
**THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY ATTITUDES ON ECO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
IN UGANDA A CASE STUDY MOUNT ELGON NATIONAL PARK**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT
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DECLARATION

I **Tufeyo Lobson** do hereby declare that this research project has been my own original work and it has never been submitted to any University or Institution for any degree award by any person

Students Signature.....

Date.....

APPROVAL

This research proposal has been submitted for examination with approval of my supervisor and is for the award of a Bachelor of Tourism and Travel Management of Busitema University.

Supervisors. Mr. Emojongo Ronald.

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION.

This research project is dedicated to my beloved mummy, Mrs. Ahikiliza Enid, my father, Mr Kabazaire Abel and also the whole team that helped me in compiling this piece of work.

I also take this opportunity to dedicate this research to the whole staff of Busitema University most especially my supervisor Mr Emojongo Ronald for his guidance and lastly to all my friends and classmates of Tourism and Travel class for corporation and teamwork. May the Almighty God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out with the purpose of determining the effect of community attitudes on ecotourism development in mount Elgon national park. The objects for the study were: to determine the effect of community perception on ecotourism development, determine the effect of community behavior on ecotourism development, and to determine the effect of cultural diversification on ecotourism development. The research applied both qualitative and quantitative technique in designing the research. A total of 30 respondents participated in the study and were selected using random sampling method. The data was collected using questionnaires and interviews and presented using tables, graphs, and pie charts for easy analysis. The research finding revealed that community perception has led to protection of local host resources, leads to active support from the locals, leads to provision of fundamental information to tourists which helps them to promote sustainability. The study also highlighted some of the negative and positive effects of community behavior on ecotourism development in mount Elgon national park which includes; helps reduce human wildlife conflicts, allows information gathering by researchers, leads to government support to communities but also leads to environmental pollution. The research finding also revealed that cultural diversification has led to abandonment of ecotourism and focus on traditional enterprises, and also leads to diminishing of local cultures that tourists come to see due to the influence of western culture. It was however recommended that the organization should put more emphasis on ensuring that it engages the community through community chat and talk, public relation campaigns in order to create awareness to the community on the importance of ecotourism.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter described the background to the study, statements of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, the significance of the study

1.1 Background of the study

Ecotourism development has been appraised for its potential to change communities' attitudes on the use of both cultural resources and natural resources (Stone ,2015). Tourism has the ability to act as catalyst for positive change. It is important to remind the communities that they are the major stakeholders in ecotourism development therefore they are required to have a positive attitude.

Globally the community attitudes on ecotourism development are both negative and positive taking an example of Amazon rain forest in Brazil vast areas of forest are cleared by cutting down trees and burning the forest down in order to create pasture and land for grazing cattle. Brazil is the major supplier of beef to countries like United States and China, exporting 1.82 million tons in 2019 alone and 17% of the forest have been lost in the last 50 years mostly due to forest conversion for cattle ranching. Spenceley and Snyman (2012) presented that in Kakumi National Park (KNP) in Ghana the main sources of livelihood are natural resources such as forests therefore there is the risk of overexploitation of these natural resources. (Abaja et al (2020) Most of the people are farmers, loggers, miners, hunters, and gatherers, the pursuit of their economic activities could eventually result in the depletion of natural resources.

According to Kirkby et al (2010) In Africa focusing on Nigeria, the annual revenue flow from ecotourism could be large but this is affected by the habitant loss and exploitation of natural resources yet the social cost benefit analysis of the land use in ecotourism cluster in the Tambopata region of Amazonian Peru is controlled.

A according to Holmes (2013) in Tanzania, Lake Natron Ramsar site, the local people can be a direct threat to protected areas when they fail to cooperate with conservation area authorities or participate in conservation initiatives such as ecotourism. Hallet (2003) argues that when you have a deep understanding of the local communities' attitudes regarding ecotourism, it usually leads to improved local support toward conservation and eco-tourism management.

