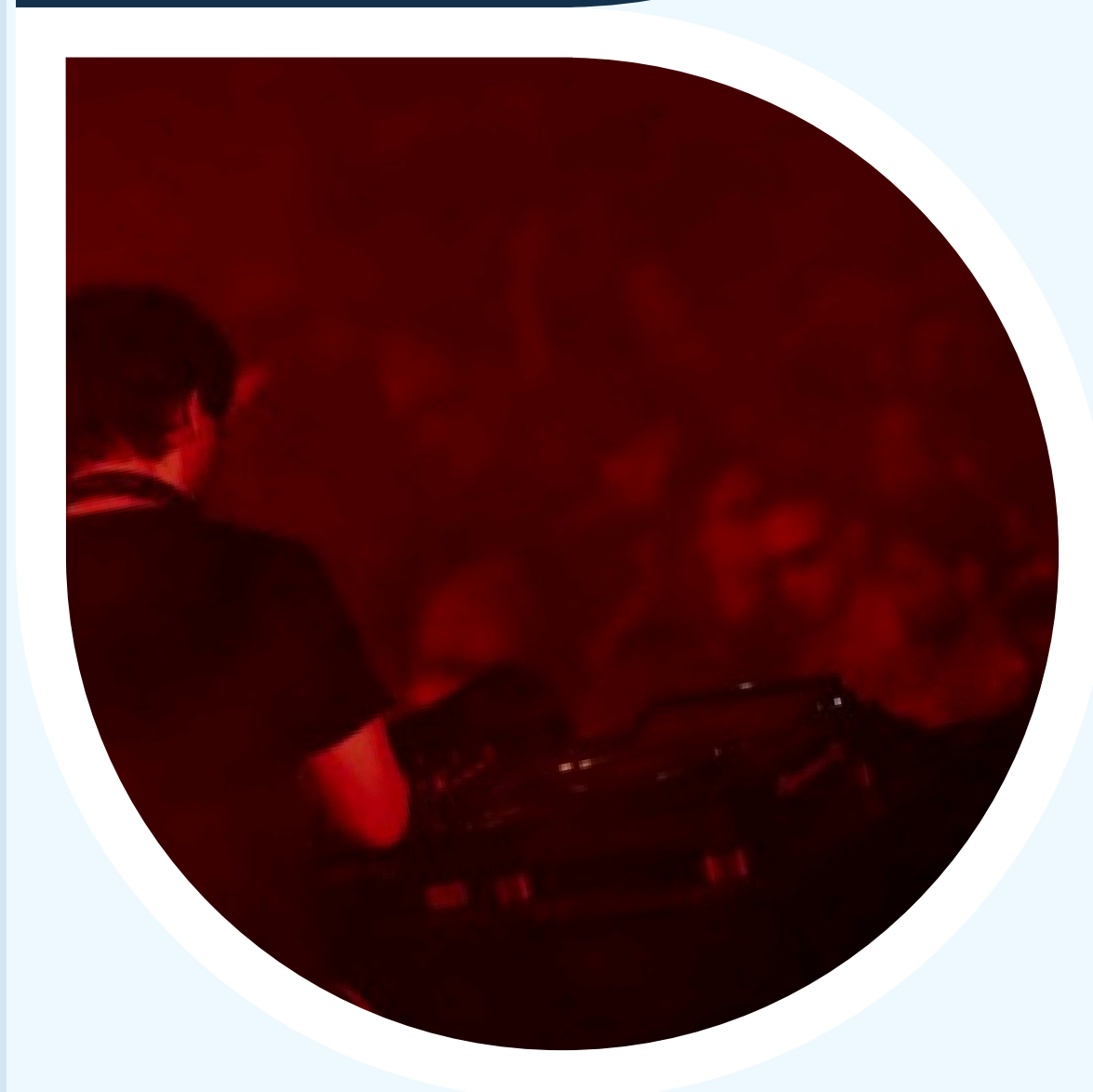


BEYOND DAYTIME TOURISM

**HARNESSING NIGHTLIFE AS A DRIVER FOR URBAN
TOURISM EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT. EVIDENCE
FROM KAMPALA CITY**



MAY 2026

**Beyond Daytime Tourism: Harnessing Nightlife as a
Driver for Urban Tourism Experience Enhancement.
Evidence from Kampala city**

This publication examines how nightlife activities, entertainment economies, and evening experiences have enhanced Kampala's urban tourism appeal, stimulated local economic growth, and strengthened the city's competitiveness as a vibrant tourism destination.

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Beyond Daytime Tourism

Harnessing Nightlife as a Driver for Urban Tourism Experience
Enhancement. Evidence from Kampala city

MAY 2026

Preface

Urban tourism is increasingly shaped not only by what cities offer during the day, but by the quality, diversity, and safety of experiences available after dark. Across the globe, cities that have successfully harnessed their night economies have enhanced destination competitiveness, extended visitor stays, stimulated local enterprise, and created inclusive employment opportunities—particularly for youth and creative workers.

Kampala, widely recognised for its vibrancy, music, food culture, and social life, has long been informally celebrated for its nightlife. Yet until now, limited empirical evidence has existed to demonstrate how international tourists actually engage with Kampala’s nightlife, what they value most, how much they spend, and how these experiences influence overall destination satisfaction.

This study, *Beyond Daytime Tourism: Harnessing Nightlife as a Driver for Enhancing Urban Tourism Experience – Evidence from Kampala City*, responds to this gap. Drawing on primary data from international visitors, it provides evidence-based insights into nightlife participation patterns, preferences, perceptions of safety and quality, and the economic contribution of nightlife to Kampala’s urban tourism ecosystem.

The report is intended to inform policymakers, city authorities, tourism agencies, security institutions, investors, and nightlife operators on how nightlife can be deliberately planned, regulated, and supported as a legitimate and valuable component of Uganda’s tourism sector. By positioning nightlife as part of the broader urban tourism system—rather than as a marginal or problematic activity—the study contributes to more inclusive, competitive, and sustainable urban tourism development.



Acknowledgement

This Nightlife Report is the result of a strategic collaboration between the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB)—the public agency mandated to sustainably promote Uganda as a competitive tourism destination—and the Tourism Research and Development Centre (TRDC), a leading tourism and hospitality research and policy centre in Uganda. UTB provided overall leadership and institutional oversight for the study, dedicating financial and technical resources to facilitate the exit survey at Entebbe International Airport and offering continuous technical input and review throughout the preparation of the report. The technical team, led by Mr. Joseph Esule Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer at UTB and Mr. Denis Ojok Senior Statistician at Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA), played a central role in guiding the research direction, validating findings, and ensuring alignment with national tourism priorities.

TRDC is credited for the technical design and execution of the study. This included the development of survey instruments, management of the online survey platforms, comprehensive data analysis, and the drafting of the final report. Under the leadership of Prof. Jim Ayorekire, the TRDC team ensured methodological rigor, analytical depth, and coherence in presenting the findings. Their commitment to evidence-based research and policy relevance greatly strengthened the quality and credibility of this publication.

The study further acknowledges the invaluable contribution of a team of experts who provided critical input in analysing nightlife tourism development in Kampala, reviewed draft versions of the report, and offered guidance throughout the research process. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for coordinating and facilitating the survey process at Entebbe International Airport. The report also recognises the dedication of the research assistants and expresses gratitude to all esteemed tourism stakeholders—including city authority officials, private sector actors, and members of academia—whose insights, information, and perspectives significantly enriched and informed the compilation of this study.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television.
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NDP IV	Fourth National Development Plan
TRDC	Tourism Research and Development Centre
TSA	Tourism Satellite Account
UGX	Uganda Shillings
UN Tourism	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UNT	Tourism United Nations Tourism
UPF	Uganda Police Force
USD	United States Dollar
UTB	Uganda Tourism Board
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council



Executive Summary

Urban tourism is evolving rapidly, with night-time experiences increasingly shaping destination attractiveness, visitor satisfaction, and economic performance. This study examines the role of nightlife in enhancing Kampala's urban tourism experience, drawing on a mixed-method online and in-person survey of 581 international tourists conducted between November and December 2025.

The findings show that nightlife participation among international tourists in Kampala is exceptionally high, with 82 percent reporting engagement in one or more nightlife activities during their stay. Tourists are drawn not only to bars and clubs, but to a wide range of experiences including dining, live music, cultural events, night markets, cinemas, sports facilities, and religious gatherings. Nightlife participation is primarily concentrated in the early evening and late evening hours, reflecting preferences for social dining, music, and cultural interaction rather than extreme late-night activity.

Overall satisfaction with Kampala's nightlife is strong. Visitors rate hospitality, food quality, music, and social atmosphere highly, reinforcing Kampala's reputation as a friendly and vibrant city. Safety perceptions are positive within venues, although concerns persist regarding pedestrian safety and public spaces outside nightlife establishments. These perceptions significantly influence where and how tourists choose to participate in nightlife.

Economically, nightlife emerges as a high-value component of urban tourism. International tourists spend an estimated average of UGX 360,000 per night on nightlife-related activities, with spending distributed across food and beverages, transport, entertainment, and informal retail. Conservative estimates indicate that nightlife generates approximately UGX 345.4 billion (USD 95.9 million) annually, supports over 73,485 direct jobs, and contributes an estimated UGX 33.3 billion (USD 9.3 million) in tax revenue annually.

The study concludes that nightlife is not a peripheral activity, but a strategic urban tourism asset. With improved safety governance, infrastructure, service standards, and data systems, Kampala's nightlife can play a more deliberate role in extending visitor stays, increasing spending, creating employment, and strengthening destination competitiveness.



1.0 Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's fastest-growing economic sectors, contributing significantly to employment, foreign exchange earnings, and urban development. Following the recovery of international tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic, destinations have increasingly diversified their tourism products to meet the growing demand for authentic and experience-based travel. Beyond traditional sightseeing, tourists now seek cultural, entertainment, culinary, shopping, and nightlife experiences, making urban tourism and the night-time economy important components of destination competitiveness (UN Tourism, 2024).

Globally and across Africa, cities such as Cape Town, Nairobi, Kigali, Lagos, and Accra have successfully developed nightlife as part of their tourism offerings through restaurants, entertainment venues, cultural events, and live performances. These initiatives have enhanced visitor experiences while generating employment, supporting creative industries, and stimulating local economies.

Uganda's tourism industry has traditionally relied on wildlife, nature, adventure, and cultural tourism. However, the National Development Plan (NDP) IV (2025/26–2029/30) emphasizes tourism product diversification to enhance the sector's competitiveness. As Uganda's principal gateway city, Kampala offers a vibrant nightlife comprising restaurants, lounges, bars, nightclubs, live music, comedy shows, cultural entertainment, casinos, and late-night dining, presenting significant opportunities for urban tourism development.

Despite its growing popularity among visitors, Kampala's nightlife has received limited empirical attention. Existing tourism statistics focus primarily on arrivals, accommodation, wildlife visitation, and tourism earnings, with little information on tourists' participation in nightlife activities. This evidence gap constrains informed policymaking, tourism planning, and private investment. Consequently, this study seeks to generate empirical evidence on international tourists' nightlife experiences in Kampala to support tourism product diversification, increase visitor spending and length of stay, strengthen the creative economy, and enhance Kampala's competitiveness as a vibrant urban tourism destination.



2.0 Rational of the Study

Uganda's tourism product offer has traditionally focused on wildlife, nature, and urban tourism has been restricted to daytime experiences, with limited structured attention to night-time tourism. Kampala, the country's main administrative and commercial city is also the gateway city in the country and the primary place where visitors spend time before or after they engage in safaris, business trips, conferences, and social visits. Most of the international tourists have continuously referred to nightlife in Kampala as one of the memorable experiences they have had on their visit to Uganda. However, there has not been any empirical data to back up this assertion.

Therefore, understanding nightlife as part of the tourism experience is important given that it can play a transformative role in tourism development, urban competitiveness, and inclusive economic growth. The results of this study are vital in informing tourism policies and planning with regards on how to;

- (i) Diversify tourism products beyond wildlife and nature;
- (ii) Extend tourists' length of stay in Kampala and Uganda in general;
- (iii) Increase visitor spending, especially on food, entertainment, transport, and shopping;
- (iv) Create jobs for youth, women, and creative workers; and
- (v) Strengthen Kampala's image as a vibrant and attractive city.

This study provides practical evidence and guides policy makers, city authorities, tourism agencies, and private investors on how nightlife can be positioned to contribute to urban tourism development and what needs to be done to unlock its full potential.

3.0 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to:

1. Identify the different categories of nightlife activities international tourists engage in while in Kampala;
2. Examine tourist preferences for nightlife activities and venues;
3. Assess tourists' perceptions and ratings of nightlife activities, facilities, and services in Kampala; and
4. Analyse the drivers for nightlife in Kampala and provide policy recommendations.





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4.0 Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-mode survey approach to capture international tourists' engagement with nightlife during their stay in Kampala. Primary data were collected through an exit survey administered at Entebbe International Airport, Uganda's main international gateway, between November and December 2025. This period coincides with a peak travel season, ensuring a diverse sample of visitors with recent and direct experience of Kampala's night-time environment.

To complement the airport-based survey and broaden coverage, an online version of the questionnaire was also developed and disseminated through tour operators. These operators shared the survey link with their international clients who had visited Uganda and stayed in Kampala during their trip. This approach enabled the study to capture responses from tourists who may not have been reached during airport departures, thereby enhancing the robustness of the dataset.

A total of 581 valid responses were obtained. Of these respondents, 67 per cent were male and 33 per cent were female, representing 96 nationalities covering a diverse composition of international visitors across the world. The dataset compiled represents a wide range of travel purposes, lengths of stay, and nationalities, providing a comprehensive picture of how different visitor segments engage with nightlife in Kampala. The survey collected information on tourists' participation in nightlife activities, preferences, motivations, expenditure patterns, perceptions of safety and service quality, and overall satisfaction with nightlife in Kampala. Additional questions captured visitors' recommendations and perceptions of future demand for night-time tourism experiences.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques to identify key patterns and trends, complemented by qualitative interpretation of open-ended responses. The analysis focused on linking nightlife participation to tourism diversification, visitor spending, satisfaction, and perceptions of urban vibrancy, in line with the objectives of the study. Where data was not readily available, the study conducted analysis based on expert opinion assumptions.



5.0 Study Findings

5.1 Participants in Nightlife

Out of the total 581 respondents that participated in the survey, 82% indicated that they had participated in nightlife activities in Kampala before, with only 17% indicating they hadn't done so.

