

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MBARARA
DISTRICT**

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S21B63/ 016**

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

September, 2024




**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

As per the university values of integrity and diligence, I have not received any unauthorized assistance while working on this paper. I declare that the work is authentically mine and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no traces of plagiarism or any other unethical practices. The only work used that has already been published by other persons has been purely for reference purposes and appropriate citations have been made.

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APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted for examination purposes with my approval as academic supervisor.

Signature..........

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Date.....18/09/2024.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to my family who advised, supported and mentored me throughout my education up to university level. Above all, I thank God for guidance, protection and provision towards completion of this dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to thank Almighty God for his grace, blessings, and the gift of life, which nabled me to complete this journey. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor, for guiding me through the research project, through advice and lessons that made the project completion easier. My sincere gratitude goes to my father, who also guided me and assisted me in this project in many ways. To my colleagues and fellow classmates, I take this chance to thank them because they offered their help and spared their time to share what they could for this project to become a success. I would also like to thank my family for supporting me throughout the class and assignments. My final gratitude goes to my classmates, who helped me morally and through brainstorming, making the project completion a possibility.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the opportunities for cultural tourism development in Mbarara District to fill in the gaps in informing ways in which the district could improve its potential as a destination for cultural tourism. Data are collected using a cross-sectional survey design from 62 respondents residing near cultural heritage sites in Mbarara District.

The objectives of the study are threefold: to establish the current status of cultural tourism in the world, Uganda, and Mbarara District; secondly, it tries to determine the global and national opportunities available for cultural tourism; and thirdly, it investigates the strategies that can be employed towards the development of cultural tourism in Mbarara District.

The results further indicate that, while cultural tourism is an increasing resource worldwide and it illustrates potential in Uganda, its shortcomings are still evident in the case of Mbarara District, which faces constraints in infrastructure, few community participations, and no economic outcomes. Improvement at the base in infrastructural areas of transport links and tourist facilities will go a long way in enhancing the communities' involvement and ensuring that the programs are culturally engaging. In this respect, innovations in technology also make Uganda more attractive and accessible to international tourists, through the use of digital marketing, virtual tours, and interactive applications. The study identifies that strategic partnerships among local stakeholders, government bodies, and private investors are what can allow the development of cultural tourism. By addressing the inadequacies in infrastructure, consideration of available technological developments, and involving the local community, the district of Mbarara is able to make fuller utilization of its resources in culture, thereby making more viable contributions to its economic growth through tourism.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism development is the planned strategies undertaken to promote and manage tourism in a region to achieve economic growth, human cultural exchange, and environmentally sustainable goals. According to UNWTO (2013),. It includes infrastructural development related to transportation, accommodations, and attractions implored towards meeting the needs of the tourists. The development of tourism successfully calls for marketing strategies to attract tourists, as well as policies meant to ensure responsible and sustainable tourism. In essence, it aims at developing a prosperous tourism industry that will benefit the tourists and residents through job creation, cultural heritage preservation, and conservation of natural resources in the process.

Most tourism developments necessitate cooperation among stakeholders, including government bodies, private enterprises, local communities, and non-governmental organizations, and can thus be developed based on a collaborative approach. Such an approach needs to be sensitive to the social, economic, and environmental impacts related to tourism development and balance these for the purpose of long-term sustainability. For example, community-based tourism empowers the locals through participation in tourism activities and thus lets them share a fair portion of the economic benefits accrued. The development may include sustainable practices such as accommodations and conversation that enable the natural and cultural resources to be preserved for future generations. This is in agreement with Butler (2019).

Cultural Tourism Development is a niche that focuses on developing and promoting the cultural heritage of the region, attracting tourists for the promotion of economic growth and sustainable practice. It includes development in cultural sites, events promotion, and policy supportive of this reality. From this perspective, the investments by the public and private sectors in cultural tourism, improvements in travel technologies, and the interest from the global community towards culture have contributed to the development of cultural tourism globally. Cultural tourism can provide economic

benefits, preservation of the culture, as well as cross-cultural understanding when properly implemented.

Throughout the world, there has been major investment in cultural infrastructure, such as museums and heritage sites, which enable tourists to relate effectively with the culture of the region they visit. As indicated, policies for cultural tourism cover a wide range from support for heritage conservation laws to cultural promotion initiatives. Partnerships among governments, private sectors, and local communities should be developed to create an enabling environment that realizes worthwhile and genuine cultural tourism.

For example, in Uganda, the Mbarara District is turning out to be one of the major cultural tourist destination points, based on the rich cultural resources reflected in traditional dances, crafts, and historical attractions. Secondly, there are a number of global factors influencing cultural tourism development. In particular, for instance, infrastructure has to be solid to enable tourists to access cultural attractions; poor infrastructure may become a disincentive and reduce the economic benefits. Local entrepreneurs also require access to finance to develop tourism-related businesses and services. Additionally, marketing and promotion are needed for increasing cultural attractions globally. Although Mbarara is rich in cultural assets, its presence in the global market of cultural tourism needs to be strengthened if these resources are to be fully exploited.

Because they are the most affected by tourism activities within their respective areas, local communities are invaluable in the process of cultural tourism development. These communities are the main attractions for cultural tourists since they play a major role in the provision of cultural experiences, cultural preservation, and tourism services (Smith, 2023).

Skill development should, therefore, be one of the key components in the local community empowerment for sustainable cultural tourism growth. Training on aspects such as management of cultural heritage, business development, and hospitality also allows members to actively take part in tourism. Namakula and Mwenda (2019) equally note that capacity-building programs need to be need-based, focusing on precise needs of the local people. In Mbarara, several NGOs and government programs make attempts to enhance the capacity for sustainable participation in cultural tourism within the community. Whereas it is true that the tourism industry in Mbarara has benefited from its rich cultural heritage and natural attractions, there is a range of untapped potentials. The major focus on development in terms of cultural tourism may further stress the need for encouraging the region's history, traditions, and local customs to attract both domestic and international visitors. There is a dire

need for further development of cultural festivals, heritage sites, and ways that visitors can be plunged into the local way of life. Such initiatives of collaboration with the host communities in conservation and exhibition of traditional crafts, music, dance, and storytelling could provide very unique and natural experiences that would make Mbarara different from any other destination. This study shall, therefore, examine the available opportunities for developing cultural tourism within the Mbarara District .

1.2 Problem Statement

Cultural tourism in Mbarara is, therefore, important mainly because the economic growth of the area depends on it and is a source of income for the people. However, it has not actually realized its potential and is still in the infancy stage of development. The World Travel & Tourism Council reports that Uganda's cultural tourism ranks modestly on a global scale in 2022. Several challenges face the sector in realizing full potential, including poor infrastructure, a lack of concerted marketing, and lack of investment in preservation development relating to cultural heritage.

