

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

## Domestic Tourists' Visitation Profile for Ruaha National Park: What's the Impact of Social Media?

Kezia Herman Martin Mkwizu

Ph.D. Student, The Open University of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

### Abstract:

*This paper aims to assess the domestic tourists' visitation profile in Ruaha National Park and the impact of social media. The specific objectives were to assess domestic tourists' visitation profile, and to analyze the impact of social media as a source of information on domestic tourists' visitation. The study area is in Iringa region of Tanzania. Quantitative approach using survey semi structured questionnaires was used to collect data from a sample size of 105 domestic tourists. Descriptive analysis and Chi-square test were deployed as data analysis tools. Findings indicate that social media as a source of information does not have a significant impact on domestic tourists' visitation to Ruaha National Park. Future research can examine the influence of user generated content in social media on domestic tourists' visitation to the national park.*

**Keywords:** Domestic tourists' visitation, social media, national park, Tanzania

### 1. Introduction

Domestic tourism is critical as an alternative engine for economic development (Callixte, 2013). In Nigeria there were more domestic tourists visiting national parks compared to international tourists (Ngoka, 2013). In 2012 Tanzania recorded 372,409 domestic tourists who visited national parks in relation to 548,163 international tourists (MNRT, 2012). With tourism development there are many forms of advertising attractions from internal tools like brochures, guidebooks, television to social media (Andereck, 2005; Nishimura, Waryszak and King, 2007; Barake, 2011; Ansari and Joloudar, 2011; Hossain and Ahmed, 2012; Spencer, 2013; Ghosh, 2016; Mkwizu, 2016a; Mkwizu, 2016c). Ghosh (2016) mentioned that social media is a new media channel. In Tanzania, social media through Facebook is one of the media channels used by Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) to convey information about national parks to domestic tourists (TANAPA, 2016; TTB, 2016). Recently TTB and TANAPA put great efforts in using social media as a promotional campaign tool to advertise the Annular Solar Eclipse which happened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and the astronomical event was visible from Dar es Salaam, Mbeya and Iringa regions of Tanzania (TTB, 2016; TANAPA, 2016). Kronenberg et al (2015) used economics of information theory to study advertising expenditure on international tourists to destinations. Chigora (2016) investigated the effects of social media on small and medium enterprises in tourism. Ndekwa and Katunzi (2016) focused on the adoption of social media on small and medium tourist enterprises. However, these studies have not conducted research on domestic tourists' visitation profile nor the impact of social media as a source of information on domestic tourists visiting national parks. Hence to bridge the literature gap, this study aims to assess domestic tourists' visitation profile in Ruaha National Park and the impact of social media. The specific objectives are to assess domestic tourists' visitation profile, and to analyze the impact of social media as a source of information on domestic tourists' visitation.

### 2 Literature Review

#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Sigala, Christou and Gretzel (2012) mentioned various theories related to social media studies such as Social Exchange Theory, Social Penetration Theory, McLuhan's Media Theory and Psychological Ownership Theory. However, this study adopts the Economics of Information Theory developed by Stigler (1961), Telser (1964), and Nelson (1974) since the research seeks to analyze the impact of social media as a source of information about Ruaha National Park. Therefore, this study is concerned about social media as a conveyor of information to consumers. The consumers in this study are the domestic tourists who visited Ruaha National Park. Kronenberg et al (2015) mentioned that Economics of Information implies that advertising increases transparency of products and market. Developers of Economics of Information Theory introduced new concepts such as advertising and prices in relation to information (Stigler, 1961). Telser (1964) improved the theory by looking at advertising and competition. This study researches on social media as an advertising channel and its usage in relation to information about Ruaha National Park to domestic tourists by testing hypothesis  $H_1$

- $H_1$ : Social Media as a source of information has significant impact on domestic tourists' visitation.

