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**DESTINATION IMAGE AND THE TOURISTS' SATISFACTION IN UGANDA: A
CASE STUDY OF QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK -KASESE DISTRICT**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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MAY, 2022

DECLARATION

I Wanyama Priscillar hereby declare that this research was produced out of my own effort with the guidance of my supervisor and has never been submitted to any other institution for any award.

Signature: Date:

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APPROVAL

This research has been supervised and approved by me and is therefore ready for submission to the Faculty of Management Sciences of Busitema University.

Signature: Date:

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(Academic Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents Lt.col. Wanyama Denis and Ms. Ajambo Ketty, Mr. and Mrs. Mandela for the supportive hand and courage they have given me, dear friends Serah Shamim Nakayenze Joy, Muhair Keren Happuch, Okiror Ismail who advised, supported and mentored me throughout my education up to university level. Above all, I thank the Almighty God for guidance and provision towards completion of this research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

UNWTO United Nations' World Tourism Organization

E.U European Union

IATA The international Air Transport Association

DOSM Department of Statics Malaysia

WTTC World Travel & Tourism Council

USD United States Dollar

HRM Human Resource Manager

E.G For example

ABSTRACT

The study was about destination image and the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda. The study was aimed at achieving the following objectives; examine the effects of cognitive image on tourists' satisfaction, to examine the effects of cultural image on tourists' satisfaction and to examine the effects of infrastructure factor on tourists' satisfaction. The study discovered that despite the importance of destination image on the tourism sector very few papers have tried to explore the relationship of destination image on tourists' satisfaction in Uganda. This creates the question of what is the impact of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in the Ugandan Economy. 36 respondents were selected to give their views about destination images and tourist satisfaction and closed ended questionnaire was the main tool used to collect the responses from the different respondents. We used across sectional research design and a quantitative approach.

Findings showed that there is a very significant effect between destination image and tourist satisfaction; cognitive image and tourist satisfaction; and, infrastructure factor and tourist satisfaction. The study therefore, recommends that improvement of tourist satisfaction requires a good destination image having facilities, cognitive images for instance the tourist attractions, accommodation and infrastructure.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, general objective of the study, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, definition of terms, conceptual frame work and explanation of the variables.

1.1 Background of the study

Tourism plays a main role in contributing to economic growth which is an integral part of economic, social, regional and physical development. In 2018, tourism performance of the world grew 5% of international tourist arrivals which successfully reached to the 1.4 billion arrivals as well as generated USD 1.7 trillion of export earnings from tourism (UNWTO, 2019).

In the global perspective, the tourism industry has underlined the importance of destination image as one of the best ways to strengthen the competitive advantages of a destination as well as increasing the quality of tourism destination. Vietnam tourism industry has seen impressive growth recently. In 2014, Vietnam welcomed more than 7.8 million international tourists and the domestic tourists also increased rapidly to about 38.5 million visitors which generated an income of US\$8.8 billion, contributing a significant proportion to the country's GDP and tourism ranked 5th among the best industries to bring income in foreign currencies for the country (VNAT, 2015). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2019), international tourist arrivals worldwide is expected to increase by 3.3% a year between 2010 and 2030 to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to UNWTO's long term forecast tourism towards 2030. Between 2010 and 2030, arrivals in emerging destinations (+4.4% a year) are expected to increase at twice the rate of those in advanced economies (+2.2% a year). The market share of emerging economies increased from 30% in 1980 to 45% in 2014 and is expected to reach 57% by 2030 equivalent to over 1 billion international tourist arrivals.

Travel within Europe actually fell from August to October. In October, international travel globally remained 88% below the level of one year ago. Business confidence had returned to pre-COVID levels but consumer confidence was still down. At the end of November, forward bookings in the EU for the peak Christmas period were 80% below last year's level.⁸ IATA

estimates that air travel revenues, as measured by revenue passenger-kilometers (RPKs), will fall by 66% in 2020 and not recover to pre-COVID levels until 2024.

In the sub-Saharan region, the tourism industry is one of the most important contributors to the growth of Malaysia (Kushwah & Chaturvedi, 2019). The tourism industry is the third-largest contributor in Malaysia which is accounting for more than 7.0% of the country economy. In 2018, the tourism industry has generated revenue with a total of RM 11.0 billion for Sarawak as well as contributed 7.5% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Sarawak (DOSM, 2018).

