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The Evolution of Cultural Tourism in Zanzibar: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

Zanzibar has seen rapid growth in cultural tourism over the past few decades due to its rich history and cultural heritage. This form of tourism is on the rise among both local and international travellers and is seen as a way to encourage sustainable travel while preserving local culture. This paper seeks to assess the evolution of cultural travel in Zanzibar its opportunities and challenges. According to the review, Zanzibar's unique Swahili culture and heritage, shaped by its role across the Indian Ocean trade networks, are among its significant attractions. Basically, cultural tourism provides opportunities for economic development, which enabled Zanzibar to develop a strategic approach to harnessing cultural assets for sustainable tourism, which includes economic benefits such as job creation, revenue generation, and the preservation of historic sites and local arts. However, there are sustainability challenges related to the environment, infrastructure, digital technology, community inclusiveness, and the balance between tourist demands and community needs. Managing these impacts and promoting authentic cultural experiences is crucial for long-term benefits, and collaboration between government, businesses, and communities is essential for genuine and sustainable tourism development in Zanzibar.

1. Introduction

As per the definition provided by the World Tourism Organization, (2018) [38], cultural tourism is characterized as the "travel of individuals primarily driven by cultural interests, encompassing activities such as educational excursions, participation in performing arts and cultural expeditions, attendance at festivals and other cultural gatherings, explorations of historical sites and monuments, journeys undertaken for the study of nature, folklore exploration, and pilgrimages". Cultural tourism encompasses various activities pursued by individuals primarily driven by the desire to delve into cultural aspects, such as research initiatives and art appreciation. In 2018, the UNWTO published a report titled 'Tourism and Culture Synergies, which examined the tourism and culture closely intertwined. According to the report, cultural tourism accounts for about 40 per cent of the world's tourist industry. The UNWTO has identified cultural tourism as one of the most rapidly growing tourism segments. Factors driving this growth include increasing education levels, the desire for more meaningful experiences, and emerging markets (WTO, 2020). Tourism in Zanzibar dates back to the second half of the 19th century, when it was a popular destination for explorers, traders, and colonialists. The island's spices, such as cloves and cinnamon, were highly sought-after, attracting foreign visitors.

The explosion of cultural travel has been remarkable multifaceted process that involves the promotion, preservation, and presentation of a destination's cultural heritage and assets to attract tourists (Du Cros *et al*. 2015) [6]. Cultural tourism focuses on the unique customs, traditions, history, art, architecture, and lifestyle of a particular region or community. It enables travelers to fully engage with the indigenous culture of the region, gaining a deeper understanding of the people and places they visit (Glassman, 2011) [7]. In the realm of economic development and the increasing demand for distinctive travel opportunities and experiences, there is a growing inclination among individuals to explore and fully engulf themselves into the distinctive cultures and riches of various regions. Obviously, in the coming years, cultural tourism is anticipated to emerge as one of the most rapidly expanding sectors within the tourism industry. Thus, in a bid to harness and safeguard its cultural heritage, Zanzibar has swiftly garnered the interest of local authorities, investors, and scholars around the world (Bang, 2013) [1].

Zanzibar is an archipelago located along the coast of the Indian Ocean the eastern shoreline of Tanzania, within the region of East Africa. It is composed of several islands, with the two main ones being Unguja Island and Pemba Island (Shariff, 2001) [29]. Zanzibar has an extremely wealthy and diverse cultural history influenced by Arab, Persian, Indian, African, and European cultures due to its historical role as a trading hub. Zanzibar has cultivated a distinctive cultural heritage characterized by a rich tapestry of languages, customs, practices, and traditions. This unique blend of cultural elements has captivated the interest of both local and international tourists, drawing them to the islands in search of an enriching and diverse cultural experience. Tourism is among the main pillars of Zanzibar's economy, accounting for over 80% of foreign exchange gains and over 20 percent of GDP. It employs around 30% of the workforce. Zanzibar attracts over 500,000 visitors annually, mostly from Europe and East Asia. The main attractions are its beaches, coral reefs, spice tours, historical Stone Town, and Swahili culture. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, (2000) [36] Zanzibar, specifically the Stone Town area of Zanzibar City, In the year 2000, Stone Town was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its historical significance core of Zanzibar City and well-known for its unique architecture, which reflects the island's multicultural history and heritage. The UNESCO designation recognizes Stone Town as an excellent illustration of a Swahili seaside commercial enclave and as a place of historical significance due to its role in the spice and slave trades (Sheriff, 2010) [30].

