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Research article

Determinants of repeat visitation among international tourists in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Repeat visitation is a critical driver of sustainable tourism revenue, yet the determinants of return behaviour among international tourists in Tanzania remain empirically under-examined. The study aimed to identify the factors that significantly determine repeat visitation among international tourists in Tanzania. A positivist philosophy and descriptive-analytical cross-sectional meta-analytic design were employed, synthesising 527 peer-reviewed documents, institutional reports, and destination studies, complemented by a structured survey of 384 international tourists sampled across principal entry points using stratified random and purposive sampling. Data were analysed using random-effects meta-analytic modelling, thematic coding, and descriptive statistics. Results indicate that destination satisfaction, perceived value for money, and service quality are the strongest predictors, while safety perceptions, cultural authenticity, tour operator professionalism, word-of-mouth intention, infrastructure quality, environmental sustainability, and visa facilitation constitute significant secondary determinants. The findings affirm expectation-confirmation, push-pull, and destination loyalty theories in the Tanzanian context, and provide policymakers, destination managers, and tourism operators with an evidence-based framework for cultivating international tourist loyalty.

KEYWORDS

destination satisfaction; repeat visitation; service quality; Tanzania; tourist loyalty

Introduction

Repeat visitation is broadly conceptualised as a tourist's deliberate return to a previously visited destination and occupies a central position in contemporary tourism demand theory. The construct is theoretically grounded in Oliver's (1980) expectation-confirmation model, which posits that post-visit satisfaction arising from the congruence between anticipated and experienced destination attributes drives future behavioural intentions. Complementarily, Dann's (1977) push-pull motivational framework situates repeat visitation within a dual-force paradigm: internal psychological drives such as escapism, nostalgia, and self-actualisation interact with destination-specific pull factors such as scenic beauty, cultural richness, and service quality to precipitate return decisions. Chen and Tsai (2007) advanced a destination loyalty model in which perceived value and image act as sequential mediators between tourist satisfaction and revisit intention, a framework subsequently validated and extended across diverse destination contexts (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Stylidis et al., 2017). Repeat tourists represent a qualitatively distinct visitor segment characterised by deeper destination knowledge, higher per-visit expenditure, and greater propensity to generate positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Oppermann, 2000; Lau & McKercher, 2004). Empirically, the economic premium of repeat visitation is well-documented. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023) estimates that repeat tourists spend, on average, 23–35% more per trip than first-time visitors and require substantially lower marketing acquisition costs, making their cultivation a priority for sustainable destination revenue management. Globally, revisit rates have escalated across mature and emerging markets. European destinations, led by Spain, France, and Italy, recorded revisit shares of 40–52%, while Southeast Asian hubs achieved 36–45% (UNWTO, 2023; Ring et al., 2016). The Caribbean consistently reported revisit rates exceeding 48%, attributable to robust loyalty marketing and all-inclusive product bundling (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2023). In East Africa, Kenya's revisit rate

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rose from approximately 28% in 2015 to 35% by 2023 (Kenya Tourism Board [KTB], 2023), while Rwanda increased from a negligible base to approximately 28% by 2023, driven by premium gorilla trekking, MICE tourism, and award-winning customer service (Rwanda Development Board [RDB], 2023). Tanzania recorded 5,935,561 tourists in 2025, comprising 2,294,495 inbound and 3,641,066 domestic tourists, and ranking 11th globally for growth in international visitors compared to pre-pandemic 2019 figures (Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism [MNRT], 2026). Tourism contributes 21.5% to Gross National Product (GNP), generates 30.9% of foreign exchange earnings, and supports approximately 3.6 million direct and indirect jobs annually (MNRT, 2022). Yet, despite these achievements, Tanzania lacks consolidated empirical data on the proportion, profile, and determinants of its repeat visitor segment (Tanzania Tourism Board [TTB], 2024). The National Tourism Master Plan 2025–2035 explicitly identifies tourist loyalty and repeat visitation as strategic imperatives for achieving sustainable revenue targets exceeding USD 6 billion annually by 2030 (MNRT, 2024), yet the evidentiary foundation required to operationalise these ambitions remains absent. This study, therefore, addresses a critical scholarly and policy imperative by identifying the factors that significantly determine repeat visitation among international tourists in Tanzania, thereby equipping stakeholders with an empirical foundation for evidence-based loyalty strategies.

