



Cultural capital, digital capital and stakeholder partnerships: a holy trinity for a sustainable cultural tourism trajectory

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Abstract

In many developing countries, the tourism sector is used as a possible panacea for economic growth and poverty alleviation. This approach however is guided by policies that exhibit chronic disconnections among stakeholders in the culture and tourism sectors of the economy. Digital capital in the form of common website should be a point of convergence for policy makers, host communities and tourists (cultural) to increase the Tourism Consumption Expenditure (TCE). The research is informed by the desire to consider cultural tourism as a niche that does not call for deployments of huge financial resources. The objectives of the study were to establish stakeholders' views on the existence of partnerships, to ascertain the benefits of digital capital in sustainable cultural tourism and to find out the challenges that stakeholders encounter in forging partnerships as well as employing digital capital in sustainable cultural tourism. Qualitative research was used and 15 interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the culture and tourism sector. The findings indicated that the country stood to benefit from interactions between digital capital and partnerships. The benefits to be realised were way off the mark due to lack of a common purpose to sell effectively the country's cultural assets. The triad of digital capital, cultural capital and partnerships was applauded by all the respondents. The task to initiate the adoption of digital capital for the benefit of the country was given to the government. The study recommends tourism and culture stakeholders and ICT technical partners be brought together to develop a common digital platform whose purpose is to market the cultural capital that is available in Zimbabwe. It is also recommended that partnerships and digital capital adoption be enforced by the government as it is the overall guardian of the national resources.

Keywords: Culture, digital capital, partnerships, tourism, tourism stakeholders

Introduction

Tourism and culture are vital resources for the socioeconomic upliftment of many countries especially rural areas. In developing countries, tourism is valued as a tool to promote economic development, and alleviate poverty amongst communities (Meyer & Meyer, 2015). Sharing the same sentiments are Vanderborg and Russo (2005) who say that culture is a fully-fledged economic sector that generates substantial intangible and tangible economic effects. Travelling to experience the cultural capital of a destination is gaining popularity among many as highlighted by Zadel and Bogdan (2013) who point out that 40% of the world's travel is to cultural tourism destinations. However, the development of cultural tourism is presenting so many distinct imbalances. According to Valcic and Domsic (2012), cultural tourism development has



two distinct sides, which includes dependence on local resources that are hardly reproducible. On the other hand, the authors also say that its governance is done by an industry which is both global and disjointed from cultural capital resources.

Cultural tourism helps the community in keeping traditional customs and products hence being sustainable (Pavlovic *et al.*, 2015). Sustainable cultural tourism is a vital generator of financial resources necessary in the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage of many communities. The importance of involving diverse stakeholders in tourism management cannot be underestimated. Attention is now increasingly being directed to the use of partnerships that bring together a range of interests (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). According to Buhalis (2003) there is need to design participatory processes using innovative techniques given the increasingly complex relationships among cultural tourism stakeholders. According to Chiabai *et al.* (2013), today's greatest challenges for destinations include the need for engagement of all stakeholders that are relevant and development of effective and efficient models at the same time providing solutions that reflect stakeholders' expectations and needs democratically. Despite partnerships among stakeholders being a key determinant of sustainable growth of the tourism industry, research in this area is still sparse.

Many of the destinations in developing countries face challenges in establishment of links with their customers, promotion of their resources, distribution of their products, and creation of partnerships with other industry players, especially in the high- and upper-digital access markets (Katsoni & Venetsanopoulou, 2013). According to Hojaghan and Esfangareh (2011), tourism is an information intensive sector and digital capital is a key driver for developing countries in organising and marketing their tourism products and services. Trading partnerships can be built among cultural tourism stakeholders through ICTs. Technology exploitation is very crucial in the tourism industry in order to achieve competitive advantage and the provision of economic benefits for the locals. This is achieved by the reduction of asymmetric distribution of political, economic and cultural capital (Katsoni & Venetsanopoulou, 2013:34). The importance of ICTs to the tourism industry have also been acknowledged by UNWTO (2015) when they say the competitiveness of destinations and the industry in general is enhanced by ICTs.

There is paucity of literature that addresses the contribution of digital capital to cultural tourism and the role of stakeholder partnerships to the latter. This paper therefore seeks to give an understanding of cultural capital, digital capital and the role of stakeholder partnerships in cultural tourism. The research also looks at the challenges to both formation of stakeholder partnerships in cultural tourism and the utilisation of digital capital.