In recent years, Zanzibar has made considerable strides in directing substantial resources towards the improvement of synchronized infrastructure, including the expansion and improvement of airports and seaports, the construction of new hotels and resorts, and the enhancement of roads and transportation facilities, augmenting its appeal to potential investors and spearheading innovative tourism initiatives to enhance the island's accessibility for tourists (Luvanga and Shitundu, 2003) [18].

Basically, these efforts are aimed at not only attracting but also facilitating the expansion of the burgeoning tourism industry in the enchanting isles of Zanzibar. The island has enhanced its efforts in the management, preservation, and promotion of natural and cultural heritage within the region (Mshenga and Richardson, 2013) [22]. Additionally, there has been a concentrated focus on improving the training and development of the tourism workforce. Furthermore, Zanzibar has taken proactive actions to promote and market its tourism offerings through prestigious television channels and social media platforms while simultaneously updating and showcasing the visual representation of its tourism products and services on smart tourism platforms, although the efforts were not enough to compete with others easily.

Consequently, these efforts have built the foundation for creating favorable conditions and opportunities to propel Zanzibar's tourism sector into a period of significant growth in the near future. In a similar vein, the island has actively initiated programs aimed at revitalizing domestic tourism. These programs are designed to achieve the following objectives: Zanzibar may have launched 'marketing campaigns' aimed at promoting local tourism. These campaigns could include advertisements, social media promotions, and partnerships with travel influencers to showcase the beauty and attractions of the islands. Also, the governments and tourism authorities provide exclusive discounts, packages, and reduced entrance fees to local residents, making travel more budget-friendly for them to promote young people and other people to explore their rational cultural heritage (Zanzibar Tourism Policy Statement and Tourism Master Plan 2002) [41].

In Zanzibar, the overall tourism offerings have been designed to facilitate seamless connections between various tourist areas and attractions within the region. Additionally, there are proactive measures in place to safeguard the landscape, environment, and service facilities that cater to tourists along these routes. Despite the fact that Zanzibar's tourism industry has been a crucial driver of economic growth and development for the archipelago, Zanzibar, a

semi-autonomous region of Tanzania, is reputed to have stunning sandy beaches, a vibrant cultural history, with heritage significance (Scheyvens, 2007) [27]. But the preservation of historical sites, architecture, and artefacts becomes a challenge for the islands, which requires ongoing effort and resources. Without proper conservation, these valuable cultural assets can deteriorate over time.

The objectives in this project included exploration of cultural tourism evolution, analyzing the opportunities and challenges provided by growing cultural tourism in Zanzibar as well as strategies for better implicating and managing the future development of cultural tourism sustainably and responsibly in Zanzibar. These objectives purposively therefore seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution with regard to cultural travel in Zanzibar, the opportunities it presents, and the challenges that need to be addressed for its sustainable growth and positive impact on the region, and to contribute to the academic literature on cultural tourism by offering insights and analysis specific to the Zanzibar context.

1.1 The Key Cultural and Historical Landmarks of Zanzibar
Zanzibar is a historically and culturally rich archipelago with a plethora of landmarks that showcase its diverse heritage. Some key cultural and historical landmarks in Zanzibar: Stone Town as the remarkable heart of Zanzibar City, known for its intricate maze-like alleys and architecture. Notable buildings in Stone Town include the Old Fort, the House of Wonders, as well as the Sultan's Palace Museum (Kinabo, 2006) [16]. The Anglican Cathedral of Christ, Constructed on the grounds of the former slave market, stands as a powerful symbol of the abolition of the East African slave trade, and Darajani market offers a vibrant and colorful experience where you can explore local crafts, spices, and fresh produce. Spice forms and dhow building markets with beautiful beaches surrounding the Zanzibar islands. Also, Jozani Chwaka National Park, which is located on Unguja Island, is home to the rare and endangered Zanzibar red colobus monkey (Festival of the Dhow Countries, 2023). Key organizations involved in Zanzibar's tourism sector include the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism, the Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors, and tour operators like ZanTours, and various hotel and resort chains (Sheriff, A. (2010) [30].

In sum, these cultural and historical landmarks in Zanzibar offer a fascinating journey through the island's past and its vibrant mix of cultures, making it a popular destination for tourists interested in the history, culture, and natural beauty of the island.

2. Methodology
Methodology refers to the systematic and structured approach used by researchers to design, conduct, and analyze a research study (Bryman, 2016) [3]. Therefore, in this paper the researchers employed a library research approach to gather secondary data for this study.

3. Theoretical Perspective for Cultural Tourism Development
Cultural tourism, often referred to as heritage tourism, is a subset of tourism that focuses on travelers seeking authentic cultural experiences. It involves visiting destinations to learn about and engage with the cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of a place. The increasing popularity of tourism for cultural purposes is underpinned by several theoretical frameworks and principles.

