

Broadening of Uganda's Tourism Products and Its Impact on the Tourism Industry: A Case of The Batwa Trail in Uganda

Kalulu Ronald^{1*}, Tushabe Emmy¹

¹Lecturers, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management,
University of Tourism, Technology and Business Studies, Rwanda

*Corresponding author: kaluluronald@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study sought to examine the broadening of and innovative marketing of tourism products by making an analysis of the Batwa trail in Mgahinga gorilla national park in Western Uganda, using quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study established that tourism industry in Uganda experiences a stagnant growth given the fact that most tourists get bored with the existing products. The trail has a variety of products like caves, forest walk, and hiking experience. However, it experiences little acceptance levels as less is known about it by international visitors. Secondly, no promotional plan was used for the Batwa trail which meant limited number of potential tourists would know about its existence. The currently used traditional methods like trade exhibitions can yield minimal results. The use of social media like Facebook, Instagram, Watsapp, Pinrest and google adverts were seen to be the modern effective promotional tool for the trail. The study recommended constant promotion of the Batwa trail in travel magazines, social media and fairs to achieve appeal and acceptance by both domestic and international visitors.

Key words: Batwa, Batwa Trail, Product, broadening, innovation, marketing, Tourism

1. Introduction

Tourism is believed to be a fast pace growing sector with huge revenue earning as well as promoting strong cultural and social wellbeing of local communities in Uganda and the globe. Travel and Tourism are important economic activities in most countries around the world with both direct and indirect impacts such as job creation, regional development and international relations, among others. The UN Statistics Division-approved Tourism Satellite Accounting methodology (TSA: RMF 2008) quantifies only the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism. But World Travel and Tourism council (2017) recognizes that Travel and Tourism's total contribution is countless. Therefore, tourism is increasingly becoming instrumental in socio-economic development of Uganda and the sector has the potential to greatly contribute to the strengthening of the fundamentals of the economy. Tourism is Uganda's single largest export earner and generator of foreign

exchange, at USD 979 million per annum (Kalulu, 2016; UBOS, 2013). This represents more than twice the earnings of coffee, the country's second biggest export. The industry employs directly more than 200,000 people (WTTC, 2017). Nowhere else in the economy can so many jobs be created so quickly and cost-effectively as in an expanding tourism sector (Authority, 2012).

Tourism preserves and revives customs, traditional cultural expressions, and facilitates in conserving the natural environment (Kalulu, 2016; Agarwal, 1997). Uganda has a mix of natural and artificial attractions which make visiting interesting as long as they are effectively marketed (Akama, 1999). Accordingly, 2016 was a busy year for domestic tourism in Uganda with over 10 successful travel campaigns such as Tulambule, koikoi, UG Travel Month and cocktails in the Wild; all these aimed at encouraging and facilitating Ugandans to tour their country. As a result, Travel and Tourism contributed a lot to Uganda's gross domestic product. The total

contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP was UGX 6,171.5 billion in 2016 (6.6% of GDP) and was expected to grow by 14.5% to UGX7, 066.6bn (7.2% of GDP) in 2017. It is forecasted to rise by 7.1% pa to UGX14, 042.4 billion by 2027 (8.0% of GDP). Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) generated 63.7% of direct Travel and Tourism GDP in 2016 (UGX2, 5313bn) compared with 36.3% for business travel spending (WTTC, 2017).

However, even though tourism brought revenue to the country, there is still a concern by tourists that Uganda's tourism products are declining in appeal and attractiveness and are becoming more and more routine to the visitors as most destinations are still depending on traditional nature given products. This is true given the fact that tourism products just like other products are born, grow, decline and if not well managed, they will die with time (Butler, 1980). This therefore, means that tourist destinations should be more creative and innovative by coming up with new tourism products that can meet the ever increasing tourist demand. It is also critical for these destinations to come up with new marketing strategies that can entice customers to the newly introduced market offerings if they are to remain competitive (Bianchi, 1994).