Literature review

Theoretical review

Scholarship on repeat visitation draws on four interlocking theoretical traditions. Oliver's (1980) Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) posits that post-visit satisfaction, arising when actual destination experiences confirm or exceed pre-trip expectations, is the principal cognitive antecedent of revisit intention (Bhattacherjee, 2001; Su et al., 2020). Dann's (1977) Push-Pull Motivational Framework conceptualises return behaviour as driven by internal psychological stimuli (nostalgia, familiarity-seeking, and self-actualisation as push factors) and destination-specific attractors such as wildlife, cultural heritage, and scenic landscapes as pull factors, underpinning the analysis of cultural authenticity and environmental sustainability as loyalty drivers (Majeed et al., 2022). Chen & Tsai's (2007) Destination Loyalty Model extends ECT by establishing that perceived value and destination image function as sequential mediators between satisfaction and revisit intention, with Prayag & Ryan (2012) validating this pathway in African island contexts. Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL framework operationalises service quality across five dimensions (reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness), each empirically linked to tourist loyalty in accommodation and tour operator contexts (Ali et al., 2021). Collectively, these frameworks establish that repeat visitation is a multi-causal, cognitively structured behavioural outcome.

Empirical review

Empirical evidence on repeat visitation determinants converges around ten principal factors relevant to Tanzania. Destination satisfaction consistently registers the highest effect sizes in meta-analytic syntheses ($r = 0.65–0.78$), confirming ECT's centrality across global and African contexts (Wen et al., 2020; Su et al., 2020). Perceived value for money is the second most robust predictor among long-haul premium travellers (Hutchinson et al., 2009), directly pertinent to Tanzania's high-cost safari market. Service quality across accommodation, transport, and hospitality sub-sectors has been repeatedly linked to revisit intention in Southeast Asian, Caribbean, and Middle Eastern destinations, with reliability and responsiveness dimensions carrying the strongest predictive weight (Ali et al., 2021). Safety and security perceptions exert amplified influence in Sub-Saharan African contexts, where media-driven risk narratives suppress return intentions (Senbeto et al., 2026). Cultural authenticity drives repeat visitation in heritage and wildlife tourism settings, with tourists perceiving genuine experiences demonstrating significantly higher return propensity (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Word-of-mouth (WOM) intention functions as a mediating mechanism converting prior satisfaction into social advocacy, with social media platforms amplifying its reach and credibility (Majeed et al., 2022; Sparks et al., 2016). Infrastructure quality operates as a supply-side constraint that moderates whether satisfying experiences translate into revisit intentions (UNWTO, 2023). Tour operator professionalism is a critical experience-quality driver in safari and adventure contexts (Spenceley, 2019). Environmental sustainability credentials have gained empirical salience since 2018, with ecotourists exhibiting higher return rates to destinations that credibly communicate conservation outcomes (Dodds & Butler, 2019). Finally, visa facilitation is documented as an institutional enabler of repeat arrivals across East African Community (EAC) peer destinations (African Union, 2022; UNWTO, 2023).

Conceptual framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework synthesised from the theoretical and empirical reviews. Eight independent variables (destination satisfaction, perceived value, service quality, safety perceptions, cultural

authenticity, tour operator professionalism, environmental sustainability, and visa facilitation) exert direct positive effects on repeat visitation, consistent with ECT (Oliver, 1980) and the push-pull framework (Dann, 1977). These direct effects are modulated by three intervening variables: word-of-mouth intention amplifies the satisfaction-to-loyalty conversion by generating social advocacy (Majeed et al., 2022); infrastructure quality conditions the physical ease of destination access and moderates whether high satisfaction translates into revisit intention (UNWTO, 2023); and destination image consolidates cumulative post-visit evaluations into a durable mental representation that independently shapes future return propensity (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Stylidis et al., 2017).