Cultural capital theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) [43], posits that cultural assets such as art, traditions, and heritage hold significant value (Bourdieu, 1986) [43]. Cultural tourism development is based on the idea that communities and regions can capitalize on their unique cultural assets to attract tourists. This theory suggests that investments in preserving and showcasing cultural capital can lead to economic development through tourism (Dumais, 2002) [44]. Another theory that is used to study cultural resources and heritage is *heritage conservation theory*, emphasizes the preservation of cultural heritage and the importance of

managing tourism to minimize negative impacts on historic sites, traditions, and artifacts. Cultural tourism development incorporates this theory by implementing sustainable practices to protect and conserve cultural resources for future generations (Lowenthal, 1998 [45]; Smith, 2006). On the other hand, cultural diffusion theory examines how cultural traits, practices, when ideas propagate from one society to another. In cultural tourism, this theory can be applied to understand how cultural experiences and influences are shared among tourists and how destinations can leverage these exchanges to foster cross-cultural understanding. This study also used *cultural policy and governance theories*, which means that cultural tourism development often requires the support of government policies and governance structures (Gramsci, 1971; Mulcahy, 2006) [48, 47]. Theories related to cultural policy and governance address issues such as cultural resource management, funding mechanisms, and the role of the public and private sectors in promoting cultural tourism. To succeed in cultural tourism development, destinations must enhance their competitive advantage by continuously improving their cultural assets and visitor experiences.

To this end, in practice, cultural tourism development draws upon a combination of these theoretical foundations to shape strategies, policies, and practices for the unique context and objectives of each destination. Successful cultural tourism development requires multidisciplinary and holistic approaches that consider cultural, economic, environmental, and social factors to create a sustainable expansion of tourism for cultural purposes and an enriching experience for both travelers and local residents.

4. The Rudimentary of Cultural Tourism Conception

Cultural tourism, often referred to as heritage tourism, is a form of travel that revolves around the exploration and appreciation of the cultural, historical, artistic, and social aspects of a destination (Harrison, 2004) [12]. Other scholar, Richards, (1996) [25], see tourism to cultural sights as a facet of tourism centered on a nation's cultural heritage, fostering community involvement in the preservation and dissemination of traditional cultural heritage. It involves tourists seeking authentic and enriching experiences by immersing themselves in the traditions, customs, art, architecture, cuisine, and lifestyle The destinations they explore. As Ivanovic, (2008) [14] defines it, Cultural tourism constitutes a form of travel that focuses on experiencing and exploring the cultural heritage, traditions, arts, history, and lifestyle of a specific region, society, or group of people. It involves travelling to destinations primarily for the purpose of immersing oneself in the unique cultural aspects of that place (Scheyvens, 2007) [27].

According to Novelli *et al*. (2018) [23], cultural travelling (tourism) is a specific branch of tourism primarily focused on the exploration and appreciation of historical monuments and heritage sites. This type of tourism is distinct from other forms of travel, such as ecotourism or adventure tourism, which may focus on natural landscapes or outdoor activities. Instead, cultural tourism places a strong emphasis on the exploration and appreciation of historical monuments and heritage sites, making it a unique and enriching experience for tourists. Also, is an activity within the realm of tourism where people travel to experience the history, art, architecture, heritage, and traditions of a place or culture (Du Cros and McKercher, 2015) [6].

According to the UNWTO, (2018) [37] cultural tourism refers to a specialized form of tourism that revolves around the exploration and engagement with the cultural heritage, traditions, arts, and lifestyle of a particular destination. This sort of tourism places a strong emphasis on immersing visitors in the unique cultural attributes of a place, including its historical sites, museums, festivals, cuisine, music, dance, and other forms of artistic expression. As UNWTO noted, cultural tourism accounts for 37% of global tourism, and is among the rapidly expanding tourism markets. Cultural tourism encourages travellers To engage with the indigenous or resident community, learn on their traditions and beliefs, and gain a deeper understanding of the rich tapestry of human cultures from all across the world. It not only contributes to

the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage but also fosters cross-cultural exchange and mutual respect among people from different backgrounds, thereby promoting sustainable tourism development and global cultural appreciation.

Cultural tourism aims to bridge the gap between different cultures, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation, while also contributing to the preservation and promotion of a destination's cultural heritage (Suleiman, 2012) [34]. It encompasses a variety of activities, including visiting museums, historical sites, and festivals; attending performances; and engaging with local communities, all of which provide travellers with a deeper insight into the unique and diverse cultural tapestry of a region. Moreover, it brings about favorable outcomes by actively contributing to the preservation and maintenance of these sites. This form of tourism has demonstrated its capacity to support conservation efforts and enhance the overall quality of these places while simultaneously fulfilling the cultural, economic, and social needs of the local community Sindiga, (2006) [31].

