

INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATION, TRUST AND PERCEPTIONS ON RESIDENTS' SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN ZANZIBAR STONE TOWN, TANZANIA

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Abstract

This study develops a model of residents' support for conservation using social exchange theory, complemented by the concept of participation in decision making borrowed from the Arnstein's Model of Participation. The framework posited that residents' support for conservation is influenced by the trust in conservation authorities and perceived benefits, and trust is determined by perceived benefits. It uniquely posited that participation in decision making indirectly influences support for conservation through its effects on trust and perceived benefits. The model was tested using a questionnaire survey to a sample of 543 local residents in Zanzibar Stone Town in Tanzania. Results from structural equation modelling indicate that residents' support for conservation is significantly influenced by the trust in conservation authorities and perceived benefits. Results also show that support for conservation is indirectly influenced by residents' participation in decision making, which inherently influences residents' trust in conservation authorities and perceived benefits. The contributions of the study emanate from the addition of the participation in decision making variable in the social exchange model and the testing of the model in a relatively neglected setting of cultural heritage. The study discusses the implications and provides some suggestions for future research.

Key Words: Participation, trust, local resident, conservation, Zanzibar

Introduction

Conservation of historic buildings, involving the maintenance and protective care of their values, is fundamental to the preservation of socio-cultural identity, history and character of places and to their successful utilization for sustainable development goals (Lwoga, 2017; McKercher *et al.*, 2005). It is however

partly hampered by people living in and around the buildings, known as, local residents as they directly interact with the heritage (Mabulla, 2000). The success of conservation is therefore predicated on residents' support.

Studies addressing the subject of residents' support for a phenomenon formed theoretical lenses to guide their

investigations. The dominant theory has been the Social Exchange Theory (SET, Ap, 1992). SET considers social interaction as an exchange of activity, which means that people are likely to support conservation if its benefits exceed the costs (Ap, 1992). It also assumes that the sustainability of residents' support is depends on trust between those involved in an exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). While SET has limitedly been utilized to understand support for the conservation of the historic buildings, it has theoretically contributed much to the field of natural resources management and tourism. It however overlooks the importance of participation factor in fostering support. In the cultural heritage management field, studies have increasingly considered participation in decision making as an important factor perhaps due to their concerns over people's heritage and the rights of people to own and have a say in the decision making processes related to conservation (Hiyari, 2012; Masele, 2012; Yung and Chan, 2011). It is thus important, when considering the cultural heritage issues, to stress a particular focus on participation concept.

The participation theory, as posited by Arnstein (1969), defines the term 'participation' as the redistribution of power that enables local residents, who are, in most cases, the disadvantaged, to be deliberately included in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring processes. Participation is specifically crucial for the heritage sites of sub-Saharan Africa that have marginalized residents as a result of the colonial top-down, fines and fences and monumentalism conservation approaches

that have diminished trust and sense of control of resources among residents (Lwoga, 2017). Like in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the management of immovable heritage resources in Tanzania is still, to a large extent, in the hands of the State Antiquities agencies, and as guided by the legislative frameworks modified from the colonial-based ones. Yet, these frameworks, for instance the Antiquities Act of 1964 (amended in 1979) and the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority Act of 2010, limit residents in deciding the fate of their heritage. The sites in such countries suffer the problems of neglect, looting and vandalism (Mapunda, 2013; Masele, 2012; Ndoro, 2005).

It is argued by past research that participation would help to foster local support for conservation (Chirikure *et al.*, 2010; Masele, 2008; Yung and Chan, 2011). However, research has revealed mixed and conflicting results. For instance, participation has been thought to cause more problems and difficulties in conserving the heritage, such as mistrust and conflicts (Chirikure *et al.*, 2010; Pendlebury and Townshend, 1999). The inconsistency in explaining local support for the conservation of the historic buildings, and how it is being determined by participation in decision making indicates the urgency of this study.

