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## Influence of Destination Visits in the Promotion of Tourism in Tanzania: A Word-of-Mouth Perspective

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### **Abstract:**

*This study examines the influence of destination visits in promoting tourism in Tanzania based on word-of-mouth. The study employs Social Exchange Theory to extend the applicability of the use of the destination visit in promoting tourism through word-of-mouth. Questionnaires were distributed to 400 respondents in Dar-es-Salaam, Arusha and Bagamoyo. Being a quantitative study, Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) was deployed in order to establish whether marketing strategies (STRAT), reasons for visit (RFV) and destination visits (DVT) lead to Promotion of Tourism in Tanzania. The results of the study show that the measurement and structural model exhibited better model fit indices. The relationship between destination visits and participation in domestic tourism was significant as the results of data analysis indicate stronger effects. It is recommended that all factors indicated in this study be recognized for Promotion of Tourism in Tanzania.*

**Keywords:** Destination visits, tourism promotion, social exchange perspective

### **1. Background**

Destination visits encourage residents to participate in domestic tourism (Macha, 2021). Frequent destination visits happen if tourists travel to a destination for the first time and feel that it has a high perceived quality. Quality of services and products does contribute to repeated visitations by tourists and encourages others through word-of-mouth to make similar visits (Wang *et al.*, 2017). The satisfaction felt by tourists is the combined result of the quality and efficiency of diverse services they get during their stay with different providers of tourist services, including the variety of products available to tourists (Macha, 2021). A well-promoted and advertised destination will persuade a tourist to visit the tourist destination. The advertisements should carry the range of products and services offered in the advertised destination (Wang *et al.*, 2017).

The products and services provided in tourist destinations can be advertised through different marketing and promotion strategies. For example, the launching of the historical documentary called 'The Royal Tour' by the Tanzania President will make Tanzania a premier destination (URT, 2022). According to Wang *et al.* (2017), frequent visits by tourists to a destination result from good marketing strategies for the destinations. However, if tourists revisit the destination and feel dissatisfied, then they may share their negative impressions about the destination with other potential tourists. Before the tour, not much was known about some Tanzania tourism insights, but the market response was generally good after the Royal Tour (URT, 2022). In addition, when tourists return to a destination many times, they get a better understanding and appreciation of that place and hence encourage the participation of other tourists in that destination. The general objective of this study was to examine the influence of destination visits in the promotion of tourism in Tanzania based on word-of-mouth. Destination visits positively influence the promotion of tourism in Tanzania.

### **2. Literature Review**

This study was based on the Social Exchange Theory (SET). The theory was introduced in 1958 by the sociologist George Homans with the publication of his work "Social Behaviour as Exchange" (Nunkoo & Fung So, 2015). Social Exchange Theory (SET) focuses on an individual's interaction for profit or the expectation of getting profit out of the interaction. That means in the absence of getting profit or the expectation of getting profit, individuals may avoid the interaction. Reasons for destination visits may be a part of interaction because traveling is part of human life and all of us move from one place to another for some reason. Citizens travel for business, for sight-seeing, while some people travel for leisure and some travel as a necessity to attend training programmes as part of an education endeavour. Visiting destinations teaches people to trust themselves and others (Simone, 2017). In some countries, people consider that they must spend time in tourist places in summer or winter vacation. For example, foreigners come to Tanzania as international tourists in the high season, summer or winter, just to travel out. Other tourists visit destinations as an adventure (Lieberman, 2018). Citizens are advised to visit many places within and even outside the country to learn about different cultures. Tourism helps people to learn new things and get a rich experience of life in different ways. Travel teaches people how to behave when things are challenging or if everything goes wrong (Simone, 2017). Among many advantages, travelling gives the experiences and skills which will be beneficial in improving a career.

People are travelling for reasons and while traveling, they see new things in their destination that are entirely different from their own. These differences can be social, cultural, or economic, but regardless, they often see their lives through a new lens (Simone, 2017). This does not always mean that the tourists see what others lack in life; instead, they realize how lucky and blessed they are to have all that they do (Macha, 2021). Through travelling, tourists find that some cultures are comfortable living with much less, which can make their lives back home seem wasteful and materialistic (Simone, 2017). Citizens go to destinations in their own country for a vacation in cultural luxuries or luxuriant relaxation. Instead of going outside the country, they may visit the destinations within the country as a way to relax and develop the tourist sector. Tanzania is rich in adventure and excitement, as already mentioned.

