

**Investigating Factors that Affect Sustainable Tourism in the Case of Rwanda:
Policy Implications**

By

ISIMBI, Lysette

THESIS

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

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Investigating factors that affect sustainable tourism in the case of Rwanda: Policy implications

Abstract

As the world strives to achieve sustainable development, the importance of taking advantage of opportunities that are already available is balanced with the desire to grow while keeping in mind the future generation. Sustainable tourism is crucial especially for developing countries. This paper analyzed factors affecting sustainable tourism in Rwanda from the citizens' perspective. By taking into account how factors of sustainable tourism affect quality of life and the view of promotional policy, the following research questions guided the study: 1. How do economic factors affect Rwandans' quality of life? 2. How do social factors influence Rwandans' quality of life? 3. How do environmental factors affect Rwandans' quality of life? 4. How do Rwandans perceive the government's development of policies to improve traveling awareness, promotional policies based on citizens' opinions, and expanding hospitality facilities such as hotels, accommodation sharing Airbnb, public transportation that meet citizens expectations? 5. What is the Rwandans' attitude towards better promotional services in tourism to encourage them to travel more often? This study conducted an online survey and data was analyzed by applying factor analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis for hypothesis testing. The results of this study showed that social, economic and environmental factors do affect quality of life in Rwanda. In addition, promotional policy does affect sustainable tourism and it relates to policy improvement. This paper also provides policy and managerial implications for the government and business owners in the tourism industry in Rwanda.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Promotional Policy, Quality of Life

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1 Introduction

The pandemic hit Rwanda hard. Just like any other country, restrictions that came with the COVID 19 pandemic affected all sectors including tourism. In 2019, revenues from the tourism industry were around 498 million dollars and they fell to 121 million dollars in 2020 (Rwanda Development Board, 2021). The tourism industry is worth studying since it is one of the major contributors to Rwanda's GDP (Reuben & Hellen, 2015). According to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2022), the service sector was the leading contributor to the GDP with 48%. In the past decade, the topic of sustainable tourism has attracted considerable attention. There is a rapidly growing body of literature on sustainable tourism in Rwanda (Odunga et al., 2018; Redclift & Springett, 2015; Trogisch & Fletcher, 2020). A significant study by Trogisch & Fletcher (2020) has illustrated how nature-based tourism was used to keep peace between Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo through the Virunga transboundary conservation area that touches the three countries. In addition, there is a paper that has convincingly argued that sustainable tourism relies on financial risk management since most tourism projects fail to take off after the initial phase when the financier pulls out (Odunga et al., 2018). In other words, tourism projects need to be well studied in order for them to stay afloat in a self-sustainable manner. While previous research has been conducted on sustainable tourism in Rwanda, little research has been conducted specifically on Rwandan citizens' view on factors affecting sustainable tourism in Rwanda. Further research is required to understand what drives sustainable tourism by looking at it through the citizens' eyes; therefore, this paper will attempt to contribute to our understanding of the factors that influence sustainable tourism from the citizens' outlook. The aim of this study is to investigate factors affecting sustainable tourism in

Rwanda from the citizens' perspective and provide managerial and policy implications. By taking into consideration the effects on quality of life related to sustainable tourism and perception on promotional policy; the following research questions will guide this study: 1. How do economic factors affect Rwandans' quality of life? 2. How do social factors influence Rwandans' quality of life? 3. How do environmental factors affect Rwandans' quality of life? 4. How do Rwandans perceive the government's development of policies to improve traveling awareness, promotional policies based on citizens' opinions, and expanding hospitality facilities such as hotels, accommodation sharing Airbnb, public transportation that meet citizens expectations? 5. What is the Rwandans' attitude towards better promotional services in tourism to encourage them to travel more often? The findings of this paper will provide managerial and policy implications to build perceptions on sustainable tourism by Rwandans and advance marketing strategies for tourism in Rwanda. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: section 2 contains the literature review, section 3 discusses the hypothesis development, section 4 focuses on the methodology, section 5 provides a discussion of the findings, and section 6 concludes.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Tourism

At the outset, it is imperative to clarify what we mean when we talk about sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is a term that gained traction from the 1980s and it was brought to the

forefront of development around a decade ago due to the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) goals in 2015 in New York and the COP21 conference on climate change in Paris the same year (Budeanu et al., 2016). Throughout this research paper, sustainable tourism will refer to a balance and integration between the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects to ensure growth and longevity (Edgell, 2019).