The highly diverse international sample of respondents from 96 nationalities across the world reflects Kampala's position as a regional and international urban tourism hub.

The largest share of respondents came from East Africa (36%) and Rest of Africa (16%), underscoring Kampala's strong positioning as a regional city destination. At the same time, a significant number of respondents originated from Europe (10%), Asia (8%) and North America (6%) confirms Kampala's growing appeal to long-haul and intercontinental tourists.

This diversity of nationalities participating in nightlife reinforces the argument that Kampala nightlife experience cuts across regions and cultures. This contributes to tourism product diversification by offering urban experiences that resonate with visitors from multiple source markets, and offer engagements beyond traditional wildlife and nature-based tourism.

5.2 Characteristics of International Tourists that Participated in Kampala's Nightlife

Participants in Kampala nightlife came from diverse range of backgrounds. Majority were males (67%) and the minority females (33%). They were mostly the youth aged between 25 and 34 years (39%), middle aged of 35 and 44 years (36%), upper middle age of 45-54 years (22%) and a limited number (3%) of seniors (above 55 years). The majority had a bachelor's level of education (56%) followed by those with post-graduate education (25%), tertiary level at diploma and certificate level (15%), secondary school and high school level (4%) and only 0.3% with primary school education level.

Most nightlife participants were leisure travelers. When asked about their main purpose of visit, 33% were visiting friends or relatives and 30% were on holiday. Smaller shares came for business trips (15%), workshops/conferences (12%), or transit (4%).



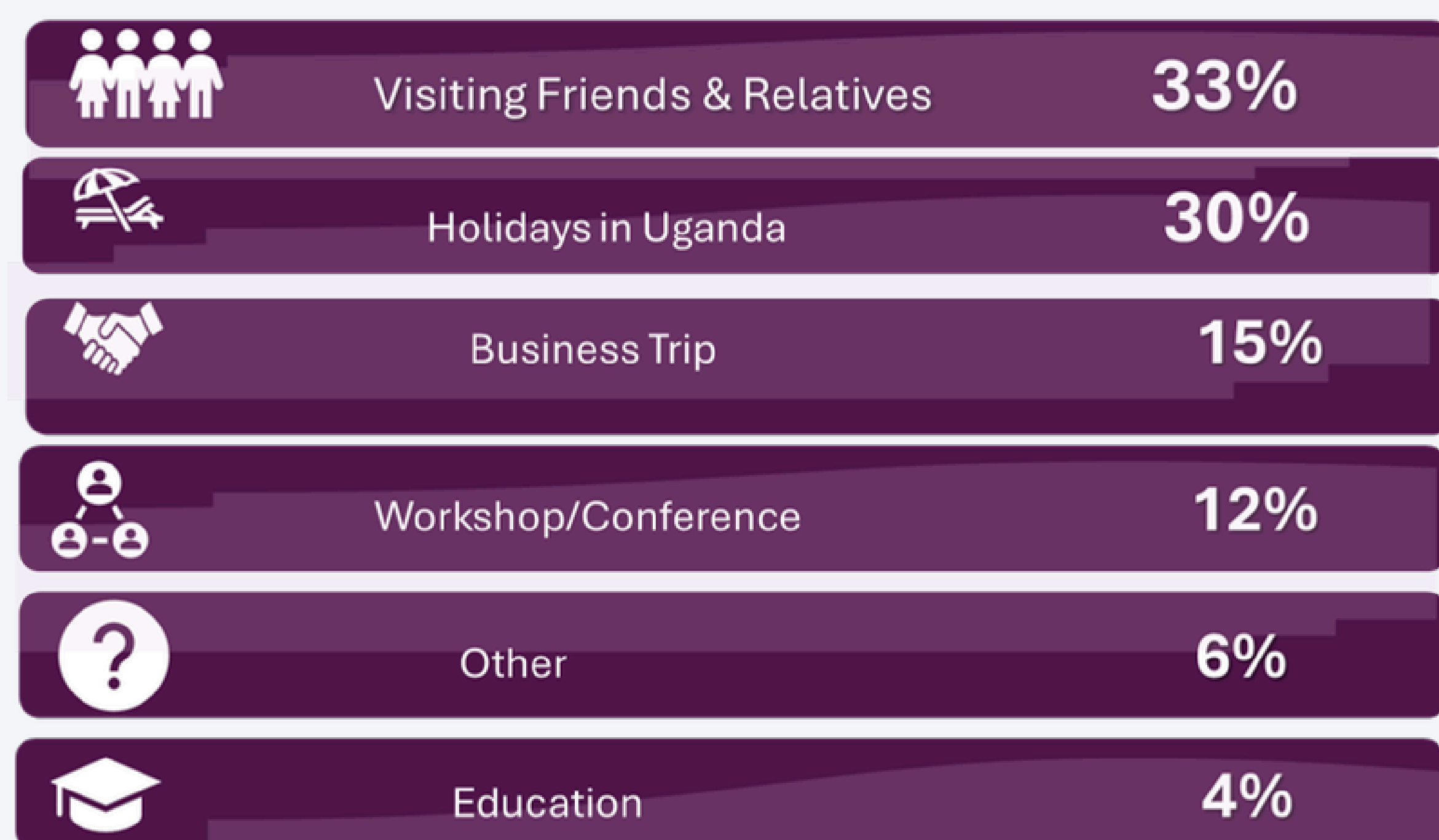


Figure 1: Main purpose for visiting Kampala city

The respondents were asked to state the reasons they decided to engage in nightlife and they identified relaxing, socializing, and experiencing local culture as the main motives. The majority (29%) identified the need to relax and unwind as the reason. This was followed by 16% who wanted to connect with friends and family, 13% who wanted to enjoy Ugandan cuisine, 12% who wanted to party and dance and 8% wanted to connect with colleagues and experience Kampala arts and crafts (Figure 2)



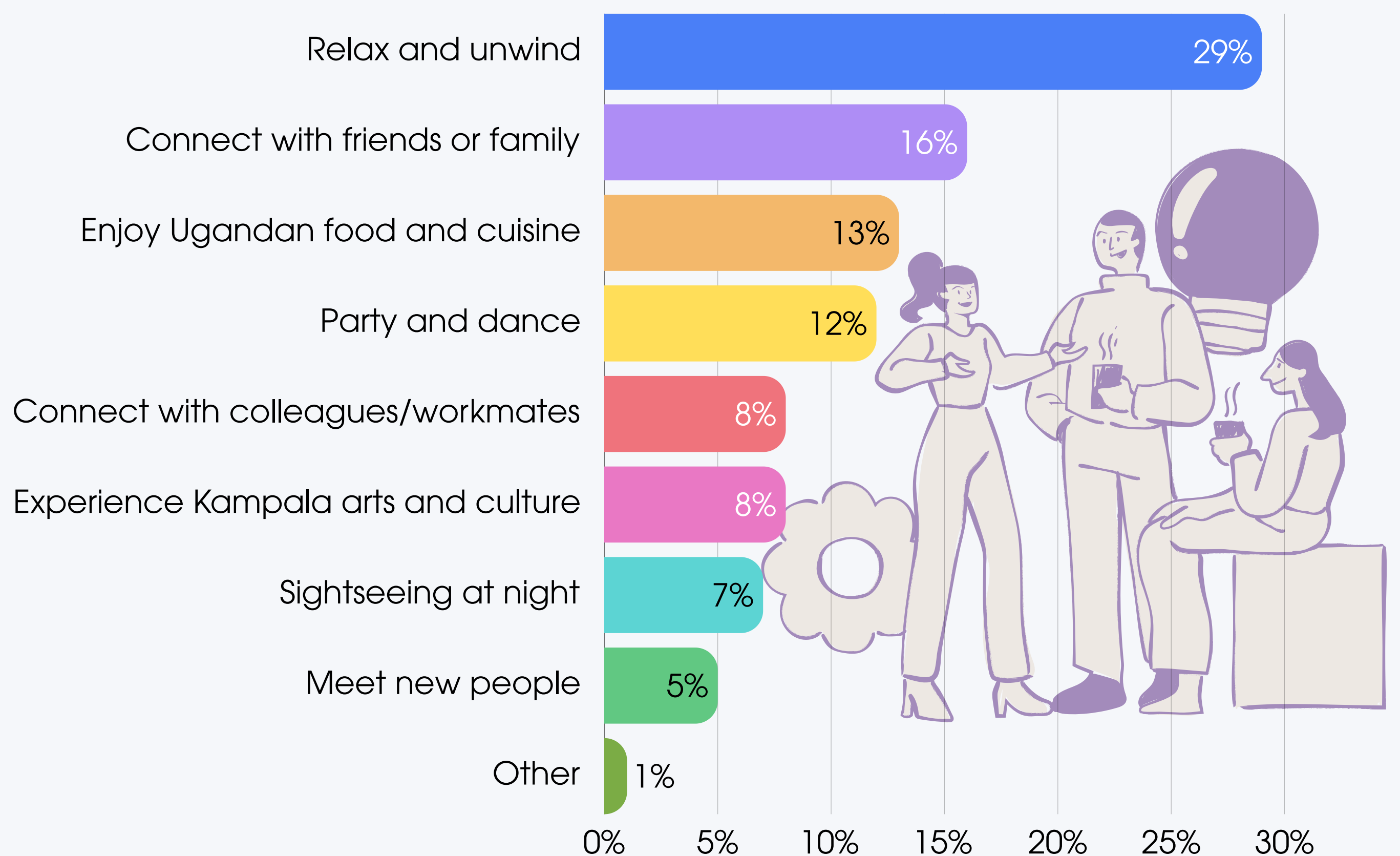


Figure 2: Purpose of engaging in nightlife

The results suggest that Kampala's nightlife appeal lies in both leisure (rest, entertainment) and cultural tourism (trying local food and experiencing the arts and crafts). Under the option of 'others' a number of tourists indicated that they mainly move out at night to engage in overnight prayers, have a meeting or do some shopping.

The findings show that nightlife in Kampala is primarily an early-evening experience (Figure 3). Majority of respondents (51%) prefer to go out between 6–8 pm, and another 46% prefer 9 pm–midnight. This suggests that most tourists begin engaging in nightlife relatively early, likely attempting to balance socializing, dining, and entertainment without staying out excessively late. Very few visitors (about 2%) reported going out after 1 am, indicating that Kampala's nightlife, from a tourist perspective, is more evening-focused than late-night driven.

On the other hand, nearly half of respondents (49%) preferred to be back from Kampala's nightlife between 9pm and midnight, while 26% return between 1–3am, and 19% after 3am. Only 6% preferred to return as early as 6–8pm. These results show that although tourists do stay out late, some choose to conclude their activities before the very late hours, possibly reflecting safety and security considerations, transport availability, and comfort with unfamiliar urban environments.



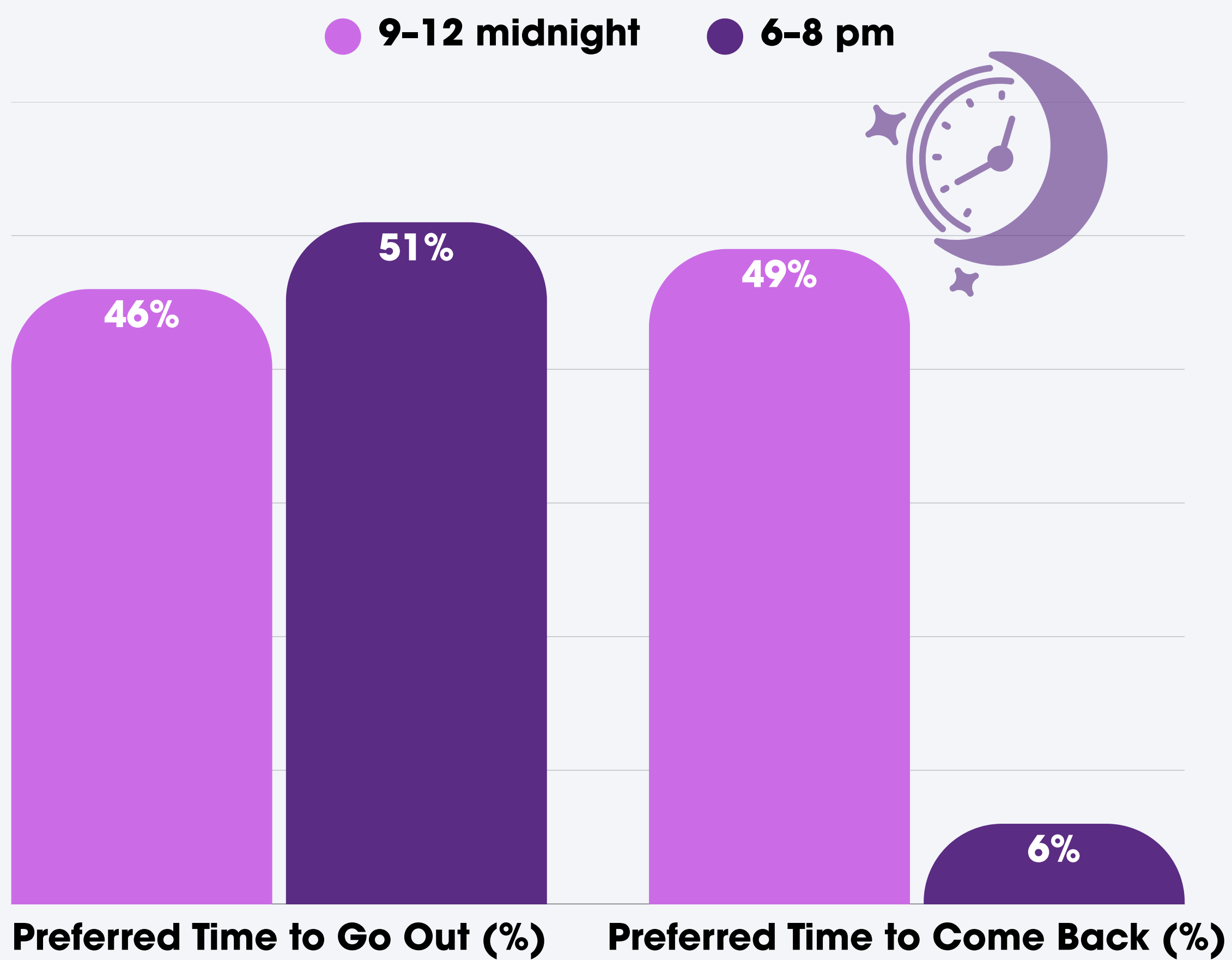


Figure 3: Preferred time for Kampala Nightlife

5.3 Nightlife Characteristics and Patterns

5.3.1 Nightlife Places Visited

When asked what types of places they actually visited on their last night out, majority (18%) indicated restaurants (with formal sit-down dining). This was followed by bars and restaurants (with dance music) at 15% and bars and restaurants (with live band music) at 13%. Other common places included shops or markets open at night (12%), nightclubs (9%), and entertainment venues like concert halls and cinemas (7%). Even cultural/theatre venues attracted 6% of respondents, sports and fitness centers at 5% and church or prayer sites drew 4% of the respondents (Figure 4). The results also revealed that, the tourists who responded to this survey but had not engaged in nightlife, identified that they would be interested to visit a vast range of places with restaurants and bars being the most preferred.



