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The Role of Marketing in the Development of Domestic Tourism in Uganda: A Case Study of Uganda Wildlife Education Centre

This is a case study on Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC) which possesses the unique attributes of a tourist destination as well as an education facility. Given the impressive rate of growth of the tourism industry worldwide, the need to engage in marketing becomes imperative. This need is emphasised greatly given that the industry avails the consumer, in this case the tourist, an immense variety from which to choose. Notwithstanding tourism's overall impressive growth, and having observed in the past UWECs ability to attract a cross section of Ugandans as well as foreigners, the researcher was prompted to establish why domestic tourism is **not** more prominent in Uganda, more so at UWEC, given the potential that exists today, and what exactly influenced the trends as they are. Specifically, the researcher explored the role played by marketing in attracting and maintaining domestic visitors. The marketing attributes of segmentation, targeting, relationship marketing, planning, positioning, market research, and the services marketing mix were reviewed to show whether indeed there would be a link with the level of appreciation of tourism, and what if any, could be done to spur a culture of tourism amongst ordinary Ugandans. With the urge exhibited by domestic tourists for more attractions, the study revealed that Uganda's endowments were as much an attraction to the indigenous as they were to foreigners, but the approach adopted towards attracting more Ugandans determined UWECs performance as a tourism venue. Furthermore, the findings of the study also confirmed the promise tourism holds for Uganda, as seen from the year-on-year performance of tourism at UWEC, and Uganda in general, if only the domestic market was targeted, given the desire shown by respondents to revisit, or recommend UWEC as a tourism site. Ultimately, it was established that UWEC needs to commission market research consistently to determine changing consumer needs and trends within the tourism industry.

Key words: Marketing, Development, Tourism, Wildlife