Some of the excitement is found in Tanzania Game Parks (Gentleman, 2018). In Tanzania Game Parks, tourists can go on a safari, dine with locals, and scale Africa's highest peak. If a tourist chooses a safari, there are many places to go, such as Zanzibar, Arusha, Tarangire, or Ruaha. In Ruaha, tourists can see leopards lying on tree branches (Gentleman, 2018). Ngorongoro Conservation Area includes the massive Ngorongoro crater formed by an extinct volcanic caldera. The wildlife preserves around the crater have lions, wildebeests, hippopotamuses, elephants, antelopes, zebras, and even the endangered black rhinos. Serengeti National Park is the most famous wildlife preserve in the world. According to Lieberman (2018), in northward across the Serengeti throughout the year, there is a camp located for the migration paths of the region's famous wildlife. Travelers are placed at the single most ideal setting for animal spotting during their safari. Mount Kilimanjaro is the highest peak in Africa and one of the most rewarding hikes in the world (Law, 2018). Any destination chosen must have a reason that guides the decision of the tourist.

### 3. Marketing of Destination Visits

Destination visits are related to the trust of tourists towards the products and services provided in a chosen destination. Knowledge of marketing strategies enables the destinations to attract more tourists since the tourist can spread word-of-mouth to others about the uniqueness and the quality of products and services offered in a destination. According to Abubakar (2016), who studied 'the impact of online word-of-mouth on destination trust and intention to travel,' based on a medical tourism perspective, destination trust includes a visitor's willingness to rely on the quality of the services provided to them.

Intention to visit chosen destinations refers to the willingness of a tourist to visit a destination. Before visiting a destination, the tourist makes a rational evaluation of the costs and benefits against a set of alternative destinations derived from external information sources such as marketing strategies. These include electronic word of mouth, travelers' blogs, television, newspapers and other marketing tools. Marketing tools assist in changing tourists' behavior and intention to visit a tourist destination (Abubakar, 2016). According to Abubakar (2016), scholars have supported the notion that positive electronic word-of-mouth tends to increase the likelihood of booking and room sales in most of the hotels.

According to Nunkoo (2016), the components of the Social Exchange Theory, particularly trust and power, have to be integrated into a single study to investigate their influence on residents' perceptions of tourism and their support for development. He argues that power and trust concepts have significant potential in explaining community acceptance of tourism and if this field of study is to be advanced theoretically, then researchers should empirically test these concepts in an integrative framework (Macha, 2021). To support this argument, the component of destination visit was analyzed together with other components, such as to develop a model for the promotion of tourism in Tanzania. The hypothesis that was analyzed was: Destination visit positively influences the participation of Tanzania citizens in domestic tourism. The study also analyzed reasons for destination visits because a tourist visits destinations for reasons. The reasons for respondents' destination visits are education and leisure, while others go to destinations for business, conference and organization meetings.

### 4. Methodology

The method used in this study is quantitative, which is rooted in positivism and regards science as an objective process of collecting objective and measurable facts (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Social exchange theory was used to develop the hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested and confirmed, leading to the further development of the theory, which could then be tested by other researchers (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The study was conducted in Bagamoyo, Coast Region, Dar-es-Salaam and Arusha. In these selected areas, there are significant developments taking place in the tourism sector to warrant analysis of citizens' participation in domestic tourism. Four hundred (400) respondents were selected from Dar-es-Salaam, Arusha and Bagamoyo. The respondents' categories fall under the age of 18 and above for both sexes. The study used the SPSS version 16 and AMOS version 20 programmes to run and estimate the path coefficients and to measure the degree of the relationship between variables by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in the data analysis.