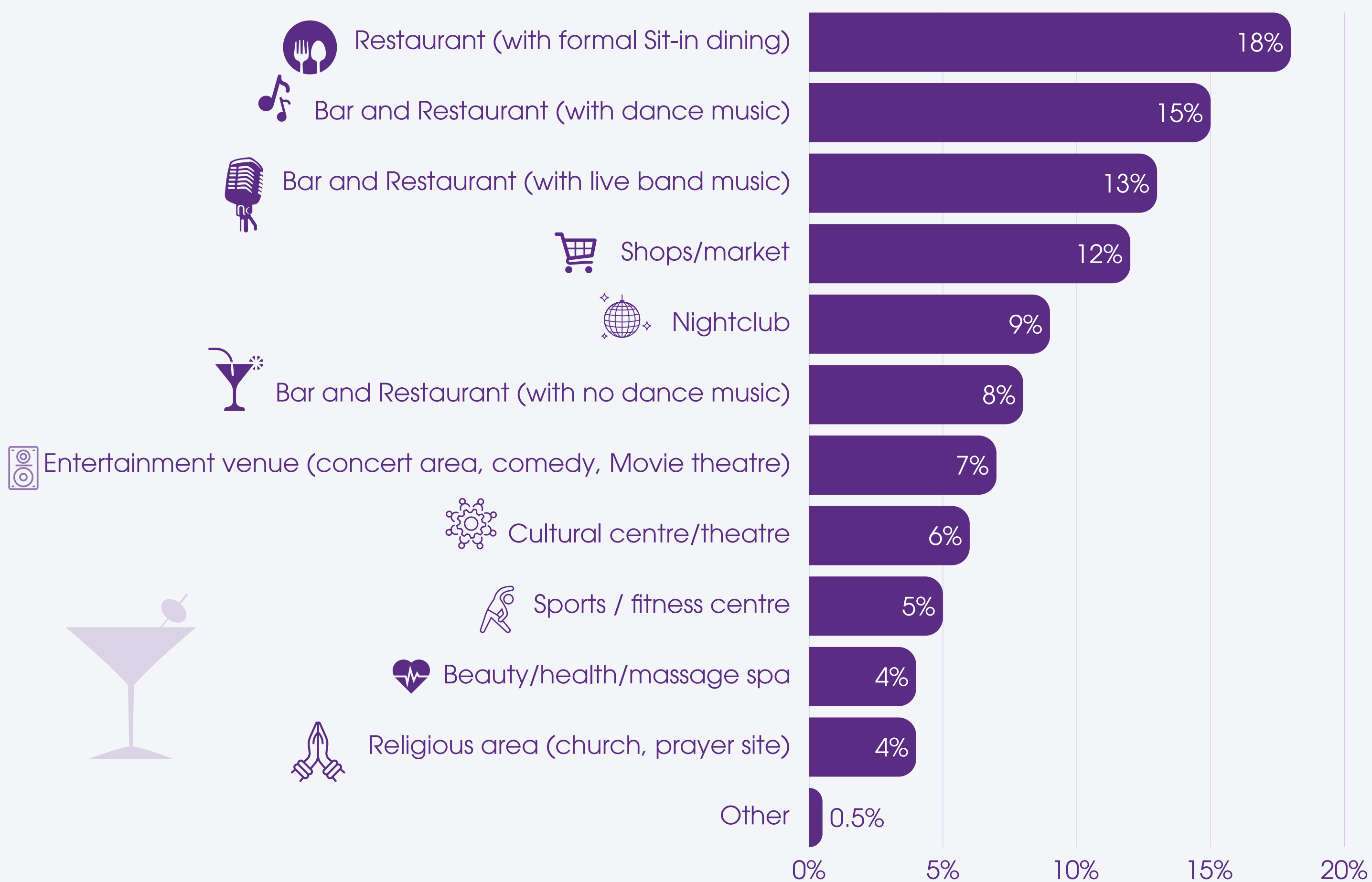


Figure 4: Places visited during Kampala nightlife

Although dining in restaurants and music in bars dominate, results further reveal that tourists engage in other activities. Nearly one in ten tourists visited other venues with diverse activities such as religious gatherings, cultural or sports/ fitness venues at night. A substantive number visited shops and markets including those selling crafts. The results reveal that nightlife in Kampala is diverse, offering a range of experiences that extend beyond alcohol and clubs to include food, culture, religion, entertainment, and social interaction, which all play a significant part in forming positive memories. The results dispel the common misconceptions that late-night venues are breeding grounds for crime or social vices.

5.3.2 Duration of Stay and Frequency

Many nightlife visitors stayed in Kampala for several days, with an average of 5-6 days. The most common length of last stay was 3-4 days (26%), followed by more than 10 days (23%), 5-6 days (16%), 7-8 days (14%) and 1-2 days (12%).

During these visits, tourists typically engaged in nightlife activities on 2-4 times (41%), 4-5 time (25%) 11% engaging in only once and 11% 6-7 times (Figure 5). This implies that even though most visitors only stayed for less than a week, they often go out at least 2-3 evenings. This reveals the strong appeal of Kampala's nightlife which offers a variety of experiences beyond daytime activities.

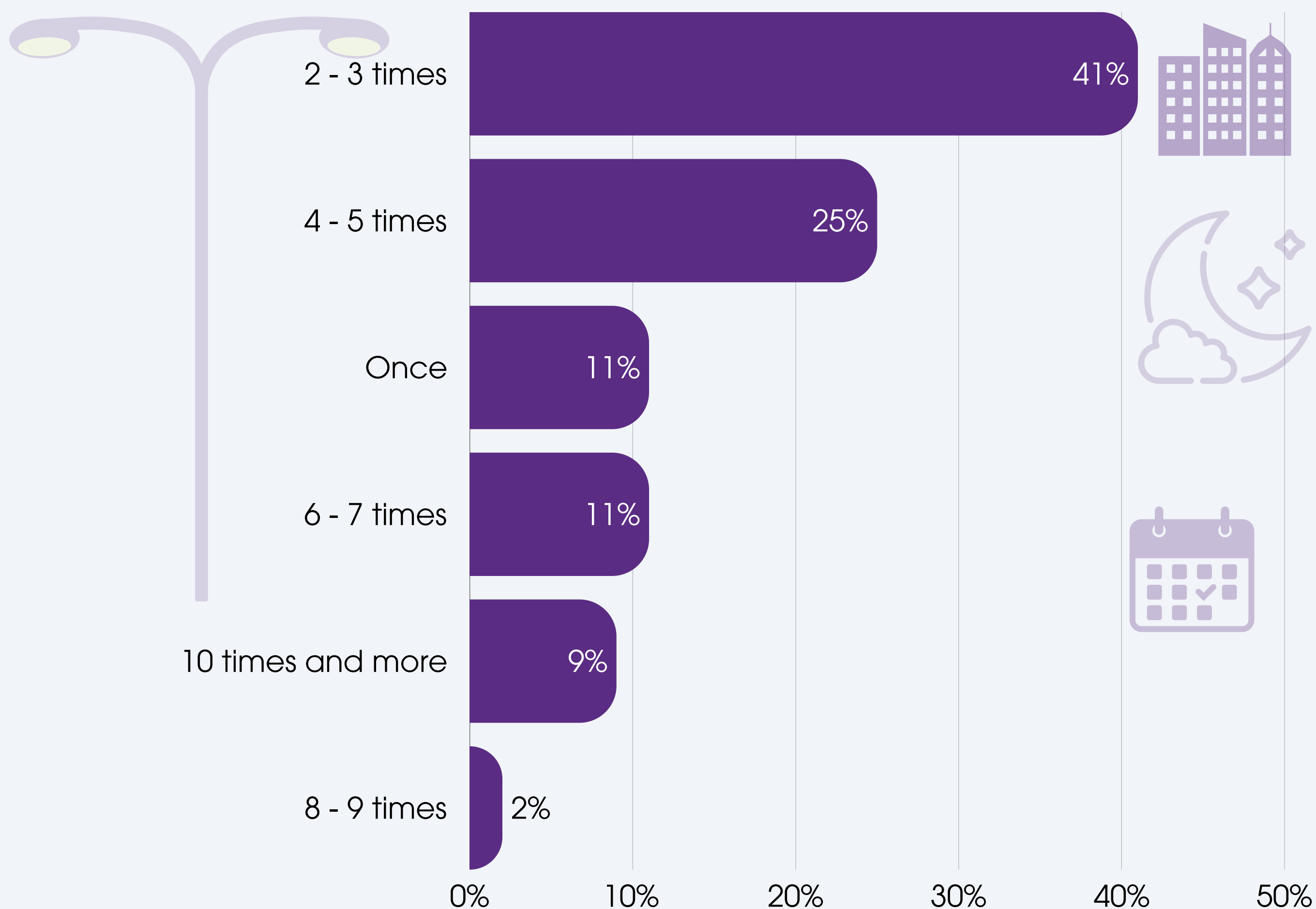


Figure 5: Number of time tourists engaged in nightlife on their last visit

5.3.3 Companionship

On their last night out, 35% went out with personal friends, 27% went alone, 23% with family members, and 14% with colleagues. This result indicates the significant role nightlife plays facilitating socializing with friends and family. On the other hand, having a significant number of sole visitors indicates that Kampala offers a relatively open and accessible nightlife environment, where tourists feel free to venture out alone and with new people they have met.

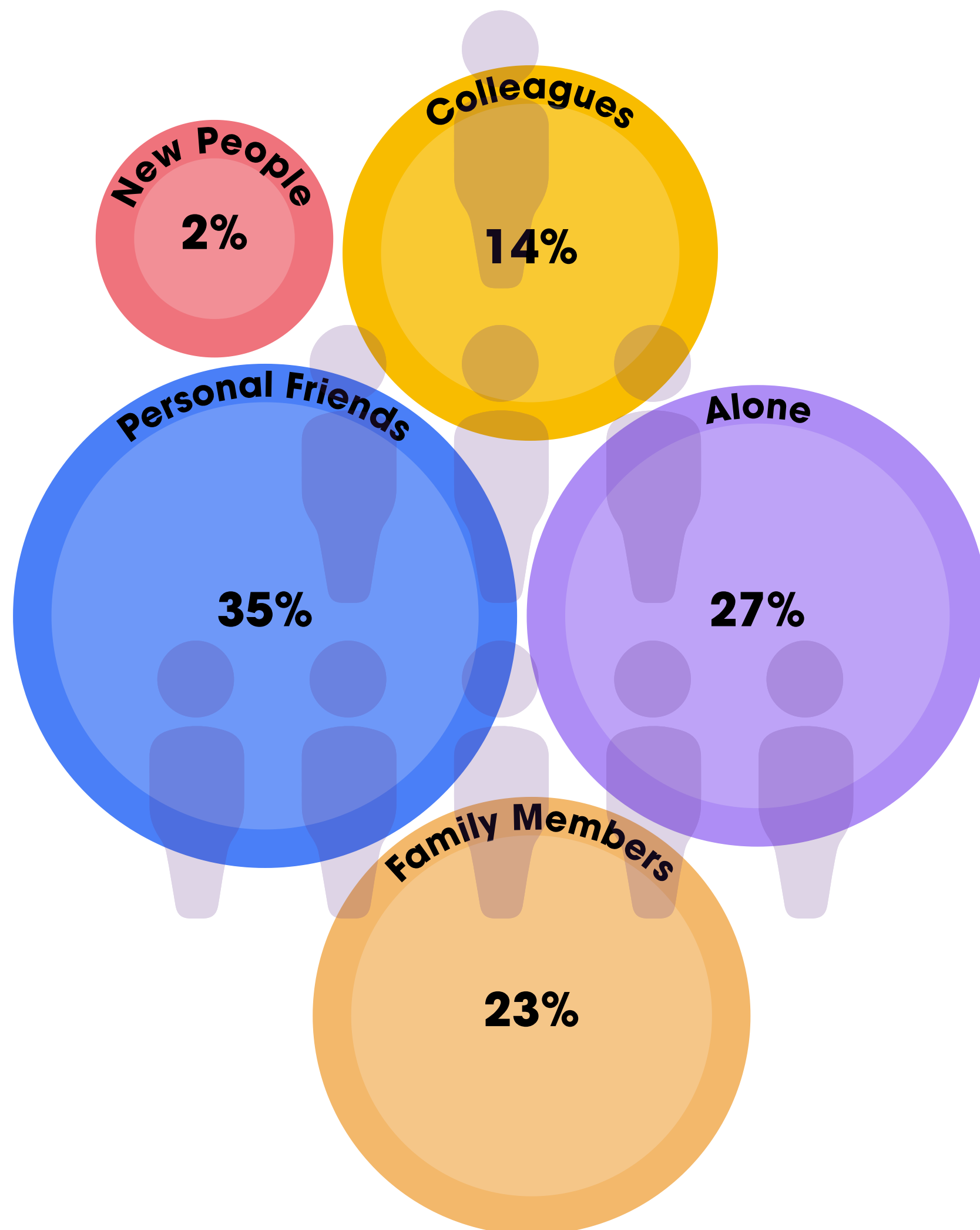


Figure 6: Companionship during nightlife in Kampala

The above results further highlight the role friends and family play in encouraging and accompanying the tourists during the nightlife experience. When asked if they were encouraged to participate in nightlife, 88% revealed in affirmative. They revealed that they had been encouraged by a friend or colleague (44%), a family member (17%) or had read good reviews on social media (16%), from tourism and travel websites (5%). Others (6%) had been encouraged by meeting/workshop organizers and this highlights the key role MICE can play in promoting urban tourism experiences beyond day time activities.



