

## Study of Tourism Business as a Tool for Financial Development in Rwanda

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to examine the role of the tourism industry in fostering economic development in the vicinity of Volcanoes National Park, with a specific focus on poverty reduction. An appropriate methodology was employed to guarantee the attainment of the findings. The Kinigi sector that was studied had a total of 2340 households in the two cells (Bisoke and Nyonirima). A statistical formula was used to choose a sample of 100 respondents. A random sampling method was used to get this sample because the population was all the same and everyone in these two cells had the same chance of being chosen. In this case, the heads of households were the people who were supposed to answer. A core-periphery factor was taken into account, and two cells were chosen. Bisoke cell is close to VNP, and Nyonirima is a little farther away from VNP. The research had both broad and narrow goals. The findings were gathered in line with these objectives, and both primary and secondary data demonstrated that the projects executed around VNP contributed to poverty alleviation in the community. So far, the groups that these community members have formed to help each other have helped them get out of poverty. People built electric grids, houses for people who needed them, and roads and bridges.

**Keywords:** Tourism Business; Poverty Alleviation; Financial Development; World Economy; Developing Economies; Volcanoes National Park; Tourism Industry; Local Communities; Infrastructure Problems.

**Cite as:** G. Josephine, V. Pradeep, and A. Kamanaluri, "Study of Tourism Business as a Tool for Financial Development in Rwanda," *AVE Trends in Intelligent Management Letters*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 178–186, 2025.

**Journal Homepage:** <https://www.avepubs.com/user/journals/details/ATIML>

**Received on:** 18/08/2024, **Revised on:** 11/10/2024, **Accepted on:** 19/01/2025, **Published on:** 09/12/2025

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.64091/ATIML.2025.000221>

### 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing and most dynamic parts of the world economy [1]. It is important for boosting economic growth, creating jobs, reducing poverty, protecting the environment, and maintaining cultural heritage. Tourism has been a strong driver of inclusive growth in both developed and developing economies. This is because it generates a wide range of job opportunities that go beyond cities and into rural and peripheral areas. Tourism is an important part of the overall development agenda in developing nations like Rwanda, where economic diversification and sustainable growth are top government priorities [2]. The industry makes a significant contribution to the country's gross domestic product, foreign exchange revenues, and national employment. It also makes the country more visible and competitive on the world stage. Rwanda has worked hard

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to make tourism a key part of the country's economic growth. Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) are two policy frameworks that clearly view tourism as a crucial driver of long-term economic growth, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods [3]. These policies emphasise high-value, low-impact tourism business models that prioritise conservation, good service, and community involvement. Rwanda wants to ensure that tourist company expansion delivers real social and economic benefits while also protecting its fragile ecosystems and cultural treasures. To do this, it focuses on sustainability and adding value [4]. Musanze District, in the Northern Province of Rwanda, is the best place in the country for tourism businesses to set up shop [5]. The district is well-known for its beautiful natural and cultural features, such as Volcanoes National Park, which is renowned worldwide as the home of the endangered mountain gorillas [6]. Gorilla trekking is now Rwanda's most popular tourist activity, attracting thousands of visitors from around the world and within the country each year [7]. It also generates significant economic benefits for the national economy and local communities. Musanze District has a lot more to offer than just gorilla tourism [8]. It offers a wide range of scenery, including volcanic mountains, lush forests, caves, lakes, and beautiful rural areas, making it a great place to visit.

