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The Management of Cultural Tourism in the Southern African Development Community Region: Learning from Best Performers

Abstract: *Introduction.* Tourists are in search of authentic experiences such as unique arts and culture in tourist destinations. Policymakers are now focusing on cultural tourism because of its perceived links to economic advantages inclusive of employment, business opportunities, and income generation. *Purpose and methods.* Using the examples of Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Seychelles, this study critically analyses the measures employed by these five countries to manage cultural tourism to improve their global tourism competitiveness. A comprehensive literature review approach is adopted as a research method to build a sufficient and accurate pool of data to attain reliable findings. *Results.* The study identified strategies utilized in the selected countries that can be adopted by other regional countries for cultural tourism development. These strategies include establishing cultural exchange programmes, preserving local cultural practices, sensitizing the local community on the importance of cultural tourism, local and international cultural tourism development collaborations, and cultural policy development among others. *Conclusions.* This study builds a body of knowledge by identifying some cultural tourism management strategies in the Southern African Development Community region. It extends new knowledge by comparing the differences and similarities in adopted strategies in the selected countries to learn about the most common cultural tourism management strategies and unique strategies adopted. Moreover, it provides recommendations that other developing countries in Africa can adopt to improve their cultural tourism management. The study provides directions for future cultural tourism research in the Southern African Development Community region.

Keywords: Southern African Development Community, culture, strategies, tourism.

1. Introduction

The problem formulation. Culture is what distinguishes a specific community of people from other human groups in the family of humanity; culture entails a totality of traits and characters that are unique to a community (Idang, 2015). The relationship between culture and tourism (cultural tourism) can be traced back to the 20th century, and a combination of the two sectors has seen remarkable development in many countries (Richards, 2011). Culture is a major force behind tourism development and competitiveness. It is a key factor in the attractiveness of many destinations, including attracting local people and inward investment (Ololo & Otegbulu, 2020; Ezenagu, 2020).

Tourism influenced by culture will continuously maintain a considerable market stand, but the new tourists will endlessly have more and more diversified needs to experience different cultures, even in remote destinations (Ezenagu, 2020). Therefore, it is important to establish creative tourism which meets the needs of a more sustainable cultural tourism (Csapo, 2012). For instance, in Africa, some tribes engage in multiple forms of entertainment which can be enjoyed by tourists. These include moonlight tales telling and role-plays, which could also be seen by the current tourism world as a new form of animation entertainment (Adeboye, 2012).

Unfortunately, tourism can lead to a negative impact on social and cultural change. For example, thousands of tourists who visited Goa in India managed to change the whole culture of the state, leading to a rise in the use of drugs, prostitution, and human trafficking (Jaswal, 2014). Because destinations are vulnerable to similar threats, only conscious tourism planning methods and practices will be able to take into consideration the principles of sustainability and carrying capacity in the given (cultural) tourism region (Csapó, 2012).

Fierce competition among tourist destinations increases the interest in inter-destination collaboration as a tool for developing innovative inter-destination products (Vodeb & Nemec Rudež, 2016). Moreover, the increasing scope of the cultural creative industries also suggests the need for regions to adopt a broad approach to the culture which includes traditional heritage tourism, intangible heritage, and modern creativity that embraces the lifestyle atmosphere of the destinations, as this can make it possible for regions to present their intangible cultural assets to the global audience (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009).

State of the study problem. Africa's rich cultural heritage has a high potential to boost its tourism industry if this resource can be fully explored and utilized effectively (Tasie, 2014). Cultural heritage tourism is identified as a crucial area to explore, as it holds developmental opportunities for Africa (Nkwanyana et al., 2016). However, as depicted from the Travel and Tourism

Competitive Index (TTCI) reports between 2007 and 2019, the majority of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries have failed to attain a good tourism competitive position; noting that the majority of countries in this region have been ranking in the bottom 40 on an average total of 140 countries. Only Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles, Botswana, Namibia, and Tanzania have ranked in the first 100 countries ranked in the TTCI (World Economic Forum, 2007; 2015; 2017; 2019). The potential of the continent's tourism remains largely untapped, and investment in cultural tourism can accelerate tourism competitiveness leading to economic development and job opportunities (World Tourism Organisation, 2015).

Due to historically lower levels of economic development, the African region continues to face difficulties in the effective selling of culture for tourism to gain a fair market share in global tourism (World Economic Forum, 2019). Some challenges prohibiting the effectiveness of cultural tourism in Africa include less involvement of the local community in heritage preservation, insufficient investment in cultural tourism, fewer collaborations between the tourism and culture sectors, inappropriate cultural tourism marketing, and less government attention to cultural tourism issues (Okharedia, 2020). To exemplify, the South African rural community is unaware that cultural heritage development carries forward income generation, supports infrastructural development and alleviates poverty (Nkwanyana et al., 2016). It is therefore, recommended that African countries should adopt concrete guidelines based on clear methodologies for tourism product development (World Tourism Organisation, 2015).