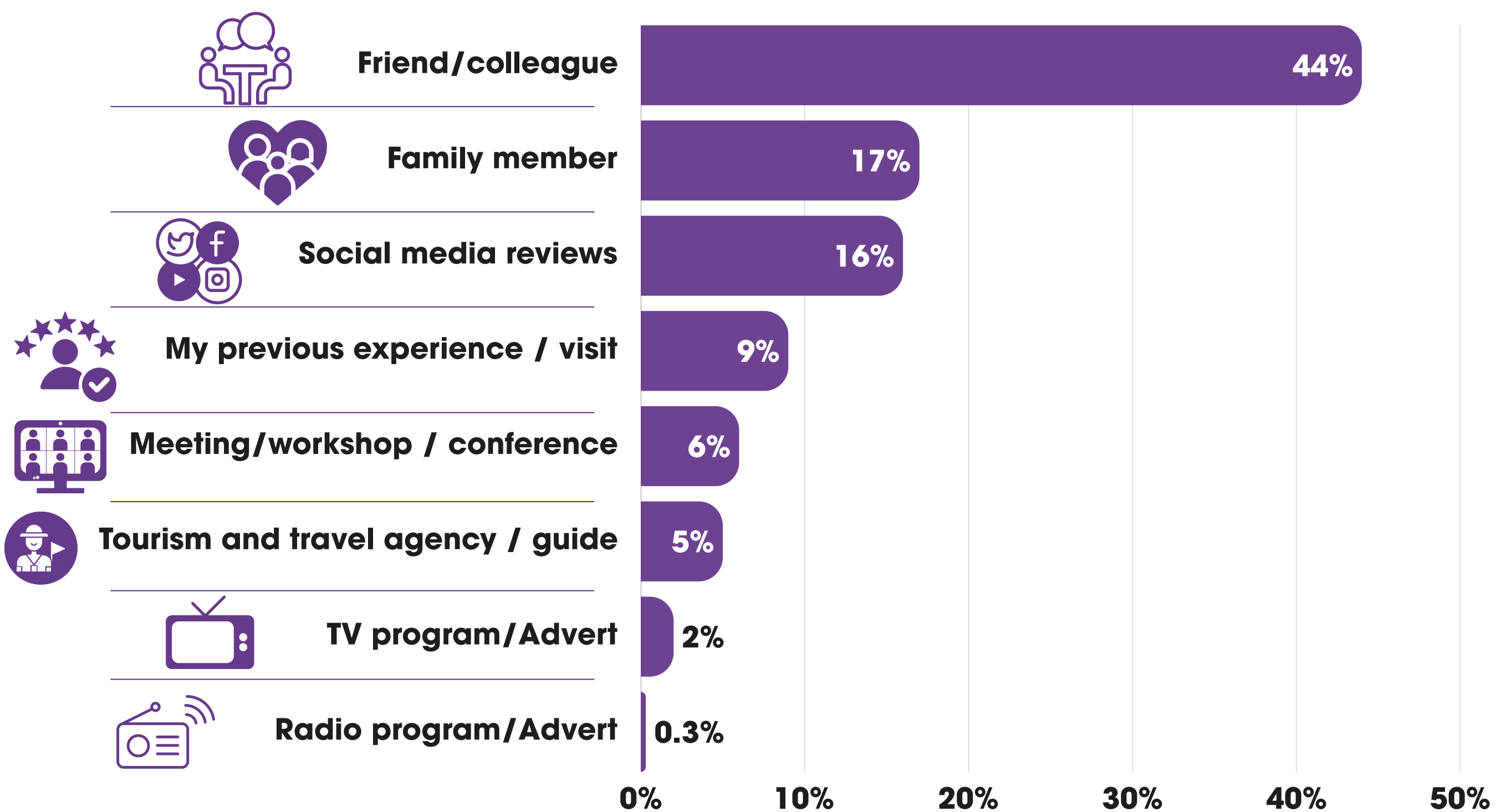


Figure 7: Source of recommendation to participate in nightlife

5.4 Preferences of Nightlife Venues and Ambiance

Notably, the tourists preferred venues with a mixed atmosphere: 52% of respondents said they like a venue with both indoor and outdoor space, rather than strictly indoor (preferred by 23%) and outdoor (24%).

When explicitly rating dining options, the majority of tourists (43%) indicated preference for venue with laid back atmosphere with some music, followed by 27% who preferred a mixed atmosphere that combines both laid back and party mood characteristics. A substantial number also preferred up beat venues with dance music. The diverse range of preferences implies that Kampala needs to ensure that it provides a wide variety nightlife atmosphere to cater for the varied tourist experiences.



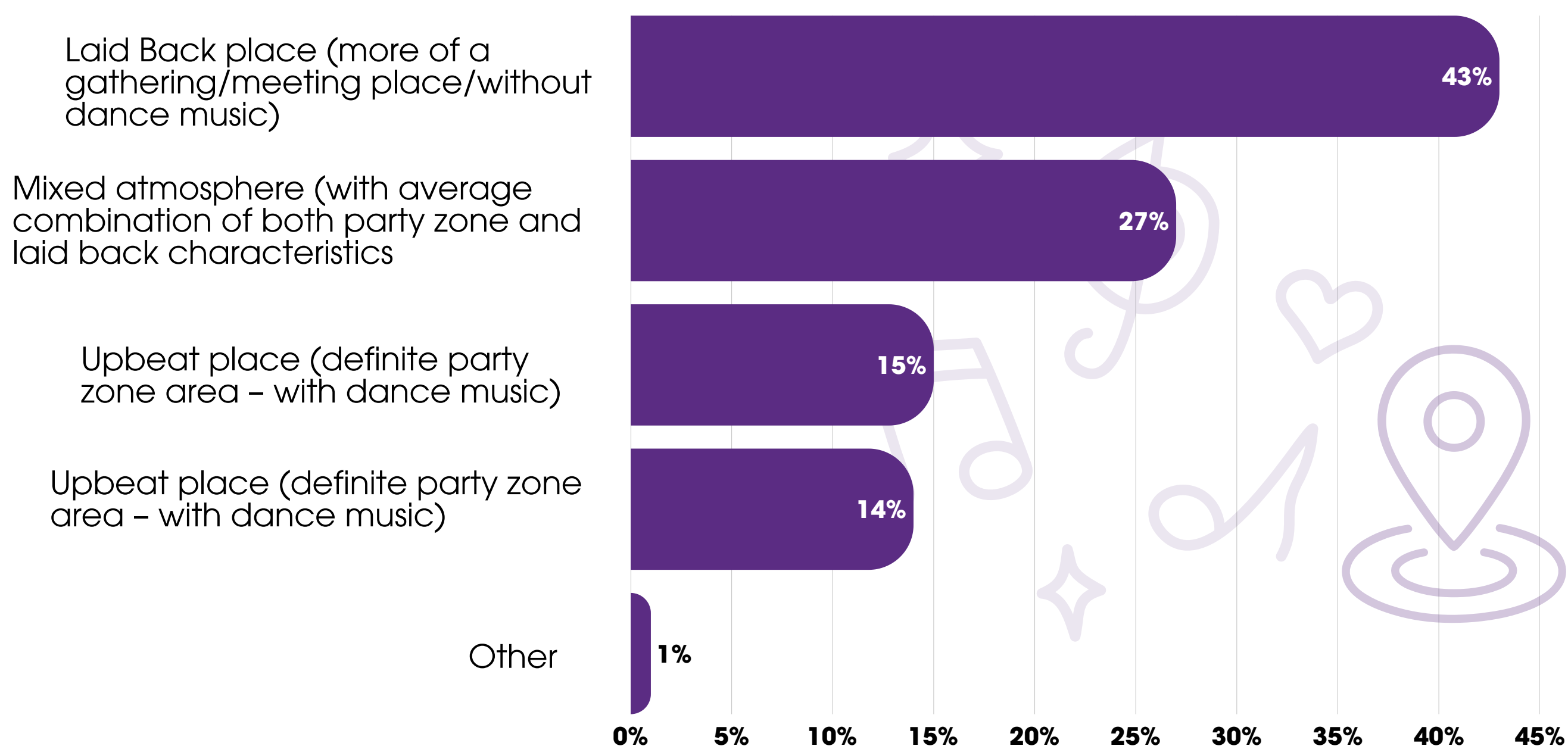


Figure 8: Tourists venue and ambiance preference

Given that visiting restaurants and dining out were selected among the main activities, the tourists were asked to state the kind of setting they preferred to take their food from. The majority (37%) indicated preference for formal restaurant settings, followed by restaurant with a bar setting (28%) and the least being roadside/street food setting (6%) – Figure 9

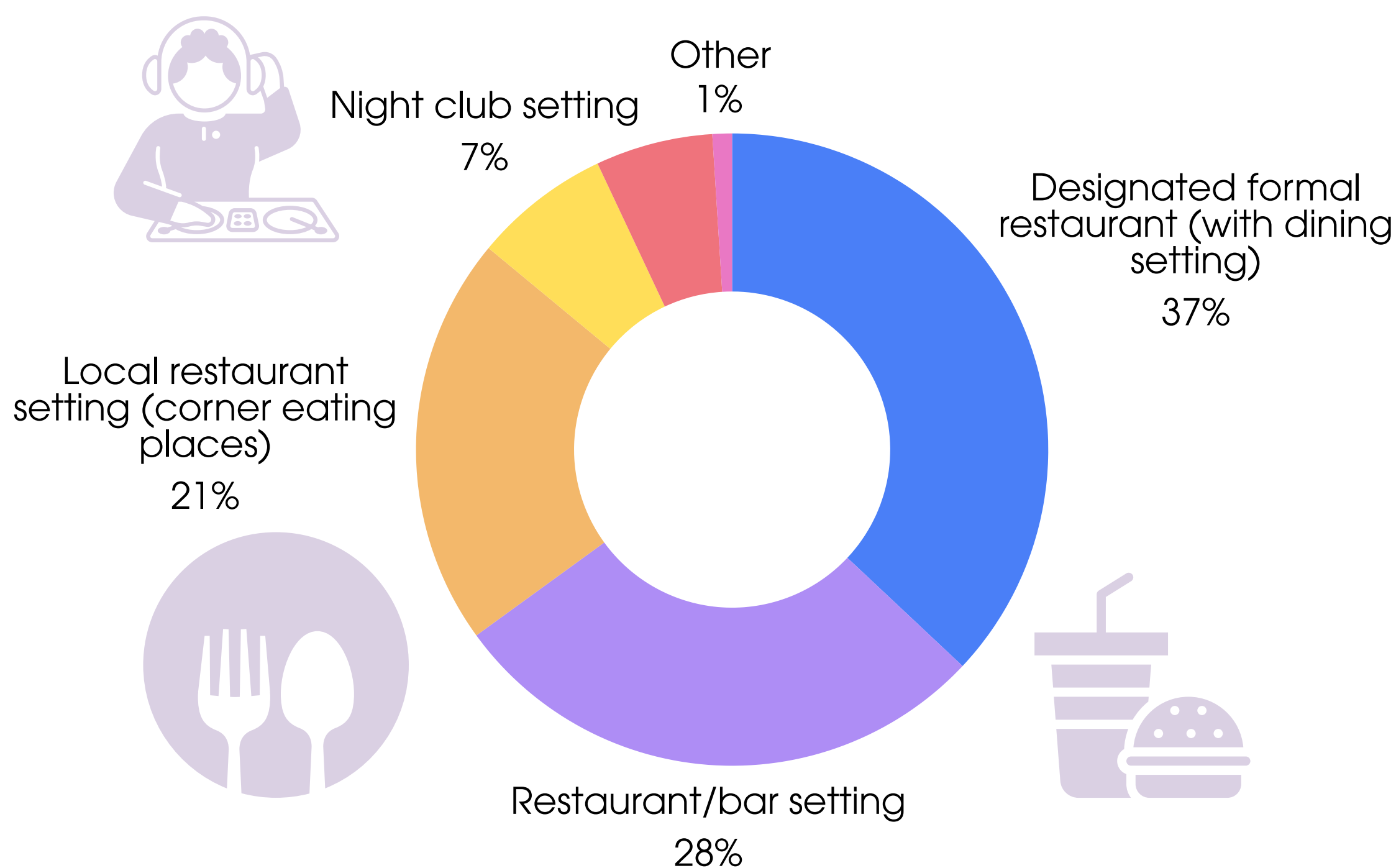


Figure 9: Tourists food setting preference

The above preference of nightlife venues reflects the kind of atmosphere and ambiance the tourists prefer. Results in Figure 10 reveal that there is high preference for venues with restaurants or social gatherings dance music, with the least preferred being restaurants without dance music. This is followed by venues with a live band, concert, themed night, cultural or a religious activity.