This study was therefore undertaken to examine the influence of residents' participation in decision making, trust and perceived benefits on their support for the conservation of the built environment, with a special focus on historic buildings in Zanzibar Stone Town in Tanzania. By comprehending

the dynamics of participation, trust and perceived benefits in the context of residents' support for the conservation of the historic buildings, stakeholders involved in the exchange, including conservators and heritage managers can purposefully adjust social relations to attain mutually required outcomes in the conservation process. This study can also broaden researchers and scholars' knowledge regarding local residents' decision to either support or not support the conservation of the built environment

Empirical Literature Review and the Conceptual Framework

The study is informed by a conceptual model developed using

concepts from social exchange theory (SET, Figure 1) and the Arnstein's Model (1969). The framework assumes that support for conservation is influenced by residents' perceived benefits of conservation and their trust in conservation authorities. The model further posits that trust is influenced by the perceived benefits. The participation in decision making is in turn proposed to influence residents' support through its effects on trust and perceived benefits. Figure 1 indicates the assumptions that have not been examined in past studies (in dashed lines).

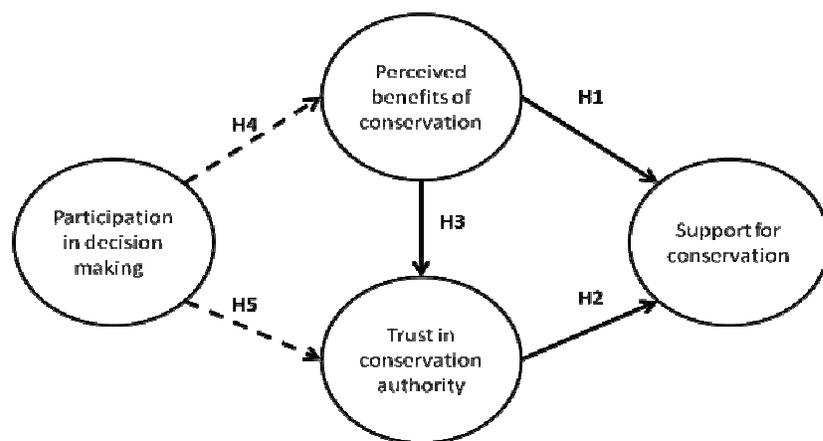


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Perceived Benefits of Conservation

Past research suggests that residents perceive conservation to result in socio-cultural and economic benefits (Lwoga, 2017; Mabulla, 2000). In support of SET, studies focused on the relationship between perceived benefits and support, but in other settings than conservation, found a positive relationship between the two concepts (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon,

2012). Some qualitative studies suggest that if residents' do not perceive the benefits, they would not support conservation (Mapunda, 2013). However, the significance and strength of the relationship have not been confirmed from the context of historic buildings. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of conservation and support for conservation.

Trust

Trust refers to a positive attitude towards the partner, and assurance that the exchange partner will perform (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). The conservation authorities in historic towns are usually related to the government and its agencies. The government and its units wield high power and control in conservation policies, and intervene in conservation processes. Thus, residents' key exchange partner in conservation refers to the government entities. Luhiste (2006) considers trust in government entities as assurance that the authorities will not misuse power. Trust is important for stimulating cooperation, creating goodwill, and decreasing fear (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012).

Positive outcomes associated with economic and social benefits of conservation or tourism increase residents' trust in authorities (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). Residents rely on their trust in authorities before making judgments about whether to accept and support its projects or not (Bronfman et al; 2009). Partners who develop trust are therefore willing to commit resources and act in support of the authorities (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). These observations make it reasonable to assume that:

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between residents trust in conservation authorities and their support for conservation.

Hypothesis 3. There is a positive relationship between the perceived

benefits of conservation and residents' trust in conservation authorities.