### 5. Findings

Tourist destination visit positively influences Tanzania citizens' participation in domestic tourism. The hypothesis predicted that visits to tourist destinations (DVT) positively influence the promotion of tourism in Tanzania. The results reveal that the correlation between DVT and PDT is 0.713, which implies that there is a positive relationship between destination visits and the participation of Tanzanians in tourism, as summarized in the study. The results are significant, according to Suhr (2000), where a number that is closer to 1 indicates a stronger effect. These results are also supported by the probability value of getting a critical ratio as large as 18.611 in absolute value is less than 0.001, meaning the regression weight for DVT in the prediction of PDT is significantly different from zero at 0.001 level (two-tailed).

These results are in line with those by Abubakar (2016), who analyzed the influence of trust in a destination and travel intention by using regression analyses. The findings suggested that electronic word-of-mouth, as one of the marketing techniques, is positively related to travel intention by a tourist. The aim of analyzing this objective was to identify the level of readiness of citizens to participate in domestic tourism. This focuses on frequently visited destinations, the reasons for the visits and products and activities preferred during the visits. The pertinent benefits and costs and how they influence participation were some of the issues examined in this section. The cut-off point is the numbers between -1 and 1. The number that is closer to 1 indicates a better coefficient (Bentler, 1990). Based on these results, the relationship was significant.

### 5.1. Visited Tourist Destinations

The respondents were asked to indicate the destinations they have visited as tourists. The highest record of the visited sites was Ngorongoro, with 27.03% of all the visitors on tourist record, followed by Mikumi with 24.32% and Bagamoyo with 18.92%, as summarized in figure 1. Lower-level education stakeholders, i.e., learners in primary and secondary schools, have special programmes of sending their students to national parks and historical places as a part of lessons in history and biology school subjects. Most schools prefer sending their students to Ngorongoro, Mikumi and Bagamoyo as a part of their field training and exposure programmes. Those who have visited the places in the past tend to need to repeat the visitation when they have completed their studies and are employed or self-employed.

According to TTB (2014), as quoted by Msuya (2015), Ngorongoro Crater is one of the top ten tourist attractions in Tanzania. Tourists enjoy viewing natural objects found in this destination. They also tend to go there either for leisure or to attend meetings organized by their organizations.

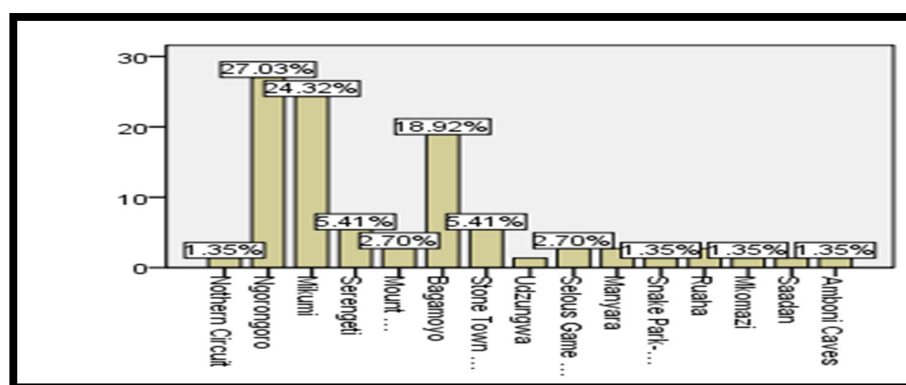


Figure 1: Visited Destinations

### 5.2. Reasons for Visiting Selected Destinations

The tourism-based respondents were asked to give reasons for visiting their selected destinations. Tourists visit destinations for reasons (Harikrisna, 2013). Education and leisure ranked first with (41.10%) of visitors' responses, followed by business conferences (6.85%) and visiting friends and relatives (4.11%). These are summarized in figure 2. Education and leisure have high scores because most of the respondents were mostly active or previous school attendees who visited one of the destinations by way of a school trip. Most lower-level schools send their learners to national parks and historical places as a part of their educational programmes. Most of the schools prefer sending their students to Bagamoyo, Mikumi National Park and Ngorongoro. As a norm, people repeat visitations when they become adults, which is a part of their leisure. Figure 2 shows the main reasons for visits to tourist destinations.