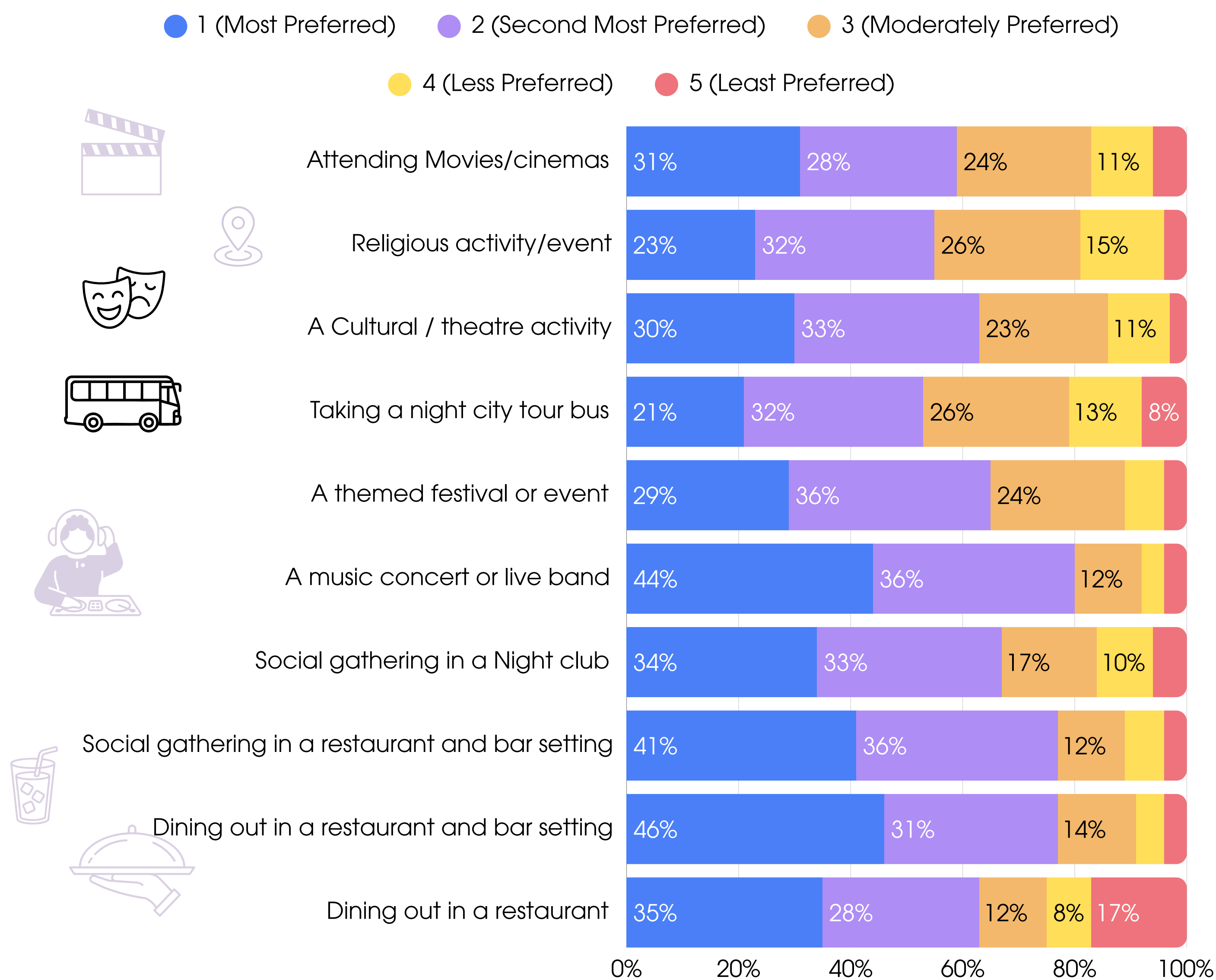


Figure 10: Preferences of tourists on a night out in Kampala



5.5 Satisfaction and Rating of Kampala's Nightlife Experience

5.5.1 Facilities and Services rating

Tourists generally expressed high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of Kampala's nightlife experience (Figure 11). The strongest ratings were recorded for the hospitality of the local population, with 54% rating it excellent and 41% good, reinforcing Kampala's reputation as a welcoming and friendly city. Similarly, quality of foods and beverages and music played received predominantly positive ratings, with more than half of respondents (52%) rating them good and around one-third rating them excellent (41%). These findings suggest that the core experiential elements that draw visitors into nightlife spaces—food, music, and social interaction—are performing well and contribute significantly to visitor enjoyment.

However, the results also highlight areas requiring improvement. Cleanliness and hygiene of venues received comparatively lower "excellent" ratings (16%), and nearly 30% rated them average. Ambience of venues and customer service also show room for enhancement, with notable low proportions rating them as excellent – 32% and 37% respectively. Although only small proportions rated safety-related factors such as behavior of other clients as poor or very poor, the fact that some respondents expressed dissatisfaction indicates lingering concerns around venue management and visitor behavior. Collectively, these patterns suggest that while Kampala delivers strong nightlife experiences, targeted investments in hygiene, ambience, and service quality would further strengthen the city's competitiveness and overall visitor satisfaction.

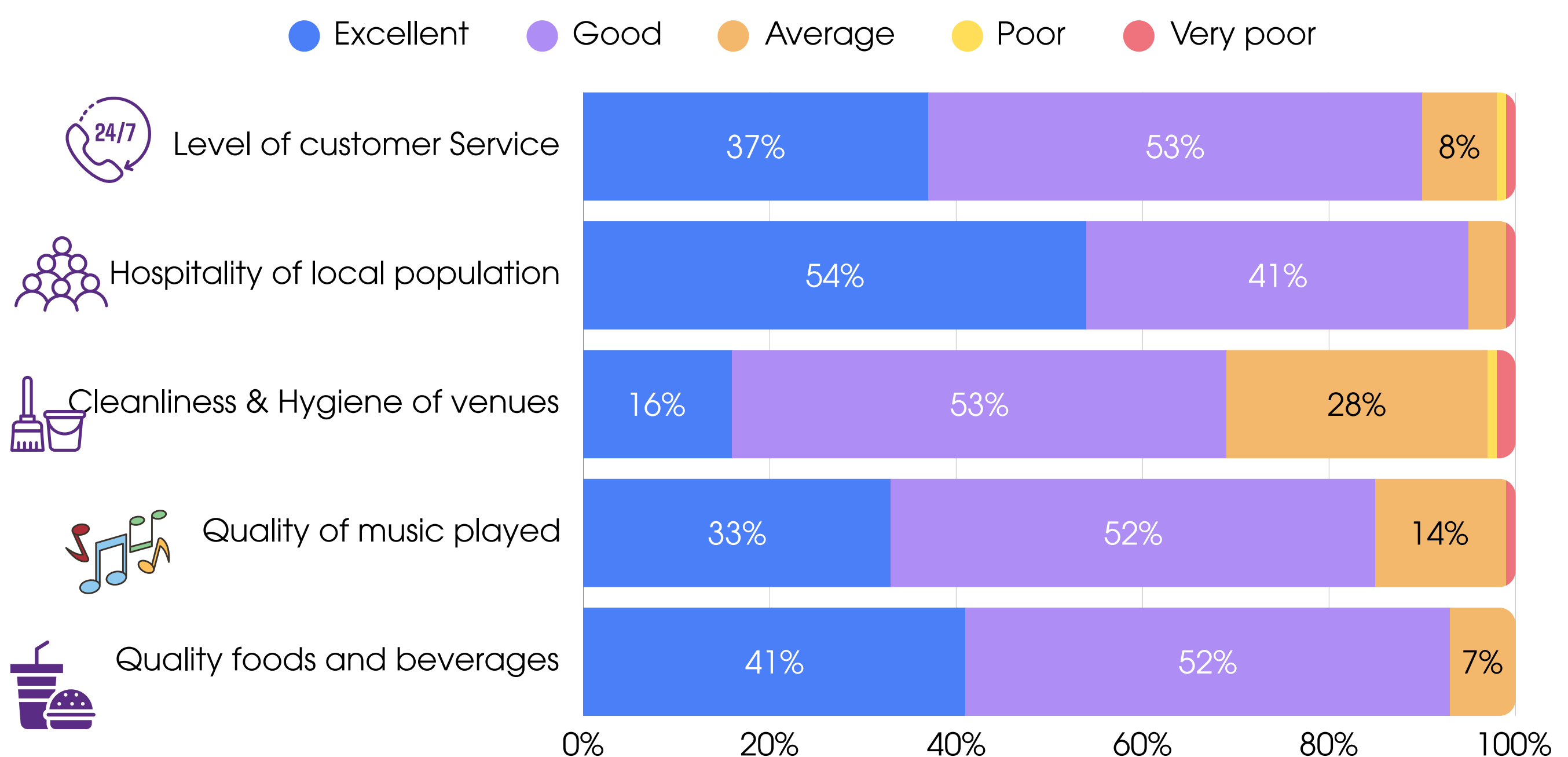


Figure 11: Levels of satisfaction with Kampala's nightlife experience

5.5.2 Food Rating

The ratings of food quality in Kampala’s nightlife venues are overwhelmingly positive across all indicators (Figure 12). More than 50% of respondents rated the taste, authenticity, and variety of food as “very good”, with an additional one-third rating them as “good.” This pattern suggests that tourists perceive Kampala’s food scene as flavorful, culturally grounded, and diverse, reinforcing nightlife as both a culinary and social experience. The consistently high scores also indicate that food is a strong value proposition within the broader night-time tourism offer.

Concerns about food quality are minimal. Only a very small proportion of respondents rated aspects such as authenticity, organic quality, taste, or variety as “poor” or “very poor,” and the share of “average” responses remains relatively low. The relatively strong scores for organic and authenticity attributes suggest that visitors value local, fresh, and traditional recipes — positioning Kampala to further develop its culinary tourism narrative. Overall, the results imply that food is a key strength that can be leveraged to encourage longer stays, repeat visits, and higher spending within the night economy. Bottom of Form

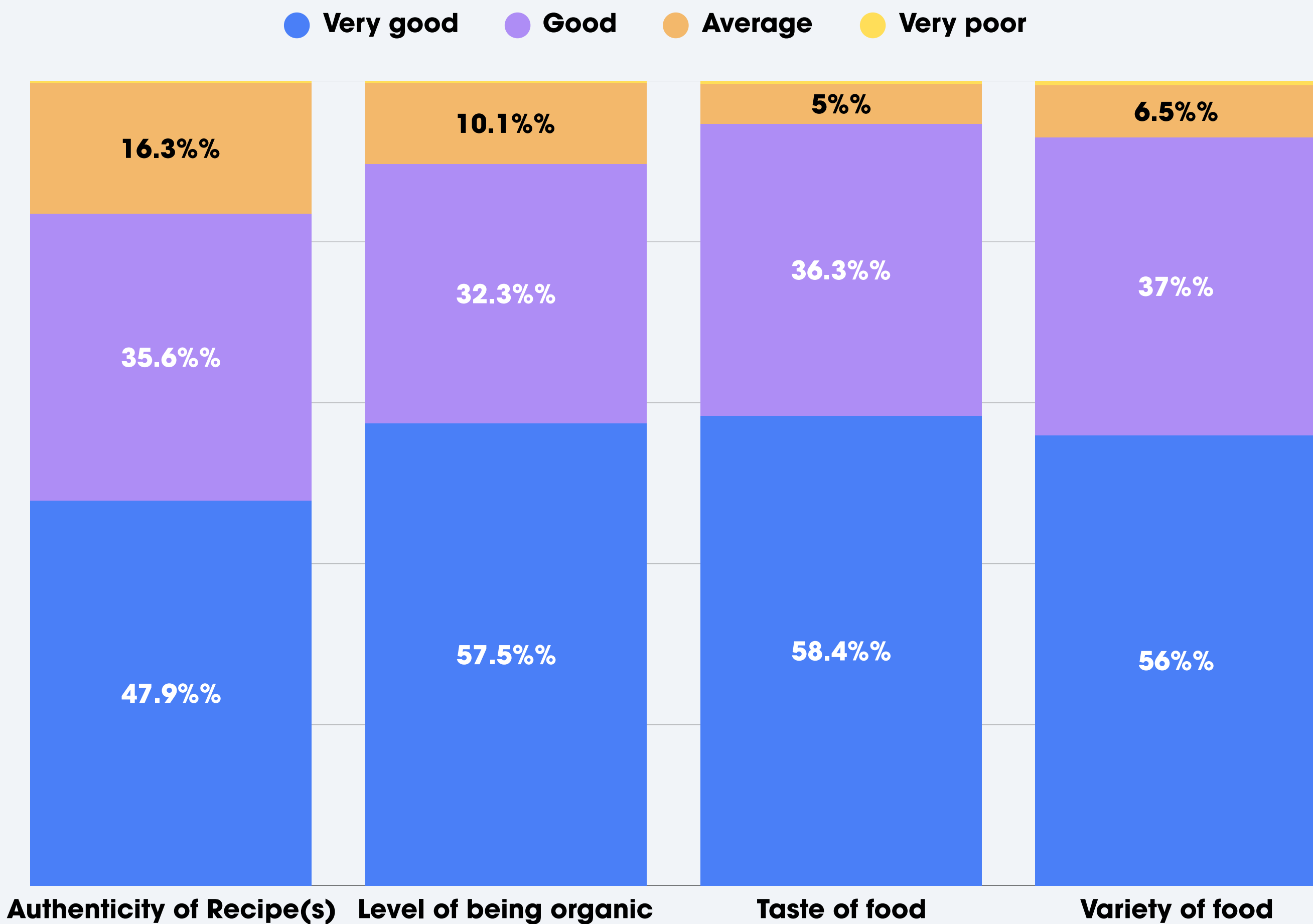


Figure 12: Rating of food in Kampala



5.5.3 Safety Rating

The results show that most tourists generally feel safe while participating in nightlife activities in Kampala (Figure 13). A combined 80% (43% strongly agree, 37% agree) reported feeling safe while out at night. This suggests that nightlife venues themselves — such as restaurants, bars, and entertainment facilities — are perceived as well-managed environments where visitors feel protected and comfortable. Indeed 88% (39% strongly agree and 49% agree) of the respondents observed that there was public order while they were out at night. However, about 6% expressed some level of disagreement, indicating that safety perceptions are not universal and that pockets of vulnerability still exist.

Important to note is that there are perception shifts when safety is evaluated outside the venues, particularly in public spaces. Only 56% (29% strongly agree, 27% agree) felt safe walking along the streets in nightlife zones, while 26% (16% disagree, 10% strongly disagree) expressed concern. This indicates that challenges such as poor lighting, limited pedestrian infrastructure, uneven policing, and the presence of disorderly activity may undermine feelings of safety once tourists leave controlled environments. This could partly explain why few tourists were preferred engaging in activities such as a night city bus tour.



