THE IMPACT OF SEASONALITY ON SAFARI LODGES,

A CASE STUDY OF MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK IN MASINDI DISTRICT.

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **NTAMBI BRIAN, 2300402463,** declare that this research report is my original work and has never been submitted to any other university or institution for any academic award. All sources of information used have been duly acknowledged.

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APPROVAL

This research report is submitted to Busitema University for examination as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Tourism and Travel Management, with the approval of my academic supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research proposal to my beloved family for their unwavering love, support, and encouragement throughout my academic journey. Special appreciation goes to my parents, Mr. Ziraba John, Mrs. Burungi Suzan, and Mrs. Nangobi Miriyonsi, whose guidance, sacrifices, and continuous motivation have been the foundation of my success.

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Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between seasonality and financial performance of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park. 8

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	MEANING
AfDB	African Development Bank
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UTB	Uganda Tourism Board
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Tourism and Travel Council

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of tourism seasonality on safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda, focusing on revenue generation, occupancy rates, and staffing levels. Guided by Tourism Demand Theory, a cross-sectional design was employed with a sample of 52 respondents drawn from lodge management, employees, tourists, tour operators, and marketing staff using purposive and random sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. Findings revealed strong agreement that seasonality significantly affects revenue generation (grand mean = 4.48), occupancy rates (grand mean = 4.50), and staffing levels (grand mean = 4.41). Correlation analysis indicated moderate positive relationships between seasonal fluctuations and staffing strategies ($r = 0.438$, $p = 0.001$), revenue generation and staffing strategies ($r = 0.498$, $p = 0.000$), and occupancy rates and staffing strategies ($r = 0.472$, $p = 0.000$). Regression analysis showed that the independent variables collectively explained 33.8% of staffing and operational strategies ($R^2 = 0.338$), with the overall model being statistically significant ($F = 2.870$, $p = 0.032$). The study concluded that seasonality creates significant revenue instability, occupancy fluctuations, and staffing challenges affecting lodge sustainability. Recommendations include product diversification, infrastructure improvement, dynamic pricing, flexible staffing, and employee retention programs. The study provides empirical evidence and practical insights for enhancing the resilience of safari lodges in protected areas.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research objectives, the research questions, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the conceptual framework, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is one of the world's most significant service industries, contributing substantially to employment creation, foreign exchange earnings, and conservation financing (Seraj et al., 2025). According to the World Tourism Organization, international tourist arrivals reached approximately 1.5 billion in 2023, representing about 88% recovery of pre-pandemic tourism levels recorded in 2019 (UNWTO, 2024a). Global tourism receipts were estimated at approximately USD 1.4 trillion in 2023, showing tourism's significant role in global economic recovery and development.

Despite this strong growth, tourism demand is unevenly distributed throughout the year due to the phenomenon known as seasonality. Tourism seasonality refers to the predictable periodic fluctuations in tourist arrivals, tourism demand, and tourism activities within a destination over specific periods of the year (DE CANTIS & Ferrante, 2017). These fluctuations are commonly driven by climatic conditions, school holidays, travel trends, and public holidays (Zvaigzne et al., 2022). Seasonality creates distinct peak and off-peak periods that affect revenue generation, infrastructure utilization, employment stability, and operational planning for tourism enterprises (Bisht et al., 2025). During peak seasons, tourism businesses record high occupancy rates and increased visitor spending, while off-peak seasons often result in reduced demand, underutilization of facilities, and financial instability for tourism operators (Bisht et al., 2025).

Globally, different regions experience varying patterns of tourism seasonality depending on climatic conditions and tourism attractions. In Europe, countries such as France, Spain, and Italy experience peak tourism during the summer months between June and August when favorable

weather attracts millions of international tourists. For instance, France recorded approximately 100 million international tourists in 2023, maintaining its position as the world's most visited destination (UNWTO, 2024a). However, during the winter months, some destinations experience significant declines in visitor numbers except for areas specializing in winter sports tourism.

Similarly, in Asia and the Pacific region, tourism growth has been significant in countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, where beach tourism and cultural tourism attract millions of international visitors annually. Thailand received approximately 28 million international tourists in 2023 as tourism recovered strongly following the pandemic (San, 2025). However, tourism activities in these countries illustrate seasonal variations shaped by monsoon seasons and holiday travel patterns.

In North America, countries such as the United States and Canada record high tourist arrivals during summer seasons when weather conditions are favorable for outdoor activities and travel. The United States alone recorded over 66 million international tourist arrivals in 2023 (WTTC, 2024). However, seasonal fluctuations influence tourism business performance, especially in destinations that rely on nature-based attractions such as national parks and coastal resorts.

In Africa, tourism has become a major driver of economic diversification, employment creation, and conservation financing (Seraj et al., 2025). Countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, and Morocco have developed strong tourism sectors based on wildlife tourism, cultural tourism, and coastal tourism attractions. In 2019, Africa received approximately 70 million international tourist arrivals, although the number declined during the COVID-19 pandemic before gradually recovering between 2022 and 2024 (UNWTO, 2024b).

Wildlife tourism dominates many African destinations due to the continent's rich biodiversity and extensive network of protected areas. For example, Kenya's tourism sector contributes approximately 7% to the national GDP and generated about USD 2.7 billion in tourism earnings in 2023 (WTTC, 2024). Similarly, Tanzania's national parks such as Serengeti National Park attract millions of tourists annually due to the famous wildebeest migration. However, tourism activities in these destinations remain highly seasonal, with visitor numbers peaking during dry seasons when wildlife viewing conditions are favorable and accessibility to parks improves (Kifworo & Dube, 2024).

In Uganda, tourism is a key contributor to national economic development and foreign exchange earnings. The country is endowed with diverse tourism attractions, including national parks, wildlife reserves, lakes, mountains, and rich cultural heritage. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities, Uganda recorded approximately 814,508 international tourist arrivals in 2022, representing a 59% increase compared to 2021 as the tourism sector recovered from the pandemic (MTWA, 2025). By 2024, international tourist arrivals had increased further to about 1.37 million visitors, generating approximately USD 1.6 billion in tourism revenue (Uganda Tourism Board [UTB], 2024).

Despite this growth, tourism demand in Uganda remains highly seasonal. Tourist arrivals are typically concentrated during the dry seasons between June and September and December and February when travel conditions are favorable for wildlife viewing, gorilla trekking, and safari experiences. During rainy seasons, particularly between March and May and October to November, tourist arrivals tend to decline due to heavy rainfall, poor road conditions, and limited accessibility to some tourism destinations (Muñoz et al., 2023).

One of Uganda's most important wildlife tourism destinations is Murchison Falls National Park, the largest national park in the country covering approximately 3,893 square kilometers. The park is renowned for its spectacular waterfall, rich biodiversity, and diverse wildlife species, including elephants, lions, giraffes, buffaloes, and numerous bird species (Akisiimire et al., 2022). Tourism activities in the park include game drives, boat cruises along the Nile River, bird watching, and nature walks. These tourism activities are supported by safari lodges that provide accommodation and hospitality services to visitors.

Safari lodges play an important role in the tourism value chain by generating employment opportunities, supporting local suppliers, and contributing to local economic development around the park (Tapera et al., 2024). However, these lodges experience significant seasonal fluctuations in tourist demand. During peak tourism seasons, lodges often record high occupancy rates and increased revenue generation due to increased visitor arrivals. Conversely, during the rainy seasons between April and May and again between October and November, tourist arrivals decline significantly due to difficult road conditions and reduced wildlife viewing opportunities (Kifworo & Dube, 2024).

Reports indicate that during some off-peak periods, occupancy rates in safari lodges around the park may decline drastically, leading to significant revenue losses and operational challenges for tourism enterprises (NTV Uganda, 2026; Watchdog Uganda, 2026). These seasonal fluctuations also affect employment stability for tourism workers and disrupt supply chains for local products and services supplied to lodges by surrounding communities (AfDB, 2023).

In response to these challenges, tourism stakeholders in the Murchison Falls region have introduced initiatives aimed at mitigating the impacts of seasonality. These include diversification of tourism activities, promotion of domestic tourism, community participation in tourism enterprises, and sustainable supply chain development (Purnomo & Purwandari, 2025). However, despite these efforts, seasonality continues to affect the operational performance and financial sustainability of safari lodges within the park.