Literature review

This section sets a foundation for the present study by critically reviewing literature related to cultural capital, stakeholder partnerships and digital capital in the following sub-sections.

Understanding cultural capital

Capital as a concept has been extended to the art and culture field in a bid to recognize the different features of art that define a particular community and other forms of cultural goods as capital resources. Bourdieu (1986) asserts that cultural capital captures the way in which such cultural resources contribute to production of further cultural services and goods. Sutherland and Burton (2011, cited in Roberts and Townsend, 2016) define cultural capital as the derived benefits of cultural goods, activities and participation, which have the ability to boost the identity and competence of a community, which has both material and symbolic value for those able to access them. Throsby (1999) says cultural capital refers to assets which embody, store or give rise to cultural value in addition to the economic value it may possess. Cultural capital exists in two forms, that is, tangible and intangible (Throsby, 1999; Roberts & Townsend, 2016). Cultural capital is tangible when it is part of public, economic and infrastructural capital (for example,



when it has a contribution to tourism) of an area in the form of the built heritage. On the other hand, intangible culture exists in the stories, traditions, practices and values shared by a community make up the intangible cultural capital. In addition, Valcic and Domsic (2012) relate to cultural capital as being embodied in buildings, artefacts, sights, songs amongst others which allows the transmission of a community's culture through space and time. As such, cherishing a community's cultural capital is an important component of understanding the past of a community so as to envisage the future. However in their research, Roberts and Townsend (2016) interpreted cultural capital as being created, and also produced which includes tourist trails, creative hubs and clusters, community arts, annual festivals, regional networks, music studios and conceptual spaces and the traditional crafts and archives. According to Tylus (2012 cited in Pavlovic *et al.*, 2015: 482), "...the role of culture in development should be treated as multi-layered: on the one hand as an intrinsic value, secondly as a real factor of regional development leading to increased attractiveness of regions for tourists, residents and investors, thirdly, as an active factor of social development based on knowledge, tolerance and creativity."

Cultural capital can be included into a community's economic development model through tourism that is, attracting tourists through cultural events, traditional arts and crafts and museums amongst others (Pavlovic *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, Brennan, Kumaran, Cantrell and Spranger (2005) aver that residents of a particular community can get a sense of identity from their local culture. This is crucial for the facilitation of mutual understanding, traditions and values which are all needed for identification of action plans to improve the community well-being. The well-being of a community can be improved because of the positive spill over effects resulting from the cultural activities as articulated by Roberts and Townsend (2016). The authors' also add that community confidence can come together and address specific issues and this is influenced by culture. Cultural heritage and customs of a community have a vital role in tourist product creation where tourists will also take part in the different activities. As such, a community with cultural capital can engage in cultural tourism. Cultural tourism involves two spectrums, that is, on the one hand are the cultural heritage objects, need for protection and their consumption. On the other hand, it involves motivations and experiences of tourists themselves (Pavlovic *et al.*, 2015). However, Throsby (1999) says that cultural capital may deteriorate over time hence the need for its maintenance and sustainability. Sustainable tourism therefore has to be adopted in order to safeguard cultural capital. This is supported by Ioan-Franc and Istoc (2007), who say that sustainable tourism optimises visitor satisfaction.

Role and benefits of stakeholder partnerships in sustainable cultural tourism

Generally, in the tourism industry, there are six categories of stakeholders, that is, local community, tourists, government, industry, educational institutions and special interest groups (Waligo *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, Chiabai *et al.* (2013) reiterate that cultural heritage is a demand-led activity having stakeholders who include tourists, citizens, locals, local infrastructure, information centres public services, central administrations and tourist agencies. In all tourism ventures, stakeholders need to work together despite their form. It is however important to note that within tourism practice and literature many terms are used to refer to inclusivity or participation, including alliances, coalitions, partnerships, forums, and task forces (Maiden, 2008; Fathimath, 2015). In this paper, the term partnership is used to refer to this form of collaboration or working together by various stakeholders.

