

**ROCK CLIMBING AND ITS IMPACT ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA;
A CASE STUDY OF TORORO MUNICIPALITY**

BY

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**RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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DECLARATION

I **ORINGO JONAH** hereby declare that the work in this proposal is original and has never been published or submitted to any institution of learning for any academic award.

Signature.....Date.....

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APPROVAL

This dissertation titled, “*Rock climbing and its impact on tourism development in Uganda*” has been developed under my supervision and is ready for submission for the award of a Degree of Bachelors’ in of tourism and travel management of Busitema University

Signed: Date:

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(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family members; mostly, Mr. Ochenge Ronald, Mrs. Asimwe Caroline, Uncle Nicholas Kereba and Aunt Ningino Joan, the Radfords,. Not forgetting also my loved ones Florence Agayo and Oringo Jude James for each and every effort they have put in place both spiritually and financially to make me who I am today. May almighty God bless you and lift you on high forever endeavors.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

NP	:	National parks
RC	:	Rock Climbing
UTB	:	Uganda Tourism Board
IFSC	:	International Federation of Sport Climbing
NGOs	:	Non-Government Organizations
SET	:	Social exchange theory
YHA	:	Youth Hostel Association
YMCA	:	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	:	Young Women's Christian Association
ISTC	:	International Student Travel Confederation
CBT	:	Community based tourism
VLT	:	Village Life Tourism
CBNRM	:	Community Based Natural Resource Management

ABSTRACT

The study was to examine the impact of Rock climbing on Tourism Development in Uganda with reference to Tororo municipality as a case study. The research objectives were; (i) To find out how rock climbing affects the development of accommodation in Tororo Municipality, (ii) To find out how rock climbing affect tourism attractions in Tororo Municipality (iii) To find out how rock climbing affects the development of amenities in Tororo Municipality. The research employed a cross sectional research design which was descriptive in nature basing on different scholars' literature. Data collected was mainly from the field using questionnaires and interview guide. Data was summarized, sorted, edited and analyzed using Microsoft excel tables and the findings were presented in a report format. Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents from the sample size of 110 and this was considered satisfactory.

In relation with the researcher's first objective, the study findings revealed that, 5 (10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 3(6%) disagreed, another proportion of the respondents 17 (34%) agreed and 25 majority of the respondents 25 (50%) strongly agreed with the statement that Rock climbing tourism has led to the development of accommodation facilities in Tororo Municipality. The second objective intended to find out whether Rock climbing has stimulated infrastructure (roads) development in Tororo Municipality. The study findings revealed that 02 (4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 02 (4%) of the respondents disagreed, 06 (12%) of the respondents were not sure, 10 (20%) agreed and majority of the respondents 30 (30%) were in agreement that Rock climbing has stimulated infrastructure (roads) development in Tororo Municipality. Findings on the third objective indicated that majority 37 (60%) of the respondents agreed that infrastructural facilities are attractive pillars for the development of tourism. However, 02 (4%) were not sure while 11 (22%) were in disagreement that Infrastructural facilities are attractive pillars for the development of tourism.

The research recommends that the best way to increase rock climbers' economic impact is to increase access to rock climbing walls. Over time, the number of climbing areas and climbing routes in Tororo Municipality has increased steadily, and non-scientific observations imply that the population has similarly increased in size

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the Background of study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the study, Research objectives, Research questions, Scope of the Study, Content Scope, Geographical Scope, Time Scope, Significance of the Study and Conceptual Framework.

1.1 Background of study

The study was about rock climbing and its impact on tourism development in Uganda. The study is important because Rock climbing tourism has been valuable for the sustainable development of the rural outdoor economy in developed countries, which is one of the important trends of rock climbing development (Dimitriou, C2017).

According to Winter (2011), a rock is defined as stuff which the earth is made off. A more acceptable scientific definition of rocks is that; a rock is a natural occurring solid cohesive aggregate of one or more mineral or mineral materials.

Rock climbing is a physically and mentally demanding sport, one that often tests a climber's strength, endurance, agility and balance along with mental control. Knowledge of proper climbing techniques and the use of specialized climbing equipment is crucial for the safe completion of routes (The Mountaineers Books 2010).

Tourism is a highly complex phenomenon and can be fully understood only by adopting a multidisciplinary approach (Candela & Figini, 2012). Tourism as a social force and institution is impacting the life of people and many are associated with the industry directly or indirectly (Hannam, & Paris, 2014). Concordantly, while tourism causes some changes and transformations in many subject (such a cross-cultural interaction, free from prejudices, contribution to peace environment etc.), it also changes in itself. Tourism development is the process of establishing and maintaining a tourism industry in a particular location. At its most fundamental level, tourism development can be defined as the process of developing strategies and plans to increase/develop/encourage tourism in a particular destination (Schegg, & Stangl, 2017).