Therefore, this study assessed the impact of seasonality on safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park. The study provided insights into how seasonal fluctuations influenced tourism business performance and identified strategies that could enhance the resilience and sustainability of safari lodges operating within wildlife tourism destinations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Problem Statement

Tourism is a major contributor to global economic development, but it is highly characterized by seasonality, which causes fluctuations in tourist demand across different periods. According to Momani et al., (2023), seasonality leads to uneven distribution of tourist flows, resulting in peak congestion and off-peak underutilization of tourism facilities. At the enterprise level, particularly in accommodation establishments, this affects occupancy rates, revenue generation, and operational efficiency. (Gössling & Scott, 2026) note that such fluctuations create financial instability, as peak seasons generate high income while off-peak periods result in low occupancy, reduced cash flow, and staffing challenges.

In Africa, safari tourism destinations are particularly vulnerable to seasonal demand due to climatic conditions and wildlife patterns. (Zvaigzne et al., 2022) found that tourism enterprises experience demand instability and operational challenges linked to seasonality, while (Tian et al., 2026)

highlight that most studies focus on destination-level performance and overlook firm-level impacts. In Uganda, tourism significantly contributes to national development, with the Uganda Tourism Board (2023) reporting strong economic contributions and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024) indicating continued growth in tourist arrivals. However, existing research largely emphasizes macro-level indicators, with limited focus on individual tourism enterprises such as safari lodges.

Murchison Falls National Park hosts several safari lodges that depend on tourist flows for their performance and sustainability. However, there was limited empirical evidence on how tourism seasonality affected lodge-level occupancy, revenue stability, staffing, and operational strategies. This gap limited the ability of managers and policymakers to design effective responses to seasonal fluctuations. Therefore, this study sought to assess the impact of tourism seasonality on safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park to generate evidence-based insights for improved decision-making and sustainability.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To find out the impact of seasonality on safari lodges using a case study of Murchison Falls National Park.

1.4 Research objectives.

I. To find out the effect of seasonality on revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.
II. To find out the seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals and their influence on occupancy rates in safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.
III. To find out how seasonality affects staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management in safari lodges.

1.5 Research questions.

I. How do seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals affect revenue generation in safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park?

II. In what ways does seasonality influence occupancy rates and overall profitability of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park?

III. How do safari lodge managers in Murchison Falls National Park adapt operational strategies, including pricing and resource allocation, to respond to seasonal variations in tourist demand?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Content Scope

This study focused on examining the impact of seasonality on safari lodges, particularly in Murchison Falls National Park.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was limited to safari lodges located within Murchison Falls National Park in Masindi District.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study covered the period from 2022 to 2025

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study held significant value for multiple stakeholders due to its focus on the operational and financial impacts of seasonality on safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park. Its contributions span academic, policy, organizational, and sectoral domains.

From an academic perspective, the study contributed to the body of knowledge on tourism management, hospitality economics, and sustainable lodge operations in East Africa. By investigating the relationship between seasonality and financial performance, the study provided empirical evidence and context-specific insights that informed future research. Scholars and students studying tourism, hospitality, and business management could use the findings as a

reference for understanding the operational challenges posed by seasonal fluctuations and for developing theoretical models that explain seasonal effects on lodges in protected areas.

For policymakers, particularly those within the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) and local tourism boards, the study provided critical insights into how seasonality influences lodge performance and, by extension, tourism revenue and community livelihoods. The findings could guide the design of policies aimed at stabilizing lodge operations throughout the year, such as incentives for off-peak visitation, improved infrastructure to mitigate accessibility issues during wet seasons, and targeted marketing strategies that promote year-round tourism. This could enhance revenue generation for both lodges and the national economy while ensuring the sustainable management of wildlife tourism assets.

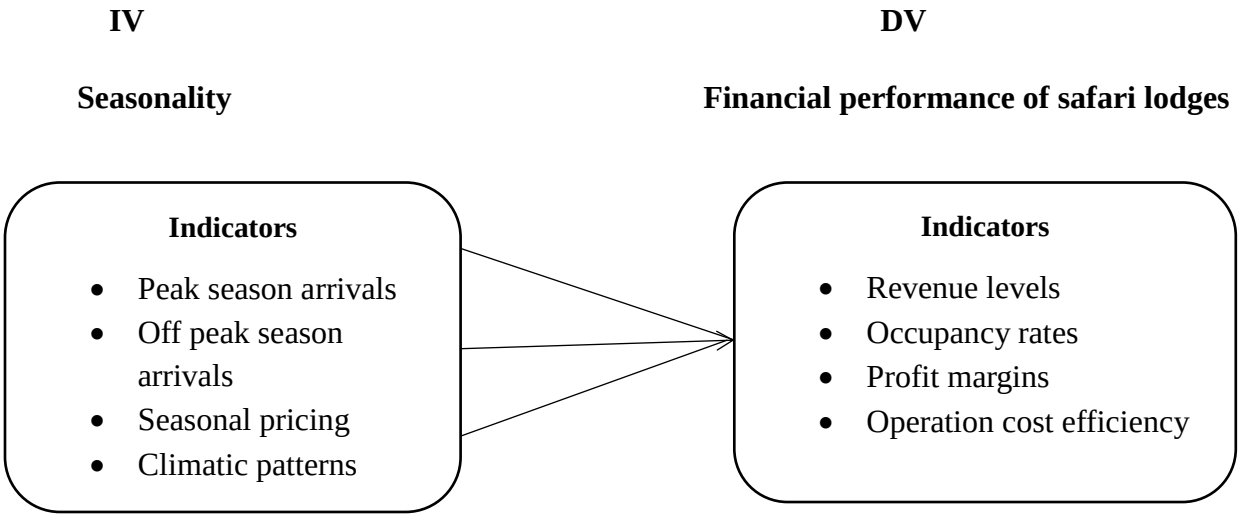
Safari lodge operators and management organizations also benefited directly from this study. By understanding how seasonal fluctuations impact revenue, occupancy, and operational costs, lodge managers could adopt more effective strategies for staffing, pricing, resource allocation, and community engagement. The recommendations of the study could support lodges in achieving financial resilience, optimizing operational efficiency, and improving customer satisfaction throughout the year. Additionally, lodge chains and tourism associations could use the findings to develop standardized frameworks for managing seasonality across multiple properties.

The broader tourism sector, including local communities, tour operators, and related service providers, also benefited from the findings of the study. Lodges play a pivotal role in generating income for surrounding communities through employment and procurement of goods and services. By addressing the challenges of seasonality, the study promotes more consistent economic benefits, strengthens lodge-community partnerships, and supports sustainable tourism development. Insights from this research could also inform tourism investment decisions by highlighting periods of opportunity and risk, thereby encouraging more stable and responsible private sector engagement.

Beyond these stakeholders, the findings of the study contributed to regional and international discussions on tourism sustainability in protected areas. The study provides lessons applicable to other East African safari destinations facing similar seasonal challenges, thereby broadening the practical impact of the research.

1.8 Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between seasonality and financial performance of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.



Source: Adapted from the World Tourism Organization (2023), World Travel & Tourism Council (2022), and Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2023) and modified by the researcher.

1.9 Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation that shows the relationship between variables in a study and how they influence each other (World Tourism Organization, 2023). In this study, the independent variable is seasonality, while the dependent variable is financial performance of safari lodges.

Seasonality, the independent variable, is conceptualized through dimensions such as peak seasons, off-peak seasons, and fluctuations in tourist arrivals. These variations are influenced by climatic conditions, travel patterns, and tourism demand trends (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

The dependent variable, financial performance, is measured using indicators such as revenue generation, occupancy rates, profit margins, and operational costs. During peak seasons, higher tourist arrivals lead to increased occupancy and revenue, thereby improving profitability. Conversely, during off-peak seasons, reduced demand leads to lower occupancy, decreased

revenue, and operational challenges such as cost adjustments and reduced staffing (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022).

Therefore, the framework demonstrates that seasonality significantly influences the financial performance and sustainability of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

1.10.1 Seasonality

Seasonality refers to predictable fluctuations in tourism demand that occur at specific periods of the year due to factors such as weather patterns, holidays, and travel behavior (World Tourism Organization, 2023).

1.10.2 Financial Performance of Safari Lodges

Financial performance refers to the ability of a tourism enterprise to generate income, manage operational costs, and achieve profitability over time (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022).

1.10.3 Safari Lodges

Safari lodges are accommodation facilities located in or near protected wildlife areas that provide lodging and tourism services to visitors engaged in nature-based tourism (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the theoretical review and a review of relevant literature related to the objectives of the study. The chapter also presents a summary of the different literature reviewed.

2.1 Theoretical review

This study was guided by the Tourism Demand Theory, which was developed by early economists and tourism scholars and explains the factors influencing tourists' decisions to travel and how demand fluctuates over time.