Cultural tourism weaknesses in the SADC region have been identified as a lack of awareness and knowledge of offering cultural experiences as commercial products, governments generally giving limited priority to cultural tourism, and limited depth and sophistication of visitor interpretation regarding cultural and natural phenomena (Southern African Development Community, 2019). Against this background, the purpose of this study is to identify the strategies that the best tourism-performing SADC countries are using for cultural tourism development purposes. Through the development of the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030, it is envisioned that by the year 2030, the regional tourism performance shall exceed average global tourism growth levels (Southern African Development Community, 2019). The results of this study shall form a policy guideline for less tourism-competitive SADC countries to adopt to boost their cultural tourism and attain the regional 2030 tourism growth vision. This study shall explore the strategies of Mauritius, Botswana, Tanzania, Namibia, and Seychelles, as these countries have performed better than all other SADC countries, as evidenced by the TTCI reports between 2015 to 2019 (World Economic Forum, 2015; 2017; 2019). It is important to note that South Africa

was not selected to play an influential role in this study because of its massive economic size, which is by far larger than its peers in the SADC region. South Africa is the second economic giant in Africa (World Bank, 2021). It might be difficult for all underperforming smaller economies in the SADC region to implement their strategies due to economic environment disparity. The SADC region comprises 15 countries, namely Lesotho, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Namibia, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Malawi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Southern African Development Community Statistical Yearbook, 2015).

Unresolved issues. Although cultural tourism is a widely studied topic, it can be learned that there is a considerable space to expand the body of knowledge in cultural tourism in the African region. Not much has been studied about cultural tourism management in the SADC region, and the findings of this research would shed light on some critical issues that may warrant a speedy attention of policy makers in this region.

The next section shall discuss the methodology adopted by this study.

2. Purpose and methods

The purpose and research tasks. Using the examples of Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Seychelles, this study critically analyses the measures employed by these five SADC countries to manage cultural tourism to improve their global tourism competitiveness. It pays attention to policy development, initiatives, roles of government and local community, funding mechanisms, and collaborations established for cultural tourism development. It is believed that the strategies identified by this study could lend a hand in informing and pointing a proper direction for other SADC countries in developing the cultural tourism policies and other cultural tourism initiatives to elevate their competitiveness in the global tourism market.

This study shall therefore focus on a specific set of tasks which mainly include:

- to highlight the importance of culture in tourism wellbeing;
- to identify the drawbacks prohibiting excellence in cultural tourism in the SADC region;
- to establish the mechanisms that the five benchmarking countries have adopted to organize and manage cultural tourism, and
- to provide a comparative analysis of cultural tourism management practices in the five benchmarking countries.

Methodology and method. Research methods include procedures and approaches utilized by the researcher to conduct a study (Mishra & Alok, 2017), and these include procedures adopted for both data collection and analysis to

deliver accurate conclusions (Walliman, 2011). This study adopted a comprehensive literature review as a research methodology. Secondary data analysis is flexible and can be used in multiple ways. It is an empirical exercise and a systematic approach with procedural and evaluative steps similar to an evaluation of primary data (Johnston, 2014). Literature reviews play an essential role as a footing for all forms of research, and it has the potential to form a basis for knowledge development, develop policy guidance and practice, deliver evidence of an effect, and provide guidelines for different disciplines (Snyder, 2019).

The rationale behind adopting a literature review approach in this research lies much with the fact that there is a readily available pool of information to allow the researcher to deliver reliable findings while minimizing costs. An analysis of documents was conducted to establish approaches that the selected countries have adopted to manage cultural tourism. Further, a comparison was made to identify the similarities and differences of strategies adopted in the five benchmarking countries.

Information base. The information regarding cultural tourism practices, strategies, policies, and management from the selected SADC countries was gathered from various sources inclusive of government reports and websites, non-governmental organizations reports and websites, journals, newspapers, private sector organizations reports, and websites, published and unpublished dissertations, magazines, and conference proceedings among others.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Results

This section shall present the case studies of Tanzania, Namibia, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Botswana.

