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## Festivals and tourism development: Practice from Tanzania and Zimbabwe

**Ladislau Batinoluho and Vitalis Basera**

### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examines the impact of festivals in developing tourism in Zimbabwe and Tanzania borrowing experience from the two countries and other countries. The significance of festivals in development of tourism is relentless. The study identified major festivals and their importance. Festivals are gradually turning out to be arenas of discussions aiding people to prompt their understandings on broader social, political and cultural issues. Festivals are part of the most significant products of tourism, nonetheless also crucial component of humanity.

**Methodology:** This study is descriptive by design and it synthesises published journal articles, books, magazines and newspapers. Correspondingly, the research employed Google scholar to search for the keywords to gain access to different information on the subject. The study also applied content analysis to evaluate the idea of festivals in relation to tourism.

**Results:** The study reveals that festivals have enormous contribution in the growth and development of tourism sector. Festivals draw tourists, where in turn tourists spend money, which enhances the local economy equally on and off the festival place. On-place spending comprises parking fees for those with vehicles, food (game meat), beverage, soft drinks, and shopping and souvenir sales. Festivals in the tourism sector have ability to build relationship especially in the festival planning stage, during and after. The study further found that festivals form an opportunity to a group to induce their preference and belief.

**Implications:** Crucial investigation of the impact of festivals in tourism development presented that festivals are one of the great vital tourism products, but also essential ingredient of society. This research shows that festivals have important contribution in growth of tourism. This study highlights the potentials of festivals in diversifying tourism products.

**Limitations:** The paper is based only on literature review to arrive at conclusion and the literature is relatively old. Survey method can be used for broader appreciation of festivals in the countries.

**Keywords:** Festivals, events, culture, contemporary tourism, and local communities.

### 1. Introduction

Festival is defined as an occasion usually celebrated by a society and focusing on some features of that particular society (Picard & Robinson, 2006) <sup>[25]</sup>. According to Skoultos (2014), the word “festival” means celebration. Since time in memorial, each community has its dates and periods exclusively meant for festivals, whereby in those dates, certain activities occur, usually based on local traditions and other ways of life. Such activities were the origin of festivals, which are now today’s festivals.

The best festivals in the world are Cartagena International Music Festival, Colombia; CTM Festival, Berlin, Germany; Hay Cartagena, Colombia (CN Traveller, 2021) <sup>[8]</sup>. Main festivals in Tanzania include Uhuru Freedom Torch races, Independence Day, Union Day, Urithi Festivals, and in Zimbabwe include Mbende Jerusarema, Mbira Dance, Harare International Festival of Arts and Harare International Carnival. The two countries are member states of ARIPO and all the festivals patented under intellectual and property rights are shown in Table 1. In Encyclopaedia Britannica (1963-73) Linwood Fredericksen defined festivals as a period of time set aside for commemorating a religious, agricultural, political, social-cultural event that gives cohesiveness and meaning to an individual. This article, explains festivals as society occasions which include people of diverse walks of life to attain a certain objective. It is an occasion normally celebrated by a community in commemorating or rejoicing for a reason. Festivals aid to achieve definite communal objectives, particularly in respect to tributes. Festivals presents a sense of fitting to a social, religious, or physical groups, adding to group cohesion. In Zimbabwe and Tanzania festivals usually offer showbiz, which is mainly significant to communities followed by various entertainments.

Festivals that emphasis on ethnic or cultural themes also pursue to apprise members in the community of their

backgrounds; the participation of elders telling stories and experience affords ways for harmony between people.