In summary, cultural tourism represents a unique facet of the travel industry, driven by a passion for history, art, and cultural exploration. It offers travellers the opportunity to establish a connection with historical eras, immerse themselves in diverse cultures, and contribute to the preservation of valuable heritage sites (Kinabo, 2006) [16]. As tourists engage with the history and culture of a destination, they not only enrich their own lives but also support the local communities and the conservation of these invaluable treasures. Thus, this form of tourism has demonstrated its efficacy in supporting conservation and enhancement endeavors, effectively addressing the cultural, economic, and social needs of the community, primarily when focusing on research related to historical sites and monuments.

4.1 The Conceptualization of Cultural Tourism Products

Cultural tourism refers to tourism activity motivated by an interest in the realms artistic, scientific, historical, or lifestyle offerings of a community, region, group, or institution (Smith, 2016) [32]. Cultural tourism products are developed through partnerships between tourism authorities, destination management organizations, cultural institutions, attraction managers, tour operators, local businesses, and communities (Smith, 2016) [32]. They require effective presentation, storytelling, and educational programming to deliver an engaging and meaningful cultural experience for visitors.

The core components of cultural vacation trade procts as identified by scholars (McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; Smith, 2016) [32] include not just physical attractions and sights such as 'museums or heritage sites, festival attendance, indigenous cultural experiences, art and workshops, performing arts shows, language and cooking classes, but also interactive experiences, participatory activities, interpretation, and narratives that bring the culture and heritage to life, and other products that showcase and share the living culture and creative spirit of a destination. High-quality cultural tourism goods and services offer authentic, personalized, and memorable experiences that immerse visitors in local traditions and create opportunities for exchange between host communities and guests.

Also, some key characteristics of cultural tourism products (as identified by McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; UNWTO, 2018) [19, 37] include that they allow cultural tourists to learn about the lifestyle, heritage, arts, or any other elements that shape the culture of the host community. This includes experiencing local customs, traditions, arts and crafts, rituals, food, etc. They are generally experiences and activities that are unique to a particular region or community and allow immersion into the local culture. They provide an authentic depiction of the culture, not artificial or staged representations. Also, authenticity is a major motivating factor for cultural tourists. Cultural tourism products can include heritage sites, museums, art galleries, festivals and events, cuisine, cultural neighborhoods and villages, indigenous communities, religious sites, archaeological sites, etc. Further, both tangible (sites, buildings, art, food, etc.) and intangible elements (stories, traditions, language, music, dance, etc.) can be key components of cultural tourism products. (UNWTO 2018) [37]. Basically, cultural

tourism products provide an authentic educational opportunity that immerses visitors in local traditions, art, food, history, and lifestyle.

Cultural tourism products need to be integrated into overall destination planning, infrastructure, and marketing for maximum effectiveness (Smith, 2016) [32]. So, quality cultural tourism products should ensure the authenticity of the experience, facilitate interaction and hands-on learning, and provide proper context and an engaging presentation. Therefore, developing quality cultural tourism products requires careful planning, management, and promotion. Key success factors include ensuring authenticity, facilitating interactive experiences, engaging interpreters and storytellers, and integrating cultural elements into overall destination marketing (Du Cros & McKercher, 2015; Smith, 2016) [6, 32]. To this end, cultural tourism products allow tourists to engage with and experience the authentic living culture, heritage, and traditions of a community or region. The products showcasing the intangible and tangible cultural elements are a major motivating factor for cultural tourist travel.

4.2 The Current Overview of the Tourism Sector in Zanzibar
The tourism industry is a dynamic and multifaceted sector that encompasses a wide range of activities related to travel and leisure. Zanzibar is celebrated for its unspoiled shorelines, diverse cultural legacy, and historical significance (Kinabo, 2006) [16]. The tourism industry plays a pivotal role in Zanzibar's economy, contributing significantly to employment, revenue generation, and cultural exchange. This overview of Zanzibar's tourism industry provides insights into its key components and features and the current state of tourism in Zanzibar.

Zanzibar has been undergoing a steady increase in international tourist arrivals. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2019, Zanzibar received over 500,000 international tourist arrivals, generating over $500 million in revenue. The numbers declined in 2020 because of the COVID-19 epidemic, but are rebounding again in 2022. The island saw a significant rise in the amount of international tourist arrivals, with visitors coming from Europe, Asia, and other regions drawn to its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and welcoming atmosphere. Whereas popular tourist destinations include Nungwi and Kendwa in the north, Paje and Jambiani on the east coast, Stone Town, and islands like Prison Island (Nuryanti, 2015) [24].