The Uganda National Tourism Competitiveness plan 2000-2015 (MTTI, 2016) stresses that it is important to create new tourism products as well as market them in an innovative ways if Uganda is to remain competitive and it is believed that development of tourism products will attract greater numbers of tourists at the same time conserve biodiversity. Thus broadening of tourism products and services is a response that helps destinations to remain competitive amidst turbulent economy performance as it enables an organization replace products that have matured and reached the decline stage of their lifecycle (Shimp, 2003). In a way of revitalizing her sector, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) developed the Batwa Trail in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) in 2006 to relieve the park of the overreliance on the gorilla. UWA forced the Batwa community out of the forest to make it a national park. This left them landless, poor, marginalized, and isolated. However, the Batwa Trail allows the ancient Batwa people who once lived in these forests return and reoccupy the land.

The Batwa Forest Trail is part of a project to restore dignity and hope by keeping the Batwa culture and traditions alive, giving employment to those who are involved in the day-to-day project of the "Batwa Trail" as dancers, site guides, porters thus making them access capital for development (Bakunda, 2014). The trail combines forest walk, culture safari of the pigmies and eventually the main highlight of the trail is the Garama cave, a 200 metre long larvae tube which used to act as the King's residence, chambers, training wing, granary, armory among others all guided by the Batwa people as they explain their life when they were still in the forest.

The introduction of the trail has recharged MGNP's park's attractiveness (Authority, 2012) and allowed the Batwa return to the beloved forest and show others about how they lived and potentially kept some of their ways and crafts such as making bamboo cups, clothing beyond this generation of the Batwa people. The guides enable one through both the long and the short trails to experience the extra ordinary life the Batwa-the first forest people who as they used to live their original setting and their unique culture. The expedition begins with a short prayer in whispers to their god of the forest called Biheeko who is believed to have powers to offer protection or deprive one of life as they go on their hunting, raiding communities, fruit gathering and other activities in the forest they once shared with wildlife. Therefore, the study aimed at investigating the broadening of Uganda's tourism products using the Batwa trail in Mgahinga gorilla national park in Uganda as a case study. Specifically the study was guided by the following questions i) what new tourism product can rejuvenate the travel industry in Uganda? ii) What effective marketing strategies can be used to sell the Batwa trail to the world market? iii) What is the influencing impact of the Batwa trail on the tourism industry?

2. Literature Review

This section presents review of related literature and studies.

2.1 New tourism product development in the 21st century

Product development is the name given to a growth strategy where a business aims to introduce new products into existing markets (Shimp, 2003). This strategy may require the development of new competencies and requires the business to develop modified products which can appeal to existing markets. It is a cycle by means of which an innovative firm routinely converts ideas into commercially viable goods or services (Ana LAndeiras, 2010). New tourism products and services mean those innovative and creative work that has been brought to the market for sale. It may mean those products by which value has been added to them, or refer to those ones that have been put up on market as new inventions. Sometimes, tourism products can be offered in other destinations or countries but when introduced to a new location or market, these are treated as new products and services. Product broadening is a necessary process to update the ever increasing needs of the tourists (Jesus, 2010). Product expansion and extension take place when a firm introduces new products on the market or when a company wishes to venture into new markets, services and even develop new competencies. Page et,al (2009) stated that this process takes the form of new use(s) of a product, new customer acquisition and distribution channels among

others. Many firms evolve and broaden their services given the fact that they cannot be stagnant for long.

The broadening of tourism products is determined by a variety of factors such as the need to improve the quality of tourism products (Aguiló, 2005); when there is stagnated sales and firm revenues; if there is a decline in product or service demand; to improve and preserve the brand; the ever changing business climate as well as technological advancements that is ever changing today. Agarwal, (1997) and lastly; destinations that create new products tend to attract tourists to stay longer at the place visited (Clarke, 2000). Product development is of two forms: related and unrelated. The related development is when a tourism firm diversifies beyond current products and markets, but within the industry in which the company operates. On the other hand, in unrelated diversification an organization moves away beyond its' current industry (Bakunda et, 2014). However, Besanko et al (2003) differs when he argues that depending on the technological and marketing links between new and old products, three forms of diversification are identified; first: Concentric diversification that involves coming up with new products and then distribute them or offer them to new consumer groups. Secondly; Horizontal diversification – whereby the new products have no technological connections to the existing ones, but are addressed to the same consumer groups, new competences and technologies being necessary, but the existing marketing competences may be utilized; third; Conglomerate diversification – where the tourism firm enters in new domains with a different approach that has no connection to the existing technologies, methods and skills competences used at first.

