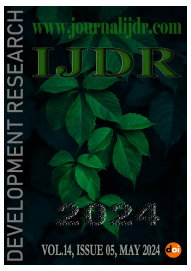
ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at http://www.journalijdr.com

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 01, Issue, 05, pp. 65599-65605, May, 2024
https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.28110.05.2024



RESEARCH ARTICLE **OPEN ACCESS**

TOWARDS AN INNOVATIVE CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM FRAMEWORK: A CASE OF MANICALANDZIWA RUINS IN ZIMBABWE

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 02nd February, 2024
Received in revised form
27th March, 2024
Accepted 19th April, 2024
Published online 30th May, 2024

Key Words:

Cultural heritage, Tourism, Framework, Ziwa ruins, Zimbabwe.

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ABSTRACT

Innovative cultural heritage tourism (ICHT) seems ever-present today and operates as a constant process that involves cultural resources and operates massively through social and institutional arrangements at different international, national and local levels. Most tourist destinations have undergone significant changes and embraced the pivotal role of innovation in cultural heritage tourism to ward off the growing international competition among countries and locations. However, the fly in the ointment has been the successive failures of these initiatives to achieve set policy targets particularly in developing countries like Zimbabwe. Innovative cultural heritage tourism in Zimbabwe has a lot of potential for economic growth; however the sector has been left undeveloped. Thus, the study sought to find out the perception on perspectives for an innovative cultural heritage tourism framework using a case study of Ziwa ruins in Manicaland, Zimbabwe. The study adopted a qualitative approach. Interviews were conducted with 8 participants using convenient sampling method. The researchers used employees and the local people of Ziwa ruins in Manicaland, Zimbabwe. Thematic analysis was implemented.

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Citation*: *Laura Simbisai Dongo, Proffessor Patrick Walter Mamimineand and Proffessor Jacob Mapara, 2024. *"Towards an innovative cultural heritage tourism framework: a case of manicalandziwa ruins in Zimbabwe". International Journal of Development Research*, 14, (05), 65599-65605.

INTRODUCTION

Given the global urgencies affecting cultural and natural heritage today, as well as the prospective of innovative cultural heritage to help address these urgent issues, the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Innovative cultural heritage serves as an authoritative to transform the framework of cultural heritage protection (International Council On Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 2022). Heritage, with its value for identity and as a repository of historical, cultural, and social memory conserved through its authenticity, integrity, and sense of place, is a critical component of the development process and plays an essential role in innovative cultural heritage and urbanization; as aessential asset of long-term tourism development; strengthening social fabric and enhancing social well-being; and enhancing the appeal and imagination of regions (ICO7MOS, 2022).

BACKGROUND

Heritage and innovative cultural heritage are closely intertwined; the goals of innovative cultural heritage include continuously assisting heritage conservation in development projects for communities, thereby ensuring heritage conservation and cultural identity maintenance among nations (ICOMOS, 2022).Heritage sites are viewed as a social and economic necessity, and the public expects them to have symbolic value and measurable benefits (ICOMOS, 2022). Cultural legacy is important to visitors, locals, and elders alike. It is required of community members to preserve and sustain traditions, and of guests to recognise, respect, and abide by them. Elders are the guardians of customs, passing them on and providing interpretations in times of conflict. These days, growth driven by cultural legacy is highly valued in many African nations. African heritage sites provide a unique opportunity for community empowerment through integrated rural development, as well as the potential to mobilize resources for cultural tourism, craft development, and improved farming methods (ICOMOS, 2022). The Majikenda Kayas of Kenya, the Kasubi Tombs of Uganda, and the National Heritage Resources Act of South Africa have all resulted in significant community development stemming from cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2021). Development can take many forms, but cultural heritage can offer opportunities for long-term development. It is evident that many communities are beginning to realise that heritage sites are alternative sources of not only development but also innovative cultural heritage. Historically, many communities, especially in Africa, have recognised the government and non-governmental organisations as sources of development. For example, Zimbabwe is one of the African nations fortunate enough to have a