According to Azzopardi (2011), the level of support provided by various stakeholders shapes the destinations' competitiveness. Therefore, successful development of cultural tourism depends on strategic collaboration among a wide spectrum of stakeholders. This is supported by Castells (2004) who says that in the new tourism environment, the most effective relationships rely on the creation of networks, alliances and partnerships among firms. When



stakeholders form partnerships, they share ideas, opinions, information and beliefs including strong bonds, relationships and loyalty (Pavlovic *et al.*, 2015).

Destination regions and communities rely on partnerships among businesses because working together improves policy coordination and related actions, and also promotes consideration of the environmental, social impacts and economic of tourism, with enhanced sustainable outcomes (Lane, 1994). According to Chiabai *et al.* (2013), in order to achieve sustainable management of cultural heritage, the stakeholder partnerships that take many forms and having different objectives need to be taken into account. The authors also add that cultural heritage stakeholders have a crucial role in sustainable management of the cultural heritage hence their involvement guarantees safeguarding of a community's culture sustainably. This is supported by Pavlovic *et al.*, (2015:483) who say that effective private and public sector partnerships contribute to sustainable development. Tourism stakeholders' collaboration is vital to cultural resources sustainability among others (Fathimath, 2015). Tourism planning, development and operation which is cross-sectional, integrative and involving all stakeholders is required in sustainable development (Maiden, 2008). This also applies to cultural tourism hence the need for stakeholder partnerships.

Many benefits are derived from forming partnerships amongst stakeholders. According to Shanker (2008), sharing information and networking leads to greater transparency and openness. In a research conducted by Pavlovic *et al.* (2015), they found that the various stakeholders are aware of the importance of having relationships and networks to improve their businesses. Bramwell and Lane (2000) say that a key reason for the growing interest in partnerships in tourism development is the belief that tourist destinations may be able to gain competitiveness by bringing together resources of several stakeholders. Chiabai *et al.* (2013) says developing stakeholder partnerships also helps in communication promotion between the various institutions which is deficient in many countries. Partnerships among stakeholders facilitate efficient use and resources sharing that creates value-adding and high quality experiences among the members (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2011). According to Fathimath (2015) members in a partnership enable each other to tackle challenges they face collectively thereby enhancing strength of their resources. According to Maiden (2008), stakeholder partnerships are desirable in order to secure a collaborative advantage which is the realisation of the objective that can be achieved by a single organisation. Collaboration among stakeholders from many fields with different interests gives better potential for holistic approaches in development of policies, which may lead to sustainability.

Challenges to the form and functionality of stakeholder partnerships in sustainable cultural tourism

Though the importance of stakeholder partnerships in sustainable cultural tourism cannot be understated, there are some challenges that hinder their success. According to Maiden (2008), partnerships in tourism are still in their infancy stage are due to the organisational, geographical and political constraints that the organisations face. According to Timothy (1999) partnerships challenge the vested interests and power of the often dominant organisations and businesses. Challenges often arise due to the fact that partnerships formation is usually influenced by power relations as to who will have the most influence in decisions hence some social groups may find it difficult to become members of a partnership. In a research on the role of stakeholder collaboration in sustainable tourism competitiveness in New Zealand, Fathimath (2015) found challenges arising from collaborative engagements being lack of clear communication and aversion to collaboration. Some stakeholders may even lack the technical knowledge, skills or even the confidence and self-expression ability. Some stakeholders may lose confidence in themselves due to the perceptions that prospective partners hold about one another.



In addition to the aforementioned challenges, Bramwell and Lane (2000:9) give the following as some of the challenges to successful partnerships in tourism. Though the authors was referring to tourism in general, the raised facts also apply to sustainable cultural tourism.

- A partnership may put in place simply as 'window dressing' to avoid dealing with real problems.
- There is a possibility of stifling healthy conflict.
- Resources required for successful collaborative efforts like time, leadership and administration may be limited.
- Some tourism players may not be willing to work with competitors who might be less powerful or unfamiliar.
- Less powerful stakeholders may be excluded collaborative processes or might not possess much influence.
- Those groups or individuals with more effective political skills can retain all the power at the detriment of the other members.
- Some key partners may be unwilling to work with others as they may decide to rely on benefits produced by others in the partnership.
- There is a possibility of coercion by some partners threatening to withdraw from the partnership as they drive their own interests.
- Accountability to various constituencies, may become blurred as the greater institutional complexity of collaboration can obscure who is accountable to whom and for what.
- Uncertainty about the future may be increased due to collaboration as policies developed by many stakeholders are more difficult to forecast than those developed by a central authority.