2.2 Product innovation

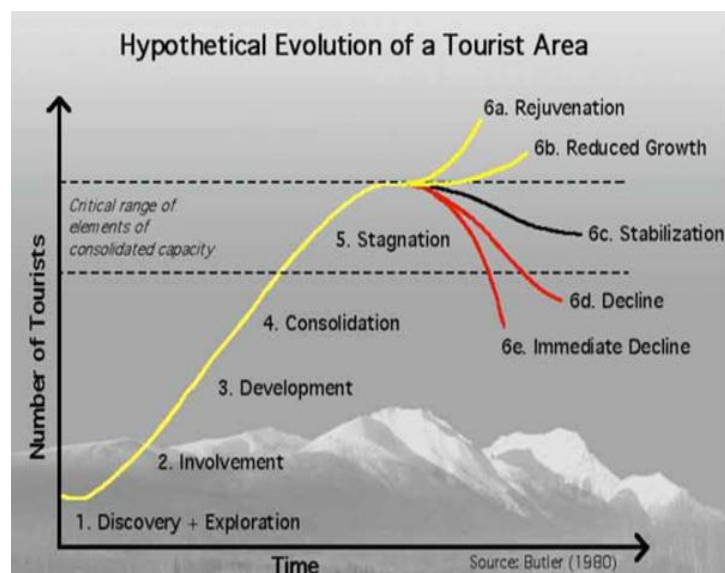
Product innovation which is linked to bringing new products on the market, has received most studies although most researchers focus on the manufacturing sector, and less on the services sector where tourism and hospitality is envisaged. Russell, (2006a) stated that innovation is described in two ways. First; incremental innovation which is a result of pressure and demands from well-known consumer to do something to the existing products. Secondly; radical innovation which refers to the creation of completely new products and services in. Therefore, tourist destinations should continually come up with tourism products and services so as to cope with the changing tourist needs and the global competition, seasonality, terrorism and other threatening factors. Poon (2003) also sheds more light on the emergence of the new tourism engineered by the birth of a new breed of tourists with more travel experience, values, lifestyles, demographics, flexible and independent – minded.

Given the fact that new tourists are highly adventurous and have unique interests (i.e. perceive a vacation as a journey of discovery, an extension of life and to see something different and widen their experiences) than old tourists, destinations ought to be more creative and appealing enough to them if they are to remain using the destination services. The underlying factors behind the fluctuations in visitor flows to destinations can be explored by the Tourism Area Lifecycle (TALC) (Butler, 1980). The TALC suggests that tourism destinations undergo a series of stages up to the point of decline – but DMO hardly put into consideration the TALC but instead attach blame on external factors for the fluctuations in tourist numbers (Butler, 2000) and (Akama, 1999).

2.3 Tourism products in the eyes of Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle

The TALC's origins (Butler, 2000) stem from the belief that, even if not fully appreciated in many tourist destinations, resorts are essentially products, i.e. they have normally been developed and modified to meet the needs of specific markets (holidaymakers) in a similar way to the production of other goods and services (Butler, (2006a). As such, it appeared to be reasonable to make the assumption that resorts would follow a generally similar pattern of development to that of most other products, namely, to have a "life cycle" of acceptance and rejection as the market first desired the product and then eventually found it outmoded and unattractive (Jesus, 2010).

Figure 1: Tourism Area Life Cycle



Source: (Butler, 1980)

Only in a very few cases do sales take off immediately; continue for decades or experience a rebirth. Therefore, to

remain outstanding and still acceptable to tourists, there should be constant innovation as Butler (1980) stated in his model-where he stated that most tourist destinations go through a six stage model and he called this the tourism life cycle model as seen below in figure 1.

