



Authentic Benefits of Packaging Traditional Dances as a Tourism Attraction in Tanzania

Author: Carol Rael Wawire

St. Augustine University of Tanzania. Website: www.saut.ac.tz

Corresponding author: Carol Rael Wawire. Email: rael.carol@yahoo.com

<https://orchid.org/0000-0002-5898-2655>

Cite as: Wawire, C. R. (2023). *Authentic Benefits of Packaging Traditional Dances as a Tourism Attraction in Tanzania [Data set]*. In *International Journal of Social and Development Concerns* (APA, Vol. 18, Number Post COVID-19 Recovery and Sustainable Development, pp. 138–146). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10262155>

Chief Editor

Web:

www.ijfdc.org

Email:

info@ijfdc.org

Editing Oversight

Impericals

Consultants

International

Limited

Abstract: *In the modern society tourism has gained popularity as a tool for socio economic development of the local community. Local community members have become innovative in packaging their cultural elements such as folk dances. The gaze for dancing creates great opportunities for tourism performers. Dance tourism is discussed as travel for the purpose of learning an important national role as well as enjoying great opportunity among the local community. Dance involves anatomical movements as well as partner interactions and their association to each other and music is art. It explores the communicative, physical, mental, emotional and artistic aspects of dance as a medium of human expression and interaction. To dance is to move rhythmically to music, typically following a set sequence of steps. Traditional dance (often called folk dances in the west) is defined as any local dancing tradition, often strongly connected with local musical forms and/or local beliefs. It reflects the life of the people of certain or region. This study applies the philosopher's dance theory which states that dance contributes to aesthetic, moral and intellectual values as well as enhancing physical adeptness and overall wellbeing. The rich culture of Tanzania is the key motive of analyzing the potential benefits that can arise as a result of packaging traditional dances by the residents in order to diversify the already existing forms of tourism. Methodologically, this research depended on review of relevant literature on the authentic benefits of traditional dances and tourism attraction. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the review findings and discussions.*

Key words: *Authentic benefits, Traditional dances, Tourism attraction*

1.1 Study background

Traditional dances play a vital role in most parts of the African culture. They serve ritual and ceremonial functions as well as entertainment. Some songs and dances are said to have originated long time ago with founding ancestors, while others are said to originate long ago by immigrant communities. African traditional music and dance involve celebrations and is tied directly to important social values, community observations and religious rituals for example preparation of fields for planting is often accompanied by songs, weddings include music and dance festivals and religious occasions. Different

musical instruments usually accompany traditional dances such as horns made from large guards and flutes or pipes made from bamboo grasses. Other instruments include; *bu* among the Luo, *nyateti*, *orutu*, and *drums*. Examples of songs included *taarab* and *chakacha* for weddings. The paper analyses the original benefits of traditional dances as attractions in Tanzania which may impact positively the destination as a whole despite its exquisite and authentic wild safaris and beaches.

Traditional dances arise as a result of cultural tourism development in destinations in a region, country or continent. Traditional dances mostly involves the women of the society while a few dances incorporate men. Traditional Dances have the potential to attract people to come together for the event hence promoting harmony and cultural pride. Authentic traditional dances have a great potential to attract tourists within a country and beyond who seek to have a cultural experience. In such a scenario locals benefit by conducting the performances socially and economically.

Africa is known for its rich culture having diverse cultural elements among them is music and dances. Tanzania has more than 100 ethnic groups which have unique lifestyles. Maasai dance has always taken a centre stage in most tourism attraction areas such as Mto wa Mbu, Snake park and Maasai Boma and villages of Ngorongoro conservation areas. Other developing traditional dances include Sukuma performances in Bujora, Mwanza, Ndireshi villages of Waarusha Tribes who are relatives of Maasai, and traditional dances in Mulala village of Waarusha and Wameru.