## 2.2. Empirical Literature Review

Studies such as Tehrani and Moghadam (2014) and Mkwizu (2016a, 2016c) focused on television advertising. However, there are current studies that have researched on social media (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010; Dina and Sabou, 2012; Manap and Adzharudin, 2013; Steinmetz, Chang and Fesenmaier, 2015; Kazakov and Predvoditeleva, 2015; Ghosh, 2016; Ndekwa and Katunzi, 2016; Chigora, 2016). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) used descriptive analyses to describe the social media unique domain websites and found that social media has a large portion of the online tourism domain. Dina and Sabou (2012) revealed that social media channels were intensely used for sourcing information by Romanian young people. Equally Manap and Adzharudin (2013) found that user generated content via social media promote awareness towards a destination. Steinmetz, Chang and Fesenmaier (2015) deployed binary logistic regression model and results indicated that sites like Trip Advisor are useful to travelers. On the other hand, Kazakov and Predvoditeleva (2015) used comparative analysis and found that Russian females first consider social media as a source of information to plan a visit to a destination. Ghosh (2016) mentioned that among social media services or social awareness streams are Facebook, Twitter and Friend Feed which have shown considerable impact on information of our society. Ndekwa and Katunzi (2016) used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and results revealed that organization and environmental contexts significantly influenced social media adoption on small and medium tourist enterprises. A similar study found that social media increased brand equity, sales and new customers (Chigora, 2016). Although there are studies on social media, there are still very few which are related to domestic tourism in Tanzania. Social Media is still a new media channel (Ghosh, 2016). Therefore, limited literature is a challenge in research studies (Mkwizu, 2015).

## 3. Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach for purposes of testing  $H_1$  which argues that social media as a source of information has a positive impact on domestic tourists visiting Ruaha National Park. The unit of analysis for this study is domestic tourists. Tanzania is endowed with 16 national parks (TANAPA, 2016). The national parks are also protected areas for current and future generations (Mkwizu, 2016b). This study selected Ruaha National Park which is located in Iringa region because it is the largest park in Tanzania as per Figure 1. Another reason for choosing Ruaha National Park was because of its tourism potential as per Figure 2 showing endowment of the park with the famous greater Kudus. This study adopted and customized the source of media item from Mungai (2011) and domestic tourists were asked in general if they use social media as a source of information to know about Ruaha National Park. The question used a categorical scale of measurement type. The survey questionnaires were distributed to 105 domestic tourists during the month of December 2014 and January 2015. However, 5 questionnaires were not fully completed and could not be used for analysis. Hence 100 fully completed questionnaires were subjected to descriptive analysis and Chi-square test using SPSS version 20.

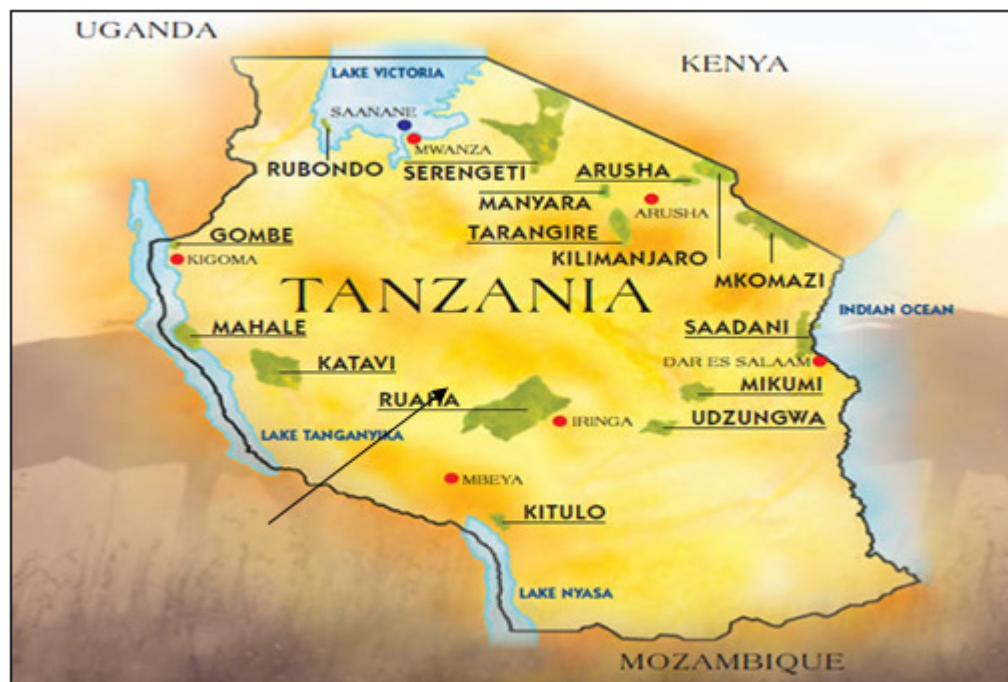


Figure 1: Map showing location of Ruaha National Park in Tanzania  
Source: TANAPA (2015)



Figure 2: The Greater Kudus at Ruaha National Park in Tanzania  
Source: Photography by Researcher (2016)

#### 4. Findings

The profile of sampled size as per Table 1 shows that majority (63%) of domestic tourists were first time visitors to Ruaha National Park. Most of them were aged between 26 and 35 years (42%), were males (71%), earn monthly income (56%), and are University graduates (50%).

