

**Impact of covid 19 on the performance of national parks: Case study of Rwenzori National Park**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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## **DECLARATION**

I Ssegawa Rooney hereby declare that this report is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due, acknowledgement has been made in the text and reference list.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this research report entitled “IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL PARKS” has been under my supervision and it is now ready for submission.

**SUPERVISOR: MR JULIUS JJUKO**

Signature

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Date

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I thank the Almighty God who enabled me to complete this long process with a successful end.



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**ABSTRACT**

The study was conducted on the topic entitled the Impact of COVID 19 on the performance of national parks, a case study of Rwenzori National Park. It later followed the following objectives; to determine the level of performance of national parks during and after COVID 19, to find out the challenges faced by Mt. Rwenzori National Park during and after covid-19 and to find out the measures taken by the national parks and tourism industry to recover from COVID-19 problems.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a descriptive research design was employed in which the relationship between COVID-19 and performance of national parks was determined. In addition, the descriptive kind of research design was adopted because it helps provide answers to questions of who, what, when. The study used a sample size of 20 respondents consisting of employees of Mt. Rwenzori National Park such as tour guides and rangers, management of the national park, tourists and community members. Questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. The researcher utilized closed-end in designing the questionnaire. Questionnaires give the respondent ample time to give the required information in the provided document, hence it assures high rate of response.

From the study findings, it was revealed that National parks were not closed during Covid-19 and this didn't decline the financial performance of the park, National parks had poor performance due to lack of funds, Rwenzori national park did not follow standard operating procedures and guidelines, Rwenzori national park could allow online bookings and online payments during and after Covid-19. From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 16(80%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there was low turn up of tourists, 4(20%) agreed, There was low turn up of tourists. It was revealed that respondents strongly agreed that there was increased poaching due to limited staff of the park that could monitor the park, no park staff (game rangers & tour guides) died of Covid 19 and Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19.

From the study findings, it was concluded that there is a stronger positive relationship between COVID 19 on the performance of national parks, since income of the national parks was lowered down by the coming of covid-19.



## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Globally, the travel and tourism industry directly contributed approximately (10%) equivalent to 2.9 trillion U.S. dollars to GDP in 2019 (Statista, 2020). The travel and tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth in 2019, outpacing that of the global economy (2.5%) for the ninth consecutive year (WTTC, 2020a). In 2018, passenger air travel comprised over 50% of international inbound tourism, which translated to revenue of around 812 billion U.S. dollars for commercial airlines (Statista, 2020). However, the COVID-19 outbreak which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan has brought the world to a standstill and presents the global community and the tourism sector with a major and evolving challenge (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020).

The COVID-19 outbreak has brought the world to a standstill with unparalleled and unforeseen impact in all aspects ranging from our lives, economies, societies and our livelihoods, thus creating a growing risk of a global recession coupled by massive loss of jobs (UNWTO, 2020a). Based on the latest developments such as quarantine measures, travel bans and border closures, UNWTO estimates international tourist arrivals could decline by 20% to 30% in 2020 translating to a loss of 300 to 450 US\$ billion in international tourism receipts (exports).

The world started closing down in early March 2020 when the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a global pandemic and actions to try and contain the spread of the virus including lockdowns and quarantines were implemented. With the first COVID-19 lockdown implemented in China in January 2020, the implementation of lockdowns increased and by March 2020, many European, African and South American countries had enforced lockdowns (Koh, 2020). Across much of the world lockdowns resulted in the closure of all non-essential businesses and only kept grocery stores and pharmacies open (Koh, 2020; Atalan, 2020). Along with the national lockdowns, travel restrictions and bans were also implemented to try to contain the spread of the virus. As of May 2021, there are almost 170 million confirmed cases worldwide and more than 3 million deaths (Worldometer, 2021a). While several vaccines have been developed, there have been numerous new strains discovered as the virus continues to mutate (Bollinger and Ray, 2021). The discovery of new strains is causing the restrictions to still be implemented, despite having a vaccine (UNWTO, 2021).

While all industries have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism is said to have been hit the hardest of all major economic sectors. The tourism sector is one of the most economically important (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). The pandemic has undoubtedly affected every industry, however, the impacts the COVID-19-pandemic would have on the tourism industry were hugely underestimated (Škare et. al, 2021). It has been established that the tourism industry is sensitive (Duan et al., 2021) and is particularly vulnerable to crises (Pforr, 2009). The reason for this is that the industry is highly influenced and dependent on many external factors such as “political instability, economic conditions, the environment and weather” (Okumus, Altinay and Arasli, 2005 in Ritchie and Jiang, 2019, p.1). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates over 60 million jobs were lost in the travel and tourism industry in 2020 (World Travel and Tourism Council, n.d.).

All countries that rely heavily on tourism have felt the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (Baratti, 2020). However, as with significant other crises, countries with weaker economies have perhaps felt the effects more severely. Some developed countries have been able to subsidise their tourism industries and provide unemployment benefits to people in the tourism industry but this has not been the case in many developing countries (UNWTO, 2020). In many Sub-Saharan countries where the tourism industry is a major contributor to the country’s economy and provides job security to many people, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been pronounced. One such country is Zambia, where the safari industry ground to an abrupt halt with the global travel restrictions (Baratti, 2020).