large number of historic sites. A couple of the heritage sites are World Heritage Sites, including the Matobo cultural landscape, Khami, and Great Zimbabwe, to name a few. These sites should provide good models for innovative cultural heritage to communities living in the vicinity of such sites. Ziwa was declared a National Monument in 1946 and is currently under consideration for World Heritage listing (Chipangura et al., 2017). Zimbabwe is home to several national historic monuments, including World's View, Domboshava, Old Bulawayo, and Great Zimbabwe. These locations ought to serve as excellent role models for the areas surrounding them when it comes to creating jobs. On the lowlands of the northern portion of the Eastern Highlands, Ziwa National Monument (No. 53) is situated on an estate approximately 20 kilometres to the northwest of Nyanga hamlet (Latitude 18008'S, Longitude 32038'E). The estate consists of some 3 337 hectares which are declared a National Monument under the National Mus0eums and Monuments Act, Chapter 25:11 of 1997 (Mupira, 2011). The location was designated as a National Monument by Government Gazette No. 236 on May 3, 1946. The Nyan'ombe River in the west and the Ziwa Mountains in the east define the boundaries of the National Monument. The estate borders the settlements of Matongo to the north and SaNyangare to the north-west, respectively. Ziwa is part of the most impressive and extensive Nyanga archaeological agricultural landscape (Mupira, 2011).

The archaeological property on the estate consists of stone terraces, enclosures, pit enclosures, hill forts, passages, smelting furnaces, grinding places, clearance cairns and other important remains from the past (Chipangura et al., 2017). The most prominent features in the terrain are enclosures and terraces. Terrace farming in this region and the district as a whole seems to have been a way for the later farming communities that settled in the area between the 17th and the early 20th centuries AD to adapt to an environment with generally steep terrain. This shows technological innovation on their part. Travellers and antiquarians first believed that higher-quality walls, like those at places like to Great Zimbabwe, were older and constructed by a superior people. The crude walls of Nyanga and other impoverished barriers were constructed by the so-called decadent Kaffirs of Bantu civilizations, who arrived later (Hall, 1905, for example). Modern study has refuted this, and dating has demonstrated that the two settlements were essentially contemporaneous. The Ziwa ruin complex, which dates from 1600 to 1900 AD, is a part of what are known as Later Farming Communities in Southern Africa. Terracing agricultural systems were common in many parts of Sub-saharan Africa from east Africa to South Africa (Chipangura et al., 2017).

Therefore, Nyanga is not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it is likely one of the most widespread examples of this breakthrough in agricultural technology. At Ziwa, there is a site museum that has been operational for the last eighteen years. Presently, there are endeavours to include the estate as an organically generated remnant landscape on the World Heritage List. The aforementioned criteria have led to its inclusion on the World Heritage Tentative List: it must provide a singular or remarkable account of a cultural tradition or civilization, either extant or extinct; it must be an exceptional illustration of a particular building, architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape that exemplifies a significant period in human history; and it must be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use that is representative For this reason, it has enormous archaeological value, and the world community will gain from its correct management (Chipangura et al., 2017). It is therefore against this background that the paper looks at innovative cultural heritage tourism framework of Ziwa National Monument in Nyanga, Zimbabwe.

Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are

- To assess the current innovations being practiced by cultural heritage sitesin Zimbabwe
- To identify the challenges faced by Heritage sites in their innovation operations
- To develop tourism innovative strategies that enhances Heritage site management

Definition of terms

Innovation: An innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new cultural heritage tourism sites method in business practices workplace cultural heritage tourism sites or external relations.Innovation is also the creation of newknowledge and ideas to facilitate new cultural heritage tourism sites in this case Ziwa ruins outcomes, aimed at improving internal business processes and structures and to create market driven products and servicesDu Plessis (2007).

Cultural heritage*:* refers to tangible and intangible assets that constitute the legacy of physical artworks and intangible attributes of a society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations (Alexandrakis et al., 2019). For instances, the Ziwa ruins is a tangible asset that was inherited by the current generation from the works of the Late Iron Age people.

Tourism means the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, as well as their activities during their stay at these destinations (Schegg&Stangl, 2017). In the case of Ziwa ruins, tourists from within and outside Zimbabwe visits the heritage site to appreciate the dry stone-walled works done by the ancestors of the area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing innovation in cultural heritage: Innovation in the cultural heritage sites remain an undervalued and not well-understood phenomenon (Čivre & Omerzel, 2015; Booyens&Rogerson, 2017). As the world is constantly changing, heritage tourism sites must not be seen to be taking a back seat to the changes taking place in the global arena. The tourism industry is undergoing transformation and changing markets are associated with tight uncertainty (Alsos et al., 2014). With the current globalisation initiatives innovation is no longer a luxury but a necessity (Antonites&Haguma, 2011). Innovation is widely considered as the life blood of corporate survival and growth (Oster, 2009). Innovative cultural heritage tourism framework is therefore recognized to play a central role in creating value and sustaining competitive advantage, (Booyens&Rogerson 2017 andReguia 2014). The view that survival depends upon the creativity and resilience of a country's entrepreneurs who are associated with the culture of innovation. In this dynamic sector, highly exposed to global competition, tourism firms need to innovate to survive, because otherwise their offerings are likely to become obsolete and have no demand (Booyens&Rogerson, 2017; Gyurácz-Németh, Friedrich & Clarke, 2013). Tourism being one of the most promising sectors of growth, innovation must be seen as a permanent, global and dynamic process, (Smaranda, Paun, Bota & Fleseuri, 2014). In support (Boycheva, 2017) reiterates that to be competitive, tourism firms are forced to innovate, responding to the needs of the increasingly demanding tourist. Tourists are the guiding factor innovations to be introduced must be in line with the demands of the recipients of the products or services.