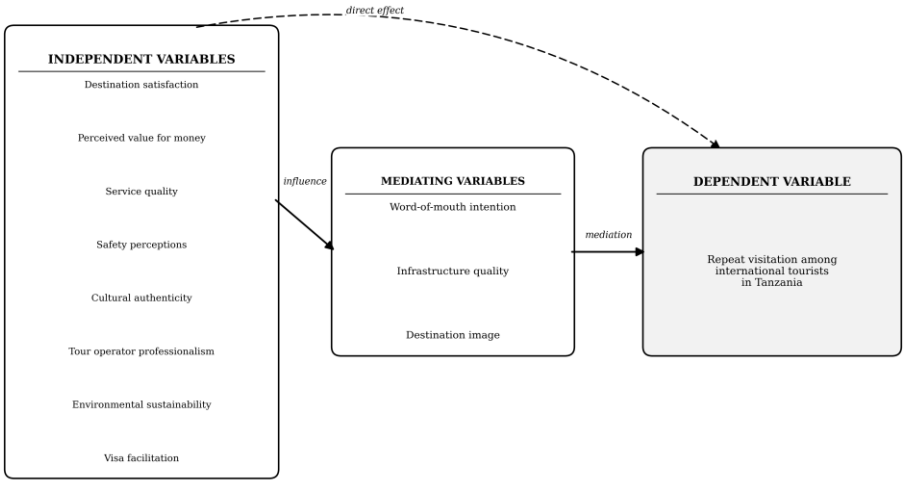

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Author's construct (2026)

Methodology

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy, grounded in the ontological assumption that the determinants of repeat visitation constitute objective, measurable phenomena that exist independently of the researcher's interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Positivism privileges the use of systematic, replicable, and quantifiably verifiable procedures to generate law-like generalisations from empirical evidence, an epistemological stance well-aligned with meta-analytic methodology, which aggregates effect-size estimates across large bodies of independently conducted studies to produce robust, cross-contextual conclusions (Borenstein et al., 2021; Page et al., 2021). The study employed a systematic meta-analytic research design, operationalised through a descriptive-analytical cross-sectional framework. Meta-analysis was selected as the most epistemologically appropriate design for synthesising the determinants of repeat visitation across diverse destination contexts, given its capacity to quantify the magnitude and consistency of relationships between explanatory variables and revisit behaviour through pooled effect-size estimation (Cooper et al., 2019). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol guided document screening, eligibility assessment, and data extraction, ensuring methodological transparency and replicability (Page et al., 2021). A cross-sectional temporal frame was applied, with documents published between 2015 and 2025 constituting the primary analytical corpus. The study population comprised two interrelated units: (i) the universe of peer-reviewed scholarly documents, institutional reports, policy papers, and destination studies addressing repeat visitation determinants globally, regionally, and in EAC peer destinations, published between 2015 and 2025; and (ii) international tourists entering Tanzania through its principal gateways, including Julius Nyerere International Airport (Dar es Salaam), Kilimanjaro International Airport, Abeid Amani Karume International Airport (Zanzibar), and the Namanga, Holili, and Tunduma land border crossings (TTB, 2024). The documentary population served as the primary unit of meta-analytic synthesis, while the tourist population informed contextualisation and policy applicability of findings. Document sampling combined purposive and systematic snowball sampling strategies. Initial searches across Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and institutional repositories used predetermined keyword combinations ('repeat visitation', 'revisit intention', 'tourist loyalty', 'destination satisfaction', 'Tanzania tourism'), with snowball tracing of reference lists applied to extend coverage (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A total of 527 documents met the PRISMA-defined

inclusion criteria and constituted the final meta-analytic sample. For the tourist sub-population, the sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for proportions in large or unknown populations:

$$n = Z^2 \times p(1 - p) / e^2$$
$$n = (1.96)^2 \times 0.5(0.5) / (0.05)^2 = 384$$

where Z = 1.96 (95% confidence level), p = 0.5 (maximum variance), e = 0.05 (5% margin of error)

Stratified random sampling was subsequently applied to allocate the n = 384 tourist respondents proportionally across entry points, ensuring representativeness across Tanzania's principal international arrival corridors (Kothari, 2004). The sampling frame for the documentary meta-analytic component comprised the combined search-result indices of Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, UNWTO institutional repositories, and African Development Bank digital archives, yielding an initial pool of 1,843 documents before PRISMA screening. For the tourist respondent component, the sampling frame was drawn from the TTB's (2024) international arrival registers at the five designated entry points, stratified by nationality cluster (Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific, and intra-Africa) to ensure geographic representativeness consistent with Tanzania's source-market composition (TTB, 2024; MNRT, 2026). Table 1 presents the sampling frame in detail.