Musanze has many cultural heritage sites, in addition to its natural charms, making it an even better place for tourists to visit [9]. Local crafts, traditional music and dance, cooking styles, and historical places all add to a unique cultural character that makes visits more enjoyable. Cultural tourism business efforts not only add to the variety of tourism businesses but also give local artists, performers, and entrepreneurs a chance to be part of the tourism value chain. As a result, the tourism industry in Musanze has become a vital means of promoting local economic empowerment and cultural preservation [10]. The tourism industry in Musanze District has generated significant revenue by creating jobs, attracting visitors, and building infrastructure [11]. Tourism-related activities, including providing places to stay, guiding tours, providing transportation, making handicrafts, and offering hospitality, create jobs in the area [12]. Many families make money through small- and medium-sized businesses, community-based projects, and informal economic activities that are connected to what visitors want. This diversity of income is especially crucial in rural areas, where relying on subsistence farming alone may not be enough to keep you financially safe [13]. Tourism business growth in Musanze District, on the other hand, is not without its problems, even if it has made a big difference to the economy and society [14]. If not managed appropriately, the rapid growth in visitor arrivals and tourism industry infrastructure can put significant strain on natural resources and local ecosystems. Environmental deterioration, such as habitat destruction, waste disposal problems, and strain on land and water resources, threatens the long-term viability of the tourism industry [15]. Musanze's tourism sector is closely linked to its natural environment; hence, environmental damage is a direct threat to the local tourism economy [16]. One of the biggest problems is that local communities have no say in planning, decision-making, or sharing the benefits of tourism.

Tourism businesses make a lot of money, but the advantages are not always shared fairly. Some areas don't see much economic boost relative to the value created [17]. Not enough people in the community becoming involved might make people feel left out, make people less likely to support conservation efforts, and cause problems between tourism industry owners and communities [18]. To grow financially sustainably, the tourism company needs governance systems that involve everyone and give communities greater authority as active partners rather than just passive recipients. Infrastructure problems also impede the tourism business in Musanze District from reaching its full potential. Even if roads, places to stay, and public services have improved, there are still problems with access to rural areas, sanitation, energy supply, and internet connectivity [19]. Poor infrastructure can make visitors' experiences less enjoyable, make it harder for local businesses to reach customers, and raise the costs of running a tourism business. To make tourism businesses more competitive and ensure their growth is both fair and long-lasting, these problems must be addressed [20]. The goal of sustainable tourism and business financial development is to strike a balance among economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice. This type of thinking recognises that tourist businesses need to be run in ways that meet current demands without compromising future generations' access to natural and cultural resources. In Musanze District, sustainable tourism means protecting biodiversity, especially the mountain gorillas and their habitats, and improving the lives of the local people. To find this balance, government agencies, businesses, community groups, and conservation groups must work together, plan together, and follow the rules. This study examines the tourism industry as a driver of economic growth in Musanze District, emphasising its role in economic empowerment, social inclusivity, and environmental sustainability.

The tourism industry helps people become economically independent by creating jobs, supporting small businesses, and generating revenue that can be used to pay for education, healthcare, and household needs. Community-based tourism business initiatives, such as cooperatives and cultural tourism enterprises, are vital to ensuring that local people have a greater share of tourism benefits. Another important part of growing a tourism business is making it more socially inclusive. Inclusive tourism businesses ensure that women, young people, and other groups who are often left out can find work, get training, and start their own businesses in the tourism value chain. In Musanze District, the tourism industry might help bring people together by encouraging interactions between tourists and locals, boosting cultural pride, and funding community development projects with funds generated by tourism. But to address structural hurdles and disparities, it is important to actively promote inclusivity through targeted policies and capacity-building measures. For the tourism company in Musanze to be successful in the long term, it must be environmentally sustainable. Over the past few decades, conservation policy and practices have increasingly

emphasised the connections between rural poverty and environmental degradation. This has made it clear that we need to find a way to balance social and economic requirements with protecting biodiversity and managing protected areas. In Musanze District, conservation efforts related to Volcanoes National Park have included ways to share tourism revenue with community development projects. These tools are meant to reduce conflict between people and animals, engage more people in the area in conservation, and demonstrate the real benefits of safeguarding natural resources. The connection between tourism, conservation, and community development demonstrates the importance of combining methods to improve finances. When people in a community can see concrete economic and social benefits from tourism businesses that focus on conservation, they are more inclined to support efforts to protect the environment.

