

**CONTRIBUTION OF TOUR OPERATORS IN PROMOTING MOUNT  
KILIMANJARO AS ONE OF THE NATURE-BASED TOURIST  
DESTINATIONS IN TANZANIA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS  
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**2015**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that she has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled “*Contribution of Tour Operators in Promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the Nature-Based Tourist Destinations in Tanzania*” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration of the Open University of Tanzania.

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Dr. Hawa Uiso

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Date

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I, **Amani Gibson Shipella** do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and it has not been submitted and will not be presented for a similar or any other degree in any other University.

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Signature

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Date

**DEDICATION**

To my children; Desderata, Renatta and Edgar.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I foremost thank the Almighty God, Jehovah for his love in my life. I secondly thank my wife Daines for her encouragement, moral and material support during my studies.

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May God bless you all.

**ABSTRACT**

Promoting destinations aims to increase awareness of potential target market tourists regarding the possibilities and tourism products found in a particular country. The present study aimed at assessing the contribution of tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania. The area of the study was Mount Kilimanjaro which is among the favourable tourist destinations in Tanzania. The research data collection instruments were administered to a sample of 112 tourists who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. Descriptive statistic analysis were performed using Microsoft Excel 2010. The results showed that 20% of the tourists who climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro got information from tour operators. The research further revealed that the tour operators provide a big support to their clients to ensure that they fulfil their life-time dreams of climbing the highest mountain in Africa. The study recommends that the government should aggressively sensitize tour operators to promoting nature-based tourist destinations in combination to promoting their tour companies.

*Keywords: tour operators, nature-based tourist destinations, promotion, Mount Kilimanjaro.*

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CD-ROM	Compact Disc Read-Only Memory
DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KINAPA	Kilimanjaro National Park
MT	Mount
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
PR	Public Relations
TANAPA	Tanzania National Parks
TATO	Tanzania Association of Tour operators
TCT	Tourism Confederation of Tanzania
TOI	Tour operators Initiative
TTB	Tanzania Tourist Board
UK	United Kingdom
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Research Problem

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (UNWTO, 2011). According to Kuenzi and McNeely (2010), over 800 million people travel internationally each year with many more travelling within their countries of residence that makes up 3-10% of GDP in developed countries and up to 40% in some developing countries. Many of those who travel are mostly attracted with different tourism associated elements including nature-based.

The nature-based element is the fastest growing element of tourism that comprises a number of outdoor activities undertaken by tourists in the natural environment (Christ *et. al.*, 2003). The activities include jet boating, skydiving, mountain climbing, bush walking, wildlife and scenic tourism and boat cruises (ibid). Moreover, national parks and other protected areas are considered as the basic resource for nature-based tourism throughout the world. Likewise, the nature-based tourism and its activities provide foreign exchange and economic reward for the preservation of natural systems and wildlife.

With tourism being increasingly recognized as a key economic opportunity around the world, competition among countries and regions for a share of global tourism

expenditure is increasing by the day (Mulec, 2010). Destinations have to be tailored to consumers' needs and have to show uniqueness in relation to other destinations (UNWTO, 2007). For a destination to be recognized and to attract their rightful share of the global tourism market it is of critical importance for a country to promote its attractions. This implies the development of communicating channels with clientele and other stakeholders to raise awareness and persuade to purchase products (Mulec, 2010). Promoting destinations aims to increase awareness of potential target market tourists regarding the possibilities and tourism products found in a particular country. For Tanzania in particular, promotion also aims to create purchasing desire; increase the incoming information queries from foreign markets regarding Tanzania as a tourism destination and tourism products; inform the target market travel agencies about the possibilities of Tanzania as a tourism destination and tourism products.

In most tourist destinations, the increased number of visitors is always a result of good efforts shown by various stakeholders including tour operators. These tour operators direct and influence the volume of tourism, the tourist destinations and facilities that are used (TOI, 2003a). Tour operators provide customers with pricing information and guidelines on how to avoid negative impacts while visiting sensitive areas, for example by maintaining appropriate distances from wild animals, staying on trails to avoid trampling plants or causing erosion, and keeping water and energy use down to avoid related impacts on the environment (ibid).

According to the International Federation of Tour Operators, the tour operators represent 12% of international arrivals, while in Europe they represent 35% of leisure

air holidays (TOI, 2003). These figures do not take into account packages sold by tour operators, or incoming agents, directly to tourists in destinations. Tour operators are in part responsible for the negative impacts of tourism, as they determine where many tourists go and which facilities they use (ibid). They also act in some ways as a catalyst bringing other tourism sectors together.

Tanzania being a country with many tourist attractions has prioritized conservation by allocating more than 25% of its area of land as protected areas (TCT, 2009). The Tanzania's superb endowment of nature emerges as by far its key competitive strength. The most well-known nature-based tourist attractions are located in Northern part of the country and include Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the 16 National Parks is well-known for its outstanding local, national and regional significance. In terms of tourism-based revenue generation, it is only second after Serengeti National Park contributing about 40.5% of the annual revenue generated by all the 16 National Parks in Tanzania for the financial year 2013/2014. It also attracts substantial employment for an estimated 2,220 mountain guides and 30,000 porters annually, the majority of whom are from the nearby local communities (KINAPA, 2015). The mountain also serves as a regional water catchment and feeds a 107MW capacity hydro-electric plant downstream the Pangani Hydro-System of the Tanzanian National Power Grid. In addition, the lower slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro support diverse livelihoods of one of the most densely human populated areas in the region (KINAPA, 2015).



It is well known that, Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa at 5,895 m above mean sea level and the highest free-standing volcanic mountain in the world. The mountain as one of the famous tourists' destinations in Tanzania has been attracting many visitors from within and outside the country. There has been gradual increase in the number of visitors from year to year. In the financial year 2007/2008 for example, a total of 42,411 tourists visited the park and in 2013/2014 the number increased to 51,287 (KINAPA, 2015).

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Tour operators act as intermediaries between tourists and service providers and they can influence the choices of consumers, the practices of suppliers and the development patterns of destinations (TOI, 2003). This unique role means that tour operators can make an important contribution to furthering the goals of sustainable tourism development and protecting the environmental and cultural resources on which the tourism industry depends for its survival and growth.

During the financial year 2009/10, a total of 44,187 tourists climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and in 2011/12 the number increased to 57,456. The increased number of visitors in Tanzania specifically to Mount Kilimanjaro has been a result of good efforts shown by different stakeholders including tour operators. Despite of the combined efforts made by different stakeholders in promoting nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania, and more specifically Mount Kilimanjaro, the role of tour operators is not well known by the majority of people. This study aimed at filling this gap of knowledge.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to assess the contribution of tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

Specifically, the study aimed;-

- (i) To assess the role of tour operators in providing information to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.
- (ii) To discuss the role of tour operators in providing services to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.
- (iii) To identify the challenges faced by tour operators in promoting nature-based tourism.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following questions were used in relation to the specific objectives;-

- (i) What are the roles played by tour operators in providing information to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?
- (ii) What are the roles played by tour operators in providing services to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?
- (iii) What are the challenges faced by tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations?.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study assessed the contribution of tour operators in promoting nature-based tourism destinations in Tanzania. Results from the study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge towards enhancing understanding on the tour operators contribution in promoting nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania. The results will contribute to the efforts of promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania. The study will also contribute towards informing policy-makers in acknowledging the contribution of tour operators in promoting nature-based tourism destinations in Tanzania.