Case 1: Tanzania

Tanzania has 120 tribes, and the country has the most welcoming people who are willing to share their unique cultures. Societies manage their cultural programs and welcome tourists from different parts of the world to their homes, which in turn generates income for the local communities and offers them an opportunity to share their unique culture (Tanzania Tourist Board, 2018). With the assistance of the Danish Embassy in 2008, Tanzania successfully established the culture programme which has brought cultural diversification to Tanzania, as children and adults, rural and urban population, traditional and contemporary art has been incorporated into the cultural life of Tanzania (Flento, 2012). Tanzania managed to define its cultural tourism product accurately and has been developing this niche market since 1996, with the Tanzania Tourist Board and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism as overseers. Furthermore, cul-

tural tourism in the country operates in a form of a community-based tourism system whereby the local communities are directly involved in the design, organizing of tours, and showing tourists aspects of their lives in the area they live in (Tanzania Cultural Tourism Programmes, 2018).

Case 2: Namibia

Namibia submitted a proposal on Culture and Development to the United Nations Development Programme-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F). This initiative emphasized national ownership and participation of indigenous people in cultural heritage tourism activities based on three focus areas, namely, creating a knowledge base, evaluating and creating awareness about legislation related to cultural heritage, and developing pilots using a knowledge base and streamlined policies and legislation to improve livelihoods (National Planning Commission of Namibia, 2008). In 2008, the mid-term evaluation of this programme was conducted to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme activities concerning the stated objectives so far. The aim was also to generate knowledge, including the identification of best practices and lessons learned, and recommend measures to accelerate the performance of this initiative (Maconick, 2010). Following the completion of this mid-term report, the phase of incorporating recommendations commenced through the development of the Joint Programme Improvement Plan, which detailed the action plan for the programme management (Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, 2011).

As noted by the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (2013), the final Joint Programme Report “Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Namibia” yielded the following results:

- Knowledge base and information-sharing portal development and baseline on tangible and intangible heritage and training;
- Identification of new heritage sites;
- Identification and documentation of legal, cultural, and community barriers between cultural tourism and poverty reduction;
- Identification of pilot sites for implementation and replication;
- Harmonisation and publicizing of relevant policies and legislation on tangible/intangible heritage and customary laws, and
- Communities/groups in the nine focus regions reaping benefits from cultural/natural heritage assets.

In addition, some of the positive spill-over effects resulting from this initiative included:

- Strengthening governance of Namibia’s Geopark programme;
- Communities’ capacities, end products, and livelihoods are upgraded through establishing pilot sites and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns instituted;

- Communities empowered to generate employment and income from the pilot projects;
- Integration of cultural/natural heritage assets into national and international tourism networks;
- Promote skills transfer, built capacity and enhance market opportunities, and
- Support the establishment and management of a Geopark.

This initiative contributed to Namibia's attainment of MDG Goals 1, 3, 6, and 7 also supported the national priorities as stipulated in Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan 3 and 4 among others (Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund, 2013).

Case 3: Seychelles

To boost cultural tourism, Seychelles has preserved dance plays. Both the séga and the moutya dances mirror traditional African customs that have shifted from village halls to modern clubs' events (Britannika, 2021). Also, the review and the finalization of the National Culture Policy resulted from the collaborations between the key cultural stakeholders, including the Government of Seychelles and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). This was executed with the findings and recommendations of UNESCO 2018 Global Monitoring Report: Re-Shaping Cultural Policies, to enable an analysis of trends, track progress, identify challenges and provide examples of innovative cultural policies and measures to promote diversity of cultural expressions (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2018). Further, Seychelles has plans to bring tourists to the heart of the community to experience an authentic cultural exchange and identified this measure as a key focus area. The Ministry of Tourism has the vision to advocate for the establishment of relevant platforms necessary for the facilitation of community-based tourism to promote authentic experiences and traditions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, 2021).

Case 4: Mauritius

To boost cultural tourism, cultural exchange programmes have been signed between Mauritius and the countries such as India, Seychelles, China, Russia, Egypt, France, Mozambique, and Madagascar (Ministry of Arts and Culture, 2018).

Case 5: Botswana

Communities are encouraged to market their cultural knowledge, including holding traditional public assemblies (Kgotle), traditional Botswana hospitality, and performance arts and handicrafts to attract tourists (Bolaane & Kanduza, 2008). Botswana is also utilizing cultural villages to attract tourists where cultural tours are taken while sharing customs, stories, and history (Jones, 2009).

3.2. Discussions

In a table form, this section shall provide an analysis of the similarities and differences of the strategies adopted by these benchmarking countries. *Table 1* presents an analysis of the cultural tourism development strategies and initiatives implemented in the five selected countries.