Tourism demand theory explains that the demand for tourism is influenced by factors such as income levels, prices, seasonality, consumer preferences, and external environmental conditions (Vanhove, 2022). The theory emphasizes that tourism demand is not constant but varies across time due to predictable and unpredictable factors, including weather conditions, holidays, and economic situations.

According to (Gössling & Scott, 2026), tourism demand is highly influenced by seasonal variations, particularly in nature-based destinations such as national parks. Favorable weather conditions during dry seasons attract large numbers of tourists, while unfavorable weather conditions during rainy seasons discourage travel and reduce tourist arrivals.

The concept of seasonality is closely linked to tourism demand theory because it explains the predictable fluctuations in tourist flows throughout the year. As noted by UNWTO (2024), tourism demand tends to increase during peak seasons when travel conditions are favorable and declines during off-peak seasons due to environmental and socio-economic factors.

Huang et al., (2026) further explain that tourism demand is price-sensitive, especially during low seasons, where tourism businesses often reduce prices to attract visitors. During peak seasons, high demand allows businsesses to increase prices and maximize profits.

Tourism Demand Theory also highlights that fluctuations in tourist demand directly affect tourism enterprises such as accommodation facilities. High demand leads to increased occupancy rates, higher revenues, and more employment opportunities, while low demand results in reduced occupancy, lower revenues, and staff deductions (Alrawabdeh, 2022).

The theory is applied to safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park, where seasonal changes such as dry and rainy seasons significantly influence tourist arrivals. The fluctuations in demand affect occupancy rates, revenue generation, and staffing levels in lodges, making the theory relevant for explaining the relationship between seasonality and lodge performance.

2.2 Effect of seasonality on revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges

Tourism seasonality has a significant impact on revenue generation and financial performance of accommodation facilities. According to (Dalir, 2024), seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals lead to uneven revenue streams, where tourism businesses generate high income during peak seasons and low income during off-peak periods.

Stone & Stone, (2025) examined tourism enterprises in African wildlife destinations and found that safari lodges are highly dependent on seasonal demand. During peak seasons, lodges experience increased bookings and higher room rates, leading to improved financial performance. However, during off-peak seasons, reduced tourist arrivals result in revenue losses and financial instability.

Gössling & Scott, (2026) also found that seasonality creates financial challenges for tourism businesses due to inconsistent cash flow. The study highlighted that many tourism enterprises struggle to meet operational costs such as maintenance, utilities, and salaries during low seasons.

In the Ugandan context, the Uganda Tourism Board (2024) indicates that tourism revenue is highly concentrated in peak seasons, particularly during dry periods when wildlife viewing is favorable. This creates an imbalance in revenue generation for safari lodges, as they depend heavily on a limited number of high-demand months.

Additionally, (PĂTRĂUCEANU & PETELCA, n.d.) emphasizes that tourism revenue fluctuations affect investment decisions and long-term sustainability of tourism enterprises.

Businesses operating in seasonal destinations often face difficulties in maintaining financial stability throughout the year.

However, much of the existing literature focuses on destination-level revenue performance rather than lodge-level financial dynamics. There is limited empirical evidence on how seasonality affects the financial performance of individual safari lodges, particularly in Murchison Falls National Park.

2.3 Seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals and their influence on occupancy rates in safari lodges

Seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals play a crucial role in determining occupancy rates in accommodation facilities. According to (Goulding & Pomfret, 2022), tourism destinations experience predictable cycles of high and low demand, which directly affect occupancy levels in hotels and lodges.

Bisht et al., (2025)found that accommodation facilities record high occupancy rates during peak seasons due to increased tourist arrivals, while off-peak seasons are characterized by low occupancy and underutilization of facilities.

In wildlife tourism destinations, (Xu et al., 2022) observed that tourist arrivals are influenced by climatic conditions. Dry seasons attract more visitors due to better wildlife viewing opportunities and accessibility, leading to higher occupancy rates. On the other hand, rainy seasons discourage travel and result in low occupancy levels.

Tan et al., (2023) further explain that travel decisions are influenced by holidays, weather conditions, and travel preferences, which contribute to seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals and occupancy rates.

In Uganda, the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (2025) notes that national parks experience high visitor numbers during dry seasons, which increases demand for accommodation facilities such as safari lodges.

However, most studies focus on general hotel occupancy trends or national tourism statistics, with limited emphasis on safari lodges operating within protected areas. There is also limited research on occupancy patterns specific to Murchison Falls National Park.

2.4 Effects of seasonality on staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management in safari lodges

Seasonality significantly affects staffing levels and employment stability in tourism enterprises. According to (Bisht et al., 2025), tourism employment is highly seasonal, with businesses increasing staff during peak seasons and reducing workforce during off-peak periods.

Krisnadewi et al., (2026) found that safari lodges often rely on temporary and casual workers to cope with seasonal demand fluctuations. During peak seasons, employment opportunities increase, while off-peak seasons lead to job insecurity and reduced working hours.

Recuero Virto, (2023) also observed that tourism enterprises adopt flexible staffing strategies such as part-time employment and contract-based work to manage seasonal demand.

Magrizos et al., (2023) noted that seasonality affects employee retention, as workers often seek alternative employment during low seasons. This creates challenges for tourism businesses in maintaining a skilled workforce and consistent service quality.

In Uganda, (Awenu & Oh, 2026) reports that tourism-related employment is highly dependent on tourist arrivals, particularly in wildlife destinations where businesses adjust staffing levels based on demand.

However, existing literature provides limited insight into how safari lodge managers respond to staffing challenges caused by seasonality. There is also a lack of studies focusing on human resource management strategies in safari lodges within Murchison Falls National Park.

2.5 Summary of literature reviewed

The literature highlights Tourism Demand Theory's role in explaining how tourism demand fluctuates due to seasonal variations and how these fluctuations influence tourism enterprises. It emphasizes the relationship between seasonality and key variables such as occupancy rates, revenue generation, and staffing levels.

Based on the literature reviewed under the first objective, seasonality significantly affects revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges. Peak seasons result in high revenues, while off-peak seasons lead to financial instability. However, gaps exist in lodge-level financial analysis.

Based on the literature reviewed under the second objective, seasonal tourist arrivals strongly influence occupancy rates in safari lodges. High occupancy is experienced during peak seasons, while low occupancy occurs during off-peak periods. However, limited studies focus specifically on safari lodges in protected areas.

Based on the literature reviewed under the third objective, seasonality affects staffing levels and employment stability, leading to temporary employment and workforce fluctuations. However, limited research exists on staffing strategies used by lodge managers.

Overall, the literature highlights the need for more context-specific research on the impact of seasonality on safari lodges, particularly in Murchison Falls National Park. Therefore, the study sought to fill these gaps by providing empirical evidence on how seasonal variations affected lodge performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents research design, study population, sample size, sampling methods, type of data, data collection methods, data analysis plan, data analysis techniques and methods, data reliability and validity, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

A research design serves as the strategic blueprint for conducting a study, detailing the plan for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data to address specific research questions (Gamage, 2025). In this study, the researcher adopted a cross-sectional research approach to examine how seasonality affected the performance of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.

This design allowed for the collection of data from a large sample at a single point in time, enabling a comprehensive comparison across different groups. Additionally, the cross-sectional approach was both economical and time-efficient, making it well-suited for capturing a detailed snapshot of the phenomenon under study (Baumeister et al., 2026).

3.2 Study population

A study population is defined as the complete set of individuals or elements that share specific characteristics relevant to the research question (Hossan et al., 2023). (Leavy, 2022) further explains that the study population encompasses all subjects or cases that form the context for the research and influence the outcomes when sampled. The study targeted a population of 65 respondents drawn from safari lodges and tourism stakeholders in Murchison Falls National Park.

3.3 Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of participants included in a study, which is essential for ensuring the findings are statistically significant and representative of the broader population (2023). The

sample size for this study was determined using the (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) table. From the study population of 65 respondents, a sample of 52 participants was selected.

Sampling method

The study employed both random and purposive sampling techniques to select participants. These methods were chosen because they are cost-effective, time-efficient, and help minimize bias during data collection.

Table 1.3.1: showing sample size of respondents

Category of respondents	**Targeted population**	**Desired Sample**	**Sampling techniques**
Lodge management	12	10	Purposive sampling
Lodge employees	21	16	Random sampling
Tourists	15	11	Random sampling
Marketing department	8	6	Purposive sampling
Tour operators	9	9	Purposive sampling
Total	**65**	**52**	

Source: Murchison Falls National Park Report 2025

3.5 Type of data

3.5.1 Primary data

According to Creswell and Poth (2022), primary data refers to information collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific purpose, making it tailored to the needs of the study. In this research, data were collected from selected respondents through questionnaires on how seasonality affected revenue generation, occupancy rates, and staffing levels in safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.