Variable	Frequencies (n)	Percentage (%)	
<b>Age :</b>	<18	6	6
	18-25	32	32
	26-35	42	42
	36-45	13	13
	46-55	7	7
	56-65	-	-
	65-100	-	-
<b>Gender:</b>	Male	71	71
	Female	29	29
<b>Income per month:</b>	No Income	34	34
	< 300,000 TZS	29	29
	>300,000 TZS	37	37
<b>Highest Education:</b>	Primary	11	11
	Secondary	21	21
	College	18	18
	University	50	50
<b>Domestic Tourists:</b>	First Time	63	63
	Repeat	37	37

Table 1: Summary Profile of Domestic Tourists  
Source: Researcher (2016)

Further descriptive analysis of the sampled size is as per Table 2 which revealed that only a quarter of domestic tourists use social media as a source of information about Ruaha National Park. This implies that the majority of domestic tourists who visited Ruaha National Park do not use social media as a source of information to know about Ruaha National Park. This result differs from the study by Dina and Sabou (2012) whose research outcome showed positive use of social media as a source of information.

Variable	Percentage (%)
<b>Social Media:</b> Not Social Media	75%
Social Media	25%
Total	100%

Table 2: Social Media as a source of information by domestic tourists who visited Ruaha National Park  
Source: Researcher (2016)

The Chi-square test results as per Table 3 shows that the impact of social media as a source of information on domestic tourists' visitation is not significant ( $p=.720$ ). The hypothesis is rejected since there is no significant impact of social media as a source of information on domestic tourists' visitation. Hence in the context of Tanzania the hypothesis does not support Economics of Information Theory which is based on informative view of conveying information to consumers. The insignificant result is different from Manap and Adzharudin (2013) which had positive results for the role of social media as a user generated content for the tourism sector. Results of this study also differ from Steinmetz, Chang and Fesenmaier (2015) which showed positive outcome on traveller's response to social media. Other studies (Dina and Sabou, 2012; Kazakov and Predvoditeleva, 2015) had results showing intense usage of social media for sourcing information which is different from this study. This implies that social media as a source of information has not yet shown a considerable impact on domestic tourists' visitation to Ruaha National Park.

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	.129 <sup>a</sup>	1	.720

Table 3: Chi-square test for  $H_1$   
Source: Researcher (2016)

## 5. Conclusion

This study aimed at assessing domestic tourists' visitation profile in Ruaha National Park and the impact of social media. The specific objectives were to assess domestic tourists' visitation profile, and to analyze the impact of social media as a source of information about Ruaha National Park. Findings indicated that there is no significant impact of social media as a source of information on domestic tourists' visitation to Ruaha National Park. This result has a policy implication to assist promotion improvements of social media related to its usage as a source of information about Ruaha National Park in order to boost domestic tourism. Future research can examine the user generated content in social media on domestic tourists' visitation to Ruaha National Park in Tanzania.