Participation in Decision Making

Participation in decision making means the involvement of local residents in some way to communicate, interact, exchange information, provide input on a particular set of issues, problems or decisions related to conservation, and to share in decision making to one degree or another (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein (1969) provides an abstraction of participation depicted in dimensions that are useful for analysing participation in a range of settings. The dimensions comprise manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control. In the tourism context, Kayat (2002) found that residents who felt control in making decisions had favourable attitudes towards tourism and supported its development. Thus, local residents who perceive control over conservation with respect to the dimensions of partnership, delegated power and citizen control, *genuine participation*, can have positive perceptions of conservation. On the other hand, those who perceive less control with respect to the dimensions of manipulation, therapy and informing, *non-participation*, can have negative perceptions of conservation. The observations led to the development of the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. There is a positive relationship between residents' participation in decision making and the perceived benefits of conservation.

Participation in decision making influences the partners' appraisal of the relative worth of the exchange relationship and the kind of cooperation that takes place within the foundation of

truth (Farrell, 2004; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). The perceptions that there is no fair participation in the decision making process create grounds for distrust (Farrell, 2004). In Hong Kong, the conservation elites including the government officials, experts and a few community elites organized consultations and workshops, yet the residents perceived a limited influence on decision making, i.e. *tokenism* (Yung and Chan, 2011). The outcome was residents' rejection of conservation. Similarly, Hiyari (2012) and Masele (2012) who studied participation in Al Salt City in Jordan and in Kunduchi Ruins in Tanzania, respectively, found that, while *non-participation* causes residents to shun conservation activities, the promotion of *genuine participation* may cause them to support conservation. Pendlebury and Townshend (1999) found that residents' participation in decision making regarding the conservation in the UK was limited to *tokenism*, and largely to consultation. While some respondents reported that consultation resulted in engendering support for conservation, others reported that consultation had

resulted in residents abandoning the proposed conservation plans (Pendlebury & Townshend, 1999). This inconsistency indicates the need for further investigation. Based on these arguments, it is reasonable to propose that:

Hypothesis 5. There is a positive relationship between residents' participation in decision making and their trust in conservation authorities.

Methodology

The model was tested using data collected from local residents of Zanzibar Stone Town, a world heritage site situated in the west of Zanzibar Island in Tanzania (Figure 2). It is the commercial and political centre of Zanzibar Island. Its main economic activities include fishing, port and tourism. Tourism is partly based on historic buildings, and directly employs about 15,000 people (ZCT, 2014). The conservation of the historic buildings is under the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority, which is supported by the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority Act of 2010.