The six stages are explained and within the stages the following happen;

Stage1. EXPLORATION / discovery stage- a few hardy and adventurous people looking for something different in a holiday find a place that is special in terms of its culture, natural beauty, history or landscape. There may be no tourist services available and local people may not be involved in tourist money making activities. This is a stage when a destination is found or discovered. At this stage, a destination receives very few visitors however through word of mouth; it gets adventurous visitors for purposes of showing off to their friends and relatives that they have been to an unknown place.

Stage 2. Discovery/involvement stage: At this stage, local people start to notice that there are increasing numbers of people coming to their local area. They start businesses to provide accommodation, food, guides, and transport. The destination receives the actual wave of visitors. The adventurous visitors of stage 1 will have moved on to seek new, unique and novel locations.

Stage3. DEVELOPMENT - Big companies start to see the emerging potential of the area as a tourist potential and therefore start to invest money in the region due to media support. They build large hotel complexes and sell package holidays (a package might include travel, accommodation, food and excursions). This makes the numbers of tourists swell dramatically and massively expands the number of job opportunities for people in the local region, in both tourist related jobs and in construction and services.

Stage4.Consolidation/stagnation - The local economy is probably dominated by tourism at this stage, and many local people will make their money from this type of industry. However, this can remove people from other industries such as farming and fishing and these industries can suffer as a result. There will be continued building and expansion of the destination BUT some of the older buildings will start to become unattractive and a lower quality client base might result. *The destination reaches the apex of the growth curve. This is a stage where there is neither growth nor decline.* The destination has already established a large number of hotels, fast – food restaurants, shopping centers and different kinds of entertainment. Eventually, the destination loses its uniqueness and begins to appear as familiar as any other. Visitor numbers may start to decline at this stage.

Stage5. Decline: - Competition from other resorts, rowdiness and a loss of the original features (e.g. if it had a great beach but that is now crowded and full of rubbish) can cause the resort to stop growing. The number of

people going levels off then starts to decline, threatening local businesses and services.

Stage 6: The S-curve – REJUVENATION: From the stagnation point onwards there are 2 basic possibilities: Decline in various forms or rejuvenation (regrowth of the site). Decline can be slow or rapid, and regular visitors are replaced by people seeking a cheap break or day trippers. Rejuvenation involves a cash injection from either a private company or the government, to create a new attraction within the original resort to boost its popularity - such as the Pleasure Beach at Blackpoll. Morgan et al (2002) cited a case of St Moritz as a destination that has excelled at remaining fashionable by not allowing its ‘famous’ stage to deteriorate in its offerings. Together with partners, the Switzerland DMO continuously introduces fresh events and products that blend well with the current offerings. On the contrary, many a destinations fail to remain fashionable and go to the third stage known as familiar. It’s a well-known destination and has lost its appeal. This stage finally takes them to the fourth stage known as fatigue. A destination at this stage loses its visitors to the famous and fashionable destinations.

2.4 Factors determining tourism product development

The demand for tourism depends on income of tourists in that when the income increases, this is likely to increase the demand for travel as per capita income gives people the economic power to enjoy tourism facilities (Jesus, 2010). Secondly, the media also plays a major role in supporting a given tourism destination. Many tourists tour other countries or tourist attraction sites because of the image the media creates about the host (Butler, (2006a). Today, television and the internet play a crucial role in marketing destinations than any other communication channel. With good promotion strategies, a positive image of a destination increases the demand and vice versa (Akama, 1999; Aguiló, 2005; Russell, 2006a). Through branding, marketers create a positive image of the destination in the mind of potential travelers, thus increasing the chances of attracting tourists from different parts of the world. Thirdly, pricing of tourism products affects tourism demand as tourists prefer destinations that offer affordable rates for their tourism facilities. Thus, tourism companies must strike a balance between making profits and attracting travelers with relatively cheap rates to remain competitive in the market. Fourth, availability of accommodation facilities, infrastructure, currency exchange rate, season, climate, security, and government regulations among others (Faulkner, 2003).