A national park is a large area of land which is protected the government because of tis natural beauty. Plants or animals and which the public can usually visit. Or national park is a park in use for conservation purposes. A national park is an area of special scenic, historical or scientific importance set aside and maintained by a government. Uganda has gotten most beautiful national Parks, each with different number of species. Uganda has many national parks which are over 10 national parks and reserves, although the term “national park” has been used throughout the world, national park systems have diversely evolved to meet unique country-specific circumstances, and thus are not uniform. Many countries have adopted a system similar to that of national parks established in the U.S., where national parks have been established on government-owned land (state ownership system). However in European countries and in Japan, where much of the land has been developed in the course of history and land ownership has become complex, a system in which national parks can

be designated in areas that have been excluded the ownership requirement (zoning system) was introduced. Masaaki Yui (2014).

Since Rwenzori Mountain falls was chosen as the case study, it is commonly referred to as the mountain of the moon, it covers about 1000 square kilometers. It has harbors over 60 mammals and 200 species of birds, it sits on the equator along the Uganda DRC boarder, Rwenzori Mountain falls slopes to the west of the famous Semuliki River and Lake Edward. It has a lot of Attractions such as; Vegetation water bodies, Snow, Animals, Birds and Cultural heritage. It contains different activities that are carried out for example There is nature and hiking walks in Rwenzori mountain, it give an opportunity for the nature walks in the central circuits zones, it includes trails to lake Mahooma and Buraco chimp forest and There is Bulemba Ihandiro cultural trail, this is a 6 to 7 hour trail movement through the holly valley and many other sit of great significance to the Bankozo tribe and There is a cultural encounter in Rwenzori Mountain.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

According to the UNWTO, international tourist arrivals fell by 81% in July and 79% in August, 2020 compared to 2019. In late October, they estimated a fall in international arrivals of roughly 70% for 2020, with the rebound only starting in the third quarter of 2021. They estimate it will take between 2½ and 4 years to return to 2019 levels. This affected Mt. Rwenzori national park since it was not receiving tourist from abroad and inside Uganda due to Covid-19. National parks were closed during covid-19.

The Government of Uganda through Uganda Tourism Board and Ministry of Tourism have tried so much to engage in promoting tourism attractions such as joining tourism expos like china expo among others but the turn-up is still very low. One wonders whether covid-19 has affected national park performance.

This therefore prompted the researcher to conduct a study on the impact of covid-19 on the performance of national parks using Mt. Rwenzori national park as the case study

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

### **1.3.1 General objective**

To assess the impact of COVID 19 on the performance of national parks in Mt. Rwenzori national park

### 1.3.2 Specific objective

- i. To determine the level of performance of national parks during and after COVID 19
- ii. To find out the challenges faced by Mt. Rwenzori National Park during and after covid-19
- iii. To find out the measures taken by the national parks and tourism industry to recover from COVID-19 problems

### 1.4 Research questions

- i. What is the level of performance of national parks during and after COVID 19?
- ii. What are the challenges faced by Mt. Rwenzori National Park during and after covid-19
- iii. What are the measures taken by the Mt. Rwenzori National Park and tourism industry to recover from COVID-19 problems?

### 1.5 Scope of the study

#### Content scope

The study sought to determine the level of performance of national parks during and after COVID 19, challenges faced by Mt. Rwenzori National Park during and after covid-19, impact of Covid-19 on the national parks and tourism industry at large in Uganda and the measures taken by the national parks and tourism industry to recover from COVID-19 problems.

#### Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Mt. Rwenzori National Park, which is located in western Uganda.

#### Time scope

The study lasted for a period of 3 months that is being effective from May 2023 to August 2023 and this period will be enough to make a report.

### 1.6 Significance of the study

- i. This research will be relevant to analyzing the impacts and effects of COVID-19 and could be applicable to other safari businesses, domestic and international.
- ii. The study will act as a reference to other researcher that will conduct the same study on the same variables.

iii. The study will be

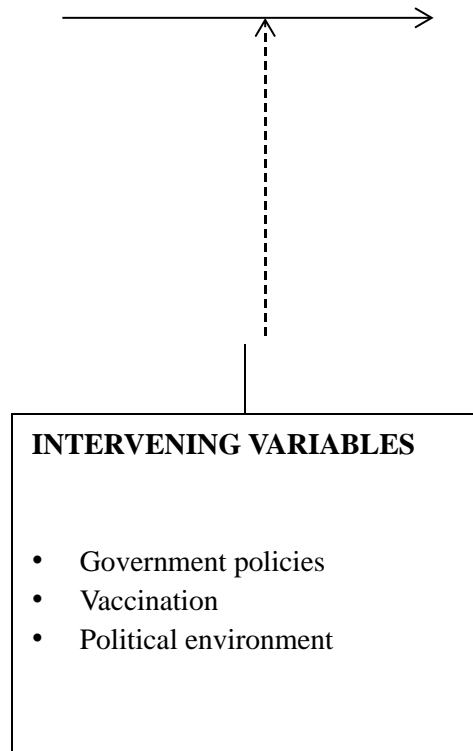
<b>IMPACT OF COVID -19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Restricted entry</li><li>• Banned movements</li><li>• Use of face masks</li></ul>	significant in portraying the	<b>NATIONAL PARK PERFORMANCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of tourists</li><li>• Foreign earnings</li><li>• Profitability</li></ul>
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challenges undergone by tourism in Uganda iv. The study will help the researchers to fulfill his partial requirement for the award of a degree in hotel and tourism management.

## 1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE**



Source; constructed by Researcher

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

The crises that have affected Uganda in the past have had varying effects on its national parks and tourism industry. This is reflected in Uganda's tourism performance over time, with dips in the year after major crisis. In some instances, the crises have had mild effects on the tourism industry.