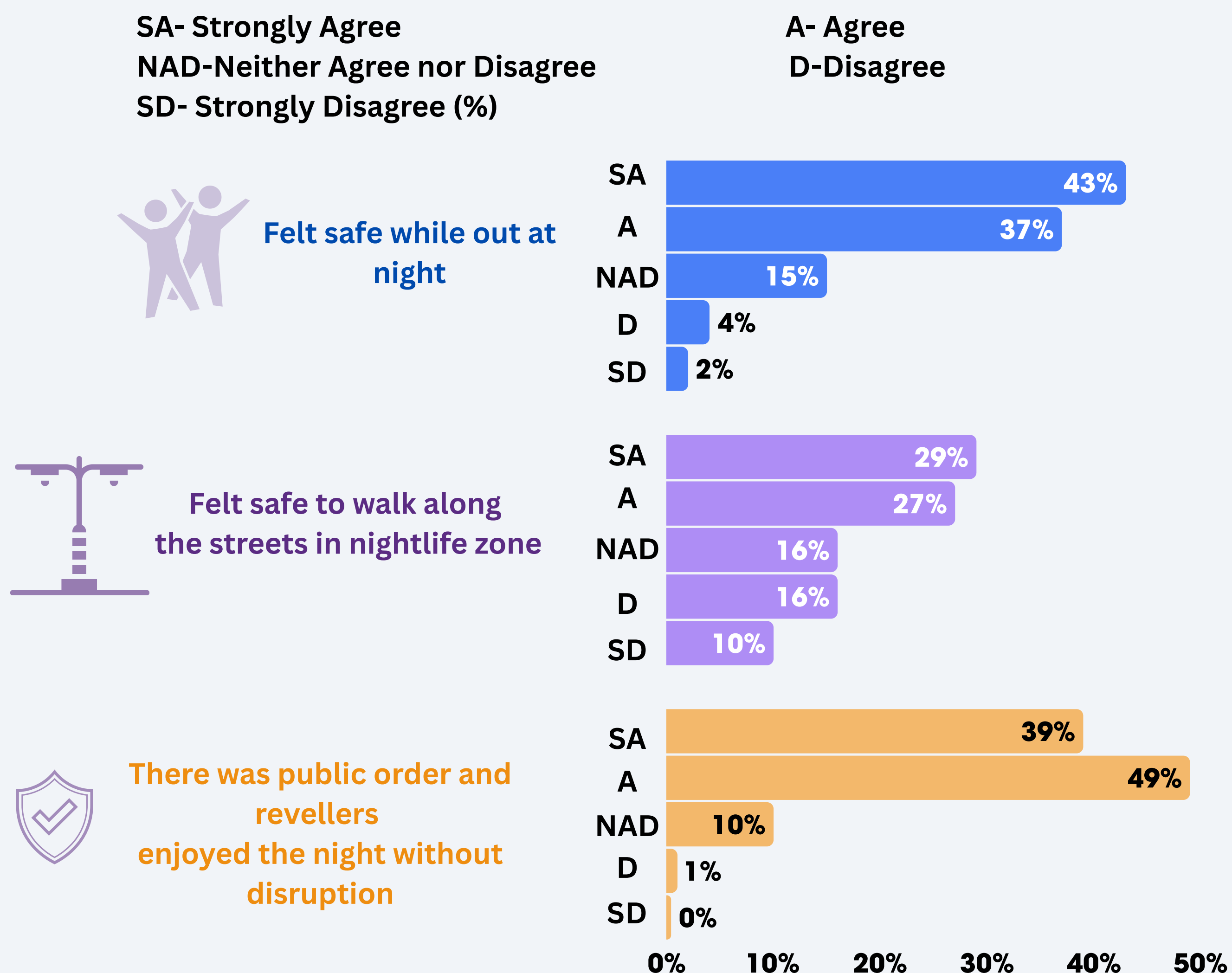


Figure 13: Rating of safety while engaging in nightlife

The Kampala case therefore demonstrates that nightlife competitiveness is inseparable from urban safety governance. Improving policing visibility, enhancing street lighting, coordinating transport at peak night hours, and maintaining orderly environments are not merely security interventions — they are tourism competitiveness strategies. Cities that recognise this linkage are better positioned to convert nightlife demand into sustained economic benefit, stronger destination image, and repeat visitation. In this sense, safety should be understood not as an ancillary concern, but as a foundational pillar of Kampala’s evolving night-time urban tourism system.



5.6 Determinants of Nightlife Choices in Kampala

The findings reveal that tourists' nightlife choices in Kampala are strongly shaped by safety and quality considerations rather than by just entertainment. An overwhelming 92% (49% strongly agree and 43% agree) reported that they consider safety when deciding where to go at night, and 91% (42% strongly agree and 49% agree) prefer venues that follow strict health and safety protocols. Food also emerged as a major determinant: 88% (43% strongly agree and 45% agree) indicated that food quality played a significant role in determining which venues they visited.

These results highlight that tourists are deliberate and discerning consumers of nightlife, prioritising venues that feel well-managed, dependable, and comfortable. The data also challenges a common misconception that alcohol is the primary driver of nightlife participation. Although 57% agreed that alcohol influenced their nightlife experience (16% strongly agree and 41% agree), there is a substantial proportion that remained neutral (20%) or disagreed (23%).

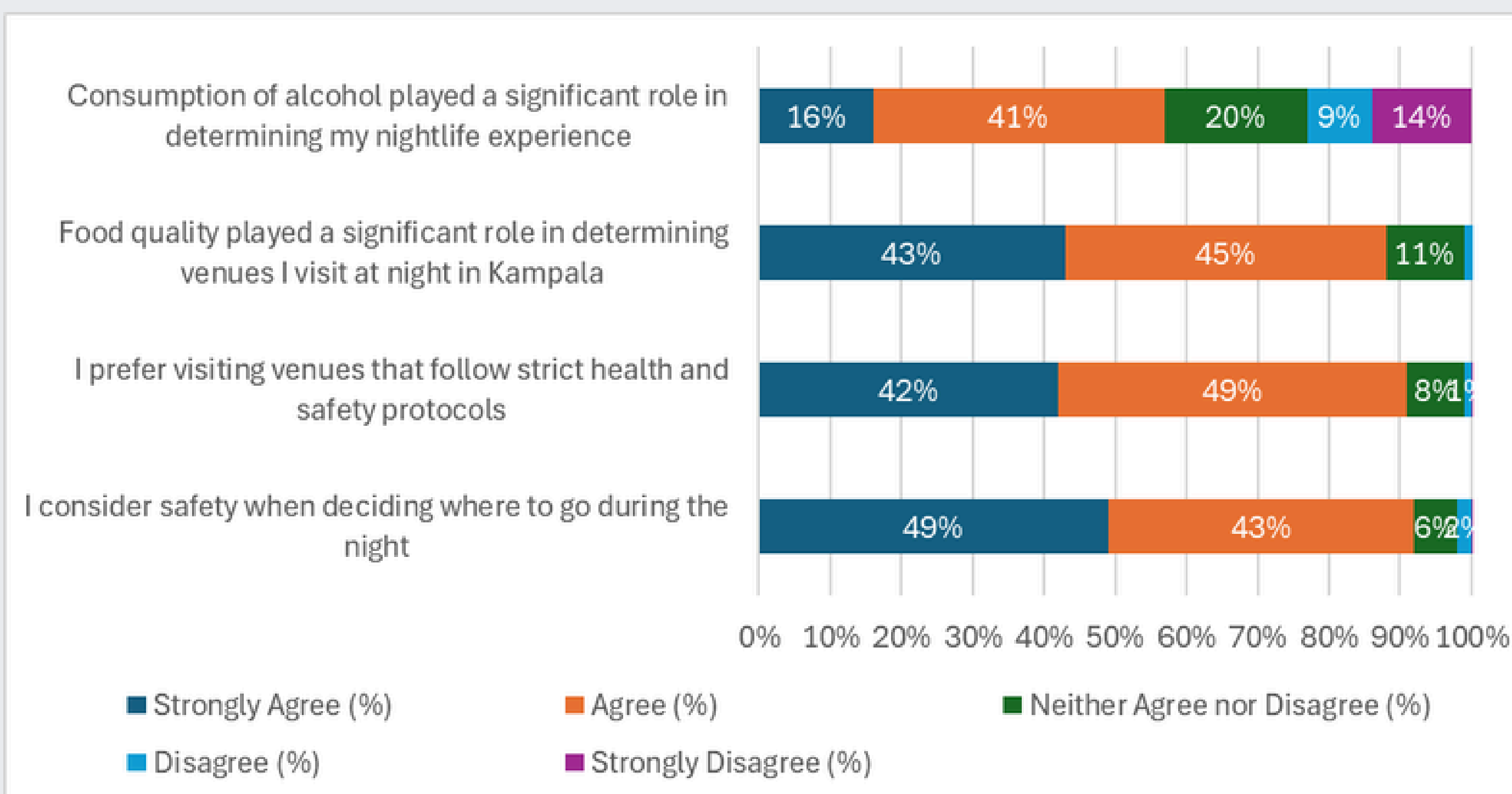


Figure 14: Rating of safety while engaging in nightlife

This suggests that, for most visitors, nightlife in Kampala is valued more for safety, ambience, food, and social experience than for alcohol consumption. Recognizing this distinction is important for urban tourism planning. It's important to position nightlife not as a risk-laden space, but as a legitimate tourism product that—when well managed—supports city vibrancy, visitor satisfaction and broader economic benefits.



5.7 Economic impact of Nightlife in Kampala

Limited data was available to determine the economic impact of nightlife in Kampala city especially with regards to its contribution to revenue generation, employment, contribution to taxes and investment in the city. However, the study was able to collect data from the tourists how much on average they spent in total per night when they went out and what items they spent the money on. Based on the expenditure data, the study was able to extrapolate the estimated economic contribution of nightlife

5.7.1 International Tourist Participation in Kampala's Nightlife

In order to establish the number of people that engage in Kampala nightlife the study built a model based on the existing tourist data and on expert opinion assumptions. The base year used was 2024, where Uganda received a total number of 1,371,895 international tourists out of which 315,313 (23%) arrived by air through Entebbe International Airport and 1,056,582 (77%) arrived by road through

the various border points(1). Given that there is no official record, the study model estimates that out of 315,313 tourists that arrived through Entebbe International Airport, 85% (268,016) stayed or visited Kampala. It's further assumed that of the 1,056,582 tourists who entered Uganda through land border posts, 30% (316,975) stayed or visited Kampala. This gives an annual estimate of 584,991 tourists in Kampala City.

Based on Expert Opinion, the model estimates that out of the 584,991 visitors to Kampala City, 82% (479,693) engaged in one or more activities (such as shopping, going out to a restaurant or bar etc) hence actively participating in the nightlife economy between 6pm and 6am. This reflects Kampala's strong reputation as a city with vibrant urban culture, music, food, and social life.

Importantly, the study notes that tourists in Kampala do not participate in nightlife every night of their stay. Survey results reveal that on average tourist spent 7 nights in Kampala (not far from 8.7 nights national average), and over 50% of them engaged in nightlife activities between two (2) and four (4) times per visit.

5.7.2 Tourist Nights and Consumption Patterns

Based on participation rates and frequency of engagement, the total number of international nightlife tourists is estimated at 479,693 with an average of participation of 2 nights per tourist. This results in approximately 786,508 nightlife tourist nights annually. These nightlife-specific tourist nights represent periods of concentrated discretionary spending, typically characterized by higher margins, strong employment intensity, and significant linkages to local suppliers, artists, and service providers.

5.7.3 Average Tourist Spending on Nightlife

The results indicate that nightlife generates substantial per-visitor spending, averaging approximately UGX 360,000 (approximately USD 100) per night. As reflected in Figure 15, the largest share of this spending, UGX 160,000 (44%) goes to food and drinks, reflecting the strong role of culinary and social dining experiences in Kampala's night economy. A further UGX 110,000 (30%) is spent on "other expenses," which include shopping, crafts, tips, and parking — suggesting that nightlife spending circulates widely across multiple sectors, including informal vendors.

Transport represents another significant cost of UGX 58,000 (16%), showing reliance on taxis and ride-hailing services. Entrance fees account for around UGX 35,000 (10%), indicating willingness by tourists to pay for quality venues and entertainment. This further suggests that nightlife in Kampala is relatively accessible, with most expenses driven by supporting services rather than ticketed entertainment.

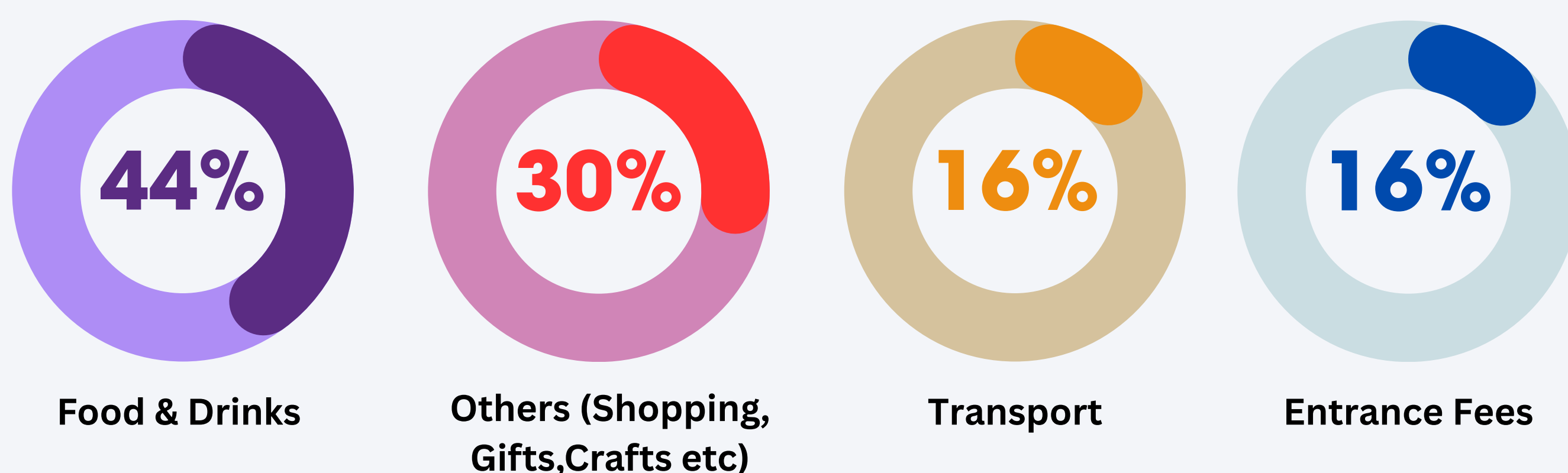


Figure 15: Average tourist expenditure % distribution

Figure 15 shows new money injected into Kampala's urban economy through international tourism consumption during night-time hours. This affirms that nightlife is not a marginal activity; instead, it is a high-value tourism product that contributes meaningfully to city revenues, MSME incomes, and youth employment across hospitality, retail, and transport sub sectors. This implies that since nightlife supports multiple segments of the urban economy, if sufficiently supported and strategically planned it can have strong potential to stimulate local economic growth and provide economic benefits to numerous actors along the tourism value chain.



5.7.4 Significance Relative to Total Tourist Expenditure

Results reveal that nightlife spending amounts to USD 200 (for two nights) per participating tourist. With the national average expenditure per international tourist per trip at USD 933, this implies that nightlife accounts for approximately 21% of total trip expenditure for the participating tourists.

This positions nightlife as a major discretionary spending category, rivalling accommodation and transport in its contribution to tourist value capture. It also demonstrates that nightlife is not a peripheral activity, but a core component of Kampala's tourism value proposition, influencing visitor satisfaction, length of stay, and destination competitiveness.

