

# The tourism industry supply chain and sustainability challenges in Uganda Case study Kabale District: a historical perspective

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**Abstract:** *The study's focus was on the supply chain and sustainability issues facing Uganda's tourism industry: a case study of Kabale District. The study's goals were to identify the supply chain issues that the tourism sector has in connection to sustainability, investigate potential solutions to these issues, and draw a link between these issues and the industry's sustainability concerns. The research study used questionnaires and interview guides to gather data, and it also used a correlation research methodology. It was discovered that there is an excellent relationship between the tourism industry supply chain and sustainability challenges, which is sustainability performance, increases competition, and increased customer satisfaction. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to examine sustainability challenges, such as overpopulation, pollution, and global warming.*

**Keywords:** Tourism Industry, Supply chain, Sustainability, Historical perspective.

## 1.0 Background of the Study

The origins of tourism can be found in the travels of English aristocrats to various locations on the European continent, including France, Italy, and occasionally Switzerland, starting at the end of the seventeenth century. Although tourism has roots in the growth and development of mankind, its earliest forms can be found during these journeys. The grand tour, also known as the start of cultural and educational tourism, was an early form and precursor of modern tourism that young nobility undertook between the 16th and 18th centuries. This was followed by the power of the steam engine, which both reduced costs and expanded the distances tourists could traverse within reasonably short amounts of time. By planning the first led trip in Europe in 1841, Thomas Cook invented contemporary mass tourism. Cook later organized the first trips to the Holy Land and Egypt, which were frequently added on to the more conventional European "Grand Tour," in 1869, a few years later. The majority of these first travelers were drawn by the continent's animals. These foreigners initially came to hunt it; only later would waves of visitors come to photograph the wildlife using cameras rather than firearms. Thomas Cook (1808–1892) is credited as the creator of mass commercial tourism because he planned group vacations with all-inclusive prices that cut down on travelers' expenses. In 1841, he led 571 guests from Leicester to Loughborough on his first all-inclusive vacation, which included meals and brass music (Gyr, 2010)

The 1960s saw the peak of European tourism. Here, the tourism industry created its own supporting systems and institutions. In addition to the establishment of several travel companies and tourism organizations, package vacations were also sold in department stores, such as Neckermann in Germany starting in 1963 and Jelmoli in Switzerland starting in 1972. Travel by car, caravan, and subsequently by air began to replace travel by bus and rail, which served as a significant economic stimulus (Gyr, 2010)

Thomas Cook and other modern travel firms opened up a new horizon for international tourism by introducing leisure travel and continental travel around the world (Poon, 1993). Travel advancements from those times included the use of hotel vouchers, circular notes, credit cards, and advance reservations for all necessary tourist services. However, the growth of tourism and travel has brought about some significant problems, including excessive energy use, biodiversity loss, land degradation, high tourist volumes, escalating negative environmental effects, and reduced quality of life for locals.

Sustainability has historical origins in social justice, environmental conservation, internationalism, and other movements. Since the 1980s, the travel and tourism sector has started to seriously consider sustainable travel. The phrase "sustainable tourism" started to appear more frequently in the 1990s. It includes a tourism strategy that acknowledges the value of the host community, the way in which employees are treated, and the goal to maximize the economic advantages of tourism for the host community. The development of environmentally friendly operations management began in the hospitality sector. Hotels received guidance from industry associations on how to run their operations more sustainably, including suggestions for energy conservation, recycling, and trash reduction.

In the 1990s, the phrase "supply chain management" gained popularity after it was coined in the late 1980s. Houlihan made the initial suggestion in 1985, and several researchers have since used this idea in a variety of disciplines, including tourism (Kauric, Mikulic, & Schroeder, 2015; Tigu & Calaretu, 2013). Supply chain management can be used to provide improvements in sustainability

performance together with improvements in financial performance by working to improve the business operations of each supplier in the supply chain. The tourism industry functions through business-to-business connections (Tapper, 2004).

Kabale District was chosen as the case study; it is located in South Western Uganda and has a population of 345,678 (according to the 2012 Housing and Population Census). Due to Lake Bunyonyi and its role as a tourism hub for visitors to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Mgahinga National Parks, Echuya Forests, and Rwanda, Kabale District has a great deal of potential for tourism.

## **2.0 Literature review**

### **2.1 The Tourism Industry as a supply chain**

A supply chain is a collection of independent businesses linked together by the goods and services they each individually or together contribute value to offer to the final customer (Dawei, 2011). All tourism-related businesses have partnerships with other organizations and other businesses providing complementary services, in order to more effectively carry out their operations and meet the demands of their customers (Song, 2012).