## **2.1 Impact of Covid-19 on the national parks and tourism industry at large in Uganda**

Uganda started the year 2020 with a positive economic outlook, with the GDP growth expected to reach 6% in 2020 and stay at this level in 2021, spurred by private consumption and good performances in the industrial and services sectors (The World Bank Group, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant effect on the country's tourism industry; consumer and business sentiment are all disrupted. The most notable effects on the tourism industry and national parks have been associated with:-

- (i) Reduced arrivals and Visitation** - Reduced arrivals from international visitors as well as reduced visitation to Uganda's tourism attractions and facilities.
- (ii) Image Crises** – The image of the destination is always tarnished especially from crises that occur within Uganda . For crises that occur outside Uganda, there is always negative image by association, where Uganda is tied into the larger area image where the crisis is occurring. A case in point is the Ebola Virus scare in 2014 in West African Countries.
- (iii) Low Tourism Revenue** – Tourism receipts in periods after the crisis have always taken a dip.
- (iv) Reduced employment** – Employment has always been affected by the crises given that that there are few arrivals and visitation to tourist facilities and attractions is curtailed.
- (vi) Loss of life and Property** – In some sad instances, crises have led to loss of life and property which impact negatively on the surviving family and members of staff in case of loss of life and investment climate.

### **Consumer Confidence Dropped Over COVID-19**

KASI (2020) provides consumer insights for business promotion in Africa. Each month, they survey thousands of average Africans from over 10 countries and turn survey data into insights and measures that inform decision makers and investors (KASI, 2020). Consumer confidence (KASI CCI) dropped in February 2020 over COVID-19 concerns and the economic implication of the pandemic in Africa; the index dropped 6 points to +3. Both the sub-index of current economic conditions and of future expectations dropped 4 and 6 points respectively.

Despite the low prevalence of cases in Africa, they decided to launch a COVID-19 survey in 7 countries they cover each month and found that 85% of the people surveyed are concerned about COVID-19 with 60% of the respondents citing that they are very concerned about the COVID-19. Incidentally, respondents in countries where individuals have been tested positive for the COVID-19 are also the most concerned. In Uganda, 69% of the respondents stated they were very concerned about COVID-19 which is not surprising given the recent events in the country where passengers from China were released in the country without going through quarantine.

### **Potential Price Increase for Imported Products**

Some experts are warning of potential prices increase for products imported from China and sold in markets across Africa as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak (KASI, 2020). As the pandemic persists and the world fight to contain the virus, shortages are bound to increase and prices will likely go up. It is too early to tell how much price will go up by or how the consumers in Africa will adjust to the new norm.

By 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, more than 37 cargo ships that supply goods to Uganda and the rest of the region had failed to dock at the Mombasa port, having cancelled their arrivals. This is likely to see a surge in prices of consumer goods in the region. A number of vessels, which made a call at the port in February 2020, also reported blank arrivals. There are at least another 102 whose fate was unknown by 16<sup>th</sup>

March 2020. If they follow the same path of blank arrivals, then the supply chain disruption in East Africa will move to critical (Daily Nation, 2020a). Available figures indicate that China is Uganda's largest source market accounting for about 20% of Uganda's import requirements (Ugandan Wall Street, 2020).

### **Hotels and Restaurants Ordered to Stay Closed**

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many businesses globally struggling to stay afloat. The tourism industry has been largely affected following lockdowns and travel restrictions in various countries. The hospitality industry has also taken a big hit. Restaurants have been ordered to stay closed, save for take-out services (The Standard Group PLC, 2020). Some hotels have resorted to shutting down and suspending operations due to a reduction in number of guests at the facilities. Some of the hotels that have closed down include: Serena Hotels, Weston Hotel, Enashipai Resort and Spa, Ole-Sereni

Hotels, DusitD2 Nairobi, Sopa Lodges, White Rhino Hotel, Leopard Beach Hotel, Diani Reef, The Maiyan and many others are following suit every day.

### **Shutting Down Borders to Lock Out Virus and Slow Down Transmission**

The tourism industry is taking the biggest hit given the measures already taken by the government in shutting down its borders in an attempt to lock out the virus and slow down transmission. The virus now promises to derail the impressive recovery in the sector which was just shrugging off the impact of terror threats (Daily Nation, 2020a). The Economic Survey 2019 shows that tourism earnings increased by 31.3% to Sh157.4 billion in 2018. The number of international arrivals increased by 14 per cent to two million people in 2018, while hotel bed occupancy increased by 20.1% to 8.6 million, of which 52.1% were occupied by residents, indicating the growing importance of domestic tourism. But the lockdown and various actions geared at stopping the transmission of the virus will have the consequences of reversing these gains

### **Loss of Finances and Business Revenues**

Uganda Airways is taking the biggest hit in Uganda's aviation space, with most countries locking out airlines from countries that have reported cases of COVID-19. Uganda Airways estimates that it is losing at least Sh800 million a month, noting that the situation could change more dramatically in coming days as more restrictions in global travel come (Daily Nation, 2020a). According to the Daily Nation, China is arguably the largest trading partner with Africa and Uganda and, therefore, its significance cannot be downplayed. China is also a key cargo origin and a main feeder to regional freighters. On 16th March 2020, Jambojet suspended its services to Kigali, Rwanda and Entebbe, Uganda with immediate effect. Already, a number of airlines have started to revise their profit forecasts for the year, factoring in the impact of the virus on their revenues. Fixed costs, such as, rent, electricity, insurance, internet, marketing/advertising costs, will majorly affect hotels' bottom line negatively. The below-average revenues of many hotels will be exceeded by the expenditure (Standard Media, 2020). **Restriction of Travel among International Travelers**