Tanzania National Parks and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in general will also benefit through the provision of strategies for collaborating with tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the important tourist destinations in Tanzania.

Lastly, the dissertation is the pre-requisite for accomplishment of the Master of Business Administration program.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Definitions of Basic Concepts

##### 2.1.1 Tourism

The definition of tourism varies source by source, person by person. There is no consensus concerning the definition of tourism. Nearly each institution defines tourism differently. But when it comes to explain it with basic terms, the UNWTO (2011) definition can be adopted; ‘tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes’. Tourist destinations on the other hand, are places with tourists’ attractions (ibid). Attraction can be manmade, natural, or cultural. The attraction and the benefit it offers are sometimes the reasons for visiting a destination (Esu, 2010).

Tourism is different from travel. In order for tourism to happen, there must be a displacement; an individual has to travel, using any type of means of transportation (he might even travel on foot, and concerns pilgrims, hikers etc).

Three criteria are used to characterize a trip as belonging to tourism (ibid). The displacement must be such that; it involves a displacement outside the usual environment; type of purpose: the travel must occur for any purpose different from being remunerated from within the place visited; and duration: only a maximal duration is mentioned, not a minimal. Tourism displacement can be with or without an overnight stay.

### **2.1.2 Nature-based Tourism**

Nature-based tourism denotes all tourism directly dependent on the use of natural resources, even if the use is not a wise or sustainable one (Jascha and Steven, 2011). It is characterized by the demand for nature-oriented activities in attractive, natural and preferably unspoiled areas. The activity spectrum ranges from trekking, wildlife watching and nature photography through consumptive resource uses (e.g., fishing and hunting) to sport and adventure tourism (Kuenzi and McNeely, 2010). In its broadest sense, nature in tourism involves experiencing natural places, typically through outdoor activities that are sustainable in terms of their impact on the environment. Nature-based tourism (sometimes simply called nature tourism) is dependent on the natural attractions offered by an area. In summary, nature-based tourism is a segment in the tourism market in which people travel with the primary purpose of visiting a natural destination (Jascha and Steven, 2011).

## **2.2 Theoretical Literature Review**

### **2.2.1 Tour Operators' Roles and Activities on Tourism Business**

Tour operators are businesses that combine two or more travel services (e.g. transport, accommodation, catering, entertainment, and sightseeing) and sell them through travel agencies or directly to final consumers as a single product (Devaraja and Deepak, 2014). As a service provider, tour operator plays a vital and intermediate role between tourism service providers and tourists. Another role is to preserve the environment in their destinations and to establish good relationships with local communities, to improve the quality of their tourism products and increase customer satisfaction (TOI, 2003a). More

and more researches show that customers respond positively to actions taken by tour operators to improve the sustainability of their businesses.

For example, in Morocco, due to influence of tour operators, the quality of food and service is enhanced. At the supplier level, hotels and restaurants are helped to adhere to international standards of quality (TOI, 2003b). At the official and legal level, the programme is helping Morocco build generalized rules and update national regulations to comply with international hygiene standards. Some tour operators in Morocco have also developed a Mountain and Desert Guide's Charter for its guides. This is used as a means to build awareness on their roles as liaisons to travelers on; environmental problems; economic impacts of groups in a given area; financial resources generated by tourism and their role in preserving local species and heritage; local social and economic development; and appropriate and sustainable environmental and social practices (ibid).

In Finland, tour operators' association monitor feedback from hotel customers through questionnaires and via the feedback mailing option at the company websites. If there is negative feedback from customers or if issues that compromise the criteria set arise, a hotel may have its environmental classification downgraded. In Germany, tour operators provide training on good environmental practices to heads of tourists' destinations and tourism guides. In Scandinavian countries, some tour operators have listed environmental actions that hotels are encouraged to adopt voluntarily. Once a hotel decides to implement the programme, a one-day training session is held with key personnel (maids, maintenance workers, hotel management etc).

Tour operators believe that they can contribute to the sustainable development of tourism in protected areas (Esu, 2010). This can be done in many different ways, such as including protected areas in their itineraries and giving customers information about the natural and cultural features of visited sites and their roles in the conservation of local ecosystems. Tour operators also limit the size of visitors groups or dividing large groups into small ones when visiting protected areas. It is the tour operators who inform protected area managers of tourist visits ahead of time and discussing ways to reduce visitor impacts; and they also make financial contributions to conservation and development projects (UNEP, 2005). Tour operators also provide customers with guidelines on how to avoid negative impacts while visiting sensitive areas, for example by maintaining appropriate distances from wild animals, staying on trails to avoid trampling plants or causing erosion and keeping water and energy use down to avoid related impacts on the environment.

Some of the tour operators' roles and responsibilities are as follows;-

### **2.2.2 Planning and Arranging a Tourism**

A tour operator plans each leg of the tourism for their clients, taking care of the requirements of the clients like their place of interest, mode of transport preferred, period of stay, budget allocated, and other activities to be performed at the location. Each client has a different requirement with respect to travelling, stay, local tourism, etc (Evans *et. al.*, 2003). The job of a tour operator is to provide customized services as per the requirements of each client.

Once the tour operator has planned the trip according to the requirements of the client, it is the responsibility of the travel guide to arrange the tourism as planned. A good tour operator shall make sure that the client does not face any difficulties in the tourism and it goes as smoothly as possible (Wong and Lee, 2011). Providing quality service not only enhances the goodwill in the market, but also brings in more revenue in the form of repeat orders and referrals.

### **2.2.3 Evaluation on the Options Available and Advice on Sightseeing**

It is the job of the tour operator to identify and evaluate various options available for travelling, accommodation, etc. He/she must identify new hotels, motels, tourist spots, etc to offer better services to the clients. If necessary, the tour operator might visit the location and access whether the services offered are worth the money they charge or not (Evans *et. al.*, 2003). A tour operator gives bulk orders and earns a margin by distributing the bulk into small chunks. For example, they may tie up with a hotel chain at lower prices by offering them repeat customers. This will be a win-win situation for both the hotel chain and the tour operator as both the parties will be earning through this deal(Wong and Lee, 2011).

A tour operator can also provide advice on sightseeing to the client as it adds to the revenue of the tour operator it (Saffery *et. al.*, 2007). self . Travel management is also the job of a tour operator. A good travel guide makes sure that the travel of the client is managed effectively so that the client is satisfied with the smooth tourism services.



#### **2.2.4 Promotion, Sales and Marketing**

Promotion of the services offered by a tour operator is another important aspect of their responsibilities. No tour operator will be successful in generating returns unless the potential customers are made aware of the services offered (Saffery *et. al.*, 2007). It is in the interest of the tour operator to promote the services offered. Promotion can be done through creation of a website, listing on online directories, placing an advertisement on online sites, distributing brochures, placing an advertisement in newspapers or magazines, etc.

The tour operator is responsible for convincing the client that they are offering the best deals in the industry at affordable prices. Not only this, they are involved in the enhancement of business through repeats and referrals by providing quality service as committed to the clients (Devaraja, Deepak, 2014).