3.5.2 Secondary data

Secondary data is information originally collected by others for different purposes but used in this study to support new analysis or investigation (Creswell, 2022). Sources of secondary data included scholarly books, pamphlets, research proposals, reports, online journals, and other relevant publications. This approach provided valuable insights into the historical context of the research topic.

3.6 Data collection methods

The researcher used closed-ended questionnaires to collect data. This method allowed participants to choose responses that best reflected their views, which helped maintain consistency in the response rate (Adi Bhat, 2023).

The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). This format was selected for its efficiency and time-saving advantages.

3.7 Data analysis plan

Data analysis is defined as the systematic application of statistical and logical methods to describe and interpret data, turning raw information into meaningful insights (Babbie, 2023). The collected data were organized and classified using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) before computer analysis. Regression analysis was applied to determine how much the independent variable explained the variance in the dependent variable.

3.8 Data analysis techniques and methods

The study data were processed, coded, and arranged into tables for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated. The analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was chosen for its accuracy, efficiency, and error-reducing capabilities. Additionally, correlation analysis was performed to assess the strength and direction of relationships between the study variables.

3.9 Research reliability and validity

Research reliability

According to Trochim (2021), reliability refers to the consistency of a research instrument in producing similar results under consistent conditions. To evaluate reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Research validity

Bryman (2021) explains validity as the degree to which a measurement accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure, which is crucial for enhancing the research's quality and credibility. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by the academic supervisor before being administered to the respondents to confirm its alignment with the research objectives.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Time presented a significant limitation to the study, as the researcher had limited time due to attending lectures, coursework, and examinations. This made it difficult to fully allocate sufficient time for the research process.

Financial constraints also limited the study, as the researcher required funds for internet access, printing, transportation, data collection, and processing of research work.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The researcher first obtained official permission to collect data from respondents in Murchison Falls National Park by presenting an introductory letter from the university for Identification Purposes.

To maintain ethical standards, confidentiality was strictly upheld by excluding respondents' names from all data collection records. Participants were informed that the information gathered was used solely for academic research, with assurances that the study maintained impartiality and avoided personal bias.

The final report was compiled by the researcher and submitted to the Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Tourism and Hospitality at Busitema University.

Throughout the study, confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were strictly protected, personal identities and sensitive information were not disclosed, and data was presented in aggregate form to prevent any potential harm to participants.

Furthermore, privacy was safeguarded by ensuring that all information provided by respondents was used exclusively for academic purposes and was not shared with unauthorized individuals or institutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data analysis and interpretation of the researcher's findings. For this study, data analysis and interpretation of findings are guided by the following study objectives:

I. To find out the effect of seasonality on revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.
II. To find out the seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals and their influence on occupancy rates in safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park.
III. To find out how seasonality affects staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management in safari lodges.

4.1 Response Rate

The results are displayed in the table below. The researcher distributed 52 questionnaires, and all of them were returned, indicating a 100% response rate.

Table 2.4.1: Response Rate

Response Category	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**
Returned Questionnaires	52	100
Unreturned Questionnaires	0	0
Total	**52**	**100**

The findings indicate that all the questionnaires distributed to respondents were returned, giving a response rate of 100%. This response rate was considered adequate and sufficiently representative enough for analysis and interpretation of findings.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

This section presents demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, education level, role, and years of experience.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 1 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Male	28	53.8	53.8	53.8
Female	24	46.2	46.2	100.0
Total	**52**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were male, represented by 53.8%, while females constituted 46.2%. This implies that males were more involved in tourism and hospitality activities at Murchison Falls National Park compared to females.

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

Table 2 4.3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
18-33	16	30.8	30.8	30.8
34-44	18	34.6	34.6	65.4
45-54	12	23.1	23.1	88.5
55 and above	6	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	**52**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents were aged between 34–44 years represented by 34.6%. This implies that the working age group is highly involved in tourism and hospitality activities at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.2.3 Education Level of Respondents

Table 5.4.4: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**	**Valid Percent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
No Formal Education	4	7.7	7.7	7.7
Certificate	10	19.2	19.2	26.9
Diploma	14	26.9	26.9	53.8
Degree	16	30.8	30.8	84.6
Master's and Above	8	15.4	15.4	100.0
Total	**52**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents possessed degree qualifications represented by 30.8% followed by diploma qualifications represented by 26.9%. This implies that respondents were knowledgeable enough to provide reliable information concerning the effect of seasonality on safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.2.4 Respondent's Role at Murchison Falls National Park

Table 6.4.5: Role of Respondents at Murchison Falls National Park

Role Category	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**	**Valid Percent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Tourist	14	26.9	26.9	26.9
Lodge Employee	16	30.8	30.8	57.7
Lodge Manager	8	15.4	15.4	73.1
Tour Operator	8	15.4	15.4	88.5
Marketing Staff	6	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	**52**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were lodge employees, represented by 30.8%, followed by tourists, represented by 26.9%. This implies that the study obtained information from respondents directly involved in tourism and hospitality activities at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.2.5 Years of Experience/Stay in the Area

Table 7 4.6: Years of Experience/Stay in the Area

Duration (Years)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Less than 1 year	8	15.4	15.4	15.4
1-3 years	14	26.9	26.9	42.3
3-5 years	16	30.8	30.8	73.1
Over 5 years	14	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	**52**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The findings reveal that majority of respondents had 3-5 years of experience/stay in the area represented by 30.8%. This implies that respondents had sufficient experience and familiarity with the area to provide reliable information concerning seasonality effects on safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

This section presents findings according to the study objectives using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

The interpretation of means was based on the following scale;

4.21 – 5.00 = Strongly Agree

3.41 – 4.20 = Agree

2.61 – 3.40 = Neutral

1.81 – 2.60 = Disagree

1.00 – 1.80 = Strongly Disagree

4.3.1 Effect of Seasonality on Revenue Generation and Financial Performance of Safari Lodges

Table 3 4.7: Effect of Seasonality on Revenue Generation and Financial Performance

Statement	Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Revenue increases significantly during peak seasons	52	100	4.62	0.58	Strongly Agree
Lodges experience low income during off-peak seasons	51	98.1	4.48	0.72	Strongly Agree
Seasonal fluctuations create unstable cash flow for lodges	50	96.2	4.40	0.75	Strongly Agree
Lodges rely heavily on peak seasons for annual revenue	52	100	4.56	0.64	Strongly Agree
Discounts are offered during low seasons to attract customers	49	94.2	4.35	0.78	Strongly Agree
Seasonality affects profitability of safari lodges	51	98.1	4.50	0.70	Strongly Agree
Fixed operational costs remain high despite low revenue in off-season	50	96.2	4.44	0.73	Strongly Agree
Seasonality affects financial planning in lodges	52	100	4.52	0.67	Strongly Agree

Grand Mean: 4.48: 0.70: Strongly Agree

The findings in Table 4.7 revealed that respondents strongly agreed that seasonality affects revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park with a grand mean of 4.48.

Respondents strongly agreed that revenue increases significantly during peak seasons, lodges rely heavily on peak seasons for annual revenue, and seasonality affects financial planning in lodges. The study findings imply that seasonality creates significant revenue fluctuations that affect the financial performance and sustainability of safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.3.2 Seasonal Patterns of Tourist Arrivals and Their Influence on Occupancy Rates

Table 4 4.8: Seasonal Patterns of Tourist Arrivals and Influence on Occupancy Rates

Statement	Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Lodges experience high occupancy during peak seasons	52	100	4.65	0.55	Strongly Agree
Occupancy rates drop significantly during rainy seasons	51	98.1	4.52	0.67	Strongly Agree
Some lodge rooms remain unused during off-peak periods	50	96.2	4.42	0.73	Strongly Agree
Seasonal demand influences booking patterns	52	100	4.48	0.70	Strongly Agree
Peak seasons sometimes lead to full bookings	51	98.1	4.58	0.62	Strongly Agree
Seasonality affects the overall utilization of lodge facilities	50	96.2	4.46	0.71	Strongly Agree
Accessibility challenges reduce occupancy during rainy seasons	49	94.2	4.38	0.76	Strongly Agree
Tourist arrival trends directly determine occupancy levels	52	100	4.54	0.65	Strongly Agree

Grand Mean: 4.50: 0.67: Strongly Agree

The findings indicate that seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals significantly influence occupancy rates in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park with a grand mean of 4.50.