Italy and the rest of Europe are some of the most important nations to Uganda's tourism industry and the ban on travel has seen hundreds trapped here and thousands others unable to travel (Daily Nation, 2020a). Tourism in Uganda, particularly the hotel industry, has been hit the most owing to lockdowns and travel advisories in nearly all parts of the world that have led to cancellations of bookings and reservations (Standard Media, 2020). Owing to booking cancellations, hotels have suffered low occupancy resulting in dismal accommodation revenue. Due to the virus scare, the

majority of Ugandans have shied away from eating out, drinking out, and attending conferences (Standard Media, 2020). These are key revenue centers in a hotel setup; their lack of utilization will lead to little or no revenue.

Many hotels, restaurants, pubs, cafes, meeting centers have been deserted.

### **Downsizing and Job Loss**

As a result of low occupancies, one of the obvious decisions by management of hotels will be to lay off casual workers and to suspend the renewal of contracts expiring during this period. Loss of jobs will affect families directly as the breadwinners are sent packing (Standard Media, 2020).

### **Unpaid Creditors**

With insufficient cash flow, hotels will not be able to meet their financial obligations, especially creditors, among other things. This will directly have a negative impact on the creditors' businesses and an indirect impact on other parties, depending on the creditors (Standard Media, 2020).

### **Wastage and Spoilage**

In as much as Uganda was alert and ready to employ recommended global measures of dealing with the pandemic in the eventuality it hits her, nobody expected the virus to catch up with us this soon. Procurement of edibles, perishables, among other delicate foodstuffs, had taken place with the hope of selling them to a projected number of customers. The low business volume has led to spoilage of perishables and other food items that cannot be preserved (Standard Media, 2020).

## **2.3 Measures Taken by the National Parks and Tourism Industry to recover from covid-19 problems**

Though Uganda remains one of the regions with the fewest cases, the number of African countries affected has increased over the past week. While the relatively low number of cases on the continent so far is good news, African policymakers including Uganda should not be complacent. They should instead use this window of opportunity to take decisive steps to protect their citizens and economies from the pandemic. To achieve these goals, Brookings Institution (2020) recommends a three-step approach: contain the spread of the virus; swiftly treat identified cases; and cushion the economy from the effects of the pandemic.

## **Containing the Spread of the Virus**

The Government, through the Ministry of Health, is doing the best to sensitize Ugandans and to inform them about emerging and suspected cases (Standard Media, 2020). Because Uganda and many African countries have relatively weak health care systems, proactive measures to prevent the spread of the virus will be critical (The Brookings Institution, 2020). Uganda Airways among other tourism organizations stepped up campaigns to educate the public on best practices, including promoting good hygiene and social distancing, discouraging large public gatherings, and encouraging employers to protect the jobs of employees who require quarantine or treatment. Campaigns should elicit the help of religious and civil society leaders for maximum effect

## **Suspension of All International Travel**

The Government of Uganda issued a directive that requires all incoming and outgoing international passenger traffic to and from Uganda to cease from midnight of 25th March, 2020. To comply with this directive, Uganda Airways temporarily suspended all international services effective midnight 25th March, 2020 until further notice (Uganda Airways, 2020). They will continue to operate cargo flights particularly and are available to offer emergency services or much needed supplies. Uganda Airways has been working hard to help their passengers return to their homes given the increased travel restrictions across the world. In the meantime, the domestic flights to Mombasa and Kisumu remain operational. Due to the ongoing uncertainty over travel plans, Uganda Airways is offering a waiver on change fees on all fares excluding travel within domestic Uganda. This change gives customers the confidence to continue with travel plans even with the uncertainty of this situation.

## **Leaders in the Tourism Sector's Support for the Fight against the Scourge**

The world all over is experiencing the greatest health emergency Corona Virus aka COVID-19. Almost all sectors that contribute to the economies have been affected. Tourism is one such economy that has been hard hit by the pandemic (Voyages Afriq Media, 2020). Leaders in the tourism sector have come out to show support for the fight against the scourge by encouraging travelers to heed to the UNWTO call to 'Stay Home for now and Travel Tomorrow.' KTB CEO Dr. Betty Radier said, the board is putting people first and sensitizing the tourism sector to ensure the necessary precautionary protocols are observed to curb and defeat covid-19 and will be happy to welcome the world back to Uganda when they travel tomorrow. 'We join the rest of the destinations in putting

people first and taking all precautions to flatten the COVID-19 curve; key measures include washing hands, social distancing and self- quarantine for those who have recently arrived into the country or been in to contact with infected persons. The Uganda n tourism private sector has been in the frontline in securing both the safety of visitors and staff alike. Uganda’s Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Najib Balala, on 19th March, 2020 held talks with the United Nations World Travel Organization (UNWTO) executive council and other global tourism leaders. The meeting was aimed at coordinating the efforts of the tourism sector globally and collaborating in the light of the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In a virtual meeting chaired by the UNWTO Secretary General, Zurab Pololikashvili, the leaders discussed the need to establish a joint action plan as a matter of priority (African Press Agency, 2020). The Cabinet Secretary noted that apart from creating awareness at this time, collaboration among all stakeholders would see tourism bouncing back to normalcy once the pandemic is contained.