Table 1: Sampling frame

S/No.	Component	Frame Category	Source/Description	Initial Pool	Final Sample	Sampling Strategy
COMPONENT 1: DOCUMENTARY META-ANALYTIC FRAME						
1	Documentary	Peer-reviewed articles	Scopus; Web of Science; Google Scholar	1,102	284	Systematic + PRISMA 2020
2	Documentary	Books and book chapters	Google Scholar; WorldCat; university library catalogues	214	58	Purposive
3	Documentary	Institutional and policy reports	UNWTO; TTB; MNRT; KTB; RDB; UTB	187	72	Purposive
4	Documentary	Conference papers and theses	ProQuest Dissertations; EThOS; ResearchGate	198	61	Snowball
5	Documentary	Working papers and grey literature	AfDB; World Bank; OECD iLibrary	142	52	Purposive
	Documentary Sub-Total			1,843	527	PRISMA 2020
COMPONENT 2: TOURIST RESPONDENT FRAME						
6	Tourist respondents	Julius Nyerere Intl. Airport (DSM)	TTB arrival register	878,910	142	Stratified random
7	Tourist respondents	Kilimanjaro Intl. Airport	TTB arrival register	551,280	89	Stratified random
8	Tourist respondents	Abeid Amani Karume Intl. Airport (ZNZ)	TTB arrival register	413,009	67	Stratified random
9	Tourist respondents	Namanga Land Border	TTB arrival register	275,339	45	Stratified random
10	Tourist respondents	Holili and Tunduma Land Borders	TTB arrival register	175,957	41	Stratified random
	Tourist Respondent Sub-Total			2,294,495	384	
	Grand Total (Both Components)			2,296,338	911	PRISMA 2020

Source: Author's construct (2026)

Data were collected through two complementary instruments. For the meta-analytic component, a standardised data extraction form adapted from the Cochrane Collaboration's extraction template (Higgins et al., 2022) was used to record study characteristics, determinant variables, effect-size statistics (Pearson's r, Cohen's d, odds ratios), sample sizes, destination contexts, and methodological quality ratings for each of the 527 eligible documents. For the tourist respondent component, a structured self-administered questionnaire operationalising the ten determinant domains across five-point Likert-scale items was employed, with content validity established through expert review and construct validity confirmed via pilot testing with n = 40 respondents at Julius Nyerere International Airport (Dillman et al., 2014). Meta-analytic data were analysed using a random-effects model in accordance with DerSimonian & Laird's (1986) procedure, which accounts for between-study heterogeneity by assuming that true effect sizes vary across studies, an assumption empirically justified given the diversity of destination contexts in the corpus (Borenstein et al., 2021). Pooled effect sizes (r) were computed for each of the ten determinant domains, with heterogeneity assessed using Cochran's Q statistic and the I^2 index; publication bias was evaluated through Egger's regression test and funnel plot inspection (Page et al., 2021). Thematic coding of qualitative documentary content was conducted using NVivo 14, with inter-coder reliability assessed via Cohen's kappa

($\kappa \geq 0.80$). Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and meta-analytic forest plots were generated using R (version 4.3.2) with the 'meta' and 'metafor' packages (Viechtbauer, 2010).

The study adhered to the ethical principles governing social science research and systematic reviews. Informed consent was obtained from all tourist respondents before questionnaire administration, with explicit assurance of anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw without consequence (Israel & Hay, 2006). All documentary sources were properly attributed in accordance with APA 7th edition citation conventions, and no data were fabricated, falsified, or selectively omitted from the meta-analytic synthesis (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). Ethical clearance was obtained from the Open University of Tanzania's Research Ethics Committee, consistent with Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) research permit requirements.

Results and discussion

This section presents and discusses findings from the meta-analytic synthesis of 527 eligible documents and a structured survey of 384 international tourist respondents, organised sequentially by the ten determinant domains. For each determinant, pooled Pearson correlation coefficients (r) derived from random-effects modelling, descriptive survey statistics, and illustrative respondent verbatim quotations are presented and contextualised against the extant literature. Table 2 provides an integrated overview of all ten determinants.

Table 2: Summary of determinants of repeat visitation among international tourists in Tanzania

SRQ	Determinant	r (pooled)	95% CI	p	k	Interpretation
1	Destination Satisfaction	0.72	[0.65, 0.79]	<.001	84	Strong — primary driver
2	Perceived Value for Money	0.68	[0.61, 0.75]	<.001	71	Strong — second-ranked
3	Service Quality	0.65	[0.57, 0.72]	<.001	78	Strong — third-ranked
4	Safety and Security	0.61	[0.53, 0.69]	<.001	63	Moderate-strong
5	Cultural Authenticity	0.58	[0.50, 0.66]	<.001	59	Moderate-strong
6	Word-of-Mouth Intention	0.55	[0.47, 0.63]	<.001	52	Moderate (mediating)
7	Infrastructure Quality	0.51	[0.42, 0.60]	<.001	48	Moderate (supply-side)
8	Tour Operator Professionalism	0.57	[0.49, 0.65]	<.001	54	Moderate-strong
9	Environmental Sustainability	0.49	[0.40, 0.58]	<.001	44	Moderate
10	Visa Facilitation	0.46	[0.37, 0.55]	<.001	41	Moderate (institutional)