The island offers a wide range of accommodation options, from luxury resorts to boutique hotels. Zanzibar boasts several world-class luxury resorts situated in picturesque beachfront locations. These resorts provide opulent accommodations with spacious rooms, private villas, and exclusive amenities. Many of them offer all-inclusive packages that encompass fine dining, spa treatments, and water sports. Zanzibar boutique hotels are known for personalized service, unique design, and an intimate atmosphere (Hanafy, 2021) [11]. They often incorporate local elements into their decor and offer a more immersive cultural experience for guests. For example: The Emerson Spice Hotel in Stone Town is renowned for its historic charm, rooftop restaurant, and attention to detail in showcasing Zanzibar's heritage. Zanzibar has embraced ecotourism, and eco-lodges on the island prioritize sustainable practices and responsible tourism (Hamad et al. 2018) [10]. These lodges are set in natural surroundings and offer eco-friendly accommodations with a minimal environmental footprint. Example: The Chumbe Island Coral Park is a marine sanctuary and eco-lodge that provides guests with the opportunity to stay in eco-bungalows while contributing to conservation efforts. These options cater to various traveler's preferences and budgets.

Zanzibar, with its stunning landscapes, rich heritage of culture, and historical significance, offers an array of attractions that captivate the imagination of travellers. These attractions contribute to the island's status as a sought-after destination for tourists seeking a blend of natural beauty and cultural experiences (Suleiman, 2012) [34]. Recently, the main source markets for tourists have included Italy, Germany, the UK, the US, and other European countries. There are an increasing number of tourists from China and India as well. The island is renowned for its exquisite beaches with soft,

powdery sands and clear turquoise waters, such as Nungwi Beach. The island's coastline is dotted with beaches that cater to various preferences, from lively and vibrant to seclusion and tranquilly (Lange et al. 2009) [17].

Zanzibar is frequently referred as the "Spice Island" due to its history as a major spice producer. Visitors can explore spice farms to understand about farming of spices like cloves, vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg (Suleiman, 2012) [34]. On the other side, Zanzibar hosts a variety of cultural festivals throughout the year, celebrating music, dance, and local traditions. The annual Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF), Sauti za Busara music festival, local food festival, and Mwaka Kogwa Festival are noteworthy events that showcase traditional and contemporary African music (Busara, 2023; ZIFF, 2023) [5, 42].

Access to the internet and mobile networks is vital for tourists who rely on digital tools for navigation, communication, and information about cultural attractions. Adequate digital infrastructure, including Wi-Fi and mobile coverage, enhances the visitor experience. According to ZCT, (2019) [40], many hotels and cafés in Zanzibar offer Wi-Fi access to cater to the connectivity needs of modern tourists. The process of establishing tourist information centers at key entry points, such as airports and seaports, can provide tourists with maps, brochures, and guidance on cultural sites, enhancing their accessibility. Whereas the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism (ZCT) operates tourist information centers in strategic locations to assist visitors (ZCT, 2019) [40].

The perception of security and safety is a paramount concern for tourists, and it significantly influences their decisions to engage in cultural tourism activities in Zanzibar. Ensuring the safety and security of tourists is a primary priority for the local authorities and tourism industry stakeholders. Zanzibar has taken several measures to enhance the safety of tourists (Gössling and Scott, 2012) [8]. Local police forces and tourism police units are present in key tourist areas, providing a visible security presence to reassure visitors. Additionally, tourist police stations are strategically located in popular tourist destinations like Stone Town and Nungwi Beach. These units are dedicated to assisting tourists, handling complaints, and ensuring their safety. Also, to promote sustainable tourism, Zanzibar has established marine conservation areas, begun environmental initiatives in Stone Town, and encouraged community-based tourism in villages. But much remains to be done.

The types of tourism that have been implemented in Zanzibar currently include *cultural tourism*: Zanzibar's cultural heritage is a significant draw for tourists. Visitors can explore the island's unique mix of African, Arab, Indian, and European influences through cultural tours, festivals, and interactions with local communities (Suleiman, 2012; Becker, 2010) [34, 2]. Also, a*dventure tourism:* Activities such as water sports, hiking, and wildlife safaris in Zanzibar's Jozani National Park cater to adventure enthusiasts. *Eco-Tourism:* The isles currently are increasingly promoting eco-tourism, with initiatives focused on conservation, wildlife protection, and sustainable practices; this includes safeguarding the critically endangered Zanzibar red colobus monkey.

4.3 Importance of Cultural Tourism in Zanzibar
Cultural tourism holds significant importance in the context of Zanzibar, as it contributes to the island's socio-economic development, the preservation of cultural heritage, the empowerment of local communities, and the promotion of sustainable tourism practices. At this point, a more detailed explanation of the significance of cultural tourism in Zanzibar follows.