### **Engaging UNWTO in Mitigating the Covid-19 Impact**

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in these challenging times has been engaging the WHO and other allied tourism organizations to look at ways of mitigating the impact on the tourism sector as well as urging governments to make tourism part of their recovery plans. The campaign essentially entreats citizens to stay home in order to help curb the spread of the virus while planning to travel tomorrow (Voyages Afriq Media, 2020). The Uganda Tourism Board (KTB), the agency responsible for the marketing of the country has joined the campaign to sensitize the public about the challenging times and the importance of staying at home as advised but also use this time to plan and explore the unforgettable experiences of Uganda’s tourism magic tomorrow.

### **Holding Meetings with the Frontline Staff and Private Sector Players**

Businesses have been hit hard and this will have a major impact on the economy. Hotels must train their staff on the virus, how it spreads and how spreading can be curbed. The use of disinfectants during cleaning is of the essence. Provision of enough clean water, soap and sanitizer for staff and guests is paramount to fighting the pandemic. If the Covid-19 pandemic is not urgently resolved, there will be more loss of lives, businesses, and jobs. Hopefully, the pandemic will be resolved soonest possible (Standard Media, 2020).

The Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Board have held several meetings with the frontline staff and private sector players to ensure that safety and WHO standard measures are adhered at all tourism facilities and points of entry (Voyages Afriq Media, 2020). This is also in line with the Ministry of Health directives in Uganda which the tourism sector is supporting.

### **Continuous Monitoring and Response through Integrated Approach**

Uganda's Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Najib Balala, while holding talks with the United Nations World Travel Organization (UNWTO) executive council and other global tourism leaders observed that "Addressing the multi-faceted impact of the pandemic demands an integrated approach across the world. When adequately supported with accurate and timely information, travel patterns will resume and tourism will rebound." He called for mobilization by key members to contribute to ways of mitigating the spread of COVID-19 as they put in measures for a recovery plan (African Press Agency, 2020). As destinations continue to put measures to handle the crisis, there is need to factor in recovery plans by involving key institutions such as the financial and research institutions.

### **Innovative Recovery Strategies and Solutions to the COVID-19 Crisis affecting the Uganda n Tourism Industry**

#### **Supply Customers with Updated Information**

Due to Covid-19 developments, Uganda Airways is currently experiencing extremely high call volumes and are unable to respond to all of them on time. Their Contact Center is prioritizing flight re-bookings for guests who are scheduled to travel within the next 72hrs. This is aimed at providing the affected customers with updated information as early as possible hence; the customers make sure contact details are up to date on the Uganda Airways 'Manage My Booking' site, and encourage all guest to check their 'Flight Status' on upcoming travel due to the rapidly evolving schedule changes.

#### **Share Lessons Learned and Assist Each Other**

The Ugandan Tourism community must come together to collaborate, coordinate, share lessons learned, and assist each other to combat the pandemic. Until every county, business and human is safe, the country will not be safe. The outbreak should serve to highlight the extent to which the tourism sectors in the country are interconnected and interdependent and should be a call to strengthen Uganda's institutions and the governance system.

## **Area Event Calendars**

Springfield-area event calendars, usually packed with spring activities, are instead filled with cancellations and postponements as the impact of the new COVID-19 intensifies (Springfield Business

Journal, 2020). Tracy Kimberlin, Convention & Visitors Bureau's (CVB) president and CEO said, "There will be plenty of other cancellations. We're trying to get a handle on how many are being canceled." Uganda n event planners should adopt Area Event Calendars where groups provide notifications of postponement or cancellation decisions.

## **Setting aside Funds for Post Corona Recovery Initiatives**

The Cabinet Secretary promised to set aside \$3 million for post corona recovery strategy (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2020). He also promised to give \$ 2million to the gazette the ministry's National Crisis Committee, to aid in boosting the image of the destination.

## **Deal with the Many Travel Advisories**

Tourism stakeholders in Uganda should request the government decision makers to be selective about who they allow to enter or leave the country rather than placing blanket bans on international travel. The request should be contained in a memorandum sent to the Uganda n government and shared with the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife in meeting with hoteliers, tour operators, travel agents, and airline representatives.

## **Strengthening of the Tourism Resilience Centre**

The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife is spearheading the establishment of a Tourism resilience Centre in Uganda. The Centre will assist the country with preparedness, management and recovery from crises. The roles of the Centre will be: creating, producing and generating toolkits; develop guidelines and policies to handle the recovery process following a disaster; assist with preparedness, management and recovery from disruptions and/or crises that impact tourism and threaten economies and livelihoods; collate data generated from different organizations related to tourism industry; and network on knowledge generation and sharing with other relevant regional and international bodies (kenyatta University, 2020).

## **Free-To-Attend Virtual Conference Open to All in the Tourism Industry**

While the world works through stages of virus contact, contagion, containment and control, nothing is certain. Nothing, aside from that our world will never be the same again. Even before recovery can be ventured into, leaders must come together to identify: changes in our world and people - operationally, financially, and psychologically; where, when and how signs of recovery can be anticipated; the role of travel and tourism in accelerating momentum for recovery (Africa Press Office, 2020). On 7th April, 2020 Hospitality Tomorrow hosted a free-to-attend virtual conference from the safety of our own home or office. The participants gained from 6 hours of interactive, essential industry insights delivered by stellar lineup of global speakers, virtual exhibition and roundtables, and live face-to-face networking sessions.

