

Research Article

## Rural Tourism and Socio-Economic Development in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District of Uganda

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**Abstract:** This research explores the interplay between rural tourism and socio-economic development in Kalapatta Sub County, located within the Kabong District. As rural areas globally seek sustainable pathways for growth, the study focuses on the specific impacts of tourism on the socio-economic fabric of the community. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights gathered through interviews and surveys conducted among local residents, business owners, and tourists. Key indicators such as income generation, employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and cultural preservation are examined to assess the multifaceted impact of rural tourism on the local community. Preliminary findings indicate that the influx of tourists has led to increased economic activities, including the growth of local businesses and the creation of employment opportunities. However, challenges such as environmental degradation, cultural commodification, and unequal distribution of benefits are also identified. The research sheds light on the complex dynamics between the tourism industry and the socio-economic development of the rural community, emphasizing the need for sustainable and inclusive strategies. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on rural tourism by providing context-specific insights from Kalapatta Sub County, Kabong District. Recommendations for policymakers, local authorities, and community stakeholders are offered to guide the development of strategies that maximize the positive impacts of tourism while mitigating its potential negative consequences. Ultimately, this research aims to inform the creation of a framework for sustainable rural tourism that fosters socio-economic development in a manner that respects and enhances the local culture and environment.

**Keywords:** Cultural Preservation, Empowerment, Social-Economic Development, Tourism.



## 1. Introduction

On a global scale, international tourism has burgeoned into a nearly two-trillion-dollar industry, experiencing exponential growth in recent decades. The diverse cultural landscapes across different regions offer travelers the prospect of immersive multilingual and intercultural experiences, fostering rich interactions between tourists and locals [1]. This burgeoning interest in the cultures and pursuits of adventure and independent travelers within the realm of international tourism has captured the attention of tourism sociologists, social geographers, and cultural theorists [2]. This trend underscores the significance of international travel not only in social and cultural studies but also, to some extent, in the realms of linguistics and communication.

Concurrently, there is a noticeable shift in scholarly focus towards discourse and communication, intricately connected to language, within the field of tourism studies [1]. In economic terms, tourism permeates various segments of a country's population. The evolving concept of tourism development has increasingly directed attention towards developing countries, where tourism has emerged as a pivotal instrument for sustainable development. The multifaceted impact of tourism extends beyond economic aspects, encompassing opportunities for employment, poverty reduction, investment in marginalized communities, property access, and lifestyle enhancement [1]. Furthermore, tourism contributes to non-economic dimensions, such as training, education, skill development, heightened self-esteem and self-confidence, improvements in health, and overall socio-cultural advancement.

Tourism facilitates the connection of individuals to distinctive geographical sites, fostering public relationships through the exchange of cultures, civilizations, beliefs, morals, lifestyles, languages, and wealth. Beyond its economic and cultural dimensions, tourism plays a role in promoting harmony, enhancing cultural diversity, and mitigating urban migration by generating local employment opportunities. Communities can assimilate and appreciate the valued aspects of another community's culture and tradition through tourism. Moreover, tourism has positive ecological implications, as it emphasizes environmental protection and conservation. The awareness generated by tourism contributes to funding the preservation of environmental zones [3] [4]. Sustainable tourism emphasizes the importance of natural sites, prompting government and tourism authorities to prioritize their development. Preservation of the environment not only benefits the ecosystem but also enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

## 2. Literature Review

The comprehensive impact of the tourism industry on South Asia's GDP reached USD 162.4 billion in 2014, constituting 6.8% of the total GDP. Projections indicate a 6.9% increase in 2015. The travel and tourism sector directly contributed to 26,211,000 employments, accounting for 4.7% of total jobs, and exhibited a 1.9% growth in 2015 [4] [5] [6] [7]. This study adopts discourse and communication as focal points, essential components of language and culture, to delve into and comprehend the tourism experience. The study posits that tourism motivations shape travel expectations, subsequently influencing tourist behavior. The goal is to examine how these expectations impact behavioral aspects and tourism discourse, interacting with the behavioral and cultural dimensions of the host society to ultimately define the tourists' experience [2] [8] [9] [10]. The argument posits a reciprocal influence, acknowledging that while tourists bring expectations that guide behavior, host societies and their cultural norms can alter the anticipated tourism discourse, potentially influencing the fulfillment of expectations and, consequently, determining the overall travel outcome [7].