1.2 Study objective

The objective of this study was to investigate the authentic benefits of packaging traditional dances as a tourism attraction in Tanzania

1.3 Methodology

This study was basically a desktop based research. A review of the literature concerning the authentic benefits of packaging traditional dances as a tourism attraction in Tanzania was conducted using Web of Science, UNWTO, Google Scholar, research gate, the Cochrane Library, CORE, Tylor&Francisonline, Cognizant Communication, Science Direct, WBI Library among others with restrictions placed on traditional dances and tourism attraction. Relevant articles were also found by scanning the references of found articles (backward search) and locating newer articles that included the original cited paper (forward search). Findings were summarized and recommendations drawn from analysis done on the collected data related to the study variables.

1.4 Literature Review

Ni Made et al., (2020) carried out a study with the aim of understanding the existence of Sesandaran Dance, which until now is still sustainable in the midst of the hectic tourist attraction of Tanjung Bena Bali. Although many tourists are interested in watching the Sesandaran Dance Show, the local community seems to not be interested in commercializing the dance for tourism. This research was conducted using qualitative methods. The primary data was obtained directly from the field through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and FGDs with related informants, and was analyzed using aesthetic theory, religious theory, and relation theory of knowledge power. The research findings showed that the people in the traditional village of Tanjung Bena perform Sesandaran Dance in the form of a drama, and the local society continues to preserve the Sesandaran Dance until now because it is based on

religious ideology, self-actualization ideology and cultural preservation ideology in this global era. Adhika (2020) backs up with the findings of Bali as a place of cultured dances that has pulled tourists over the years.

Suntikul & Dorji (2016), conducted a research on ways in which Indigenous tourism affects representations of identity and culture, and how tourism practices are described, negotiated and related to development in Indigenous communities. This aim was met through a study, including interviews and observations in Québec, Canada, where Indigenous tourism has received increased attention and economic importance in recent years. Tourism is put forward as positive for economic as well as social and cultural development, through alternative income opportunities and the revalorization of traditions and cultural practices. Individuals from four different ethnic nations were involved in the study: Innu (formerly known as Montagnais), Cree (Eeyou), Wôbanaki (Abénakis) and Hurons (Wendat). From the interviews conducted from the above study, it was found out that Indigenous tourism influences the ways in which individuals see themselves, and how they perceive their identity and culture. Through the production of Indigenous tourism products, the notion of authenticity is challenged, and performed in ways that benefit contemporary life within the communities. But these performances may also reproduce or challenge traditional Indigenous identities, and fuel tensions and conflicts between different groups within the communities.

A study which was conducted in North Carolina found out that much of today's heritage tourism product depends on the staging or re-creation of ethnic or cultural traditions. The study analyzed the role of perceived authenticity as a measure of product quality and as a determinant of tourist satisfaction. The event studied was the Flora Macdonald Scottish Highland Games held in North Carolina (United States). Tourists and event organizers were asked to evaluate the authenticity of specific festival events on a Likert scale. The study revealed that high perception of authenticity can be achieved even when the event is staged in a place far away from the original source of the cultural tradition. Important differences in perceived authenticity were observed among various groups of visitors.

Ranwa (2022), found out that through the case of intangible cultural heritage of Kalbeliya dance and songs of India, tourism can profoundly affect intangible heritage as well as its practitioners or bearers. In-depth interviews and observation were employed to collect data for the study. Findings showed that tourism has led to drastic changes in the aesthetic content of Kalbeliya performances as well as the context in which they are performed due to their increased production in commercial settings leading to their commodification. Kalbeliya performers, who should ideally act as active agents as heritage practitioners, are also marginalized culturally from their own performing traditions. Among positive consequences of tourism, results reveal limited economic benefits for Kalbeliya performers and their improved self-esteem as cultural custodians which has also remained limited to a few popular Kalbeliya performers.

Banio and Mos'sko (2019) contends that, dance plays an important role in the modern tourism industry. Today, the craze for dancing creates great opportunities for cultural tourism. However, the researcher notes that there is a great danger of losing the most important meaning of dance by commercializing and reducing its essence. Dance tourism enables tourists to travel for the purpose of learning about dance and its culture in places where given dance styles were born, or where they play an important national role as

well as enjoying great popularity among the local community. The researcher focused on introduction to the issue of dance tourism in an anthropological context. It presents potential attractions related to dance in the perspectives of cultural and sports tourism, it has an illustrative and descriptive character while its method is a literature review and presentation of popular examples. Anom (2020) agrees with the above findings with his study which he conducted in Bali.