2.5 Innovative Tourism product and service marketing

When new services are put on market, there is need to make them known to the world (tourists) who are the final users. This stage of product development involves rigorous promotion campaigns using both online and

offline methods. There is also need to embrace the modern technologies such as the social media (Facebook, Watsap, google ad, pinrest, Instagram, emails, etc. (Kalulu R. N., 2018). The marketing strategies involve, advertising via paid media channels; sales promotion; personal selling; direct marketing and public relations (MTTI, 2005). The traditional marketing channels also can be used alongside the modern one. These include; trade shows and exhibitions in tourist generating countries; market segmentation among others but the destination acceptance by tourists needs serious attention.

3. Research Methodology

Given the nature of the study, the study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both primary and secondary sources were used to obtain data from respondents. Primary sources included two focus group discussions, interviews from key informants and self-administered structured and semi-structured questionnaires. The secondary sources involved document review of the reports and other related documents from UWA, tourism ministry, (WTO, 2016), and (WTTC, 2017). The results of this exercise guided the subsequent phase which involved a series of key informant interviews of the management and staff of UWA and the Kisoro district authorities. The study respondents were selected from the administrative district of Kisoro in Western Uganda and they comprised of the Batwa community, key managers and employees of UWA, tourists visiting MGNP, and the surrounding park community leaders. The study adopted a purposive sampling method especially from key informants to enable the study get vivid information from the field. The total population of the study was 295 but the study sampled only 169 key figures including respondents considered adequate to provide reliable data determined using (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The sample included; 8 park staff, 7 tour operators, 10 UWA headquarter managers attached to MGNP, 50 community leaders, 60 tourists (30 international and 30 domestic), 50 pigmies (Batwa), and 110 community members. The study also employed a focus group discussion with community leaders and key stakeholder organizations. The researchers used excel as well as SPSS to analyze data into meaningful information. However, the data gathering faced hardships such as the terrain of the park with rugged landscape that made the data collection burdensome, communicating with the Batwa was not easy due to the fact that they were spread along the park, did not understand English hence creating a language bottleneck, forest walk to the cave consumed a lot of study time, the UWA staff were busy to provide information as well as the funds to the whole project was inadequate as the researchers had to foot all the funding. Despite the above limitations, the research team utilized the available means to achieve the goals by getting interpreters, permission from authority and self-funding of the study.

4. The study findings

The study was undertaken to achieve and to answer a variety of questions which included what new tourism product can rejuvenate the travel industry in Uganda, What effective marketing strategies can be used to sell the Batwa trail to the world market and what is the impact of the Batwa trail on the tourism industry? Literature was reviewed, data was collected and analyzed and eventually presented in tables, figures and narrative.

4.1 MGNP tourism products

Table 1: showing MGNP tourism products

Product Name	Country of origin	Type of tourist	Category of customer	Frequency
Gorilla trekking	Belgium, Germany, Israel, Italy and UK,USA ETC	Adventure and eco-tourist	Foreign visitor	Most often
Batwa trail/Garama cave	United Kingdom	Adventure, cultural	Foreigners dominate with less domestic customers	Least visited
Golden Monkey	Belgium, Germany, Israel, Italy and UK	Adventure and eco-tourist	Foreign visitor	Most often
Mountain hiking	Mixed	Adventure	Foreigners dominate with less domestic customers	Moderately visited
The gorge trail	Mixed	Leisure tourist	Mixed	Rarely visited
The snake island	Belgium, Germany, Israel, Italy and UK	Adventure and eco-tourist	Foreign visitor	Rarely visited
Panorama (Nature walk)	Mixed		Mixed	Frequently visited
Bird watching	Mixed		Mixed	Often visited

Source: (Authority, 2012)

Table 1 shows that gorilla trekking is the cash cow of the park followed by golden monkey tracking as these command visitor recognition and high levels of acceptability. As visitors went for these two products they were at the same time hiking the Virunga-Volcano Mountain indicating good potential. The panorama (nature walk) is a free activity as customers are on the way to trek the golden monkeys and gorillas. They are able to have a view of the beautiful scenery of Kisoro stretching up to DRC. It is also clear from Table 1 that Batwa trail has not achieved visitor recognition and acceptance than the gorillas, golden monkeys and other tourism products offered by the Park. The conveniently found tour operators (Obed from Eco-tours Ltd), narrated that most tour operators have no sufficient information on the Batwa trail. Furthermore, the snake island (located in Lake Mutanda outside the park) was rarely visited by tourists and those that visit it are majorly researchers although sometimes tourists cannot see even one snake.