#### **2.2.5 Taking care of anomalies**

The first job of a tour operator is to avoid any anomalies in the services offered. However, if because of certain unavoidable circumstances, any of the clients faces a difficult situation, the job of a tour operator is to handle the situation in such a manner that the goodwill of the services offered is maintained (Kozak and Baloglu, 2011). The tour operator should tactfully handle the situation so that no wrong feelings about the services are spread.

Generally, a tour operator shall be good at communication and convincing to be able to do his/her job effectively (Buhalis, 2000). Apart from providing quality services, a tour

operator also takes regular feedbacks from the customers and take necessary actions if the services are not offered as per expectations of the customers.

### **2.2.6 Promotional Strategies of a Product**

Promotion refers to raising customer awareness of a product or brand, generating sales and creating brand loyalty. It is the entire set of activities, which communicate the product, brand or service to the user. Promotion also refers to communicative activity of marketing. It fills the perceptual and informational gaps that exist between suppliers of tourism (industry) and the tourists (market). Promotion involves the creation and dissimulation of information that the tourist need to take a purchase and consumption decision (Esu, 2010). Promotional activities must be consistent with the needs of the tourists and integrated with the other elements of the marketing mix. Information is used to position, market and sell destinations (ibid). The promotional strategies will serve as connect between the customers and the experience they are seeking. Since tourists have expectations, it has become necessary that these requirements form the bases of the promotional strategies of tourism destination. Promotion is one of the four basic elements of the market mix, which includes the four P's: Product, Price, Promotion and Place.

Fundamentally, there are three basic objectives of promotion including;- to present information to consumers and others, to increase demand and to differentiate a product (Dieudonné, 2012).

The purpose of a promotion and thus its promotional plan can have a wide range, including: sales increases, new product acceptance, creation of brand equity, positioning, competitive retaliations or creation of a corporate image.

There have been different ways to promote a product in person or with different media. According to Lent (2011), both person and media can be physically real or virtual /electronic. In a physical environment, promoters have used newspapers, special events, or endorsements. Promotions can be held in physical environments at special events such as concerts, festivals, trade shows, and in the field, such as in grocery or department stores (Esu, 2010). Interactions in the field allow immediate purchases. The purchase of a product can be incentive with discounts (i.e. coupons), free items, or a contest. This method is used to increase the sales of a given product. Person-to-person interaction, as opposed to media-to-person involvement, establishes connections that add another dimension to promotion. Building a community through promoting goods and services can lead to brand loyalty.

Promotion can also be done by different media, namely print media which includes newspaper and magazines, electronic media which includes radio and television, digital media which includes internet, social networking and social media sites and lastly outdoor media which includes banner ads, and out of home (Mulec, 2010). Digital media is a modern way of brands interacting with consumers as it releases news, information and advertising from the technological limits of print and broadcast infrastructures. The goal of a promotion is then to reach the most people possible in a time efficient and a cost efficient manner.

Promoting a tourist destination is the process (set of means and actions) designed to inform potential visitors about the tourism product offered, sharing with them its most attractive and innovative attributes (Dieudonné, 2012). As such it is usually integrated with distribution and implies communication activities, including advertising. Literature show that the mechanism called “word of mouth” remains the main method of promotion.

Destination promotional function is primarily the responsibility of the Destination Marketing Organizations. These are organizations that have been established to promote specific destinations to potential travelers (Esu, 2010). Tourist Boards may be regarded as marketed, agencies. Their role is to promote places. That is, attract visitors to destinations in these areas (ibid). Destination marketing is a collective effort that requires various organizations and businesses in a geographically limited area to harmoniously work together to achieve a common goal (Gransjo, 2003).

Specifically, Destination Marketing Organizatrions aim at generating tourist visitations for a given destination at a given period, provide information to visitors and they are responsible for developing a unique image of the destination.

### **2.2.7 Economic and Biological Aspects of Nature-Based Tourism**

The economic potential of nature-based tourism may be extremely high. It is therefore often referred to as an example of 'low volume high value' tourism. This high value aspect can be seen in the kinds of costs usually associated with specialist nature tourisms (Jascha and Steven, 2011). For example a 6 mountain-climbing trip in some

developing countries might cost around \$700 per person. Nature-based tourism should help to conserve nature and thereby contribute to the sustainability of Tourism reliant on natural resources.

Also according to UNWTO (2005), tourism accounts for as much as 11% of global GDP, offers jobs to 200 million people, and includes more than 800 million international travelers per year. Those figures are projected to nearly double by 2020. Tourism makes up 3-10% of GDP in developed countries and up to 40% in some developing countries.

For 83% of countries, tourism is amongst the top five shares of exported goods and services; for 38% of countries it is the primary source of foreign currency.

While, over the past 40 years, the world's population has doubled, legally protected areas have tripled, now totaling well over 100,000 sites and covering about 12% of the Earth's land surface. Over the past two decades, both nature and adventure tourism have developed to be part of the fastest-growing segments within the tourism industry. With an annual growth rate of 10-30%, nature-based tourism seems to be the fastest growing tourism sector. Its share in the world travel market is currently about 20%. Within the same territory, employment related to recreational activities can exceed employment related to resource exploitation by more than five times (Chris et. al., 2003). 1.4% of the Earth's land surface accommodates 44% of all endemic plants as well as 35% of all endemic mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. 40% of the global economy is estimated to be rooted in biological products and processes, demonstrating that biodiversity matters.

### **2.2.8 Tourist Attractions in Tanzania**

Tanzania is a country with many tourist attractions. The Tanzania's superb endowment of nature emerges as by far its key competitive strength. The country has prioritized conservation by allocating more than 25% of its area of land as protected areas. Wildlife, diving, beaches and trekking can give the destination competitive advantage (TCT, 2009). Tanzania's most well-known tourist attractions are located in Northern part of the country and include Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain. Serengeti National Park is world famous and has spectacular seasonal migrations of animals. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area is an extinct volcanic caldera with excellent game viewing from the crater rim (URT, 2001). The area has large herds of wildebeest, zebra, lions and endangered rhinoceros.

Tourism is also focused on the coast, especially the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia. Game fishing and diving are the main attractions in these islands.

World Economic Forum ranks Tanzania among the top in the world with regard to richness in natural resources and its potential to attract tourists (URT, 2002). The ongoing protection of many of the world's protected areas and their natural resources depend on the well-being of the tourism industry.

### **2.2.9 National Tourism Policy; Marketing Strategy**

Tanzania has its National Tourism Policy (1999) with different tourism-related objectives and strategies. Traditionally, tourism in Tanzania has been dependent on the natural tourist attractions and the environment. These attractions include, among others,

areas of great biodiversity like the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and the Usambara Mountains (URT, 2001). Others are national parks and game reserves such as Serengeti and Selous respectively. Other sites of great natural beauty include Mount Kilimanjaro, the beaches and marine resources. The continued existence of these attractions and therefore the tourist industry depends on proper conservation and sustainable management of the environment (URT, 1999).

The policy has set aside various objectives and strategies for tourism development of Tanzania. Among the strategies are those concerned with marketing of the tourists attractions. The aim of marketing is to promote the image of Tanzania's quality resorts and diverse tourist attractions and its position as a leading destination for nature-based tourism (URT, 1999). The strategies include;- supporting the promotional activities of operations in the tourist industry such as tour operators and travel agents (ibid).