**Table 1:** Cultural festivals and events in ARIPO member states

Country	Zimbabwe	Tanzania
Festivals/ Events	1. Bira	1. Sauti Za Busara Music Festival
	2. Chimanimani Arts Festival	2. Dr Tulia Traditional Dances Festival
	3. The Mbende Jerusarema	3. The Nyamachoma Festival
	4. Harare International Festival of Arts (HIFA)	4. Zanzibar International Film Festival
	5. Midlands Arts and Cultural Festival (MACfest)	5. SinemaZetu International Film Festival
	6. Zimbabwe Culture Week	6. Urithi Festival
	7. Zimbabwe International Bookfair (ZIBF)	7. Bagamoyo Festival of Arts and Culture
	8. Mbira Dance	
	9. Zimbabwe International Carnival/ Harare International Carnival	
	10. Annual Chibuku Neshamwari Festival	
	11. Mukwerera	
	12. Intwasa Arts Festival	
	13. Zimbabwe	
	14. International Film Festival (ZIFF)	
	15. Kurova Guva Ceremony	

Source: (ARIPO, 2019) <sup>[1]</sup>.

The notion of festivals is fundamentally extensive, making it problematic to explain. Celebrations and or local culture are usually included in Festivals. Categorising of festivals is hard due to intricacy of meaning, even though there are some fundamental categories according to objective and theme, such as area-based festivals, film festivals, music festivals, traditional festivals, art festivals, academic festivals, political festivals, barbeque festivals, religious festivals, and agricultural festivals

Recently, festivals are gradually developing as majority of nations globally endeavour to maximize their latent in developing tourism sector and other socioeconomic impacts. Festivals comprise a study area where quite a lot of scholars from different technical backgrounds work together. A few of these fields are: economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, tourism, politics and religion.

According to Bernd (2000) <sup>[5]</sup>, Tanzania is Africa’s “cultural melting pot” as the four major ethnolinguistics African Language Families occur. These are the Bantu, Afro-Asiatic Nilo-Saharan, and the Khoisan “click” language. Bantu Language and the Khoisan “click” click language are the two major languages also spoken in Zimbabwe. Historically there is a close cultural link between Zimbabwe and Tanzania and it is believed the population descended from same origin (Beach, 1998) <sup>[3]</sup>. Tanzania has a population of more than 54.2 million people and consists of more than 128 ethnic groups (NBS, 2012) <sup>[24]</sup>. Zimbabwe has a population of around 13.6 million people and comprise of more than 17 ethnic groups which are from two main ethnic groups of Shona and Ndebele (ZIMSTATS, 2017). Each ethnic group has its own customs, language and cultural features linked with its religious, historical and geographical backgrounds. Intrinsically, both countries are rich in both intangible and tangible cultural heritage that can be used to help the country economically and socially. The countries’ cultural and natural heritages are vital and inimitable assets and a basis for festivals. Conserving and utilising these resources is essential in building community and national identity and pride, while increasing the tourism product and fascinate tourists to appreciate this captivating heritage. Each

community, irrespective of its scope has a history of which it can be gratified. An expedition into the history of any society can be taken to life by performance of a heritage festival. There is a necessity to examine the impact of festivals in order to recommend to the stakeholders and mainly governments on the need for supporting the existing festivals in the countries, which improve community and national pride, and identity, generating tourism magnets, permitting young age group to get an understanding of local culture, history and giving senior generation a chance to renew ties with the history. Eventually, these practices bring about community self-importance; create a robust cultural possessions and country pride.

Festivals have inordinate effects on the development of hospitality and tourism to the destination (Getz, 1997) <sup>[13, 14]</sup>. Nowadays festivals contribute meaningfully to the economic and cultural progression of many nations worldwide. The festival organisers are now using the cultural and historical themes to come up with the annual events to attract tourists and make cultural image in the host cities by organising festivals in the community locations. The necessity for festivals is not precisely intended to address the wants for any single specific group. The holding of festivals is developed because of the economic and tourism opportunities further to cultural and social paybacks (Blesic, Pivac, Dordevic, Stamenkovic, & Janicevic, 2014) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Festivals have the likelihood to produce huge volume of tourism when they accommodate tourists from other source zones as well as the latent for sponsorship or grants, either by indirect or direct drive. In other countries, governments promote and support festivals as part of their strategies for tourism growth. For example, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania in collaboration with tourism stakeholders provided financial support to the Urithi Festivals, which were celebrated in four locations countrywide. During the Urithi Festivals, the major beneficiaries included travel and tour operators, accommodation facilities, restaurants, food vendors, recreational centers, and shops. In Zimbabwe the National Conventions Bureau is responsible for assisting in

organizing festivals that are of national status throughout the country (ZTA, 2021). The festivals are a key pull factor for attracting tourists and creating the national image and identity. Leveraging tourism potential in a geographical location, utilization of tourism products is essential.