On the other hand, when communities are left out or receive little benefit, conservation goals may be harmed by the use of unsustainable resources. So, for tourism businesses to grow in Musanze, they need to find a way to balance conservation goals with the needs and wants of the people who live there. Also, the tourism industry in Musanze District has a greater impact on Rwanda's national development plans. The tourism industry can help the economy become more resilient and build value chains by connecting tourism with other industries such as farming, manufacturing, and services. For example, getting food from local farmers, promoting crafts made in the area, and encouraging people to invest in tourism businesses in their own country can all help the local economy by making tourism businesses more profitable. In conclusion, tourism is a powerful way for Musanze District to generate revenue, as it creates many opportunities for economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. The district's unique natural and cultural resources make it a great place for the long-term growth of tourism companies. However, to reach its full potential, it needs to address environmental sustainability, community involvement, and infrastructure development. Tourism businesses can make a real difference in the lives of people in Rwanda by adopting community-centred, inclusive, and conservation-focused practices. These approaches can also help Rwanda reach its larger development goals. Strengthening tourism to promote balanced financial growth in Musanze District benefits the people who live there and Rwanda's reputation as a world leader in responsible, sustainable tourism.

### **1.1. Objective**

To study is to examine the role of the tourism business as a tool for financial development in Musanze District, Rwanda.

### **1.2. Justification of Study**

The tourism business has become a critical driver of socio-economic development, especially in countries like Rwanda, where it contributes significantly to GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and employment generation. Despite its growing importance, there remain gaps in understanding how the tourism business can be effectively leveraged to achieve financial development, particularly in local contexts such as Musanze District. This study is justified by the need to assess the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the tourism business on communities surrounding Volcanoes National Park, the country's leading tourist destination. By examining these dimensions, the study provides insights into how the tourism industry can enhance livelihoods, reduce poverty, and promote cultural preservation while minimising negative environmental impacts. Furthermore, the study addresses challenges such as limited community participation, unequal distribution of tourism benefits, and infrastructure deficits that may hinder the sector's sustainability. The findings will inform policymakers, tourism business authorities, and financial development partners about strategies to strengthen the tourism business's contribution to financial development, ensuring inclusive growth that benefits both the environment and local populations. By highlighting practical approaches to integrating tourism business revenues into national financial development programs and fostering community engagement, this research contributes to Rwanda's broader objectives under Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation, emphasising tourism businesses as sustainable and transformative tools for socio-economic development in Musanze District.

### **1.3. Scope of Study**

This paper will focus on the role of the tourism industry as a tool for economic development in Musanze District, Rwanda, with particular attention to its activities and impacts within and around Volcanoes National Park (VNP). The study will examine the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of the tourism business and how they contribute to the district's overall financial development (Figure 1). The research will cover key stakeholders, including local communities, tourism businesses, government agencies, and conservation organisations. It will analyse the benefits and challenges of the financial development of the tourism business, including poverty reduction, environmental management, and community engagement. Geographically, the study will be confined to Musanze District, which is Rwanda's leading tourism destination. However, the findings and recommendations may be relevant to other tourism business regions in the country. The research will focus on recent financial developments and on data collected over the past five years to ensure relevance and accuracy.



**Figure 1:** Rwanda Volcanoes National Park (VNP)

### **1.3.1. State of the Art**

The tourism business has evolved into a major global economic sector, with its influence extending beyond revenue generation into social and environmental dimensions. In the context of financial development, modern tourism business practices emphasise responsible, community-centred approaches that balance economic benefits with ecological preservation and cultural heritage protection. Globally, destinations integrating eco-tourism, community-based tourism, and conservation initiatives have demonstrated positive impacts on local livelihoods, biodiversity, and social cohesion. Rwanda, particularly Musanze District, reflects these trends by leveraging its unique natural attractions, such as Volcanoes National Park, to promote tourism business that aligns with financial development goals. Studies highlight that while the tourism business contributes significantly to income generation and job creation, challenges remain, including environmental degradation, inequitable benefit-sharing, and limited local participation. Advances in tourism business management practices now prioritise stakeholder collaboration, adaptive policy frameworks, and the use of technology for visitor management and resource monitoring. Understanding the current state of tourism in Musanze requires examining both international best practices and local experiences to identify strategies that maximise benefits for communities while safeguarding natural and cultural assets. This study builds on existing knowledge to propose practical interventions to enhance sustainable tourism businesses in the district.