Respondents strongly agreed that lodges experience high occupancy during peak seasons, peak seasons sometimes lead to full bookings, and tourist arrival trends directly determine occupancy levels. This implies that seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals create significant variations in occupancy rates, affecting the overall utilization of lodge facilities and financial performance.

4.3.3 Effect of Seasonality on Staffing Levels, Employment Stability, and Human Resource Management

Table 5 4.9: Effect of Seasonality on Staffing Levels, Employment Stability, and Human Resource Management

Statement	Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Lodges hire more staff during peak seasons	52	100	4.60	0.60	Strongly Agree
Staff numbers are reduced during off-peak seasons	50	96.2	4.35	0.78	Strongly Agree
Seasonality leads to job insecurity among employees	49	94.2	4.28	0.82	Strongly Agree
Temporary workers are commonly used during peak seasons	51	98.1	4.42	0.73	Strongly Agree
Employees experience reduced working hours during low seasons	48	92.3	4.25	0.85	Strongly Agree
Lodges adjust pricing strategies depending on season	52	100	4.48	0.70	Strongly Agree
Lodges implement marketing strategies to attract tourists in low seasons	50	96.2	4.38	0.76	Strongly Agree
Resource allocation (staff, supplies) changes with seasons	51	98.1	4.52	0.67	Strongly Agree
Seasonality affects service quality due to staffing changes	50	96.2	4.40	0.75	Strongly Agree

Management strategies help reduce the negative effects of seasonality	51	98.1	4.45	0.72	Strongly Agree

Grand Mean: 4.41: 0.74: Strongly Agree

The findings revealed that seasonality significantly affects staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park with a grand mean of 4.41.

Respondents strongly agreed that lodges hire more staff during peak seasons, resource allocation changes with seasons, and lodges adjust pricing strategies depending on season. The study findings imply that seasonality creates staffing challenges that affect employment stability, service quality, and overall human resource management in safari lodges.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

In order to determine the extent and direction of relationship between the independent and dependent variables, Pearson correlation analysis was used and the results summarized as below.

4.4.1 Correlation between Seasonal Fluctuations and Staffing Strategies

Table 6 4.10: Correlation between Seasonal Fluctuations and Staffing Strategies

Variables	r Value	Sig. Value	Interpretation
Seasonal Fluctuations vs Staffing Strategies	0.438**	0.001	Moderate Positive Relationship

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings revealed that seasonal fluctuations had a moderate positive relationship with staffing strategies ($r = 0.438$, $p = 0.001$). This implies that seasonal fluctuations significantly influence staffing decisions and human resource management in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.4.2 Correlation between Revenue Generation and Staffing Strategies

Table 7 4.11: Correlation between Revenue Generation and Staffing Strategies

Variables	r Value	Sig. Value	Interpretation
Revenue Generation vs Staffing Strategies	0.498**	0.000	Moderate Positive Relationship

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings revealed that revenue generation had a moderate positive relationship with staffing strategies ($r = 0.498$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that revenue fluctuations due to seasonality significantly influence staffing levels and human resource management in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.4.3 Correlation between Occupancy Rates and Staffing Strategies

Table 8 4.12: Correlation between Occupancy Rates and Staffing Strategies.

Variables	r Value	Sig. Value	Interpretation
Occupancy Rates vs. Staffing Strategies	0.472**	0.000	Moderate Positive Relationship

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings revealed that occupancy rates had a moderate positive relationship with staffing strategies ($r = 0.472$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that occupancy fluctuations due to seasonality significantly influence staffing decisions and operational strategies in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.5 Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of seasonal fluctuations, revenue generation, and occupancy rates on staffing and operational strategies in safari lodges.

4.5.1 Model Summary

Table 9 4.13: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.581	0.338	0.297	0.420

The findings indicate that the independent variables explain 33.8% of staffing and operational strategies in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park. This means that seasonal fluctuations, revenue generation, and occupancy rates significantly influence staffing and operational strategies.

4.5.2 ANOVA Results

Table 15.4.14: ANOVA Results

MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
REGRESSION	1.520	3	0.507	2.870	0.032
RESIDUAL	2.430	48	0.051		
TOTAL	**3.950**	**51**			

The regression model was statistically significant because the significance value was less than 0.05 ($p = 0.032$). This implies that the independent variables significantly predict staffing and operational strategies in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

4.5.3 Regression Coefficients

Table 10 4.15: Regression Coefficients

Variables	Beta	T-Value	Sig.
Seasonal Fluctuations	0.147	0.812	0.421
Revenue Generation	0.298	1.724	0.092
Occupancy Rates	0.214	1.156	0.254

The findings indicate that revenue generation had the highest influence on staffing and operational strategies with Beta value of 0.298 followed by occupancy rates with Beta value of 0.214 and seasonal fluctuations with Beta value of 0.147. However, none of the individual variables were statistically significant predictors, suggesting that while the overall model is significant, the variables may work together to influence staffing strategies.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section presents a discussion of the study findings, conclusion, recommendations, limitations, and areas of further research.

5.1.0 Discussion of the Study Findings

5.1.1 Objective One: Effect of Seasonality on Revenue Generation and Financial Performance of Safari Lodges in Murchison Falls National Park

The first objective of the study was to determine the effect of seasonality on revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park. Findings revealed strong agreement among respondents that seasonality significantly affects revenue generation and financial performance, reflected in a grand mean of (Mean = 4.48; SD = 0.70). Respondents particularly highlighted that revenue increases significantly during peak seasons (Mean = 4.62); lodges rely heavily on peak seasons for annual revenue (Mean = 4.56); seasonality affects financial planning in lodges (Mean = 4.52); seasonality affects profitability of safari lodges (Mean = 4.50); lodges experience low income during off-peak seasons (Mean = 4.48); and fixed operational costs remain high despite low revenue in the off-season (Mean = 4.44). These results confirmed that seasonal fluctuations create significant revenue instability, affecting the financial performance and sustainability of safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between seasonal fluctuations and staffing strategies ($r = 0.438$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that seasonal variations in tourist demand are associated with adjustments in staffing levels. Furthermore, correlation analysis demonstrated a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between revenue generation and staffing strategies ($rs = 0.498$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that revenue fluctuations due to seasonality substantially influence staffing decisions. Regression analysis further confirmed that the independent variables—seasonal fluctuations, revenue generation, and occupancy rates—collectively explain 33.8% of staffing and operational strategies in safari lodges ($R^2 = 0.338$), with

the overall regression model being statistically significant ($F = 2.870$, $p = 0.032$). Among the variables, revenue generation had the highest influence on staffing and operational strategies ($\beta = 0.298$), followed by occupancy rates ($\beta = 0.214$) and seasonal fluctuations ($\beta = 0.147$), suggesting that revenue performance is the most critical factor driving operational adjustments in response to seasonality.

These findings aligned with (Dalir, 2024), who found that seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals lead to uneven revenue streams, where tourism businesses generate high income during peak seasons and low income during off-peak periods. Similarly, (Stone & Stone, 2025) examined tourism enterprises in African wildlife destinations and found that safari lodges are highly dependent on seasonal demand, experiencing increased bookings and higher room rates during peak seasons, leading to improved financial performance, while reduced tourist arrivals during off-peak seasons result in revenue losses and financial instability. The study's finding that lodges experience low income during off-peak seasons (mean = 4.48) supported (Gössling & Scott, 2026) , who observed that seasonality creates financial challenges for tourism businesses due to inconsistent cash flow, with many tourism enterprises struggling to meet operational costs such as maintenance, utilities, and salaries during low seasons.

The study further supported the Uganda Tourism Board (2024) , which indicated that tourism revenue in Uganda is highly concentrated in peak seasons, particularly during dry periods when wildlife viewing is favorable, creating an imbalance in revenue generation for safari lodges that depend heavily on a limited number of high-demand months. In the context of Murchison Falls National Park, respondents' strong agreement that seasonality affects financial planning in lodges (mean = 4.52) highlights how seasonal revenue instability complicates budgeting, investment decisions, and long-term financial sustainability. This is consistent with (PĂTRĂUCEANU & PETELCA, n.d.), who emphasized that tourism revenue fluctuations affect investment decisions and long-term sustainability of tourism enterprises operating in seasonal destinations. The finding that fixed operational costs remain high despite low revenue in off-season (Mean = 4.44) underscores the financial vulnerability of safari lodges, as they must maintain facilities, pay salaries, and cover utilities even when tourist numbers decline significantly.

