

Effects of Cultural Tourism Practices on Socio-Economic Development of the Communities living in Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to establish the effects of cultural tourism practices on the socio-economic development of the communities living in Machakos County, Kenya. Methodology: The study adopted a quantitative research approach with an explanatory census survey design. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 191 employees drawn from 31 targeted attraction sites in Machakos County. Sustainable livelihood theory and theory of Inclusive rural development were used to guide this study. Data was collected using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to understand the data as well as the demographic profile of the respondents. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to address the research question and test the corresponding research hypotheses.

Findings: The findings of this study indicated that cultural tourism practices ($\beta = .345, t = 3.692, p < .001$), was a significant predictor of social-economic development among the communities in Machakos County, Kenya.

Recommendations: It was recommended that the county government of Machakos should strengthen partnerships with the local business sector, the local community sector, and general stakeholders and enhance community sensitization. Further, the local community should join hands with the tourism authorities to showcase their products by setting up a location whereby the tourist on their way to the park can make a stopover and have a look at the display of their products and cultures.

Key Words: socio-economic, cultural tourism, development, Machakos County, tourism practices, rural development, communities.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TOURISM IN MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA

The study's purpose was to to establish the impact of cultural tourism practices on the communities socioeconomic development in Machakos County, Kenya. The tourist industry has been growing around the world. Furthermore, this expansion has occurred globally, with overseas arrivals increasing by about 7% by 2017 (UNWTO, 2017).

Tourism served as a source of income by creating jobs in different parts of Kenya (KNBS, 2017). The report also notes that tourism adds significantly to Kenya's Gross Domestic product. From 84. billion in 2015 to 99.7 billion in 2016, earnings climbed by 17.8%. In addition, international arrivals grew by about 14%.

1.1.1 Machakos County is a tourism haven with a variety of attractions including scenic beauty, diverse wildlife, diverse cultures, traditions and many opportunities to explore the outdoors through sporting and adventure activities. However, little is known about the socio-economic impact of rural tourism on the livelihoods of poor people in rural areas (Bennet & George, 2014). According to the Machakos County Integrated Report noted that the impact of rural tourism economy has also been on decline since recent economic survey indicate that tourism industry accounted for 1.5% of GDP (KES 561.8bn) in 2014, compared to 12.1% in 2013 and is forecast to rise by 4.2% to 1.4% (KES 585.2bn) in 2015, and to rise by 5.1% pa to 1.3% (KES 964.2bn) in 2025 (CIDP, 2018).

1.1.2 Extant research (e.g., Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Barbieri, 2013; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2020; Irshad, 2010; López-Sanz et al., 2021; Nthiga et al., 2015) has previously linked rural tourism practices to sustainability through its auxiliary roles of using and valorising rural areas, countryside and culture. Majority of these studies however have been done in developed countries. Moreover, Nthiga et al. (2015) established that rural tourism practices have contributed to the community livelihoods and conservation of environment.

1.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND TOURISM PRACTICES

1.3 Momanyi (2013) defines socio-economic development as the development concerned with a wide variety of aspects relating to the quality of life. It includes references to healthcare, food, nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, shelter, levels of education, human rights, dignity, security and participation in political processes. Momanyi (2013) further states that socio-economic development is determined by not only income but also freedoms and opportunities that fulfill one's potential. Such opportunities include access to education, healthcare and democracy.

1.4 Mudida (2009) define social economic development as an increase in per capita income associated with an improvement in the indicators of the quality of life such as adult literacy, infant mortality, life expectancy and ratio of the population per doctor, socio-economic development addresses not only material deprivation but also life-chances such as human rights, dignity, security and participation in political processes. This study will therefore be based on the sustainable livelihoods framework as stated by Ellis (2000) and Farrington, Slater and Holmes (2004) because it links the broader socio-economic components of household assets, livelihood activities, outcomes of livelihoods activities, and factors mediating access to livelihood activities.