Table 1. Strategies to promote cultural tourism

Initiatives and strategies	Mauritius	Botswana	Tanzania	Namibia	Seychelle
Establishing cultural exchange programmes with countries in Africa, Europe, and Asia	+				
Preserving and encouraging cultural practices and art Societies managing cultural programmes		+	+		+
Inter-government cultural tourism development led collaborations			+		
Engaging foreign governments assistance towards running cultural programmes			+		
Enabling environment for community-based cultural tourism		+	+	+	+
Securing funding for cultural tourism programmes from doner partners				+	
Building cultural tourism knowledge among indigenous people				+	
Evaluating and creating awareness about legislation related to cultural heritage focusing on indigenous people				+	
Developing pilots using knowledge base and streamlined policies and legislation				+	
Aligning cultural tourism initiatives to MDGs and national strategic plan goals				+	
Conducting performance audits of established cultural tourism initiatives				+	
Preserving indigenous dances					+
Shifting indigenous entertainment practices from the village settings to modern clubs' events					+
Engaging international NGOs during cultural policy development					+
Identify cultural tourism as a key focus area for development				+	+

Source: researcher's own compilation

From *Table 1*, it can be drawn that the five countries are utilizing different approaches to promote cultural tourism. However, most countries have established supportive measures for engaging the local community in cultural tourism. The findings of the study revealed that these strategies include establishing cultural exchanges with other countries, encouraging and preserving local cultural practices, sensitizing the local community on the importance of cultural tourism, collaborating with international governments, Non-Governmental Organisations, and donor agencies on cultural tourism development programmes, auditing cultural tourism programmes performance, cultural policy development, ensuring that cultural tourism initiatives are aligned to national priorities, and showcasing cultural practices in tourists dominated places.

4. Conclusions

This study has achieved its objectives of identifying strategies and initiatives for promoting cultural tourism in some SADC countries, therefore, providing useful lessons for weak tourism competitors in the region. This led them to the following conclusions:

1. It can be drawn from the study results that governments play an important part in planning, leading, and coordinating cultural tourism development initiatives.

2. The results also pointed out that the tourism private sector is an insignificant player in cultural tourism development in the SADC region. Therefore, engaging the private sector in cultural tourism development initiatives could result in an enhanced management system of the sector and eliminate any emerging financial leakages emanating from the weak collaborations with other tourism stakeholders. The dimensions of the private sector involvement in preserving heritage are wide, hence, it is key to form public-private collaborations to develop cultural heritage. Partnerships in this regard could be through the private sector financial sponsorships, donations of goods and services, and management services to public cultural resources (Seaman, 2013).

3. The findings also revealed that the major players in cultural tourism within the SADC region are mainly the local community and the government sector. Collaborations between the government and the local community seem to be a crucial weapon in accelerating cultural tourism effectiveness. It can also be learned that the local community holds a fair share in cultural tourism initiatives implementation.

4. Additionally, the results also show that governments need to develop strong governance systems to minimize the negative impact that could result from interactions between the tourists and local communities.

The scientific novelty. Not much has been studied about cultural tourism in the SADC region. Previous research on cultural tourism in the region focused on issues such as theoretical understanding of cultural tourism in the SADC region, originality of culture, cultural products, and their presentations to tourists, providing an overview of opportunities and debates of cultural tourism in the region such as the studies of (Saarinen et al., 2014; Saarinen & Rogerson, 2015; Manwa et al., 2016; Saarinen, 2016). At the time of the research, no study regarding the identification of strategies that countries in the SADC region have adopted to implement cultural tourism programmes could be traced. Therefore, this study builds a body of knowledge by designing a multiple case study approach to identify cultural tourism management strategies in the SADC region. The study also extends new knowledge by comparing the differences and similarities of adopted strategies in the selected countries to learn about the most common cultural tourism management strategies and unique strategies adopted by the five benchmarking countries.

The significance of the study. This research could be significant to several stakeholders, inclusive of the private business community, general public, policymakers, and academia, among others. For the policymakers, this study could contribute to understanding the main issues to consider when developing cultural tourism policies and the national strategic plans. For the private business community, the research has uncovered opportunities that may have been missed by this sector, such as establishing collaborations with both the public sector and the local community to manage cultural tourism activities. Further, for the local community, the significance of the study lies in the likelihood of understanding the involvement of the local community in implementing cultural tourism activities as noted in the benchmarking countries. Finally, for academia, this study has closed gaps that needed to be clarified regarding different strategies used by the SADC countries to manage cultural tourism activities.

Prospects for future research. Future research could focus on establishing challenges prohibiting sustainable cultural tourism in the SADC region. Exploring this area could direct policymakers to strategic areas requiring speedy attention to attain sustainable cultural tourism. Again, future research could also focus on establishing strategic collaborations methods between the local community, government, and private sector to improve cultural tourism in the SADC region.

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