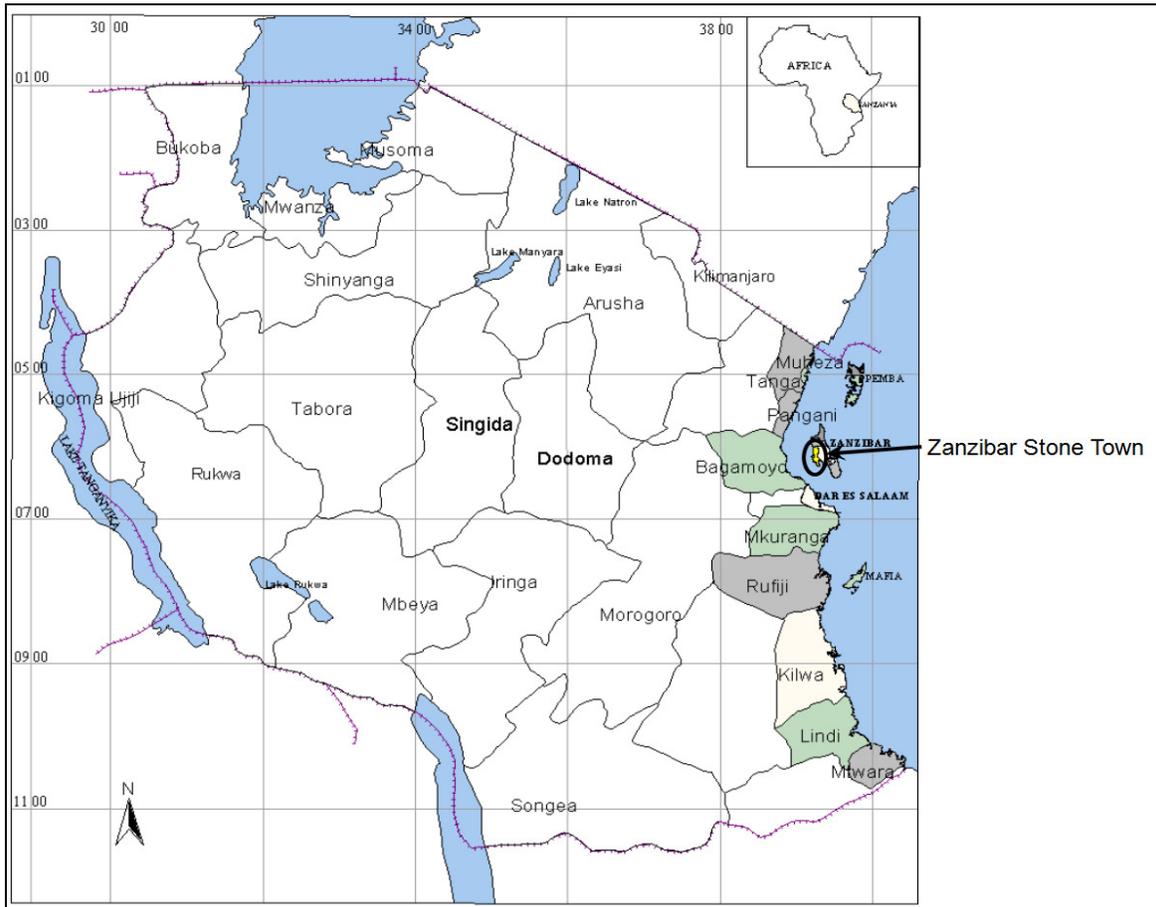


Fig. 2: Zanzibar Stone Town

Source: TCMP (2001)

A stratified random sampling procedure was used to reflect the geographical distribution of the inhabited area (wards) of the stone town. Households in each ward were selected randomly. The questionnaire was administered to 543 households using face-to-face structured interviews. The respondents were permanent residents of the selected households aged at least 18 years or older. The questionnaire captured the concepts mentioned in the conceptual framework by employing employed a 5-point Likert-type scale. Measurement items for the concepts were adopted from previous studies including

Lwoga (2017), Nunkoo and Ramkinssoon (2012), Mabulla (2000), and Arnstein’s (1969). The items were translated into Swahili and then back-translated into English, and were refined after expert review and pilot test. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to summarize the data in components. Confirmatory factor analysis was then conducted to validate the measurement model. Structural equation modelling was conducted to test the hypotheses. Validity and reliability of data were checked by employing the average variance extracted and Cronbach’s alpha tests.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

An estimated 62.8% of the respondents were males while 37.2 were females. Some 46.3% of respondents were aged between 21 and 40 and 39.6% were aged between 41 and 60. Most respondents, 43.3%, had no more than a primary education followed by those with no more than secondary education (37.4 percent). The majority, 90.9%, had an income of 1 – 1,000,000 Tshs per month, but some had no income at all, while a few had an income of more than one million Tshs.

Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability

Table 1: Factor Analysis and Reliability Results

Construct and Indicators		Mean	SD	Component				α
				1	2	3	4	
Support for conservation								
AC1	Conservation of historic buildings is good	4.42	0.634	0.928				
AC2	Conservation of historic buildings is useful	4.33	0.794	0.924				
AC3	Conservation of historic buildings is rewarding	4.12	0.988	0.770				0.923
AC4	Conservation of historic buildings is sensible	4.32	0.677	0.898				
AC5	I support maintenance of historic buildings	4.29	0.747	0.877				
Perceived benefits								
PB1	Conservation improves attractiveness of our town	4.34	0.617		0.639			
PB2	Conservation generates employment opportunities here	4.22	0.710		0.757			
PB3	Conservation creates opportunities to learn our history	4.07	0.731		0.870			0.880
PB4	Conservation promotes our identity	4.26	0.679		0.825			
PB5	Conservation improves property value of buildings	4.10	0.674		0.932			
Participation in decision making								
PD1	We are consulted in decision making process regarding conservation here	2.10	1.032			0.879		
PD2	We control decision making process regarding conservation here	2.01	0.962			0.893		0.732
Trust in conservation authorities								
TS1	I trust key government conservation authorities	3.43	0.892				0.889	
TS2	I trust conservation information provided by conservation authorities	3.61	0.828				0.861	0.692

Note: Principal component analysis done using promax rotation method.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.889, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = 4480 ($p = 0.000$).