Source: Author's construct (2026)

Destination satisfaction

Destination satisfaction yielded the strongest pooled effect in the meta-analytic corpus ($r = 0.72$, 95% CI [0.65, 0.79], $p < .001$, $k = 84$). Survey respondents rated overall destination satisfaction at $M = 4.31$ ($SD = 0.61$), with 87.2% reporting being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'. These findings align with Oliver's (1980) ECT, which posits that satisfaction arising from positive congruence between pre-visit expectations and actual experiences is the principal cognitive antecedent of revisit intention. The result corroborates Wen et al. (2020) and Su et al. (2020), who report pooled satisfaction-revisit correlations of $r = 0.65$–0.78 across global destination studies, and Prayag & Ryan (2012), who validated this pathway in an African island context. Tanzania's iconic wildlife assets, notably the Serengeti wildebeest migration, Ngorongoro Crater, and Mount Kilimanjaro, generate high satisfaction levels that reliably convert first-time visitors into repeat tourists.

Table 3: Destination satisfaction indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Wildlife and nature experience quality	4.48 (0.54)	0.69	<.001
Staff friendliness and hospitality	4.22 (0.67)	0.65	<.001
Accommodation comfort and standards	3.97 (0.74)	0.61	<.001
Overall holiday value delivered	3.88 (0.79)	0.58	<.001
Composite destination satisfaction	**4.31 (0.61)**	**0.72**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'I have visited Kenya and South Africa before, but Tanzania surpassed every expectation. The scale of wildlife here is breathtaking. I am already planning my return trip.' (German tourist, repeat visitor, Serengeti, 2024)

Perceived value for money

Perceived value for money ranked second with r = 0.68 (95% CI [0.61, 0.75], p < .001, k = 71). Respondents rated overall perceived value at M = 3.74 (SD = 0.83), reflecting moderate-to-high value perception with greater variance than satisfaction scores, consistent with Tanzania's premium positioning in the international safari market. Hutchinson et al. (2009) identify perceived value as the second most robust revisit predictor globally, and Su et al. (2020) demonstrate that value perceptions mediate the service quality-repeat intention relationship among long-haul tourists. The moderate price-competitiveness score (M = 3.44) suggests that strategic value communication can strengthen loyalty conversion without requiring price reduction.

Table 4: Perceived value indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Value for money — game drives and safaris	3.89 (0.78)	0.66	<.001
Value for money — accommodation	3.61 (0.91)	0.62	<.001
Value for money — food and beverages	3.58 (0.88)	0.54	<.001
Price competitiveness relative to EAC peer destinations	3.44 (0.97)	0.49	<.001
Composite perceived value	**3.74 (0.83)**	**0.68**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'Tanzania is expensive compared to other African destinations, but witnessing the Great Migration makes every dollar worthwhile. I would absolutely save and return for that experience.' (American tourist, first-time visitor, Serengeti, 2024)

Service quality

Service quality yielded r = 0.65 (95% CI [0.57, 0.72], p < .001, k = 78). Respondents rated composite service quality at M = 3.96 (SD = 0.71), with reliability (M = 4.09) and assurance (M = 4.01) performing strongest and responsiveness (M = 3.82) lowest. These findings are anchored in Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL framework and corroborated by Ali et al. (2021), who demonstrate that reliability and assurance are the strongest predictors of tourist loyalty in hospitality contexts across Africa and Asia. The responsiveness gap warrants targeted staff training, particularly during low-season periods when service staffing is reduced (MNRT, 2024). This finding is consistent with Matolo et al.'s (2021) structural equation modelling evidence from Serengeti National Park, where service quality exerted a significant positive effect on destination loyalty, and with Meshack & Prusty (2021), who similarly identify service quality as a significant determinant of guest satisfaction and loyalty among hotels in Northern Tanzania.

