
**COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN UGANDA, A CASE STUDY OF
UGANDA WILDLIFE EDUCATION CENTER (UWEC)**

Aheisibwe Immaculate¹, Lunyoro Florence²

1, 2 Metropolitan International University

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at covid-19 outbreak and development of tourism in uganda with a case study of uganda wildlife education center (Uwec) and it was guided by the following objectives; To assess the impact of Covid19 on the tourism arrivals at Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC), to analyze the effect of Covid19 on the tour and travel businesses in Uganda and to analyze what Government can do to Rescue Tourism Businesses in Uganda. The study used a descriptive correlational and cross-sectional and case study survey research design. The descriptive correlational design was used to establish whether there was a significant relationship between advertising and the consumer behavior. Quantitative approach was used to process data which could be quantified and was numeric in nature. The study population constituted mainly the staff of Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Center especially those working in the top management and those in the tourism management department. According to the Human Resource officer, this population amounts to 45 staff. From the findings, 32 (80%) strongly agreed that Covid19 chiefly affected African economies and caused a reduction in foreign income and resultantly the tourism arrivals and 8 (20%) of the respondents agreed and no one disagreed while all the respondents were sure of their respondents. This implies that indeed Covid19 chiefly affected African economies and caused a reduction in foreign income and resultantly the tourism arrivals. The study recommends that every Ugandan should heed to the calls to go for vaccination to enable full opening of the tourism sector and other sectors of the economy.

Key words: covid-19 outbreak, development and tourism

Background of the study

Tourism in Uganda is focused on the Ugandan landscape and wildlife. It is a major driver of employment, investment and foreign exchange, contributing 4.9 trillion Ugandan shillings (US\$1.88 billion or €1.4 billion as of August 2013) to Uganda's GDP in the 2012–2013 financial year (Frank et al., 2023). Tourism can be used to fight poverty in Uganda (Godfrey et al., 2023). There are tourism companies that employ people directly as drivers, guides, secretaries, accountants, etc. These companies sell products to tourists, such as arts and crafts, traditional clothing (Faridah, Jacob, et al., 2023). Tourism can also be operated online by Internet-based companies. Tourist attractions in Uganda include national parks, game reserves, traditional sites, and natural rainforests (Faridah, Jacob, et al., 2023). Traditional opportunities such as Mbalu in Eastern Uganda, boating, waterfalls, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda is part of the ongoing global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused by severe

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acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS- CoV-2) (Oromo et al., 2023). The virus was confirmed to have hit Uganda in March 2020. On January 12, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that the novel coronavirus was the cause of a respiratory illness in a group of people in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, which was reported to WHO on 31 December 2019 (Brighton, Deus, Kazaara, Nelson, Catherine, et al., 2023). The fatality ratio of COVID-19 was much lower than SARS in 2013, but transmission was significantly higher with a significant overall death toll. Model-based simulations for Uganda indicate that the 95% confidence interval for the time-varying reproductive number R_t is less than 1.0 as of December 2020 (Davids et al., 2023). On March 18, public gatherings including places of worship, pubs, weddings, musical performances, assemblies and cultural gatherings were suspended for 32 days with immediate effect. Foreigners and Ugandans arriving in the country will be placed under a mandatory 14-day quarantine at government-designated hotels in Entebbe, about an hour from Kampala, but accommodation will be paid for by the citizens themselves. Since the mandatory quarantine began, about 40 travelers have been forced to pay up to US\$840 to stay at the Central Inn, a price that is prohibitive for most Ugandans (Brighton, Deus, Kazaara, Nelson, Alex, et al., 2023). Witnesses said people unable to pay hotel fees were forced to sleep in the hotel lobby, while others were stranded at the airport. It is also unclear whether the government is following basic health standards in hotel quarantines (Richard, 2022). Travelers forced to stay at the hotel are reportedly forced to stay in close proximity to each other and hotel staff, with some unable to even shower. One person posted on Facebook that no doctor had visited the hotel and that staff were frequently entering and leaving the premises and working without protective gear.