Another policy strategy is to prepare and disseminate marketing and promotional materials on issues such as tourist attractions including wildlife, mountains, beaches, improving and extending tourist information services within and outside Tanzania and providing free tourist information (ibid).

#### **2.2.10 Promotion of Tourism Development in Tanzania**

In Tanzania the technical body for promotion of tourism development is Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB). According to the TTB Act (1992), the Board has the following main functions;- promoting Tanzania's potential abroad and within the country, conducting publicity campaigns (advertising, public relations road shows) within the

objective of attracting more tourists. Other functions include;- preparing and publishing the destination brochures and other promotional literature; providing information to tourists; and to undertake market research to establish up-to-date tourism database.

Despite that legal mandate vested to TTB, other organizations and individual people have been promoting Tanzania as a destination to the inside and outside world. Those include Tanzania National Parks through its Marketing Directorate; Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority; and Tour operators. Their combined efforts have been positive to the country due to the fact that, the tourists' numbers have been increasing with years.

The average annual growth rate of tourist arrivals over the period 2000-2006 in Tanzania was 4.3%. At the same time as it is clear that Tanzania's economy relies heavily on tourism, and therefore an increase in tourist arrivals will almost certainly boost the economy accordingly (TATO, 2010).

Currently, tourism industry contributes more than 17% of Gross Domestic Product and 25% of the revenue generated by total exports. Tourism was a leading in number of investment projects (209 projects in 2012) and also it contributed more than 11% of the total employment in 2013.

On Mount Kilimanjaro, the number of tourists has been increasing significantly since 2004/05 to 2013/14 as shown in Table 2.1 below. The mountain also attracts substantial employment for an estimated 2,220 mountain guides and 30,000 porters annually. Majority of those guides and porters originate from the neighboring local communities (KINAPA, 2015).



**Table 2.1 : Number of tourists visited Mount Kilimanjaro, 2004/05-2013/14**

Financial Year	Number of Tourists
2004/05	37,029
2005/06	41,656
2006/07	40,701
2007/08	42,411
2008/09	40,709
2009/10	44,187
2010/11	52,696
2011/12	57,456
2012/13	55,553
2013/14	51,287

Source: KINAPA, (2015)

### 2.3 Empirical Literature Review

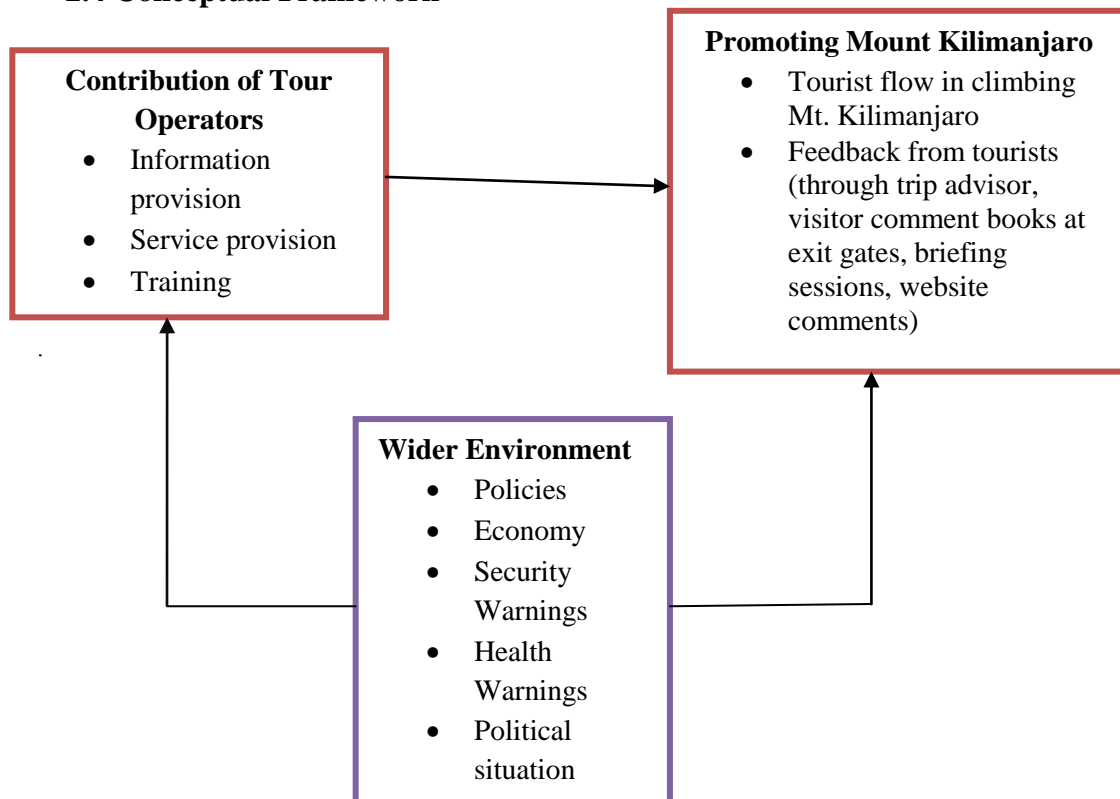
Tour operators play an important role in promoting the country as a tourist destination (Devaraja and Deepak, 2014). A tour operator is a crucial link in the distribution chain, representing the central connection between customers and providers of tourism services, and thus has the power to influence both the demand and the supply side. Andriotis (2003) in his paper titled ‘Dependency on Tour Operators’ pointed out that tour operators have a role of packaging, pricing, marketing and promoting inclusive foreign holidays, and they offer them to the customer through a travel agent or retailer. More specifically tour operating combines aircraft seats, beds in hotels (or other forms of accommodation), and other services and activities.

In addition, tour operators play critical function in destination marketing by providing information to potential travelers and developing and promoting destination packages

(Baloglu and Mangalolu, 2001). Tour operators are also referred to as image creators, since they represent a primary source of information contributing to the image formation that the travelers base their decision upon (Andriotis, 2003). According to Ciuchete (2013), tour operators represent a crucial link in the tourism industry as they influence a destination image and lead international tourist flows to certain destinations.

A tour operator is responsible for taking care of all the necessary activities in organizing a trip so that the overall plan of the client goes smooth and pleasant from the beginning till the end (Evans *et al.*, 2003). A tour operator may travel to the trip location to experience the potential of the services offered and assess its potential in general.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 2.1 : A conceptual framework**

Source: Researcher, 2015

From Figure 2.1, the dependent variable is 'promoting Mount Kilimanjaro' while independent variable is 'contribution of tour operators'. The variable 'promoting Mount Kilimanjaro' was measured from; tourist flow climbing the mountain and feedback from tourists, whereas the variable 'contribution of tour operators' was measured from; information provision to tourists, service provided to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and training provided to tour guides by the tour operators.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined as "the development of knowledge and the nature of knowledge" (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). It is precisely the exact thing every researcher is doing when he or she is conducting a research and that is the will to develop knowledge in a particular field. According to Crossan (2003), there are several reasons on why researchers needs to understand philosophical issues before embarking themselves in a particular field. Easterby-Smith *et al.*, (2002), identifies three reasons on why there is significance on understanding philosophies in reference to research methodology. The first reason the author points out is that by understanding research philosophy the researcher may refine and clarify the research method to be used in their study and consequently help the researcher to gather their evidence and to answer their research questions. Secondly, the knowledge of research philosophy will enable to assist the researchers with different types of methodologies and as such avoiding inappropriate and unrelated works. Lastly, by understanding the basic meaning of research philosophy and understanding its advantages and benefits, it helps the researcher to be more creative and exploratory in their method of research.