Generally, sustainable tourism brings benefits and/or challenges to societies (Carr et al., 2016; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Moscardo & Murphy, 2014; World Bank Group, 2017). For indigenous communities, sustainable tourism provides jobs where it would have been hard to find employment due to remote locations, language barriers, etc. (Carr et al., 2016). Similarly, Moscardo and Murphy (2014) claim that businesses in the tourism sector that fully embrace sustainability practices and are eco-friendly will be better off in the long run. On the other hand, there is a study that claims that sustainable tourism comes with less to little benefits because the underlying issue is not sustaining tourism but our consumer mentality and strong desire for economic growth above anything else (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018).

Sustainable tourism is measured by using indicators even though there is little agreement on what those indicators should be (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019; Mihalic, 2016; Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2014). Torres-Delgado and Palomeque, (2014) used a scientific method to come up with 26 indicators such as origin of tourism demand, facilities and basic services, noise pollution, etc. These indicators took into consideration social, economic and environmental sustainability since the tourism industry shifted from purely economic factors towards sustainability (Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2014). In addition, Mihalic, (2016) came up with a model called

the Triple A Model which compliments the indicators system. This model aimed at ensuring tourism sustainability and responsible tourism (Mihalic, 2016). A different study used the Deriving forces-Pressure State Impact Response (DPSIR) framework while developing indicators such as local prosperity, biological diversity, visitor fulfillment, etc. (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019). This would allow stakeholders to know the impact of tourism in a particular travel destination (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019).

An increasing number of studies have found that sustainable tourism has challenges in the implementation process because stakeholders have different agendas (e.g., Agyeiwaah et al., 2017; Lee, 2013; Pan et al., 2018). Agyeiwaah et al. (2017) state that business owners in the tourism industry do not manage to reach their goals in terms of sustainability because they have many indicators to choose from and it leads to inaction and confusion. As a solution, Agyeiwaah et al. (2017) proposed a set of indicators including quality of life, solid waste management, and business viability, etc. These were more enterprise focused with less reliance on different stakeholders (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017). Another study by Lee (2013) drew a correlation between the community's perceived benefits from tourism and its adoption of sustainable tourism practices. However, a different study went in the opposite direction, it demonstrated that sustainable tourism can only be achieved if there is integration in international and national policies in terms of the use of public transportation, green infrastructure, leveraging technology, etc. (Pan et al., 2018).

In the pursuit of sustainable tourism, communities are influenced by different factors such as marketing, local beliefs and many more (Chen et al., 2014; Dewi, 2014; Lee & Jan, 2019).

Tourism in Indonesia is mainly focused in Bali, and Dewi, (2014) wanted to bring attention to the traditional village of Pancasari. By analyzing different variables, Dewi, (2014) concluded that local wisdom was the variable that most affected tourism sustainability of the Pancasari village. Another study by Lee and Jan (2019) looked at communities in Taiwan and they realized that involving citizens in the touristic activities would lead to sustainability. This involvement could be translating, showing cultural artifacts, and many more (Lee & Jan, 2019). Chen et al., (2014) claims that marketing highly affects sustainable tourism especially in the case of China where they analyzed 10 years of China related materials published on National Geographic.

Countries take different approaches while gearing towards sustainable tourism (See Amir et al., 2015; Negruşa et al., 2015; Waligo et al., 2013). There is a unique paper that shows how gamification was used to foster sustainable tourism in the United States; by using games tourists learn about the local culture and cultivate ethical behavior towards the environment and so forth (Negruşa et al., 2015). Another study reviewed the implementation of sustainable tourism in the United Kingdom and they concluded that alignment with stakeholders is important (Waligo et al., 2013). This is because they emphasized the fact that tourism is a multi-stakeholder industry hence stakeholder consultations and involvement in the execution has potential to yield better results in achieving sustainable tourism (Waligo et al., 2013). In Malaysia, tourism promotional campaigns took into consideration the resilience of rural communities (Amir et al., 2015). Data showed that the campaign's success depended on Malaysians as a community, “pride in being Malaysian” (Amir et al., 2015). Having discussed literature on sustainable tourism, let us now turn to tourism in Rwanda.