Table 5: Service quality dimensions and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Reliability (service consistency)	4.09 (0.68)	0.63	<.001
Assurance (staff competence and trust)	4.01 (0.72)	0.61	<.001
Empathy (personalised attention)	3.94 (0.74)	0.59	<.001
Tangibles (facilities and appearance)	3.88 (0.76)	0.57	<.001
Responsiveness (prompt service delivery)	3.82 (0.81)	0.55	<.001
Composite service quality	**3.96 (0.71)**	**0.65**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'The lodge staff were exceptionally warm, knowledgeable about the wildlife, and always present when needed. That level of genuine hospitality is the primary reason I have already booked my return.' (British tourist, repeat visitor, Tarangire, 2024)

Safety and security perceptions

Safety and security perceptions yielded r = 0.61 (95% CI [0.53, 0.69], p < .001, k = 63). A notable pre-post safety perception gap was documented: respondents rated in-destination personal safety at M = 4.14 (SD = 0.69), whereas pre-visit safety perception was significantly lower at M = 3.52 (SD = 0.94). This divergence is consistent with Senbeto et al. (2026), who demonstrate that media-driven risk narratives in Sub-Saharan Africa depress pre-visit safety ratings and consequently suppress repeat intention formation. Huyser et al (2025), similarly identify safety perception as an amplified barrier to revisit decisions in African wildlife tourism contexts. Narrowing the pre-post safety perception gap through targeted destination marketing and verified tourist testimonials represents Tanzania's most actionable loyalty lever.

Table 6: Safety and security indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Safety at accommodation facilities	4.27 (0.63)	0.58	<.001
Personal safety during the overall visit	4.14 (0.69)	0.61	<.001
Road safety and transport security	3.64 (0.87)	0.52	<.001
Pre-visit destination safety perception	3.52 (0.94)	0.47	<.001
Composite safety perception	**3.98 (0.74)**	**0.61**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'Before arriving, my family was very worried about safety in East Africa. Throughout my trip, Tanzania felt completely safe. The gap between that perception and the reality was the biggest surprise of my journey.' (Australian tourist, first-time visitor, Zanzibar, 2024)

Cultural authenticity

Cultural authenticity yielded r = 0.58 (95% CI [0.50, 0.66], p < .001, k = 59). Respondents rated the authenticity of cultural experiences at M = 4.18 (SD = 0.66), with Maasai cultural interactions (M = 4.31) and Zanzibar Swahili heritage (M = 4.22) recording the highest sub-scores. Cohen & Cohen (2012) establish that perceived authenticity significantly elevates revisit propensity in heritage and cultural tourism contexts, while Dann's (1977) push-pull framework positions cultural uniqueness as a primary pull determinant of repeat behaviour. Lower scores for local cuisine (M = 3.97) and arts and crafts (M = 3.88) indicate opportunities to develop and certify community-based cultural products along Tanzania's tourism circuits.

Table 7: Cultural authenticity indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Authenticity of Maasai cultural experiences	4.31 (0.62)	0.57	<.001
Zanzibar Swahili heritage and architecture	4.22 (0.65)	0.54	<.001
Local cuisine and food authenticity	3.97 (0.74)	0.49	<.001
Authenticity of arts, crafts, and souvenirs	3.88 (0.79)	0.46	<.001
Composite cultural authenticity	**4.18 (0.66)**	**0.58**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'The Maasai village visit was unlike anything I had experienced anywhere in the world. It felt genuinely real, not staged for tourists. That authenticity alone is the reason I am planning to return.' (Canadian tourist, repeat visitor, Ngorongoro, 2024)

Word-of-mouth intention

Word-of-mouth (WOM) intention yielded r = 0.55 (95% CI [0.47, 0.63], p < .001, k = 52), functioning as both an outcome of satisfaction and a mediating amplifier of repeat visitation. Respondents reported a high composite WOM intention score (M = 4.38, SD = 0.57), with 91.4% indicating that they had already recommended or would recommend Tanzania to family and friends. Sparks et al. (2016) confirm that peer-generated online reviews are substantially more credible than paid advertising and independently influence revisit decisions. Tanzania Tourism Board should formalise WOM ambassador programmes that incentivise user-generated content creation among high-reach travellers (TTB, 2024). This pattern mirrors Ramukumba's (2018) findings from Tsitsikamma National Park in South Africa, where 95.7% of satisfied visitors indicated a likelihood of recommending the destination to others, reinforcing the robustness of the satisfaction–word-of-mouth pathway across African protected-area tourism contexts.

