



Contribution of Rock Art towards Tourism Development in Mwanza Region, Tanzania

Author: Carol Rael Wawire

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

P.O BOX 307, Mwanza Malimbe

Correspondence: Carol Rael Wawire **Email:** rael.carol@yahoo.com

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

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Abstract: *Tourism is a captivating industry in the modern world which has boosted the society economically, socially and environmentally. The additional focus of tourism based on wildlife and beach safaris has become old fashioned and congested. Modern tourist seeks new destinations that are suitable, sustainable and adventurous. Rock art tourism is one of the segments which has the greatest potential especially in the case study area, Mwanza, Tanzania. Its authenticity and originality in the geological formation sets the area suitably fit for rock art tourism, a niche which interlinks well with the proximal attractions within the area including Sukuma Museum, Lake Victoria, Saanane National Park, just to name a few. The study explored various destinations in the world where rock art has been practiced, its potential and challenges. Results were based on secondary data sources of tourist destinations which have embraced the idea of rock art tourism development and its contribution to the society. Findings reveal that in deed rock art is an excellent niche that can benefit key tourism stakeholders including the government, tourists, tour operators and the local community if the resources are well managed and packaged. In Tanzania, tourism has been ranked as the second economic activity that contributes to the growth and development of the economy. Development of an idea on rock art tourism will have a greater positive contribution to the country as it diversifies the tourism sector. Tourists will have diverse forms of tourism to choose from hence increasing their satisfaction levels as they consume the tourism products. Tour operators will work with tour agents so as to develop itineraries and routes towards rock art site. The government will use revenues accrued from tourism to develop infrastructure such as passable roads to the rock sites. However great concern should be on long term conservation of the rock art for longevity benefits to the stakeholders involved in tourism development in Tanzania, especially Mwanza region.*

Key words: *contribution, ecological formations, niche, rock art, stakeholders, tourism development*

1.1 Background of the Study

Noele (2016) defines rock art as the artwork done on natural rock surfaces. It can be found on the sides of walls of caves, cliffs, sheer, standing rocks and boulders. Rock art occur in four types namely;

paintings, petroglyphs, rock reliefs, and earth figures. Rock art functions as a repository of memory, enabling each culture to speak about themselves and their origins in all geographical settings. Rock art is found in two forms; iconic and non-iconic.

Rock Art gives people information about human past and various areas of human culture which is not available from any other source. It gives us information about the varieties of change and development and the ways in which humans interact with the universe and establish their place in it. Rock art can provide the history of a country, region or group of people. It is part of the national wealth that people want to experience in its natural form and with its native environment. Rock art has opened rock paintings, prints, engraving, bas-relief and other designs. It can be found in caves and rock shelters and rock platforms (Nedema 2014; Tason 2016).

Rock art is a key ingredient of the tourism experience as ‘cultural travel’, which typically focuses on culturally differentiated destinations, ‘history’, natural landscapes and opportunities to learn and engage with local and/or indigenous communities (Abscal 2016; Bonet 2003; Du Cros and McKetcher 2015). Although details are initially missing in the review of cultural tourism research (Richards 2018), and from the World Tourism Organization report of 2018, rock art tourism most certainly exists as a niche type of cultural tourism. The prehistoric rock art trails promoted by the Council of Europe 2019 as a tourism initiative to link 112 World Heritage Sites across northern and Western Europe in 2019. In China, the World Heritage listed Magao caves, a complex of some 400 caves containing Buddhist art, attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year (China Daily 2016). India’s sole World Heritage listed rock art site Bhimbetka, receives 85,000 visitors per year (Krishna, 2015) compared with eight million at Taj Mahal (Kate, 2018).

Rock art has been found to contribute to tourism all over the world including Asia (Srivasta (2021), Australia (Noelene 2016), Brazil (Nobrega, 2015), China (Gao, 2017), Thailand (Sukkhom 2011), Israel (Schmidt 2022), South Africa (Smith 2017), Western Cape (Rust, 2018), Nigeria (Margut 2015) Ethiopia (Sembeto 2020), Zimbabwe (Pwiti & Mvenge 1996, East Africa (Besigye et al., 2023), Kenya (Borana & Teryy 2014) and Tanzania (Kilonzo, 2017; Temu, 2018).