Song & Yuan (2021) conducted a study in Xiaohuang, China. The study found out that minority groups have increasingly begun to promote and use their traditional ethnic cultures for economic benefits by attracting more tourists. Indeed, the notion of tourism commodification has raised concerns over the impact on aspects of local culture, such as ethnic music. Existing studies, however, neglect changes in music and the social role of such changes in the context of tourism. To this end, this study explores the influence of ethnic tourism on music and music-related social life by studying the case of Xiaohuang village in China. Semi-structured interviews, participant observation and second-hand documentation were used to collect data. This study found that the style of ethnic music has been commercialized, as evidenced by Mandarin version of songs. Indeed, the role of Dong music has become diversified in different tourism contexts. In addition, tourism has directly impacted on work opportunities and had an indirect impact on music transmission. A discussion is provided about the authenticity of ethnic music, the commodification of tourism, and the inheritance of culture.

The Chinese government is making tourism an important rural development strategy. Local governments and outside developers jointly manage and develop natural and cultural resources to increase tourism revenues. The government sells development and management rights to large for-profit corporations. This study examines one such project in Fenghuang County, Hunan Province, where Yellow Dragon Cave Corporation (YDCC) and the local government of Fenghuang County are jointly promoting tourism. Pleasant climate, stunning views, "colorful" ethnic minority cultures, and the newly discovered and partially restored Ming Dynasty "Southern China Great Wall" are the primary tourist attractions in Fenghuang County. This project impacts 374,000 people, made up of 29 national minorities and representing 74 percent of the local population. Some researchers argue that this public-private partnership successfully produces profits for developers and creates economic growth. The present research uses a power and scale perspective to identify the preliminary socioeconomic impacts of this capital-intensive development model on local communities. Open-ended interviews with residents, government officials, and business representatives are combined with demographic and economic statistics to identify the decision-makers, document the distribution of social power, and identify the flow of costs and benefits through the tourism system.

Melubo and Carr (2019) noted that safari attractions are dominating the African tourism sector. Many tourism studies in Africa have focused on wildlife and wilderness resourced-based tourism, with a secondary body of literature exploring cultural aspects of tourism. Recently many countries in the region, including Tanzania, have started to recognize the potential for stand-alone, culture-based tourism to diversify the tourism industry and for rural, economic development purposes. Drawing upon insights from local stakeholders, primarily members of the Maasai community, this study identifies the critical challenges for providing indigenous cultural tourism in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania. Qualitative data for the study were collected through interviews and site visits to eight Maasai *bomas* (cultural tourism villages or settlements). Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed

significant limiting factors affecting the development of indigenous cultural tourism amongst Maasai in Tanzania. The findings indicate that achieving success in indigenous cultural tourism is therefore challenging, and needs to incorporate specific community-based strategies which can facilitate the development of Maasai cultural tourism.

Sanga (2021) conducted study to answer the question of gender and the manner that it is constructed in the songs of Wahehe in Iringa, Tanzania. Kiduo dance songs were used as a case in point. The reason for picking Kiduo songs was grounded on familiarity. The researcher participated in singing Kiduo songs as a child and later as a fully-fledged adult. Singing the aforesaid songs for such a long time and being exposed to gender issues the researcher became conscious of the fact that some songs (not all) typecast women in different ways as reproductive devices, poor, weak, sexual outlets of men and individuals who cannot make proper decisions. As a member of the community and a current scholar, the author strived to find answers to three questions: how women are constructed in songs of Wahehe; how the social construction is regarded as reality of women; and how this impacts lives of women. Findings for this research were collected through observations and focus group interviews. The study used the tenet of constructionism to argue that women in Kiduo songs are projected as dependents of men in decision-making. They are featured as poor and timid in a way that weakens their bargaining power. In some songs women are portrayed as sexual outlets of men and reproductive devices whose sense of purpose in life is void except for getting married and giving birth to children. Examining how women are constructed in Kiduo songs of Wahehe is a profound contribution this research makes to the scholarship of gender and performance in Tanzania. The Study however did not focus much on Kiduo Dance as a tourism attraction.