2.2 Development of Tourism in Rwanda

In the past decade, a growing body of literature pointed out that East African countries can develop their economies by using tourism (Lal et al., 2017; Maekawa et al., 2013; Okello & Novelli, 2014 for Kenya see Njoya & Seetaram, 2017 for Uganda see Adiyia et al., 2016). Okello and Novelli, (2014) reviewed different challenges and opportunities facing tourism in East Africa and they recommended each country's ways forward. Rwanda specifically was encouraged to keep an eye on its infrastructure development and political and socio-economic stability since it is one of the major contributors to national image (Okello & Novelli, 2014). In the same direction, another paper claims that income from nature based touristic sites has potential to expand the growing tourism sector in Rwanda (Lal et al., 2017). Additionally, Maekawa et al., (2013) pointed out that after the genocide against Tutsis in 1994, the Virungas provided revenues that helped the community in the recovering process.

Previous researchers debate on the best way to grow Rwanda's tourism industry (Anbalagan & Lovelock, 2014; Behuria, 2021; Behuria & Goodfellow, 2018). According to Behuria, (2021) Rwanda's decision to ban plastic bags has improved its image on a global scale and made it a pioneer in the environmental policy arena. Furthermore, in an innovative study, coffee tourism was suggested as a way to diversify Rwanda's tourism offerings; instead of just nature-based activities, tourists can stay longer and coffee producers can take more control in their interaction with end users (Anbalagan & Lovelock, 2014). On the contrary, Behuria and Goodfellow (2018) acknowledged Rwanda's efforts to become a center for global conferences and international

gatherings, while they notice a lack of backward linkage as jobs are created due to tourism investments without opportunities to Rwandans.

Rwanda has made considerable efforts in terms of wildlife conservation and environmental protection (Kabera & Tushabe, 2021; Nsengimana et al., 2017; Umuziranenge & Muhirwa, 2017). Rwanda trained secondary school teachers on the subject of sustainable biodiversity conservation in order to ensure that young Rwandans get to assimilate that notion while in high school (Nsengimana et al., 2017). In addition, Umuziranenge and Muhirwa, (2017) claim that Rwanda's ecotourism journey in Nyungwe National Park will be more successful, if there is a better alignment with both conservation and revenue sharing with the local community. Revenue sharing ties into conservation by providing formal employment to local residents hence raising awareness and reducing the chances of poaching or other harmful activities towards the environment (Umuziranenge & Muhirwa, 2017).

2.3 Tourism and Policy Issues

Tourism policy evolution determines economic development (Garcia, 2014; Tang, 2017; Rizal, 2021). In Indonesia, tourism development was encouraged especially in the Garut district and it was using corporate social responsibility (CSR) to raise funds and it had good performance (Rizal, 2021). Overtime, China's tourism policy has changed from being administrative based allocation of resources to market based allocation of resources that has led to economic growth, while these are guided by the government's strategic goals of national development (Tang, 2017).

Garcia (2014), analyzed tourism policies in Spain and Portugal and concluded that as time went by both countries paid a high price socially and environmentally, while Spain showed economic growth but not Portugal. This raises the question: in other countries, the tourism policies we choose, are they going to lead to economic development?

Tourism policies sometimes do not yield the desired results because each country faces different challenges (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017; OECD, 2015; OECD, 2017). In Russia, as per the presidential decree for tourism in 1995 and a later update by the Targeted Program Development of Incoming and Domestic Tourism, the Russian federation has been implementing policies to allow tourism to flourish however there are still issues such as its global image to the world due to geopolitics(Andrades & Dimanche, 2017). In addition the reality of the public sector is that it is difficult to secure funding for certain projects; this was the case for the UK, and they came up with a tourism policy promotion that was “matched” by the government(OECD, 2017). This approach worked since 2015 where a grant in aid was matched by the government for their campaign “GREAT Britain, You’re invited”(OECD, 2017). On the other hand, tourism policy works well if coordinated with other necessary policies such as the case of Canada which incorporated tourism and transportation policies creating the Blue Sky policy(OECD, 2015). This policy was made by the Transport Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission, taking full advantage of aerial transportation in enhancing tourism(OECD, 2015).

A deep understanding of tourism policy and its stakeholders prove to be the core for sustainable tourism (Khan et al., 2021; OECD, 2020; Thetsane, 2019). A paper analyzed the tourism industry in Lesotho and they recommended consultations with citizens while coming up with

tourism policies(Thetsane, 2019). This is because the involvement of citizens would ensure more compliance with sustainable strategies in the tourism industry(Thetsane, 2019). In addition, legislative changes in Bulgaria led to outsourcing some parts of the tourism policy(OECD, 2020). Instead of the government being in charge of everything, Regional Tourism Management Organizations were put in charge and they coordinated with the government in tourism policy making(OECD, 2020). On the other hand, a study by Khan et al., (2021) provided empirical evidence that tourism policy can be used to address tourists' negative behavior towards the environment by using strategies that foster development encompassing the hosts, tourists and their environment.