Keenan (2002) carried out research on the role played by tourism in both the destruction and the conservation of the Sahara’s cultural heritage. He noted that it takes the opportunity to present some of the results as geopolitics of the destruction and conservation of rock art in the Sahara which provided an analysis of both the many causes of its destruction and the difficulties being encountered in its conservation. A key factor in both the ‘destruction’ and conservation of the heritage, as well as the Sahara’s ‘living’ cultures, is tourism. After many years without tourism, the central Sahara regions of Libya and Algeria in particular, are showing the potential of becoming the major international tourism destinations. However, the resumption of tourism in these regions in the last years has revealed many of the more negative and detrimental features of ‘mass tourism’. After examining the actions and responsibilities of both the governments and local communities, the study concluded that the way in which tourism is managed over the next few years will determine, whether the environmental catastrophe predicted and feared by many of the Sahara’s local communities will be avoided.

Tanzania as a country is an epitome for rock art paintings that reflect the life experiences of ancient population. The ecological setting, forest animals and flora, foraging techniques of subsistence, magic religious activities of disease cure and other dance performances of communal functions of people of remote antiquity are some of the activities that can be perceived from the rock expressions. These drawings were found depicted on the rock surfaces of shelters, caves and other dwelling floors and habitats. Such instances of ethnographies of the past can be enjoyable visual attractions to the tourists.

Therefore, protection of these valuable cultural assets is the only means to uphold tourism development. Unfortunately, some of these areas of rock art sites have been influenced by natural and cultural threats.

Antiquity department has the task to mitigate challenges in dense areas such as Kolo Kondoa area, Iramba, Kisiri and Makalama districts of Singida which have shown great potential as heritage assets and hence can attract tourism. However continuous damage and lack of community involvement is a potential barrier to conservation and tourism promotion. Temu (2018) recommend for a continuous awareness campaign, vigilance of the indigenous communities and their participation in the planning and implementation of conservation programs. Also, development of community- based tourism/cultural tourism programs will complement the existing heritage and provide new avenues for community income. Since the tourism sector is an emerging area with its expanding horizons of revenue, rock art is an excellent component of heritage element and economic explorer of contemporary period need to be conserved and preserved by facilitators to reduce damage.

Mwanza is a region that has great potential of rock art contribution on tourism development as it has diverse attractions that can help promote this niche. Such attractions include Sukuma Museum, specialty museums, Saanane National Park, Rubondo Island National Park, Lake Victoria, Robert Koch Hill, geologic formations and the famous Bismarck rock.

1.2 Study Objective

The main purpose of this study is to find out the potential of rock art contribution on tourism development in Mwanza, Tanzania.

1.3 Methodology

This research was based on secondary data sources in line with rock art potential towards tourism development in Mwanza Tanzania. It was conducted using google scholar articles, research gate, UNWTO, Web of Science, WBI Library, Science Direct among other sources. The study was confined within the rock art destinations. Essential articles were also found by scanning references of found articles and locating more recent articles that included the original cited task. Results were summed up and key recommendation drawn from analysis done on the collected data related to the study variable.

1.4 Literature Review

Gao (2017) conducted a study on social values and rock art tourism; an ethnographic study of the Huashan Rock art area. The researcher noted an expansion of cultural tourism that has led to increased number of visitors to rock art sites throughout the world. He found out that rock art tourism has affected not only the preservation of rock art sites, but also the social values attributed to the sites by communities in the immediate vicinity. Social values refer to the social and cultural meanings that a place of heritage holds for a particular community. Huashan Rock art cultural landscape is the first rock art heritage in China proposed to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage status in July 2016. The researcher argues that many of the changes generated by the endeavor towards tourism promotion by the authorities in their pursuit of World Heritage designation have contributed to the reinforcement of social values.