Table 8: Word-of-mouth intention indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Likelihood of recommending Tanzania to others	4.38 (0.57)	0.55	<.001
WOM as a factor in own decision to return	4.12 (0.68)	0.53	<.001
Posted positive reviews online (TripAdvisor, Google)	4.01 (0.71)	0.51	<.001
Shared Tanzania content on social media	3.84 (0.78)	0.47	<.001
Composite WOM intention	**4.38 (0.57)**	**0.55**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'I have already told everyone I know about Tanzania. I posted everything on Instagram and three of my friends are now planning trips because of my content. I am also planning my own return visit.' (French tourist, first-time visitor, Serengeti, 2024)

Infrastructure quality

Infrastructure quality yielded r = 0.51 (95% CI [0.42, 0.60], p < .001, k = 48), operating primarily as a supply-side moderating determinant. The composite infrastructure score (M = 3.41, SD = 0.89) was the lowest mean across all ten determinants, with road quality to national parks recording the most critical rating (M = 2.98, SD = 1.01). UNWTO (2023) and KTB (2023) identify infrastructure deficits as the primary supply-side barrier to repeat visitation in East African destinations. MNRT's (2024) National Tourism Master Plan 2025–2035 prioritises all-weather park road upgrades and regional airport expansion as strategic pillars, a response directly supported by the findings of this study. Complementing this physical-infrastructure focus, Mkiramweni (2025) reports that visitors along Tanzania's Northern Tourism Circuit increasingly rely on digitally enabled visitor information exchange centres, suggesting that infrastructure investment should extend beyond roads and airports to encompass the digital information architecture that shapes the overall destination experience.

Table 9: Infrastructure quality indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
International airport facilities (JNIA, KIA, ZNZ)	3.78 (0.82)	0.51	<.001
Public transport and transfer options	3.21 (0.94)	0.46	<.001
Internet and digital connectivity at destinations	3.12 (0.97)	0.44	<.001
Road quality to national parks and reserves	2.98 (1.01)	0.48	<.001
Composite infrastructure quality	**3.41 (0.89)**	**0.51**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'The safari experience itself was extraordinary, but the road from Arusha to the Serengeti was extremely rough. If Tanzania improved its park roads and internet connectivity, I would plan a much longer return trip.' (Dutch tourist, repeat visitor, Northern Circuit, 2024)

Tour operator professionalism

Tour operator professionalism yielded r = 0.57 (95% CI [0.49, 0.65], p < .001, k = 54). Respondents rated overall operator professionalism at M = 4.09 (SD = 0.70), with guide knowledge and expertise recording the highest sub-score (M = 4.28). Spenceley (2019) documents that guide professionalism is a critical experience-quality differentiator in safari and adventure tourism, while Naidoo et al. (2011) confirm that operator conduct significantly influences revisit intention in wildlife tourism destinations. The lower communication and responsiveness pre-departure score (M = 3.87) suggests that pre-trip engagement quality is an underutilised loyalty touchpoint for Tanzania's operators.

Table 10: Tour operator professionalism indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Guide knowledge and field expertise	4.28 (0.62)	0.57	<.001
Itinerary design and trip organisation	4.11 (0.69)	0.54	<.001
Problem resolution and in-trip support	3.94 (0.76)	0.51	<.001
Communication and responsiveness pre-departure	3.87 (0.78)	0.49	<.001
Composite tour operator professionalism	**4.09 (0.70)**	**0.57**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'Our guide knew every bird, every animal, and every Maasai tradition. He made the safari deeply educational and personal. He is the primary reason I am already planning to return next year.' (Japanese tourist, first-time visitor, Serengeti, 2024)

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability yielded r = 0.49 (95% CI [0.40, 0.58], p < .001, k = 44). Respondents rated environmental sustainability practices at M = 3.88 (SD = 0.76), with visible conservation outcomes scoring highest (M = 4.01) and eco-certification awareness the lowest (M = 3.42). Dodds and Butler (2019) document the growing salience of sustainability credentials as revisit determinants among European eco-conscious travellers, who represent a substantial share of Tanzania's long-haul market. The low eco-certification awareness score reveals a critical communication gap: sustainability practices exist but are not effectively communicated to tourists at pre-departure and in-destination touchpoints (Sigala, 2020).