Despite all these rich cultural resources in the district, for example, the heritage from the Ankole Kingdom, traditional music and dance, handicrafts, and historical sites, their actual usage has not reached the fullest capacity. The present research attempts to bring into light different opportunities available for tourism development in the field of culture in Mbarara for raising visibility and economies based on these cultural resources.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study is therefore exploratory in nature and seeks to explore the opportunities available for cultural tourism development in Mbarara District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- i. To evaluate the status of tourism in the world, Uganda, and also within Mbarara District.

- ii. To explore the opportunities available for cultural tourism in the world and Uganda

- iii. To examine the opportunities available for improving cultural tourism development in Mbarara District.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What are the current global and local situations of cultural tourism in Uganda and in Mbarara District?

ii. What global and national opportunities are available for cultural tourism in Uganda?

iii. What are the opportunities for developing cultural tourism in Mbarara District?

1.6 Scoping of the Study

1.6.1 Subject Scope

The research shall be scoped to the opportunities for cultural tourism development in Mbarara District.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

This study will be limited to Mbarara District and its surroundings in Uganda. Mbarara, being one of the major western Uganda districts, is endowed with various cultural attractions that are yet to be identified and put into good use. In exploring this vibrant region, our aim is to realize real insights into how cultural tourism can further rise and thrive in the community for the benefit of all involved, nationally and internationally.

This will be a continuous ten-year study, from 2014 to 2024, and thus long-term trends and their impacts can be scrutinized clearly. Consequently, it is reassuringly an opportune moment to consider how cultural tourism and community dynamics have changed over time. The period during which the researcher intends to carry out this research project is three months, commencing in May and ending in August 2024, gaining an in-depth insight into the stories that have shaped the changes within these communities.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will investigate how cultural tourism can actually help improve the economic welfare of residents, and will provide helpful insights to help shape future development policies. In that respect, with the emphasis on residents' active participation in planning and managing cultural tourism, it is framed in terms of calling for options to be inclusive and sustainable by one and all.

We also discuss in detail the environmental and cultural impacts of tourism, focusing on how community-led initiatives can safeguard cultural heritage while continuing to invite visitors. The analysis will draw useful lessons in the balancing of tourism with the protection of cultural resources.

The findings are expected to have practical recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders by calling on them to devise strategies that address the community and its rich cultural heritage. It is also

significant that the socio-economic and cultural interests of the local communities are asserted to help make residents' voices louder and stronger with regards to the future of cultural tourism and conservation at the local level.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature review forms one of the foundational chapters that place research into the wider framework of existing knowledge. It synthesizes the contributions of earlier works, points to areas which have not been sufficiently investigated, and sets the foundation on which statements of your research questions and hypotheses will be grounded. It not only helps to crystallize what has been found but also indicates the significance of your contribution to furthering knowledge in your area.

This chapter explores the theoretical underpinning and empirical research, related to the study. It identifies a specific understanding of the issues involved to ensure the research is integrated into academic literature and it is informed by, or reflects, the earlier work.

2.1 Definition of terms

Tourist the World Tourism Organization defines tourism as covering the activity of people travelling to and staying in places other than their normal environment for a period of not exceeding one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes. The definition covers various aspects of the travel and activities undertaken, depending on the temporary nature of the stay and away from the usual environment.

Cultural Tourism: This is a kind of tourism product whereby the visitor's essential motive is to learn, discover, feel, and consume tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products offered by the destination in question. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.

"Tourism Development is a concept that represents an increase in the tourism industry through the process of planning and development and management of tourist destinations and strategizing in order to stimulate tourists to spend more time in a locality for betterment or enhancement of tourism activities by improvement in infrastructure, investment in hospitality services and initiatives towards conservation and showcasing cultural and natural heritage." According to Hall 2019

2.2 Theoretical Review

It is an exciting and rapidly developing part of world tourism that is based on the rich tapestry of a country or region's culture. It is all about the peoples' ways of lives and their histories, their art, architecture, and religious denoting. Mbarara District, Uganda, happens to be one of those with quite an avid cultural heritage and, therefore, a very high potential for the development of cultural tourism.

Cultural Heritage Theory: This theory identifies the significance of both tangible and intangible cultural assets in attracting tourists. Tangible heritage in this respect includes monuments, buildings, and objects, while intangible heritage refers to traditions, customs, and usage. To this end, tourism in Mbarara might be developed to include elements of the traditional Ankole culture, which includes rare ceremonies, crafts, music, dance, and folklore; this will not only enhance tourism but also preserve significant cultural components in the region.

Sociocultural Theory: This theory deals more specifically with the work of Lev Vygotsky on how people and society are influenced by interacting with other people and cultural settings. Tourism in this case would involve a search for authentic experiences wherein guests can identify and learn from the local culture. In this instance, Mbarara District would be developed with interactive experiences in which visitors can engage directly with local traditions to deepen their appreciation of Ankole culture.

Destination Image Theory: This explains how tourist perceptions of a destination are developed and how these developed perceptions influence travel decisions. This postulates that a positive image of cultural attributes at a destination has the potential to create more visitors. In the case of Mbarara, an ascription into its image through effective marketing strategies will add greatly to its appeal as a cultural tourism destination in terms of the cultural festivals, historical sites, and craftsmanship.

Tourism Area Life Cycle-TALC Model: This model, developed by Richard Butler, outlines the stages of development that take place in tourism, namely exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and either decline or rejuvenation. This model has been applied to Mbarara to establish what stage Mbarara is currently experiencing in terms of cultural tourism development and to suggest a way in which it can grow in a sustainable manner. Knowing where Mbarara is on this cycle can lead stakeholders to understand where effective interventions might be made.

The concept of Sustainable Tourism Development. This concept supports tourism, which is economically viable, environmentally responsible, and socially equitable. It focuses on the relevance of cultural heritage conservation with community benefits accruing from tourism. For Mbarara District, this will involve full participation of the community in tourism planning, conservation of the cultural

sites, and sharing tourism benefits equitably among members.

In short, Mbarara District is definitely rich in cultural resources, which, when developed thoughtfully and in a non-destructive manner, can be appealing to visitors and enrich the local community. By using such theories, it is possible for all interested parties to develop a rich cultural tourism sector that celebrates and promotes the distinctive heritage of the Ankole people.

2.3 The state of cultural tourism at the global level, in Uganda, and in Mbarara District.

Cultural tourism entails plunging into and being introduced to a rich tapestry of heritage, arts, architecture, history, and traditions of an area. Travelers into this form of tourism are mostly influenced not just by seeing new places, but by connecting with local ways of life and meaningful cultural exchanges. Recent studies have been emphasized to show how cultural tourism plays this dual role: helping to preserve and promote cultural heritage, while boosting local economies.