The above shows that challenges amongst stakeholder partnerships are inevitable. There is therefore need to come up with strategies to minimise these challenges and ensure maximum participation of everyone involved.

Digital capital

According to Roberts and Townsend (2016: 202), digital capital are the benefits and resources which communities can utilise from the internet infrastructure, online information, communication models and tools to digital literacy skills. Bughin and Manyika (2013) say that digital capital takes two forms, that is, the tangible and intangible assets. The tangible assets, for example, are the online purchasing platforms, servers, routers and the basic internet software among others. On the other hand, the intangible include among others, the patents and unique designs that takes into consideration the large numbers of users and improving their digital experience.

Adoption of ICTs by developing countries will help to facilitate the traditional tourism system to be slowly integrated with the digital economy (Shanker, 2008). In today's world, ICTs are being developed and adopted heavily across all sectors of the economy hence their use in the tourism industry is very crucial. However Nawa and Sirayi (2014) are of the view that digital technology is not a universal remedy to the development and reconstruction of communities hence it should be treated with caution for the fear that it does the opposite of what it is intended to do. Digital tools are becoming an increasingly important component of all originative practices like simple research to online 'real-time' collaborations. According to Valcic and Domsic (2012) there is



need to establish a technological link among heritage and a sustainable tourism economy that is based on cultural richness of communities.

Role and benefits of digital capital in sustainable cultural tourism

As Bughin and Manyika (2013) reiterate, building strong capabilities in digital capital in organisations is necessitated by the need to grow and create competitive advantage. This can also apply to the cultural tourism sector as highlighted by Roberts and Townsend (2016) who say that the internet enables the local players in cultural tourism to connect with other providers and markets which becomes a self-promotion tool and inspiration source and as such, the local communities can maintain more networks still living in their area through technologies like websites and emails. In cultural tourism, Valcic and Domsic (2012) say that ICTs and use of the internet can broker the reconciliation of tourism and heritage, therefore supporting empowerment of local stakeholders and innovative encounters among hosts and guests. The authors also add that one of the greatest challenges for cultural tourism enhancement to find common ground on the different views of how tourism organisations can present their cultural capital appealing to the interests of various audiences. There is therefore need for generation of value from local information and knowledge including availing it to consumers around the world. This is enabled and made possible by the exploitation of digital capital. According to Go, Lee and Russo (2003), by utilising ICT infrastructure, communities can become more strategic and entrepreneurial in managing their culture. This fulfils one of the basic prerequisites for sustainable tourism which is to allow communities and individuals the opportunity to be inclusion and connectedness.

According to Shanker (2008) digital capital has provided new tools and enabled new distribution channels thereby creating a new business environment. In the tourism industry, networking with other players, product and service distribution and information provision to consumers facilitates business transactions. Digital capital is able to bring in many ancient historical monuments, museums, galleries, sites and theatres into the mainstream tourism. However it is the intervention of the government and its cultural policies that is essential to make ICT application in cultural tourism meaningful (Shanker, 2008). ICT s can therefore open up new avenues for cultural tourism policies through the combination of development and preservation of resources. Throsby (1999) is of the view that ICTs have the ability to improve stakeholders' quality by provision of new tools for enhanced access to knowledge management, information and sharing. ICTs drive the innovation process by reduction in distance and time constraints in interinstitutional and interpersonal contacts through minimising the complexity of information acquiring and exchange. According to Katsoni and Venetsanopoulo (2013), partnerships and networks can be created and likely be made better by the introduction of new ICTs and information. The same applies to partnerships in cultural tourism also. Chiabai *et al.* (2013) support this by saying that ICTs help in promoting active participation of all stakeholders in management of cultural capital. In addition, it may be used in promotion and safeguarding of cultural heritage and local identities.

