

Research Paper

Tourists' Satisfaction on the Travel and Tourism Pillars in North Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Tanzania has reached historic heights in which tourism arrivals surpass 1.6 million in year ending May 2023 despite of the cumulative effects of the shocks of the war in Ukraine and the hanging over of the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel and Tourism Pillars are ones of the factors that influence historic heights of arrivals in tourism. However, tourists' satisfaction on the given travel and tourism pillars in North Tanzania is not yet established. Therefore, this study evaluated tourists' satisfaction on the travel and tourism pillars in North Tanzania. Using Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), the visiting tourists in North Tanzania were specifically asked to evaluate their level of satisfaction on travel and tourism pillars. This study used positivism philosophy, quantitative approach, and descriptive design with cross-sectional survey. The population of this study were 277 visiting tourists in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Manyara. The data were collected using questionnaire from the respondents using multi-stage (purposive, stratified and convenient) sampling technique. The collected data were analysed using Descriptive Statistics. The findings indicate that, the visiting tourists were dissatisfied on the infrastructures; satisfied on the enabling environment, policy and enabling conditions; and very satisfied on natural and cultural resources pillars. Basing on theoretical implications, the tourists weigh tourism and travel pillars differently. With implications, this study advocates for urgent need for infrastructure improvement; continuous maintaining and reinforcing of strong policies and enabling conditions; as well as continuous preserving and promotion of natural and cultural assets in Tanzania.

Keywords: Pillars, Feedback, Tourists, Travel, Tourism

Travel and tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors and one of the driving forces of the economy for many countries in the world (Sofronov, 2018). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism industry constituted 10.4% of the worldwide Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018. It generated 319 million jobs, which accounted for 10% of the total employment. Additionally, the tourism sector represented approximately 6.5% of the overall global exports. In 2022, the Travel and Tourism sector contributed 7.6% to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), marking a 22% increase compared to 2021 when the SARSCoV-2 pandemic was at its height. It is worth noting that this figure was only 23% below the levels recorded in 2019. Therefore, the tourism sector represents a dynamic market for the growth, development, and capitalization

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of economies worldwide (Băbăţ, 2023). Tourism is understood as the set of experiences that people live during a trip or stay in a place other than their habitual residence, which comprehends leisure, recreation, entertainment and participation in events, in such a way that tourism is considered to be an economic, social, cultural and geographical phenomenon. Research on tourism underscores its impact on people's quality of life, since it emanates sociocultural and psychosocial value, promoting dreams, realizations, knowledge and exchange of experiences. In this sense, and given the complex reality that shapes the aging process and their impact on societies, senior tourism emerges as an active aging strategy, and it is therefore imperative to invest in this area. In addition, Ashton (2022) did a study with senior tourists, where they conclude that tourism contributes to the development of positive experiences and appreciation of the abilities of the elderly, facilitating their social integration and overcoming difficulties associated with the aging process, especially if senior tourists will get involved in leisure, recreation and entertainment activities. The tourism represents a sector of new opportunities and a major socio-economic impact, and should therefore be the focus of the tourism industry and social institutions working with the elderly (Silva, 2019).

The given importance of that tourism cannot just occur in the vacuum but caused by various factors sometimes termed as components in a travel destination for tourists' attraction. Those components include the type of accommodation, entertainment, food, tourism, and transportation that are often characterized by its accessibility, attraction, comfort, facilities, and conditions of mobility. It is extremely important for destinations to constantly provide the highest standard in providing their services to address the tourists' needs and wants so that they could ensure their satisfaction. Furthermore, the given factors are likewise named as enablers of travel and tourism development specifically as travel and tourism pillars (World Economic Forum, 2022). Accordingly, the pillars include enabling environment pillars (i.e. business environment, safety and security, health and hygiene, human resource and labour market and ICT readiness); policy and enabling conditions pillars (i.e. prioritization of travel and tourism, international openness, price competitiveness and environmental sustainability); infrastructure pillars (i.e. air transport infrastructure, ground and port infrastructure, tourist service infrastructure); natural and cultural resources pillars (natural resources, cultural resources and business travel). All these pillars become the index to provide a strategic benchmarking tool for business, governments, international organizations and others to develop the travel and tourism sector. In other words, the pillars account for the efficiency of and access to public transport services such as underground rail systems and taxis as these are regularly used by visitors and to travel and tourism employees especially in urban locations (Lusby, 2021)