Current innovations being practiced by cultural heritage site: Technology innovation, according to Bailetti et al. (2012), is best described as an investment in a project that brings together and uses specialized people and heterogeneous assets that are intricately related to advancements in scientific and technological knowledge in order to create and capture value for a heritage site structure By comprehending client demands and how they should be met, design technology can therefore find new market chances while traditional innovations on heritage structure continue to provide their current products and services and contend with several other companies in

the marketplace. They apply technology to deal with issues in the real world. The needs of the clients and contemporary technology must be met by these solutions. Technology innovations on heritage structure can also update outdated technology in response to changes in the client environment (Minke, 2022).

Studies show that, preserving the integrity of both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage while making it available to visitors is a challenge (Conway, 2014). Some of the major challenges in WHS management are unequal benefit sharing, dispossession of historic sites and forced displacement (Yang, Xue& Jones, 2019). When there is rural poverty generated by the above challenges, young people migrate to towns and cities thereby not only threatening the physical fabric with decay, but also disrupting an intergenerational transmission of knowledge and valuable traditions (Cadar, 2014). Loss of this transmission widens the gap between parents and children as traditional knowledge systems are eroded. The poor's social capital and main asset is indigenous knowledge which they invest in their struggle for survival to control their own lives (Giamiccoli&Kalis, 2012; Su & Wall, 2013). Migration of the younger generation also leaves behind the aged people leading to the decline of human resources in the rural areas (Su & Sun, Min & Jiao, 2018).

One of the key elements that might influence a city's character, identity, and image is innovation aimed at maximising cultural assets on heritage sites. Second, it serves as a mirror reflecting the intellectual and social climate of the day. Heritage is about the past, present, and future of our country. Moreover, legacy is perceived as a mirror of the customs and conduct of prevailing local groups across the board in society. Technology-driven innovations, as well as shifts in the population and economy, have an impact on cultural heritage. As a result, both innovation and heritage are dynamic and subject to constant change. Cultural values are define by Mateja, Davis and Pipan (2015) some kind of a territorial capital or developmental source, which is to be experienced and enjoyed not only by tourists, but also by local inhabitants, and which can cause positive economic, social and environmental effects. Although legacy inventions and their preservation have historically been perceived as antagonistic to economic progress, they are now recognised as valuable allies in a nation's development. While social cohesiveness, community empowerment, skill and development learning, and tourist visits and consumption may be measured to assess the social value, the economic value can be ascertained by calculating the gross added value and the multiplier impacts on the economy. The benefits of innovation potential have been included by the authors since they have found a connection between maintaining ecosystem stability and complexity and sustainable heritage management. Balan and Vasile (2015) provide an alternative viewpoint about a nation's innovation, arguing that it has a significant impact on its economic growth history. Products, expressions, and discoveries that have the power to enhance a community's social and economic circumstances are examples of how culture contributes. Innovation entails a variety of concepts, including education, conventions, folklore, habits, and a sense of national identity.Vasile et al. (2015) believe that conventional tourism items, as promoted by the media, appeal to a smaller segment of the market, particularly to conservative individuals. Additionally, the locals' interests in cultural consumption during their leisure time enable them to learn more about the local heritage. According to Kolesnikova, Salyahov, and Fakhrutdinov (2015), immaterial legacy has distinct elements, such as immaterial wealth and immaterial property. Knowledge, creativity, national pride, customs, and other factors are examples of the intangible national riches. Within the framework of the contemporary economy, the ongoing economic downturn and the competition among countries to achieve competitive progress in regional development policies may be viewed as a defensive mechanism against potential dangers posed by globalisation. Consequently, a nation's ability to compete for foreign investment is typically based on its distinctive and special intangible resources. As a result, it is believed that expenditures in R&D and innovation are the primary drivers of performance and are essential for creating intellectual and knowledge-based capital. According to Author Rusu-Tanasa's (2015) argument, a system of variables that aids in identifying and managing a nation's invisible riches must be articulated in order to discuss the intellectual capital of a nation (or a region of nations). One of the fundamental resources for creating value is knowledge. In order to fulfil the Lisbon aim of making the Culture Heritage Tourism Destination economy the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, the countries and regions of the destination try to promote/use national and regional innovation strategies, both at the corporate and regional levels. Heritage structure design and technology innovation provide value by making high-quality products that draw buyers. They do not content themselves to create unique and innovative products and services, but they add value to the community. This value added includes job creation and economic security. An entrepreneur is someone who creates innovative products whose functions are the improvement of the economy. Innovations on heritage structure need to receive extra attention because their abilities, aspirations, and willingness are what sustain the heritage site structure. It is crucial to understand that the cultural heritage mindset is a growth-oriented approach that encourages adaptability, creativity, ongoing innovation, and regeneration. Utilizing their creative and problem-solving abilities, innovations on heritage structure generate new opportunities that draw in other cultural heritage sites to share resources and establish robust commercial and cultural heritage support networks (Riedy, 2022).