With the advancement of digital technologies, tourism of culture has been very different. It provides interactive and reach cultural sites: virtual tours, augmented reality, and digital storytelling. Correspondingly, Moscardo and Benfield state that VR and AR have turned into an important means for museums and cultural attractions in order to reach wider audiences. In addition, digital platforms play an important role in spreading cultural content all over the world.

Sustainability is one of the main issues of cultural tourism in modern conditions. It would be fair to say that the rising emphasis on responsible travel today reflects a wider recognition of the importance of balancing tourism development with the concerns of cultural heritage preservation (Bramwell & Lane, 2019). According to recent research, increasing the participation of local communities in tourism planning and popularity of cultural heritage sites as sustainable destinations can have a positive impact on this balance (Goodwin, 2020).

Tourists nowadays yearn more for authentic experiences that will actually enable them to connect with the culture of the places visited. According to Richards and Palmer (2020), people now are seeking experiences beyond just the concept of seeing; hence, there is a development of experiences which are tourist-based and where authenticity plays a significant role.

Cultural tourism has raised a number of impacts that are associated with local communities. While the industry may provide opportunities for economic gain, cultural exchange, and an awareness of local heritage, cultural commodification and the potential for cultural erosion are also identified problems.

The creation of employment for the locals, business stimulation, and revenue generation in substantial

sums due to tourism activities are the benefits created by tourism in these regions. Chen and Lee 2018, elucidate how investment in the tourism infrastructure can be utilized for the improvement of local economic development. Furthermore, cultural exchange facilitates a deeper appreciation and understanding between the guests and the host communities.

Cultural tourism, however unwelcoming it may sound, cannot be steered away from. One of the major concerns about cultural tourism is that the culture can be sold or commercialized, which means traditional practices can be altered to meet the expectations of the tourists. This might lead to the loss of authenticity in the culture itself. This accession of tourists will affect the resources and way of life of the residents too. According to Timothy and Teye (2022), such risks need proper attention in terms of planning.

All these different benefits of cultural tourism can only be maximized, together with minimizing the negative impacts of cultural tourism, by using effective policy and management strategies. Participation, sustainability, and regulatory mechanisms have been highlighted in recent literature as urgent needs in the development of cultural tourism. In this respect, tourism planning should be undertaken with the close involvement of local residents in such a manner that is congruent with local mores and priorities. Tosun (2021) further observes that participatory approaches have great potentials for enhancing the sustainability and efficiency of cultural tourism projects.

Eco-friendly tourism is important to safeguard cultural heritage and reduce impacts on the natural environment. This includes strategies for making tourism more sustainable, such as buying local crafts and respecting traditions, among others, according to Bramwell & Lane (2019).

Over the past two decades, cultural tourism in Uganda has been on the increase. Akech et al. (2020) studied how various ethnic groups and historical sites stimulate this increase in growth in the country. The government of Uganda recognizes the potential use of cultural tourism to economic development and the conservation of cultural heritage by way of promotion of key tourist attractions like Kasubi Tombs and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest (Musekura 2019).

The increase in Community-based Tourism enterprises would probably come closest to what may be termed as a development. These initiatives involve the local communities in tourism, thereby economically benefiting them while they preserve their cultural heritage. For instance, the involvement of the Batwa Pygmies in tourism not only guarantees their source of income but also puts their unique cultural practices in the light. Cultural tourism has significantly altered the premise for local communities in Uganda. Indeed, as in the instance of Ocansey et al. (2021), positive impacts such as

job creation for local artisans and increased income for them were accompanied by negative features related to commodification of culture and environmental degradation, respectively.

In this regard, the government of Uganda has implemented cultural tourism-friendly policies such as the National Tourism Policy 2019, which focuses on cultural heritage among the main ingredients of tourism in the country's tourism industry. This is according to the Uganda Tourism Board, 2021. This policy targets strategies for establishing infrastructure for cultural tourism-such as museums and cultural centers-and involves the people.

NGOs also play a major role in the development of tourism related to culture in Uganda, in collaboration with the Uganda Tourism Board, in the promotion and identification of community-based tourism projects at cultural heritage sites.

While there is development in Uganda as far as cultural tourism is concerned, yet many challenges face Uganda, such as underdeveloped infrastructures to access the sites; this relates to tourist experiences as a whole. Indeed, many of these sites have no basic facilities like visitor centres or options for transportation.

There is the efficient management of sites related to cultural heritage. The World Tourism Organization (2022) indicates that there is a pressing need to improve existing conservation and management practices for cultural tourism to be sustainable.

The development of cultural tourism routes connecting the sites or the use of digital technologies for reaching a global audience may promote in the future cultural tourism in Uganda. Such partnership among government, local communities, and the private sector has to be developed for sustainable tourism development, innovation, and equitable distribution of benefits accruing from tourism.

Recent studies have shown that cultural tourism is of growing importance in Uganda, especially within Mbarara District, which boasts a lively cultural landscape coupled with historical depth. It is one area that comprises various ethnic groups, including the Banyankole, Bakiga, and Bahima with different cultures that create a rich mosaic of cultures.

This means increased interest by both domestic and international tourists in pursuit of authentic cultural experiences. The Uganda Tourism Board attests that cultural tourism is on an upward trajectory, with Mbarara being among the leading contributors due to its rich cultural panorama and proximity to the Lake Mburo National Park attraction.

While the potential for cultural tourism is huge in Uganda, a range of dilemmas, from underdeveloped infrastructural frameworks to cultural commodification and site management, first needs to be squarely

addressed. By harnessing sustainable practices, embracing infrastructure development, and ensuring increased collaboration, Uganda can work to promote further development of its cultural tourism industry, with a view toward enhancing its status as a prime cultural heritage destination.

2.4 Opportunities for cultural tourism - global and Uganda

Cultural tourism has become one of the cornerstones of the world's tourism industry, affording special means whereby countries share their rich heritage and entice a varied breed of visitors. In Uganda, a country full of cultural diversity and historical clout, it is cultural tourism that provides a lucrative trajectory in economic development and heritage preservation.

Cultural tourism remains an increasingly major vehicle for primary economic stimulus globally. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, this industry contributed about US\$9.2 trillion to the world economy and supported 319 million jobs, about 10% of total employment. This resilience has been particularly remarkable following the COVID- 19 pandemic. Research by Mc Kercher and du Cros (2019) suggests that cultural tourists also stay longer and spend more money than traditional tourists.

Recent evidence from UNWTO, 2021, indicates that "cultural-asset-rich destinations"-which can be UNESCO heritage sites-give evidence for a remarkable number of tourists and economic growth. Places like Florence or Kyoto have used their cultural heritage as the main attractions for high-value tourism, with the effect of stimulating their economies and jobs.