Countries like Kenya experience low levels of tourist satisfaction witness significant reductions in tourism businesses. Tourists will not revisit the same destination if they feel dissatisfied, which may cause a significant decline in the tourism economy (Khoshnevis Yazdi et al., 2017). Park et al. (2019) demonstrated that tourists reported lower satisfaction level with destination quality as well as its image after they have revisited the destination. This underlines the need for a better understanding of the factors that influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intention which are needed for developing a desirable destination in a region (Zainuddin et al., 2016). In this regard, the power of destination image is acknowledged universally due to its effect on perception, consequent behavior, and destination choice of tourists (Zhang et al., 2018).

In the Ugandan economy, UNWTO, (2019) explains that, 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. It is estimated that it will take between 2½ and 4 years to return to 2019 levels. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) reported a 99% drop in international air travel in May. There was a slight improvement in the following months, but this trend stopped with the second wave of infections. As with other observers, they expect domestic travel to pick up first. For international travel, visiting family and friends is likely to rebound before business or leisure tourism.

Therefore, the problem of declining tourist attraction could be ascribed due to poor destination images made by the tourists' sector.

However, a lot of studies have been carried out in Vietnam, Malaysia and India but the problem seems not to be addressed regard to the solution. There is also no evidence of such a study conducted in Uganda and therefore, this presents a knowledge gap and thus, there is need to

conduct such a study in order to examine the effects of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda a case study of Queen Elizabeth National Park.

1.2 Problem statement

The travel and tourism industry is one of the biggest industries in the world. Given its many disparate parts, and the lack of reliable data, it is impossible to give a satisfactory estimate of its total size. Tourists' satisfaction seems to portray a negative trend for instance dissatisfaction of tourists' associated with low perceived attractions, inaccessibility of resources and poor lodging services of the hotel. This is evidenced by the annual report of UNWTO, (2019) which asserts that international tourist arrivals fell by 81% in July and 79% in August, 2020 compared to 2019 due to low accessibility to resources. 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. The UNWTO, (2019) estimated that it will take between 2½ and 4 years to return to 2019 levels. In a similar situation, a report by WTTC, (2020) forecasted a fall in international tourist arrivals between 41% and 73% for 2020. By August, it appeared to be leaning towards the worst-case scenario, after observing the return of some travel restrictions in the European market and later they estimated a drop of 73% in international tourist arrivals for Africa for 2020 in November. Therefore, despite the importance of destination image on the tourism sector very few papers have tried to explore the relationship of destination image on tourists' satisfaction in Uganda. This creates the question of what is the impact of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in the Ugandan Economy.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish the impact of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda: a case of Queen Elizabeth National Park-Kasese District.

1.4 Specific objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following specific research objectives:

- i. To examine the effect of cognitive image on tourists' satisfaction.
- ii. To examine the effects of cultural image on tourists' satisfaction.

- iii. To examine the effects of infrastructure factor on tourists' satisfaction.

1.5 Research questions

The study will aim at answering the following questions:

- i. What is the effect of cognitive image on tourists' satisfaction?
- ii. What is the effect of cultural image on tourists' satisfaction?
- iii. What is the effect of infrastructure factor on tourists' satisfaction?

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the study covered three dimensions that are; content, geographical and time and these were discussed in detail below.

1.6.1 Content Scope

The study focused on the impact of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda. It was limited to; the effect of cognitive image on tourists' satisfaction, the effect of cultural image on tourists' satisfaction and effect of infrastructure factor on tourists' satisfaction.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Queen Elizabeth National Park in Kasese District. This was because it's one of the hotels in Uganda that has tried to ensure that destination image was put at the forefront in the bid to ensure improved tourists' satisfaction.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study focused on the period from 2010 to 2021. This helped in comparing the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda for the past 10 years.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study added onto the theory of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction by focusing on the different destination images in Uganda.