4.2 New tourism product development in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

The study established that the untapped resource of Garama cave (home to the last Batwa king and a hiding place for the Batwa whenever faced with danger) was a motivation for the development of the trail. This cave had been neglected and not adequately exploited as neither tourists nor the guides paid great attention yet they passed through it occasionally on their way to the park. Development of the Batwa trail therefore would add flesh to the cave as a tourist product and provide a more meaningful experience to tourists. Uganda Wildlife Authority therefore decided to utilize the Batwa as guides and dancers for tourists. During the interview with the park managers and employees, it was found that Batwa trail was a result of continued demand to see the Batwa people from the international tourists who visited the MGNP (Authority, 2012).

When tourism started in Kisoro area in early 90s, tourists exhibited curiosity about visiting Batwa and often the local tour guides would take them to watch the Batwa as though they were “zoo items”. This was seen as inhuman by IGCP to the extent that they began to develop a package offering a more positive Batwa experience based on the culture of the Batwa people in a dignified way. On a cultural note, the study found out that the Batwa culture was dying out and that their rich knowledge of the forest/ecosystem was becoming distinct. This was evident especially to those Batwa children born outside the forest who adopted some aspects of the non Batwa culture yet Batwa are known to have a very rich culture with a strong preference to nature. Their knowledge of the forest, medicinal plants is immeasurable. They are also great musicians and dancers. However, time was passing by as they lived outside the forest without practicing their culture, with their young ones getting more assimilated into the non Batwa community. The trail was therefore

developed to preserve the Batwa culture in the coming generations as well as to promote cultural tourism using the Batwa activities.

4.3 How the Batwa trail was conceived and developed

The Batwa trail took a long process and steps before it was put on the market. These according to local communities, tourists and park staff involved idea generation and concept development by IGCP and later it was shared with key stakeholders of UWA, UOBDU and KDLG for scrutiny and approval. There was documentation of Batwa culture followed by production of the tourism development plan, then execution of the plan. The final step was marketing of the product.

1. Concept development: This is a stage at which the idea was generated and the concept developed and later sold to key stakeholders for implementation specifically Kisoro district leaders, UWA and United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) for approval and consideration.
2. Documentation of the Batwa culture: the Batwa culture was well documented after concept approval by players. This involved; feeding patterns, housing, dancing, hunting, beliefs, cooking, child birth, marriage ceremonies, norms and architecture.
3. Production of the tourism development plan: It was after documenting the Batwa culture, that a tourism development plan was produced. It was later subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for approval as a viable plan so as to avoid damage to culture and to the environment.
4. Execution of the tourism plan: The plan was then executed after approval by NEMA and it involved a number of activities and roles by stakeholders. These included;

Phase one

- Selection and training of Batwa guides in guiding skills and customer communications; identification and development of spot sites to be included in the trail particularly where the Batwa used to perform certain activities; rehabilitation/renovation of Garama cave to acceptable standards to enable tourism activities to take place. This exercise

involved many stakeholders including none- Batwa community.

Phase two

- Discussion and agreement on the operation mode of the project by formation of the management committee and sharing of responsibilities. This involved UWA, IGCP, Kisoro District Local government and IGCP.
- Procurement of materials: materials for renovation of the cave, cutting the trail and making uniforms/ costumes for the Batwa guides.
- Development of the interpretation plan: Interpretation plan was developed and manuals developed for usage by the guides and UWA staff.

Phase three

- Compilation of historical and current Batwa lifestyles; the culture and lifestyles of the Batwa both before leaving the forest and after were documented. Improvement of relevant infrastructure: other relevant infrastructure necessary for the success of the project were improved such as the rest house at Garama cave where visitors take rest after walking the trail.