In India, Srivastava (2021) carried out a study on rock art tourism development and conservation challenges. He found out that rock art represents a striking human artistic achievement

that enriches us and inspires respect, admiration and enthusiasm in those who see it. The natural landscape setting of rock art enhances its interior beauty, and brings the landscape to a complete package for the tourism industry. The researcher however noted that there was lack of awareness among tourism stakeholders about the real importance/proper handling of the delicate art that deteriorates due to vandalism, or natural causes. Conservation of rock art can only be possible by promoting awareness through strategic management of rock art tourism (Tason, 2016). The study was quantitative, and analyzed research on rock art tourism in Hadoti region of Rajasthan, India.

Schmidt (2022) found out that developing rock art in Israel presents the findings of an interdisciplinary project aimed at safeguarding the future of this rock unique resource. Cultural heritage in the Negev desert region of Israel is potentially under threat from a number of social, political and economic activities such as militarization, settlement and tourism; resulting in significant environmental change. The cultural heritage and archeology extend back at least 300BCE. These engravings form a clear association with other relic monuments including prehistoric, and protohistoric settlements, agricultural and irrigation regimes, and the remnants of a nomadic way of life. In December 2017, an International Conference was held at Mitzpe Raman and was attended by academics, heritage professionals and individuals from the tourism industry. The Integrative Multilateral Planning to Advance Rock Art Tourism (IMPART) was formed by Israel- Italian scholars. The IMPART researchers collaborated to conduct archeo-ecological and socio-tourist research with the goal of establishing an authoritative set of sustainable best practices for effectively valorizing Negev rock art.

Sukkhram (2011) conducted a study on ancient Rock Arts Management for sustainable tourism in the West Coast of Southern Thailand. The author noted that ancient rock art sites along the western coast of Southern Thailand especially at Krabi and Phangnga provinces have totally ten sites which mostly belonged to prehistoric period and only one for historic site. The region is well known among tourists regarding the charming of marine attraction. Although the eco-tourist attractions have been rapidly developed but the heritage sites are still ignored by locals leading to the damage of cultural treasure. To prevent the further destruction, the ancient rock arts must be evaluated and maintained as cultural heritage sites along with other adventure activities. The tour follows the connected tourist route map by three main tourist attractive centers like Luek Bay, Phangnga Bay and Phi Phi Island. The researcher's main point was to introduce general knowledge of cultural tourism management for tourist guides in order to support sustainable tourism industry. Furthermore, this plan is able to develop as formal tourist route map issued by Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Research was conducted in Australia regarding the contexts, trajectories and multifaceted Realities (Noele et al., 2022). The aim was to identify aspects which are visible in tourism promotions. The authors noted the trends in rock art tourism and related research, survey the Australian situation and employ a case study approach to outline the development of indigenous rock art tourism in Kakadu National Park (KNP) and parts of the Quinkan (Laura Cooktown) region. In both regions, Aboriginal communities inherited legacies to top down decision making and bureaucratic methods. Although the Laura people transitioned to a community- based system and a successful ranger program, they face challenges of achieving their aspirations for sustainable rock art tourism. KNP communities subsumed into an unwieldy joint management arrangement for the world heritage listed national parks which are faced by competing values and perspectives of the dominant government system. A centerpiece of the Balnggrarrawarra tourism initiative the range/tour guide system of the type which operated for some years at Laura and was introduced briefly at KNP. The model incorporates key elements of sustainable

indigenous tourism—traditional owner control and jobs, land care, conservation, cultural preservation, partnerships and public education, inclusive of the contemporary challenges and realities, a unifying theme is essential for the rock art.

Melanie and Smith (2017) conducted research in South Africa on rock art tourism in the Ukhahlamba/ Drakensberg World Heritage Site. The study focused on rock art tourism as a highly vulnerable heritage of broad public interest, only sustainable within an effective management framework. The site selected was inscribed in 2000 for its natural landscapes and its exceptional rock art heritage. In practice nature dominates the area's tourism and management dynamics. Current tourism patterns, markets and frequencies, together with rock arts low place within tourist agenda were described. This situation is shown to be a legacy of European Alpine romanticism, and the political rejection of indigenous cultural heritage prior to 1994, still expressed through visitor patterns and marketing policies. Despite rock art being in need of tourism to valorize its conservation, and being recognized by commentators and the state as a viable route to tourism development, heritage conservation, and socio-economic regeneration and cultural empowerment, the failure to reform entrenched and ineffective tourism conservation governance and management systems is well documented. The challenges affecting rock art tourism have allowed the retention of unwelcome values from South Africa's pre-democratic era, risk of the World Heritage site status, the destruction of globally outstanding art works and waste an important opportunity to expand and diversify sustainable tourism in South Africa.