5.1.2 Objective Two: Seasonal Patterns of Tourist Arrivals and Their Influence on Occupancy Rates in Safari Lodges in Murchison Falls National Park

The second objective of the study was to determine the seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals and their influence on occupancy rates in safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park. Findings revealed strong agreement among respondents that seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals significantly influence occupancy rates, reflected in a grand mean of (Mean = 4.50; SD = 0.67). Respondents particularly emphasized that lodges experience high occupancy during peak seasons (Mean = 4.65), peak seasons sometimes lead to full bookings (Mean = 4.58), tourist arrival trends directly determine occupancy levels (Mean = 4.54); occupancy rates drop significantly during rainy seasons (Mean = 4.52), seasonal demand influences booking patterns (Mean = 4.48), and seasonality affects the overall utilization of lodge facilities (Mean = 4.46). These results confirmed that seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals create significant variations in occupancy rates, affecting the overall utilization of lodge facilities and financial performance at Murchison Falls National Park.

Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between occupancy rates and staffing strategies ($r = 0.472$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that occupancy fluctuations due to seasonality significantly influence staffing decisions and operational strategies in safari lodges. The statistically significant result confirms that this relationship is unlikely to be due to chance. The regression analysis further demonstrated that occupancy rates contribute to predicting staffing and operational strategies ($\beta = 0.214$), highlighting that occupancy levels serve as a critical indicator for lodge managers when making operational decisions related to staffing, resource allocation, and service delivery.

These findings aligned with (Goulding & Pomfret, 2022), who found that tourism destinations experience predictable cycles of high and low demand, which directly affect occupancy levels in hotels and lodges. Similarly, (Bisht et al., 2025) observed that accommodation facilities record high occupancy rates during peak seasons due to increased tourist arrivals, while off-peak seasons are characterized by low occupancy and underutilization of facilities. The study's finding that occupancy rates drop significantly during rainy seasons (mean = 4.52) supports (Xu et al., 2022), who observed that in wildlife tourism destinations, tourist arrivals are influenced by climatic

conditions, with dry seasons attracting more visitors due to better wildlife viewing opportunities and accessibility, leading to higher occupancy rates, while rainy seasons discourage travel and result in low occupancy levels.

The study further supported (Tan et al., 2023), who explained that travel decisions are influenced by holidays, weather conditions, and travel preferences, which contribute to seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals and occupancy rates. In the context of Murchison Falls National Park, respondents' strong agreement that accessibility challenges reduce occupancy during rainy seasons (Mean = 4.38) reflects the reality that heavy rainfall, poor road conditions, and limited accessibility to tourism destinations during wet periods significantly reduce visitor numbers. This is consistent with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities (2025)**,** which noted that national parks in Uganda experience high visitor numbers during dry seasons, which increases demand for accommodation facilities such as safari lodges. The finding that seasonal demand influences booking patterns (Mean = 4.48) underscores how tourists plan their visits around favourable weather conditions, leading to concentrated demand during peak periods and underutilization during off-peak seasons.

5.1.3 Objective Three: Effect of Seasonality on Staffing Levels, Employment Stability, and Human Resource Management in Safari Lodges

The third objective of the study was to determine how seasonality affects staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management in safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park. Findings revealed strong agreement among respondents that seasonality significantly affects staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management, reflected in a grand mean of (Mean = 4.41; SD = 0.74). Respondents particularly emphasized that lodges hire more staff during peak seasons (Mean = 4.60), resource allocation changes with seasons (Mean = 4.52), lodges adjust pricing strategies depending on season (Mean = 4.48), management strategies help reduce the negative effects of seasonality (Mean = 4.45), temporary workers are commonly used during peak seasons (Mean = 4.42), and seasonality affects service quality due to staffing changes (Mean = 4.40). These results confirmed that seasonality creates staffing challenges that affect employment stability, service quality, and overall human resource management in safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park.

Correlation analysis demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between seasonal fluctuations and staffing strategies ($r = 0.438$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that seasonal variations in tourist demand are significantly associated with adjustments in staffing levels and human resource management practices. Furthermore, the regression analysis confirmed that the independent variables collectively explain 33.8% of staffing and operational strategies ($R^2 = 0.338$), with the overall model being statistically significant ($F = 2.870$, $p = 0.032$). These findings emphasize that seasonality is a critical factor influencing human resource decisions in safari lodges, affecting hiring practices, employment stability, and service delivery.

These findings aligned with (Bisht et al., 2025), who found that tourism employment is highly seasonal, with businesses increasing staff during peak seasons and reducing workforce during off-peak periods. Similarly, (Krisnadewi et al., 2026) observed that safari lodges often rely on temporary and casual workers to cope with seasonal demand fluctuations, with employment opportunities increasing during peak seasons and job insecurity rising during off-peak periods. The study's finding that lodges hire more staff during peak seasons (Mean = 4.60) and temporary workers are commonly used during peak seasons (Mean = 4.42) supported (Recuero Virto, 2023), who observed that tourism enterprises adopt flexible staffing strategies such as part-time employment and contract-based work to manage seasonal demand.

The study further supported (Magrizos et al., 2023), who noted that seasonality affects employee retention, as workers may seek alternative employment during low seasons, creating challenges for tourism businesses in maintaining a skilled workforce and consistent service quality. In the context of Murchison Falls National Park, respondents' agreement that seasonality affects service quality due to staffing changes (Mean = 4.40) highlights how fluctuations in staffing levels can compromise the quality of visitor experiences, as temporary or inexperienced staff may be deployed during peak periods, while reduced staffing during low seasons may lead to service gaps. This is consistent with (Awenu & Oh, 2026), who reported that tourism-related employment in Uganda is highly dependent on tourist arrivals, particularly in wildlife destinations where businesses adjust staffing levels based on demand. The finding that management strategies help reduce the negative effects of seasonality (Mean = 4.45) suggests that proactive human resource management, including flexible staffing arrangements, cross-training, and retention incentives,

can help mitigate the adverse impacts of seasonal fluctuations on employment stability and service quality.

5.2 Conclusion

The conclusions are drawn based on the study objectives.

5.2.1 Effect of Seasonality on Revenue Generation and Financial Performance of Safari Lodges

The statistical analysis underscored the critical effect of seasonality on revenue generation and financial performance of safari lodges. Correlation results showed a moderate positive relationship between revenue generation and staffing strategies ($r = 0.498$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that revenue fluctuations due to seasonality are closely linked to operational adjustments. Regression analysis confirmed that seasonal fluctuations, revenue generation, and occupancy rates collectively explain 33.8% of staffing and operational strategies ($R^2 = 0.338$), with the overall model being statistically significant ($F = 2.870$, $p = 0.032$). The study concluded that seasonality creates significant revenue instability that affects the financial performance and sustainability of safari lodges at Murchison Falls National Park. Respondents strongly agreed that revenue increases significantly during peak seasons, lodges rely heavily on peak seasons for annual revenue, and seasonality affects financial planning in lodges. During peak seasons, higher tourist arrivals lead to increased occupancy and revenue, thereby improving profitability. Conversely, during off-peak seasons, reduced demand leads to lower occupancy, decreased revenue, and operational challenges such as cost adjustments and reduced staffing. The financial vulnerability of safari lodges is further compounded by fixed operational costs that remain high despite low revenue during off-peak periods, making it difficult for lodges to maintain financial stability throughout the year.

5.2.2 Seasonal Patterns of Tourist Arrivals and Their Influence on Occupancy Rates in Safari Lodges

The study identified a strong consensus among respondents that seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals significantly influence occupancy rates in safari lodges. Correlation analysis demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between occupancy rates and staffing strategies ($r = 0.472$, $p =$

0.000), indicating that occupancy fluctuations due to seasonality are significantly associated with staffing decisions and operational strategies. The study concluded that seasonal variations in tourist arrivals create significant fluctuations in occupancy rates, affecting the overall utilization of lodge facilities and financial performance. Respondents strongly agreed that lodges experience high occupancy during peak seasons, peak seasons sometimes lead to full bookings, and tourist arrival trends directly determine occupancy levels. During dry seasons when wildlife viewing conditions are favorable and accessibility to parks improves, visitor numbers increase, leading to high occupancy rates. Conversely, during rainy seasons, heavy rainfall, poor road conditions, and limited accessibility to tourism destinations lead to reduced tourist arrivals and significant declines in occupancy rates. The seasonal nature of tourist demand creates challenges for lodge managers in optimizing facility utilization, revenue generation, and operational efficiency throughout the year.