The challenges faced by Heritage sites in their innovation operations: Poor technological networks are one of the major challenges that adversely affect the sustainability of heritage sites through innovative tourism. Poor road networks reduce number of tourists who visits the sites and in turn reduces the cash inflows.Technology plays a critical role in tourism and it is generally referred to as the driver of the economic development and growth of any country because a good internet system is one of the major technology systems that connects people and places (Vuchic, 2017). For cultural and heritage institutions around the world, innovative cultural heritage sustainability is the major challenge of the twenty-first century. In the first major work to analyze this critical issue, Barthel-Bouchier (2013) argues that programmatic commitments to innovation sustainability arose both from direct environmental threats to tangible and intangible heritage, and from social andeconomic contradictions as heritage developed into a truly innovative cultural global field. She examines important international heritage organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, and the World Monuments Fund, as well as national trust organisations of Great Britain, the United States, and Australia, among many others. She does this by drawing on extensive fieldwork and interviews conducted over many years, as well as detailed coverage of primary documents and secondary literature. This wide-ranging study establishes a foundation for critical analysis in innovative heritage tourism and programmatic advances as heritage professionals encounter the growing challenge of sustainability (Barthel-Bouchier, 2013). In developing countries it is possible to observe the difficulties involved in achieving successful innovation initiative sustainable practices of historical sites affected by their harsh socioeconomic and political contexts (Penna et al., 2013). There are always going to be problems with things like inequality, providing for basic requirements like food and housing, access to education, medical care, and innovation, as well as environmental preservation and technical sustainability. The natural and constructed environment resources that persons living in poverty rely on for subsistence are dangerously being depleted as a result of the ecologically unsustainable economic growth that is common in emerging nations.

Tourism innovative strategies that enhances Heritage site management: Innovation in heritage tourism including:information communication technologies (ICT), achievements inenergy generation from renewable resources as the third industrial revolution, the potential for providing information, collected by sensors across sassets of interest for sustainable development via Internet of Things (IoT) platforms in realtime, opens opportunities for better-informed and participatory decision-making (Manser Payne *et al*., 2021).

Moreover, the fourth industrial revolution, comprising of artificial intelligence, machine learning, gene sequencing technology and quantum computing and the interaction of innovations across the physical,digital and biological domains is noteworthy (Li, 2020). Developing tools that can harness the benefits of the anticipated abundance of real-time data because the mere availability of datasets is not significant unless decision-makers have access to data-analysis and presentation tools and can acquire feedback from those affected by their decisions (Dimitrijević, 2017). For instance, the web, principally social media, signify a new communication channel where cultural heritage products can reach a greater number of digital visitors. In other countries from the developed world, there are more cultural heritage sites with a Facebook account than with their own website (Wapenaar, 2017). Online communication has largely been adopted to replicate traditional mediacommunication, advertising the products available onsite, and as a marketing tool tosell entrance tickets to an exhibition (Padilla-Meléndez&delÁguila-Obra, 2013). The availability of information freely available online is expected to influence cultural heritage leisure activities(Han, Tom, & Jung, 2019), including visits to the museum, and to contribute to the destabilizationof leisure activities in relation to place and time (López-Sintas&García-Álvarez,2015). Therefore, digital technologies make it increasingly possible to visit the cultural heritage sites from anywhereat any time. It has been suggested that cultural heritage tourism can serve a digital visit from a traveller looking for leisure activities online. This digital visit might take the shape of explicitly designated places on the museum website or unintentional references in third-party portals. Online messaging, browsing, and socialising are now included in the list of leisure activities (Henderson, 2008). These sites may include digital museums. It is anticipated that recognising the importance of digital visitors would lead to a number of other improvements in museum operations, unrelated to the volume of in-person visitors, enhancing the standing of historical establishments in the growing online marketplace.