Even further, cultural tourism has been transformed by digital technologies. Virtual and augmented reality create new avenues for engagement with heritage. As Pappas et al. (2020) affirmed, these technologies enable virtual tours at museums, historical sites, or events related to culture. This greatly extends the impacts of cultural tourism beyond geographical limits.

It goes without saying that digital platforms-actually, social media-play a very important role in travel decision-making. According to Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2019), user-generated content and online reviews are increasingly influential in molding the perceptions of tourists and the choices they make.

Of late, sustainability has emerged as the top accompaniment to cultural tourism. Global Sustainable Tourism Council GSTC, 2021, outlines certain sustainable practices aimed at retaining local culture, diminishing impacts on the environment, and sharing economic benefits equitably among the local communities. Becken and Hay, 2018, state that sustainable tourism of culture favours community involvement and taking care of the heritage to be conserved. Tourism projects at the community level, together with projects of heritage conservation, were, in fact, acclaimed as successfully aligning tourism to the values of local culture.

The COVID-19 pandemic heavily affected cultural tourism; the numbers of tourists seriously declined because of travel bans and health concerns. It also brought an opportunity for reflection on the revitalization of tourism policies. According to Hall et al. (2021), this recovery phase may be used to build resilience by diversifying the range of tourism products, embracing digital innovations, and building closer relationships with the local communities. Modern-day Destination Management Organizations have to deal more with personalized and safe cultural experiences, health protocols, and contactless technologies in order to attract tourists.

It is the emerging markets of Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia that are becoming a factor in cultural tourism. Fennell and Dowling, 2019 note that these countries have great potential to offer an alternative cultural experience. Cultural tourism is at the fore of tourism in Uganda, contributing approximately 7% to the country's GDP. The diverse ethnic groups, historical sites, and rich cultural festivals will always be in demand from tourists looking for real experiences.

Different cultural sites and heritage points abound, creating a lot of potential for cultural tourism in Uganda. Kibaale Forest and Mubende Rock Art give evidence of early human habitation. The performances in the Ndere Cultural Centre and the festivals of the Buganda Kingdom also represent very important attractions. Apart from that, these cultural assets also attract tourists. However, most important of all, they provide for the sustainable conservation of Uganda's intangible cultural heritage, which is very vital for retaining cultural identity.

Some of the drawbacks that Namatovu feels face the Uganda cultural tourism industry are insufficient infrastructure and less promotion of the sector. Equally fundamental is the training in holding rapport with the tourism industry at the levels of local communities, according to Kibombo & Mugisha, 2019. On the contrary, technological advancements like digital storytelling and virtual tours can increase the visibility of the sites for a worldwide audience, according to Katongole & Byaruhanga, 2021.

Sustainability is still a core preoccupation. In the processes of trying to capture benefits accruing from tourism, sustainable practices are very important in conserving resources, both cultural and environmental. Dewa & Amuquandoh, 2020 Community-based tourism projects contribute to carving a path toward sustainability by way of incorporating local involvement in decision-making processes. Mwebaza & Lugemwa, 2022.

Actual cultural tourism opportunities may only be realized through effective policy and strategic planning. The Ugandan government and all other tourism stakeholders need to fashion comprehensive policies that will help in developing cultural tourism, yet at the same time address the challenges faced.

Infrastructure improvements, increased cultural education, and public-private partnerships will have huge effects on the sector.

In other words, the prospects for cultural tourism in Uganda are enormous and on many levels: economic, cultural, and sustainable. Though there are yet many obstacles to overcome, recent research shows that the potential for further growth lies in selective investment, infrastructure development, and proper policy formulation. The rich cultural heritage of Uganda can be fruitfully tapped for the development of its cultural tourism industry, which in turn can ensure its economic development and the preservation of its culture. Future research and policy efforts should focus on these challenges and newly opening opportunities with a view to creating a robust cultural tourism industry in Uganda. The following sections explain ways through which Mbarara District can improve its cultural tourism development.

Tourism in the cultural domains has become the spotlight of the global tourism industry, whereby cultural heritage becomes a firm point of attraction. This review looks at approaches through which the development in cultural tourism can be enhanced based on the review of recent scholarship for an understanding of current trends and strategies that can maximize its potential.

Recent research has identified the integration of a diverse set of cultural heritage resources to enhance tourism experiences in a cultural vein. Smith and Richards (2020) added that taking a product with diverse cultural elements, such as intangible heritage represented in festivals or traditional crafts, would add value to it from the perspective of the tourist experience. The authors have opined that this type of multidimensional approach to cultural heritage in tourism products would lead to greater appeal for more tourists and provide a fuller cultural experience.

Harrison and Hitchcock (2021) give further emphasis by showing that cataloging and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural assets become highly important. Improvement in the documentation and management of cultural resources would enhance tourism planning and representation, assuring better preservation of culture with authentic cultural experience in tourism development.

Community involvement therefore plays a very major role in the development of sustainable cultural tourism. According to Timothy and Teye (2019), the involvement of the local people in the planning process infuses them with a sense of ownership and thus results in an equitable distribution of the revenues of tourism. Such a participatory approach gives rise to tourism products that reflect respect for traditions and authenticity.

Correspondingly, van der Merwe et al. (2022) note how community-based tourism initiatives develop cultural tourism by involving local stakeholders at each step of decision-making processes. This keeps the development of tourism experiences at the heart of community values and traditions, allowing for more authentic interactions between tourists and hosts.

The integration of digital technologies is thought to go a long way in raising cultural tourism. For instance, Leung et al. (2018) have shown that technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have the ability to create cultural experiences beyond physical cultural site constraints. These technologies can allow the tourists to interact with the cultural site or its artifacts in various ways which will increase their interest in cultural tourism.

Social media also plays a significant role in promoting cultural tourism. In relation to this, Xiang et al. (2021) cited that user-generated content through platforms like Instagram and Facebook creates immense visibility of cultural tourism. Social media allows tourists to share all information on culture and also allows them to create a digital narrative to attract potential tourists.

Currently, the development of cultural tourism is increasingly combined with the issues of sustainability. Gössling et al. (2020) present sustainable practices as one of the main means of preserving cultural heritage without causing any negative impacts on local communities and the environment. The key implication of their study could be that the adoption of sustainable tourism practices could be an important solution to many issues advanced by tourism development in terms of crowding and degradation of the environment.

Cernaian and Săftoiu held that in 2019, there is an increasing requirement for tourism products directed toward the conservation of natural environments and toward the maintenance of cultural heritage. They proposed that the incorporation of sustainability into the strategy for cultural tourism would enhance

the long-term viability of tourism destinations while preserving authentic cultural experiences.