Researchers analyzed tourism policy development and its effects (Apaza-Panca et al., 2020; Hwang & Lee, 2015; Panasiuk, 2019; Studzieniecki & Korneevets, 2016). Before the pandemic, obviously tourism policies had not taken into consideration wars, global epidemics and other unforeseeable circumstances however the post COVID industry will and there will be adjustments like virtual meetings being the new norm (Apaza-Panca et al., 2020). Studzieniecki and Korneevets (2016) reviewed how tourism policy was changed in order to fit the cross border of the Lithuanian-Polish-Russia and found that an integration is needed in order to foster development. In the case of South Korea, tourism policy was used to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas' development (Hwang & Lee, 2015). As rural areas move away from agriculture, tourism was seen as an alternative (Hwang & Lee, 2015). Another study looked at tourism policy in Poland: since tourism management is held by public institutions that benefit from subsidies from the government it reduces effectiveness and coordination (Panasiuk, 2019).

This part focused on tourism and policy issues, the next part of this paper will discuss the hypothesis development.

3 Hypotheses Development

3.1 The Effect of Economic Factors on Quality of Life in Rwanda

It is generally understood that money determines the ability to travel (Bianchi & Milberg, 2016; Dolnicar et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2014; Pandža Bajš, 2013; Rajaguru, 2016; Su et al., 2022). According to Rajaguru (2016), low cost airlines' customers do not have high expectations in terms of quality service because of their perception and sensitiveness of value for money. In addition, a unique paper by Su et al., (2022) analyzed the effect of sunk costs on travel destinations and they concluded that the effect is positive temporarily and negative in the long run. For example: charging cancellation fees reduces the tourists' intention to travel to that destination in the future (Su et al., 2022). Similarly, the value of money is not just what is real, it is also what is perceived to be real as portrayed in the case of Chileans who were not visiting Australia because it was perceived to be far and expensive (Bianchi & Milberg, 2016). Despite the improvement in transportation (flights) for the last few years, Chileans still thought Australia was far and out of their price range (Bianchi & Milberg, 2016). Another study by Dolnicar et al., (2013) analyzed the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intention to travel and they concluded that past literature might be biased so the results were to be interpreted with caution. On the other hand, it was recommended to hosts to provide interpretations while guiding

tourists in order to increase satisfaction and foster behavioral intention to travel to that destination again(Huang et al., 2014). In Rwanda, most people would travel if they could afford it therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Economic factors affect quality of life.

3.2 The Effect of Social Factors on Quality of Life in Rwanda

A strand of scholarship demonstrates that social interactions can increase or reduce the intention to travel (Aman et al., 2019; Henok, 2021; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Niedziółka, 2014; Uslu et al., 2020). Uslu et al. (2020) reviewed the effects of socio-cultural factors on tourism in Turkey and they concluded that men had a lower satisfaction with tourism development due to the fact that tourism affects different demographics differently. Furthermore, other socio-cultural factors such as common language, cultural distance and hospitality culture have a strong effect on tourists' intention to travel (Henok, 2021). Another paper by Aman et al., (2019) claims that Islam religion influences tourism development in Pakistan. In other words, tourists whose religious practice and beliefs positively match the local residents are more likely to visit Pakistan (Aman et al., 2019). However, there are negative effects from the interaction between tourists and hosts such as disturbing the local ways of life and feeling like one's culture is being commercialized(Niedziółka, 2014). Research by McCabe and Johnson, (2013) provided evidence that tourism is linked with subjective well being and quality of life. For example: going on holidays with family and friends creates memories and solidifies the ties among them(McCabe &

Johnson, 2013). In Rwanda, people prefer to live in communities, family and friends' bond is treasured. Hence, I propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Social factors affect quality of life.