Authenticity in Cultural and Heritage Tourism: Cultural sites are recognized centers of authentic heritage content with vast collections of unique objects. While some authors argue that authenticity is an importantelement for selecting destinations and activities (González-Rodríguez, & Luis Roldán, 2019), others argue tourists seek entertaining, enjoyable, transformational, meaningful, memorable, and extraordinary experiences (Duerden et al., 2018), perhaps believing that replicas are sufficient for a good experience (Timothy &Boyd, 2003). In fact, authenticity is relative to time and place, more dependent of the cultural capital of the viewer than on the object or site (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). O'Neil (2017) argues that instead of opaque and invisible models, disguised as'intellectual property', transparent and continuously updated models, based on ethics, shouldbe developed. Similar ethical concerns pervade Harari's (2017) contemplations about apossible future in which governing and corporate elites own technologies, and in whichhumanity could lose economic and military usefulness and value in evolving economic andpolitical systems, commenting pessimistically that for armies and co.

When implemented in a heritage tourism context, technologies have been argued to provide tourists with unique and authentic experiences (Jin et al., 2020; Tsai, 2020). While authenticity has beenwidely recognized to have the potential to affect visitors' satisfactionand behavior in heritage tourism in-person experiences (Fu, 2019;Yu et al., 2020), a limited number of studies investigated whether the authenticity conveyed by technologies, specifically through non-immersive representationsof a heritage site, can also have a meaningful impact ontourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Mehraliyev et al., 2021). Kim, Lee, et al. (2020) successfully used the stimulus-organism response(SOR) model by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and measured authenticity to predict cultural virtual reality experiences. However, the application of this model by Kim, Lee, et al. (2020) measures authenticity as aone-dimensional antecedent, even though authenticity is increasingly conceived as a multi-dimensional concept that can be related to thegenuineness of an object, or to the individual's subjective existence,both in real and digital experiences (Canavan&McCamley, 2021).

Virtual Reality Tourism: In the last decades, virtual reality (VR) has become one of the most prominent innovations in the tourism industry, providing tourismoperators with cutting-edge media to enhance the customer experience,while giving tourists the opportunity to have an early and easyaccess to experiences of a destination or site (Buonincontri&Marasco, 2017; Guttentag, 2010; Lin et al., 2020). VR tourism can bedefined as a "virtual representation of an actual attraction, destination, or visitor experience that is designed as a prelude to visitation orto extend previous experiences of consumers" (Kim, Lee, et al., 2020,p. 70). In the context of cultural and heritage tourism, VR technologiesare recognized to play a relevant role across the whole visitor experience,and to positively influence visitors' satisfaction and loyalty inthe post-trip phase (Beck et al., 2019). This is because VR applications represent an opportunityto remove physical barriers and reduce distances, thus enhancingaccessibility, and facilitating tourists' interactions with heritage sitesand destinations before their visit (Dieck& Jung, 2018). Recently, both immersive and non-immersive VR technologies havebeen successfully applied in heritage tourism, enabling individuals tovirtually visit distant heritage sites, museums and art collections fromtheir homes (Guttentag, 2010). This is specifically relevant forheritage sites that are located in remote or rural areas and, even moreimportantly, in these current times, as the COVID-19 pandemic hassignificantly reduced tourist flows and visitation by local residents. Tofurther understand and provide improved visitor experiences throughVR, it is important to investigate how characteristics of a VR experiencecan increase satisfaction with the experience and loyalty for theplace (Wei et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2019). Moreover, most existingstudies on tourism and VR have considered experiences that are immersive and involve the use of VR gear.