## 6. References

- i. Andereck, K.L. (2005). Evaluation of a tourist brochure. Retrieved from <http://offices.colgate.edu/bselleck/ENST%20480/Readings%20Fall%202006/Andereck%20article.pdf>
- ii. Ansari, M.E., & Joloudar, S.Y.E. (2011). An investigation of TV advertising effects on customers' purchasing and their satisfaction. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 3(4): 175-181.
- iii. Barake, K.O. (2011). Effectiveness of selected communication media on tourism awareness development in Orgun state Nigeria. *Africa Research Review* 5(1): 382-392.
- iv. Callixte, K. (2013). Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> ATLAS Africa Conference '13: Domestic tourism, an obvious alternative engine for economic development of Rwanda? A case study of National Parks. Kigali, Rwanda.
- v. Chigora, F. (2016). Social Media and Brand Equity: Reality for Small to Medium Enterprises in Zimbabwe Tourism Industry. *The International Journal of Innovative Research & Development*, 5(4): 23-29.
- vi. Dina, R., & Sabou, G. (2012). Influence of social media in choice of touristic destination. *Cactus Tourism Journal*, 3(2): 24-30.
- vii. Ghosh, S. (2016). Change in marketing strategies due to new media. *The International Journal of Business & Management*, 4(5): 376-386.
- viii. Hossain, O.S., & Ahmed, S.M. (2012). Television advertising of Bangladesh: Viewers attitude and behaviour. *Journal of Social Sciences Research Network*. Retrieved from [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2170908](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2170908)
- ix. Kazakov, S.P., & Predvoditeleva, M.D. (2015). How travelers use online and social media channels to make hotel choice decisions. A comparative study of Russian Federation and American tourists' online consumer behaviour. Retrieved from <https://www.hse.ru/data/2015/12/02/1081043155/44MAN2015.pdf>
- x. Kronenberg, K., Fuchs, M., Salman, K., Lexhagen, M. & Hopken, W. (2015). Economic effects of advertising expenditure – a Swedish destination study of international tourists. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*. Retrieved from <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2015.1101013>
- xi. Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. (2012). Tourism Division: The 2012 Tourism Statistics Bulletin. Dar es Salaam.
- xii. Manap, K.A., & Adzharudin, N.A. (2013). Proceedings of WEI International Academic Conference' 13: The Role of User Generated Content (UGC) in Social Media for Tourism Sector, Instabul, Turkey. Retrieved from <http://www.westeastinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Khairul-Hilmi-A-Manap.pdf>
- xiii. Mkwizu, K.H. (2015). Proceedings of the 11th International Operations Research Society of Eastern Africa Conference' 15: PhD milestone and Study Challenges. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- xiv. Mkwizu, K.H.M. (2016a). Domestic Tourists' Attitude towards Television Advertising in Tanzania. *The International Journal of Business & Management*, 4(6): 364-370. Retrieved from <http://www.theijbm.com/2016-2/june-16>
- xv. Mkwizu, K.H.M. (2016b). Proceedings of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual ATLAS Conference '16: Role of Domestic Tourism: An Evolutionary Economic Geography Approach in Tanzania. Canterbury, UK Retrieved from <http://www.atlas-euro.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=q6iiKmLMg8Q%3d&tabid=248&language=en-US>
- xvi. Mkwizu, K.H.M. (2016c). Intra-Destination Television Advertising on Domestic Tourism in Tanzania. *The International Journal of Business & Management*, 4(7): 424-430. Retrieved from <http://www.theijbm.com/2016-2/july-16>

- xvii. Mungai, G. (2011). *Tourism marketing Masai Mara National Reserve*. (Bachelor thesis). Retrieved from [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/33139/Mungai\\_George.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/33139/Mungai_George.pdf?sequence=1)
- xviii. Ndekwa, A.G., & Katunzi, T.M. (2016). Small and Medium Tourist Enterprises and Social Media Adoption: Empirical Evidence from Tanzania Tourism Sector. *International Journal of Business & Management*, 11(4): 71-72.
- xix. Nelson, P. (1974). Advertising as information. *Journal of Political Economy* 82: 729-754.
- xx. Ngoka, P. (2013). Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> ATLAS Africa Conference '13: Tourism visitation of Yankari and Cross River national parks by local and foreign statuses-Implications for development of international tourism in Nigeria. Kigali, Rwanda.
- xxi. Nishimura, S., Waryszak, R., & King, B. (2007). The use of guide books by Japanese overseas tourists. A quantitative approach [Abstract]. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45: 275-284. Retrieved from <http://jtr.sagepub.com/content/45/3/275.abstract>
- xxii. Sigala, M., Christou, E., & Gretzel, U. (2012). Social Media in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality: Theory, Practice and Cases. Retrieved from <http://www.panb.people.cofc.edu/pan/TheoreticalModelsofSocialMedia.pdf>
- xxiii. Spencer, D.M. (2013). Effectiveness of intra-destination television advertising of tourist attractions and facilities. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 2(3): 155-164.
- xxiv. Steinmetz, J.L., Chang, C.Y., & Fesenmaier, D.R. (2015). Evaluating Traveler's Response to Social Media Using Facets-based ROI Metrics. *Tourism Travel and Research Association*. Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=ttra>
- xxv. Stigler, G.J. (1961). The economics of information. *Journal of Political Economy*, 69: 213-225.
- xxvi. Tanzania National Parks. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.tanzaniaparks.com>
- xxvii. Tanzania National Parks. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.tanzaniaparks.go.tz>
- xxviii. Tanzania National Parks. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/tzparks>
- xxix. Tanzania Tourist Board. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.tanzaniatouristboard.com/about-us/vision-mission-and-core-values/>
- xxx. Tanzania Tourist Board. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TanzaniaTouristBoard/>
- xxxi. Tehrani, A.G., Tehrani, A.G., & Moghadam, B.H. (2014). Identifying factors creating positive in audiences' attitude towards television advertising from Alborz Azad University students' point of view. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 3: 54-67.
- xxxii. Telser, L.G. (1964). Advertising and competition. *Journal of Political Economy*, 72: 537-562.
- xxxiii. Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in an online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, 31: 179-188.