Topics covered were: the economics of COVID-19, how to survive the greatest adversity of our time, the nine essential leadership behaviours needed in a crisis, the outlook to recovery, how to capitalize on the upturn when it comes and the new post-COVID reality. These discussions were moderated by the presenter of HARDtalk and conference chair, Stephen Sackur and Anita Mendiratta, Special Advisor to Secretary General, UNWTO (Africa Press Office, 2020).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

Burns and Bush (2010), is a set of advance decisions that make up the master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information. Research design is a blue print, a frame-work for conducting a study, control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a descriptive research design was employed in which the relationship between COVID-19 and performance of national parks was determined. In addition, the descriptive kind of research design was adopted because it helps provide answers to questions of who, what, when.

### **3.3 Study Population**

Target population is the collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made. In the study, the target population was respondents consisting of employees of Mt. Rwenzori National Parks such tour guides and rangers, management of the national parks, tourists and community members.

#### **3.4.1 Sample Size**

The study used a sample size of 20 respondents consisting of employees of Mt. Rwenzori National Parks such tour guides and rangers, management of the national parks, tourists and community members.

**Table showing sample size**

	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling techniques</b>
Tourists	6	Simple random sampling
Tour guides and tour rangers	4	Purposive sampling
Management of the national park	2	Purposive sampling
Community members	8	Simple random sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

#### **3.4.2.1 Simple Random Sampling**

Simple random sampling provides an equal and unsystematic chance of selection of both variables. Simple random sampling helped the researcher balance representation of demographics of the population such as age, sex, religion and others. The choice of this technique helped the researcher to get unbiased data.

#### **Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental sampling. It helped the researcher to focus on decisions of the respondents who have adequate information about the effects covid-19 on the performance of national parks.

### **3.5 Data Sources**

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data during the study.

#### **3.5.1 Primary Source**

Data was obtained from first-hand information directly from the employees of Mt. Rwenzori national park through administering questionnaires to the selected respondents.

#### **3.5.2 Secondary Source**

This consisted of data from already existing literatures such as textbooks, journals, annual reports, internet, magazines and newspapers among others

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

The study constituted or used the interview method and questionnaire method. This is because the mentioned methods was cheap in the collection of data and also provided a wide range of data

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaire is a structured technique for data collection that consists of a series of questions, written or verbal, that a respondent answers. A series of questions make up the questionnaires so as to gather all the relevant information from respondents for the purpose of making investigation and conclusion of the problem understudy. The researcher utilised closed-end in designing the questionnaire. The primary motive of having structured questions is to save the respondent amount of thinking and effort. Questionnaires give the respondent ample time to give the required information in the provided document, hence it assures high rate of response. Questioning is also faster and cheaper research instrument as the resources consumed by the instrument are minimal.

#### **3.6.2 Interviews**

Interview as a formal process in which a trained interviewer asks a subject a set of predetermined and probing questions usually in a face-to-face setting. Interviews facilitated the revelation of more information through the recording and taking down of notes from respondents. More qualitative and reliable data was disclosed as questions can be clarified for a better understanding by the respondents.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

#### **3.9.1 Quantitative Analysis**

The collected data especially the type that has numerical information was edited, coded and reviewed in order to have the required quality, accuracy, consistency and completeness. Data was analyzed quantitatively based on statistical data analysis approaches that incorporate frequency distributions, measurement of central tendencies (graphs, tables, pie-charts, histograms, and pictures). Interpretation was done using Microsoft excel.

#### **3.9.2 Qualitative Analysis**

Data collected from the respondents was presented, deduced, and analyzed through descriptive narration, graphs, tables and pie charts. Descriptive narration was used to examine the qualitative data collected from respondents.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

In the process of data collection, the researcher bared in mind that the need to handle the respondents with care and respect. There was need to ensure that the researcher’s action did not offend the respondents. The researcher humbly asked for content of the respondents before soliciting for information from them.

### **3.11 Limitations**

Financial problems in gathering the relevant data and also expenses related to transport, stationary such as printing and photocopying.

The researcher faced non-response of some questions especially where the respondents selected have little knowledge about particular questions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings that were collected using data collection instruments such as the questionnaires, interviews etc. findings are presented in line with the stated objectives of the study

### **4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents**

#### **4.1.1 Gender of respondents**

**Table showing gender of respondents**

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	8	40
Female	12	60

Total	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
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**Source: primary data, 2022**

According to findings in table 2, it was revealed that 40% of the respondents were males, 60% of the respondents were female.

**Table showing age bracket**

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 25 years	8	40
26-30	3	15
31-40	7	35
40 and above	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: primary data, 2022**

Findings from table 2, it was revealed that 40% of the respondents were below 25 years of age, 15% of the respondents were between 26 to 30 years, 35% of the respondents were between 31-40 years and 10% of the respondents were above 40 years.

**Table showing education level**

	Frequency	Percentage
O level	10	50
Institute	4	20
University	6	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Primary Data, 2022**

It's from the above table that it was revealed that 50% of the respondents had stopped in "O" level, 20% of the respondents had reached institute and 30% had reached university which means that all respondents were educated.