It is clear from past evidence according to Holmes (2013) in Lake Natron, 85% of the local communities feel that they do not benefit from eco-tourism, and hence do not see its contribution value to their lives. This makes difficult for them to appreciate the positive impact of ecotourism

In Uganda local communities are essential for local participation but the local communities have negative attitudes towards ecotourism because of cultural diversification, community behaviors and community perceptions and as long as these three elements are contradicting the community attitudes to ecotourism are always negative.

According to the International Ecotourism Society (2007) Uganda has multitude of unique cultural elements of local and indigenous communities around the world and culture is identified as a critical issue for strengthening the sustainability. In Mount Elgon National Park most tropical forests, even those in protected areas are influenced by human activities such as harvesting of forest resources to meet current live hood needs which impacts forest regeneration, structure and diversity (Mackenzi,2012). This is caused by the cultural diversification between the people from Mbale, Sironko, and Kapchorwa which carries over 80% of the rural population with agriculture as their dominant economic activity indicating the negative attitudes of community on ecotourism development.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Rastegar (2010) states that despite the ecological and economic importance of Ecotourism in supporting conservation, there is a problem of wildlife conflicts caused by lack of motivation due to different levels of understanding of people in the community which may need different levels of motivation and satisfaction. This problem comes because of local community being excluded or mainly minimally involved in the planning and management of natural resources in protected areas which increases the negative attitude of community on ecotourism development.

Using the grounded theory research method, it examines the way in which existing ecotourism has impacted the surrounding community and the feasibility of future ecotourism development. According to the Ecotourism and Sustainable conference held in April (2015) by the International Ecotourism society (TIES) under the theme the future we want, the Effecting positive change through Ecotourism in Quito, Ecuador. They said although the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region has experienced increased ecotourism projects through the Community Based Nature Resources Management (CBNRM) regime, it has also experienced increased bush meat consumption and wildlife poaching (Mfunda & Roskaft 2016) where the communities appear to be losing the battle against the loss of wildlife and its habitat resources. It is therefore on this basis that the researcher sought to determine the effect of community attitudes on eco-tourism development in Uganda.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study aimed at determining the effect of community perception, community behavior, and cultural diversification on eco-tourism development.

1.4 Research objectives

The study will be guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To determine the effect of community perceptions on ecotourism development.
- ii. To determine the effect of community behaviors on eco-tourism development.
- iii. To determine the effect of cultural diversification on ecotourism development.

1.5 Research questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of community perception on ecotourism development.?
- ii. What is the effect of community behaviors on ecotourism development.?
- iii. What is the effect of cultural diversification on ecotourism development.?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was carried out in mount Elgon national park in the Eastern part of Uganda, which is one of the tourism hotspots in the country. It is also one of the areas where ecotourism within community ranches has been established with the aim of benefiting the community and utilization of resources. The study focused on the community attitudes on ecotourism development around mount Elgon National Park

1.6.1 Content scope

This study focused on the relationship between Community attitudes towards Eco tourism development

1.6.2 Geographic scope

Mount Elgon national park is a national park in the Eastern Uganda and with the oldest mountain that has stayed for over 20years in the Rift Valley .it is located on the border between Uganda and Kenya with the highest point of crater rim which is 4321 above the sea level.

According to UWA the park consists of many different types of animal species for example there are many types of monkeys, baboons, buffalos, elephants, hyenas and many other cats which have been conserved inside the park. However, all these animal species have been endangered by the local communities through poaching in search for food and other resources which portrays a negative attitude of communities around mount Elgon national park on the ecotourism development.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study will help the community around the conservation areas develop a positive attitude on conserved areas and also support ecotourism development to preserve these areas for ecology.