In addition, Saunders *et al.*, (2009) also pointed out that the levels of research methods a researcher should adopt will contain his or her views about the world. Furthermore, these views and assumptions will greatly affect the research strategy and methodology a researcher chooses as part of its approach. The views will support the researcher's

judgement on which research method the researcher should choose as a part of its strategy (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

In the social science world there are two standpoints; positivism and the non-positivism/interpretativism (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). If a researcher reflects the philosophy or the views of positivism, then most probably the researcher will take on the philosophical instance of natural scientist. Positivism relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist. This involves working with an observable social reality and the end product can be law-like generalisations similar to those in the physical and natural sciences (ibid). Interpretivism on the other hand, strongly believes that it is imperative for a researcher to understand the factors and "differences between humans in our role as social actors" (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

In social science, it is argued that positivism is most probably the most important attempt in order to have 'authoritative knowledge' (Smith, 1998). The author also added that the positive approach to social sciences is more of a scientific method because a researcher with positivism philosophy will always assume that everything and every phenomenon can be studied as hard facts and as such establish scientific laws.

### **3.2 Study Area**

This study was conducted at Mount Kilimanjaro between June and September, 2015. It is the Africa's highest mountain at 5,895 m or 19,340 feet above the mean sea level (KINAPA, 2015) and is also the highest free-standing volcanic mountain in the world. In addition, Mount Kilimanjaro is the UNESCO's World Heritage Site since 1987 and it

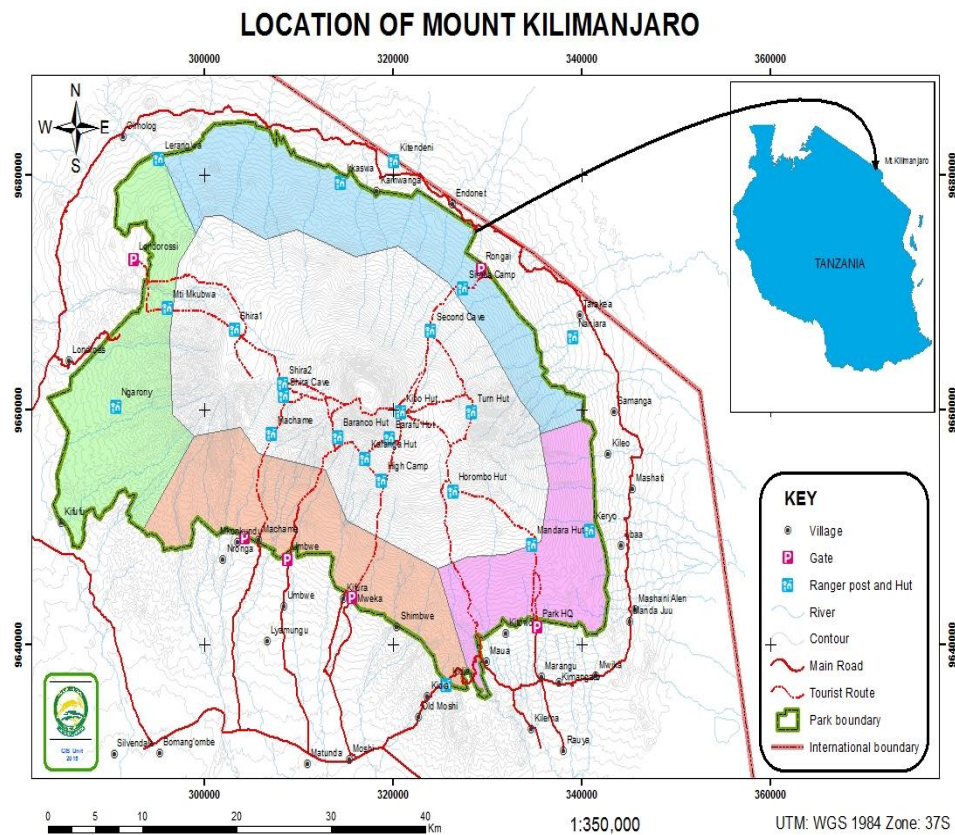
recently attained another International status in 2013 and became one of the Africa's seven Natural Wonders.

The reasons for selecting Mount Kilimanjaro is due to its unique features already explained. In addition, Mount Kilimanjaro is one of the nature-based tourists' destinations which is a good source of revenue to the government.

The mountain also serves as a regional water catchment and feeds a 107MW capacity hydro-electric plant downstream the Pangani Hydro-System of the Tanzanian National Power Grid. Further, the lower slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro support diverse livelihoods of one of the densest human populated areas in the region (KINAPA, 2015).

Mount Kilimanjaro has a number of attractions including; the three peaks-Kibo, Mawenzi and Shira at 5,895m a.m.s.l, 5,149m a.m.s.l and 3,962 m a.m.s.l respectively. The montane forest is another attraction with a number of biological diversity in it. These include birds, plants and animals some of which are endemic to the mountain. Kifinika cultural site, Maundi crater and Lake Challa are other important attractions to provide for the visitors' satisfaction while on Mount Kilimanjaro.

Those attractions are the reasons to having a number of tourists' activities on the mountain. The main activity being mountain climbing, others are; visit to the waterfalls (Marangu, and Lauwo), walking on nature trails, visiting the Shira Plateau, watching wildlife including high altitude birds, visiting Maundi crater and Kifinika cultural site.



**Figure 3.2 : Location of Mount Kilimanjaro**

### 3.3 Research Design and Sampling Procedures

Research design is a framework or blueprint for conducting the marketing research project (Kothari , 2004). It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the required information. According to Saunders *et. al.*, (2003), a research design is a master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information. It is a strategy specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analysing the data. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design using Mount Kilimanjaro as a case study.

The respondents included tourists who were descending the mountain, tour operators, porters and government officers. In order to get the sample population of respondents,

random sampling was employed. So, among those tourists and guides who were descending, few were randomly selected to represent others at the exit gates.

From a list of tour operators who had registered to conduct tourism business on the mountain this year, a few were randomly selected and involved in a research as respondents.

### **3.4 Research Methods**

This study was based on field research in order to collect data from tourists and other important stakeholders in tourism of Mount Kilimanjaro. The primary data were collected with the aim of obtaining more accurate information about the research topic (Bernard, 2011). The data collected were in the form of; various sources of information to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, services provided to tourists by tour operators and challenges faced by tour operators in promoting nature-based tourism destinations. They are original in nature and are always collected specifically for the purpose in mind. The data are useful for the current study as well as for future studies. Despite those advantages, primary data are expensive to collect and they are time-consuming. Field data were gathered through unstructured and structured interviews, and interview guide questionnaires.