Globally, Rock climbing tourism is increasingly valued by numerous countries, rock climbing tourism is a type of tourism that aims at rock climbing and provides sustainable tourism development for tourist destinations (Maples et al. 2019). Starting from the developed countries such as Britain, the United States, Germany and France, this paper studies the development status, characteristics and economic value of rock climbing tourism. The development experience of rock climbing tourism in developed countries is practically significant for developing countries, such as promoting the innovation in the model of sports and tourism integration, helping rural economic transformation and promoting the rapid development of rock climbing tourism industry.

Rock climbing tourism is an important part of tourism in the United Kingdom. As early as 2000, rock climbing and mountaineering holiday activities had generated 81.7 million pounds in revenue (OIA. 2020, 2019). With recent increase in national leisure time, family participation in British rock climbing has increased yearly, prompting major travel companies to actively develop rock climbing tourism businesses. In Explore-Share, the world's first online booking platform for alpine adventures, travel agents have published route information for various UK holiday rock climbing tours which not only benefit these agents, but also promote the economic growth of related industries of the climbing destination, and expand the publicity effect of the destination. Moreover, the integration of rock climbing events with local characteristic activities has directly promoted the development of the regional economy.

In Africa with specific reference to South Africa, rock climbing has a rich history and has grown in popularity in the last few decades. Due to the unique geological features of South Africa, rock climbing has received worldwide recognition, with top international climbers visiting Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces to participate in this activity. From domestic tourists regularly visiting mountainous areas, one can assume that there are thousands of active rock climbers in South Africa. The rock climbing industry is a growing market. It has, however, not been supported by an extensive research based evidence (Pomfret, 2014).

Regionally, Kenya boasts some fantastic rock climbing opportunities though some are difficult to reach by road. Many of them are located within national parks, ensuring that the natural scenery is maintained. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania features some excellent climbing opportunities. Although Mount Kenya is the second highest mountain in Africa, climbing this majestic natural monument is by no means as gruelling as trekking Mount Kilimanjaro. The climb is technically not as

involved as climbing Mount Kilimanjaro (which involves sophisticated gear, training and months of preparation), but rather a slow yet fascinating ascent that can be done at your own pace, with a reasonable level of fitness (Rossiter, 2017).

In Tanzania, this central African country became famous and very popular among tourists and climbers from the entire world because of the fact that one of the most beautiful and fabulous mountains in the world is located on its Territory-Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain of Tanzania and all Africa. Apart of Kilimanjaro, the dozens of Tanzanian mountains can be listed (mostly they are extinct volcanos), but there are no doubts that all that is just of the secondary importance comparing to the Roof of Africa-Kilimanjaro. In addition to mountain climbing, very attractive for the tourists in Tanzania is the variety of National parks, where everyone can meet face to face with the most of the species of the Africa animal world (Lewis, 2011).

In Uganda, Generally, rock climbing is not only a physically demanding sport, but also a mentally demanding activity, and many a times tests the participant's mental control, endurance, balance, alertness as well as physical strength. Mountain climbing in Uganda is carried out on major mountains of Elgon, Rwenzori, Mgahinga, Muhavura and Moroto as well as several other hills across the country. Mountain climbing provides an exclusive fascination for backpackers trailing the numerous bird species and the rich variety of vegetation cover and wildlife for nature lovers (Ainsworth et al. (2011).

Climbing Tororo rock is challenging but almost anyone can do it if they are mentally prepared. Seasoned mountain hikers might find hiking Tororo rock a walkover. Climbing to the top takes anywhere between 30 to 45 minutes. The first part of the hike is generally easy for anyone in good shape but the final third requires more endurance, stamina and determination. Many climbers quit at this point. Four ladders have been built to help climbers pass through the steepest section before reaching the very top of the rock (Perkins, 2015)

Tororo Rock climbing is generally not organized to high professional standards. The District has contracted a company owned by Phoebe Otaala to run the activity at a fee of 20,000 shillings per person. For that amount, you get a tour guide who will help climb with you up to the top. There is a safe parking space at the starting point (AMustafa 2019). According to Tahir Albayrak & Meltem Caber (2016), Tororo Rock is perhaps the only remaining site in the district with more natural or indigenous vegetation. Some of the indigenous plant species still grow intact on the

rock while most natural vegetation in other parts of the district have disappeared due to intensive farming and increased human settlement