For the success of cultural tourism, collaborative stakeholder involvement through utilising ICTs is essential. Valcic and Domsic (2012) are of the view innovation in heritage destination management relies on the establishment of close linkages among the cultural heritage and ICTs. As such the authors says a combined web page by stakeholders segmentation of the market therefore giving prospective customers relevant information that is contextualised and supplemented by facts, stories, history and related sites and objects . In addition, websites have a crucial role in creation of sustainable cultural tourism as it also enables virtual tourism and displaying quality information about a particular cultural site. Therefore, joining forces with other stakeholders in a common web page is able to reduce costs and respond better to customer needs. Chiabai *et al.* (2013) in their research sought to develop an e-participation website for an Italian city in which stakeholders are at the centre of the decision making process. The study



shows that the common website though it is there, it is still to be utilised as an effective tool in stakeholder participation processes. On the other hand, Felton *et al.* (2010) in their research found that partnerships operate across geographical boundaries mostly through ICTs. The study also argues that supporting and sustaining creative industries' networks in outer suburban locations may require different strategies than those applied to inner city locations.

Challenges to digital capital adoption and usage in tourism

The adoption and usage of digital capital in the tourism industry in many developing countries is marred by a number of challenges. Karanasios and Burgess (2008) say adoption and usage of ICTs in small to medium enterprises which make up the majority of tourism businesses around the world is limited by factors that include inadequate and unreliable telecommunications infrastructure, high costs involved and lack of relevant skills and knowledge of ICT. The authors allege that many of these challenges are experienced by developing countries. In their research, Roberts and Townsend (2016) found the challenges to use of digital capital as including inability to upload and download data intensive files like video clips and images. Other challenges include limited access to online resources, lack of capacity to use email reliably, poor or unavailable broadband internet service. On the other hand, a research was carried out by Nkosana *et al.*, (2016) on the challenges of ICT adoption and utilisation in small restaurants in Kwa Zulu Natal. The results of the research centred mostly on high costs associated, lack of ICT skills among staff, owner's lack of familiarity with ICTs and the inability of imported software packages to suit local needs.

Another research was done on factors affecting the adoption of ICT in the hospitality industry in Imo state, Nigeria by Nwakanma *et al.*(2014). Findings from the research revealed that the rate of adoption and usage of ICT infrastructure by hotels in this state adopt is low and it is mostly affected by the scope of activities the organisation is engaged in. Shanker (2008) says that many times, information available on the internet is highly fragmented and requires intelligent navigation which may be time consuming. The author suggests that there is need to develop search engines which are specific to tourism. Katsoni and Venetsanopoulo (2013) assert that awareness on the functions of the internet, resources and expertise necessary to take advantage of using it may be lacking. The authors also talk of digital divide as a challenge which can lead to social and digital exclusion if communities and organisations are not able to participate fully in the society of network and determine their own destiny. The same sentiments are shared by Hojaghan and Esfangareh (2011) who say the digital divide is very rampant in least developed countries since access to ICTs is very difficult in these countries. Shanker (2008) says that in cultural tourism, the locals who are the custodians of their cultures are yet to understand the potential of ICT applications for cultural heritage preservation. The literature review has given an understanding of the two concepts that is cultural capital and digital capital and their roles in tourism. Stakeholder partnerships in cultural tourism have also been looked at including how they can be enhanced by adoption of digital capital by stakeholders. The next section looks at the methodology utilised for the study.

Research approach and methodology

In order to collect data about intersections between digital capital, cultural capital and stakeholder partnerships in sustainable cultural tourism, qualitative research was carried out at Great Zimbabwe National Monument (GZNM). Semi-structured interviews were done with 15 study participants which included local residents, tourists and representatives of the culture and tourism sectors. The culture and tourism sectors were limited and/ or restricted to the Department of National Museums and Monuments and Zimbabwe Tourism Authority respectively.



Table 1: Sample characteristics

Category		Number of participants	
Gender			
	Male		13
	Female		2
Age			
	Up to 20	0	21-30
		3	
	31-40		9
	41-50		3
	51-60		0
	+60		0
Position		Code	
	Culture and Arts Organisation CA		3
	Local Residents	LR	7
	Tourists	T	3
	Policy Makers in Tourism Sector	PM	2

Convenience sampling was used to select the study participants. The interviews were carried out over a period of two days in July 2018. The sample size was based on data saturation. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Saturation is also based on information power, which depends on the study aim. The research therefore chose to narrow the aim of the study to increase information power (Malterud *et al.*, 2015). Owing to the poverty of time on the part of the research subjects, no prior arrangements were made to conduct the interviews. Only those respondents who were available and willing to take part in the study were considered.

The data collected was based on five dimensions. The questions posed to the study subjects were meant to get their views on the existence of partnerships, perceived benefits of partnerships, challenges affecting the substance and form of partnerships, the cultural capital that exists in the country, and the essence of digital capital in the tourism sector.