Secondary data are advantageous in a sense that they are relatively inexpensive and the time economies in collecting. Secondary data are also easily accessible, the researcher's need is simply to search through online sources or library and locate the appropriate source, record the information obtained and analyze it (Bryman, 2008). This data



therefore, may be quicker to carry out. The secondary data collected during research include the number of visitors who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro since 2004/05 to 2013/14 and number of tourists who were provided with accommodation by some tour operators during September, 2015.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in order to collect primary data from the study area. Qualitative methods seek to find out more details concerning research topic from different stakeholders (Bernard, 2011). The method is flexible and systematic and allows researchers to ask more questions according to participants' explanations (ibid). This method involved unstructured interviews methods. Quantitative methods include numerical data and close-ended format questions. Instruments applied are inflexible and highly structured which include interview guide questionnaires (Creswell, 2008).

Information collected through both qualitative and quantitative methods aimed at answering the following specific research questions:-

- (i) What are the roles played by tour operators in providing information to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?
- (ii) What are the roles played by tour operators in providing services to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?
- (iii) What are the challenges faced by tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are employed in order to collect quantitative data from the study area and other relevant stakeholders (Creswell, 2008). The interview involved 112 respondents who are tourists aged between 16 and above. These were the tourists descending Mount Kilimanjaro. All were interviewed at exit gates.

The process of filling questionnaires was done by tourists at exit gates. The questionnaires are important as they provided quantitative information to supplement the qualitative data (Creswell, 2008). When also compared to qualitative data, questionnaires are easily analyzed by using statistical methods (ibid). However, the questionnaire method limits the opportunity of participants to provide additional or new relevant information beyond that asked (Bernard, 2011).

### **3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews included individuals with relatively different perspectives in order to represent the other stakeholders. The interview was unstructured (informal) to allow a researcher to explore more information from respondents (Bernard, 2011). The researcher used a checklist to facilitate the conversation while taking some notes. Unstructured interview participants included members of Tanzania Association of Tour Operators, guides and officers from Tourism Division (of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism).

Key informants provided new ideas and issues related to the main objective of the study that had not been anticipated before conducting the research. Informants were assured

that their names would not be recorded anywhere so that they could provide more information pertaining to the topic. Information obtained from key informant interviews were triangulated with other data from different interview guide questionnaire.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation**

The collected data were analysed and summarized using Tables and columns. Qualitative data from key informant interviews were first organized and transcribed into Microsoft Word 2010. Data were then compiled into Microsoft Word 2010 and printed out for textual analysis. Ms Excel was used to code data to enable cross tabulations, and allow calculation of frequencies. Much of the qualitative data was analyzed manually and used with quantitative data to triangulate and enrich analysis in the study.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity**

The reliability of the study refers to the repeatability of findings and the way that the study gives relevant results (Golafshani, 2003). Thus, if two or more evaluators end up in the same conclusions, the results are considered to be reliable.

The reliability of this study might change in a period of time (Winter, 2000). This is due to the fact that the variables of research are being influenced by the internal and external environment such as change in government policies and promotion strategies. Thus, the changes in those factors might lead to changes in tourism business operations and the results provided by the respondents.

On the other hand, the research validity refers to the degree to which a research study measures what it intends to measure (Winter, 2000). Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the the research results are (Golafshani, 2003).

To test the validity of the research instruments, the questionnaires were pre-tested. This was done on a small sample of respondents from the target population.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Basic Profile of Respondents

During data collection, the questionnaires were randomly distributed to 112 respondents who were tourists descending Mount Kilimanjaro. During analysis it was revealed that about 58.93% of them were males and the remaining 41.07% were females (Table 4.1). The age structure of the population sample ranged from 16 years and above. Majority of the population aged 41 years and above and this was accounted for 25.89% of the respondents. With regard to age range, the intention was to interview tourists who are considered adults as per Kilimanjaro National Park visitors' age categories. According to the park's category, a tourist is considered adult starting from 16 years of age. The Mountains National Parks Regulations (2003) stipulates that children under 10 years old are not allowed to climb beyond 3,700 metres. Therefore, results from Table 4.1 means that, all of the interviewed tourists were those who are allowed by law to climb the mountain to its peak.

**Table 4.1 : Number of respondents by gender and age groups**

Gender	Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents by Age groups (years)					
		16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	Above 41
Female	46	3	12	10	6	5	10
Male	66	2	16	15	3	11	19
Total	112	5	28	25	9	16	29

Source: Research data, 2015

Most of the visitors during the time of data collection were from USA and UK (Table. 4.2). These two countries comprised of about 36.6% in total, which is inline with the current statistics available at the park office which show that these two countries lead for number of Mount Kilimanjaro climbers. Other countries with large number of visitors were Denmark and France, where about 25.0% of the interviewed respondents were from these two countries. This generally indicates that Europe and America have a big number of visitors who climb Mount Kilimanjaro annually.

Before people are able to experience tourism, they need to have money to spend on non-essentials, that is 'disposable income'. Therefore, from Table 4.2 it can be assumed that many Europeans and Americans have huge disposable income as compared to the rest parts of the world. This is generally inline with the current statistics on average monthly personal disposable income where Denmark, USA and UK are among the top 6 countries in the world (George, 2015). A higher disposable income gives more buying power to the consumer. Another assumption could be English which is the official language in central and northern America thus the tourists do not face language barriers in Tanzania as Kiswahili and English are the official languages (URT, 2001).

**Table 4.2 : Countries of residency by percentage**

<b>Country of Residency</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Australia	3.57%
Canada	3.57%
China	3.57%
Denmark	12.5%
France	12.5%
Germany	6.25%
India	1.79%
Indonesia	0.89%
Japan	0.89%
Netherlands	4.46%
Norway	5.36%
South Africa	3.57%
Sweden	0.89%
Switzerland	2.68%
Taiwan	0.89%
UK	13.39%
USA	23.21%
Total	100.00

Source: Research data, 2015

#### **4.2 Findings for objective one: The role of tour operators in providing information to tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro**

Basing on literature consulted, the law prohibits non-citizen to be issued with mountain climbing licenses. Therefore, mountain climbing tour operators must be 100% owned by Tanzanians (URT, 200b). This means that all the trips for climbing Mount Kilimanjaro have to be organized by tour operators who are Tanzanians. These operators have

several obligations to the tourists in order to make tourists' dreams true. From the study, it was observed that about 45.33% of the respondents got information about Mount Kilimanjaro through Internet, documentaries and guide books while none of them got information from international trade fairs (Table 4.3). About 29.33% of the respondents said they were informed of Mount Kilimanjaro from their friends who either had already climbed the mountain or just had essential information about it. This may be interpreted that, a word of mouth is one of the important ways to spread information on nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania. This is inline with Esu (2010) in his paper titled 'Promoting and Emerging Tourist Destination' that a word of mouth remains the main method of promotion. This indirect promotional channel can also be called the person-to-person channel, which is between the person and his/her friends, relatives and colleagues.

A word-of-mouth is ranked one of the most important information source when a consumer is making a purchase decision (Litvin *et. al.*, 2008). These influences are especially important in the hospitality and tourism industry, whose intangible products are difficult to evaluate prior to their consumption (ibid).