Another highly promising avenue of increasing cultural tourism relates to personalization of tourist experiences. In this respect, Buhalis and Sinarta (2019) discuss the issue of how experiences can be tailored to improve tourist satisfaction and engagement. Tourism providers can apply data analytics and knowledge of customers to make them enjoy cultural experiences that match the preference of individuals and thus become more memorable.

In support, Neuhofer et al. (2020) have identified that personalized cultural tourism experiences can surely increase visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of revisit. Personalization enhances not just the tourist experience but also differentiates the cultural tourism offer in highly competitive markets.

In fact, this necessitates an integrated multi-level collaborative approach by all stakeholders in furthering the development of cultural tourism. As Ritchie and Crouch (2021) argue, a necessary partnership has to be made between different levels of public and private sectors, and with the local communities and operators of tourism. In fact, this can lead to only one integrated tourism product wherein the strength of various stakeholders acts together to result in an overall successful cultural tourism development process.

Mair et al. (2019) further comment that sustainability and cultural sensitivity of tourism practices also imply cross-sector collaboration. In this respect, through the creation of partnerships and networks, tourism stakeholders are able to share resources and knowledge, thus yielding substantial benefits for enhanced cultural tourism solutions.

In this respect, effective marketing and branding are believed to be two strong tools for the attraction of tourists towards cultural destinations. Based on the study conducted by Kozak and Rimmington, 2020, it is suggested that well-identified brand identity with proper target marketing strategies can add more value to the visibility and attractiveness level of cultural tourism destinations. They propose that this branding needs to focus on unique cultural features and experiences if destinations want to emerge as real differentiators in a competitive market.

Aydin and Altintas (2021) further emphasize strategic marketing that should consider the cultural values and preferences of target audiences. As such, tourism operators can convey to this diverse audience of tourists the value of the cultural experience by subsequently adopting a culturally sensitive marketing approach.

Conclusion: In general, more opportunities of developing the cultural tourism may arise through strategic management of the cultural heritage resources, community involvement, and integration of technology, being sustainable, personalized, and collaborative and with appropriate marketing. If these issues are addressed, then the stakeholders would make active contributions to the development and sustainability of tourism in these cultures while maintaining and preserving the culture of humanity.

Literature Gap

In as much as there is immense research on cultural tourism, especially in regions like Mbarara District, a considerable gap has remained in the literature. Whereas there is extensive study on cultural tourism at global and Ugandan levels in terms of its impacts, challenges, and development strategies, an in-depth analysis focused on Mbarara District has lacked presentation.

Cultural tourism has been explored globally in terms of impacts-economic, socio-, and environmental- and methods of enhancement. However, most of these studies do not go down to the level of how this can be applied at a district level, especially in developing countries such as Uganda.

While it is recognized that Uganda has a pertinent cultural tourism sector with potentials in its growth, much of the available research aggregates its findings to the national scale, failing to unpack this at lower district levels to capture their peculiar characteristics and opportunities. Whereas the general potential for cultural tourism in Uganda may be documented, the typical cultural assets and the particular tourism opportunities existing in places like Mbarara are often left unheard.

Besides, most available studies often dwell on broader strategies that are not at all targeted at the district level. There is a felt need for literature on how specific socio-economic and cultural characteristics of Mbarara District can be utilized in enhancing cultural tourism within the district. This calls for an in-depth scan of Mbarara's cultural tourism landscape, identifying opportunities, and crafting localized strategies that would enhance it. This focus will seek to provide valuable insight that can be used in supporting focused development efforts and policy recommendations on cultural tourism for Mbarara District.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The following chapter covers the details of the components of the research design, area of study, population, sample size, sampling techniques, sources of data, methods of data collection, validation and reliability of instruments, data analysis, measurement of variables, ethical issues involved, and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. It allows for data collection from a wide area at one single point in time. According to Ordho (2000), research design is a plan of how data is to be collected, measured, and analyzed; it is a guideline towards addressing research problems.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Mbarara District.

3.3 Study Population

The study intended to use a sample size of 70 respondents dwelling around the cultural heritages in Mbarara District.

3.4 Sample size determination

3.4.1 Size of sample

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, the sample size was determined to be 62 respondents.

3.4.2 Sampling techniques and procedure

A simple random sampling method was employed to reduce bias by giving equal chances for every respondent to be selected.

3.5 Sources of data

The information sources used were obtained from both primary and secondary data sources.

3.5.1 Primary data

Primary data is original and directly relates to the problem statement. It was collected through surveys and questionnaires.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

Supplementing the primary data was the secondary data obtained from various reports, journals, and

other published material.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The questionnaire survey method was used in the collection of data.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaires were self-administered to the respondents to ensure privacy and could be returned by them at convenience.

3.7.1 Questionnaire Guide

The main instrument of data collection was the questionnaire guide comprising structured questions. This instrument ensured consistency and also ensured data collection was undertaken within a short period.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher, cleared with an introductory letter from Uganda Christian University, had questionnaires distributed to respondents. After one week, the filled questionnaires were retrieved for analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data was coded, edited, and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean, and standard deviation using SPSS. Results were presented in tables and descriptive summaries.

3.10 Ethics Consideration

The researcher ensured ethical considerations were made by ensuring that the information provided by the respondents would be kept confidential and that permission is sought from the higher authorities before the research commences. An introductory letter from Uganda Christian University was presented to seek access approval for the collection of data.

3.11 Limitations of the study

Some respondents were not available, and hence this could affect data completeness.

Some respondents may have given socially desirable rather than actual responses.

Data was collected for some time, which may limit the scope of the study.

The study was confined to an area; hence, the generalization of the findings could not be achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings of the study. The first section presented response rate, this is followed by background information about the respondents, and finally descriptive and inferential presentation and analysis of the study findings in relation to the specific objectives.

4.2 Response rate

The response rate for this research was 95.2% and hence it was high. According to Amin (2005), a high response rate also suggests more accurate survey results.

Table 1: Response rate

Number of questionnaires distributed to respondents	62
Number of questionnaires received back from respondents	59
Number of questionnaires not received back from respondents	3

Source: Primary data

$$\text{Response rate} = \frac{\text{received questionnaires}}{\text{Total questionnaires distributed}} \times 100 = \frac{59}{62} \times 100 = 95.2\%$$

The response rate for this research was 95.2% which was high. Amin (2005) suggested that a high response rate also suggests more accurate survey results.

This section gives the number of people who responded to the study against those which the researcher had targeted and also the characteristics of the respondents in relation to gender and age. This was based on the information provided in the

questionnaire and interviews by the respondents.