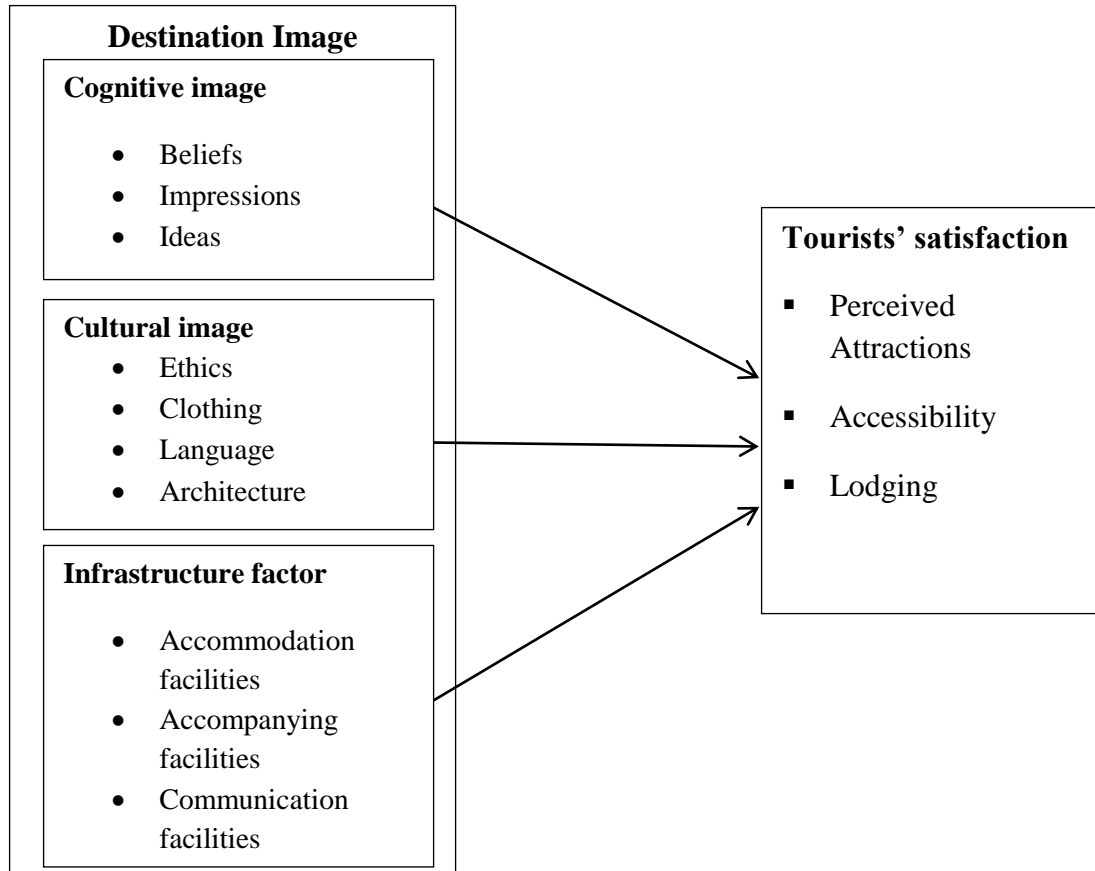
The study benefited the management of Queen Elizabeth National Park and other hotels as they understood the different destination images that could be implemented to ensure improved customer/ tourists' satisfaction available for them as far as decision making was concerned.

The study benefited scholars and academicians interested in pursuing a study in destination image and tourists' satisfaction in Uganda as it formed a foundation for other studies. Also the result of this research provided the reference for other researchers who aimed to do the same study. So it added up in the data bank of the academic areas.

1.8 Conceptual framework

According to Creswell, (2014) conceptual framework is a basic structure of a research consisting of a certain abstract ideas and concepts that a researcher wanted to observe or analyze. This study sought to establish the effect of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda, a case of Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Figure 1: Shows the conceptual framework



Source: Adapted from Warstrom and Niemela (2015)

Based on the above conceptual frame work, Tourists' satisfaction was the dependent on Destination image. Destination Image practiced was in three dimensions that is; Cognitive image, Cultural image and Infrastructural factor used. The indicators for Tourists' satisfaction tourists' satisfaction include; perceived attractions, accessibility and lodging (Kozak, M., 2010). This also explained by the Social exchange theory which assumes that a framework which indicates how individuals are contingent on rewarding actions from others (Emerson, 1976). Subsequently, this theory has been commonly implemented to consider the perceptions, attitudes and satisfaction level of tourist towards tourism (Coulson et al., 2014). The researcher used this framework to check on the impact of destination image on the tourists' satisfaction in Uganda a case of Queen Elizabeth National Park.

1.9 Definitions of terms used in the study

1.9.1 Satisfaction.

This is defined as customers' judgments about products or service fulfillment (Oliver, 2017).

1.9.2 Destination image.

Destination image defined as “the overall perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time” for example, (Assael, 2011)

1.9.4 Tourists' satisfaction.

According to Tse and Wilton (2010), define tourists' satisfaction as the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (or some norm of performance) and the actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption”.

1.9.5 Destination.

This is a geographic area which can be defined at various levels of aggregation e.g. village, town, region or country.

Copper et al (2020) grouped destination attributes into four categories- attractions, access, amenities and ancillary services.

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