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the tourism initiatives in Tororo municipality, the local community still lives in poverty. The local community reaps few benefits and has little control over how the tourism industry is managed. They are ignored by the various tourism agencies during the process of decision making attributed to their low level of literacy (Dimitriou, 2017). Regardless of the existing eco-tourism features, the local community has entirely not benefited from the tourism activities and is affected by the high poverty levels. Youth and women have also been adversely affected since they cannot effectively contribute to the development of the economy (Tororo Municipality council meeting held on 29th October 2019). Rock climbing is an increasingly popular recreational and sporting activity that creates an important market for tourism and the travel industry, because the number of rock climbers has significantly increased (Tahir Albayrak & Meltem Caber 2016). According to International Federation of Sport Climbing, 25 million people all over the world are regularly climbing. In Uganda's case, despite the wide availability of rocks like Tororo rock, Masambwa Rock with unique properties and formation processes, very few tourists (rock climbers) are received in Tororo District. This is due to lack of tourism related infrastructure, lack of tourism investment, poor marketing of the tourism destination and lack of knowledge. If the above challenges are not addressed by the government of Uganda and the tourism industry, tourism development will not be realized. It is against this context that this research evaluates the critical role of rock climbing on tourism development in Uganda with specific reference to Tororo municipality in Tororo district

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of Rock climbing on Tourism Development in Uganda with reference to Tororo municipality as a case study

1.4 Research objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- (i) To find out how rock climbing affects the development of accommodation in Tororo Municipality
- (ii) To find out how rock climbing affects the development of amenities in Tororo Municipality
- (iii) To find out how rock climbing affect tourism attractions in Tororo Municipality

1.5 Research questions

The researcher mapped out vital questions which needed to be answered and these included the following;

- (i) How does rock climbing affect the development of accommodation in Tororo Municipality?
- (ii) How does rock climbing affect the development of amenities in Tororo Municipality?
- (iii) How does rock climbing affect tourism attractions in Tororo Municipality?

1.6.0 Scope of the Study

The study determined the impact of Rock climbing on Tourism Development in Uganda. This section explains the limits of the study in respect to geographical scope, contents scope and the time scope as discussed below;

1.6.1 Content Scope

The study focused on examining the impact of rock climbing on Tourism Development in Uganda. The study premised on rock climbing as the independent variable with relief accommodations, amenities, tourism attractions as its dimensions and tourism development as the dependent variable with Technology advancement (media), Infrastructure development, Government policies and Travel agencies as its dimensions

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was carried out from Tororo Municipality which is a third-order administrative division and is located in Tororo District, Eastern Region, Uganda. It borders with the Republic of Kenya to the East, Bugiri District to the West, Butaleja to the North and Busia to the South and Mbale to the North East.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study considered a period of three years (03) 2019-2022 since it's between this period that tourism activities in (Uganda) were suspended in a bid to contain the increasing numbers of Covid-19 during that time. Hence the study is premised to finding out how the inactive rock climbing activities affected tourism development in Uganda.

1.7 Significance of the study

This research was undertaken on the premise that a number of benefits would accrue out of it. The significance of this study was numerous and very important both to government, corporate bodies and individuals. The findings of the study may significantly benefit the following stakeholders:

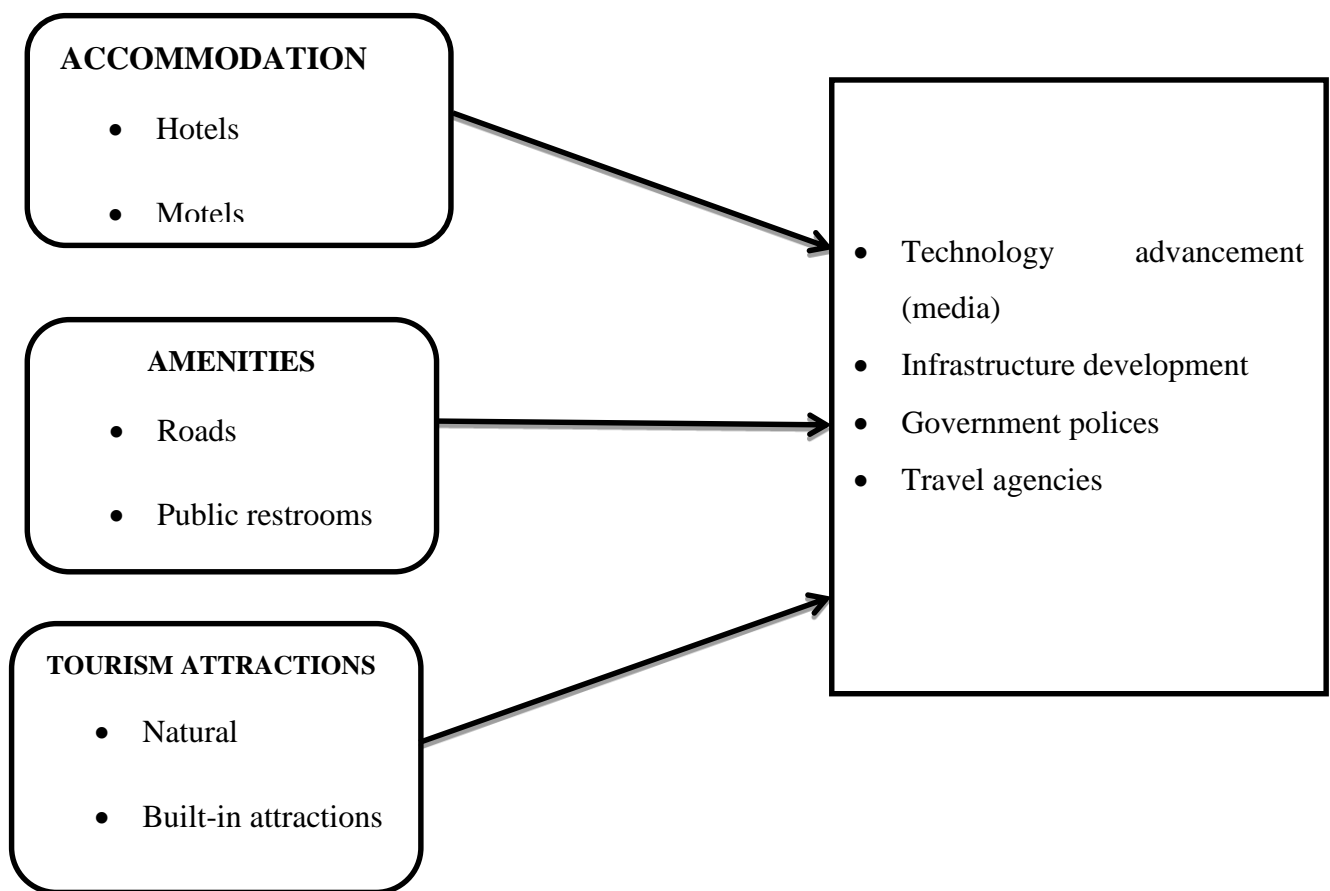
- (i)** The results of the research are expected to provide significant information which can inform the management of tourist sites in Uganda. It is also expected to provide appropriate approaches, which can promote tourism activities among the local community.
- (ii)** The outcome of this study is expected to inform policy formulation and provide effective, practical approaches for effective organizations, continuous existence, preservation, and management of existing resources to enhance benefits accrued to the local community. In addition, the findings could act as an information resource that guides planners and policy makers in selecting appropriate choices as well as the allocation of tourism resources to local communities
- (iii)** The researcher holds the view that the conclusions and practical implications solicited from this research could provide valuable information to community development agencies and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). NGOs could also use the recommendations of this study to enhance community empowerment and to encourage the youths to pursue relevant education so that they can get jobs in the tourism industry.
- (iv)** The outcome of the study is thus expected to contribute to the knowledge of understanding of who is involved in rock climbing tourism, their roles, and the benefits they receive from their involvement and the subsequent contribution to regional development in Tororo Municipality. This will be instrumental in identifying the scope

for new recommendations for both spatial and non-spatial improvements of mountain tourism-related activities.

- (v) This study is therefore significant as it investigates how rock climbing tourism has been factored in regional development in Uganda. It is also appropriate in contributing towards regional planning policy that is considerable of region-specific challenges and solutions.
- (vi) The findings of the study provided and add knowledge to existing literature and may also act as a foundation for further research in the same area.

Figure 1: Showing the relationship between rock climbing and tourism development

1.8 Conceptual framework



Source: Adopted from the study literature and modified by the researcher (2022)

Figure 1.1 showed the interrelationship between independent variable (rock climbing), and the dependent variable (tourism development). Rock climbing consists of the dimensions below that is to say relief accommodations, amenities, tourism attractions which attract tourism. While as tourism development consists of Technology advancement (media), infrastructure development, Government policies and Travel agencies.

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