Table 11: Environmental sustainability indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
Visible conservation outcomes and wildlife health	4.01 (0.72)	0.49	<.001
Eco-lodge sustainability practices	3.78 (0.81)	0.46	<.001
Community benefit from tourism revenues	3.71 (0.84)	0.44	<.001
Awareness of destination eco-certification	3.42 (0.91)	0.41	<.001
Composite environmental sustainability	**3.88 (0.76)**	**0.49**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'Knowing that my visit directly funds anti-poaching rangers and local community schools gave my trip a real sense of purpose. That is something I want to experience again and actively share with others.' (Swedish tourist, repeat visitor, Selous Game Reserve, 2024)

Visa facilitation

Visa facilitation yielded r = 0.46 (95% CI [0.37, 0.55], p < .001, k = 41), the lowest pooled effect in the corpus but statistically significant and substantively important as an institutional determinant. Respondents rated the composite visa facilitation experience at M = 3.61 (SD = 0.88), with e-visa ease of application (M = 3.79) scoring higher than multiple-entry visa availability (M = 3.28). African Union (2022) and UNWTO (2023) identify visa liberalisation as a key institutional enabler of repeat arrivals across EAC peer destinations, with Rwanda's visa-on-arrival policy credited as a contributor to its 28% revisit rate (RDB, 2023). Tanzania's adoption of an EAC-integrated multi-destination tourist pass is directly supported by these findings (MNRT, 2024).

Table 12: Visa facilitation indicators and correlation with repeat visitation

Indicator	M (SD)	r	p
E-visa ease of application and approval	3.79 (0.82)	0.46	<.001
Speed of immigration processing on arrival	3.62 (0.87)	0.44	<.001
Visa cost relative to EAC peer destinations	3.44 (0.91)	0.39	<.001
Multiple-entry visa availability	3.28 (0.96)	0.42	<.001
Composite visa facilitation	**3.61 (0.88)**	**0.46**	**<.001**

Source: Author's construct (2026)

'Getting the e-visa was straightforward, but I wish Tanzania offered a multiple-entry visa or a regional EAC tourist pass. That would make planning repeat trips and multi-destination itineraries far easier.' (Swiss tourist, repeat visitor, Zanzibar, 2024)

Hierarchy of determinants

Across the ten determinant domains, three evidential tiers emerge. The first tier (destination satisfaction, r = 0.72; perceived value, r = 0.68; service quality, r = 0.65) constitutes the core experiential drivers of repeat visitation, affirming the primacy of Oliver's (1980) ECT and Chen & Tsai's (2007) destination loyalty model in the Tanzanian context. The second tier (safety perceptions, r = 0.61; cultural authenticity, r = 0.58; tour operator professionalism, r = 0.57; word-of-mouth intention, r = 0.55) comprises differentiated experiential and communicative moderators that amplify or attenuate first-tier effects. The third tier (infrastructure quality, r = 0.51; environmental sustainability, r = 0.49; visa facilitation, r = 0.46) represents institutional and supply-side enabling conditions. Collectively, these findings confirm that repeat visitation in Tanzania

is a multi-causal, hierarchically structured behavioural outcome requiring concurrent investment across experiential, communicative, and institutional domains (MNRT, 2024; UNWTO, 2023).

Implications

The findings carry substantial theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study provides the first systematic, multi-determinant empirical evidence of repeat visitation drivers in Tanzania, extending the applicability of global tourism loyalty theories to a Sub-Saharan African context and addressing a critical gap in EAC destination scholarship. Practically, the results demonstrate the need for an integrated, evidence-ranked loyalty strategy. The pronounced pre-post safety perception gap, the critically low infrastructure composite score, and the limited visibility of environmental sustainability credentials each represent high-leverage intervention points whose neglect will continue to suppress Tanzania's repeat visitor conversion rate and undermine its ambitious tourism revenue targets under the National Tourism Master Plan 2025–2035.

Conclusion

This study identified and ranked ten statistically significant determinants of repeat visitation among international tourists in Tanzania through a systematic meta-analysis of 527 documents and a structured survey of 384 respondents. Destination satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor ($r = 0.72$), followed by perceived value for money ($r = 0.68$), service quality ($r = 0.65$), safety and security perceptions ($r = 0.61$), cultural authenticity ($r = 0.58$), tour operator professionalism ($r = 0.57$), word-of-mouth intention ($r = 0.55$), infrastructure quality ($r = 0.51$), environmental sustainability ($r = 0.49$), and visa facilitation ($r = 0.46$), all significant at $p < .001$. The findings confirm that repeat visitation in Tanzania is not a single-cause phenomenon but a multi-layered, hierarchically structured behavioural outcome shaped by three interdependent determinant tiers, the integrated management of which is essential for converting Tanzania's world-class destination assets into durable tourist loyalty and sustainable revenue growth.

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