3.3 The Effect of Environmental Factors on Quality of Life in Rwanda

Recent studies focus on the integration of environmental awareness in the tourism industry to improve satisfaction (Chiu et al., 2014; Imran et al., 2014; Juvan & Dolnicar, 2016; Pramanik & Ingkadijaya, 2018; Stylidis et al., 2014; Tyrväinen et al., 2014). Since the environment contributes to satisfaction from tourism, it was suggested that there should be at least one garbage bin every hundred meters in Indonesia in order to ensure cleanliness of the tourist sites (Pramanik & Ingkadijaya, 2018). On the other hand, a paper by Stylidis et al., (2014) found that residents' support for tourism took into consideration environmental impact as the least factor while analyzing perceived impact of tourism. This is because tourism's impact on the environment is long term so it is easy for the residents to not consider it at the beginning (Stylidis et al., 2014). People travel to ecotourism sites because they are attracted to nature therefore their satisfaction is tied to environmentally responsible behavior (Chiu et al., 2014). Hence providing the tourists with opportunities to get involved in the protection of nature based sites would enhance their experience (Chiu et al., 2014). Even though people would like to contribute to the protection of the environment there are still knowledge gaps such as ecological understanding, adaptive legislation, etc. (Imran et al., 2014). Addressing some of those areas would help in creating policies that are pro-environmental and residents' benefits (Imran et al., 2014). Tourists'

preference tends to go against environmentally friendly infrastructure as seen in Finnish Lapland where tourists prefer to live in single chalets which are spacious and staggered far apart creating a burden on the ecosystem(Tyrväinen et al., 2014). However, tourists can be steered towards environmentally friendly practices by using the design and infrastructure of their activities and surroundings(Juvan & Dolnicar, 2016). In Rwanda, the government is trying to instill environmentally friendly behavior in the citizens so I propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Environmental factors affect quality of life.

3.4 The Effect of Promotional Policy on Necessity of Policy Improvement and Sustainability Tourism

Tourism promotional policy impacts the citizens hence their involvement in the development is crucial (Abahre & Raddad, 2016; Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013; Gössling & Buckley, 2016; OECD, 2017; OECD, 2018). In Palestine, there were archeological sites that were occupied by Israel and the residents were advocating for policy changes in order to ensure the development and sustainability of the tourism industry(Abahre & Raddad, 2016). In addition, Dredge and Jamal, (2015) claim that there should be clear coordination between researchers and policy makers in order to address challenges currently present in the tourism industry. Furthermore, Gössling and Buckley, (2016) state that adding more information on ecolabels will allow tourists to make environmentally conscious decisions affecting sustainable tourism. Clearly there are different factors affecting tourism however promotion is one of the

strategic moves that fosters growth in the tourism industry(Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). In Mexico the government didn't have enough funds for tourism promotion and branding on the global scale so they came up with a Non-Immigrant Tax which they collected and it allowed them to grow their tourism industry and improve their brand worldwide(OECD, 2017). In Luxembourg the government invested in a promotional project called "Meet Luxembourg" that showcased green events to encourage ecological infrastructure, green businesses etc.(OECD, 2018). This was intended to grow their MICE in tourism, bringing together their supply and demand in one place(OECD, 2018). In Rwanda, the government has campaigns such as "Tembera u Rwanda" which means visit Rwanda and "Na Yombi" which means with both hands, a slogan encouraging employees in the service sector to treat tourists/customers well. Therefore I propose the following hypotheses:

H_{4a}: Perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism affects the necessity of policy improvement.

H_{4b}: Perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism affects sustainable tourism.

H_{5a}: Perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives affects the necessity of policy improvement.

H_{5b}: Perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives affects sustainable tourism.

H_{6a}: Perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure affects the necessity of policy improvement.

H_{6b}: Perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure affects sustainable tourism.

H_{7a}: Perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services affects the necessity of policy improvement.

H_{7b}: Perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services affects sustainable tourism.

4 Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

This paper examines the factors that affect sustainable tourism in Rwanda through the citizens' perspective. This is why an online survey was made and distributed to Rwandans. Data was collected by using google forms that were both in English and French distributed to people by using social media (WhatsApp). The survey questionnaire was made of 3 sections: introductory questions, key questions and demographic questions. The questions were mainly about people's views on parts of sustainable tourism such as economic, social , environmental factors and promotional policy. This research applied a 5 point Likert scale with 1 as strongly disagree and 5

as strongly agree. The total number of respondents to the survey was 120 with a response rate of 0.3.

4.2 Sample Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 showed the summary of respondents demographic information.