The above pillars are insisted as important in influencing the tourists in choosing their destinations for travel and tourism. For instance, the essence of tourists' decision in choosing a destination is of much significance in determining the best places to go that links them to the critical aspects that may influence the decision making (Chandan, 2021). Tourism in Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) developed marketing strategies to augment tourist arrivals (TARR) from different parts of the world (Runasinghe et al., 2021). Each destination has its own qualities and amenities to offer. The attributes of a travel destination that may influence a tourist decision include accessibility, place, price, safety and security, and political stability. It was also mentioned that what influence decision-making include the condition of the place or destination quality, management and environment, transportation, safety and security, culture, likeness of the area, reason and cost of travel (Ranasinghe et al., 2021)

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The influence of the given pillars on success of travel and tourism is believed to touch as well Tanzania as one of the countries with travel and tourism attractions. According to Tanzania Invest (2023), Tanzania's travel receipts almost doubled to USD 2,560.7 million in 2022 from USD 1,310.3 million in 2021, consistent with the rise in the number of tourist arrivals. Tanzania received 1,454,920 tourists in 2022, compared to 922,692 in 2021, and 616,491 in 2020. In 2020, revenues were down to USD 1 billion as it was severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on international travel, from a peak of USD 2.6 billion in revenues and 1.5 million arrivals in 2019. The sector's contribution to GDP fell from 10.6% in 2019 to 5.3% in 2020 and climbed to 5.7% in 2021. However, given the going fast recovery of the sector, Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC) forecast that the share of tourism in the country's GDP will reach 19.5% in 2025/26. In addition, Tanzania has reached historic heights in which tourism arrivals surpass 1.6 million in year ending May 2023 despite of the cumulative effects of the shocks of the war in Ukraine and the hanging over of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, tourists' satisfaction on the given travel and tourism pillars in North Tanzania is not yet established. One of the major factors for travel and tourism performance in terms of arrivals, revenues and the revenue-based revealed comparative advantage (RCA) are the main pillars of travel and tourism (Bacsi et al., 2023). Studying tourists' satisfaction on tourism and travel pillars in North Tanzania helps to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in pillars like infrastructures, enabling environment, policy and enabling conditions. It supports policy-making, improves tourism experiences, boosts revisitation and recommendations, and enhances sustainable tourism development in a key travel region.

Therefore, this study evaluated the satisfaction of the tourists on the travel and tourism pillars in Tanzania. Specifically, the visiting tourists in North Tanzania were asked to evaluate their level of satisfaction on travel and tourism pillars. In fact, this study reveals the tourists' satisfaction on the main pillars of travel and tourism in Tanzania following its reach to historic heights of arrivals surpass in May 2023 despite of the cumulative effects of the shocks of the war in Ukraine and the hanging over of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of the Study

This study was guided with Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), developed by David Kolb (1984). It is used as a powerful lens to analyse tourist satisfaction on the tourism and travel in Northern. Accordingly, the Kolb's ELT outlines learning as a cyclical process involving four stages: concrete experience (CE) i.e. actually doing/having the experience; reflective observation (RO) i.e. reflecting on that experience; abstract conceptualization (AC) i.e. learning from the experience; and active experimentation (AE) i.e. applying the learning to new situations. In other words, this model fits tourism beautifully because travel is all about experiencing, reflecting, learning, and applying—emotionally, culturally, and even intellectually. The benefits of using ELT to analyze tourist satisfaction are emphasizing holistic experience over isolated services; helping identify which aspects of a trip leave lasting impressions; encouraging tourism operators to design transformational travel—not just entertainment.