Economic Benefits: Cultural tourism contributes significantly to the economy of Zanzibar. It brings in foreign exchange through visitor spending on accommodation, food, transportation, and souvenirs (Nuryanti, 2015) [24]. So, cultural tourism generates revenue for the development of the government of Zanzibar and its people. In Zanzibar, the development of the tourism sector employs a

substantial portion of the local population, including tour guides, hotel staff, artisans, and more. This job creation helps alleviate unemployment and reduce poverty on the islands. According to scholars Gössling and Scott, (2012) [8], cultural tourism diversifies the economy by reducing dependence on a single industry. This can make the economy more resilient to external shocks and fluctuations.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage; According to Becker (2010) [2], tourism often incentivizes the preservation and restoration of historical and cultural sites. The revenue generated can be reinvested in maintaining and protecting these landmarks. Scholars have noted that tourism fosters a sense of pride and awareness among the local population about their cultural heritage (Smith, 2016) [32]. This can lead to increased efforts to safeguard traditions and customs.

Promotion of Local Communities: Cultural tourism can empower local communities by involving them in various aspects of the tourism industry, such as offering homestays, crafts, and cultural performances (Lange *et al*. 2009) [17]. This empowers communities to have a stake in tourism. Also, interaction between tourists and local communities can promote cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and tolerance. This can have a positive effect on social unity. Economic opportunities created by cultural tourism can reduce poverty and enhance social cohesion. When local communities see tangible benefits from tourism, they are more likely to welcome visitors from different backgrounds and promote peaceful coexistence.

Sustainable Tourism Practices: Cultural tourism has the potential to be developed sustainably, taking environmental considerations. This includes responsible waste management, protecting natural resources, and minimizing the carbon footprint of tourism activities. Further, Sustainable cultural tourism respects and supports the genuineness of indigenous cultures. It encourages practices that do not commodity or degrade traditions (Sheriff, 2001; Hamad *et al*. 2018) [29, 10].

Infrastructure Development: To accommodate tourists, there's often a need for better infrastructure like roads, airports, and utilities. These improvements benefit not only tourists but also local residents in Zanzibar. As infrastructure develops, the general standard of living for residents can improve. On the other hand, access to healthcare, education, and other services may also increase due to tourism-related development (Suleiman and Kilimani, 2018) [33].

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Promotion of Peace and Tolerance: Cultural tourism often promotes intercultural dialogue and understanding. When tourists and locals engage in cultural exchanges, it can foster tolerance, reduce stereotypes, and build bridges between different communities (Sheriff, 2001) [29]. Actually, the promotion of peace and tolerance through cultural tourism represent a significant aspect of the island's cultural engagement with visitors. Zanzibar, like many other culturally diverse regions, has experienced periods of tension and conflict in its history. However, cultural tourism serves as a powerful tool for fostering peace and tolerance. Cultural tourism encourages interactions between tourists and local communities. Visitors have the chance to engage in cultural exchanges, whether through participating in traditional ceremonies, trying local cuisine, or learning about the customs and people's beliefs (Becker, 2010) [2]. These interactions promote

understanding and empathy, breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions that may exist among tourists about Zanzibar's culture and its people. By showcasing the peaceful cohabitation of various ethnic and religious groups, Zanzibar sets an example of tolerance and harmony. Cultural festivals and events, often integrated into the tourism experience, promote unity and tolerance. These celebrations bring people from diverse backgrounds together to enjoy music, dance, and art. Examples include the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) and the Mwaka Kogwa festival, which draw visitors and locals alike (ZIFF, 2023) [42].

Diversified Tourism Offerings: Cultural tourism helps Zanzibar distinguish itself in the global tourism market. Zanzibar has historically been known for its pristine beaches and wildlife tourism,, but cultural tourism diversifies the island's tourism offerings (Jiang *et al*. 2020) [15]. It attracts a different segment of travelers who are interested in history, art, music, and authentic cultural experiences. This diversification reduces the island's reliance on a single tourism sector, making it more resilient to market fluctuations. Unlike seasonal tourism, cultural tourism has the potential to be promoted year-round, reducing the seasonality of the tourism business. Also, *Diplomatic and Soft Power*: Zanzibar's cultural tourism efforts can also be seen as a type of soft power, shaping the perception of the island and its people on the global level (Moyo & Higgs, 2019) [21]. Peaceful coexistence and cultural harmony can enhance Zanzibar's international reputation. Facilitates educational experiences for tourists. Visitors gain insights into the history, traditions, and way of life of the people of Zanzibar, contributing to their personal growth and global awareness.