Since very few studies have focused on VR tourism experiences through non-immersive technologies,which are easier to use and less costly compared to immersive gear (Pleyers&Poncin, 2020), further research is needed to investigatetheir role in providing a satisfactory environment for consumer experiences in relation to cultural heritage tourism. VR technologieshave also been implemented in the tourism industry, especially inattractions, historical collections, heritage sites and museums (Hudson et al., 2019), to provide tourists with novel and immersive experiences (Loureiro, Guerreiro, et al., 2020). Many cultural and heritage attractions have particularly extended their experience portfolio by addingVR applications to enhance the tourist experience before, after and during the visit (Errichiello et al., 2019). VR has been recognized as a powerful tool to enhance the heritage experience and is considered complementary (and not a substitute) of real travel experiences (e.g., Mura et al., 2017). In this vein,recent academic literature has started to analyze the implication of VRtechnologies for cultural tourists' experiences (Jung, et al., 2020), demonstratingthat VR provides tourist cultural experiences with added value,novelty, immersion and personalization (Errichiello et al., 2019). Furthermore, recent studies highlighted the important role of VR in promoting cultural and heritage sites (Marasco et al., 2018; Tussyadiah), providing potential tourists with detailed information to reduce associated risks and to make more informed decisions when visiting in person (Lee, Jung, et al., 2020). The elements influencing VR visitors to visit the location have been specifically studied as it has been shown that travellers are more likely to utilise VR applications to experience museums or other cultural attractions prior to their visit (Buhalis & Law). For instance, Kim, Bonn, et al. (2017) discovered that good behavioural intentions and pleasure were associated with experiences that were mediated by technology and viewed as authentic by visitors. Yung and Khoo-Lattimore (2019) also discovered that authenticity had a favourable effect on satisfaction, particularly in VR tourist experiences. Furthermore, Kim, Lee, et al. (2020) showed that people's positive emotional and cognitive responses to VR are positively correlated with its perceived authenticity, which in turn increases people's connection to the technology and their positive desire to visit. However, the studies

discussed above on the antecedent role of authenticity in VR experiences have considered theconstruct as one dimensional, even though the cultural heritage tourism literature hasdelved into such concept, and established that it is a multi-facetedconstruct that can refer to characteristics of objects, or to the individualstate of being (Yu et al., 2020). Recent rapid breakthroughs in virtual reality technology have given travel agencies access to state-of-the-art media to improve the client experience and allow travellers to experience a trip or sight ahead of time and conveniently. Very few research have examined the significance of perceived object-based and existential authenticity in a virtual reality experience, despite the critical role that perceived authenticity plays, particularly in heritage tourism, in evoking visitors' satisfaction and behavioural intentions.Studies on non-immersive virtual visits to cultural heritage places are especially lacking.

METHODOLOGY

This essay used a qualitative methodology. In order to get insight into the phenomena of perception on perspectives for a novel framework for cultural heritage tourism, it employs the phenomenological method. In order to characterise the present condition, the study also uses a descriptive research approach to gather information about the phenomenon's current status.This study w based on a case study research design in order to understand Ziwaheritage site in order to reach innovative cultural heritage tourism sustainability. A case study design was chosen in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of perceptions of perception on perspectives for an innovative cultural heritage tourism frameworkand ultimately come up with sound recommendations.The targeted respondents from Ziwa Heritage Site and households from the local community only. A target population is the group of individuals that the intervention intends to conduct research in and draw conclusions from (Barsbee and Nghiem, 2018). Thus a same size four (4) employees from the Ziwa Heritage Site, two(2) heritage site consumersand 2 members from the host community constituted the research participants. Zikmund (2003) states that once the data has been collected, it needs to be converted into a format that would answer the research questions. Data analysis often begins with the correction of research mistakes, such as replies that were entered on the incorrect section of the study, and data classification into manageable categories. Zikmund (2003) defined data analysis as the process of using logic to comprehend and evaluate data. Three themes emerged from the study's thematic approach to data analysis: the innovations being used in Zimbabwe's cultural heritage sites at the moment; the difficulties these sites face in implementing new ideas; and creative approaches to promoting the sustainability of cultural heritage tourism.

FINDINGS

From the thematic data analysis four themes emerged namely: Innovations being practiced in cultural heritage tourism; Challenges faced by cultural heritage sites in their innovation operations; and Innovative strategies to promote culturalheritage tourism sustainability.

Innovations being practiced in cultural heritage sites: Participants indicated that various innovations are being practiced in cultural heritage sites. Statements below from participants reveal this fact:

"We are using an online marketing strategy which is mostly limited to website and face book. However, we do not offer virtual tour and there is a shortage of technicians". Employee participant 3

"Our website show address, phone number, email so that tourist are able to contact us for bookings." Employee participant 1

"We have internet facilities; however the connection is sometimes not stable. The cell phone networks are mostly a problem and we rely on landlines for telephone communications." Employee participant 4

"One way in which the site is implementing innovation is through booking on computers and provision of Wi-Fi and scanning of important documents and information provided in form of soft copies" Consumer participant 2

The statements above reveal that the cultural heritage site is employing some form of innovations in its operations.