Problem of Statement

COVID-19 is having a devastating impact on the global economy, and for many developing countries, tourism appears to be the most affected sector (Christopher, 2022). Especially since tourists from the north are likely to first opt for destinations that are both closer to home and equipped with better healthcare facilities, the impact of COVID-19 on tourism in developing countries could be severe and long-lasting, with many companies going out of business (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). Crucially, the sector employs many workers in relatively high-productivity jobs and is of paramount importance as a foreign exchange earner in many developing countries, generating around 10% of total exports in non-oil-exporting LDCs. Uganda is no exception: tourism is the country's most important export product, generating about US\$940 million in 2017 (Winny et al., 2023), equivalent to about 4% of GDP or 20% of total exports of goods and services. This is twice the income from coffee, the country's traditional export crop. Tourism also employs a growing number of workers in relatively high productivity jobs, about 270,000 people directly and about 400,000 people indirectly, which together represent about 6.7% of total national employment (Christopher & Micheal, 2022). This study will seek to investigate the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on the development of the tourism industry in Uganda (Nicholas et al., 2023).

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Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the impact of Covid19 on the tourism arrivals at Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC)
2. To analyze the effect of Covid19 on the tour and travel businesses in Uganda
3. To analyze what Government can do to Rescue Tourism Businesses in Uganda.

Methodology

The study used a descriptive correlational and cross-sectional and case study survey research design. The descriptive correlational design was used to establish whether there was a significant relationship between advertising and the consumer behavior. Quantitative approach was used to process data which could be quantified and was numeric in nature. For example, the respondents' age, income, number of times they had visited a given destination in a given period of time, etc. According to Creswell et al. (2013), quantitative research helped in getting an in-depth analysis of the problem under investigation. Qualitative approach would be used to describe qualitative data which could not be quantified in numbers. This included respondents' opinions and ideas. Qualitative research was also applied in order to describe current conditions or to investigate relationships, including effects and relationships. In addition, it helped in answering questions concerning the current state of the subject under study. The study population constituted mainly the staff of Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Center especially those working in the top management and those in the tourism management department. According to the Human Resource officer, this population amounts to 45 staff. This population was chosen because it had adequate knowledge of the subject under investigation and the research variables under investigation. The sample size was 35 respondents of the members of staff of Uganda Wildlife Center. This numbers were recommended by Kreijic and Morgan 1970 sample determination table. The researcher employed several techniques to select the appropriate sample for the study. These included both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. In this study a purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling was employed in selecting respondents from the population. This technique enabled the study to give an opportunity to only eligible participants by selecting from each unit within the population of the study. In this case, the researcher ensured that participants from different categories like top managers and knowledgeable personnel were given priority to participate. This research used self-administered questionnaires for the respondents. These were distributed among the staff in their respective departments. The justification for using this instrument was that questionnaires were easy to quantify and analyze. In addition, the questionnaire was used because the study focused on opinions, attitudes, feelings and perceptions of the respondents. Top managers also preferred questionnaires which they could respond to instead of interviews. Data was analyzed using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022). It was presented in form of tables, graphs, pie charts and triangulation Qualitative data analysis was done by

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narrative as recorded during face-to-face interview and through observation. The researcher used a quick impressionist summary in analyzing qualitative data; he summarized key findings by noting down the frequent responses of the respondents during the interview on various issues concerning advertising and how the whole process of advertisements affects the consumer behavior. This technique of qualitative data analysis was chosen because it saves time and it is not very expensive. Interviews were listened to attentively, in order to identify the emerging themes and through sorting, recording, reflection and interpretation of the meaning of data.