## **1.4. Materials and Methods**

### **1.4.1. Requirement Analysis and Materials**

The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources to investigate the tourism business as a tool for financial development in Musanze District. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to local community members, interviews with tourism business stakeholders, and direct field observations to capture real-time insights on tourism business impacts. Secondary data included government reports, policy documents, scholarly papers, and statistics from the Rwanda Financial Development Board and other relevant institutions. The requirement analysis focused on identifying the key economic, social, and environmental indicators that reflect sustainable tourism business practices and their effects on local communities. Materials used for data collection included printed questionnaires, audio recorders for interviews, cameras for documenting field observations, and computers equipped with Microsoft Excel and SPSS software for data coding, entry, and analysis. The analysis also required thematic frameworks to process qualitative data and ensure systematic categorisation of responses. Overall, the materials and methods were selected to ensure the collection of reliable, valid, and comprehensive data, enabling accurate assessment of tourism businesses' contributions and challenges in promoting financial development in the study area.

### **1.4.2. Functional Requirements**

- Collection of reliable economic, social, and environmental data.
- Engagement with community members and stakeholders to capture diverse perspectives.
- Analysis of data to identify patterns, trends, and correlations related to the tourism business.

### 1.4.3. Technical Requirements

- Use of SPSS and Microsoft Excel for quantitative data analysis.
- Audio recording and transcription tools for interviews.
- Data validation procedures to ensure reliability and accuracy.

### 1.4.4. Materials

- Questionnaires and interview guides.
- Cameras and notebooks for field documentation.
- Computers with statistical software.
- Internet and library resources for secondary data.

## 2. Problem Context and Industry Gaps

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the role of the tourism business as a tool for financial development in Musanze District. The design facilitated the collection of comprehensive data on economic, social, and environmental impacts while identifying challenges and potential strategies for sustainable tourism businesses. The research design ensured methodological triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. The specific objectives, associated hypotheses, methodologies, and statistical tools used are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Used methodology for the study

Objectives	Hypotheses	Methodology	Statistics
Assess the contribution of the tourism business to economic and financial development.	The tourism business positively contributes to local economic growth	Questionnaire, interviews	Percentages, means, frequencies
Analyse the social impacts of the tourism business	Tourism business improves the social well-being of local communities	Interviews, focus groups	Descriptive statistics, thematic analysis
Evaluate the environmental implications of the tourism business	Tourism business activities influence environmental sustainability	Field observation, document review	Descriptive analysis, Tables, charts
Identify challenges hindering sustainable tourism business financial development.	Communities face barriers that limit tourism business benefits	Questionnaire, interviews	Percentages, thematic coding
Propose strategies for promoting sustainable tourism business	Community participation enhances sustainable tourism business outcomes	Focus groups, interviews	Frequencies, descriptive summaries
Assess the role of the tourism business in poverty alleviation	Tourism business reduces poverty in communities around VNP	Questionnaire, interviews	Percentages, thematic analysis

## 3. Presentation of the Study Area

Musanze District, located in Rwanda’s Northern Province, is a prominent tourism business hub due to its natural and cultural attractions. It is home to Volcanoes National Park, which hosts endangered mountain gorillas and attracts thousands of tourists annually. The district also features caves, lakes, scenic landscapes, and a rich cultural heritage, making it a focal point for eco- and community-based tourism initiatives. The tourism industry significantly contributes to local livelihoods, generating employment and revenue for residents.

### 3.1. Sampling Methods and Techniques

A purposive and random sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling selected key informants, such as RDB officials and tour operators, who possess expert knowledge of the tourism industry. Random sampling was used to ensure representation from various sectors. Given an estimated population of 160 respondents, the sample size was determined to be (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Sampling technique and sample size

Population Category	Sampling Method	Sample Size
Community members	Random sampling	60
Tour operators and guides	Purposive sampling	20
Hotel managers	Purposive sampling	15
RDB officials and local leaders	Purposive sampling	10
Others (students, entrepreneurs)	Random sampling	9
Total		114