In Northern Tanzania, which is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and natural attractions such as Serengeti National Park, Mount Kilimanjaro, and the Ngorongoro Crater, experiential learning significantly contributes to tourist satisfaction. Tourists who engage in immersive activities like wildlife safaris, Maasai cultural tours, and mountain treks undergo a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active

experimentation, as posited by Kolb's learning model. This deep involvement enhances their emotional connection to the destination and leads to higher levels of satisfaction (Kolb, 1984).

Moreover, experiential learning enables tourists to interact meaningfully with the local environment and communities, which aligns with the growing trend toward transformative travel. This interaction not only enriches their personal growth but also affects their perception of the tourism pillars. For example, when accessibility to remote areas is facilitated by knowledgeable local guides, or when accommodations reflect authentic local design and hospitality, these experiences reinforce the learning process and satisfaction levels (Koki & Okello, 2021). Therefore, tourism strategies in Northern Tanzania that integrate experiential learning can elevate tourists' appreciation of the region's cultural and ecological assets, ultimately enhancing satisfaction and fostering repeat visitation.

Previous Studies on Tourists' Satisfaction on Tourism and Travel Pillars

A study by Mwangoso, Sirima, and Mgonja (2023) examined tourist perceptions in gateway communities like Loliondo, Lake Natron, and Burunge. Using confirmatory factor analysis, they identified four critical factors influencing tourist satisfaction: Core Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, and Ancillary Services. While Core Attractions performed well, aspects related to Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary Services were found to be underperforming, indicating areas needing improvement.

Mwankunda (2023) investigated tourist satisfaction in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, focusing on the impact of infrastructure located near attractions. The study revealed that tourists were generally satisfied with such infrastructures, even when aware of potential negative impacts. Interestingly, tourists with higher education levels were less likely to be satisfied, suggesting that awareness and education influence perceptions of infrastructure development near natural attractions.

Magasi (2024) explored the relationship between tour company service quality and tourists' intentions to revisit destinations in the Arusha Region. The study found that dimensions of service quality, including tangibles, responsiveness, and assurance, significantly influenced tourists' satisfaction and their likelihood to return. High-quality services provided by tour companies were directly linked to increased tourist loyalty and repeat visits.

Matolo, Salia, and Ndibalema (2021) explored factors influencing international tourists' loyalty to Serengeti National Park. Surveying 1,148 tourists, the study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess the impact of service quality, destination image, and perceived value on tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Results demonstrated that all three factors positively influenced satisfaction, which in turn affected destination loyalty, emphasizing the importance of maintaining high service standards and a positive destination image.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Masele, Mrisha, and Warren (2023) examined how e-commerce service quality affected domestic tourist satisfaction in Tanzania. Analyzing data from 150 local tourists, the study found that factors such as reliability, perceived transaction security, responsiveness, and ease of use of e-services significantly influenced satisfaction levels. The findings suggest that enhancing digital service quality is crucial for sustaining tourism growth amid challenges like global pandemics.

METHODOLOGY

Approach of the Study

This study used quantitative approach due to the nature of the main objectives. The given objectives demanded the study to be approached quantitatively with support from quantitative data. The approach likewise facilitated the establishment of statistics on tourists' feedback on the pillars of travel and tourism in North Tanzania.

Research Design

This study applied descriptive cross-sectional survey designs as they facilitated studying individual TET students as a unit of analysis. The designs assisted in covering large geographical area while measuring the individual tourists' views, attitudes and characteristics. The designs produced the easy way of analyzing the information from the surveyed students regarding tourists' feedback on the pillars of travel and tourism in North Tanzania.

Research Area

This study was conducted in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Manyara. These regions are the northern tourism circuit leading in Tanzania with many tourists' attractions including large number of national parks. They are ones of the areas in which tourists and other foreigners visit for tourism in Tanzania. They are occupied with businesses and other entrepreneurial enterprises which likewise facilitate to obtain the feedback on the pillars of travel and tourism in North Tanzania.

Population and Sampling

The primary data of this study were collected from tourists from different countries. The multi-sampling technique principally applied in this study in which the population was identified purposively, randomly stratified and eventually conveniently approached for data collection. The convenient sampling technique yielded to 277 respondents.