A variety of organizations must work together to supply a tourism product. For instance, a national park that offers gorilla tracking also offers guiding and ranger services. Hotels and restaurants offer meals and lodging, tour operators package the goods, advertise them, and transport tourists to their destinations. A tourist supply chain is made up of these organizations that provide various product components. The complexity, high risk, and challenging nature of the tourism supply chain make it tough to maintain quality (Yang Li, 2013).

The tourism supply chain is a comprehensive set of operations that coordinates resource sharing, cost-cutting, and customer value creation across all aspects of the industry, including the flow of goods, money, and information that have an impact on the tourism industry's output and visitor experiences (Chen & Yi, 2010). According to Zhang et al. (2009) TSC is a network of tourism organizations engaged in a variety of activities, starting with the provision of a full range of tourism product/service components, such as flights and lodging at the tourism reception desk, and concluding with the sale of tourism products in the tourism region. The components of a tourism good or service that make up a travel bundle in the TSC are: (1) lodging; (2) travel to and from the destination; and (3) catering and food. (4) Ground transportation; (5) Ground services; (6) Cultural and social events; (7) Resources related to the environment, culture, and heritage of the location; and (9) Food and Beverage (F&B) (Costa, and Carvalho, 2011).

### **2.2 sustainability challenges**

Sustainability has historical origins in social justice, environmental conservation, internationalism, and other movements. It's crucial to consider using renewable fuels, cutting carbon emissions, safeguarding the environment, and maintaining the integrity of our planet's delicate ecosystems.

Because of rising carbon dioxide levels, global warming is already causing harmful climatic effects that endanger both people and other ecosystems. The whole environment is in danger due to the rate of climate change, which is resulting in more frequent and severe weather disasters.

Water contamination and air pollution. Over 90% of people, according to experts, breathe dirty air. Unfriendly gases are released into the air by a variety of companies, used automobiles, various electrical equipment, etc., which lowers the quality of the air. There are many negative effects of air pollution, such as cancer, heart and eye illnesses, and respiratory issues. To lower the rates of respiratory ailments and save seven million fatalities annually, it is crucial to reduce air pollution, usage of chemicals, and wastewater treatment. Industrial pollutants have been dumped in water bodies, the majority of which are poisonous and bankrupt. Ocean, sea, and inland water pollution results in contaminated water, which also poses serious health risks. The oceans have turned into enormous landfills for plastic waste. Industrial wastes, many of which are poisonous and bankrupt, have been dumped on bodies. Ocean, sea, and inland water pollution results in contaminated water, which also poses serious health risks. There are significant environmental issues associated to the oceans, such as harm to ecosystems from dumping pollutants, wastewater, and fuel spills. The oceans have evolved into enormous trash dumps for plastic and other synthetic materials.

A sluggish transition to a more renewable energy mix. Many people around the world rely on fossil fuels for cooking because they have no access to sustainable energy sources like electricity. In order to create more sustainable societies, there needs to be an energy shift toward a model that is cleaner, more affordable, and more effective.

In order to meet their demands, the rising population has put strain on natural resources, leading to their depletion and environmental disturbance.

### 2.3 Solutions to sustainability challenges

Use of sustainable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and electricity, is necessary to meet the world's rising energy needs. They produce vast amounts of energy at little cost, without ecological damage, and without safety risks. The most important thing is that no natural resource is being depleted at the expense of future generations.

Mass sensibilization to reduce the prevalence of respiratory ailments, the public should be educated about sustainability challenges, their effects, and the best ways to mitigate chemical use.

Sustainability is facilitated by environmental preservation, protection of our natural environment, human and ecological health, and the stimulation of innovation without compromising our way of life. preserving biodiversity, taking decisive action to address these dangers, and preserving our natural heritage, including the increasingly vulnerable forests. It is vital to prevent animal species from going extinct and to preserve their natural habitats.

Sustainability needs to be included into everyday business operations. In order to rethink, restructure, and evolve business activities in a more sustainable way, the organizations should implement green practices. There is a rising concern to integrate social sustainability into their commercial operations as more firms commit to sustainability.

Governments support this by establishing a framework that requires businesses to adopt best practices for sector collaboration and public-private partnerships around the implementation of the SDGs, by developing adequate infrastructure and supply chains, and by strengthening policies and institutions to ensure that tourism activities are carried out sustainably and meet economic, social, and environmental goals (UNCTD, 2013).