**4.2 Findings on the Level of performance of national parks during and after Covid-19 Table showing findings on the Level of performance of national parks during and after Covid19**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
National parks were closed during Covid-19 and this declined the financial performance of the park	-	1(5%)	-	8(40%)	11(55%)	20(100%)
National parks had poor performance due to lack of funds	6(30%)	7(35%)	7(35%)	-	-	20(100%)
Rwenzori national park followed standard operating procedures and guidelines	6(30%)	-	1(5%)	5(25%)	8(40%)	20(100%)

Rwenzori national park could allow online booking and online payments during and after Covid-19	12(60%)	4(20%)	1(5%)	3(15%)	-	20(100%)
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**Source; Primary Data, 2022**

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 1(5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that National parks were closed during Covid-19 and this declined the financial performance of the park, 8(40%) disagreed., 11(55%) strongly disagreed, this implies that National parks were not closed during Covid-19 and this didn't decline the financial performance of the park

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 6(30%) of the respondents strongly agreed that National parks had poor performance due to lack of funds, 7(35%) agreed, 7(35%) were not sure, this implies that National parks had poor performance due to lack of funds

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 6(30%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Rwenzori national park followed standard operating procedures and guidelines, 1(5%) were not sure, 5(25%) disagreed, 8(40%) strongly disagreed, this implies that Rwenzori national park did not follow standard operating procedures and guidelines.

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 12(60%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Rwenzori national park could allow online booking and online payments during and after Covid-19, 4(20%) agreed, 1(5%) were not sure, 3(15%) disagreed. This implies that Rwenzori national park could allow online booking and online payments during and after Covid-19

### 4.3 Findings on the Challenges faced by mt. Rwenzori national park during and after covid

**Table showing Findings on the Challenges faced by mt. Rwenzori national park during and after covid**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Rwenzori national park lacked enough funds to take care of the park	8(40%)	6(30%)	5(25%)	1(5%)	-	20(100%)
Most of the park employees could not access work due to restrictions of Covid-19	2(10%)	2(10%)	4(20%)	10(50%)	2(10%)	20(100%)
Rwenzori national park had a challenge of high maintenance costs during and after Covid-19	4(20%)	11(55%)	5(25%)	-	-	20(100%)
There was low turn up of tourists.	16(80%)	4(20%)	-	-	-	20(100%)

There was increased poaching due to limited staff of the park that could monitor the park	-	2(10%)	6(30%)	10(50%)	2(10%)	20(100%)
Some park staff (game rangers & tour guides) died of Covid 19.	-	-	3(15%)	14(70%)	3(15%)	20(100%)
Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19.	4(20%)	2(10%)	8(40%)	4(20%)	2(10%)	20(100%)

Source; primary data, 2022

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 8(40%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Rwenzori national park lacked enough funds to take care of the park, 6(30%) agreed, 5(25%) were not sure, 1(5%) disagreed. This implies that Rwenzori national park lacked enough funds to take care of the park

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 2(10%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Most of the park employees could not access work due to restrictions of Covid-19, 2(10%) agreed, 4(20%) were not sure, 10(50%) disagreed, 2(10%) strongly disagreed, this implies that Most of the park employees could access work due to restrictions of Covid-19.

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 4(20%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Rwenzori national park had a challenge of high maintenance costs during and after Covid19, 11(55%) agreed, 5(25%) were not sure, this implies that Rwenzori national park had a challenge of high maintenance costs during and after Covid-19.

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 16(80%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there was low turn up of tourists, 4(20%) agreed, this implies that There was low turn up of tourists.

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 2(10%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there was increased poaching due to limited staff of the park that could monitor the park,

6(30%) agreed, 10(50%) disagreed, 2(10%) strongly disagreed, this implies that there was no increased poaching due to limited staff of the park that could monitor the park

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 14(70%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that no park staff (game rangers & tour guides) died of Covid 19, 3(15%) strongly disagreed and this implies that no park staff (game rangers & tour guides) died of Covid 19.

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 4(20%) of the respondents were in agreement that Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19, 8(40%) were not sure, 4(20%) disagreed, 2(10%) strongly disagreed, this implies that Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19

#### **4.4 Findings on the Measures taken by MT. Rwenzori national park and tourism industry to recover from covid-19 problems**

**Table showing findings on the Measures taken by MT. Rwenzori national park and tourism industry to recover from covid-19 problems**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
There was introduction of online booking for the tour companies and tourists as such.	12(60%)	6(30%)	2(10%)	-	-	20(100%)
The park followed Covid-19 standard operating procedures	8(40%)	6(30%)	4(20%)	2(10%)	-	20(100%)
The park emphasized vaccinating of all its workers (tour guides, game rangers)	2(10%)	14(70%)	4(20%)	-	-	20(100%)
The park started advertizing through websites, internet and	6(30%)	12(60%)	2(10%)	-	-	20(100%)
other social media platforms						

Encouraging local tourism through advertising on local channels	4(20%)	11(55%)	5(25%)	-	-	20(100%)
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Source; primary data, 2022

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 4(20%) of the respondents were in agreement that Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19, 8(40%) were not sure, 4(20%) disagreed, 2(10%) strongly disagreed, this implies that Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 12(60%) of the total respondents strongly agreed that There was introduction of online booking for the tour companies and tourists as such, 6(30%) agreed, 2(10%) were not sure; this implies that There was introduction of online booking for the tour companies and tourists as such

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 8(40%) of the total respondents strongly agreed that the park followed Covid-19 standard operating procedures, 6(30%) agreed, 2(10%) disagreed, this implies that the park followed Covid-19 standard operating procedures

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 2(10%) of the total respondents strongly agreed that the park emphasized vaccinating of all its workers (tour guides, game rangers), 14(70%) agreed, 4(20%) were not sure, this implies that the park emphasized vaccinating of all its workers (tour guides, game rangers)

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 6(30%) of the total respondents strongly agreed that the park started advertng through websites, internet and other social media platforms, 12(60%) agreed, 2(10%) were not sure, this implies that the park started advertng through websites, internet and other social media platforms

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 4(20%) of the total respondents strongly agreed that Encouraging local tourism through advertising on local channels, 11(55%) agreed, 5(25%) were not sure, this implies that Encouraging local tourism through advertising on local channels

**CHAPTER FIVE**

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Summary of findings**

**5.1.1 Findings on the Level of performance of national parks during and after Covid-19** From the study findings, it was revealed that National parks were not closed during Covid-19 and this didn't decline the financial performance of the park, National parks had poor performance due to lack of funds, Rwenzori national park did not follow standard operating procedures and guidelines, Rwenzori national park could allow online booking and online payments during and after Covid-19.