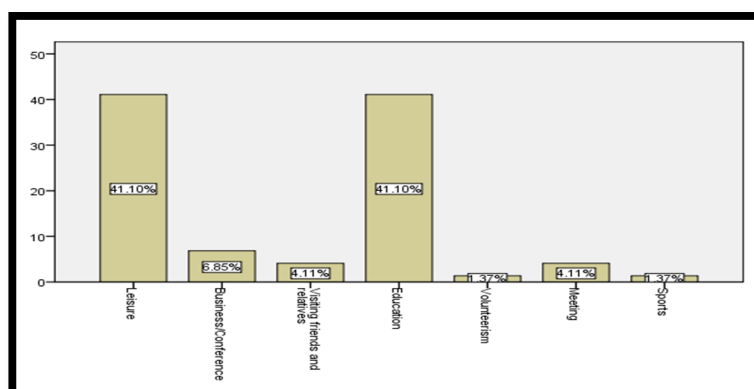


Figure 2: Reasons for Visits

### 5.3. Activities Preferred by Tourists in Their Chosen Destinations

Tourist destinations usually design a range of activities and products to attract tourists. According to Philemon (2015), each tourist destination is unique and as a result, what dissatisfies or satisfies a tourist in one destination might be different from what attracts the same in another destination. Organizations compete in destinations to make sure that they provide unique products and services to attract and retain tourists. Some tourists prefer wildlife viewing in their chosen destinations (Kilungu *et al.*, 2014). Swimming, sunbathing, mountain climbing, attending music performances and nature walks are some of the other activities preferred by tourists.

### 5.4. Swimming and Sunbathing

The study analysed the range of activities preferred by domestic tourists during their tourist visits, such as hotels allocated along the seashore. The study finds swimming and other physical exercises offered in hotels as the major activities preferred by domestic tourists. Some tourists go for beach parties at places such as Jangwani Sea Breeze Resort, White Sands and Giraffe Oceanic hotels. This applies mainly to tourists living in Dar-es-Salaam, as shown in figure 3. Some respondents, however, have complained about the cost of services offered in the seashore hotels. Hotels do not discriminate between domestic and international tourists in terms of pricing. For example, entrance fees and charges per person for swimming and lunch or dinner in Lamada Hotel in Dar-es-Salaam are Tzs 40,000, excluding drinks, which is quite high for locals.



Figure 3: Domestic Tourists at Jangwani Sea Breeze Resort  
Source: ([www.jangwaniseebreeze.com](http://www.jangwaniseebreeze.com))

### 5.5. Mountain Climbing Adventures

Some of the respondents climbed Mount Kilimanjaro as a part of the move by a mob. One of the respondents said, "Nilipanda kwa sababu, tulikuwa tunabishana na rafiki zangu tukiwa kwenye mazoezi kuwa ni nani anaweza kupanda Mlima Kilimanjaro, ndio tukaamua kwenda kupanda." (I climbed because I argued with my friends at the gym as who among us could successfully climb Mount Kilimanjaro, then we decided to go for it). This is depicted in figure 4. According to Hassan (2015) and Laakso (2011), mountain climbers in other countries have become heroes and use their status to win political election positions.



Figure 4: Domestic Tourists at the Uhuru Peak on Mount Kilimanjaro (William, 2016)

Some people gratify themselves by trying to do things other people have not done. This is also expressed in the number of respondents who prefer mountain climbing and a large number of them are males. Domestic responsibilities for females make it difficult for them to join mountain climbing expeditions in the absence of their husbands. The number of female respondents who are interested in this kind of tour cannot be compared to males.

Apart from swimming and other exercises offered at hotels, some people prefer to visit cultural heritage sites. Most of these sites are located in towns and many people can reach them easily. School programmes such as for history arrange trips for their students to these places. Young people who were born in recent years are born in the town and many are not aware of traditional houses where their grandparents and parents lived in the past. Some of these houses are in historical sites such as the Dar-es-Salaam village museum located in Makumbusho area in Dar-es-Salaam. Different tourists, including primary school children, visit these sites every year.