Phase four

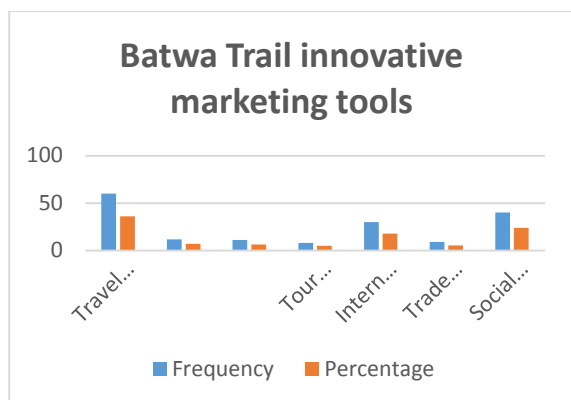
- Product launching and Marketing started and is still on-going.

were effective promotional tool for the trail (24%). The website and internet were also mentioned as an effective source of information for Batwa trail and that most potential visitors search them for photographical interpretation of the location before deciding to book (18%). One tourist stressed that “if you have a very good website, people will find you.” The others were regarded as traditional tools which only need emphasis.

According to UWA interviews, at the start, no given promotional plan was used for the Batwa trail even though after some time, traditional methods were employed but mainly word of mouth was commonly adopted. The introduction of modern tools of social media gave a boost to the marketing efforts but still Word of mouth dominated, followed by recommendation by those who visited the park. The tourism ministry explored trade exhibition where all tourism products being offered in Uganda are promoted/displayed. Through this, both international potential tourists and tour operators access information on the available tourism products available including the Batwa trail. The others are brochures, familiarization trips for tour operators as well as advertising to achieve appeal and acceptance of the Batwa trail in travel magazines such as the lonely planet to inform both existing and potential tourists of the existence of a new cultural tourism product (Akama, 1999). Other channels to make known of the trail are signposts as you enter western region from Kabale up to Kisoro. Print and visual media such as TV stations like NTV sponsored by Non-Governmental Agencies such as FFI to also promote their activities and showcase their achievements (see video recording attached). There is also use of the internet and the worldwide web specially made for Batwa (www.TheBatwaTrail.com) and posted on the Uganda wildlife web portal. Other Uganda government agencies such as UTB included on the list of tourism products being offered in MGNP. Other partners such as Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA) also have it on their website (Authority, 2012).

4.4 The effective marketing strategies for Batwa trail

Figure 2: Effective marketing tools



Source: Primary data

The findings from Figure 2 indicates that travel magazines and travel news play an important role in making known of the Batwa trail in Uganda as majority respondents were satisfied with its source of information and accuracy (36%). It was followed by social media with 40 out of 169 respondents saying that social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Watsap, Pinrest and google adverts

4.5 The outcomes of innovative marketing of the Batwa trail

Effectiveness of the marketing campaign for the Batwa trail was measured by recording the number of tourists visiting it or those who have knowledge of its existence, as well as destinations reached by the marketing efforts and finally the preferred source of information by tourists about the trail. Findings indicate that there has been improved acceptance and visitations to the trail than before though it's still low as narrated by MGNP staff and UWA staff. Therefore tourism policy makers like UWA and tourism organizations ought to put tourism

information in those magazines as well as dare to have good websites as indicated in the figure below;

4.6 The social, economic, environmental and cultural growth impacts of the Batwa trail

The study found out that Batwa trail had social, economic, environmental and cultural growth impacts as narrated by respondents as tabulated in table 2.