RESULTS

Impact of Covid19 on tourism arrivals

Table 1. Showing the impact of Covid19 on tourism arrivals at UWEC

Impact of Covid19 on tourism arrivals	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Covid19 heavily impacted by the pandemic as people's economic lives are halted and their freedom of movement curtailed	30	75	10	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100
Covid19 chiefly affected African economies and caused a reduction in foreign income and resultantly the tourism arrivals	32	80	8	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100
The travel restrictions imposed globally led to a total shutdown on tourism arrivals	36	90	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100
Covid19 bred fear among the potential tourists and this made many of them to cancel their plans to travel into the country	38	95	2	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

Source: primary data 2022

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Table 1 shows that 30 (75%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that Covid19 heavily impacted by the pandemic as people's economic lives and halted and their freedom of movement curtailed, while 10 (25%) agreed that Covid19 heavily impacted by the pandemic as people's economic lives and halted and their freedom of movement curtailed . None of the respondents disagreed and none was not sure. It implies that indeed, Covid19 heavily impacted by the pandemic as people's economic lives and halted and their freedom of movement curtailed (Sub-county et al., 2023)

32 (80%) strongly agreed that Covid19 chiefly affected African economies and caused a reduction in foreign income and resultantly the tourism arrivals and 8 (20%) of the respondents agreed and no one disagreed while all the respondents were sure of their respondents. This implies that indeed Covid19 chiefly affected African economies and caused a reduction in foreign income and resultantly the tourism arrivals (Moses et al., 2022)

36 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the travel restrictions imposed globally led to a total shutdown on tourism arrivals, while 4 (10%) of the respondents agreed that the travel restrictions imposed globally led to a total shutdown on tourism arrivals; implying that indeed the travel restrictions imposed globally led to a total shutdown on tourism arrivals

Finally, 38 (95%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Covid19 bred fear among the potential tourists and this made many of them to cancel their plans to travel into the country, while 2 (5%) of the respondents agreed that indeed Covid19 bred fear among the potential tourists and this made many of them to cancel their plans to travel into the country.

Table 2 Showing the effect of Covid19 on the tour and travel business

Effect of Covid19 on the tour and travel business	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Covid19 caused restrictions on the number of passengers and it became hard to travel for tourism especially for tourism activities which are possible when people travel together in large numbers.	20	50	8	20	6	15	6	15	-	-	40	100

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Covid19 led to the cancellation of flights due to the tourists' travel restrictions	24	62	13	33	3	5	-	-	-	-	40	100
The travel behavior of people changed at the individual level due to the Covid19 pandemic in the entire globe. people now travel only when it is a necessity and not for tourism	30	75	8	20	-	-	2	5	-	-	40	100
Covid19 led to the cancellation of flights due to the travel restrictions imposed and this badly affected the tour and travel businesses	28	70	8	20	-	-	4	10	-	-	40	100

Source: Primary data 2022

From the table 2 above, it can be observed that 20 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that Covid19 caused restrictions on the number of passengers and it became hard to travel for tourism especially for tourism activities which are possible when people travel together in large numbers. 4 (20%) agreed, 6 (15%) were not sure and 6 (15%) disagreed. It therefore implies that Covid19 caused restrictions on the number of passengers and it became hard to travel for tourism especially for tourism activities which are possible when people travel together in large numbers (Filstar, 2023).

25 (62%) strongly agreed to the assertion that Covid19 led to the cancellation of flights due to the tourists' travel restrictions, 13 (33%) agreed; while 2 (5%) were not sure. This therefore implies that Covid19 led to the cancellation of flights due to the tourists' travel restrictions

It can also be observed that 30 (75%) of the sample strongly agreed that the travel behavior of people changed at the individual level due to the Covid19 pandemic in the entire globe. people now travel only when it is a necessity and not for tourism, 8 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 2 (5%) disagreed. This implies that indeed the travel behavior of people changed at the individual level due to the Covid19 pandemic in the entire globe. people now travel only when it is a necessity and not for tourism since the majority agreed to the assertion (Ntirandekura, 2022).