Biographic characteristics 4.3.1 Gender of the respondent Table 2: Gender of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	26	44
Female	33	56
Total	59	100

Source: Primary data

The table 2 above shows that 44% of the respondents were males compared to 56% counterparts who were females. The males were many compared to females.

Age bracket of the respondents.

Table 3: The age composition of respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
21-30years	10	17
31-40years	14	24
41-50years	23	39
Above 50years	12	20
Total	59	100

Source: primary data

Results in table 3 above, show that 39% of the respondents were between the age of 41-50years. And 17% of the respondents were between the age of 21-30 years of age while 24% and 20% of the respondents were between the age of 31-40 years and above 50 years respectively.

The current state of cultural tourism globally, in Uganda and in Mbarara District

Table 3: The current state of cultural tourism globally, in Uganda and in Mbarara District

	Mean	Standard deviation
Globally, cultural tourism has experienced significant growth in recent years.	4.20	.738
Uganda's cultural tourism is well-promoted and attracts a substantial number of international visitors.	4.19	.730
Cultural sites in Mbarara District are well-preserved and attract many tourists.	3.93	.828
There is adequate infrastructure supporting cultural tourism in Mbarara District.	1.88	.966
The local community in Mbarara District actively participates in cultural tourism activities	1.86	.955
Cultural tourism in Mbarara District is a significant contributor to the local economy.	2.43	.788

Primary data source

The data herein portrays various trends of cultural tourism across three levels: the global level, Uganda, and Mbarara District.

Globally, cultural tourism has received a dramatic increase, as indicated by the high mean score of 4.20 with a relatively low standard deviation of .738. This means a strong consensus that cultural tourism at the globe is thriving propelled by an increased interest in experiencing other cultures.

In the context of Uganda, cultural tourism also presents positive trends with an average score of 4.19 and a standard deviation of .730, actually quite an indication that efforts to promote Uganda's

cultural assets have so far been successful, witnessed by many international visitors and increased importance as a cultural tourism destination.

However, it was interesting the disposition in which cultural tourism stood in Mbarara District. On one hand, it showed a relatively good state of site preservation and appeal, with a mean of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 0.828. This implies that these sites were relatively well-maintained and attracted a decent number of visitors.

On the other hand, there is a very low infrastructure to support cultural tourism within the district, represented by an average score of 1.88 and a standard deviation of 0.966. It means severe lacunas in the facilities and services which could add value to the tourist experience.

Besides, the community involvement in cultural tourism activities is also quite low, with a mean of 1.86 and a standard deviation of 0.955. This means that local people do not participate much in tourism activities; this is the major cause of underdevelopment in this sector. On the whole, though Mbarara District has fairly good grounds in terms of cultural sites, there is a big room for improvement in infrastructure and community participation.

A mean score of 2.43 and a standard deviation of .788 suggest that, on the contrary, the overall economic contribution of cultural tourism to the local economy is modest, thus signaling that insofar as cultural tourism makes an economic contribution, its role in district economic development remains limited.

While there is massive growth in cultural tourism both internationally and within Uganda, a number of challenges impinge on infrastructure, community involvement, and economic relevance in the Mbarara District, and thus require specific attention in order to improve as a means of realizing full benefit from its potential in cultural tourism.

The opportunities for cultural tourism globally and in Uganda

Table 3: The opportunities for cultural tourism globally and in Uganda

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
There are increasing global opportunities for the growth of cultural tourism	2.46	1.250
Uganda has a rich cultural heritage that presents significant opportunities for cultural tourism.	2.51	1.251
The global trend of experiential travel is benefiting Uganda's cultural tourism sector	2.41	1.191
Uganda has the potential to become a leading cultural tourism destination in Africa.	4.29	0.911
.Leveraging technology can enhance the promotion of Uganda's cultural tourism.	4.25	0.902
The preservation of cultural sites in Uganda is essential to maximizing tourism opportunities.	2.31	1.235

Source: Primary data

Table 3: The current state of cultural tourism globally, in Uganda and in Mbarara District

	Mean	Standard deviation
Globally, cultural tourism has experienced significant growth in recent years.	4.20	.738
Uganda's cultural tourism is well-promoted and attracts a substantial number of international visitors.	4.19	.730
Cultural sites in Mbarara District are well-preserved and attract many tourists.	3.93	.828
There is adequate infrastructure supporting cultural tourism in Mbarara District.	1.88	.966
The local community in Mbarara District actively participates in cultural tourism activities	1.86	.955
Cultural tourism in Mbarara District is a significant contributor to the local economy.	2.43	.788

Table 4 presents a mixed picture from data of the state of opportunities, both for cultural tourism globally and in Uganda. The mean scores for statements related to global opportunities and statements related to Uganda's cultural heritage suggest mixed perceptions of their potentials. More specifically, the perceived level of opportunity for the growth of cultural tourism globally (Mean = 2.46) and for Uganda's rich cultural heritage to drive tourism (Mean = 2.51) are much lower. Such relatively lower ratings may reflect a feeling that global and local opportunities are not being realized or that there are serious obstacles to exploiting such opportunities.

While the data seems rather optimistic, the ratings stand at an average of 4.29 for the item on Uganda's potential to be a leading cultural tourism destination in Africa and 4.25 for the use of technology to enhance the promotion of cultural tourism. These higher scores suggest that there is a strong belief in Uganda's potential to emerge as a major player in cultural tourism, and technological development can play an important role in this development. Such optimism may be indicative of recent improvements in marketing strategies and infrastructure that are starting to have an impact.

The respondents were somewhat less urgent about the need for the preservation of cultural sites in Uganda, with a mean of 2.31. This could indicate that it is an area of very important concern, but it is probably less vital than some other areas which will maximize the potential of tourism. Such perception could point out an opportunity to more easily integrate such preservation efforts with tourism development plans.

The data underlines strong beliefs in the potential of Uganda's cultural tourism sector, especially through technology and positioning in Africa; it also indicates areas where perceptions of opportunities could be taken further.

The opportunities for enhancing cultural tourism development in Mbarara District

Table 5: The opportunities for enhancing cultural tourism development in Mbarara District

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
There is potential to develop new cultural tourism sites in Mbarara District.	2.22	1.190
Investing in infrastructure could significantly enhance cultural tourism in Mbarara District.	2.25	1.154

Involving the local community in tourism planning could boost cultural tourism in Mbarara District.	2.32	1.224
Promoting local cultural festivals can enhance the appeal of Mbarara District as a cultural tourism destination.	2.41	1.261
Collaboration with local and international stakeholders can advance cultural tourism in Mbarara District.	2.24	1.165
Providing training for local artisans can improve the cultural tourism offerings in Mbarara District.	2.34	1.456

Source: Primary data

Table 5: Development Opportunities of Cultural Tourism in Mbarara District

The Data above in Table 5 represents different development opportunities for cultural tourism development in Mbarara. Statements are perceptions of possible ways to enhance cultural tourism development by having mean scores from a low of 2.22 to a high of 2.41 And standard deviations reflecting the spread of agreement.