### **5.1.2 Findings on the Challenges faced by Mt. Rwenzori national park during and after covid**

From the study findings, it was revealed that 8(40%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Rwenzori national park lacked enough funds to take care of the park, 6(30%) agreed, 5(25%) were not sure, 1(5%) disagreed. This implies that Rwenzori national park lacked enough funds to take care of the park, it was revealed that respondents strongly agreed that Most of the park employees could access work due to restrictions of Covid-19. it was revealed that respondents strongly agreed that that Rwenzori national park had a challenge of high maintenance costs during and after Covid-19.

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that 16(80%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there was low turn up of tourists, 4(20%) agreed, There was low turn up of tourists. It was revealed that respondents strongly agreed that there was no increased poaching due to limited staff of the park that could monitor the park, no park staff (game rangers & tour guides) died of Covid 19 and Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19

### **5.1.3 Findings on the Measures taken by MT. Rwenzori national park and tourism industry to recover from covid-19 problems**

From the study findings in the table above, it was revealed that the respondents were in agreement that Inadequate funds to advertise for the services during Covid-19, there was introduction of online booking for the tour companies and tourists as such, the park followed Covid-19 standard operating procedures, the park emphasized vaccinating of all its workers (tour guides, game rangers), it was revealed that the park started adverting through websites, internet and other social media platforms; it was revealed that Encouraging local tourism through advertising on local channels

## **5.2 Conclusion**

From the study findings, it can be concluded that there is a stronger positive relationship between COVID 19 on the performance of national parks, since income of the national parks was lowered down by the coming of covid-19

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am SSEGAWA ROONEY, a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing Bachelor's in Tourism and Hospitality management (BOTHM) currently undertaking research on the topic “*the impact of COVID-19 on the performance of national parks, a case study of Rwenzori National Park*”. The data shall be used for academic purpose only and it will be treated with confidentiality it deserves. The respondents are highly encouraged and persuaded to respond to the statements in this questionnaire in the most truthful and objected way possible. Your participation in facilitating this study will be highly appreciated. Kindly tick in the space provided with the correct answer

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



Please tick in the box with the correct answer/option

1. Gender  (a) Male  (b) Female

2. Age  (a) Up to 25 years  (b) 26-30 years  (c) 31-40 years   
 (d) Above 40 years

3. Education background  (a) Below O level  (b) university level  (d) others

### SECTION B; LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL PARKS DURING AND AFTER COVID 19

FOR SECTION B, C, & D; Please answers the following statement using the following scale; SA – Strongly Agree, A- Agree, NS- Not Sure, DS- Disagree, SDA- Strongly Disagree.

Statement	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
National parks were closed during covid-9 and this declined the financial performance of the park					
National parks had poor performance due to lack of funds					

Rwenzori National Park followed standard operating procedures and guidelines					
Rwenzori National Park could allow online booking and online payments during and after covid-19					

**SECTION C; CHALLENGES FACED BY MT. RWENZORI NATIONAL PARK DURING AND AFTER COVID-19**

Statement	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
1. Rwenzori National Park lacked enough funds to take care of the park					
2. Most of the Park employees could not access work due to restrictions of covid-19					
3. Rwenzori National Park had a challenge of high maintenance costs during and after covid-19					
4. There was low turn up of tourists					
5. There was increased poaching due to limited staff of the park that could monitor the park					
6. Some park staff (game rangers & tour guides) died of covid-19					
7. In adequate fund to advertise for the services during covid-19					

**SECTION D: MEASURES TAKEN BY MT. RWENZORI NATIONAL PARK AND TOURISM INDUSTRY TO RECOVER FROM COVID-19 PROBLEMS?**

Statement	SA	A	NS	DA	SDA
1. There was introduction of online booking for the tour companies and tourists as such.					
2. The park followed covid-19 standard operating procedures.					
3. The park emphasized vaccinating of all its workers (tour guides & game rangers among others).					
4. The park started advertising through websites, internet and other social media platforms.					
5. Encouraging local tourism through advertising on local channels.					

**THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

**APPENDIX A**

**PROPOSED BUDGET**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT UGX</b>
TRANSPORT	150,000
DATA COLLECTION	50,000
STATIONARY	50,000
TYPING/PRINTING/BINDING	35,000
INTERNET	50,000
AIRTIME	50,000
MISCLENEOUS	100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>485,000</b>

## APPENDIX B

### WORK PLAN

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>Writing Chapter one</b>	<b>May- June 2023</b>
<b>Searching for Literature Review and finishing Chapter two</b>	<b>June 2023</b>
<b>Writing Chapter three</b>	<b>June 2023</b>
<b>Writing Chapter four</b>	<b>July 2023</b>
<b>Writing Chapter five</b>	<b>August 2023</b>
<b>Binding and submission</b>	<b>August 2023</b>