Challenges faced by cultural heritage sites in their innovation operations: Participants professed that in innovation operations in cultural heritage tourism operations is the fact that technologies are not broadly adopted for a variety of reasons. One factor indicated by participants was the community's noninvolvement in the innovation process and activities. Quotations from participants below reveal this notion:

"One challenge I have noted regarding the innovation operations of this National Monument is the fact that there is no clear vision about our role as community members living around the site in the innovation process".(Host Community participant 2)

"*It would be great if we were also consulted concerning what should be done to improve our tourist site because we consider it as our heritage and part of our dominant culture. This would grant us the opportunity to contribute to the innovation process. We also harness ideas that can help in innovation products that will lure more visitors through service improvement"*(Host Community participant 1)

Participants also felt that the cultural heritage site has become a reserve for the elites because most poor and rural people are hardly able to save money to meet the costs required. The following statements from participants reveal this sentiment:

"Local people rarely visit this tourist destination and we mostly receive tourist visitors during the festive season and these are mostly from outside Zimbabwe. We also host various organizations for conferences and workshops during the year". (Employee participant 4)

"I managed to come here this year because my company is sponsoring for the conference I am attending. Otherwise I could not have afforded to come and stay here the whole week. I really am enjoying the scenery here and wish I could someday afford to bring my family for a vacation. The meals and accommodation are great but very expensive for an ordinary person". (Consumer participant 1)

Participants attributed failure to successfully implement innovative operations to limited stakeholder involvement and inadequate resources. The by a participant below reveal this view:

"Considering the current economic crisis, it is difficult to fully implement the various innovative activities to meet the standard global expectations for a cultural heritage destination because of low stakeholder involvement. If we could have more partners chipping in especially financially and other resources it would improve the status quo". (Employee participant 2)

Low tourist or visitor turnout was considered to be one of the obstacles to innovative operations implementation. A participant had the following to say concerning this:

*"I have been staying at this tourist destination for four days now, and I have realized we are very few visitors here. Seriously, if this is how it mostly is like, then there cannot be expectations for much revenue to be generated and how can facilities and service be improved without money?"*Consumer participant 2

Participants also indicated deteriorating facilities due to inability to maintain them aggravated by to financial constrains as another key

challenge being faced by cultural heritage sites in their innovation operations. The statement by a participant below shows this notion:

> *"The facilities have deteriorated both the monument and the accommodation. This is due to lack of funds to undertake the necessary maintenance activities."* Employee participant 2

Therefore, the facilities have deteriorated posing a challenge to the sustainability of a cultural heritage site.

Innovative strategies to promote cultural heritage tourism sustainability

Participants indicated that community engagement and management in cultural heritage tourism will go a long way in promoting cultural heritage tourism sustainability.

Participants also argued for improvements in information dissemination as a way of luring more visitors to the tourist destination site. The quotation below reveals this fact:

> *" From my own point of view, as a tourist cultural destination, we should find more ways and tools to market our products to the public using traditional formats such as catalogs, post cards, posters and invitations using the modern social media platforms such as on face book, twitter, WhatsApp, emails and so on".* (Employee participant 3)

Participants argued fordomestic tourism as an innovative strategy in cultural heritage tourism. This notion is shown in the following quotations by participants:

> *"Considering the fact that most tourists from abroad visits at the end of the year, it would be very beneficial for cultural heritage tourism to engage in domestic tourism whereby packages affordable to locals are offered for food, accommodation and all services provided. This would go a long way in preserving infrastructure such as accommodation which can be maintained with limited deterioration from disuse".* (Employee participant 1)
> *"If tourists visit throughout the year then the revenue for the tourist destination will be boosted thereby according those employed in cultural heritage tourism industry with a decent earning as a source of livelihood. Moreover, it would prevent the site structures from deteriorating because there would be regular maintenance ".* (Consumer participant 2)

The need for improved both air and road connectivity was sighted by participant as one of the strategies to promote cultural heritage tourism sustainability. The following quotation from a participant reveals this view:

> *"It is very important for any cultural heritage site to have excellent network connectivity plus both air and road accessibility in addition to good rates, accommodation and service so as to lure business entities for conferences and workshops which will greatly contribute to the revenue for the cultural heritage destination site".* Consumer participant 2