To explore these experiences, the study focuses on the tourism communication and discourse encounters of tourists. Emphasizing tourism as a social psychological phenomenon [7] proposed that the shared experiences of tourists within a specific context can be better understood by considering the social and psychological factors shaping these experiences. Moreover, [3] suggests that tourism planners should analyze tourist behavior from a psychological perspective. While existing research primarily concentrates on intercultural training for tourists, predominantly using quantitative methods [8] [11] [12] [13], this study underscores the importance of social identities, tourist learning, and the engagement of tourists with locals in the tourism discourse, as these factors significantly impact the overall tourist experience. Given the neglect of these factors in prior tourism research, there is a compelling opportunity to investigate their effects on the tourism experience. This opportunity forms a solid foundation for a qualitative, specifically phenomenological inquiry. The belief is that by capturing the narratives of tourists within a specific setting, common underlying themes may emerge, facilitating a deeper understanding of the essence of these experiences in the given context [10] [11] [14] [15].

The language barrier within the tourism industry in Uganda, particularly in Kalapatta Sub County, has impeded effective communication between local and international tourists. Despite the significant contribution of tourism to the national product and government revenue, this hindrance has adversely affected both local tourists and individuals employed in the tourism sector. Moreover, Kalapatta Sub County faces unemployment challenges, and tourism has the potential to alleviate this issue by fostering the establishment of various businesses such as hotels, resorts, and touristic sites.

Secondly, the underdeveloped transportation infrastructure, including roads and communication systems, poses a critical problem for tourism in Kalapatta Sub County. Despite its natural beauty, the lack of satisfactory transportation options hinders tourists' satisfaction. Safety concerns further complicate travel to the area, and the limited availability of accommodation facilities, including guesthouses, motels, and hotels, forces tourists to resort to uncomfortable alternatives or curtails their stay. The inadequate communication and transportation systems, coupled with the absence of a railroad and poor road conditions, contribute to frequent road accidents and an outdated traffic system.

Owing to all these challenges, this paper aims to investigate the impact of the tourism industry on the socio-economic status of the people in Kalapatta Sub County, Kabong District, with a focus on addressing the identified problems to enhance the overall tourism experience and economic outcomes for the local community.

### **3. Methodology**

This section of this paper is subdivided into research design, Study population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, procedures of data collection and finally, data analysis.

- **Research design**  
This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights gathered through interviews and surveys conducted among local residents, business owners, and tourists.
- **Study Population**  
This study comprised 254 respondents which is made up of 4 field managers and 250 residents in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District, Uganda. The study selected beautiful sceneries in Kalapatta Sub County Like Hotels, Crafts and craftsmen and other natural resources in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District, Uganda. 70 respondents which comprised 04 field managers and 66 respondents were sampled using Purposive sampling techniques.
- **Data Collection Instruments**  
The researcher designed a questionnaire that guided data collection. The researcher also used interviews in open and closed-ended methods to further obtain some data. The instrument was physically validated by two lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundation and one from the tourism area in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District, Uganda.
- **Data Analysis and Presentation**  
Quantitative methods were employed to analyze the data, which was subsequently refined, classified, and conveyed as percentages through frequency tables, graphs, and pie charts to facilitate clear interpretation. Responses to open-ended questions were meticulously recorded and organized into coherent patterns. Validation was achieved by cross-referencing this information with data obtained from interviews and observations. The collected data was carefully edited and categorized into thematic groupings aligned with the study objectives.

### **4. Finding and Discussion**

#### **4.1. Research Finding**

The findings are presented according to the themes that are based on the objectives of the research study and research questions.