Although, the destination has little or no direct control over what is being said about it among the public, but information spreads very quickly to the prospective destination visitors. The only thing destinations can do is to try their best to provide their customers with excellent service and hope that they will be mentioned and also spoken of kindly. However, the promotion generated through this channel can be both positive and negative.



**Table 4.3 : Visitors' source of information on Mount Kilimanjaro**

<b>Tourism stakeholder</b>	<b>Information provision to tourists</b>
Foreign tour agents	25.33%
Tanzania National Parks website	20.00%
Tanzania tour operators	20.00%
Tanzania Tourist Board website	2.67%
Friends or colleagues	29.33%
Internet, documentaries and guide books	45.33%
International trade fairs	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>142.66%</b>

Source: Research data, 2015

From Table 4.3, it can be seen that, influence from friends and colleagues (word of mouth), were about 11 times more important as a factor influencing the respondent's decision, than information from TTB website. Likewise, the influence of tour operators were about 20%, equivalent to that from Tanzania National Parks' website. This gives an indication of the importance of tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro to the outside world. The tour operators are good supplements to the technically responsible body in promoting all aspects of tourism industry, the Tanzania Tourist Board (URT, 1992). Basing on the sample selected, the researcher observed that there was no respondents who got information by participating in international trade fairs.

It should be noted from Table 4.3 that the cumulative percentage is more than 100% since respondents were allowed to mention more than one influence.

Tour operators use various means of communication to provide information to their prospective tourists. This includes; website, attending international and local trade fairs,

social media and guide book directories. Table 4.4 below show some tour operators and means of communication they use for displaying information to clients.

**Table 4.4 : Means of communication used by tour operators**

Tour operator's name	Means of communication used			
	Website	Inter. Trade fairs	Social media	Guide book directories
East Africa Voyages Ltd	√	√	√	√
African Environments Ltd	√	√	√	√
Kessy Brothers Tours and Travel	√	×	√	√
Zara Tanzania Adventures	√	√	√	√
Popote Africa Tours	√	×	√	×
African Spoonbill Tours and Safaris	√	√	√	√
Nyange Adventure Tours Ltd	√	×	√	×
Evans Adventures Tours Ltd	√	×	√	×
Kili Boys Tours Ltd	√	×	√	√
Sed Adventure Tours and Safaris	√	×	√	×
Mar Tours and Safaris	√	×	√	×
Marangu Colobus Tours and Safaris Ltd	√	×	√	×

Source: Research data

From Table 4.4, it can be seen that all the tour operators use websites and social media to display information on tourists' attractions in Tanzania including Mount Kilimanjaro. Very few tour operators attend international trade fairs due to limitation of resources. Only companies with huge financial muscles and human resources attend those trade fairs outside the country. It is where they meet directly with prospective tourists or tour

agents and make their company known to them together with the destinations of their choice in Tanzania including Mount Kilimanjaro.

#### **4.3 Findings for Objective two: the role of Tour Operators in Providing Services to Tourists Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro**

Findings revealed that the majority of tourists received help from tour operators in planning for their trips and in getting the basic requirements for mountain climbing (Table 4.5). The services included accommodation, food, water and other logistics from collecting them from Airport, arranging for the hotels in town to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This result is similar to what was observed by Evans and his colleagues (2003) who pointed out that a tour operator plans each leg of the tourism for their clients including all the activities to be performed at the destination.

A few tourists indicated that they got advise on good route when climbing Mount Kilimanjaro together with guiding services. The guides explained to them about natural features of the mountain, and how important will their climb be in conservation of local ecosystems of the mountain. They generally said, tour operators were their teachers, leaders, friends and part of their family. This is inline with what was observed by Andriotis (2003) that tour operators are primary source of information to the prospective tourists.

It should be noted that, revenue collected from tourism business is what supports conservation activities in national parks of Tanzania. Therefore, sustainability of

tourism industry will also mean sustainability of the parks and conservation activities in general.

**Table 4.5 : Service provided by tour operators to their clients**

<b>Service provided to tourists</b>	<b>Tourists provided</b>
Planning the climb	78.4%
Transport	100.0%
Accommodation	47.32%
Logistics	36.6%
Guiding	21.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>283.92%</b>

Source: Research Data, 2015

Some tour operators have own hotels where their tourists get accommodation before and after the climb. Those tour operators which don't have hotels have to rent from hotel owners for their tourists while in Tanzania. For example, during September 2015 a total of 7,330 tourists visited Mount Kilimanjaro. During that month, tour operators provided accommodation, transport and guiding services to their clients as shown in Table 4.6

Tour operators like Zara Adventure Tours own its hotel, the Springlands where its tourists spend their nights before and after climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. During September, 2015 about 878 Zara Adventure tourists who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro were provided accommodation at Springlands Hotel. Likewise, other tour operators provided accommodation to their clients before climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and to some, even after a climb.

**Table 4.6 : A number of tourists provided services during September 2015**

<b>Tour Company</b>	<b>Number of visitors</b>
Zara Tanzania Adventures	878
African Walking Company	227
Summits Africa Safaris	244
Shining Peaks Tours	73
Nyange Adventure Tours Ltd	63
Lions Safaris	259
Big Expeditions Tours and Safaris Ltd	69
Ahsante Tours and Safaris Ltd	274

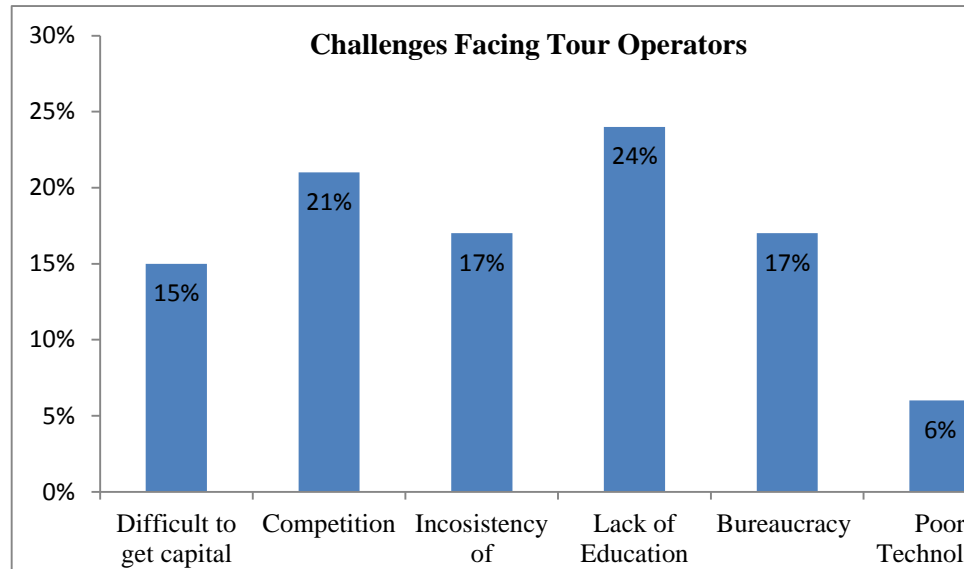
Source: Research data, 2015

#### **4.4 Findings for objective three: the challenges facing tour operators in promoting nature-based tourism**

Tour operators face some difficulties while performing their daily obligations. Some of these challenges are external to the companies while others are within the companies.