Participants also indicated that there is need for a viable sustainability framework drawn after consultation with all relevant stakeholders if sustainability cultural heritage tourism is to be realized. The following quotation reveals this notion:

> *"A sustainability framework is essential for the preservation of cultural heritage tourism in this era of digitilisation as the fourthrevolution; otherwise the sector will cease to be of value*" Community participant 1

DISCUSSION

Current research findings revealed that there are some of innovations being practiced by the cultural heritage destination sites. However, the progress is hindered by various factors including shortage of skilled manpower who are capable of tackling the virtual gadgets and processes (Nyambiya et al. (2022). Research findings established that the use of modern technologies is a viable way to enhance cultural heritage tourism. This is similar to what other researches which found that developing information and communication technology to facilitate close interaction with consumers before, during and after the trip (Hung et al., 2019), as well as implementing co-creation strategies in product development processes for better tourist experiences (Jovicic, 2016) is essential for cultural heritage tourism sustainability. The issue of technological innovations was indicated as one was to promote sustainable cultural heritage tourism. This finding concur with one from a study by Matzner et al. (2018) who established that through technology cultural heritage destination sites can better manage their service provision activities, provide memorable visitor experiences and overcome physical boundaries through the use of online distributions and communication channels which in turn can lead to higher public satisfaction. This has a positive influence on the rate of visitation and, implicitly, on the revenues gained by the cultural heritage destination site.

Research findings established that community members value their cultural heritage sites and would like to contribute to their innovation processes but sometimes they are not accorded the opportunity. This therefore, poses as a significant challenge for cultural heritage sites in their innovation operations. This finding concur with a study by Chirikure&Pwiti (2008) which found that issues of community engagement and empowerment in the management of both natural and cultural resources have become topical in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa where in some instances previously disadvantaged communities have been demanding engagement and to be consulted concerning cultural heritage resources in their areas. The revelation that for sustainable cultural heritage tourism, the destination site should resort to technological innovations in management, marketing methods, service provision, and virtual reality tourism from the current research study concurs with another study which established that when implemented in a heritage tourism context, technologies have been argued to provide tourists with unique and authentic experiences (Lin et al., 2020). Current study findings revealed that a small number of local visit or have access the cultural heritage destination site. This is similar to one study which discovered that the conservation'by-laws' set in place by National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe and the result is also seen as a stifle in the interaction between the community andthe site for spiritual/ritual purposes (Mupira, 2011).

The research findings unearthed that host community feel that they are not being engaged enough in innovative activities at the cultural heritage site. This finding concur with those from a study by Chipangura (2018) who found that heritage conservation at one cultural heritage site have been a frontier of tensions emanating from a community that feels largely excluded in the overall management of the sites by the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ). This reveals the community's sentiments in not being engaged in the innovation of the cultural heritage destination as the host community. Deterioration of monuments facilities has been identified as one of the major challenges for cultural heritage sites in their innovation operations. Such a scenario demotivates tourists to visit the destination site thereby leading to low tourist turn out. This finding concur with a finding by Mupira (2011) who discovered that there was no monitoring scheme that had been officially adopted for the site, although there had been experimentation with some of the less precise techniques The current research study also found that it is fundamental to preserve the cultural heritage facilities. This study finding is similar to that of Little et al. (2019) who argue that considerable preservationefforts are required to maintain heritage artefacts and monuments, particularly those part oftourism experiences. Research findings indicate the need for a sustainability operational framework in order to enhance cultural heritage tourism. This finding concurs with that of USAID (2013) who established that lack of inter-governmentalpolicy coordination and poor policy implementation impacts negatively on tourism.

CONCLUSION

This research study concludes that there are a wide number of innovations being practiced at cultural heritage sites. However, a lot of challenges are being encountered in implementing the innovation processes such as inadequate resources, limited stakeholder involvement, low tourist or visitor turn out, deteriorating facilities which are difficult for the destination sites to maintain due to financial constraints. The research points out the importance of community in taking part in the cultural heritage tourism innovation process. Another important point to note is the involvement of all stakeholders, that is: the users, the providers and governance in innovation operations of destination sites including a sustainability framework as a way of fostering sustainable cultural heritage tourism. Moreover, implementing innovation product development requires substantial investments in form of higher costs which would yield higher revenue if contemporary visitor needs are met. The use of innovations at cultural heritage sites would in turn better preserve their heritage, whilst improving the scenery and consequently increase the revenue and therefore leading to sustainable cultural heritage tourism.

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