Smith (2020) conducted research in South Africa in order to find out the successes and failures in the history of rock art management and presentation. He argues that the public rock art sites have a key role in national identity, poverty relief, and job creation and makes a strong case of management process in rock art tourism development based on carefully negotiated partnerships between landowners, local communities' archeologists and heritage managers. No wonder the then President Mbeki chose to put San rock art at the heart of the court of arms.

Morris (2007), conducted a study on rock art as a source and resource; that is contribution of rock art in research and responsibility towards education, heritage and tourism. The author noted that in the recent past there has been much discussion on the uses and practice of history beyond the academy, where a wide diversity of heritage, memory, community tourism and educational projects can be said to compliment, and sometimes contest especially in area of impacts associated with rocks in different regions.

Melanie (2017) noted that rock art facilities range widely from a total absence of purpose-built infrastructure to multimillion-dollar interpretation centers and from free and unrestricted visitation to fee-paying, highly mediated visitation experiences by tourism professionals. The authors addressed questions surrounding the principles and practices of rock art tourism development in conjunction with issues of heritage management and conservation; each site is different, and development practices in one area cannot simply be transferred to another, although common methodologies may be followed. David 2018; Di Lernia 2005 provided a historical overview of rock art tourism management with a focus on conservation, interpretation, territoriality and cultural connectivity. For a better output, a consultative process that included relevant stakeholders was used.

Hoerman (2022), conducted a study to critique the binary opposition approach that pits preservation against tourism development, and to determine the ways in which tourism development, and to determine the ways in which tourism can contribute to the preservation of rock art sites. The results presented derive from research conducted in the region of Ukhahlamba- Drakensberg Park. The

authors analyzed how tourist practices and motivations can be used in the development of sustainable rock art tourism. Goldhalm et al., 2020 noted that specific attention is paid to the identification of different types of visitors were identified, 'hedonists', outdoor and sports tourists; information seekers; rock art enthusiasts and general 'sightseers. The understanding of the types of tourists visiting the UDP led the authors to determine a set of actions that might be taken to develop sustainable rock art tourism in the area.

Namono (2018) conducted research in Makgabeng Plateau, South Africa on how to use digital technology and community framework for heritage rock art tourism. Using digital technologies in the process of collecting and documenting oral heritage allows previously marginalized voices to feed into heritage and historical narratives for rock art heritage tourism. Literary, heritage narratives have tended to dominate the dissemination of information on African Heritage, whereas African cosmologies and oral traditions are the intangible values of places that attract visitors to heritage sites. In Makgabeng, oral heritage is narrated through stories, songs, dances and poetry collected using digital technologies to help preserve African values threatened by the on sought of Western ones, especially through written European languages and social media. The Makgabeng community rock art project re-values the role of elders in sustainability of heritage tourism initiatives and the integration of a community structure as a sustainable ready-made framework to heritage management in Africa.

Duval *et al.*, 2020 in South Africa conducted research to find out why it has been so difficult for the country's rock art to attract tourists: challenges facing cultural heritage tourism in a remote area, Limpopo province. Starting from the observation that having exceptional rock art sites is not enough on its own to attract tourist. The authors used a case study in the Makgabeng to analyze the challenges many remote areas face when trying to develop rock art tourism. Several initiatives to attract tourists to cultural heritage sites in the province have been launched since the late 2000s, without producing the anticipated growth in visitor numbers. The study combined empirical and qualitative analysis of data obtained from field observations, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, all conducted in 2019. In addition, travel reports, travel guides and information from the websites were used to investigate whether comparative research from Ukhahlamba Drakensberg mountains could be applied to address visitor numbers in the Makgabeng. In terms of practical applications, identifying obstacles to development and the sustainability of initiatives, the results purposed to help stakeholders orientate their actions. From the methodological perspective, the study shows the value of using a systematic and multiscale approach to analyze factors that impact a given place, and the interactive and evolving dynamics linking these factors on different spatial levels. This type of analysis provided a synoptic and holistic assessment of the challenges facing tourist development projects in remote areas, (Quemin, 2022)