Festivals and culture are interrelated, and many scholars tend to embrace culture in the definition of festival. It is acknowledged by Getz (2005) <sup>[15, 16]</sup> that “A Festival is a cultural occasion consisting of a series of performances of works in the fine arts, often devoted to a single artist or field”. Globalization and social changes have been proposed as the key drivers for the rapid growth of festivals in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The changes comprised economic, political, and social, changes emphasised the need for replacement and redefinition of social identity to the cultural and social world map (Azevedo, 2016; Waterman, 1998) <sup>[2]</sup>.

Festivals are learning platforms; depending on a festival's subject, it's assured to be instructional and visitors are guaranteed to learn from it, which enhances sense of belonging and nationalism in the protection and conservation of the country's natural and cultural assets (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2014) <sup>[20]</sup>. ARIPO (2019) <sup>[1]</sup>, noted that culture, norms and traditions constitute festivals in various contexts. Each aspect celebrated during a festival despite of its type encompasses a component of the culture in a given society of an area. Thus, cultural effect of festivals on promoting tourism in such a community is significant as it provides a cultural involvement. Festivals can prime to a revitalization and conservation of native culture. For example traditional doctors can be reinforced during festivals. Besides, the introduction of new ideas primes to the growth of the cultural projections of festivals' attendees. Consequently, festivals can be done as a means for social and cultural development by communities.

## 2. Methodology

This study adopted literature review methodology, whereby published articles, books, journals, magazines and newspapers. Google scholar search engine was used searching keywords to get information on the festivals. The role of festivals in Zimbabwe and Tanzania tourism development was examined borrowing experience from other countries. To assess the concept and details of festivals in relation to tourism content analysis was employed.

Content analysis technique is a common data analysis technique in the social sciences (Berg, 2009) <sup>[4]</sup>. Moreover, the researchers found that this method demands a detailed, careful, interpretation and systematic assessment of a particular literature with the purpose of identifying themes, patterns, meanings and biases. The method recognized the meaning of the content and maintained its qualitative textual manner (Silverman, 2006; Elo and Kyngas, 2007) <sup>[26, 44]</sup>. Content analysis was used because it is systematically flexible and offers a replicable way if carried out correctly (Duriau, Reger and Pfarrer, 2007) <sup>[10]</sup>. Elo and Kyngas (2007) <sup>[11]</sup>, stated that this method can be used as deductive or inductive research approach and that different analysis can be performed through quantitative and qualitative approaches during longitudinal research designs.

In tourism researches, many researchers have used this method. The analysis was carried out to contextualize

explanations of the synthesised literature to give valid, reliable, dependable and trustworthy findings.

## 3. Findings and discussion

### 3.1 Festivals in other countries

Festivals have important role to play in economies of many countries. The International Festival and Events Association (2014), suggests that before COVID-19 outbreak, globally there were over 4.5 million festivals taking place per year. A country that cuddles the positive effects of festivals is the United Kingdom, whereby it was estimated that before COVID-19 outbreak it used to hold 200 top festivals and 670 events contributing about £450 million per annum to the economy. The money was generated from the sale of tickets, transport costs, fares and accommodation costs. Skoultos (2014) reported that music festivals were among the few sectors that were not affected by the worldwide financial crisis which hit the world in 2008, because the arts and music industry had made more money from concerts than from record sales. Conversely, although COVID-19 pandemic is still unfolding, there are some indications that the music industry and artists have made significant money through online streaming on social media, particularly on youtube, twitter, instagram, whatsapp, facebook, and so forth. This proves that the festivals and events if explored properly may become a tool for cushioning the economies during unforeseen situations such as pandemics and other natural disasters.