Lema & Kapinga (2023) content that community participation in natural resources management is a basis for sustainable management of these resources. However, the question of which actors/assets within communities are more connected to the natural resources based on their knowledge, skills and talents is not well captured. This study, therefore, combined Asset Based Community Development approach and Bio-Cultural approach, to identify influential stakeholders in the utilization of catchment resources in Upper Zigi and Lower Mngeta catchments, in the United Republic of Tanzania. Participatory rural appraisal tools; participatory bio-physical resource mapping (PBRM) and participatory community asset mapping (PCAM) were used for data collection. Similar observations were made in both study sites, that, the most influential community assets were traditional healers, traditional dancers, hunters, Village Government, fishermen, farmers and family, and therefore, these most influential community assets should get involved in the management of catchment resources because they are true representatives of the community.

Lubao & Ichumbaki (2023) noted that fishers (both men and women) have engaged in different activities ranging from preparing fishing equipment (traps, nets, fishing vessels), weather forecasting, and sailing to fishing grounds and they continue to do so today. While sailing, fishers paddle collaboratively when the wind is low and when the boat is leaking, some crew will bail the vessel. Once they arrive at the fishing grounds, fishers cast anchor, mend the fishnets, and fix the boat foresheets. If successful, the fishers collect their catch, weigh the anchor, return to shore, and prepare to sell their fish. These fishing activities have always been accompanied by maritime customs, traditions, rituals, stories, and gestures. For instance, singing is one key tradition that has continued to accompany the fishing process from the

start to the end. The research documented the songs that have always been part of the fishing process in Kilwa Kisiwani, along the southern coast of Tanzania. The fishing songs are presented in the context of intangible cultural heritage of the east African Swahili coast.

Traditional dances take place during harvesting periods but also sometimes they take place during burial ceremony of village members as part of the culture, (Chimanda, 2018). The dances are popular in all districts of Tanzania covered by Nyakyusa people for example Rungwe, Busokeleo and Kyela in Mbeya region, Tanzania. The same culture is found in Malawi (Tonya & Matilda 2019). The major traditional dances of Nyakyusa people are Ing'oma, Magosi, Samba, Mwambulo, and Ipenenga. The categories are based on the age group of people who participate in dancing.

Wigashe is the Sitting Dance. From June through September, Sukuma song writers compete in long festivals. The composers groups are called Wigashe (Mapana, 2021). Among the Ngonis the dance is called Ing'oma, while it is called Ngoma among the central MasekoGamatus. Lingwalangwaya is a tradition performed by young male members of the Makonde society in the northern part of Mozambique and in South Eastern Tanzania. It is usually performed in the evening for purposes of entertainment. Chakacha is a traditional music and dance style of Swahili people of coastal Kenya and Tanzania, originally associated with weddings and performed and watched by women (Heale *et al* 2018). Other dances include Magosi and Samba are performed by youths. The difference between the two is just the number of dancers. Samba can exceed three while Magosi consists of Maximum of three performers at a time (Mapana 2020).

According to Tonya & Sambu (2019), Mwambulo and Ipenenga are the two dances that are done together and are performed by men and women aged between 25 years to 40 years. They are normally performed during times with high production of rice, (Tonya & Sambu, 2019). It is a symbol of victory where people celebrate the production of crops being enormous.

Anderson (2015) conducted a study in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of cultural tourism on welfare as perceived by communities in rural Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. The survey, which involved 85 randomly selected households in five villages in 2013, was qualitatively analyzed through quasi-statistics, domain analysis and narratology. The research findings confirmed that cultural tourism contributes significantly to improving the livelihoods of people. Its impact differed from one village to another but what they all had in common was their ability to get a reliable source of income, unlike in the past when they solely depended on selling their livestock or seasonal crops. After the introduction of cultural tourism in the area 10 years ago, local people noticed significant social progress, ranging from a rise in household income to gaining access to education and health facilities. However, a good number of residents have limited skills and professional knowledge coupled with a negative attitude to the industry. Therefore, this study underlines the importance of instituting training programmes at community level that will ultimately provide opportunities for local people to be employed in various tourist businesses.