5.2.3 Effect of Seasonality on Staffing Levels, Employment Stability, and Human Resource Management in Safari Lodges

The study identified that seasonality significantly affects staffing levels, employment stability, and human resource management in safari lodges. Correlation analysis demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between seasonal fluctuations and staffing strategies ($r = 0.438$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that seasonal variations in tourist demand significantly influence staffing decisions. Regression analysis further confirmed that revenue generation ($\beta = 0.298$) and occupancy rates ($\beta = 0.214$) are important predictors of staffing strategies, highlighting the interconnected nature of financial performance, occupancy levels, and human resource management. The study concluded that seasonality creates staffing challenges that affect employment stability, service quality, and overall human resource management in safari lodges. Respondents strongly agreed that lodges hire more staff during peak seasons, resource allocation changes with seasons, and lodges adjust pricing strategies depending on season. The reliance on temporary and casual workers during peak seasons creates job insecurity for employees, as staff numbers are reduced during off-peak periods, leading to reduced working hours and income instability. These staffing fluctuations can compromise service quality, as temporary or inexperienced staff may be deployed during peak periods, while reduced staffing during low seasons may lead to service gaps. However, proactive human resource management strategies, including flexible staffing arrangements, cross-training, and retention

incentives, helped mitigate the adverse impacts of seasonal fluctuations on employment stability and service quality.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations are proposed to improve on the problem under study. This is done based on the findings and conclusions of this study.

5.3.1 Revenue Generation and Financial Performance

The study advocated for increased investment by policymakers, including the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, the Uganda Tourism Board, and the Uganda Wildlife Authority, in developing strategies to stabilize revenue streams for safari lodges operating in Murchison Falls National Park. It emphasized the need for policies that promote year-round tourism through the diversification of tourism products, such as developing cultural tourism experiences, community-based tourism initiatives, and event-based tourism that can attract visitors during off-peak periods. Additionally, lodge managers and tourism practitioners are encouraged to implement dynamic pricing strategies that optimize revenue during peak seasons while offering competitive packages and incentives during low seasons to attract visitors. The study also highlights the value of partnerships between safari lodges, tour operators, and local communities to develop innovative tourism products that reduce dependence on peak seasons and enhance financial sustainability. Financial planning and risk management strategies, including the establishment of reserve funds during peak seasons to cover operational costs during low seasons, were recommended to improve the financial resilience of safari lodges.

5.3.2 Seasonal Patterns and Occupancy Rates

The study recommended that policymakers develop policies to improve infrastructure accessibility to Murchison Falls National Park during rainy seasons, including road maintenance and improvement programs that ensure all-weather access to tourism destinations. It advised local governments, tourism agencies, and private stakeholders to implement marketing campaigns that promote off-peak tourism, highlighting the unique experiences available during rainy seasons such as bird watching, lush landscapes, and reduced visitor congestion. Additionally, lodge managers

and tourism operators were encouraged to develop flexible booking policies, loyalty programs, and off-peak packages that incentivize visitors to travel during low seasons. The study underscored the importance of strengthening collaboration between safari lodges and tour operators to develop combined tour packages that include accommodation, transportation, and activities, making off-peak travel more attractive and affordable for visitors. Furthermore, investment in alternative tourism activities that are less dependent on weather conditions, such as cultural experiences, community visits, and indoor activities, was recommended to help maintain occupancy rates throughout the year.

5.3.3 Staffing Levels, Employment Stability, and Human Resource Management

The study recommended that policymakers develop and enforce policies that promote employment stability in the tourism sector, including guidelines for fair employment practices, minimum working hours, and social protection measures for seasonal workers. Lodge managers and human resource practitioners were advised to implement strategies to maintain a skilled and motivated workforce despite seasonal fluctuations, including cross-training programs that enable staff to perform multiple roles, retention incentives such as bonuses and benefits for year-round employees, and partnerships with local training institutions to develop a pipeline of qualified tourism professionals. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of investing in employee welfare through training and development programs, career progression opportunities, and competitive compensation packages that encourage staff retention. Lodge managers were encouraged to adopt flexible staffing models that balance operational efficiency with employment stability, such as maintaining a core team of permanent staff supplemented by temporary workers during peak seasons. The study also highlighted the value of implementing effective human resource management practices, including performance management systems, employee engagement initiatives, and clear communication channels, to maintain service quality and employee satisfaction throughout the year.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Despite the successful completion of this study, several limitations may have influenced the findings and should be considered when interpreting the results. The study was conducted within

a limited timeframe, which restricted extensive engagement with a broader range of stakeholders and limited opportunities for follow-up interactions with lodge managers, employees, and tourists. In addition, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may have introduced respondent bias through socially desirable responses or selective disclosure of information, potentially affecting the accuracy of responses related to revenue generation, occupancy rates, and staffing practices. The study was also confined to safari lodges in Murchison Falls National Park, which limited the generalizability of the findings to other safari lodges or tourism destinations in Uganda or the broader East African region with different contextual characteristics, such as varying climatic conditions, tourism infrastructure, and wildlife patterns. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design captured data at a single point in time, making it difficult to assess changes in seasonality patterns, lodge performance, and operational strategies over time. The study also focused primarily on quantitative data collection through questionnaires, which may have limited the depth of insights into the lived experiences of lodge managers and employees in responding to seasonal challenges. Nevertheless, appropriate research procedures were followed to ensure the collection of reliable data and the achievement of the study objectives.

5.5 Areas of Further Research

Future researchers should undertake similar studies in other national parks in Uganda, such as Queen Elizabeth National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, and Kidepo Valley National Park, to explore whether the patterns identified in this study hold true across diverse wildlife tourism contexts with different climatic conditions, wildlife species, and tourism infrastructure. Comparative research across different protected areas is essential to broaden the applicability of findings related to the impact of seasonality on safari lodges and to identify context-specific strategies for managing seasonal fluctuations. Employing longitudinal approaches would also be valuable to track changes over time in seasonal patterns, lodge performance, and operational strategies, offering deeper insight into the lasting impacts of seasonality on tourism enterprises and the effectiveness of mitigation strategies. Additionally, further investigation into the role of emerging technologies such as online booking platforms, digital marketing, data analytics, and revenue management systems would help reveal how innovation enhances lodge managers' ability to forecast demand, optimize pricing, and manage resources more effectively in response to seasonal fluctuations. Research exploring the perceptions and experiences of employees working

in seasonal tourism environments would provide valuable insights into the human dimension of seasonality, including the social and economic impacts of employment instability on workers and their families. Finally, studies examining the effectiveness of specific policy interventions, such as government incentives for off-peak tourism, infrastructure investments, and capacity-building programs, would contribute to evidence-based policymaking aimed at promoting sustainable and resilient tourism development in Uganda's protected areas.

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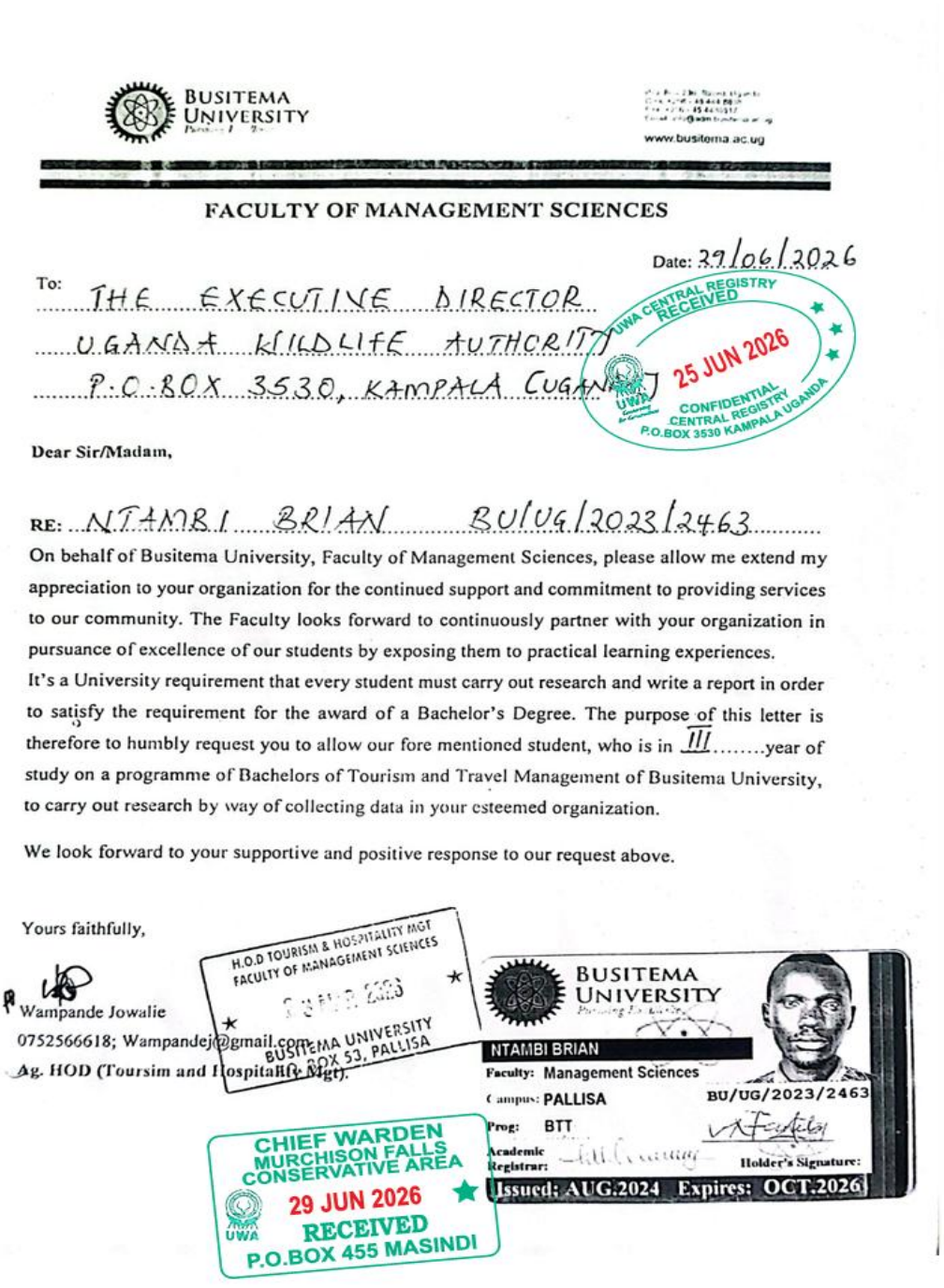
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APPENDICES