1.5 Development of rural tourism practices will produce wide socioeconomic benefits like, revitalization of rural areas, protecting and preserving the indigenous rural destinations and its' identity (Ezeuduji & Rid 2011). Various destinations still had challenges associated with social and economic implications which result from failure to involve sectoral stakeholders in planning and monitoring rural tourism development (Hall & Page 2008). He further states that rural tourism cannot be successful without the involvement of various stakeholders in planning, policy and decision making.

Cultural Tourism Practices and Socioeconomic Development

Cultural tourism as an element of international tourism accounts for 39% of the global tourist arrivals (Greg, 2018; UNWTO, 2017). Cultural tourism refers to type of tourism in which people from various background visit specific destinations with rich cultural setting to attend, observe, participate, learn or enjoy cultural events of a particular ethnic group (Sampson, 2018; Quan-Baffour, 2020; Greg, 2018). Okumus et al. (2012) defines it as all the movements of people outside their normal place of residence to specific cultural attractions that may include heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama. The UNWTO (2017, p. 18) defines cultural tourism as the "...type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions or products in a tourism destination". It is therefore a form of experiential tourism focusing on the search for and participation in new and deep cultural experiences of an aesthetic, intellectual, emotional or psychological nature (Quan-Baffour, 2020). According to UNWTO (2017) it includes spiritual and emotional elements such as historical and cultural heritage, arts and craft, architecture, literature, music, creative industries and living cultures with their lifestyles,

value systems, beliefs and traditions. Yanev and Zlatarov (2017) in their study examined cultural tourism based on material and intangible elements which included historical landmarks, works of art, painting, music, architecture, museums, language, education, clothing, religion and rituals, crafts and folklore.

Various authors (e.g., Obonyo & Fwaya, 2012; Sampson; 2018; Adom, 2017, 2019; Quan-Baffour, 2020; 2019; Yanev & Zlatarov, 2017; UNWTO, 2017; Petkova, 2017) have acknowledged the contribution of cultural tourism practices to socio economic development of a destination. Obonyo and Fwaya (2012) examined cultural and heritage tourism as a component of rural tourism in western Kenya. In their qualitative study, they concluded that if cultural tourism is properly planned and coordinated, it will benefit the community through creation of employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and income generation. Similar sentiments are shared by Quan-Baffour (2020, 2019), Adom (2019), Petkova (2017) and Sampson (2018) who contend that cultural tourism other than improving the local economic conditions, it also serves as an avenue for propagating the rich cultural heritage of local communities. In this view, Greg (2018, p. 2) perceives that cultural tourism is driven by the 'heritage boom' implying that for a region to attract cultural oriented tourists, it must have a well-established heritage. While Machakos County has bounty of cultural heritage, including handicraft, traditional song, folklore and dances, it's not clear as to how these contribute to the socioeconomic development of the communities living in Machakos County given the different cultural set up from other regions studied before.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

1.5.1 Rural tourism practices including, cultural tourism are largely attributed to socioeconomic development of the rural populace where these activities take place worldwide. Machakos County largely boasts of pristine environment, and cultural settings that allows for rural tourism practices to take place. Presence of various cultural and natural tourism attractions as well as agricultural activities has made the region a canter for tourist attraction. Despite this, the region is still characterized by indefinite number of socio-economic and environmental challenges like land degradation, inequality development, conflicts generated by wildlife, food and long drought calamities, water shortage, insecurity, famine, poor infrastructure, poverty, lack of education and diseases etc.

1.5.2 While previous research focusing on rural tourism and socioeconomic development exist, indicating the relevancy of rural tourism practices to socioeconomic development of the local communities, majority of these studies have been conducted outside Machakos County. Similar studies have also been conducted in disjointed manner, without considering an integrated approach of the three main aspects of rural tourism practices, namely agritourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism and their effects on socioeconomic development from a developing country's perspective. This study therefore examines the effect of cultural tourism on socioeconomic development of communities living in Machakos County

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.5.3 SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THEORY

Sustainable Livelihood Theory (SLT) and the Theory of Inclusive Rural Development were used in this study. Sustainable Livelihood Theory (SLT) has dominated the execution of development initiatives by a number of large international agencies since the 1990s. It is described in terms of a social unit's capacity to build on its resources and capabilities over time in the face of shocks and pressures. The theory identifies significant assets in livelihood, their trends over time well as the nature and impacts of shocks and stresses upon these assets.