Table 2: The social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts of the Batwa trail

Impact/influence	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Increased number of tourists and improved earning capacity by the Batwa	Economic	55	33
Generational pass on and preservation of Batwa culture as well as empowerment of Batwa through training thus improved Batwa-UWA relations	Cultural	74	44
Reduced ecological park pressure and illegal activities and reduced overreliance on the gorilla	Environmental	40	23

Table 2 reveals that the Batwa trail has helped preserve the Batwa culture as the coming generations will have knowledge of the Batwa heritage (44%). It is also evident from the findings that Batwa trail activities has somehow improved the visitation to the park and earned the Batwa some income though still little (33%). From the records seen from (MGNP,2012), it is estimated that by August 2012, more than 400 tourists had walked the trail and generated more than USD 40,000 in revenues and part of this money is given to Batwa for settlement purposes. This is in addition to the fact that Batwa are now working in the park as guides, porters, dancers, others participate in maintenance activities of the trail while some sell foodstuffs to tourists along the trail (Bakunda et, 2014). The study also revealed that, the Batwa men are being paid UGX 8,000/= per day worked while females earn about UGX 5,000/=.

From the environmental part, the creation of the trail has resulted to reduced ecological park pressure and illegal park activities and that there reduced overreliance on the gorilla as a tourism product hence diversification of the tourism industry offerings by (24%) as Batwa who used to be poachers are now beneficiaries of the park hence increased preservation and conservation of the forest. The Batwa have also been empowered through training to have a self-reliance lifestyle devoid of begging. This has had positive change to the extent that some are now starting to see the world in a positive way thus some can survive on their own. The Batwa are getting civilized as they get

mixed with the world and exposed to the rest of the local people and foreigners. This has helped them gain confidence and a sense of acceptance in society.

5. Conclusion

After data analysis and interpretation, the study came up with the following conclusions:

First: The tourism industry of Uganda was experiencing a stagnant growth given the fact that most tourists were getting bored with the existing products. Therefore, the creation of the Batwa trail reduced over reliance on gorilla tourism as sometimes the gorillas would rotate to other countries in the greater Virunga area thus creating a gap in revenue earning as it was the major product of the MGNP. This resulted into a growing concern for park stakeholders and thus the birth of the Batwa trail idea was developed as an answer and a rejuvenation process of improving the performance of the park and the industry at large. The trail has a variety of other sub products like caves, forest walk, and hiking experience. However, the trail experiences little acceptance levels as less is known about it by international visitors (Page, 2009).

Secondly, at the start, no given promotional plan was used for the Batwa trail which meant that no visitor would know about its existence. However, with time UWA used traditional methods like trade exhibitions among others but still the results were minimal. After a series of interviews and discussions with respondents, the study found and identified travel magazines as a major source of information and was that majority respondents were satisfied with its source of information and accuracy. On addition, the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Watsap, Pinrest and google adverts were seen to be the modern effective promotional tool for the trail as well as the creation of the Batwa website where information for Batwa trail can be found by distant visitors who search for photographic interpretation of the location before deciding to book as one tourist stressed, “if you have a very good website, people will find you.” The others marketing avenues included print and visual media such as TV stations like NTV.

Third, the study found out that the Batwa trail development to have social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts like increased number of tourists to the park and generational pass on by preservation of Batwa culture, enhanced revenue collection from the park, reduced ecological park pressure and illegal activities, reduced overreliance on the gorilla, capacity building and empowerment of Batwa through training, and improved Batwa-UWA relations as well as enhanced civilization of Batwa community (Authority, 2012).

6. Recommendations

Based on the above discussions and conclusions, and after coming to the end of the study, we propose the following as appropriate recommendations for the success of the Batwa trail in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Western Uganda;

1. There is need for more promotion of the Batwa trail to achieve both domestic and international acceptance and appeal especially by availing information in the tourists' major sources of travel information such as the internet, travel news and magazines as well as involving tourism players like tour and travel agents, education sector and government institutions in marketing the trail as failure to do so, will result to low numbers of tourists and failure to achieve the intended goals of new products to the Ugandan market.
2. There is a call to employ modern marketing platforms especially social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Watsap, Pinrest and google adverts as they were seen to be the effective tool for the trail. This is because it is evident today that social media use has high acceptance and usage per day especially by the millennials who are the majority of the population globally. (Ana LAndeiras, 2010).
3. More cultural studies be done to establish the impact of the trail on the perception of the trail development by the Batwa community.

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