The results show that lack of education and skills was the most prevalent challenge (24%) among tourism companies' staff (Figure 4.1). Some reasons for lack of learning among staff is the fact that a big number of companies work only during the high visitation season. Most of staff in these companies are employed on seasonal basis and when the season ends, their employment ends too. At the same time, there is no assurance that the same staff will be employed by the same company in the next season. Therefore, educationa and professional development of personnel are organized only in well giant tourism companies.

The education challenge runs in connection with level of capital a company has. From Figure 4.1, the problem of having insufficient running capital was accounted to by 15% of those who responded to the particular question which enquired them to answer.



**Figure 4.1 : Some Challenges Faced by Tour Operators in Promoting Mt. Kilimanjaro**

Source: Research data, 2015

Having good working capital can be a source of offering a number of services including; paying sufficient salaries to attract and retain skilled staff, conducting training to develop staff and also the capital can be invested in the other operational activities such as marketing of the company and destinations of its choice.

About 17% of the tour operators who responded to this query, pointed out that the government is inconsistent in operating with tour operators. This is especially evident during payment of fees at some entry gates for tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This is for tourists aiming to climbing the mountain via Lemosho route and Londorosi

route. In these two routes, there are natural and planted forests where tourists have to cross before reaching park entry gates. These forests are under Forest and Bee-Keeping Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. There are official barriers where the tour operators are required to pay some fees for their tourists and crews accompanying them. Upon arrival at the park entry gates, they are required to pay relevant fees for the visitors' climb on Mount Kilimanjaro. So, the tour operators are in the view that, all those fees could have been merged and paid at either of the gates/barriers. This could have minimized unnecessary stops for the tourists' vehicles while on their way to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro through those two routes.

About 21% of the tour operators said that competition among themselves is another challenge they face in their duties. This is because, in recent years the number of registered tourism companies is bigger than the growth of tourists climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This leads to some tourism companies ending up without a significant number of tourists in a year. In one way or another, this is in favor of delivering quality services to the tourists so that many more can be attracted to those companies providing high quality services.

The issue of poor technology was another challenge pointed out by 6% of the tour operators during research. The least percent mean that the aspect does not pose a great deal of effects in their company operations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

The aim of the study was to assess the contribution of tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania. Basing on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn from the study. In the first instance, the roles of tour operators can not be underestimated because it is stipulated by the law that tourists have to go through tour operators before climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. In the second instance, reliable travel information provision was easily accessible through tour operators using their websites, social media, guide book directories and some tour operators attend international trade fairs. In the third instance, tour operators also provide tourists with services crucial for their trips while climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This includes; transport, accommodation, planning and guiding services while on the mountain.

#### **5.2 Recommendations**

Basing on the conclusions made, the following recommendations were given; the government should give more recognition to the key roles played by tour operators and hence assign to them the importance they deserve. The government should also complement more on improving services provided by tour operators to tourists while climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. This includes camping sites, nature trails, and availability of water sources on camping areas.



### **5.3 Direction for Future Research**

Given these conclusions, future studies on the roles of tours operators might fruitful focus on other nature-based tourism such as beach attractions and visits to national parks/conservation areas and other historical places.

Future studies could also be based on nature-based tourism in other countries.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Questionnaire for Tourists Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

Dear respondent,

My name is Amani G. Shipella, a student from Open University of Tanzania (OUT).

I am conducting a study titled '*Contribution of tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro as one of the nature-based tourist destinations in Tanzania*'. The study is conducted to partially fulfill the requirements for the award of a Master of Business Administration, the degree of OUT. Being one of the tourists having climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, I kindly request you to take few minutes to respond freely to the questions provided below basing on best of your knowledge.

The information gathered will be used for academic purposes only.

Age.....

- |                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| (i) 10-15 years .....          | (ii) 16-20 years ..... |
| (iii) 21-25 years .....        | (iv) 26-30 years ..... |
| (v) 31-35 years .....          | (vi) 36-40 years ..... |
| (vii) 41 years and above ..... |                        |

Gender..... (Male/Female)

Country of Origin.....

Country of Residency.....

1. Why did you choose to climb Mount Kilimanjaro among other mountains in the World?

.....



2. How did you get information about Mount Kilimanjaro?

- (i) Foreign Tourism agent .....
- (ii) Tanzania National Parks' website.....
- (iii) Tanzanian tour operator.....
- (iv) International Trade fairs.....
- (v) Tanzania Tourist Board website.....
- (vi) Colleague ..... (vi) Other source (please specify).....

3. What was the role of a local tour operator (local tourism agent) in support of your climb?

- (i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii).....
- (iv).....

5. What problems did you encounter in your trip to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?

6. Do you have any comments to Mount Kilimanjaro Park management? (park staffs, trails, infrastructure, cleanliness of trails, campsites, toilets etc)

.....  
.....

Thank you for your time!

## Appendix II: Interview Guide for Tour Operators

Tour Company.....

1. For how long have you been doing tourism business in Tanzania?
2. Can you mention some of your responsibilities as local tour operator
3. Based on your daily activities as local Tour operator;-  
What benefits do you get?
  - (i) What challenges do you face?
  - (ii) How do you tackle the challenges mentioned above?
  - (iii) What are the opportunities you see in tourism industry of  
Tanzania?
4. How do you make your company known to Tanzania and the outside world?
5. What strategies do you use in promoting nature-based tourists' destinations in  
Tanzania?
6. How do you involve yourself with other stakeholders in tourism business in  
Tanzania?
7. Do you know any tourism strategy in Tanzania that relates to your activities?  
Yes/ No, If yes;-
  - (i) Can you mention any strategy that you know?
  - (ii) How did you know the strategy mentioned above?
  - (iii) Do you think the strategy (ies) mentioned above supports your  
activities?
8. What are the destinations of your choice in Tanzania and why?
9. Which country do most of your visitors come from?

10. How many Mount Kilimanjaro climbing visitors do you receive in a year?
11. How do you see the trend of Mount Kilimanjaro visitors?
12. How does your company support the community adjacent to Mount Kilimanjaro?
13. Do you have any suggestions with regard to tourism business of Mount Kilimanjaro?

**Appendix III: Interview Guide for Government Tourism Officers**

1. How long have you worked for the government as tourism officer?
2. Do you know the roles of local tour operators in promoting nature-based tourist destination of Tanzania?
3. Do you know any contribution that local tour operators have to Mount Kilimanjaro?
4. Are there any strategies in place that support local tour operators in their activities? (Yes/No).....

If yes, please mention it/them, how practical are the strategies to Tanzanian environment?

5. How do you comment on the recent (2000s) tourists' trend in Tanzania?
6. What do you think are the challenges for growth of nature-based tourism in Tanzania?

**Appendix IV: Interview Guide Mount Kilimanjaro Tour Guides**

1. What is the place of your birth?
2. How long have you been climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?
3. On average, how many times do you climb Mount Kilimanjaro in a year?
4. Do you know any activities conducted by tour operators?
5. What are the benefits you get from tour operators?
6. What challenges do you face while performing your duties on the Mountain?
7. What do you think should be done for improving tourism of Mount Kilimanjaro?
8. While at the camping sites/hut station, how often do you interact with visitors?
9. What do you think should be done with local tour operators in promoting Mount Kilimanjaro?