Four factors accounting for 74.942% of the total variance.

Cronbach's alpha test results show that all the variables had a value greater than 0.70 (Table 1), indicating the reliability of the measurement scale (Hair *et al.*, 2014). As indicated in Table 1, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy was above the threshold of 0.6, indicating the adequacy of the sample. Promax rotation was used to derive factor solution. The results indicate that the items were valid because of being grouped into four components, in line with the proposed conceptualization, and were also loaded with values above the average of 0.5 (Table 1).

Multivariate Analyses and hypotheses Testing

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted. Table 2 indicates that the measurement model reasonably fit the data ($\chi^2 = 173.32$, $df = 67$, $p < 0.01$, $RMSEA = 0.054$, $CFI = 0.976$), and standardized loadings were all above 0.6

and significant, Fig. 3. As seen in Table 2, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassed the cutoff of 0.50 (Hair et al; 2014). The squared correlation between a pair of variables was less than the AVE values; thus, convergent and discriminant validity were established.

Table 2: Correlations and Measurement Model Results

	Items	Mean	SD	PD	TS	PB	AC
PD	2	2.058	0.886	1			
TS	2	3.520	0.752	0.258** ^a (0.06 ^b)	1		
PB	5	4.199	0.562	0.078 (0.01)	0.239** (0.06)	1	
AC	5	4.297	0.680	0.245** (0.06)	0.262** (0.07)	0.607** (0.37)	1
AVE				0.583	0.538	0.613	0.748
CR				0.7	0.7	0.9	0.9

Fit indices: $\chi^2 = 173.32$ ($df = 67$, $p < .01$), $RMSEA = 0.054$ ($PCLOSE = 0.236$), $CFI = 0.976$, $TLI = 0.967$, $NFI = 0.962$

^a Correlations, ^b Squared correlations, PD = Participation in decision making, ** = $p < 0.01$
 TS = Trust in conservation authorities, PB = Perceived benefits, AC = Support for conservation,
 SD = Standard deviation, CR = Composite reliability.