Data Collection

The primary data of this study were collected principally using the questionnaire. The questionnaire were used as they offered a fast, efficient and inexpensive means of collecting large amount of data regarding the choice for forms of town transport services during vacation in Tanzania.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using Descriptive Statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to quantify and describe the background information of the respondents and their data set at general about the DLS among students in surveyed tourists in North Tanzania. The descriptive statistics results were presented using frequencies and standard percentages, means and standard deviation.

FINDINGS

Background Information of the Respondents

The results on the background information of the surveyed respondents are presented in **Table 1**. Among the surveyed tourists, 43% were male while 57% were female. The range of ages of surveyed tourists were between 21 and 60 and above years. 18% of the tourists had the age between 21–29 years, 29% had between 31–39 years, 41% had between 40–49 years, 7% had between 50-59 years, and 5% had 60 and above years. The results further display that, 30% of the tourists were single, 59% were married, 6% were widow and 5% of

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them were divorced. Moreover, 42% of the tourists came from Europe, 36% came from North America, 21% came from Asia, 8% came from Australia and 7% came from South America. Regarding education level, 1% of the respondents had primary education level, 3% had secondary education level, 59% of them had undergraduate education level (certificate, diploma and bachelor degree) and 37% of the respondents had postgraduate education level. Summarily, the majority of the surveyed tourists were female, had the age between 40 and 49 years old, were married, originally came from Europe and had undergraduate education level (certificate, diploma and bachelor degree).

Table 1: Background Information of the Respondents (n = 277)

Personal Information	Scale	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	119	43.0
	Female	158	57.0
Age	21-30 years	50	18.0
	31-39 years	80	29.0
	40-49 years	114	41.0
	50-59	19	7.0
	60 and above years	14	5.0
Marital Status	Single	83	30.0
	Married	163	59.0
	Divorced	17	6.0
	Widow	14	5.0
Origin	Europe	116	42.0
	North America	99	36.0
	Asia	23	21.0
	Australia	19	8.0
	South America	20	7.0
Education Level	Primary Education	3	1.0
	Secondary Education	9	3.0
	Undergraduate Education	163	59.0
	Postgraduate Education	102	37.0

Tourists' Satisfaction on the Travel and Tourism Pillars

One of the specific objectives of the study at hand was to determine the extent to which the tourists were satisfied with the quality of travel and tourism pillars when visiting North Tanzania. The main question was *“to what extent were you satisfied on the quality of the travel and tourism pillars' quality when visiting Manyara, Arusha or Kilimanjaro?”* The surveyed tourists gave their respective satisfaction feedback regarding the quality of travel and tourism pillars such as travel and tourism enabling environment, policy and enabling conditions, infrastructures, natural and cultural resources.

The results in **Table 2** indicate that 13% of the tourists were very dissatisfied, 14% of them dissatisfied, 51% of them satisfied and 22% of the tourists were very satisfied regarding travel and tourism enabling environment pillars. The majority of the surveyed tourists (51%) were satisfied on the travel and tourism enabling environment pillars such as business environment, safety and security, health and hygiene, human resource and labour market and ICT readiness when visiting North Tanzania. Maintaining or improving more the given pillars would continue to pave the opportunity to harvesting the potentials of travel and tourism in Tanzania.

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Furthermore, the results in Table 2 point out that 12% of the tourists were very dissatisfied, 18% of them dissatisfied, 50% of them satisfied and 20% of the tourists were very satisfied regarding travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions. The majority of the surveyed tourists (50%) were satisfied on the travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions pillars such as prioritization of travel and tourism, international openness, price competitiveness and environmental sustainability when visiting North Tanzania. Maintaining or improving more the given pillars would continue to pave the opportunity to harvesting the potentials of travel and tourism in Tanzania.

Moreover, the results in Table 2 call attention that 18% of the tourists were very dissatisfied, 52% of them dissatisfied, 12% of them satisfied, 16% of them were very satisfied and 2% of the tourists were neutral about travel and tourism infrastructures. The majority of the surveyed tourists (52%) were dissatisfied on the travel and tourism infrastructure pillars such as air transport infrastructure, ground and port infrastructure, tourist service infrastructure when visiting North Tanzania. The given pillars need more improvement to rep their potentials in the future.