In 2012, in Adelaide-Australia festivals' attendees reached 2.82 million and 590,000 tickets were sold to both local people and visitors. The event supported more than 300,000 overnight vacations to the area. Expenditures of the both local people and visitors at that festival were estimated to be over 58 million AUD (besides festival tickets); leave alone the earnings for the area which was about 62.9 million AUD. Furthermore, execution of the top ten festivals of the area contributed for 790 permanent jobs in same year (Skoultos, 2014).

Increasingly, a number of countries embrace the importance of festivals in attracting tourists. For instance, Skoultos (2014), found that 44% of the respondents in Europe acknowledged that they favor to go to festivals during vacations and holidays. The same study, established that 60% of the attendees booked their festival tickets, transportation and accommodation separately. It was also revealed that the participants in the study spent, on average, £578 per festival attendance in another country and £206 per festival attendance in home country. Another example was study by Burger and Labuschagne (2016) <sup>[7]</sup> at Vryfees Arts Festival in South Africa which studied traits of festival goers from the worldwide. It was found that 40% of respondents in the survey acknowledged that they had previously attended a festival in another country and 39% of them above one festival. The study further revealed 75% of the respondents acknowledged that they desire to embrace festival attendance in their holiday, while 60% desire to extend their vacation in order to get to see the surrounding area.

### 3.2 Festivals in Tanzania

#### 3.2.1 Tulia Traditional Dances Festival

The Tulia Traditional Dances Festival program holds yearly traditional dances festivals in separate places in Tanzania. The initial traditional dances festival was successfully held

in Mbeya Region in Tukuyu town. The Festival drew ten groups of traditional dances accordingly, Maghosi, Ing'oma, Ipenenga, Samba, Kimwenge, Nkyesyo, Ndingala, Kibhota, Kapote and Kitumbwike.

The ten dances are usually practiced in Rungwe District Council, Busokelo Council and Kyela District Council. 62 groups participated and 27 groups emerged winners. The Tulia Traditional Dances Festival had 1,100 participants attracted about 1,000 visitors from outside Mbeya Region as well as members of parliament, ambassadors, ministers and other government officials. The Festival pulled about 23,000 attendees in total. This being the first time for such an event to be organised, it is considered that was a huge success in that way nurturing traditions and culture.

### 3.2.2 Sauti za Busara Music Festival - Zanzibar

Sauti za Busara festival takes place in Stone town of Zanzibar, it include a rich variety of African music from the region with more than four hundred musicians participating over five days. In 2014 the festival commemorated its 11<sup>th</sup> edition, bringing together different artists and audiences, building awareness for East African music. The event is more than a music festival: it aid to the development and professionalization of the arts sector in the region; affords learning, exchange and employment opportunities, and publicises Tanzania in specific Zanzibar as a top destination for cultural tourism. Sauti za Busara festival ([www.busaramusic.org](http://www.busaramusic.org)) intends to:

- i). Increasing the calendar of events to intensify accessibility and visibility for local culture and music;
- ii). Increasing outreach action to aggressively realise and foster new talents, and assist them to get new markets;
- iii). Curating and creating content, to promote African music on cyberspace and other media;
- iv). Professionalising the regional music business through improved opportunities for capacity building and training;
- v). Strengthening collaborations with organisations in East Africa and the South and North;
- vi). to share information, join efforts and develop capacities through skills exchange
- vii). Expanding income streams that encourage sustainability in the accomplishment of its mission.

### 3.2.3 Festival of the Dhow Countries - Zanzibar

East Africa's major cultural event, it is held in Zanzibar along the waterfront of Stone Town. The festival celebrates the exclusive cultural heritage of the African continent and the Indian Ocean region and their diaspora. It is held yearly in the first half of July. It presents an international film and video competition, theatre, music, performing arts, conferences, workshops, seminars and other related cultural and arts programmes.

### 3.2.4 MwakaKogwa Festival - Zanzibar

It is a traditional festival that is held in July or August to celebrate the local New Year. It is mostly practiced in the Southern Unguja, mainly in Makunduchi. Originated from Persia and brought in Tanzania by early immigrants. Mwaka Kogwa is commemorated by dances, sacrifices and the real field fighting. It attracts tourists from whole of East Africa and also from abroad.