Results from the survey provide some interesting insights regarding cultural tourism in Mbarara, especially on community attitudes and beliefs related to development opportunities.

A mean score of 2.22 for the statement developing new sites for cultural tourism indicates that the feelings of the respondents are somewhat neutral or slightly doubtful in relation to the potentiality of new sites. This would mean the response is uninformed about possible opportunities, or it is perceived that the current cultural attractions might suffice at the moment.

Likewise, the mean score of 2.25 for infrastructure investment indicates that while this is perceived as benefiting cultural tourism, there is some level of unclarity regarding the true effects such upgrades would provide.

In terms of the level of residents' involvement in tourism planning, the mean score reaches 2.32. Therefore, the respondents acknowledge community involvement but at a mediocre level. It may be that benefits of such

Either the premise of engagement isn't fully grasped, or there are pragmatic issues on how to accomplish this effectively.

The notion of encouraging cultural festivals at the local levels scored a 2.41 mean - indicating a belief these events could make Mbarara District more attractive as a cultural destination. Still, this would appear to be tempered in level of excitement by other considerations.

The collaboration with local and international partners showed a mean of 2.24, reflecting moderately optimistic perception of benefits that may be derived from this alliance. While all will acknowledge some merit in these partnerships, their being effective or practical remains a matter of opinion.

Lastly, training to local artisans received a mean of 2.34. It would appear that there is an opinion that the artisans' skills need to be upgraded in order to offer better cultural tourism experiences. However, with a higher standard deviation of 1.456, there are indeed mixed perceptions over the present state of artisan skills and their impact on tourism.

Overall, though there is a feeling that different opportunities are available for the development of cultural tourism in Mbarara District, responses also show skepticism or a moderate level of agreement that these strategies will prove effective. This calls for further investigation and a directed effort in an attempt to actually unlock the potential that exists for cultural tourism development.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The first section presents the discussion of findings, summary of the study findings in relation to the specific objectives, conclusion, and recommendations of the study in relation to the objectives of the study.

5.2 Discussion of the key findings

5.2.1 The current state of cultural tourism globally, in Uganda and in Mbarara District

In this respect, the data for cultural tourism exhibits a multi-composite scenario at global, national, and local levels in terms of having a good number of successes along with an equal share of challenges. That comes clearly from the very strong presence of cultural tourism at the global level. For example, Richards identifies that the emergence of cultural tourism as a main segment within the wider tourism sector is a result of rising demand from global visitors for more varied and involved cultural experiences. This agrees with data indicating that there is a feeling worldwide that cultural tourism is a booming business in response to a rising demand for authentic cultural experiences.

The cultural tourism is, however, on a positive increase in Uganda, especially with the national strategies put in place aimed at revealing the rich cultural heritage of the country. Research by Ochieng and Kitur, 2021, shows that Uganda is increasingly becoming an ideal destination for tourists around the world, largely because of massive adverts channeled this way. The government and other international partnerships have equally done so much.

However, Mbarara District does not portray that simple picture. Whereas the district has been highly rated in terms of ensuring that its cultural sites are well conserved and promoted, challenges are evident. According to Mwaura (2019), it is through conservation and organization of the cultural heritage that most districts in Uganda have ensured the resource base necessary for attracting tourists. In fact, despite such instances of effort, Mbarara faces challenges in terms of poor infrastructure and limited participation by the local community. As UNWTO, 2020 expounds, poor facilities may negatively affect and discourage tourism development in the developing areas since visitors' experience will be overall affected. Additionally, it's sad to note that there is a low rate of involvement by the community members of Mbarara. Tosun, 2006 explains that where residents are

not involved in tourism development; this has been seen as impacting negatively on the sustainability of tourism and maximization of benefits gained from tourism. The situation on the ground in Mbarara represents a missed opportunity as addressing such gaps would go a long way in reinforcing and enhancing the effectiveness of cultural tourism in the region.

5.2.2. Global and Ugandan prospects for cultural tourism.

The insights from Table 4 paint an elaborate picture of cultural tourism from both the global and Uganda-specific perspectives. In these respects, there would seem to be a fair share of mixed feelings toward the potential growth opportunity for this sector. While most respondents testified to the general presence of challenges offered by negative infrastructure and a lack of appropriate marketing, a tone of optimism was similarly captured-especially with regard to Uganda's role in driving the development of cultural tourism on the African continent.

Indeed, many scholars have identified that cultural tourism has strong potential, but this potential is often realized with considerable barriers. For instance, Timothy and Boyd, 2003, reported that a region may have difficulty in benefiting from its cultural resources, as seen by the views on global cultural tourism development vis-a-vis Uganda's rich heritage.

On the plus side, are musings that technology enhancement and improvement aided to alter perceptions of Uganda's potential? For instance, researchers such as Meskell 2015 and Ioannides and Holcomb 2017 note that technology has the ability to enhance exposure and market promotion. From this perspective, therefore, the improvement in marketing and infrastructure in Uganda hints at an increasing belief in the country's potentials to attract cultural tourists.

It is interesting, however, to note the rather low priority given to the preservation of cultural sites. Whereas most recognized that there was a greater need for preservation to create sustainable tourism development, there was the desire to maximize economic benefits now rather than taking time to engage in long-term preservation efforts. This tension has been noted by Hall (2005), as one of balancing preservation with development, and it signals the need for strategies which combine the goals of preserving cultural heritage with aspirations for tourism growth.

On the whole, while there is much potential for cultural tourism development in Uganda, the approaches also needed to be thoughtful with regard to both short term economic benefits and long-term site preservation.

5.2.3 Opportunities available for improving cultural tourism development in Mbarara District

Table 5: Insights into strategies for developing cultural tourism in Mbarara District

From Table 5, there are various perceptions of the strategies that might help boost cultural tourism in Mbarara District. These perceptions become very important in understanding how different approaches could influence the development of cultural tourism in the area.

The first important observation is the lukewarm interest in the creation of new cultural tourism sites. This could be because of some doubts over the usefulness or viability of such projects. This warning is also supported by available literature; for example, Timothy and Boyd, 2003 opine that, on many occasions, the improvement of resources that are already in culture is better than an investment in new ones, something that could be desired in areas where resources are minimal. This implies that the tendencies of the respondents may be directed toward using what they have.

A second important finding pertains to infrastructure improvement. Several researchers, such as Lee and Arcodia, have reiterated over time that infrastructure improvement is one of the important elements that will ensure that tourism succeeds. Despite recognizing its importance, a relatively high level of agreement suggests that the respondents may not fully understand the potential improvements in infrastructure for increasing tourism. It could have been due to a misunderstanding of how much infrastructure directly impacts the tourist experience.