- **Socio-Demographic Characteristics**

The characteristics of respondents included gender, age and level of education. These were presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio- Demographic Distribution on Gender, Age and Level of Education

Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Males	47	59
Females	33	41
Total	80	100
<b>Age</b>		
20-30 years	23	28
31-40 years	38	47
41-50	12	15
51 and above	8	10
Total	80	100
<b>Education level</b>		
Bachelors	52	65
Diploma	14	17
Certificate	10	13
No Education	4	5
Total	80	100

The responses from the Table 1 on socio demographic characteristics indicated that 59% of the respondents were males whereas 41% were females. The responses also indicated that 28% of the respondents were between 20-30 years where as 47% were between 31-40 years. The responses also indicated that 15% were within the range of 41-50 whereas 10% were of 51 years and above.

The responses also showed that 65% had attained education up to a Bachelor level, 17% had attained up to a diploma level, 13% had attained certificate whereas 5% had no education. The table indicates that the majority of respondents 73.3% had attained a level in education and hence knew how to read and write. A least percentage 5% of the respondents had no education.

#### • Discussion of Objectives

Respondents were asked to give their views on the tourist attractions in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District. The results were summarized in the table below given by all respondents.

Table 2. Responses on the Tourist Attractions in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Natural Attraction. Nature physically, such as flora, fauna, and natural creatures such as mountains, beaches, marine, lakes, forests, etc.	5 (6.25%)	10(12.5%)	1(1.25%)	0	2 (2.5%)
<b>Cultural Attraction.</b>	<b>4 (5%)</b>	<b>7 (8.75%)</b>	<b>2 (2.5%)</b>	<b>1(1.25%)</b>	<b>1(1.25%)</b>
Human Attraction. Human activity motivates people to come and watch the activity such as racing.	7 (8.75%)	8 (10%)	3(3.75%)	0	0
Personal Event.	6 (7.5%)	3 (3.75%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)	1(1.25%)

From Table 2 findings, 5 (6.25%) agreed, 10 (12.5%) strongly agreed, 1 (1.25%) disagreed and 2 (2.5%) were not sure about the statement that natural Attraction was among the types of tourism. Nature physically, such as flora, fauna, and natural creatures such as mountains, beaches, marine, lakes, forests, etc.

The findings also showed that Cultural Attraction is among the tourist attractions. This was supported by all respondents 4 (5%) agreed, 7 (8.75%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) were not sure with the given statement.

- 7 (8.75%) agreed, 8 (10%) disagreed and 3 (3.75%) strongly disagreed that human attraction is also a tourist attraction. Human activity motivates people to come and watch the activity such as racing.
- 6 (7.5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed 2 (2.5%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) was not sure that Personal Event is also among the tourist attractions

#### • Tourism and its Impacts on the Livelihood

In relation to objective two, respondents were asked about the sources of income to determine tourism and its impacts on Livelihood. The responses are summarized below

Table 3. Responses on Tourism and its Impacts on the Livelihood in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Income from employment. Income from employment comprises receipts for participation in economic activities in a strictly employment-related capacity	6(7.5%)	8(10%)	2(2.5%)	0	2(2.5%)
Property income. Property income is the flow of receipts that arise from the ownership of assets (return for use of assets) that are provided to others for their use.	2(2.5%)	7(8.75%)	3(3.75%)	1(1.25%)	3(3.75%)
Income from the household production of services for own consumption. Income from the household production of services for own consumption includes services produced within the household for the household's own consumption rather than for the market.	4(5%)	6(7.5%)	3(3.75%)	2(2.5%)	3(3.75%)
Home production for own consumption.	5(6.25%)	3(3.75%)	1(2.5%)	0	3(3.75%)
Income from life insurance, annuities and private pension funds	4(5%)	2(2.5%)	1(1.25%)	1(1.25%)	1(1.25%)
Income from employment. Income from employment comprises receipts for participation in economic activities in a strictly employment-related capacity	3(3.75%)	4(5%)	0	0	0

*Agree-1, Strongly Agree- 2, Disagree-3, Strongly Disagree-4, Not Sure-5*

From the study findings, 6 (7.5%) agreed, 8 (10%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed and 2 (2.5%) were not sure with the statement that income from employment was also a major source. Income from employment comprised of receipts for participation in economic activities in a strictly employment-related capacity.