Mangut (2012) in Nigeria carried out a study on harnessing the potentials of rock art sites in Birnin Kudu, Jigawa state, for tourism development. The findings blamed the current state of affairs as far as the rock arts are concerned revealing that the National Commission for Museums and monuments inclusive of the government has grossly failed. The findings were similar to those of Sembeto (2020) in Ethiopia and Mvenge & Pwiti (1995) in Zimbabwe.

In Kenya a study was conducted by Terry & Borana (2014) to find out if rock art can reduce poverty. The construction of physical barriers as protection of rock art against the threats of gravitivandalism, encroachment, deforestation, quarrying and other human activity is rarely effective. The best barrier is a community which has an emotional or economic link to the heritage. Engaging local communities in the management, conservation and valorization of sites and ensuring that they are

beneficiaries of the heritage lays the foundations of those protective barriers. One of the ways the Trust for African Rock Art (TARA) has been doing this through the development of responsible rock art tourism. In 2008, TARA's partnership in a project with the people of Mfangano Island, Kenya, led to the official opening of the Abasuba, Community Peace Museum, the gateway to the island's rock art and other heritage. The project provided a community project model which TARA has subsequently used in Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Tanzania and Uganda.

Kilonzo (2017) conducted a study on how rock art tourism can be an innovation and earn Tanzania the biggest foreign exchange. He however noted that tourism in the country has focused on Ngorongoro conservation area, game reserves and national parks, while neglecting rock art sites, which in fact are among potential tourism attractions. The author appreciates the contribution of well-known resources to the economy. However he also noted that innovation is of vital importance for rapid tourism promotion. Kilonzo recommended that people living around rock art sites should be involved in site protection measures, building hotels and camps around the sites and educate the general public about the sites.

1.5 Results & Findings

Araujo & Nobrega (2015) found out there are various opportunities and bottlenecks in the development of rock art tourism in Carnauba dos Dantas. Rock art tourism in this Portugal region was seen to serve as an instrument for protecting, promoting and conserving the archeological heritage of the region. The methodology in this study consisted of a literature review involving concepts associated with the topic in question, followed by a second phase involving data collection through fieldwork using the following data methods; participant observation, semi-structured interviews and photographic recording. The results indicate that there is a significant potential in Carnauba dos Dantas to develop archeological tourism such as the existence of attractions that can be planned for organized visits in a systematic way. By contrast, it was observed that lack of knowledge and information among residents of the rural area in respect to the historical and cultural relevance of the rock art, leading to the lagging behind in the development of this tourism segment. These results suggest that if the archeological tourism segment is approached in synergy among public, private and third-party stakeholders, it could serve as an economic alternative for cattle raising, agriculture and mining for residents in the region, Qin & Wash (2020).

Besigye, Musalizi and Asiimwe (2023) reported that the geographic rock art sites in the Lake Victoria region in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Results noted a few rocks that are involved in tourism development such as Kit Mikayi. This rock formation is around 40m high and is situated 29km West of Kisumu in western Kenya. Kit Mikayi means the stone of the first wife. An explanation of the shape of the unique stone is that the structure represents the Luo cultural polygamous family which had the first wife's house (Mikayi) built further in between on the righthand side was the second wife's house (Nyachira) while the third wife's house (Reru) was built on the left -hand side of the homestead. The site is associated with sacrifices and many legends from pre-Christian times, especially stories explaining the meaning of the name. Kit Mikayi is a regional point of sightseeing interest. Religious organizations like Legio Maria fast and pray frequently in this rock formation and believe miracles occur when they pray at the rock.