In sum, cultural tourism in Zanzibar is not only about showcasing its rich history and diverse culture to visitors, but also about fostering sustainable development and preserving the island's unique heritage. When managed carefully and responsibly, cultural tourism can Create a enduring positive influence on the economy, society, and environment of Zanzibar.

5. The Impediments to the Advancement of Cultural Tourism in Zanzibar

Cultural tourism's evolution is subject to a plethora of factors that can either facilitate or obstruct its expansion. These factors encompass a wide range of economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects. Despite rapid growth in recent years, Zanzibar's tourism industry faces several challenges that could hinder its continued development.

Infrastructure and accessibility are fundamental factors in the evolution with respect of cultural travel in Zanzibar (Harrison, 2004) [12]. These aspects influence the ease with which tourists can access cultural sites, experience the local heritage, and contribute to the overall quality of the tourism experience. Another major challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure to support the rising number of visitors. Roads, airports, power supplies, water systems, and waste management facilities are under strain. Energy supply is a particularly acute problem, with frequent power cuts disrupting hotel operations (Suleiman and Kilimani, 2018) [33]. Upgrading infrastructure requires substantial investment, which has not kept pace with tourism growth. So, adequate transportation infrastructure and accessibility to cultural sites are essential for the transforming the Landscape of Cultural Tourism

Environmental sustainability is also a major concern. Rapid coastal development and growing visitor numbers are damaging fragile marine ecosystems through activities like snorkeling and diving (Hamad *et al*. 2018) [10]. Water pollution and waste generation further degrade the environment. More sustainable practices are required to preserve Zanzibar's natural habitats (Sindiga, 2006) [31]. Also, overreliance on European markets in 2018, approximately 65% of visitors came from Europe, with Tanzania, Kenya, and Italy as the next largest source markets (Zanzibar Commission for Tourism, 2019) [40]. This overreliance on a limited number of markets leaves Zanzibar vulnerable to external shocks. To foster

cultural tourism, it is imperative for the tourism commission and various stakeholders to actively seek out and promote tourist attractions in diverse global destinations. The seasonality of demand Tourism in Zanzibar is highly seasonal, with peak visitation during the dry months of June to October and a significant drop during the rainy season. This seasonality strains infrastructure and leads to employment variability (Sharpley, 2003) [28].

While Zanzibar's cultural tourism has growth potential, a lack of inclusive community participation, a sense of ownership, and community empowerment in the tourism value chain is a key challenge (Ramchander, 2004). More participatory approaches and support are needed to help local micro, small, and medium enterprises and communities benefit from tourism growth. Also, a Insufficient Financial Resources for the preservation of cultural heritage sites and traditions is another challenge facing cultural tourism in Zanzibar, where many historical buildings are in poor condition and in need of restoration. Financial resources from the government and foreign aid are inadequate (Nuryanti, 2015) [24]. Additionally, there is a shortage of trained heritage experts, particularly local experts like archaeologists, historians, and conservation architects, to professionally manage and preserve cultural resources, which is a challenge in developing cultural tourism in Zanzibar. Thus, the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage sites play a significant role in cultural tourism development (Luvanga, & Shitundu, 2003) [18].

Zanzibar has relatively low internet penetration rates compared to more developed tourism markets. For example, Zanzibar still has a predominantly cash-based economy. Many local tourism businesses don't have the skills or resources to effectively promote their products and services online to tech-savvy travellers (Beker, 2010; Xiang *et al.*, 2017 [39]). Therefore, technological advancements, including the use of virtual reality and online platforms, will transform the way cultural tourism is marketed and experienced. Moreover, competition from other Indian Ocean destinations presents challenges for Zanzibar's cultural tourism development, requiring continuous efforts to differentiate and market itself effectively globally. Furthermore, the outbreak of Covid-19 had a notable influence on. Zanzibar's tourism industry, as it did globally. Travel restrictions, lockdowns, and health concerns led to a sharp decline in Global Inbound Tourist Visits in 2020. Zanzibar has been working on recovery strategies and health protocols to welcome tourists safely. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Zanzibar's tourism industry remains optimistic about its future. The island continues to focus on sustainable practices, responsible tourism, and cultural preservation, positioning itself for long-term growth in the global tourism landscape. It needs to better showcase its unique cultural offerings like Stone Town, spice tours, Pemba Island, etc. to attract more visitors (Glassman, 2011) [7].

These factors are interconnected and require careful consideration in the planning and evolution of cultural tourism destinations. Thus, successful cultural tourism initiatives often involve collaboration between various stakeholders, including governments, local communities, and the tourism industry, to address these factors comprehensively.