5.7.5 Revenue Generation

The survey results indicate that on average a tourist spends about UGX 360,000 (USD 100) per night and typically on average they go out twice per visit in Kampala. This implies each participating tourist spends an average of UGX 720,000 (USD 200) per visit on nightlife activities. Projected across the full year, the 479,693 tourists estimated to visit Kampala annually (assuming similar participation patterns), nightlife generates about UGX 345.4 billion (USD 95.9 Million) annually.

Important to note is that, this is a conservative estimate given that the study only captures international tourists' direct spending - expenditure on food, drinks, entertainment, and related services provided by nightlife businesses. The study does not capture the indirect expenditure (such as income earned by workers, supply chain purchases etc) and induced expenditure (re-spending within the local economy such as buying food, transport, paying rent etc). Even under this conservative scenario, the revenue results highlight nightlife as a significant, yet under-recognized, economic contributor within Kampala's urban tourism ecosystem. This reinforces the need for ensuring there is structured institutional support and investment in night-time economy planning and development.

5.7.6 Contribution to Employment

In order to estimate the number of jobs supported by nightlife in Kampala, the study applied a revenue-per-job ratio, a methodology commonly used by WTTC and UN Tourism estimates. Based on the Uganda Tourism Satellite Account Report (2025) in 2023 the tourism expenditure was UGX 3,818.6 billion and this was able to deliver 803,691 total direct jobs in the tourism sector. This implies that each direct tourism job in Uganda is supported by roughly UGX 4.7 million annual revenue from tourism.

With an estimated nightlife spending of UGX 345.4 billion per year and based on the revenue-per-job ratio (of one direct job per 4.7 million revenue) Kampala's nightlife economy supports approximately 73,485 direct jobs - across various occupations as club managers, bartenders, waiting staff, DJs, security personnel, event promoters, guides, cashiers, cleaners, transport and other night-time service providers. Kampala's nightlife accounts for about 10% of total jobs in Uganda's tourism industry.

It's important to emphasise that the estimate of jobs supported by Kampala's nightlife, is a modest one since the study only covers international tourists (excluding domestic tourist's contribution) and it only accounts for direct tourism jobs. In reality, tourism spending also generates indirect jobs (for example, suppliers of food and beverages, farmers, wholesalers, utilities, maintenance services, ICT providers) and induced jobs - created when workers in both the direct and indirect sectors spend their income in the wider economy on food, transport, rent etc. The contribution of nightlife to employment is therefore higher since these multiplier effects typically expand total employment significantly beyond the direct figure. Therefore, while the direct jobs estimate provides a useful baseline for policy planning, there is need to accurately calculate the total employment impact of nightlife tourism in Kampala and Uganda in general.

The study results point to the fact that a vibrant and well-managed nightlife economy does not simply have an entertainment function, but acts as a meaningful employment engine—supporting jobs and livelihoods of thousands of households within and without of the city. The results further justify the need for planners and policymakers to treat nightlife as a strategic sub sector (and not merely a marginal activity) that propels the urban economy and the tourism industry at large.



5.7.7 Contribution to Tax

Using the Uganda Tourism Satellite Account (2025) as a benchmark, inbound tourism expenditure in 2023 totalled UGX 3,818.6 billion and generated UGX 370 billion in tax revenue. This implies that, on average, tourism sector contributed about 9.7 percent of its value as government tax revenue.

Applying the same ratio, nightlife tourism revenue of UGX 345.4 billion potentially contributes approximately UGX 33.3 billion (USD 9.3 million) annually as tax. While this is an estimated extrapolation (given that actual outcomes may vary depending on tax compliance levels, the mix of formal versus informal businesses, and tax administration efficiency), it provides a representative indication that nightlife is not just a leisure activity — it is a meaningful fiscal contributor. Recognizing this tax potential strengthens the case for deliberately planning, regulating, and supporting nightlife as part of Uganda's broader tourism and urban development strategy.

On overall there is clear evidence that nightlife already contributes significantly to tourism spending, employment, and tax revenue. However, the current estimates remain conservative because they rely on limited available indicators and on estimates, rather than a comprehensive economic data variable. This implies that the nightlife economy (that operates across multiple sectors - transport, food services, entertainment, informal trade) interactions are often not systematically recorded and its impact fully captured. To fully understand the real economic value of nightlife to Kampala and to the tourism sector more broadly, there is a strong need for more comprehensive and routine data collection on key variables such as; number of patrons to venues, business turnover, employment (formal and informal), supply-chain linkages, and tax contributions.



5.8 Challenges Faced by Tourists while Participating in Kampala's nightlife

Although most tourists reported generally positive nightlife experiences, the challenges highlighted in the Figure 16, such as limited Wi-Fi access (19%), excessive noise (15%), high prices (10%), safety concerns (9%), and limited variety of activities (9%) — suggest areas that deserve policy attention. While none of these issues emerged as overwhelmingly dominant or crippling to visitor enjoyment, they nevertheless point to service-quality gaps that can gradually erode the overall visitor experience if left unaddressed.

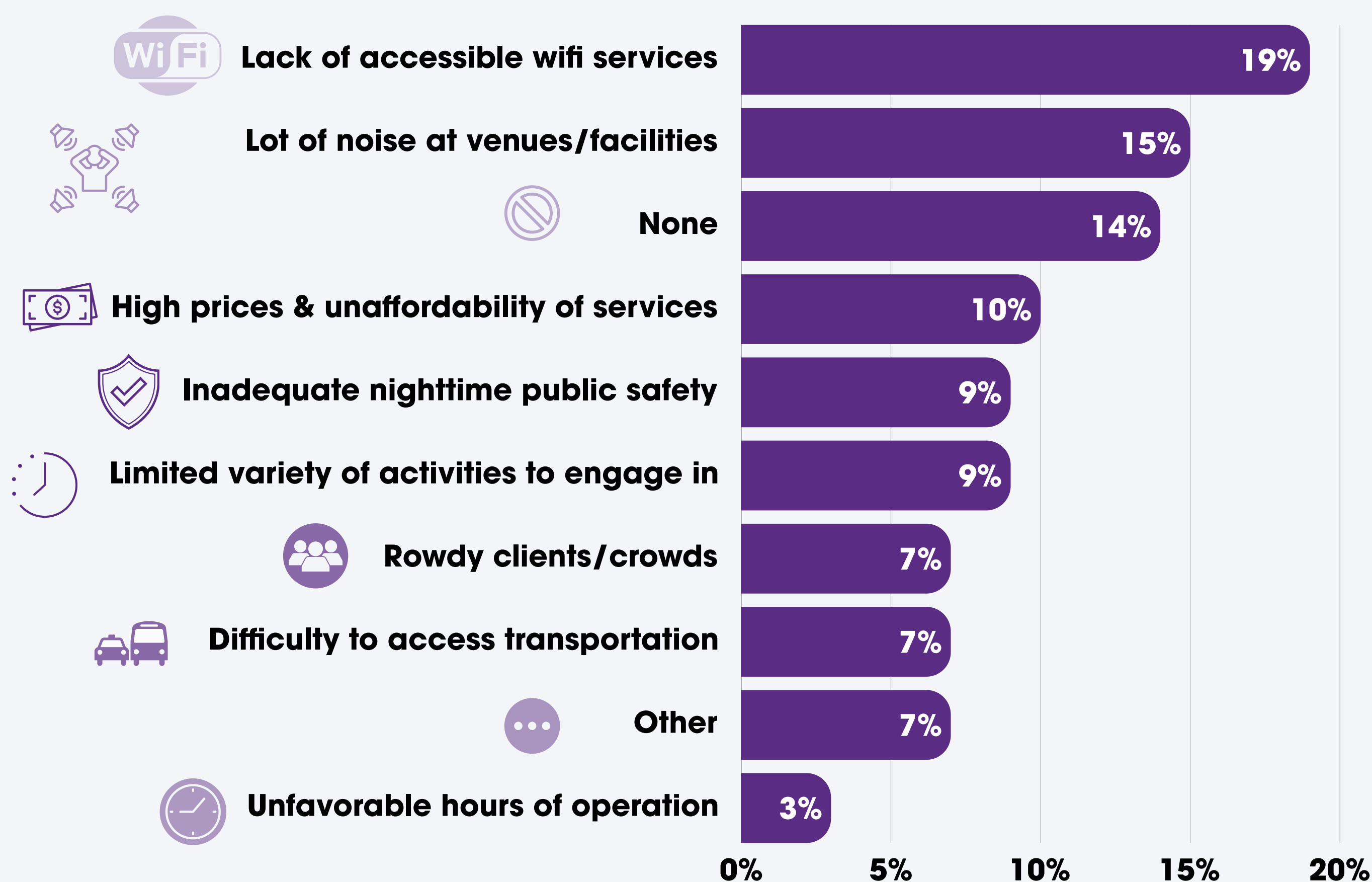


Figure 16: Challenges faced by tourists while participating in Kampala's nightlife

From a destination-competitiveness perspective, these concerns should be viewed as early warning indicators rather than major deterrents. Addressing them proactively — through improved safety coordination, better transport access, clearer pricing, diversified nightlife activities, and stronger digital connectivity — would help Kampala strengthen its image as a welcoming, well-managed, and modern urban tourism destination. In short, the findings do not signal a crisis, but they clearly highlight strategic areas where targeted investment and policy support can significantly enhance Kampala's night-time tourism offering.



On a positive note, the study findings strongly suggest that the future of Kampala's nightlife is bright. Overall satisfaction is very high: 65% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 29% were 'very satisfied', while 93% said they intend to participate in nightlife again on their next visit. Equally encouraging, 57% would 'highly recommend' and 41% would 'recommend' Kampala nightlife to friends or colleagues. These indicators demonstrate strong loyalty, positive word-of-mouth marketing, and repeat participation—all critical ingredients for competitiveness. With targeted improvements in the identified challenge areas, Kampala can further strengthen its position as a vibrant, appealing, and competitive urban nightlife destination.



5.9 Drivers for Nightlife in Kampala

The evidence from this study strongly suggests that future demand for nightlife in Kampala will continue to grow and diversify. High levels of satisfaction, strong repeat-intention indicators, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations point to sustained and expanding interest in night-time experiences among international visitors.

Several factors are expected to drive this growth. First, Kampala's position as Uganda's primary gateway city means that most international tourists spend at least part of their trip in the city before or after engaging in wildlife, business, or conference travel. As tourism volumes recover and grow, the absolute number of visitors exposed to Kampala's nightlife will rise correspondingly. Given that over 90 percent of surveyed tourists expressed an intention to participate in nightlife again on future visits, repeat engagement is likely to intensify.

Second, demographic trends favour nightlife expansion. The dominant nightlife participants are young and middle-aged adults who value social interaction, food experiences, music, and cultural authenticity. This cohort aligns closely with global urban tourism trends, where travellers increasingly seek immersive, experiential, and evening-based activities rather than passive sightseeing. Kampala's existing strengths in hospitality, music, cuisine, and social vibrancy position it well to meet these expectations.

Third, demand is expected to shift toward more diversified and curated nightlife products. The findings show that tourists value safety, ambience, food quality, and cultural content more than alcohol consumption alone. This implies growing demand for guided food tours, live music circuits, themed cultural nights, creative performances, night markets, and faith-based or wellness-oriented night activities. As visitor preferences evolve, nightlife demand will extend beyond clubs into more inclusive, multi-generational, and experience-driven formats.





Fourth, improvements in safety, mobility, and infrastructure will significantly influence future demand. The study shows that tourists feel safer within venues than in surrounding public spaces. Addressing issues such as street lighting, pedestrian safety, night-time transport, and visible policing is likely to unlock latent demand—encouraging tourists to stay out longer, explore more areas, and participate in a wider range of night-time activities.

Finally, digital platforms and social media will amplify future demand. Positive reviews, peer recommendations, and online visibility already play a significant role in encouraging nightlife participation. As Kampala’s nightlife becomes better packaged, branded, and digitally promoted, demand is likely to grow not only in volume but also in value, with higher per-visitor spending and stronger linkages to local creative industries.

On overall, future demand for nightlife in Kampala is expected to be strong, diversified, and increasingly experience-driven. With strategic planning, improved governance, and targeted investment, nightlife can evolve from an informal attraction into a structured pillar of Kampala’s urban tourism economy—contributing to longer stays, higher spending, job creation, and a stronger international city brand.

6.0 Conclusion

This study affirms that nightlife is an important driver of urban tourism in Kampala offering a diverse night-time activities ranging from dining, live music, cultural events, markets to religious gatherings. Large majority of visitors were satisfied with their night-time experiences, are willing to recommend others to participate, and nearly all of them intend to engage in nightlife again. This reveals that nightlife is already a substantive and positively-valued component of Kampala's urban tourism offer, with significant per-night expenditure. This demonstrate that nightlife does not only contribute to visitor satisfaction, but significantly contributes to the city's vibrancy. When viewed through an urban tourism lens, nightlife is a strategic asset that stimulates the city economy, supports livelihoods, and shapes Uganda's destination image and competitiveness.

However, it's important to note that benefits of nightlife are not automatic. Without proper planning and coordination, nightlife can generate negative impacts that can undermine both tourist and community wellbeing. Kampala therefore has a timely opportunity to deliberately shape its night economy experience by developing approaches and strategies that are grounded in local realities and in line with standards from other global cities. Therefore there is need for Kampala city to address the existing managerial, operational and infrastructure challenges given that perceived safety, ease of accessibility and service quality directly influence tourists repeat visits and word-of-mouth promotion.

On overall, nightlife is an asset for Kampala's urban tourism development and local livelihoods enhancement. However, its full potential will be realized only if city planners, tourism authorities and businesses coordinate to ensure varied experiences, visitor safety, enhanced mobility, improved service standards, and product development. With targeted modest investments and better data, nightlife can become a stronger engine of inclusive economic growth, job creation, and destination competitiveness for Kampala. Positioning nightlife as a core part of Kampala's urban tourism ecosystem (rather than being perceived as a social problem) can unlock inclusive growth, stronger destination branding, and a more vibrant city for residents and visitors alike.