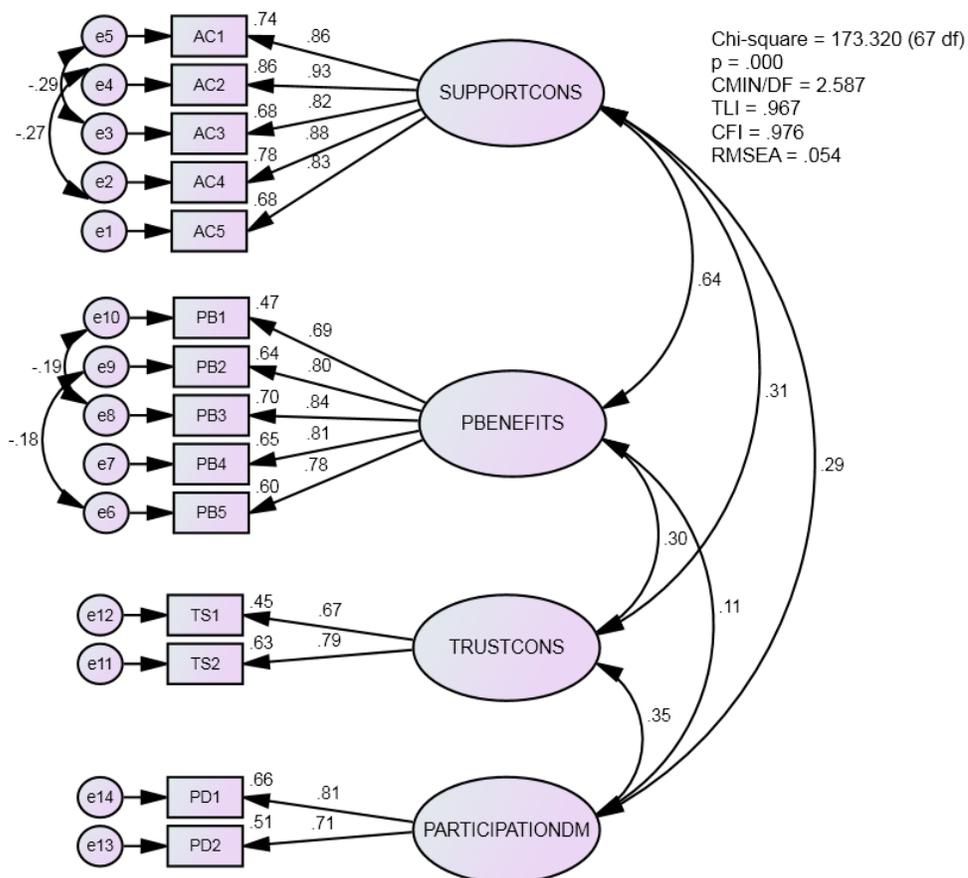


Fig. 3:A Measurement Model (standardized estimates)

Hypotheses were tested using a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with a maximum likelihood estimation method, which accounted for measurement errors, as well as the interrelationships between constructs. Results verified the fit of the model to the data ($\chi^2 = 192.428$, $df = 68$, $p < 0.01$, $RMSEA = 0.058$ ($PCLOSE = 0.81$), $CFI = 0.972$, $TLI = 0.962$, $NFI = 0.957$, $GFI = 0.953$), Fig. 6. As indicated in Table 3, the hypotheses were supported in that significant relationships were found between perceived benefits of

conservation and support for conservation ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$), between trust and support for conservation ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$), between perceived benefits of conservation and trust in conservation authorities ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$), between participation in decision making and perceived benefits ($\gamma = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), and participation in decision making and trust in conservation authorities ($\gamma = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$). Perceived benefits and trust account for 44% of the total variance for support for conservation (Fig. 4).