Table 2: Questions for each dimension

Dimensions	Questions
Existence of partnerships	1. Are you involved in any partnerships with other stakeholders in the culture and tourism sectors? 2. What kind of support do you get from other stakeholders? 3. Is the support that you get sufficient for your requirements?
Perceived benefits of partnerships	4. Are there any stakeholder meetings in which you take part? 5. How do stakeholder partnerships benefit the tourism sector? 6. In your view, do partnerships impact the livelihoods of local communities?
Challenges affecting partnerships	7. What sort of challenges do see as impeding stakeholder partnerships from achieving envisaged goals of the tourism sector? 8. What are some of the difficulties that you encounter in your quest to fully play a part in partnerships?
Cultural capital	9. What cultural products do you showcase/ are showcased? 10. In what ways do you think the products are of benefit to Zimbabwe? 11. What problems do you encounter as key stakeholders in the culture and tourism sector? 12. What ways are used to make people aware of the existence of the cultural products that are showcased?
The essence of digital capital	13. Is there a digital platform (in the form of websites and mobile applications) where cultural products are showcased? 14. Is there a common website that is jointly administered by stakeholders in the culture and tourism sectors? 14. What do you consider to be benefits of having digital platforms to reach out to various stakeholders in the culture and tourism sector? 15. Who in your view should take the initiative of having such digital platforms in place?



Findings

Views on the existence of partnerships in the culture and tourism sector

A number of issues relating to partnerships were established from interviews. There was a general admission pertaining to the existence of partnerships in the culture and tourism sectors of the economy. There were however divergent pronouncements on the form and structure of the partnerships, a scenario that has a likelihood of lowering the Tourism Consumption Expenditure (TCE):

The National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) work hand in hand with ZTA, EMA and local communities. A bit of marketing is done in collaboration with ZTA. We also work hand in hand with tour operators. We have a specific program for primary schools to visit museums in their localities... (CA1)

Local authorities collaborate with local communities on issues that pertain to development. Local communities are allowed by NMMZ to operate in areas that are controlled by the latter. NMMZ does not however engage meaningfully with local communities. The department actually extends a favour to local communities by allowing them to operate in areas that are managed by the department... (CA3)

Maybe they collaborate with other organisations but I doubt it. At times I see people from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority but I don't know what they will be doing.... (CA2)

We work closely with NMMZ. I am not sure of whether ZTA and ZimParks are involved in any way. We get support from NMMZ by being allowed to operate from within the Great Zimbabwe National Monuments... (LR6)

The relationships between stakeholders are not clearly defined. Stakeholder meetings are erratic and this compromises the capitalisation of the cultural and digital capital that exists in the country. It is in such meetings that stakeholders exchange views about how the sector should be made to exponentially grow:

If there is anything that they want from us, they approach us... (CA2)

I am not sure whether any meetings are held between ZTA, ZimParks, local communities, Museums and local authorities. There was a time when the local authority got involved through the traditional chiefs who ordered the closure of a tunnel at the hill complex when tourists had disappeared in it... (CA3)

We get in touch with other stakeholders to check whether they have anything they want included in our marketing packages... (PM1)

Perceived benefits of partnerships

There are benefits that are realised from stakeholder partnerships. The study participants from different sectors acknowledged that all stakeholders stand to benefit from partnerships:

*When tourists visit the **Karanga** village, they leave a token of appreciation....* (CA1)

If stakeholders forge meaningful partnerships, there is likely to be meaningful development in local communities in terms of infrastructure. The products will get to be known and tourists will be better informed about what to expect at the Great Zimbabwe National Monument. The local community benefits immensely from the culture centre which was established with them in mind.



The young people will get employed in the culture and tourism sector as well and in the same vein livelihoods are improved... (CA3)

When we visit this place, we spent a lot of money. The money definitely finds its way to both the government and the local people. We pay a lot of money to enter this place and rarely do we leave without purchasing art pieces that are sold by the local people... (T2)

Challenges affecting the smooth functioning of partnerships

Three issues were highlighted by the interviewees. Firstly, local residents indicated that they encountered difficulties in finding markets for their products. They did not know who exactly to approach in order to have their issues attended to. They also indicated that sales were very low. This was attributable to foreign tourists being limited to buying small pieces of art owing to restrictions of the weight of baggage allowed at the airport.