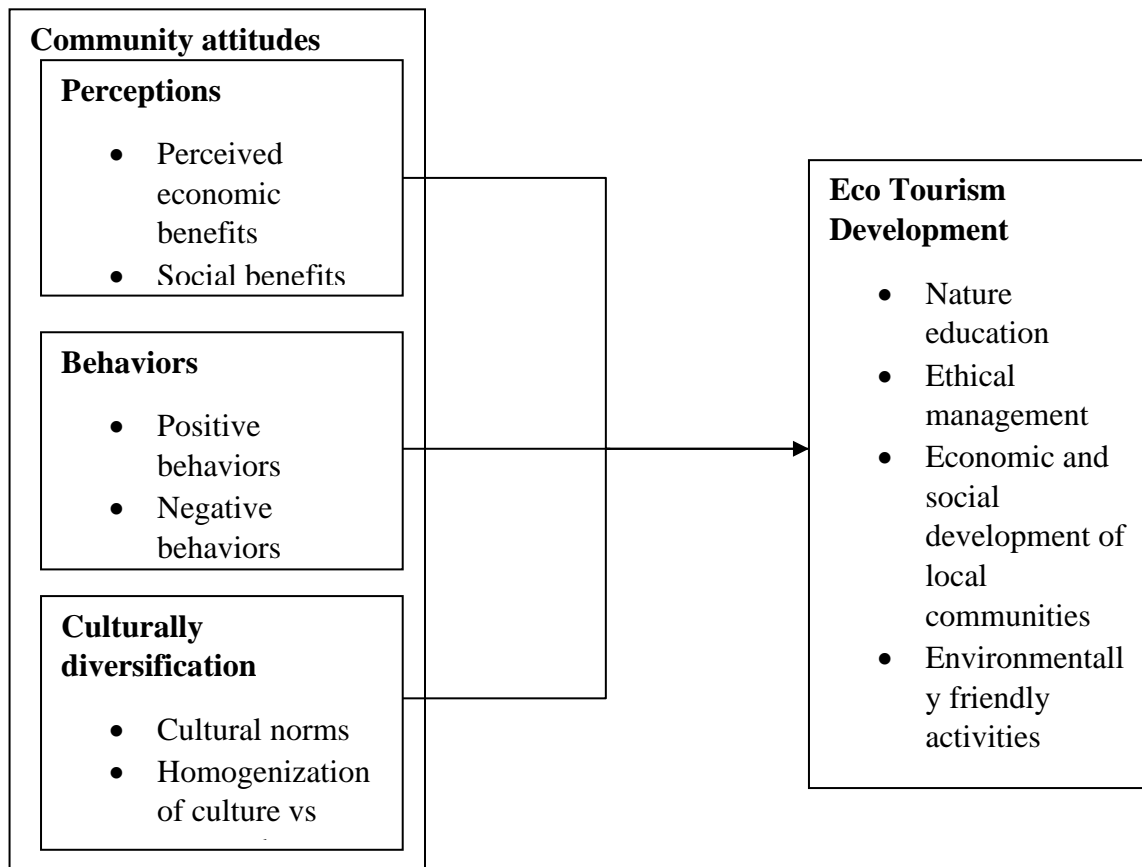
This research will help the tourism organizations and authorities for example the Uganda Tourism Board and Uganda Wildlife Authority to measure the levels of community attitudes on ecotourism development in different conservation areas and set relevant policies to govern the community attitudes on ecotourism which will promote the development of ecotourism on different conservation areas for future generation.

This research will also help managers and residents of ecotourism destination adjust their attitudes and actions to enhance desired culture and diminish their undesired cultural impacts, behaviors and perception on ecotourism development which will create a positive relationship of local communities on ecotourism development.

1.8 Conceptual framework

Ecotourism development according to (Ashok, Behera, and Majumdar, 2017) it is the way of taking responsibility for the natural areas that are conserved and improves the welfare of local people. Based on the principle of sustainability, the main focus of ecotourism is on experience and learning about nature, ethical management, non-consumptive behavior, local orientation and contribution to conservation of the area. In regards to the study, eco-tourism development is influenced by community attitudes, this is best presented by Igeler, Raujo, Abaja et al (2020) who stated that community participation in conservation with the receiving of economic benefits results into improved eco-tourism education, ethical conduct and good behaviors. The information is got from the theory of planned behavior which predicts an individual intension to engage in behavior at a specific time and place.

Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Igeler, Raujo, Abaja et al (2020) adapted and modified by the researcher

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