The Sustainable Livelihoods theory focuses on approaches to understand priorities and practical realities of disadvantaged men and women, including what they actually do for a living, their resources, and the challenges they encounter. The argument is that those creating policies and programs to address poverty will be better able to identify potential places of intervention and suitable tactics the more this is understood.

Successful strategies under the SL approach should serve to improve and consolidate poor people's access to and control over assets. Consequently, their will be improve livelihoods which will help in make lives less

vulnerable to shocks and stresses which could otherwise lead to a downward cycle of indebtedness and impoverishment (Farrington et al.,2004). Further, SL offers structures for collecting, analyzing, and integrating detailed household and community-level data to assess economic, cultural, and environmental components of the impacts of interventions on rural livelihoods. At the household in this study rural tourism practice is seen as an avenue in which the local community livelihoods can be improved.

1.5.4 THEORY OF INCLUSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This research was guided by the theory of Inclusive Rural Development. According to Fernando (2008), inclusive rural development includes three components: economic, social, and political factors, all of which are important for rural development programs. These factors can aid in community development, capacity building, competency development, and opportunities. The economic dimension of the inclusive approach to development includes the capacity and opportunity to participate in and benefit from the growth process.

The social dimension covers comprehensive social development. The political dimension includes capacity and opportunities to operate in political process. The importance of an inclusive approach to development is that it covers all the aspects of community life and it directs development to needs of communities (Fernando, 2008).

1.6 Empirical Review

The link between cultural tourism and socioeconomic development has been examined by various authors (e.g., Obonyo & Fwaya, 2012; Sampson; 2018; Adom, 2017, 2019; Quan-Baffour, 2020; 2019; Yanev & Zlatarov, 2017; UNWTO, 2017; Petkova, 2017) in different destination context. Majority of these researchers agree that cultural tourism serves as channels for propagating the rich cultural heritage of local communities and at the same time improving the local economic conditions.

Obonyo and Fwaya (2012) examined cultural and heritage tourism as a component of rural tourism in western Kenya. In their qualitative study, they concluded that if cultural tourism is properly planned and coordinated, it will benefit the community through creation of employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and income generation. Sampson (2018), examined cultural tourism by focusing on role of over 30 traditional festivals and events celebrated by different ethnic groups at different calendar months in Ghana. Sampson affirms the key role played by cultural tourism in generating foreign exchange earnings and creating jobs. In this view, Greg (2018, p. 2) perceives that cultural tourism is driven by the 'heritage boom' implying that for a region to attract cultural oriented tourists, it must have a well-established heritage.

Quan-Baffour (2020) conducted qualitative-ethnographic research where interviews and participant observation were employed in investigation of *Apo* festival as a cultural tourism in Ghana. The study revealed that *Apo* festival had a positive impact on the socio-economic development of the Bono Takyiman Municipality. This study despite showing positive results of cultural tourism on socioeconomic development had narrowly focused on *Apo* festivals alone, which mainly found in Ghana. While Machakos County has bounty of cultural heritage, including handicraft, traditional song, folklore and dances, it's not clear as to how these contribute to the socioeconomic development of the communities living in Machakos County given the different cultural set up from other regions studied before.

METHODOLOGY

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Explanatory census survey research design was used in this study. Explanatory design is employed in research that seeks to establish a causal relationship between variables. Explanatory research design is quantitative in nature and hence enables the use of hypothesis testing to measure the relationships between variables and analysis of data using statistical techniques. Furthermore, it allows the use of multiple regressions, which identified the causal relationships by analyzing the correlations between the study variables (Kothari 2004).