The respondents also preferred to visit historical places in Zanzibar and Bagamoyo, where artefacts of the history of Tanzania are preserved for future generations to see. They preferred to visit historical places as a part of education programmes and leisure. Places preserved for history have a lot of entertaining features that attract people. Tanzanians who live in Dar-es-Salaam prefer to go to Bagamoyo during weekends as a part of relaxation after a busy week at employment or business establishments.

#### 5.6. Animal and Bird Watching

Some respondents prefer animal and bird watching in tourist destinations. Some respondents have visited destinations for such purposes in Ngorongoro, Serengeti, Selous Game Reserve and other areas in the Northern and Southern tourist Circuits. One of the common things tourists worry about is security in their destinations, especially during low seasons. In low season, destinations often receive low numbers of tourists. One respondent in the informal interview said it is very dangerous to go for animal and bird watching during low season because tourists can be attacked by animals in cases of car breakdowns and there are no other people in the area to provide help or support.

#### 5.7. Attending Art Music Performance

Music performances seem to be a big interest for most Tanzanians. Some of the respondents showed their interest in attending music performances in the selected destinations. These are often performed in hotels and at the Makumbusho Village Museum in Dar-es-Salaam. In the Makumbusho Village, music bands from different tribes in Tanzania play on weekends. Famous old musicians also entertain in these places. Gifts offered for the good dancers are also part of this entertainment and attract more people to these places.

#### 5.8. Nature Walk in Tourist Destinations

Domestic tourists prefer walking along the beach as part of physical exercise or sight-seeing. It is not common to see indigenous Tanzanians of seventy years and above walking along the sea. This is more common among Tanzanians of Asian origin and international tourists who secure accommodation in hotels before they travel to see other tourist destinations such as historical sites, wildlife parks and mountain climbing. The respondents showed interest in participating in nature walks in tourist centres, especially along the beaches.

Many domestic tourists save their money for use along the beaches despite the high prices of services offered for food and drinks. The researcher conducted an informal interview with an 83-year-old Tanzanian woman who had gone to the beach with her son, daughter and daughter-in-law to walk as a part of leisure and exercise, as shown in figure 5. Visiting destinations for most Tanzanians is scant due to the inability to cover the cost associated with the trip and the high cost of services offered in the destinations (Mariki *et al.*, 2011). The trips remain for those who have high disposable income (Anderson, 2010). The study observed that domestic tourists who were walking along the seashore came from high social classes and had been exposed to different environments. This group of Tanzanians have disposable income, which enables them to afford a leisure trip.



Figure 5: Domestic Tourists along the Seashore (Joseph, 2016)

### 5.9. Benefits and Costs of Participating in Domestic Tourism

Some of the respondents consider cost and benefits in decision-making for participation in domestic tourism. When domestic tourists decide to make a trip to a tourist destination, they think of what they will benefit from after going there in terms of knowledge, opportunity to relax and other personal benefits. The decision to make such travels depends on the benefits associated with the trip since the trip considers value for money and the expected level of services to obtain at affordable costs. This includes the cost of transport, meals, accommodation, entertainment and other services provided in the destinations.

Tanzanian respondents show the need for tourism to bring economic benefits to their country and improve people's standards of living. The lack of benefits for the local population is partly attributed to the fact that tourism is dominated mostly by package tours where tourists pay their bills for the respective hotels in advance via the travel agents that require the tourists to do so and spend very little money in the communities they pass through (Kazuzuru, 2014). Expected economic benefits, as far as this study is concerned, are in terms of income generation and employment for Tanzanians in the major tourist destinations.

The running costs of tourist destinations force the owners to set prices that enable them to give quality services to tourists. The results tally with those from other studies like Laakso (2011) and Shelutete (2013), who have indicated that most of the charges for tourist attractions are high for domestic and other tourists. They reflect the increases in parking fees set by TANAPA. In historical sites like the National Museum of Tanzania, it is only the entrance fee that is affordable to domestic tourists. All other charges are the same for services provided to all types of tourists. Companies that provide services to tourists face challenges in implementing the tourism policy. Tourism is like any other business and aims to make a profit at minimum cost.