Table 1. Summary of Demographics

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	35	35.7%
Male	63	64.3%
Occupation		
Employee in non profit organization	3	3.0%
Employee in the private sector	48	49.0%
Employee in the public sector	13	13.3%
Researcher	1	1.0%
Self-employed	1	1.0%
Student in university	29	29.6%
Unemployed	3	3.1%
Age		
18-24 years old	10	10.2%
25-29 years old	55	56.1%
30-34 years old	20	20.4%
35-39 years old	10	10.2%

40-44 years old	3	3.1%
Education		
High school	2	2.0%
Associate degree	3	3.1%
Bachelor's degree	53	54.1%
Master's degree	33	33.7%
Ph.D.	7	7.1%

5 Data Analysis

In order to find out the relationship between the factors, regression analysis was used to establish significance. Table 2 shows that economic factors affect quality of life. According to ANOVA, the model in table 2 demonstrates R square = .030 and showed significance at 0.10 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H1.

Table 2. Effect of Economic Factors on Quality of Life

Variable (Independent→Dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Economic factors→quality of life (H1)	1.727(.087*)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 3 shows that social factors affect quality of life. According to ANOVA, the model in table 3 demonstrates R square = .041 and showed significance at 0.05 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H2.

Table 3. Effect of Social Factors on Quality of Life

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Social factors→quality of life (H2)	2.017(.046**)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 4 shows that environmental factors affect quality of life. According to ANOVA, the model in table 4 demonstrates R square = .049 and showed significance at 0.05 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H3.

Table 4. Effect of Environmental Factors on Quality of Life

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Environmental factors→quality of life (H3)	2.214(.029**)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 5 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism affects the necessity of policy improvement . According to ANOVA, the model in table 5 demonstrates R square = .110 and showed significance at 0.01 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H4a.

Table 5. Effect of Promotional Policy on Necessity of Policy Improvement

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding	3.438(.001***)

awareness of tourism → the necessity of policy improvement (H4a)	
--	--

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 6 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives affects the necessity of policy improvement. According to ANOVA, the model in table 6 demonstrates R square = .058 and showed significance at 0.05 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H5a.

Table 6. Effect of Promotional Policy on Necessity of Policy Improvement

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives → the necessity of policy improvement (H5a)	2.420(.017**)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 7 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure affects the necessity of policy improvement. According to ANOVA, the model in table 7 demonstrates R square = .076 and showed significance at 0.01 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H6a.

Table 7. Effect of Promotional Policy on Necessity of Policy Improvement

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure → the necessity of policy improvement (H6a)	2.813(.006***)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 8 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services affects the necessity of policy improvement. According to ANOVA, the model in table 8 demonstrates R square = .106 and showed significance at 0.01 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H7a.

Table 8. Effect of Promotional Policy on Necessity of Policy Improvement

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services → necessity of policy improvement (H7a)	3.366(.001***)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 9 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism affects sustainable tourism. According to ANOVA, the model in table 9 demonstrates R square = .099 and showed significance at 0.01 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H4b.

Table 9. Effect of Promotional Policy on Sustainable Tourism

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism → sustainable tourism (H4b)	3.255(.002***)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 10 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives affects sustainable tourism. According to ANOVA, the model in table 10 demonstrates R square = .038 and showed significance at 0.10 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H5b.

Table 10. Effect of Promotional Policy on Sustainable Tourism

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives → sustainable tourism (H5b)	1.937(.056*)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 11 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure affects sustainable tourism. According to ANOVA, the model in table 11 demonstrates R square = .081 and showed significance at 0.01 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H6b.

Table 11. Effect of Promotional Policy on Sustainable Tourism

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
Perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure → sustainable tourism (H6b)	2.901(.005***)

*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

Table 12 shows that perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services affects sustainable tourism. According to ANOVA, the model in table 12 demonstrates R square = .090 and showed significance at 0.01 level, so we reject null and accept alternative hypothesis H7b.