1.8 STUDY AREA AND POPULATION

The study was conducted within Machakos County, which covers an area of 5953 km². The county is divided into eight sub-counties namely Kangundo, Kathiani, Machakos Town, Masinga, Matungulu, Mavoko, Mwala and Yatta. The county borders several counties which include: Nairobi and Kiambu counties to north, Kajiado to the South West, Makueni to the South, Kitui to the East, Muranga and Kirinyaga to north west. It is located at latitude 1°31' and 0° 31' south and longitude 37°45' and 36° 45' East. The county lies in the arid and semi- arid zones of the eastern region of the country. Machakos has a hot and dry climate with temperature ranging from 21°C to 35°C. The County experiences erratic and unpredictable rain of less than 800mm annually, with short rains in October through to December and the long rains in late March to May.

Population density of Machakos County is approximately 1099000. The prevailing local climate is semi-arid and the landscape is hilly, rising from an altitude of 1,237 to 2,300 meters above sea level. The poverty levels in the County are at 59.6 % against a national average of 47.2% based on Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (2013); this positions the County at 32 out of the 47 counties, while 52% of the population lives in the urban centres, which is way above the national average of 29.9%. Machakos is approximately 64 kilometres from Nairobi city making it easily accessible by the tourists. Machakos County is endowed with rich cultural heritage and pristine environment which makes it a suitable destination for rural tourism.

Machakos County is very rich in handicraft, traditional song, folklore and dances which have not been well branded and marketed to national and international tourism market. Other attractions include Ol Donyo Sabuk National Park, Mua Hills best for Paragliding, People's Park and Masinga dam. Accommodation facilities include, A&L Hotel, Gelian Hotel, Garden Hotel, Tea Tot Hotel, Konza city hotel, Zeroes Resort, and Kyaka hotel. The County's proximity to Nairobi city and the upcoming Konza techno city makes it ideal for the development of the tourism. Machakos region has beautiful hilly scenery that is perfect for camping and hiking. This consists of tricky terrain that would challenge any camper. According to Machakos County Government (2020), the county has seven heritage and culture sites that include Wamunyu and Muliluni handicrafts in Mwala Sub -county; Second World War platers, Masaku and Muindi Mbingu grave sites in Machakos Town Sub -county; Paul Ngei grave site in Kangundo Sub - county and African heritage house in Mavoko Sub - county. It also has a ray of agritourism sites including Bishop Masika Farm, in Yatta Sub-County and Kamutunga Farm in Machakos Town Sub -county. In view of this, Machakos County was selected as the area of study.

Table 1: Target Population

Sub-County	No of Attraction Sites of Interest	Population Estimate
Kathiani	2	14
Kangundo	2	14
Machakos Town	13	91
Masinga	1	7
Matungulu	2	14
Mavoko	7	49
Mwala	3	21
Yatta	1	7
	Total	217

Source; (Reconnaissance study of Machakos County by Author)

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The study employed census method to select all the 176 respondents owing to the small number of respondents. A census is a study that involve consideration of every element or case in a population. According to Kothari (2004), a census provides a true measure of the population since there is no sampling error.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The study used questionnaires designed to collect data from employees of tourism attraction sites, community leaders (ward administrators) and key personnel in the department of tourism and culture Machakos County. The questionnaires were self-administered by the researcher with the help of a research assistant randomly to the respondents. The questionnaires were closed ended and was divided into four sections. The first section dealt with personal information; section two was on tourism activities undertaken by the local communities in Machakos County. The third section was on cultural tourism practices, and the last section was on social economic development.

Cultural tourism practices were measured using five items that related to farming customs; local lifestyles, handicrafts and arts, festivals/rites as well as music and dances. Five statements were therefore formulated in this regard and the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with each of the statement as depicted in data collection instrument. The Likert scale continuum ranged from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The measurement variables were transformed by computing their means to represent their distinctive construct or key variable.