Appendix i: Introduction letter



BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY

www.busitema.ac.ug

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Date: 29/06/2026

To: THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY
P.O.BOX 3530, KAMPALA UGANDA

UWA CENTRAL REGISTRY RECEIVED 25 JUN 2026 CONFIDENTIAL CENTRAL REGISTRY P.O.BOX 3530 KAMPALA UGANDA

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: NTAMBI BRIAN BU/UG/2023/2463

On behalf of Busitema University, Faculty of Management Sciences, please allow me extend my appreciation to your organization for the continued support and commitment to providing services to our community. The Faculty looks forward to continuously partner with your organization in pursuance of excellence of our students by exposing them to practical learning experiences.

It's a University requirement that every student must carry out research and write a report in order to satisfy the requirement for the award of a Bachelor's Degree. The purpose of this letter is therefore to humbly request you to allow our fore mentioned student, who is in III .....year of study on a programme of Bachelors of Tourism and Travel Management of Busitema University, to carry out research by way of collecting data in your esteemed organization.

We look forward to your supportive and positive response to our request above.

Yours faithfully,

Wampande Jowalie
0752566618; Wampandej@gmail.com
Ag. HOD (Toursim and Hospitality Mgt).

H.O.D TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MGT FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY P.O.BOX 53, PALLISA

BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY
NTAMBI BRIAN
Faculty: Management Sciences
Campus: PALLISA
BU/UG/2023/2463
Prog: BTT
Academic Registrar:
Holder's Signature:
Issued: AUG.2024 Expires: OCT.2026

CHIEF WARDEN MURCHISON FALLS CONSERVATIVE AREA
29 JUN 2026
RECEIVED
P.O.BOX 455 MASINDI

Appendix ii: Questionnaires

BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY
Pursuing Excellence

P.O. Box 236, Tororo, Uganda
Gen: +256 - 45 444 8838
Fax: +256 - 45 4436517
Email: info@adm.busitema.ac.ug
www.busitema.ac.ug

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

BACHELOR OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Research Questionnaires

Research Titles: *The Impact of Seasonality on Safari Lodges, a case study of Murchison Falls National Park, Masindi District.*

Researcher: Ntambi Brian

Registration Number: BU/UG/2023/2463

Dear Respondent,

I am a student of Busitema University conducting a research study to examin *The Impact of Seasonality on Safari Lodges of Murchison Falls National Park, Masindi District*. Therefore, this questionnaire aims to gather primary data to support the study.

Your participation is highly valued and voluntary. Please take a few minutes to respond truthfully. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes.

Instructions:

- Tick [✓] where appropriate.
- Sections B to E use a 5-point Likert scale:
    - **SA – Strongly Agree**,
    - **A – Agree**,

- **N – Neutral**,
- **D – Disagree**,
- **SD – Strongly Disagree**

SECTION A: RESPONDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. **Gender:**
   ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Age Bracket:**
   ☐ 18–33 ☐ 34–44 ☐ 45–54 ☐ 55 & above
3. **Highest Level of Education:**
   ☐ No Formal Education ☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma
   ☐ Degree ☐ Master's or above
4. **Your Role in/around Murchison Falls National Park:**
   ☐ Tourist ☐ Lodge Employee ☐ Lodge Manager
   ☐ Tour Operator Marketing Staff ☐
5. **Years of Experience/Stay in the Area:**
   ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ Over 5 years

SECTION B: Seasonal Fluctuations In Tourist Arrivals

S/N	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
SF1	Tourist arrivals vary significantly between peak and off-peak seasons					
SF2	Dry seasons attract more tourists compared to rainy seasons					

SF3	Weather conditions influence tourists' decision to visit the park					
SF4	Road accessibility during rainy seasons affects tourist arrivals					
SF5	Holiday periods increase the number of tourists visiting lodges					
SF6	International tourists prefer visiting during peak seasons					
SF7	Domestic tourism helps to increase visitor numbers during off-peak seasons					
SF8	Seasonal changes lead to uneven distribution of tourists throughout the year					

SECTION C: Effect of seasonality on revenue generation

S/N	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
RG1	Revenue increases significantly during peak seasons					
RG2	Lodges experience low income during off-peak seasons					
RG3	Seasonal fluctuations create unstable cash flow for lodges					
RG4	Lodges rely heavily on peak seasons for annual revenue					
RG5	Discounts are offered during low seasons to attract customers					
RG6	Seasonality affects profitability of safari lodges					
RG7	Fixed operational costs remain high despite low revenue in off-season					
RG8	Seasonality affects financial planning in lodges					

SECTION: D: Effect of seasonality on occupancy

S/N	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
OR1	Lodges experience high occupancy during peak seasons					

OR2	Occupancy rates drop significantly during rainy seasons					
OR3	Some lodge rooms remain unused during off-peak periods					
OR4	Seasonal demand influences booking patterns					
OR5	Peak seasons sometimes lead to full bookings					
OR6	Seasonality affects the overall utilization of lodge facilities					
OR7	Accessibility challenges reduce occupancy during rainy seasons					
OR8	Tourist arrival trends directly determine occupancy levels					

SECTION E: Effect of seasonality on staffing and operational strategies

S/N	**Statements**	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
ST1	Lodges hire more staff during peak seasons					
ST2	Staff numbers are reduced during off-peak seasons					
ST3	Seasonality leads to job insecurity among employees					
ST4	Temporary workers are commonly used during peak seasons					
ST5	Employees experience reduced working hours during low seasons					
ST6	Lodges adjust pricing strategies depending on season					
ST7	Lodges implement marketing strategies to attract tourists in low seasons					
ST8	Resource allocation (staff, supplies) changes with seasons					

ST9	Seasonality affects service quality due to staffing changes					
ST10	Management strategies help reduce the negative effects of seasonality					

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me through the details provided by the university.

Appendix iii: Research Work plan

Activity	**JAN**	**FEB**	**MARCH**	**APRIL**	**MAY**	**JUNE**
Research Problem Identification						
Approving the research topic						
Writing the research Proposal						
Approving the Research Proposal						
Collecting data from the field						
Analysis and interpreting data						
Writing final research report						
Submitting final research report						

Appendix iv: Research Budget

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT (shs)
Internet (Data)	-	120,000	120,000
Data collection Assistants	2	20,000	40,000
Typing and editing the report	-	60,000	60,000
Printing and bidding	3 proposal 3 Reports	135,000	135,000
Transport to my case study		80,000	80,000
Meals and accommodation		120,000	120,000
Data analysis and interpretation		80,000	80,000
Total			**635,000shs**

Appendix iv: Krejcie and Morgan sample size table

N	*S*	*N*	*S*	*N*	*S*
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970