Table 12. Effect of Promotional Policy on Sustainable Tourism

Variable (Independent→dependent)	Standardized Coefficient (t-value-Sig)
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Perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services → sustainable tourism (H7b)	3.086(.003***)
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*** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1 indicates statistical significance

To conclude, the hypothesis testing results are summarized in the following table 13

Table 13 Hypothesis Testing Results Summary

Hypothesis Testing	Results
Economic factors→quality of life (H1)	Accepted
Social factors→quality of life (H2)	Accepted
Environmental factors→quality of life (H3)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism → the necessity of policy improvement (H4a)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives → the necessity of policy improvement (H5a)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure → the necessity of policy improvement (H6a)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services → the necessity of policy improvement (H7a)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding awareness of tourism → sustainable tourism (H4b)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding citizens' perspectives → sustainable tourism (H5b)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding travel infrastructure → sustainable tourism (H6b)	Accepted
Perceived promotional policy regarding promotional services → sustainable tourism (H7b)	Accepted

6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

The aim of this study is to investigate factors affecting sustainable tourism in Rwanda from the citizens' perspective. The results of this study showed that social, economic and environmental factors affect quality of life with H1, H2, and H3 being accepted. This implied that having more additional income would allow people to travel more often in Rwanda. In addition, interacting with residents who live where one expects to travel helps build ties in the local society. Furthermore, it is important to change one's habits such as recycling, reusing, planting trees, etc. to conserve the environment while traveling.

Additionally, with H4a and H4b being accepted, it implies that governments should consider developing promotional policies to improve awareness of travel destinations. In the same direction, the acceptance of H5a and H5b implies that governments should consider developing promotional policies by applying citizens' perspectives on tourism. Moreover, H6a and H6b were accepted which implies that governments should consider developing more hospitality facility services by considering citizens' expectations. Hypotheses H7a and H7b were accepted which implies that governments should provide better promotional services for tourism to encourage citizens to travel more often.

6.2 Policy and Managerial Implications

This paper analyzed factors affecting sustainable tourism in Rwanda from the citizens' perspective and the results will help us provide some policy and managerial implications.

From an economic standpoint, it is clear that having more disposable income would increase the citizens' ability to travel. The government of Rwanda has been making steps towards financial sustainability for its citizens. As per Rwanda's Vision 2050, the national development strategic plan, Rwanda aims to become an upper-middle income country by 2035 and a high income country by 2050 (MINECOFIN, 2020). To be able to reach that level, unemployment rates will have to be reduced significantly. With the emphasis on education, people will be able to get educated and get employed or create jobs. One pillar that could foster economic growth is sustainable tourism. With tourism that gives back to communities, people will be able to lift themselves out of poverty. It is recommended that governments monitor tourism investment projects and make sure that the local community is fully involved in it so that they can reap the financial benefits from the projects.

From a social perspective, traveling could help in bringing people together. Rwanda's culture is about togetherness. Generally, most people know other residents in their "umudugudu" (a cell made of around 10 households). With sustainable tourism, Rwandans would be able to interact with people from other parts of the country. The managerial recommendation is to business owners in the tourism industry. It would be better to create touristic activities that surround the local communities' dance, food, folklores, and the tourists. The important part is interaction between the hosts and tourists. Sustainable tourism would lead to keeping each region's culture and pride.

Rwanda has made good progress in terms of wildlife and environmental conservation. Rwanda banned the use of plastic bags since 2008 and its parks have been instrumental in re-introducing almost extinct wildlife such as gorillas and black rhinos back to good rates (RDB, 2021). With newly built luxurious ecotourist lodges, tourism before COVID was booming. However, after the pandemic, the industry is still recovering and it gives us time to rethink the behavior of tourists towards the environment. Even though tourists hike trails and live in eco-friendly quarters, it would be better if they could also be more involved in the day to day conservation of the environment. The managerial recommendation is to business owners in the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism can only function if both hosts and tourists are involved in environmental protection. Since the government guides the institutions towards ecotourism, it would be complementary to have business owners encourage the tourists in recycling, reusing, or planting trees. It could be embedded in the group package by travel agencies.

Promotional policy in Rwanda has reached a global level. With Rwanda signing a 3 year deal with Arsenal the London soccer team to wear its “visit Rwanda” sleeve, it has put Rwanda’s tourism sector on a higher level (RDB, n.d). In addition, different events and conferences bring people to Rwanda. One of the highlights include the Tour du Rwanda, a national cycling event. Also, Rwanda hosted different summits such as Transform Africa Summit, CHOGM, etc. The recommendation is to encourage the government to include the citizens’ perspective while coming up with the promotional policies. The citizens’ inputs would ensure the smooth execution of the different events. In addition, considering the citizens’ perspective means that

new infrastructures would accommodate not only the international tourists but the local ones as well.

Sustainable tourism relies on economic, social and environmental factors and using promotional policies in the right direction would ensure its growth.