### 3.2. Population of the Study

The target population for this study included all individuals and organisations directly or indirectly involved in tourism business activities in Musanze District. This includes tourism business operators, hotel managers, residents, community leaders, RDB officials, and conservation staff (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Target Population

Category	Estimated Number
Local community members	100
Tour operators and guides	30
Hotel and lodge managers	20
RDB and local authorities	10
Total	160

### 3.3. Criteria of Participants' Selection

The study aimed to represent the diverse agricultural conditions in Nyagatare District by selecting participants based on factors such as farm type, irrigation practices, geographical location, willingness to participate, and crop type. Smallholder, medium-scale, and commercial farms were selected based on their size, irrigation practices, geographic location, willingness to participate, and willingness to collaborate with researchers. Farmers who are open to adopting new technologies and cultivating crops with consistent moisture levels could benefit from automated irrigation systems.

### 3.4. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

The collected data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of the tourism business in financial development around Volcanoes National Park. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were first coded and entered into Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistical tools, such as percentages, means, and frequency distributions, were employed to summarise respondents' views and identify key patterns across variables related to the tourism business's economic, social, and environmental impacts. On the other hand, qualitative data gathered from interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations were analysed thematically.

### 3.5. Type of Data and Techniques of Data Collection

This study collected data on irrigation system performance, soil moisture levels, crop yield, water usage, and sensor readings (Table 4).

**Table 4:** The type of data and techniques of data collection

Activities	Techniques	Instruments
Survey	Questionnaires	Online surveys using Google Forms
	Interviews	Structured interviews
	Focus groups	Group discussions with predefined questions
Observation	Direct observation	Observing participants' interactions with the system
	Video recording	Recording driving sessions to analyse behaviour
	Field notes	Written notes on observed behaviours and system usage

Data Analytics	Data mining	Analysing large datasets to identify patterns and trends
	Statistical analysis	Applying statistical tests to quantify system performance
	Machine learning algorithms	Developing predictive models based on historical data
Interviews with Experts	Expert consultation	Interviewing engineers, designers, or policymakers
	Stakeholder interviews	Engaging with stakeholders to gather insights

### 3.6. Field Survey

The field survey was a critical component of this study aimed at understanding the current state of the tourism business as a tool for financial development in Rwanda, with a focus on Musanze District. It involved direct engagement with local communities, tourism business operators, and relevant stakeholders to gather first-hand information on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism businesses. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, interviews, and field observations to capture diverse perspectives on income generation, employment, community welfare, conservation practices, and challenges faced by residents around Volcanoes National Park. The survey provided a comprehensive understanding of how tourism business activities influence financial development and informed subsequent analysis and recommendations.

### 3.7. Data Analysis Techniques

The study evaluated the effectiveness of the tourism business in promoting financial development in Musanze District by analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data from questionnaires were coded and analysed in Microsoft Excel and SPSS, using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, and means to summarise patterns. Qualitative data from interviews and field observations were analysed thematically to identify trends, relationships, and recurring challenges in the tourism business and community welfare. Results were presented in Tables, graphs, and descriptive narratives, enabling clear interpretation of the tourism business's economic, social, and environmental contributions, as well as its associated limitations and opportunities for financial development.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The study revealed that the tourism business plays a crucial role in promoting financial development in Musanze District by contributing to economic growth, social welfare, and environmental conservation. Economically, the tourism business has created jobs in hotels, transport, and crafts, while generating tax revenue and investment opportunities. Socially, community-based tourism business initiatives and projects around Volcanoes National Park (VNP) have improved access to education, healthcare, and cultural preservation. Environmentally, the tourism business has supported conservation efforts, including wildlife protection and reforestation programs. However, challenges persist, including inadequate infrastructure, overreliance on park-based tourism, limited marketing strategies, and minimal local participation in decision-making. Poverty remains high among communities near tourist sites, and environmental pressures from increasing visitor numbers threaten ecological stability.