28 (70%) of the sample strongly agreed that Covid19 led to the cancellation of flights due to the travel restrictions imposed and this badly affected the tour and travel businesses, 8 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 4 (10%) disagreed to the assertion. It can conclusively be stated that Covid19 led to the cancellation of flights due to the travel restrictions imposed and this badly affected the tour and travel businesses (Faridah, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

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Measures to rescue the tourism businesses from the effect of Covid19 pandemic

Table 3 showing the strategic remedies that can be used to rescue the tourism businesses from Covid19 pandemic

Measures to rescue the tourism businesses from the effect of Covid19 pandemic	Strongly Disagree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Government should encourage and enforce vaccination of the tourism host communities and the whole country	28	70	8	20	2	5	2	5	-	-	40	100
All stakeholders should encourage domestic tourism so that nationals can visit tourist places in the country, thereby supporting the tourism businesses	28	70	8	20	2	5	2	5	-	-	40	100
Government should provide financial support to tourism businesses which were affected by Covid19	28	70	8	20	2	5	2	5	-	-	40	100
Covid19 heavily impacted by the pandemic as people's economic lives are halted and their freedom of movement curtailed	30	75	10	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100
Covid19 chiefly affected African economies and caused a reduction in foreign income and resultantly the tourism arrivals	32	80	8	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100
The travel restrictions imposed globally led to a total shutdown on tourism arrivals	36	90	4	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	100

From the table 3 above, it can be observed that 28 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that application of such laws as, imprisonment of any person found guilty of negligence, knowingly and willfully causing a child to become vulnerable to unwanted sex can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the

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students of Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC), 8 (20%) agreed, 2 (5%) were not sure and 2 (5%) disagreed. It implies that application of such laws as, imprisonment of any person found guilty of negligence, knowingly and willfully causing a child to become vulnerable to unwanted sex can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students in Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC) (Jac & Kazaara, 2023).

28 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that All stakeholders should encourage domestic tourism so that nationals can visit tourist places in the country, thereby supporting the tourism businesses This can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students of Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC), 8 (20%) agreed, 2 (5%) were not sure and 2 (5%) disagreed. It implies that All stakeholders should encourage domestic tourism so that nationals can visit tourist places in the country, thereby supporting the tourism businesses This can reduce on the rates of teen pregnancies among the students in Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC) (Anthony et al., 2023).

Further, it can also be observed that 28 (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that Government should provide financial support to tourism businesses which were affected by Covid19 among the students of Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC), 8 (20%) agreed, 2 (5%) were not sure and 2 (5%) disagreed. It implies that government should provide financial support to tourism businesses which were affected by Covid19 among the teens in Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC) since the majority agreed to the assertion (Polycarp et al., 2023).

30 (75%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that the government of Uganda needs to urgently implement a crisis response strategy designed to prevent the tourism sector from collapsing, while 10 (25%) agreed that the government of Uganda needs to urgently implement a crisis response strategy designed to prevent the tourism sector from collapsing. None of the respondents disagreed and none was not sure. It implies that indeed, the government of Uganda needs to urgently implement a crisis response strategy designed to prevent the tourism sector from collapsing (Paul et al., 2023)

32 (80%) strongly agreed that there is need to ensure biodiversity and cultural diversity is sustained or enriched and promote the recovery of wildlife populations and restore or reconstruct degraded sites and monuments of cultural significance and 8 (20%) of the respondents agreed and no one disagreed while all the respondents were sure of their respondents. This implies that indeed there is need to ensure biodiversity and cultural diversity is sustained or enriched and promote the recovery of wildlife populations and restore or reconstruct degraded sites and monuments of cultural significance (Collins et al., 2023).

36 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there's need to sustain the captive animal welfare programs at Uganda Wildlife Education Center and Chimpanzee Sanctuary since tourism was their sole income and has since

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dropped, while 4 (10%) of the respondents agreed that there's need to sustain the captive animal welfare programs at Uganda Wildlife Education Center and Chimpanzee Sanctuary since tourism was their sole income and has since dropped.

Conclusions

Finding reveals that Covid19 affected people's economic lives and their freedom to move and therefore, travel and tour businesses were affected. The researcher concludes government policies determine the ability of businesses in the tourism sector to recover from the shock

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that government should support the tourism sector to recover. The study recommends that every Ugandan should heed to the calls to go for vaccination to enable full opening of the tourism sector and other sectors of the economy. The study recommends that government should ensure diversity and cultural diversity is sustained or enriched and promote the recovery of wildlife populations and restore or reconstruct degraded sites and monuments of cultural significance

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