2 FINDINGS

This study set out to establish the effect of cultural tourism practices on socio economic development of the communities living in Machakos County, Kenya. The study was guided by the research hypothesis:

H₀₁: Cultural tourism practice has no significant effect on socio economic development of the communities living in Machakos County, Kenya.

In addressing the null hypothesis, linear regression was conducted using the enter method. Socio economic development as the dependent (outcome) variable and cultural tourism practices was used as the independent (predictor) variable. The results of the multiple linear regression were as indicated in the Table 5.1 below.

Table 2: Regression coefficients and significance results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower	Upper
(Constant)	.083	.329		.251	.802	-.566	.731
Cultural Tourism Practices	.345	.094	.268	3.692	.000	.161	.530

a. Dependent Variable: Socioeconomic Development

The results as indicated in Table 5.1, that cultural tourism practices ($\beta = .345$, $t = 3.692$, $p < .001$, confidence interval = [.161, .530]), was a significant predictor in the model; hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The Beta Coefficient values, ($\beta = .345$) was positive.

This denotes a positive relationship between the predictor variable, cultural tourism practices and the outcome variable, socio economic development.

Further, it suggests therefore that the more the cultural tourism practices among the Kamba community in Machakos County, Kenya, the more likelihood that there was socio economic development. Cultural tourism provides opportunities for tourists and visitors to Kamba community to take part in various cultural activities including festivals, dances and music. By doing so, they get to interact with the community which leads to learning, experience enhancement as well as cultural preservation. While immersing themselves into the host culture by consuming both tangible and intangible products of cultural tourism in the destination, tourists tend to show appreciation of this in monetary form. Through this, the local community get form of employment where they can earn revenue by selling some of the artistic products to tourists as souvenir. This in turn would positively impact on their socio-economic status as the money realized from these events and activities can be channeled to other aspects of the community. Cultural tourism would therefore support creation of employment through self-employment.

The study findings support that of Quan-Baffour (2020) who found out that cultural tourism in encourages self-employment initiatives among the communities in Bono Takyiman area in Ghana. This current study finding generally conforms with previous research (e.g., Adom, 2017, 2019; Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Okumus et al., 2012; Yanev & Zlatarov, 2017; Petkova, 2017) who acknowledge the capacity of cultural tourism in significantly contributing to socioeconomic development of host community in a tourism destination. The authors also contend that cultural tourism generally serves as a channel for promoting local culture, cultural preservation and improving the local economy of the host communities. All this extant research though conducted in different contextual set up share similar school of thought that cultural tourism facilitates the creation of employment in rural communities, particularly farming customs, lifestyles, handicrafts and arts initiatives as well as local music and dances.

3 CONCLUSION

The study sought to establish the effect of cultural tourism practices on socio economic development of the communities living in Machakos County, Kenya. The findings confirmed cultural tourism practices is a predictor of socio-economic development of the Kamba community ($\beta = .345$, $t = 3.692$, $p < .001$, confidence interval = [.161, .530]). It was thus concluded that cultural tourism practices had a significant effect on socio-economic development of the host community in Machakos County, Kenya. This was through such activities as farming customs, local lifestyles, handicrafts and arts, festivals/Rites and local music and dances which have led to improved social economic development through improved income levels, environmental awareness, preservation of culture and cultural preservation.

As far as the recommendation of the study are concerned, the researcher suggested that the Machakos County government through the Ministry of tourism and wildlife strengthen partnerships with the local business sector, the local community sector, and general stakeholders, as well as the policy-makers to ensure a faster-integrated tourism development process. The county government should enhance community sensitization through barazas, workshops, and capacity building for both cultural tourims staff and the community on the Agritourism concept.

The local community should join hands with the tourism authorities to set up a location for showcasing their cultural products as well as building more cultural avenues which can act as accommodation for the tourist. Future studies should try to look at increasing rural tourism practices by exploring potential factors that hinder their growth. The current study was heavily reliant on quantitative data. Future studies should seek to employ mixed methods designs that can allow for qualitative and quantitative approaches to this problem in order to gain a more incisive understanding of cultural tourism practices and socio-economic development.

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