The findings also showed that Property income. This was the flow of receipts that arise from the ownership of assets (return for use of assets) that are provided to others for their use. This was given by all respondents 2 (2.5%) who agreed, 7 (8.75%) strongly agreed, 3 (3.75%) disagreed 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 3 (3.75%) were not sure with the given statement.

4 (5%) agreed, 6 (7.5%) strongly agreed 3 (3.75%) disagreed, 2 (2.5%) strongly disagreed and 3(3.75%) were not sure that income from the household, production of services for own consumption was also source of income from households. Income from the household production of services for own consumption included services produced within the household for the household's consumption rather than for the market., 5 (6.25%)agreed, 2 (2.5%) strongly agreed, 1 (2.5%) disagreed 4 (5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly agreed, 1 (1.25%) disagreed 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) were not sure that income from life insurance, annuities and private pension funds is also a source of

income among households unlike 3 (3.75%) agreed and 4 (5%) strongly agreed, that Income from employment. Income from employment comprises receipts for participation in economic activities in a strictly employment-related capacity.

Table 4. Responses on Ways of Improving the tourism industry in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Extensive advertising using stamps posters, films and media such internet should be carried out	4 (5%)	6 (7.5%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.25%)	1 (1.25%)
The responsible authorities should discourage and prevent the burning and clearing of vegetation in areas surrounding the national parks and game reserves.	6 (7.5%)	3 (3.75%)	2 (2.5%)	3 (3.75%)	0
Government should upgrade security in their respective countries so as to attract more tourists	5 (6.25%)	3 (3.75%)	3 (3.75%)	1 (1.25%)	1 (1.25%)
Roads and other means of transport which lead to tourist attractions should be improved.	3 (3.75%)	4 (5%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.25%)	0
Countries must diversify from traditional tourist attractions of national parks and game reserves to activities such as sports and entertainment.	1 (1.25%)	1 (1.25%)	5 (6.25%)	4 (5%)	1 (1.25%)

From the study findings, 4 (5%) agreed, 6 (7.5%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) was not sure about the statement that Extensive advertising using stamps posters, films and media such internet should be carried out.

Based on the statement “The responsible authorities should discourage and prevent burning and clearing of vegetation in areas surrounding the national parks and game reserves.” 6 (7.5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly disagreed. “Government should upgrade security in their respective countries so as to attract more tourists” This was given by respondents who 3 (3.75%) agreed, 4 (5%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, and 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the table findings, 1 (1.25%) agreed, 1 (1.25%) strongly agreed, 5 (6.25%) disagreed, 4 (5%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) were not sure about the statement that Countries must diversify from traditional tourist attraction of national parks and game reserves to activities such as sports and entertainments.

From Table 5 findings, 5 (6.25%) agreed, 10 (12.5%) strongly agreed, 1 (1.25%) disagreed and 2 (2.5%) were not sure about the statement that natural Attraction was among the types of tourism. Nature physically, such as flora, fauna, and natural creatures such as mountains, beaches, marine, lakes, forests, etc.

The findings also showed that Cultural Attraction is among the tourist attractions. This was supported by all respondents 4 (5%) agreed, 7 (8.75%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) were not sure with the given statement.

7 (8.75%) agreed, 8 (10%) disagreed and 3 (3.75%) strongly disagreed that human attraction is also a tourist attraction. Human activity motivates people to come and watch the activity such as racing.

6 (7.5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed 2 (2.5%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) was not sure that Personal Event is also among the tourist attractions. The findings are in line with Some of the variables that are used to measure tourist motivations include „to visit historical and cultural sites“, „to seek adventure“, „to relax“, „to get close to nature“, „to get away from home“, and „to be active“ [12] [16] [17]. Although tourists themselves are not inclined to categorize themselves into fixed and well-defined typologies, academics and marketers alike find it more convenient to treat tourists as belonging to different categories in order to study and reach out to them in a more orderly fashion.

