with low incomes. This might entail providing financial aid, discounts, flexible payment schedules, and subsidized trip packages.

Stringent health and safety procedures should be put in place, including frequent staff and visitor health checks, sanitation requirements, and hygiene measures. In order to increase interest and awareness in domestic travel prospects, the second step is to improve marketing and promotional efforts. This could entail starting focused marketing initiatives, working with bloggers, influencers, and content producers, as well as attending travel shows and fairs. The third option is to support the growth of rural tourist services and infrastructure, which will diversify the industry's offers and support community-based tourism (Sofronov, 2019). This might entail funding incentives for environmentally friendly lodging, initiatives to

foster sustainable tourism, and capacity-building initiatives to support rural populations' involvement in tourist-related business and hospitality.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

6.1. CONCLUSION:

This research explored Uganda's domestic tourist market after COVID-19, highlighting both its underdeveloped and prospective growth areas. Uganda's rich natural and cultural history notwithstanding, there are still issues with domestic tourism, including poor infrastructure, a lack of knowledge, financial limitations, safety and health risks, and a lack of promotional activities. These problems show that in order to fully utilize domestic tourism for economic recovery, community empowerment, and cultural preservation, certain techniques are required. There is hope for Uganda's domestic tourist industry's future despite these challenges. The tourist industry, governmental bodies, and the business sector can work together to adopt solutions that solve identified concerns such as investing in the development of infrastructure, expanding the distribution of information, lowering costs, guaranteeing health and safety regulations, stepping up marketing initiatives, and supporting initiatives aimed at boosting domestic tourism in Uganda.

Uganda has the potential to establish itself as a top domestic travel destination, providing both foreign tourists and locals with meaningful experiences. Incorporating sustainable and inclusive tourist practises has the potential to protect cultural heritage for future generations, empower local people, and promote economic development. Following COVID-19, Uganda needs to revive its domestic tourist industry, which will take creativity, teamwork, and vision. Uganda may become a global leader in domestic tourism by taking on this task and exhibiting the diversity, beauty, and tenacity of its people and surroundings.

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. The government of Uganda should concentrate on developing infrastructure, especially in rural regions, in order to enhance visitor experience and accessibility. This includes enhancing tourist amenities, transit networks, and road networks.
- ii. By working with local communities and tour operators, information will be disseminated more effectively through information centres, mobile applications, and user-friendly tourist websites.
- iii. Improved affordability will be achieved through financial aid programs, flexible payment choices, and discounted and special deals on vacation packages.
- iv. Ensuring health and safety standards will involve enforcing strict regulations in tourist hotels and facilities, conducting routine health checks, and providing hygiene training to staff in the tourism business.
- v. Investing more in digital platforms, social media, television, radio, and print media will boost marketing efforts.
- vi. Encourage the growth of eco-friendly lodging options, homestays, and community tourism projects in rural regions by offering incentives. Encourage training and capacity-building initiatives to help rural populations take up hospitality management and tourist entrepreneurship.
- vii. To successfully implement these suggestions, encourage cooperation between governmental agencies, stakeholders in the tourist industry, and the commercial sector. Form public-private partnerships to pool resources and knowledge for Uganda's domestic tourist industry's sustainable expansion.
- viii. Provide systems for tracking and assessing how actions affect the expansion of domestic travel. Get input from visitors and interested parties to determine areas that need improvement and to make the required changes to plans and programs.

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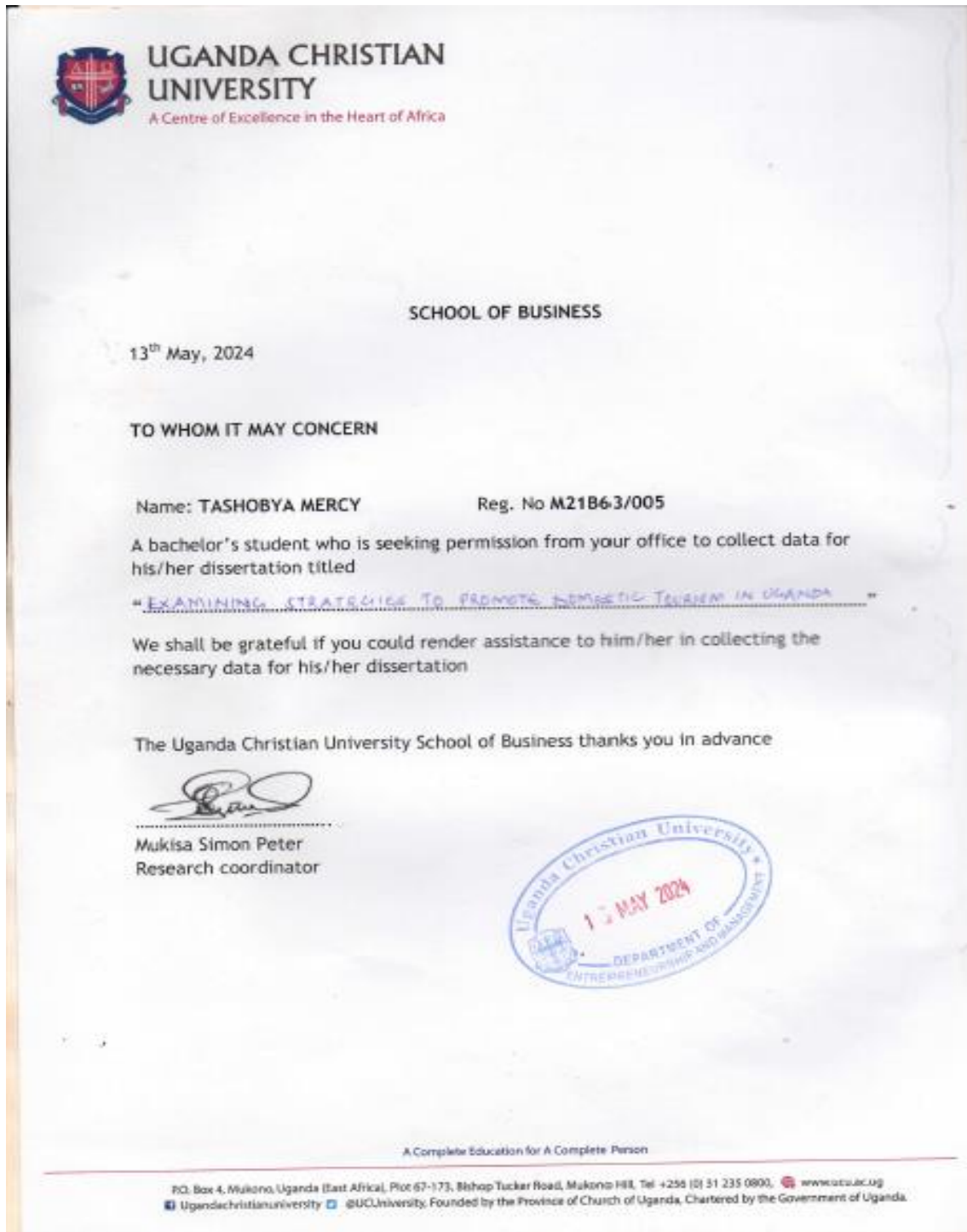
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APPENDIX



Introductory letter presented to seek permission from the different stakeholders.