7.0 Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations are broadly categorised under the following areas:

a) Formally Recognise Nightlife as a Strategic Urban Tourism Sub-Sector

Government should formally designate nightlife as a strategic sub-sector within Uganda's urban tourism framework and the broader night-time economy. This recognition should be embedded in national and city-level tourism strategies, particularly for Kampala City and emerging urban centres. Policy frameworks should clearly define nightlife tourism products, establish standards and quality assurance mechanisms. This formal policy recognition will reposition nightlife from a largely informal activity to a structured, regulated, and investable tourism product. Institutionalising nightlife within tourism planning will enhance coordination across tourism, culture, security, urban planning, and local government institutions, while strengthening Kampala's positioning as a vibrant and safe regional night-time destination.

b) Prioritise Integrated Night-Time Planning, Infrastructure and Investment

Government and city authorities should adopt a structured Night-Time Economy Strategy to guide planning, regulation, and investment in nightlife development. Policy action should focus on zoning designated entertainment districts, improving public lighting and pedestrian safety, expanding late-night public transport options, strengthening crowd management systems, and upgrading sanitation and waste management services in nightlife hotspots. Targeted investment incentives—such as tax relief for compliant venues, public-private partnerships for event infrastructure, and financial support for local music and performance spaces—should be introduced to stimulate growth while upholding safety and quality standards. Well-planned nightlife districts can contribute to urban regeneration, strengthen city branding, and promote responsible public order management.

c) Institutionalise Comprehensive Research and Measurement of Nightlife Multiplier Effects

Policymakers should institutionalise systematic research on nightlife as a core component of national tourism statistics and urban economic planning. Nightlife expenditure modules should be incorporated into exit surveys, and periodic business censuses of entertainment venues. Importantly, data collected should be structured within a tourism satellite accounting framework, making it easier to quantify contribution to GDP, taxes, and jobs while reducing reliance on infrequent or small-sample surveys.



There should be deliberate efforts to harness big data to improve the accuracy and timeliness rather than relying on infrequent or small-sample surveys to estimate tourism-related expenditure and impact. For instance mobile-money and credit card-payment transactions can provide anonymised, real-time insights into where visitors spend, how much they spend, and the types of businesses benefiting from night-time activity. Similarly, ride-hailing platforms, e-hailing taxis, and mobility apps generate valuable information on late-night travel flows, trip frequency, and transport spending patterns. When combined with traditional data, tourism and city planners can build a far more complete picture of economic flows, employment linkages, and demand behaviours. Longitudinal research should also assess social dimensions, including safety perceptions, gender dynamics, youth employment, and community relations. Strengthening data systems will enable policymakers to quantify nightlife's full economic footprint and design targeted strategies to maximise its development benefits while ensuring sustainability and inclusiveness. With this implemented Kampala will become a leader in data-driven governance of the night-time economy in Africa.

d) Strengthen Governance, Safety and Responsible Nightlife Management

To ensure sustainable growth, government in collaboration with the private sector should strengthen governance frameworks that balance economic vibrancy with public safety, community wellbeing, and environmental responsibility. This requires harmonised licensing systems, transparent enforcement mechanisms, and coordinated multi-agency oversight involving tourism authorities, law enforcement, health services, and urban planners.

Policies should be developed to support responsible beverage service training, enforce noise management standards, implement crowd safety protocols, and adopt gender-sensitive safety measures in night-time spaces. Investment in surveillance systems, emergency response coordination, and structured stakeholder engagement platforms should be prioritised to build trust between operators, communities, and regulators. The establishment of a Nightlife Advisory Council—comprising government, private sector, civil society, and academia—would provide a formal mechanism for dialogue, monitoring, and adaptive policy refinement.



In order to ensure the recommendations are implemented, the report has identified and assigned responsibility to key actors and centers:

1. Uganda Tourism Board (UTB)

- (i) Market Kampala as a vibrant — and safe — night-time destination in key source markets (e.g East Africa, Rest of Africa, Europe, and North America). Highlight diverse experiences beyond clubs: live music, food culture, arts, cultural nights, and social spaces. Promote messaging that balances vibrancy with safety and authenticity.
- (ii) Work with operators to develop packaged night-time tourism products with well curated night experiences such as guided food tours, music circuits, cultural evenings — that can be booked online.
- (iii) Collaborate with venues to strengthen quality standards including customer service, hygiene, digital presence, and safety certification so that tourists can easily identify trusted night-time establishments.
- (iv) Build partnerships with private sector platforms especially with ride-hailing firms, digital payment providers, event platforms, and hospitality associations to improve visitor information, payments, and data sharing.
- (v) Invest in periodic surveys to continuously monitor visitor category, satisfaction, spend patterns, and perception metrics. Use the findings to refine campaigns and product development strategies.

2. Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities (MTWA)

- (i) Recognize nightlife formally in tourism policy and planning and integrate nightlife into national tourism strategies, investment priorities, and product development frameworks. It should be positioned alongside cultural, urban, and creative tourism segments.
- (ii) Develop national guidelines and a coordinated policy framework covering safety standards, event management, licensing, responsible alcohol practices, and community engagement.
- (iii) Support Tourism Satellite Account enhancements that capture the impact of nightlife. This is also need to build partnerships with telecoms, mobile money providers, card processors, and ride-hailing platforms to share information on night-time expenditure and mobility patterns.



(iv) Promote inclusion and decent work through targeted programs for youth, women, creatives, and informal operators involved nightlife to improve business skills, safety practices, and access to finance.

3. Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)

(i) Formally recognize nightlife as a legitimate component of Kampala's night-time economy and urban tourism system. Integrate nightlife into city development plans, bylaws, and economic strategies.

Strategic Plan for Your Successful Business

(ii) Designate and manage night-time corridors by identifying core nightlife zones and prioritize them in city planning.

(iii) Ensure regular waste collection and sanitation around nightlife hubs, and work with venue owners on shared responsibility agreements. Cleaner night environments improve visitor satisfaction and reduce public-health risks.

(iv) Improve night-time safety by expanding street lighting in nightlife hotspots, install CCTV coverage in key areas, improve pedestrian walkways and road crossings, and coordinate with police for visible, tourist-sensitive patrols.

(v) Improve night mobility — create safe ride-share/taxi pick-up points, expand late-night public transport pilots, and ensure effective traffic management in the early evening and on all key weekend routes.

(vi) Develop noise and land-use guidelines to ensure adoption of clear noise management practices and buffer zones to reduce resident-venue conflict while allowing vibrant activity.

4. Ministry of Internal Affairs (Uganda Police Force and other law enforcement agencies)

(i) Establish dedicated Night Economy Policing Units trained in crowd management, urban tourism-sensitive policing, and conflict de-escalation.

(ii) Increase visible night patrols in designated nightlife zones to enhance visitor confidence and deter crime.

(iii) Strengthen CCTV coverage and integration of private venues security systems with police command centres, especially in high-traffic entertainment districts.



(iv) Collaborate with tourism agencies to improve visitor information dissemination on nightlife safety, conduct, and legal expectations.

(v) Promote public awareness campaigns on responsible nightlife behaviour in collaboration with venue operators.

(vi) Develop nightlife-specific emergency response protocols for crowd surges, terrorism threats, health emergencies, and fire incidents

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5. Private Sector & Nightlife Service Providers

(i) Adopt a structured early-start (6:00 pm– 11:00 pm) and extended-night (Mid-night - 5:00 am) operating model to align nightlife offerings with evolving tourist preferences, enhance visitor experience, increase revenues, and strengthen Kampala's position as a safe and vibrant nightlife destination.

(ii) Invest in service quality and customer care by focusing on professionalism, hygiene, security protocols, disability access, and digital payments.

(iii) Diversify offerings by introducing cultural evenings, live arts, themed events, food festivals, and family-friendly options — reducing reliance on alcohol-centric models.

(iv) Form nightlife member associations and collectively collaborate to with UTB, MTWA, and KCCA to enhance standards, marketing, and advocacy.

(v) Adopt responsible business practices and promote responsible drinking campaigns, crowd management, fair pricing, and safety awareness.

(vi) Use data to improve business planning to track attendance, spending, feedback, and booking trends to refine products and pricing.



6. Local Community

- (i) Support structured coexistence between residential areas and nightlife zones by respecting designated nightlife operating hours and zones.
- (ii) Actively participate in nightlife tourism value chains through provision of local services, being hospitable, and supporting youth and women-led micro-enterprises linked to nightlife demand.
- (iii) Collaborate with operators and authorities to promote community policing and neighbourhood watch initiatives.
- (iv) Participate actively in keeping Kampala city clean initiatives, such as waste and drainage management.
- (v) Participate in regular dialogue forums with nightlife operators and local authorities.
- (vi) Advocate for and support improved street lighting, pedestrian safety, and signage within their respective communities.
- (vii) Encourage visiting friends and relatives to explore and experience Kampala's diverse and vibrant nightlife offerings.

7. Education and Academic Institutions

- (i) Universities and tertiary institutions should introduce modules on the night economy, urban tourism systems, safety management, creative industries, and visitor experience design.
- (ii) Support applied research on nightlife impacts and visitor behaviour by undertake longitudinal and interdisciplinary research on nightlife participation, spending patterns, safety perceptions, labour market dynamics, and community attitudes.
- (iii) Design short courses on customer care, responsible alcohol service, safety and risk management, digital marketing, hygiene standards, and financial management targeted at bar owners, event promoters, DJs, transport providers, and hospitality workers.



(iv) Promote structured internships and innovation labs that link students with venues, creative hubs, transport services, and tourism businesses operating at night.

(v) Undertake comprehensive studies on the different components of nightlife and its impacts.

(vi) Encourage interdisciplinary research collaboration with public health, criminology, urban planning, ICT, business schools, and cultural studies departments



8.0 Areas of Further Research

While this report provides important insights into nightlife tourism in Kampala, several research gaps remain. Addressing these gaps will strengthen evidence-based policymaking, improve planning, and enable a more comprehensive understanding of nightlife's role within Uganda's urban tourism economy. The areas include

(i) Examining the Contribution of Domestic Tourism to Nightlife

Further research should assess the full scale and structure of nightlife activity, particularly by examining the contribution of domestic tourism. A dedicated study should quantify visitation by Ugandans travelling from other regions who neither reside nor work in Kampala but visit the city for leisure, entertainment, events, and social experiences. Understanding this segment is critical, as domestic visitors may represent a substantial share of nightlife consumption, especially during weekends, festivals, concerts, and holiday periods. Such research should analyse spending patterns, length of stay, motivations, frequency of visits, and linkages to accommodation, transport, and food services. Integrating domestic nightlife tourism into broader tourism statistics will provide a clearer picture of internal travel flows and strengthen strategies aimed at building a resilient, year-round night-time economy that is not solely dependent on international arrivals.

(ii) Geospatial Mapping of Nightlife Hotspots, Facilities and Services

A comprehensive geospatial mapping study should be undertaken to identify and catalogue nightlife hotspots, facilities, and supporting services across Kampala. This would involve mapping bars, clubs, live music venues, cultural performance spaces, late-night restaurants, transport nodes, accommodation clusters, security infrastructure, and event spaces. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), researchers can generate hot spots maps that illustrate spatial concentration, clustering patterns, accessibility, infrastructure gaps, and relationships between nightlife zones and residential areas. Such mapping would support urban planning, zoning decisions, safety management, transport planning, and infrastructure investment. It would also enable policymakers to identify emerging nightlife corridors, over-concentration risks, and underserved areas with growth potential. A geospatial approach would provide a practical planning tool for city authorities and tourism stakeholders alike.

(iii) Total Impact Assessment of Nightlife (Direct, Indirect and Induced Effects)

There is a need for a comprehensive economic impact assessment that captures the total contribution of nightlife to the urban and national economy. This study should quantify direct impacts (venue revenues, employment, taxes), indirect impacts (supply chain linkages including food suppliers, security services, creative performers, transport providers), and induced impacts (household spending generated from wages earned in nightlife-related sectors). Such an assessment could utilise input-output modelling or social accounting matrices to estimate multipliers and sectoral linkages.

Beyond economic metrics, the study should also assess social and cultural impacts, including youth employment, creative industry development, urban regeneration, and city branding. A total impact study would provide robust evidence to justify strategic investment and policy prioritisation of nightlife as a structured component of the night-time economy.

(iv) Replicating Nightlife Studies in Other Cities to Establish National Contribution

To obtain a comprehensive national picture, similar nightlife assessments should be undertaken in other major and emerging urban centers across Uganda. Cities such as Entebbe, Masaka Jinja, Mbarara, Mbale, Gulu, Arua, and Fort Portal, among others each possess distinct cultural, tourism, and entertainment dynamics that may contribute uniquely to the national night-time economy. Undertaking comparative city-level studies would enable benchmarking, identification of regional variations, and aggregation of data to estimate nightlife's national economic contribution. This approach would also support decentralised tourism development and reduce over-concentration in Kampala. Ultimately, a coordinated multi-city research framework would provide the empirical foundation needed to integrate nightlife into national tourism planning, urban development strategies, and economic transformation agendas.

(v) Assessing the Negative Impacts of Nightlife on City Residents and Urban Infrastructure

While nightlife generates significant economic and social benefits, further research is needed to systematically assess its potential negative externalities on city residents and urban infrastructure. Rapid growth in entertainment districts can exert pressure on transport systems, sanitation services, waste management, public utilities, and security infrastructure. A dedicated study should therefore evaluate the extent to which nightlife contributes to congestion, noise pollution, environmental degradation, public disorder, and strain on emergency and health services. Such research should incorporate resident perception surveys in key nightlife zones to assess issues related to noise levels, safety concerns, property values, and quality of life. Particular attention should be paid to mixed-use neighbourhoods where residential and entertainment functions coexist, as these areas often experience tension between economic vibrancy and community wellbeing. Quantifying complaints, enforcement data, accident rates, and infrastructure service costs would provide objective indicators of impact.

In addition, infrastructure-focused analysis should examine peak-hour transport demand, parking capacity, pedestrian safety, waste collection volumes, and energy consumption associated with nightlife activities. This would allow city planners to estimate the public cost of supporting the night-time economy and determine whether existing infrastructure is adequate or requires targeted upgrading. Understanding these negative impacts is essential for designing balanced policies that mitigate harm while preserving economic benefits. Evidence from such studies would support the development of noise management standards, zoning regulations, staggered closing hours, improved late-night transport planning, and investment in resilient urban infrastructure. By proactively addressing externalities, policymakers can ensure that nightlife growth remains socially sustainable and aligned with broader urban development goals.

Overall, these research priorities will deepen understanding of nightlife's structure, scale, spatial dynamics, and multiplier effects—thereby strengthening its strategic positioning within Uganda's urban tourism development and contribute to the night economy discourse.



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