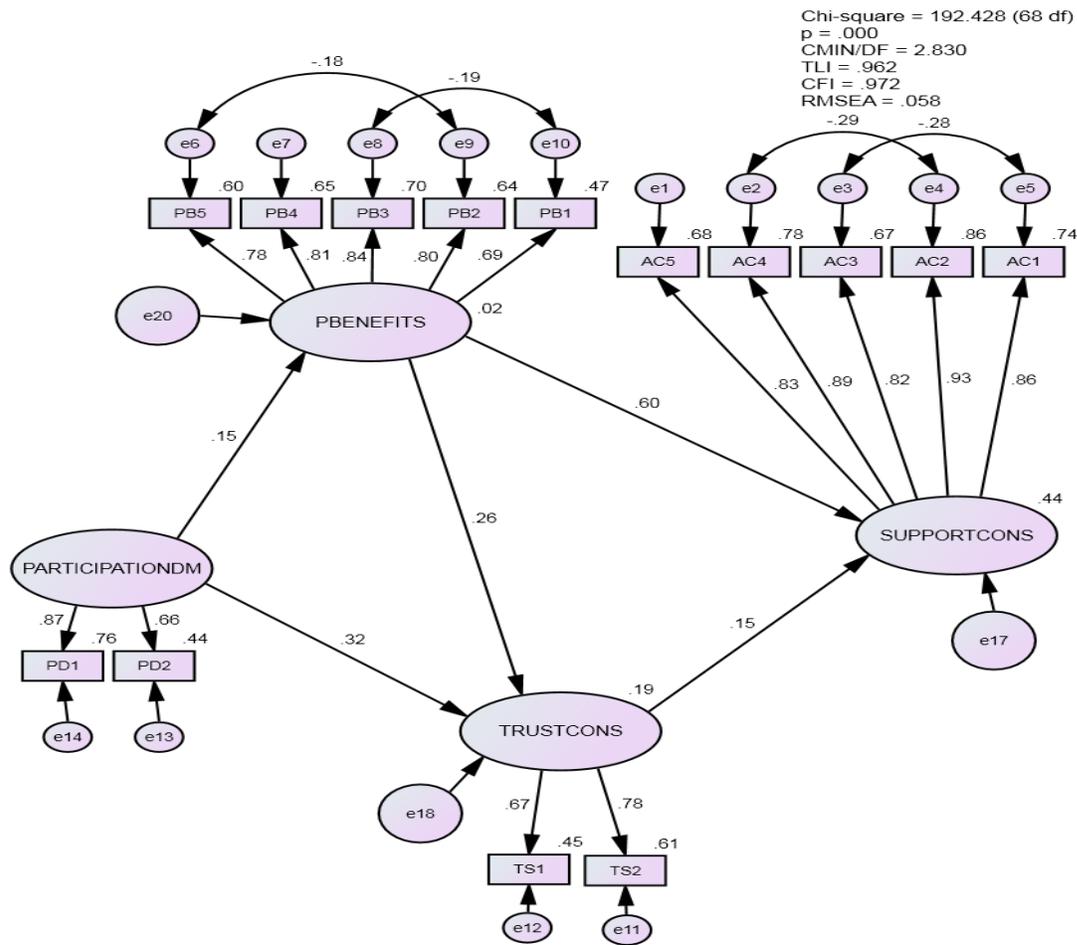


Fig. 4: Structural Model (standardized estimates)

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses	Standardized Estimate	P
H1 Support for conservation <--- Perceived benefits	0.60	***
H2 Support for conservation <--- Trust in conservation authority	0.15	***
H3 Trust in conservation authority <--- Perceived benefits	0.26	***
H4 Perceived benefits <--- Participation in decision making	0.15	0.004
H5 Trust in conservation authority <--- Participation in decision making	0.32	***

*** = $p < 0.001$

Discussion

This study proposed a model for explaining local residents' support for conservation. It considers theoretical extension of the Social Exchange Theory (SET) by complementing it with the variable of *participation in decision making* as informed by Arnstein's (1969) Model of Participation. The model had five hypotheses. Results from the structural equation modelling of data gathered from a sample of 543 local residents in Zanzibar Stone Town show that all five proposed hypotheses are supported by data.

Hypothesis 1 which proposed that there is a positive relationship between perceived benefits and support for conservation, and hypothesis 2 which proposed that there is a positive relationship between trust in conservation authorities and support for conservation were both supported ($\beta = 0.6, p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.15, p < 0.001$). These findings are congruent with those of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) who studies residents' support from the context of tourism, and further support the assumptions and validity of SET's concepts in explaining support behaviour from the setting of conservation of historic buildings. They indicate that residents who perceive the benefits and with high levels of trust in conservation authorities are likely to be more supportive of conservation activities than those who do not perceive benefits and have lower levels of trust. They also suggest that perceived benefits are strongly related to support for conservation, and thus residents are more concerned with benefits associated with conservation.

In Zanzibar, benefits associated with the conservation of the historic buildings are linked to cultural tourism; a sector that began to flourish after the drop in the market for cloves in early 2000. Today, tourism is the main sector of the town's economy directly employing about 15,000 people, with the expectation of employing about 50% of the Zanzibar workforce by 2020. These people served about 151,743 tourists in 2013 in 56 hotels and guest houses, 19 restaurants and over 150 local tour operators (Zanzibar Commission for Tourism [ZCT], 2014; Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors [ZATI], 2014). From the point of view of SET, such benefits and economic prospects associated with the existence of historic buildings can indeed influence residents to support conservation.