Conservation and involvement of local communities in tourism planning also showed a significant number with a moderate score. The conservation aspect represents the community-based tourism principles that encourage significant sustainable tourism development at the local level. According to Murphy (1985), this provides an assurance of more authentic tourism experiences. However, this could also denote skepticism about the practical realities that are to be found in such wide inclusiveness.

The fact that the respondents perceive the strategy promoting local cultural festivals as a moderately promising one suggests they believe such festivals may attract tourists. In fact, Richards and Wilson (2004) note that such a situation may give a major fillip to the destination. On the other hand, the fact there is only moderate confidence in this strategy may indicate a belief that festivals are advantageous but their success depends on effective promotion and alignment with broader tourism initiatives.

The feeling on the cooperative approach with both local and international stakeholders was cautiously optimistic. Research into the development of tourism often emphasizes benefits relating to partnerships such as sharing resources and increasing marketing efforts-one finds these ideas

expressed in Gannon and Maher 2006. Yet, a fairly moderate level of perceived effectiveness would suggest that while respondents recognize potential, they are also cognizant of the complexities involved in creating and sustaining successful collaborations.

Finally, this awareness of the need for training of local artisans suggests a vision of skill development in a wider manner to promote resources of cultural tourism. Other studies, such as Gossling (2008), also pointed out that training can bring about better quality of tourism products and services that would attract more visitors. Such divergence of opinion on this matter perhaps represents the variation in opinion over the prevailing skill levels of artisans and the impact they have on tourism, thus there is a need for focused skills training programs which can be identified according to particular local needs.

Overall, these results depict a cautious yet optimistic attitude toward a range of options for the development of cultural tourism, a thoughtful approach, and narrowly focused initiatives.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1. Current situation of cultural tourism in the world, Uganda, and Mbarara District

In brief, despite the fact that cultural tourism is developing at an international level and in Uganda, many challenges have remained in the creation or improvement of infrastructure in Mbarara District, the involvement of the people, and economic benefits. Thus, efforts towards development and community involvement will increase the potential in Mbarara District for more cultural tourism to better benefit the economy of this district.

5.3.2. Cultural tourism opportunities in the world and in Uganda

These findings put into focus high optimism in the potential of Uganda's cultural tourism, especially in respect to technological advancement and its positioning within Africa, but at the same time they indicate areas of improvement with regard to perception and strategy. It might mean that while optimism and recognition of key growth factors exist, challenges regarding global opportunities and preservation will certainly arise as barriers to the realization of the full potential of Uganda's cultural tourism sector.

5.3.3 Opportunities for improving cultural tourism development in Mbarara District

In general, the findings showed a variation of levels of perceptions concerning the ways in which cultural tourism can be improved in Mbarara District. Whereas the agreements on the investments in

infrastructure and community involvement are relatively high, the moderate level of agreement about other strategies could be viewed as suggestion of potential need for more research and precise related investments to maximize the district's cultural tourism potential.

5.4 Recommendations

Improvement in the major infrastructure supports will, therefore, boost cultural tourism in Mbarara District. This involves the advancement of transport linkages, construction and improvement of tourist facilities, and provision of services. In improving such infrastructure, collaboration with local and national government agencies and involvement of private investors will help raise the necessary funds and expertise required for enhancement. Well-developed infrastructure will not only attract more tourists but also enrich their overall experience.

Other key moves include embracing technological developments to exploit the available global tourism opportunities available to develop the cultural tourism subsector of Uganda. Easily, these can be achieved through developing a strong digital marketing platform showcasing the cultural attractions and treasures of Uganda. Further, investing in technology-driven interventions such as virtual tours, interactive apps, and online booking engines will go a long way in ensuring visibility and access by foreign visitors. Participation with local startups and digital professionals in marketing will drive the creative ideas.

Tourism development in the district can only be seriously undergirded with community involvement in Mbarara and skilled cultural programs. This could be done by developing community-based tourism initiatives that could assist the locals in benefiting and be involved in the tourism business. More cultural festivals, workshops, and heritage events can exhibit local customs and arts and provide income opportunities for residents. Indeed, successful implementation and long-term sustainability of such actions depend on the strong partnerships that will be established among the local stakeholders, cultural organizations, and tourist authorities.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

I am Akatukunda Elise a student of Uganda Christian University conducting a research study on the “OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MBARARA DISTRICT. This research will help me meet one of the requirements for the award of Bachelor’s degree in Tourism and hospitality management of Uganda Christian University.

I am kindly requesting you to assist me in this study by answering the following questions

SECTION A: Demographic Data

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box as the most agreed answer to the following statements.

1. Gender of the respondent.

Male Female

2. Age group of the respondent.

21-30 year 31-40 year 41-50 years Above 50 years

SECTION B

Rate your degree of agreement using a scale of 5 = Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Not sure, 2=Disagree and 1=strongly disagree.

A	The current state of cultural tourism globally, in Uganda and in Mbarara District	5	4	3	2	1
1	Globally, cultural tourism has experienced significant growth in recent years.					
2	Uganda's cultural tourism is well-promoted and attracts a substantial number of international visitors.					
3	Cultural sites in Mbarara District are well-preserved and attract many tourists.					
4	There is adequate infrastructure supporting cultural tourism in Mbarara District.					
5	The local community in Mbarara District actively participates in cultural tourism activities					
6	Cultural tourism in Mbarara District is a significant contributor to the local economy.					
B	The opportunities for cultural tourism globally and in Uganda	5	4	3	2	1
7	There are increasing global opportunities for the growth of cultural tourism					
8	Uganda has a rich cultural heritage that presents significant opportunities for cultural tourism.					

9	The global trend of experiential travel is benefiting Uganda's cultural tourism sector					
10	Uganda has the potential to become a leading cultural tourism destination in Africa.					
11	.Leveraging technology can enhance the promotion of Uganda's cultural tourism.					
12	The preservation of cultural sites in Uganda is essential to maximizing tourism opportunities.					
C	The opportunities for enhancing cultural tourism development in Mbarara District	5	4	3	2	1
13	There is potential to develop new cultural tourism sites in Mbarara District.					
14	Investing in infrastructure could significantly enhance cultural tourism in Mbarara District.					
15	Involving the local community in tourism planning could boost cultural tourism in Mbarara District.					
16	Promoting local cultural festivals can enhance the appeal of Mbarara District as a cultural tourism destination.					
17	Collaboration with local and international stakeholders can advance cultural tourism in Mbarara District.					
18	Providing training for local artisans can improve the cultural tourism offerings in Mbarara District.					

Thank you