### 4.1. Strength

The Tourism business in Musanze District demonstrates significant strengths in promoting financial development. It generates employment opportunities in hotels, transport, and craft industries, thereby enhancing local livelihoods. Community-based initiatives, such as SACOLA-led projects, support education, healthcare, and infrastructure financial development. The tourism industry also fosters environmental conservation through wildlife protection, reforestation programs, and awareness campaigns. The district's rich natural and cultural attractions, particularly Volcanoes National Park and surrounding scenic landscapes, make it a strong tourism business hub. Additionally, government support and involvement of local associations ensure that tourism business benefits are partially channelled to the community, improving overall socio-economic welfare and contributing to poverty alleviation.

### 4.2. Opportunities

Musanze District has numerous opportunities to further leverage the tourism business for financial development. Diversifying tourism product offerings beyond gorilla trekking, such as cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and adventure activities, can attract new markets and increase revenue. Enhanced collaboration among the Rwanda Financial Development Board, NGOs, and local communities presents opportunities for joint projects, improved capacity-building, and more equitable benefit-sharing. Investments in infrastructure, marketing strategies, and small- and medium-sized enterprises can boost local entrepreneurship and economic growth. Furthermore, the tourism business offers a platform for environmental education, cultural preservation, and poverty reduction. By strategically integrating these opportunities, Musanze can strengthen the tourism business's role in inclusive and financial development.

### 4.3. Limitations

Despite its benefits, the tourism business in Musanze District faces several limitations. Communities near Volcanoes National Park often receive limited direct economic benefits, with most of the revenue retained by park authorities and tour operators. Infrastructure remains inadequate in some areas, affecting accessibility and service delivery. A high dependence on park-based tourism creates vulnerability to environmental changes and fluctuations in visitor numbers. Limited marketing and promotion restrict potential tourist inflows. Additionally, low community participation in decision-making reduces their sense of ownership and control over tourism business initiatives. Environmental pressures from increasing visitor numbers threaten ecosystem stability, underscoring the need for integrated management strategies.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of the tourism business in promoting financial development around Volcanoes National Park (VNP), with a particular focus on poverty alleviation. Using both primary and secondary data, the research demonstrated that the tourism business contributes significantly to local livelihoods by generating income, creating employment, and supporting community-based initiatives. Projects implemented by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and community associations, such as SACOLA, have led to the construction of schools, roads, and lodges, including Sabyinyo Silverback, thereby directly improving living conditions. Residents of Kinigi and Nyange sectors benefit from organised income-generating activities that have increased household incomes, school enrolment, access to healthcare, and savings. The study also highlighted that tourism business activities in VNP not only promote conservation but also empower communities economically and socially. Despite these achievements, challenges persist, including limited infrastructure, unequal benefit-sharing, and low community participation in decision-making. To address these, recommendations target multiple stakeholders. The government should support community-based tourism business initiatives, enhance accessibility, provide funding for SMEs, and involve local communities in planning. NGOs are encouraged to assist in project implementation, training, and monitoring. Communities are urged to organise, identify tourism business resources, engage in responsible tourism, and collaborate with NGOs to maximise benefits while minimising environmental and cultural impacts.

### List of Abbreviations

- **IST:** Institut Supérieur de Technologies
- **DFID:** Department for International Development
- **AWF:** African Wildlife Foundation
- **EAC:** Eastern Africa Community
- **GDP:** Gross Domestic Product
- **IGCP:** International Gorilla Conservation Program
- **MDGs:** Millennium Development Goals
- **MICE:** Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions
- **MINICOM:** Ministry of Commerce
- **NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation
- **NISR:** Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
- **VNP:** Virunga National Park
- **WB:** World Bank
- **WHO:** World Health Organisation
- **WSSD:** World Summit on Financial Development
- **WTO:** World Tourism Organization

**Acknowledgements:** The authors thank the academic staff of IST (Institut Supérieur de Technologies), Dhaanish Ahmed College of Engineering, and the University of Birmingham for their support and efforts in making this paper a success.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data supporting the findings of this study, which examines the role of tourism business in fostering financial development in Rwanda, are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

**Funding Statement:** None

**Conflicts of Interest Statement:** I declare no conflict of interest.

**Ethics and Consent Statement:** This research was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards. Approval was obtained from the relevant authorities, and informed consent was secured from all participating organisations and individual respondents before data collection.

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