The support of the hypothesis 3 which proposed that there is a positive relationship between perceived benefits and trust ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.001$) indicates that, benefits can result into residents' trust in conservation authorities. The findings suggest that if residents perceive benefits from conservation, they are likely to trust conservation authorities; thus, the extent to which conservation meets expectations of residents can determine trust in conservation authorities. Hypothesis 4 which proposed a positive relationship between participation in decision making and perceived benefits of conservation ($\gamma = 0.15, p < 0.01$), and Hypothesis 5 which proposed a positive relationship between participation in decision making and trust in conservation authorities ($\gamma = 0.32, p < 0.001$), were both supported by data. The findings suggest that the residents with a sense of participation in decision making

are more likely to view conservation as resulting in benefits and to build trust in conservation authorities.

Interestingly, participation seems to strongly influence trust than perceived benefits. This means that participation in decision making is important in offsetting residents' doubts regarding whether the conservation authority will deliver or not, and in offsetting perceived uncertainty in a conservation social exchange process. With this regard, several initiatives are ongoing to engage local residents in the decision making process in Zanzibar Stone Town. Following the town being proclaimed a world heritage site, the Zanzibar Stone Town Heritage Society (ZSTHS) was created in 2002 as a non-government organization (NGO) with the goals of involving community in decision making, conducting community outreach programs, and impart residents with awareness and skills related to the maintenance of historic buildings. ZSTHS has conducted several community outreach programs, workshops and exhibitions, and has organized forums that foster community-conservation authority dialogue on conservation issues. Several organizations such as Aga Khan Cultural Services, in collaboration with Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority have implemented community-based rehabilitation programs with the aim of encouraging residents' participation in improving the condition of the heritage. According to the results, these participatory initiatives empower residents in terms of their involvement in conservation, and are more likely to positively influence their perceived benefits and trust in conservation authorities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although past research has developed theoretical frameworks to explain residents' support, participation in decision making has been overlooked. Recent studies have begun to acknowledge the importance of participation, but raise mixed results, some arguing on the potentiality of participation to foster support, others arguing on its potentiality of causing problems such as conflicts in the long run. While the majority of research suggests that support for conservation is determined by the perceived benefits and trust, the findings in this study suggest that participation in decision making is equally good determinant of support, though indirectly through perceived benefits and trust. With the results that provides a firm understanding of the directionality and significance of the influence of participation on support through perceived benefits and trust, the study contributes to the body of knowledge related to stakeholder support for conservation in heritage management. It further confirms the past anecdotal and qualitative arguments in cultural heritage management.

Conservators and heritage managers can utilize the results of this study to ensure conservation meets residents' expectations. Conservators and managers should ensure that conservation results in benefits for the residents. In this regard, cultural tourism can be crucial in realizing benefits. It is also important to utilize the existing media, workshops, exhibitions and other public forums to publicize the benefits of conservation. Conservation authorities and participatory initiatives should also be managed with honesty and integrity,

while favouring the expectations of the majority rather than the elite groups; thereby enhancing trust and support for conservation. In addition, conservators and managers can strengthen the empowerment component of the participatory initiatives by allowing residents to actively participate in dimensions that reflect Arnstein's (1969) *genuine participation* rather than the prevailing *tokenism* and *non-participation* dimensions. Depending on the local social and political settings, this can be done by promoting partnerships with the diverse residents' groups, and by providing room for residents to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with the authorities. Partnerships can involve sharing decision-making responsibilities through the joint policy boards or planning committees with most of the seats occupied by the local representatives. The authorities can however remain as the central authority that provides the committees with the technical advice and resources.

It should be noted that, while support and perceived benefits score rather high in the sample, trust and participation have much lower average scores, and relatively high standard deviations (Table 1). Further research is therefore required to qualitatively investigate whether residents have been involved in decision making, or do trust the heritage sector, and see whether this can explain part of the variance in the analysis. Care should also be taken given the fact that, when asked regarding their participation people have a tendency to reflect broader social dimensions than conservation alone. Moreover, the study considered trust with reflection to government-based conservation authority as it plays a key

role in heritage management. Studies done on other sites should consider other conservation entities in measuring trust.

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