Ramchander (2008), carried out a study to investigate whether demographic characteristics could constitute differentiating factors in subjects' attendance motives. 451 foreigners over 18 years of age took part in the study. A questionnaire was constructed for data collection with a total of 35 variables

which consisted of three parts. A factor and reliability analysis, Mann Whitney U test and one-way ANOVA were carried out. The statistical analysis revealed that traditional dancing was a motive in cultural tourism, and that the most significant attendance motives were Greek culture, boredom rejection, social relations and improvement of dancing skills. From the demographic characteristics, age and years of attendance, constitute a differential factor of attendance motives. More specifically, age affected the “skills improvement”, “challenge” and “new experience” factors, whereas the aspect of years of attendance had an impact on the “new experience” motive.

1.5 Results and Findings

Ni Made *et al.*; (2020) in his findings lack attachment of Sesandaran dance in Bali to tourism. The locals perceive it as a way of religion preservation and culture preservation despite the dance being popular. The findings do not directly focus on Sesandaran dance as an economic tool to both locals and tourism developers. Other researchers include Suntkul & Dorji (2016) also noted a gap between cultural dance development and local engagement. The researchers noted that packaging the dances may result to loss of indigenous identities and may result to conflicts. The researchers however failed to further study the measures that would be put in place to promote harmony among the performers and a balanced share of benefits amongst the local residents.

In North Carolina, the study focused on dependency of tourism products on recreation of ethnic and cultural traditions. The study focused on authenticity observed by various visitors without directly linking authenticity to benefits of traditional dances. Over dependency on traditional dances however has led to few performers turning up for the occasion. The local Community practitioners should consider sustainable commodification so that they can attain optimal economic benefits as well as long-term performances of the dances; Ranwa (2022).

Song & Yuan (2021) found out that only minority groups’ package their traditional cultures for economic benefits by attracting tourists. However this study focuses on all ethnic groups within packaging their cultural dances to improve themselves socially, economically and environmentally. The Chinese government has attempted to conduct partnerships with the private sector to incorporate majority of the minority cultures as primary tourist attractions. The government however has focused on 74% of the ethnic communities. The remaining 26% has been left out in the research which is a significant percentage. The current study focuses on packaging traditional dances in the whole of Tanzania, hence a higher sample is expected as opposed to that of the Chinese government.

Malebo and Carr (2019) noted that safari attractions have dominated the African tourism industry. However, they conducted their study in Ngorongoro conservation areas focusing on eight Maasai bomas. The study only focuses on manyattas leaving out other important ethnic groups that have the potential to attract tourists by packaging their folk dances. The study overemphasizes on a single culture while the country has more than 100 ethnic tribes that can showcase their tourism potential through dances.

Sanga (2021) focused on kiduo dance among the Wahehe, how it is done and its significance to the community. The findings however did not directly link the performance to tourism attraction in the region. The dance is practiced as a way of living among the residents. The Wahehe dance however diminishes the dignity of women and it is not packaged for tourism attraction purposes.

Lema & Kapinga (2023) reported that traditional dances is one of the key elements useful in the management of catchment areas because they are true representatives of the community. Although their study is focused on environmental sustainability without linking the dances directly to tourism in Upper Zigi and Lower Mngeta catchment areas.

Tonya and Matilda (2019) noted that traditional dances take place as part of the culture. Dances such as Magosi, Samba and Mwambulo are examples of such dances usually conducted during harvesting and death ceremonies. Other dances include Wingashe which is seen to have a great tourism potential. Anderson (2015) noted that cultural tourism in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania has significantly influenced social progress. However, proper packaging of traditional dances has not been taken serious 1995 when cultural tourism came into existence.

1.6 Conclusion

From the findings it is evident that packaging folk dances into tourism attractions resources can impact the community socially and economically.

1.7 Recommendation

Tourism stakeholders should join hands in ensuring traditional dances are well promoted to maximize on the benefits while putting in measures to avoid commodification.

Local community should consider complementing agriculture with performance of folk dances to visitors to empower the young generation while diversifying their source of income.