### • **Impacts of Tourism on the Livelihood in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District**

From the study findings, 6 (7.5%) agreed, 8 (10%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed and 2 (2.5%) were not sure with the statement that income from employment was also a major source. Income from employment comprised of receipts for participation in economic activities in a strictly employment-related capacity.

The findings also showed that Property income. This was the flow of receipts that arise from the ownership of assets (return for use of assets) that are provided to others for their use. This was given by all respondents 2 (2.5%) who agreed, 7 (8.75%) strongly agreed, 3 (3.75%) disagreed 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 3 (3.75%) were not sure with the given statement.

4 (5%) agreed, 6 (7.5%) strongly agreed 3 (3.75%) disagreed, 2 (2.5%) strongly disagreed and 3 (3.75%) were not sure that income from the household, production of services for own consumption was also source of income from households. Income from the household production of services for own consumption included services produced within the household for the household's consumption rather than for the market., 5 (6.25%) agreed, 2 (2.5%) strongly agreed, 1 (2.5%) disagreed 4 (5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly agreed, 1 (1.25%) disagreed 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) were not sure that income from life insurance, annuities and private pension funds is also a source of income among households unlike 3 (3.75%) agreed and 4 (5%) strongly agreed, that Income from employment. Income from employment comprises receipts for participation in economic activities in a strictly employment-related capacity.

### • **Ways of Improving Tourism Industry in Kalapatta Sub County Kabong District**

From the study findings, 4 (5%) agreed, 6 (7.5%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) was not sure about the statement that Extensive advertising using stamps posters, films and media such internet should be carried out

Based on the statement "The responsible authorities should discourage and prevent burning and clearing of vegetation in areas surrounding the national parks and game reserves. "6 (7.5%) agreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, 3 (3.75%) strongly disagreed. "Government should upgrade security in their respective countries so as to attract more tourists" This was given by respondents who 3 (3.75%) agreed, 4 (5%) strongly agreed, 2 (2.5%) disagreed, and 1 (1.25%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

From the table findings, 1 (1.25%) agreed, 1 (1.25%) strongly agreed, 5 (6.25%) disagreed, 4 (5%) strongly disagreed and 1 (1.25%) were not sure about the statement that Countries must diversify from traditional tourist attraction of national parks and game reserves to activities such as sports and entertainments. The findings were supported by [14] mentions that a tourist attraction can successfully attract visitors if it is presented well, so it can give an impression and make visitors satisfied. To present a tourism destination precisely can be done by arranging space perspective, time perspective and social-cultural perspective. Space perspective means the environment where the attraction is located [18]. Tourism attraction can be more enjoyable and give an impression if it is located in a precise location which can support the attraction. Time perspective means the precise time of a tourist attraction's history, such as some information about the history of a place or a heritage which can be presented written or orally. Social-cultural perspective means the tourism attraction's position in society's social-cultural living either in the past time or present time.

## **5. Conclusions**

In conclusion, the research identified natural, cultural, and human attractions as key factors drawing tourists to Kalapatta Sub County in Kabong District. Additionally, income from employment emerged as a significant contributor to the area's tourism sector, encompassing earnings derived from participating in employment-related economic activities. Property income, arising from the utilization of assets provided to others, was also highlighted in the findings. The study recommends a strategic approach to tourism promotion through extensive advertising, utilizing methods such as stamps, posters, films, and online media, including the Internet. The research further advocates for responsible environmental practices, urging authorities to discourage and prevent the burning and clearing of vegetation around national parks and game reserves. Emphasis is placed on the need for governments to enhance security measures in their respective countries to attract more tourists. Moreover, the study suggests diversifying tourism offerings beyond traditional attractions like national parks and game reserves to include activities such as sports and entertainment.

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