The culture and arts sector was concerned about the lack of involvement of the young people in cultural tourism. There was likelihood that the elderly who are involved in the production of cultural products would not pass their expertise to their children. There were also disparities between what the people at the *Karanga* village portray when at the Great Zimbabwe National Monuments and when they are at their homes:

Those at the Karanga village only impersonate the lives of those who were staying at the monument centuries ago. They do not teach their children to do the same. They regard the Karanga village as their place of work. It becomes difficult to pass on the culture to the next generations. It is difficult to inculcate in them a sense of ownership of the culture... (CA3)

There was lack of cohesion among stakeholders in terms of how things ought to be done. Each stakeholder group wants to be more superior to the others. This results in the negation of the overall goal of promoting tourism since the sector cannot fully realise the envisaged benefits in the absence of synergies. Tourists were of the view that certain issues about the site were not properly explained to the visitors:

Why should we be made to pay an extra amount of money for a tour guide? It's better to incorporate that fee in the gate charge and it should be my choice to have a tour guide or not... (T3)

Cultural capital

There is an array of cultural capital that exists in Zimbabwe in general and at the Great Zimbabwe National Monuments. There was convergence among stakeholders on the kinds of products that are showcased at Great Zimbabwe. The products and services that are found include crafts, traditional dances, traditional dishes, the hill complex, the culture village which is a model of what used to be centuries ago. Visitors are also able to see a 'genuine' traditional healer.

The essence of digital capital in the culture and tourism economy

There are digital platforms in the mould of websites which are individually administered by various stakeholders. NMMZ has its own website and so do others like ZimParks and ZTA:

We only know that there are websites used to showcase our products. We learnt of this through the Culture Fund..... Whether it is true or not, we do not know... (LR2)

NMMZ has a website. I am not aware of a common website for all stakeholders to showcase their products. In terms of whether ZTA has a website, I am not clear.... (CA1)

It was established that digital platforms were going to be helpful to the local and national tourism economies if there were properly defined relationships and roles among stakeholders. The



partnerships in existence were haphazard. Websites were going to help stakeholders particularly the local communities whose livelihoods depended on the Great Zimbabwe National Monuments. There were also divergent views on the need to have a common website. There were respondents who felt that the promotion of cultural products on the common website was likely to dissuade prospective visitors from visiting the monument. The stakeholders' different views about how to fully employ digital capital is likely to result in the slow growth of tourism sector:

A website is good but I have serious reservations about it. If you post your products on the website, people would not come to the monument. They will see the products on the virtual site. We find it prudent to use documents and pamphlets that are mainly meant for the foreign visitors... (CA2)

The common view was that the Government of Zimbabwe was duty bound to take the initiative to have in place a common digital platform for the country to tell the world about its cultural capital. The forerunner to this was supposed to be a formulation of policies that would compel stakeholders to partner and sell their products as a single entity:

It is possible to have a common website. What is lacking is the will power to do so. Remember we are answerable to different line ministries and our objectives as individual organisations are different. If companies in the diamond sector were forced to be one, I don't see anything that can stop the government from doing the same in the tourism sector; after all we are talking of a website... (CA1)

Conclusions and recommendations

Partnerships in the culture and tourism sector should be encouraged. It is important for the stakeholders concerned to be made aware of the benefits that accrue to individual organisations and the country if there are both policy driven and voluntary partnerships. The current situation is characterised by stakeholders interacting with one another on an adhoc basis. This makes it difficult to realise the full potential of the tourism industry. Cultural capital exists in abundance in Zimbabwe but it remains a pipe dream to realise its worthiness if there are no reliable and functional partnerships. Ultimately, the digital capital that is available cannot be fully utilised if there is no common purpose among stakeholders who should partner for the good of the country's tourism sector. There is need to bring together technical partners and local tourism stakeholders to come up with internet sites and portals that can aggregate services and information that is related to various cultures of a country. This joint-venturing process is highlighted by Valcic and Domsic (2012) as requiring active support by the local, regional and national governments. Developing countries also need to fight the digital divide that exists in many of them and be part of the new information society. It is the duty of tourism leaders and policy makers to convince stakeholders to work together on the move towards innovative strategies for the exploitation of cultural capital.

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