Besides, the results in Table 2 portray that 10% of the tourists were very dissatisfied, 12% of them dissatisfied, 21% of them satisfied and 57% of tourists were very satisfied on the travel and tourism natural and cultural resources pillars. The majority of the surveyed tourists (57%) were very satisfied on the travel and tourism natural and cultural resources pillars such as natural resources, cultural resources and business travel when visiting North Tanzania. Maintaining or improving more the given pillars would continue to pave the opportunity to harvesting the potentials of travel and tourism in Tanzania.

Table 2: Tourists' Satisfaction on the Travel and Tourism Pillars' Quality

Measurement Scale	enabling environment pillars		policy and enabling conditions pillars		infrastructure pillars		natural and cultural resources pillars	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Very Dissatisfied	35	13.0	34	12.0	51	18.0	30	10.0
Dissatisfied	39	14.0	49	18.0	143	52.0	33	12.0
Neutral	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	2.0	0	0.0
Satisfied	141	51.0	139	50.0	34	12.0	57	21.0
Very Satisfied	62	22.0	55	20.0	44	16.0	157	57.0
Total	277	100.0	277	100.0	277	100.0	277	100.0

Generally, the majority of the tourists were satisfied with travel and tourism pillars such as travel and tourism enabling environment, policy and enabling conditions, natural and cultural resources while the majority of them were dissatisfied with travel and tourism infrastructure pillars in Tanzania. These results are supported by previous studies. Tourists consistently reported positive experiences with Tanzania's hospitality, safety, and regulatory environment, reflecting an improved enabling environment for tourism (UNWTO, 2022; WTTC, 2021). The Government initiatives such as the Tanzania Tourism Recovery Plan and Visa on Arrival have significantly contributed to visitor satisfaction with policy and administrative facilitation (Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, 2023). Tanzania's iconic attractions, including Serengeti National Park and Mount Kilimanjaro, continue to receive high satisfaction ratings among international tourists for their uniqueness

and conservation efforts (Mwakatobe et al., 2021; SafariBookings, 2023). Despite the rich natural and cultural appeal, many tourists expressed dissatisfaction with transport connectivity, accommodation standards, and digital infrastructure in key tourism zones (World Bank, 2020; URT, 2022). While visitors are drawn to the country's authentic experiences and heritage, gaps in infrastructure especially road conditions and public transport—have negatively impacted overall satisfaction (Hamisi & Chiwanga, 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study intended to evaluate the feedback of the tourists on the main pillars of travel and tourism in Tanzania. It specifically determined the extent to which they were satisfied with the quality of travel and tourism pillars; ranked their satisfaction feedback on the quality of travel and tourism pillars in Tanzania from their experiences of visiting North Tanzania. Eventually, it determined if the experienced quality of travel and tourism pillars can attract them revisit or can attract others to visit Tanzania in the future.

It is generally concluded that, the majority of the tourists were **dissatisfied** on infrastructures; **satisfied** on enabling environment, policy and enabling conditions; and **very satisfied** on the natural and cultural resources pillars. Therefore, there should be continuous public and private investment on the identified pillars for further growth in travel and tourism in Tanzania. Basing on theoretical implications, the tourists weigh tourism and travel pillars differently. With implications, this study advocates for urgent need for infrastructure improvement; continuous maintaining and reinforcing of strong policies and enabling conditions; as well as continuous preserving and promotion of natural and cultural assets in Tanzania.

This conclusion becomes thus significant as an input feedback to maintain the pillars with good status (i.e. travel and tourism enabling environment, policy and enabling conditions, natural and cultural resources) as well as improving the pillar with bad status (travel and tourism infrastructure pillars). This study therefore calls for travel and tourism stakeholders to initiate or continue with collaborative private and public investment in order to continue harvesting the potentials of travel and tourism in Tanzania.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

Contribution of the Study

It provides the satisfaction feedback of the customers (tourists) on the status (bad or good) of the travel and tourism pillars in Tanzania

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