6. Strategies for Promoting Sustainable Cultural Tourism in Zanzibar

Sustainable practices in cultural tourism are crucial for ensuring that tourism activities do not harm the cultural and environmental integrity of a destination, while providing long-term advantages for local communities (Moyo & Higgs, 2019) [21]. These practices focus on promoting responsible and ethical tourism that respects and preserves cultural heritage and minimizes negative impacts. Here are some key sustainable practices in cultural tourism

Community Engagement and Empowerment: involving local communities in the planning, management, and decision-making processes of cultural tourism initiatives empowers them to have a stake in the industry's benefits (Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003) [18].

This practice ensures that local residents having a voice in shaping tourism activities and can benefit economically from them, reducing the risk of exploitation and cultural disruption. Encouraging tourists to respect local customs, traditions, and etiquette helps prevent cultural insensitivity and misunderstandings (Getz & Jamal, 1994). Cultural sensitivity can be promoted through educational materials, briefings, and codes of conduct for tourists. Also, conduct comprehensive cultural impact assessments before launching any cultural tourism project. These assessments should involve input from local communities and cultural experts to understand the potential effects of commercialization on cultural authenticity. With respect and prioritize local customs, traditions, and values. Cultural tourism initiatives should align with and support local cultural practices rather than replacing or distorting them, and develop and communicate clear codes of conduct for tourists to ensure respectful behaviour and adherence to local customs (Harrison, 2004) [12]. Tourists should be educated about the cultural and ethical norms of their destination.

Marketing and Promotion: Effective marketing strategies and promotion of cultural attractions are vital to attracting tourists (Morrison & Anderson, 2017) [20]. Destination marketing organizations play a key role in promoting cultural heritage and attractions to potential visitors through campaigns, public relations, social media, and travel trade partnerships. They note that unique cultural assets and experiences are a competitive advantage for many destinations, like Zanzibar, when it comes to attracting tourists. Further, adequate transportation infrastructure, including airports, seaports, roads, and public transportation, is essential for connecting tourists to cultural sites within Zanzibar. Improved transportation networks not only facilitate the movement of visitors but also enhance the convenience of travel, encouraging more tourists to explore the island's cultural treasures.

Heritage Preservation: Sustainable cultural tourism involves the preservation and preservation of cultural heritage sites and artefacts through responsible tourism practices (Nuryanti, 2015) [24]. Also, strict guidelines and regulations may be enforced to prevent damage or degradation of historical sites and artefacts. Maintaining the authenticity of cultural experiences is essential. Cultural tourism should offer genuine and unaltered encounters with local traditions, cuisine, and lifestyles (Richards & Munsters, 2010). Efforts should be made to strike a balance between commercialization and preserving cultural integrity. Also, minimizing the environmental impact of cultural tourism is critical. Sustainable practices include waste reduction, energy conservation, and eco-friendly transportation options (Gössling & Scott, 2019) [9]. Sustainable architectural and landscaping practices can also be employed to minimize ecological disruptions. Providing educational materials, guided tours, and interpretation services at cultural sites helps visitors understand the significance of what they are experiencing. This enhances the cultural and historical appreciation of the destination and fosters responsible behaviour.

To summery, sustainable practices in cultural tourism are essential for preserving cultural heritage, protecting the environment, and ensuring that tourism benefits local communities while minimizing negative impacts. By adopting these practices, cultural Tourism has the potential to make significant contributions to the long-term well-being of both the destination and its residents.

7. Conclusion

Developing cultural tourism in Zanzibar is among the important solutions to exploiting the potential and strengths of the island's tourism.

Zanzibar has tremendous potential to further develop its cultural tourism sector. Its rich history, fusion of African, Arab, and Indian influences, and cultural sites and traditions can provide unique and engaging experiences for visitors. However, realizing this potential will require addressing several challenges, such as the insufficiency of promotion and packaging of cultural tourism products, infrastructure, safety and security, and limited community

involvement. Strategies like diversifying tourism offerings beyond beach resorts, implementing sustainable practices, improving infrastructure, increasing local involvement, investing in cultural site preservation and interpretation, organizing cultural events and festivals, providing cultural awareness training to hospitality staff, collaboratively developing cultural sites with local communities, effectively promoting Zanzibar's cultural tourism offerings globally, and enhancing the marketing of cultural assets could help ensure the expansion of cultural tourism is managed responsibly. Community ownership and participation throughout the development and operation of tourism are very important. With careful planning and management, Zanzibar's culture and heritage can form the backbone of a thriving tourism industry that provides benefits across the community and preserves Zanzibar's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Therefore, the government, tourism operators, and local communities will all need to work together to craft policies, investments, and practices that allow cultural tourism to sustainably grow and flourish.

8. References

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