### 2.4 Relationship between tourism industry supply chain and sustainability challenges

By working to improve the business operations of each supplier in the supply chain to ensure that each company meets sustainability criteria in its own internal operations, supply chains management can be applied to the tourism industry to deliver sustainability performance improvements along with financial performance. As a result, one of the most important issues in

TSCM is the efficient management of two-party relationships within a TSC. (Song, 2012)

In a tourism supply chain, collaboration between numerous business partners is crucial for determining whether a product will be effective in luring tourists, and if it is, it also helps to maximize the efficiency of the operations that are carried out (Zhang, 2015). The improvement of supply and demand links is crucial to the sustainability of the tourism industry. So, there is a link between the relative competitiveness of each firm in the tourism industry and the sustainability of the attractiveness of the industry.

Since there are many different excellent practices, the supply chain participants work together to offer better products, which increases consumer happiness and supports sustainable development at the tourist destination. These procedures must adhere to sustainability guidelines and may significantly improve several aspects of tourism-related goods.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The supply chain actors collaborate to provide better products because there are so many diverse great practices; this improves customer satisfaction and promotes sustainable growth at the tourism location. These processes, which must follow sustainability rules, could greatly enhance a number of features of tourism-related commodities.

### 3.2. Study Population

The population of interest in this study included the following: MTWA and its key agencies (UTB, UWEC, UWA, Uganda wildlife research and training institute, (4) and 9 Tourism Associations. Principal Suppliers (accommodation providers, attraction providers, tour operators and travel agents, 1996-2022 Booking.com, 2022 Uganda Tourism Center). giving 356 in all.

### 3.3. Sample size and selection

Krejciec & Morgan tables were used to calculate sample size (1970). The study used a basic random sample method because the actors that made up the population under study represented a variety of response groups.

#### 3.3 Sample Size Determination

Population Category	Target Population	Sample size	Sampling Method
Suppliers	3055	341	Simple random sampling
MWTA & its key agencies	6	6	Purposive sampling

Tourism Associations	9	9	Purposive sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>3070</b>	<b>356</b>	

### 3.4. Data Collection Methods

The study used two techniques of data collection because it was designed to gather primary data: a questionnaire for quantitative data and an interview for qualitative data.

### 3.6 Data Quality control

#### 3.6.1 Validity

Three (3) research professionals were contacted once the data collection tools were created to determine if parts of the tools were accurate or pertinent to the study. The tools Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated using the expert judgment approach.

#### 3.6.2 Reliability

The Chronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the dependability and trustworthiness of the data gathering tools.

### 3.8. Data analysis

Data that was both quantitative and qualitative was gathered and examined. To guarantee accuracy, consistency, and completeness, the quantitative data was coded, entered into SPSS, revised, and validated.

Interview-related qualitative data was evaluated qualitatively. Data were organized, revised, categorized, and coded in accordance with the study's goals

## 4.0 Discussion and presentation of results

### 4.1 Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Females	190	53
Males	166	47
Total	356	100

53% of respondents were female and 47% were male, as shown in the graph above.

### 4.2 marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	150	42
Single	180	50
Widowed	10	3
Divorced	16	5
Total	356	100

According to the table, 50% of respondents were single, 42% were married, 3% were widowed, and 5% were divorced.

### 4.3 sustainability challenges

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Global warming	90	25
Overpopulation	85	24
Pollution	80	22
Slow energy transition	101	29
Total	356	100

Among the aforementioned, 25% of respondents concurred that one of the sustainability concerns is global warming, 24% said it is overpopulation, 22% said it is pollution, and 29% said it is slow energy transition.

#### 4.4 solutions to sustainability challenges

Solution	Frequency	Percentage
Government support	86	24
Sensitization	85	24
Use of clean energy	90	25
Environmental conservation	95	27
Total	356	100

From the above, 27% of respondents suggested using environmental protection to lessen sustainability challenges, 25% suggested using clean energy, 24% said raising awareness could help address the sustainability challenges faced by the tourism industry, and they also mentioned that government support is crucial in addressing sustainability challenges.

#### 4.6 relationship between tourism industry supply chain and sustainability challenges

Relationship	Frequency	Percentage
Growth of industry	71	20
Increased customer satisfaction	95	27
Increased revenue	90	25
Change in mind set	100	28
Total	365	100

The tourism supply chain and sustainability concerns, as identified by various respondents, are strongly correlated, as can be seen above. 20% claimed it encourages industry expansion, 27% claimed it results in higher customer satisfaction, 25% claimed it boosts revenue, and 28% claimed it alters people's perspectives.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study found a strong correlation between the supply chain of the tourism industry and an understanding of sustainability issues. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were utilized to analyze primary and secondary data. Purposive sampling, random sampling, and correlation research design were all used. A questionnaire and interviewing guidelines were used to gather the data.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

According to the research study, all tourism organizations should collaborate with one another to promote and grow the tourism business, and the government and other development partners should offer all the logistical support required.

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