6.3 Limitation and Future Study

This study has limitations. Data was collected from Rwandans only and the sample size could have been bigger. Future research could explore sustainable tourism by comparing and contrasting economies which are in the same category. It would be interesting to see where Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi stand in terms of sustainable tourism. In addition, interviewing policy makers in the tourism industry would have provided invaluable inputs.

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Appendix

Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain understanding on Rwandans' perspective towards tourism in Rwanda. Your responses will be treated strictly confidential, anonymous and applied only for academic purposes. In addition, this survey will be conducted on a voluntary basis. If you have traveled in Rwanda, please respond to the questions based on your experience. If you have not traveled in Rwanda, please respond to the questions based on what you think about traveling in Rwanda.

N.B: only Rwandans can fill this survey

1. Have you ever traveled in Rwanda?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No (then please go to question 5)

2. Where did you travel most recently in Rwanda?

- (1) Nyungwe National Park
- (2) Kwita izina ceremony
- (3) Volcanoes National Park
- (4) Akagera National Park
- (5) Kivu Lake
- (6) King's Palace Nyanza
- (7) Tea/coffee plantations
- (8) Others (please explain)

3. How much money (RWF) did you spend in a day for one person?

- (1) 0-10,000 RWF
- (2) 11,000-20,000 RWF
- (3) 21,000-30,000 RWF
- (4) 31,000-40,000 RWF
- (5) 41,000-50,000 RWF
- (6) More than 50,000 RWF

4. Please select the most important factor while deciding to travel or not

- (1) Money to spend on a trip
- (2) Time it takes for the trip

- (3) Friends/colleagues/family to go with
- (4) Available activities (museums, horse riding, hiking, picnic, kayaking, etc.)
- (5) How eco-friendly the destination is
- (6) Curiosity (e.g.: seeing a gorilla in person)
- (7) Other (please explain)

5.How do the following economic factors affect your intention to travel?

		Strongly disagree		neutral	Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I think that having more additional income would allow me to travel more often in Rwanda.					
2	I think that price promotional services for tickets, accommodation, and/or transportation would make me travel more in Rwanda.					

6.How do the following social factors affect your intention to travel?

		Strongly disagree		neutral	Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I think that going on a trip with friends/colleagues/family enhances social experience.					
2	I think that interacting with residents who live where I expect to travel helps build ties in the local society.					

7.How do the following environmental factors affect your intention to travel?

		Strongly disagree		neutral	Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5

1	I think that being conscious of the environment while traveling is important.					
2	I think that changing my habits (recycle, reuse, plant trees, etc.) to conserve the environment while traveling is important.					

8. I think that traveling in Rwanda enriches the quality of life.

Strongly Disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	

9. I think that I am satisfied with my travel experiences in Rwanda.

Strongly Disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	

10. Please answer the following regarding promotional policy related to tourism in Rwanda

		Strongly disagree		neutral	Strongly agree	
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I think that governments should consider developing promotional policies to improve awareness of travel destinations.					
2	I think that governments should consider developing promotional policies by applying citizens' perspectives on tourism.					
3	I think that governments should consider					

	developing more hospitality facility services such as hotels, accommodation sharing like Airbnb, public transportation, etc. by considering citizens' expectations.					
4	I think that governments should provide better promotional services for tourism to encourage citizens to travel more often.					

11. I think that better tourism policy would encourage me to travel more often in Rwanda.

Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. I think that sustainable tourism* in Rwanda would grow Rwanda's economy

Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

* In this survey sustainable tourism is taken to mean traveling experiences that connect tourists and the communities they are visiting, growing socially and economically while preserving the environment.

13. Please select your gender

- (1) Male (2) Female

14. Please select your occupation

- (1) Student in university
- (2) Self-employed
- (3) Employee in the public sector
- (4) Employee in the private sector
- (5) Unemployed
- (6) Retired

(7) Other (please explain)

15. Please select your age group

- (1) 18-24 years old
- (2) 25-29 years old
- (3) 30-34 years old
- (4) 35-39 years old
- (5) 40-44 years old
- (6) 45-49 years old
- (7) 50-54 years old
- (8) 55-59 years old
- (9) 60 years old and above

16. Please select your education level

- (1) Ordinary level
- (2) High school
- (3) Associate degree
- (4) Bachelor's degree
- (5) Master's degree
- (6) Ph.D.

Thank you for participating in this survey