The Crying Stone is a striking physical feature found in Ilesi, Kakamega. It resembles a gowned figure, perpetually in tears flowing from head to toe, an image spiced up by myth and folklore. The communities around the rock use the site for rituals. Under the crying stone is a cave which the

Luhya community call 'shimichiro' or 'cleansing cave' where those involved in acts of incest and murder are cleansed before they can be re-accepted into the community. Religious sects like Legio Maria use the site for prayers and fasting. Tourism activities include hiking and rock climbing.

Sikele Sia Mumia translates to Mulia footprints. The rock has various prints and is reserved by the Bukusu community as a holy place. The rock is in East Bukusu, Bungoma County. Religious organizations like 'Dini ya Msambwa' take this rock as a holy place of worship. Thimlich Ohinga is a rock that was declared as a National Monument in 1983. It serves as an example of the day stone enclosures widespread in Southern part of Nyanza in Western Kenya. Similar in construction to the well-known ruins of Great Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, Thimlich Ohinga structures represent some of the finest examples in East Africa. It refers to a 'frightening dense forest' in Dholuo language. The stone structure enclosure has walls ranging from 1-4.2 meters in height were built of loose stones and blocks without any dressing or mortar.

Kondoa rock art sites are a series of ancient paintings of rock shelter walls in central Tanzania. The Kondoa region was declared a World Heritage site in 2006 because of its impressive collection of rock art. These sites were named national monuments in 1937 by the Tanzanian Antiquities Department. The paintings are located approximately 9km east of main highway from Dodoma, 20km north of Kondoa town, in Kondoa district of Dodoma region, Tanzania. The boundaries are marked by concrete posts. The paintings are still part of the living traditions of creation and use by Sandave, in their 'simbo' healing ceremonies and by Maasai people in ritual feasting. The rock art signifies the continuity between the various ethnic and linguistic groups of people who have resided in the area over time. The paintings depict elongated people, animals and hunting scenes. Older paintings of the 'naturalistic tradition' are generally red and associated with hunters and gatherers, not only in Kondoa but also throughout the Singida, Mara, Arusha, and Manyara regions in Tanzania. The naturalistic tradition paintings are frequently superimposed by a more recent 'late white' style, often depicting cattle, that has been attributed to Bantu farmers in the area.

Kisese 11 Rockshelter is the part of UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Kondoa region of Tanzania. The site contains transitional assemblages from the middle to later stone age. The rock shelter has preserved diverse paintings, beads, pottery and other artifacts. It is studied for its insight into the major social transitions that were taking place during the late Pleistocene and Holocene eras. The site was used for the burial of seven Holocene individuals. Mungomi wa kolo is another rock art that is composed of fine-line red ochre drawing paintings depicting various people and animals.

Nash (1929) published an overview of some red ochre paintings he discovered near Kondoa Iringa. Nash recognized the granite shelters to be an ideal place of rock art and consequently scoured the hill side for drawings proving himself correct after about 10 minutes. One of the paintings depicts a human figure holding a stick and an elephant. Nash commended on the peaceful posture of the human doubting that the drawing was intended to depict a human scene. Other paintings portray giraffes, a possible rhinoceros' fragment, a humanoid figure composed of concentric circles in the head and continuous lines from the top of the head to the rest of the body and some other figures whose intended depictions were not clear.

1.6 Conclusion

Rock art conservation has developed hand-in-hand with the increased pace of tourism, yet the two activities tend to remain in opposing camps. Policies and guidelines have been developed for cultural heritage and cultural tourism and there is a widely accepted range of principles in practice, but a theory

of sustainable rock art tourism is only in its fancy. To mature, the field needs research into the interaction of key elements that affect the long-term conservation of frequently visited rock paintings and engravings in their original setting, as well as consideration of social and economic factors that drive tourism to the public interest of rock art.

1.7 Recommendation

Due to the spiritual significance that many of these rock shelters hold to the contemporary inhabitants in the area, great care must be taken when excavating the sites. According to UNESCO World Heritage, the local Sukuma people in Mwanza and other communities in regions of Tanzania which have rock art potential should use the sites sustainably as they conduct their belief systems such as healing so that the areas remain intact in order to attract visitors interested in geological formations.

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