### 3.2.5 Haydom Cultural Tourism Festival

This is a yearly festival that takes place in Hydom, Manyara Region in the month of September. The Four Corners Cultural Festival (4CCF) in association with Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) organises it. This international cultural tourism festival is meant at preserving and sustaining four African culture and languages, which are on edge of extinction in the face of increasing modernity.

### 3.2.6 Urithi Festival

Urithi Festival is a national event that purposes to bring together people in different walks of life to cherish and celebrate the country's diversified and rich natural heritage. In Tanzania, there are Nilo-Saharan, Bantu, Afro-Asiatic and the Khoisan language spoken by Hadza hunter gatherers. Tanzania consists of more than 128 ethnic groups with 54.2 million population. Each Tanzanian ethnic group has its own language, cultural and customs characteristics related with its religious, historical and geographical backgrounds. As such, Tanzania is rich in both intangible and tangible cultural heritage that can be used to help the country economically and socially. The country's cultural and natural heritages are irreplaceable and important assets. Utilising and preserving these resources is important in creating community and national pride, and identity while increasing the tourism product supply and pull tourists to experience this captivating heritage.

Every community in the country, irrespective of its size has a past of which it can be proud. An expedition into the past of any community can be brought to life by holding a heritage celebration. There is a necessity for an event or festival in a country, which will improve community and national pride and identity, generating tourism attraction, allowing new generation to get an understanding of local culture and history and older generation a chance to renew ties with the past. Eventually, these practices will bring community and national pride and produce a strong cultural assets.

By being a national festival event, clearly, Urithi Festival distinguishes itself from any other cultural heritage festival events in Tanzania and the world. This is due to the fact that all other cultural heritage festival events focus on community, city or single ethnic group and are conducted for a few days. On the contrary, Urithi Festival focuses on celebrating the cultural heritage of the entire nation and the festival is conducted for an entire month. It is the big event and through time may become more famous than the Brazilian carnival festival that is held between the Friday afternoon before Ash Wednesday and Ash Wednesday at noon, which marks the beginning of Lent, the forty-day period before Easter.

The main objective of Urithi Festival is to cherish and celebrate Tanzania's diversified and rich cultural heritage and widen the country's tourism products. Precisely, Urithi Festival aims to;

- i). Encourage national pride, identity, unity, patriotism, and popularize the national symbols;
- ii). Celebrate and promote Tanzania's diversified and rich heritage;
- iii). Encourage Tanzanians to preserve, recognize and value their traditions, cultural value and norms for the present and future generations;
- iv). Encourage development of cultural heritage assets to become touristic products in order to expand the tourism assets;

- v). Promote cultures of diverse ethnic groups in the country and in diaspora.

The festival targets all people living in Tanzania and beyond. Attendees at the 2018 Urithi Festivals in Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Zanzibar and Karatu in Tanzania, used up an average of TSh 30,000 (US \$ 15) at the festival place.

### 3.3 Festivals in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe the festivals can be categorised as National Festivals, Regional Festivals, Traditional Festivals and Tourist Festivals.

#### 3.3.1 National festivals

The national festivals attract participants from all corners of the country and beyond the borders. They are held in the capital city Harare or the second capital city Bulawayo. The nation festivals are Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF), Harare International Carnival/ Zimbabwe International Carnival, International Film Festival (ZIFF) and Harare International Festival of Arts HIFA. The national festivals cover the spectrum of performing arts, fine arts and writers attracting local, regional and international artists. The concept of national festivals was initiated back in 1990s with launch of HIFA. HIFA is longest festival which last for six days in Zimbabwe around midyear with performances of jazz, Afrobeat, soul, opera, funk, classical music, dance and theatre.