References

- Adhika, I. M., & Putra, I. D. G. A. D. (2020). Reinvigorating cultural landscapes for planning cultural tourism in Bali. *Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 33, 1462-1469.
- Anderson, W. (2015). Cultural tourism and poverty alleviation in rural Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 13(3), 208-224.
- Anom, I. P. T., Mahagangga, I. G. O., Suryawan, I. B., & Koesbardiati, T. (2020). Case study of Balinese tourism: Myth as cultural capital. *Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 25(6), 122-133.
- Banio, A., & Malchrowicz-Moško, E. (2019). Dance in tourism from an anthropological perspective: An introduction to the research issue.
- Batinoluho, L., & Basera, V. (2022). Festivals and tourism development: Examples from Tanzania and Zimbabwe. *Journal of Tourism, Culinary and Entrepreneurship (JTCE)*, 2(1), 18-33.
- Chimanda, L. (2018). Law and censorship of artistic works in Tanzania: The case of BASATA. *Sanaa: Journal of African Arts, Media and Cultures*, 3(1), 13-26.
- Dyer, P., Aberdeen, L., & Schuler, S. (2003). Tourism impacts on an Australian indigenous community: A Djabugay case study. *Tourism management*, 24(1), 83-95.
- Feng, X. (2008). Who benefits?: tourism development in Fenghuang County, China. *Human organization*, 67(2), 207-220.
- Heale, J., Wong, W., & Spence, K. (2018). *Tanzania*. Cavendish Square Publishing, LLC.
- Ingles, P. (2001) Performing Traditional Dances for Modern Tourists in the Amazon, *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 1:3-4, 143-159, DOI: 10.1300/J149v01n03_09

- Lema, M. W., & Kapinga, A. G. (2023). Identifying potential stakeholders for the management of Lower Mgeta and Upper Zigi water catchments of Tanzania, East Africa. *Environmental Quality Management*.
- Leseth, A. (2020). Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. *Sport, Dance and Embodied Identities*, 231.
- Lubao, C. B., & Ichumbaki, E. B. (2023). Fishing Songs from Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania: A Case Study of Intangible Maritime Cultural Heritage on the Swahili Coast. *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 1-31.
- Malisa, E. T., Mattee, A. Z., & Mahonge, C. P. (2023). The role of formal and informal institutions in land management in the Uluguru Mountains, Morogoro, Tanzania. *Sustainability Science*, 1-13.
- Mapana, K. E. (2021). Ngoma in Tanzania and Goma in Gujarat: Do You Know That This Ritual Practice Connects Tanzania and India?. *The African Review*, 49(1), 89-101.
- Melubo, K., & Carr, A. (2019). Developing indigenous tourism in the bomas: critiquing issues from within the Maasai community in Tanzania. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 14(3), 219-232.
- Ni Made, Ruastiti, and Pradana GYK. "The ideology behind Sesandaran dance show in Bali." *J Sociology Soc Anth* (2020): 78-85.
- Ranwa, R. (2022). Impact of tourism on intangible cultural heritage: Case of Kalbeliyas from Rajasthan, India. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 20(1-2), 20-36.
- Ramchander, P. (2007). Towards the responsible management of the sociocultural impact of township tourism. In *Tourism and Politics* (pp. 149-173). Routledge.
- Sanga, D. N. (2021). The Social Construction of Gender in Kiduo Dance Songs of the Wahehe in Iringa, Tanzania. *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies*, 18(2).
- Song, Y., & Yuan, M. (2021). Tourism and its impact on Dong traditional music and life in Xiaohuang. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 19(2), 200-215.
- Suntikul, W., & Dorji, U. (2016). Tourism development: the challenges of achieving sustainable livelihoods in Bhutan's remote reaches. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(5), 447-457.
- Го, Е. Л. (2020). The Cultural Arts Centre at Tumaini University Makumira in Tanzania: Educational Research in Action. *Проблемы музыкальной науки/Music Scholarship*, (4), 97-113.
- Tonya, E. M., & Matilda, L. (2019, April). Unexplored Tourist Sites in Tanzania: Experience of Mbeya and Songwe Regions. In *International Conference on the Future of Tourism (ICFT)* (pp. 1-17). OUT.