The high cost of services in tourist destinations is an obstacle for most Tanzanians to participate in domestic tourism. Leisure activities are activities that someone expects to engage in after fulfilling other important engagements to meet basic needs for life. A person may calculate the cost to be incurred in visiting a tourist destination and compare it with other entertainment options that are more affordable and make the decision whether to participate or not.

The objective was to evaluate the participation of Tanzanian citizens in domestic tourism on the grounds of trust, power and knowledge of tourism. The study developed hypotheses that were analyzed in a structural model of factors that influence the participation of Tanzanian citizens in domestic tourism based on the components of the social exchange theory of trust, power and knowledge. Income (IPM) was associated with trust, gender was associated with power, and the level of education (EDL) was associated with knowledge level. All these variables lead to destination visits (DVT) and influence the participation of Tanzanian citizens in domestic tourism (PDT).

The path model, as summarized in the study, is a recursive model in which the direction of the causal flow is one-way. The model, as indicated by the direction of the arrows, shows that the level of education influences income, whereby income influences choices of destination visits, and destination visits have an influence on gender. These represent independent variables, while participation in domestic tourism is the dependent variable, as summarized in the study. The hypotheses were tested after the process of running the structure model.

There is a lot of literature on evidence that Tanzania is endowed with abundant natural resources. It is true that natural resources in Tanzania tourist destinations are enjoyed by foreigners and accessed through social media platforms and browsed through different articles published in various international sites. It is evident that most foreigners wish for this experience while, on the contrary, Tanzanians' visit to destination is low as the people are not aware of what they have in their country. Tanzania needs to develop its tourism manpower and capacity, review its strategy of an expensive high-end tourism destination, shake the perceptions of an unmotivated society that does not take national development, education and economic investment seriously, and focus on providing a world-class experience to tourists.

Tanzania, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, will need to review its tourism marketing strategy and target unexploited rich tourism circuits and destinations that still lie dormant. These sites surpass other countries in tourism attractions. Tanzania should identify specific areas of improvement to maintain high-quality tourism and make the country a pillar in the socio-economic visions of future development and enable people to enjoy all the accruing benefits.

Finally, the strategies used in enhancing participation in tourism should be reviewed and implemented from the grass-root level, as discussed in the previous paragraphs. The government should allocate enough budgetary resources to implement tourism programmes that support domestic tourism development. People should be educated on the importance and purpose of participating in domestic tourism. The education should be through the media such as television, radio and newspapers that should specify the importance of relaxation after working days to improve health and performance. The establishment of infrastructure should consider the tests and preferences of all types of tourists, both domestic and international. Tourist advertisements should be designed and placed in strategic locations where everybody can see and should target all segments of Tanzanian society.

By enhancing different promotion programmes and educating people on the importance of domestic tourism to the community, local residents' participation and support for tourism development will increase and develop a tourism sector in the country. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism should increase the number of opportunities for the local community to become involved in tourism education and promotion programmes. This will entail a review of existing policies, rules, and regulations to ensure the removal of barriers to community participation, employing a more transparent and democratic political structure and maximizing the capacity of communication channels. By implementing these plans, local residents will involve themselves in tourism.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Tanzania Tourist Board, Tanzania National Park Authority and other stakeholders in tourism should promote domestic tourism by educating the people about domestic tourism.

Tourism education should be introduced in schools to teach the students what tourism is about, why tourists want to visit Tanzania, what Tanzania has to offer, why domestic tourism is important and especially emphasize what the benefits of international and domestic tourism are like job opportunities and income. Letting the Tanzanians participate in the process of tourism development and involving them in the conservation of heritage parks will make the Tanzanians more aware of domestic tourism and they can gain knowledge about it.

Knowledge of tourism enables people to work in tourism and some of them can own businesses in tourism. This can solve the problem of most tourism businesses owned by foreign investors. It will provide Tanzanians with more disposable income, which they can spend on domestic holiday trips. Besides the above, the Tanzania government, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, has to promote diversified activities, including horse riding and fishing. This is because almost everybody can participate in these activities and they are not so expensive for local residents to undertake. These activities can also be undertaken outside the main tourist areas.

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