International Film Festival (ZIFF) is intended to link Africans in and beyond the continent. It provides Africans with common ground that binds them together as people over the centuries in film (cinema). Harare International Carnival is a festival which involves the whole nation across social, political and cultural divide celebrating diversity, building relations amongst the people and furthering relations with countries friends. The festival is set as a platform for diversity to achieve gross national happiness for the Zimbabwean population. International Carnival is set to achieve high "Gross National Happiness" for the Zimbabwean people by 2020. Tourist come from within and outside the country to enjoy the festivals

#### 3.3.2 Regional Festivals

The regional festivals are meant to celebrate authenticity of different ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. The Chimanimani Festival, Intwasa Festival, Mbira Dance, Midlands Arts Festival and Mbende Jerusarema are the most popular regional festivals. The Chimanimani Festival celebrate arts and culture of the Manyika people, Ndau and Hwesa of Manicaland province attracting participants from all over the country and beyond borders. Intwasa Arts Festival is biased towards celebrating the Ndebele speaking people ethnicity with music, theatre performances, discussions, workshops, competitions, readings and literary events, films, dance performances and visual arts.

The Mbende Jerusarema and Mbira Dance are regional festivals in the Masholand provinces where they are performed in celebration of music and arts of the shona people from the old days. The festivals encourage travelling within Zimbabwe as people move back to their regions to reconnect with their cultures and others in search of entertainment and learning. It has been that festivals also created a chance to the community to share and exchange

experience, promote a sense of pride within a community. Festivals help a community to save its society and heritage.

#### 3.3.3 Traditional Festivals

Popular traditional festivals are Mukwerera and Kurova Nguva. Mukwerera Festival is a rain ceremony making ceremony which attract those that believe in African Religion. It is performed as a prayer to God for good rains or to thank God for a good farming season through ancestral spirit. Kurova Guva Festival is another festival well performed under traditional festival in remembering the departed. The festivals are an opportunity for some families and friends for advancing their relationships, as they met and had a great time with relatives and friends.

#### 3.3.4 Tourist Festivals

Victoria Falls Festival is the only tourist festival well recognized in Zimbabwe. It is Africa's biggest and most famous New Year's party which attracts tourists from world over for a three-day fun field event. It is meant to celebrate new-year in diversity pitting international artist's performances.

### 4. Conclusion

This article shows the significance of festivals for transforming the local economy, culture and tourism is pragmatism. This proof comes not only from the data discussing to festivals' demand but also from increasing research attention which leads to the constant development of the field in research. The results of this research confirm that the festivals have important role to play in the growth of tourism in a nation such as Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Infrastructure for festivals is there and it a matter coordinating and promoting the festivals from the government side. Festivals pull tourists to community events for cultural exchanges between residents and tourists. Cultural tourism brings gains to the host cities and towns, these gains have not been investigated in depth.

The paper submits, that tourism festivals have key effect on the local economies indirectly and directly. The spending by visitors on local services and goods has a direct economic effect on local businesses and also these benefits spread more extensively across the community and the economy. Conversely, cultural tourism does not take into consideration the damage of local beauty, environmental dilapidation and effects it causes on the local people of the host societies through their indirect and direct immersion with tourists. The study also found that some principal authors, like Goldblatt 2002, Hall, 1992 and Getz 1997<sup>[18, 19, 13, 14]</sup> contend that the local governments and the festival organisers only take into account the economic bearings and disregard the consequences of social effects of festivals. They contend that greater consideration should be given to the social effects of festival as well.

This research also suggests that tourism increases through development of local festivals and provides greater economic and cultural benefits to the local area. The visitors are attracted to these festivals from other areas in the country and abroad. In addition, the study established that social and economic factors contributed to tourism growth in these festivals. Given the objectives and scope, this paper reveals that all the festivals in Tanzania attract large masses of people, although the potentially is highly inclined to the major three festivals include the Tulia Festival, Urithi

Festival and Sauti za Busara in Zanzibar. In Zimbabwe major focus is on national festivals (Zimbabwe International Book Fair, Harare International Carnival, and International Film Festival) and the tourist festivals (Victoria Falls Festival are the biggest). However, there is need for another research that would aid to comprehend the level of social and economic impacts these festivals bring to local community and businesses in a broader scope.

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