

The Influences of Cultural Collectivism and Participation in Decision-Making on Women's Economic Empowerment in Zanzibar Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The victimization of women in Zanzibar by social evils with denied opportunities that could improve their well-being in various facets of life and concerns about cultural beliefs and norms that have impeded them from participating largely in developed programs in the tourism sector have been documented. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine the influences of cultural collectivism and participation in decision-making on women's economic empowerment in the Zanzibar tourism sector. The study utilized a quantitative research approach and incorporated survey and causal designs. The data was collected using structured questionnaires from 387 women who have been in tourism activities from nine wards of Zanzibar and the respondents were selected using a multistage cluster sampling technique. The study IBMSPSS to analyze the data. The study discovered that women's economic empowerment level was high in the Zanzibar tourism industry. Also, participation in decision-making significantly influenced women's economic empowerment more than cultural collectivism among women working in the Zanzibar tourism sector. Women's economic empowerment in the tourism industry is a stout product of participation in decision-making and cultural collectivism respectively, and ignoring the gains of women's participation in decision-making, and inclusivity via cultural collectivism is detrimental to sustainable economic development and societal well-being. The study contributes to the limited understanding of how women in Zanzibar are reactive to various factors including economic empowerment level, number of household members, and their employment. The study further revealed the importance of cultural collectivism adoption for enhanced economic development and family well-being.

Keywords: Collectivism, Participation in Decision-Making, Women's Economic Empowerment, Tourism, Zanzibar

Introduction

The tourism industry is a leading economic sector contributing 9.8% of the global GDP and 7% of the world's total exports (UN World Tourism Report, 2014). It is anticipated that the contribution of travel and tourism to GDP will reach 10.8% at the end of 2026 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016). These figures do not just represent economic strength, they demonstrate the vast potential of tourism, to address some of the world's most pressing challenges, including socio-economic growth and inclusive development (Rasool, Maqbool, & Tarique, 2021). Research shows that the tourism industry has generated about 284 million jobs, equivalent to creating 1 in 11 jobs globally (Economic Impact, 2016). Experts agree that most women in the formal and informal tourism industry have benefited from this sector. This led to an increase in individual income and has acted as an engine of empowering women compared to the other areas (UNWTO, 2010).

In Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous state in Tanzania, tourism is a successful sector and vital to the Zanzibar economy. It contributes about 25 percent of the island's GDP and 80 percent of the annual foreign exchange earnings (Ministry of Information, Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2016). The crucial role of the tourism sector in Zanzibar's economy made the Island city align its developmental plans to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) for inclusiveness, equality, and women's empowerment. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has an Action Plan for women's empowerment in 2006 (Ampumuza, et al., 2008). Further, research has previously shown the enormous potential of the tourism sector to empower women of all backgrounds (UNWTO, 2023).

The concept of women empowerment has received extensive thought worldwide. Women empowerment implies a process that favours their access to power, ability to control their own lives, and strategic choices (UN Commission on the Status of Women, 2002). Yet, women are still focused on lower-paid, precarious, and often informal jobs (UNWTO, 2023). Additionally, research has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic hit women in tourism harder than men; for instance, women were more likely to lose their jobs, have their hours or pay reduced, and shoulder more care responsibilities (UNWTO, 2023). This undoubtedly exposes the unsafe and unsustainable position of women in the labour force and calls for a holistic approach to empowering them, especially in the tourism industry. Admittedly, when women are empowered, the skilled workforce increases, local economies are strengthened, businesses do better, and families are drawn out of poverty, creating generational wealth and self-sufficiency.

Several factors such as educational level, exposure, religion, cultural orientation, and participation in decision-making are associated with women's empowerment. According to the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), participating in decision-making, either alone or jointly with their husband is an indicator of women's empowerment (Kishor & Subaiya, 2008). The proportionate contribution of women in decision-making irrespective of any constraint of relatives or societal norms is a major aspect of empowerment (Misra, Srivastava, Mahajan, & Thakur, 2021). Similarly, cultural collectivism enhances women's empowerment (Bastian, Wood, & Ng, 2023). Yet, little is known about the statistics on cultural orientations' roles in the supposed relation of women empowerment in the tourism sector (Brown & Osman, 2017; Ziddy, 2013).

Notwithstanding the avowed benefits of women's empowerment to various households and local economies, the implementation of this concept has been slow, especially in Zanzibar's tourism industry. Worse, women in Zanzibar are victimized by social evils and denied opportunities that could raise their well-being in various tourism sectors (Maliva, 2016; Shettar, 2015). Also, women in Zanzibar are less empowered and they participate marginally in developed programs (World Bank, 2010). This heightens concern over the economic status of women in Zanzibar because, the ratio of women participation in the tourism sector is very poor compared to other sectors in Zanzibar (OCGS, 2013a). Furthermore, there are concerns about cultural beliefs, values, norms, and religious issues impeding women from being engaged in the tourism sector, making it look like an unlawful thing (Akhus, Postmes, & Stroebe, 2017; Action Aid, 2003). However, the collectivistic tendencies of several community members have made them preserve their identity and speak against the exclusion of women as a distortion of their culture ((Wakuru & Ramadhani, 2013).

Consequently, the study attempts to actualize the following objectives: (i) To describe the level of women empowerment in Zanzibar's tourism industry. (ii) To determine the influences of cultural collectivism, and participation in decision-making on women empowerment in Zanzibar's tourism industry.

Literature Review

Women Empowerment

Scholars have argued that empowerment has a very wide coverage as a concept in the field of several disciplines such as community psychology, social work, health promotion, and organizational studies (Perkins, 2010). Empowerment takes shape from a context related to the social, cultural, economic, geographical, and political scenarios that a person experiences during his/her life course and his/her interaction with their gender roles in society (Lassi, Ali, & Meherali, 2021). Women empowerment is the process whereby women acquire the opportunity to strategic life choices and are given the right to decide on issues they were previously denied (Huis, Hansen, Otten & Lensink (2017). Women empowerment is essential to liberate women from the social, traditional, and cultural customs and norms and allows women to be aware of their rights, build self-confidence, have control over their and their important others' lives, and provide strength to bring change in society (Sohail, 2014). Women empowerment is simply an individual's capacity to be free and exercise personal choice (Budgeon, 2015).

In line with the above literature, empowerment is undoubtedly the process of attributing a specific choice of a particular activity, be it personal life, business, community well-being, and so on to an entity. The study posits that women empowerment is a deliberate attribution of rights in the scheme of things that pertains to traditional, social, religious, and societal well-being to galvanize equality and draw people out of poverty and rejection. Perkins (2010) suggested that empowerment is not only a process, but it could also be taken to be the outlook and changing outcome of the process for organizations, individuals, and entire communities. This calls to mind the ability of community stakeholders to allow women to rise to the occasion of bringing change in line with the empowerment process. Perkins (2010), further pointed out that the changing outcome of the process hinges on active participation of the concerned, understanding, and awareness of the existing powerful influence of economic and political interests and involves access control of essential resources and decisions. Hence, participation is an inevitable factor of women empowerment, and the study hereby reviews the link between these two constructs.

Participation in Decision-Making and Women Empowerment

A continuum of scholarly discourse has argued that for several years now, the tourism sector has provided opportunities for gainful employment and income across the world (Ferguson, 2010; Fayissa, Nsiah, & Tadasse, 2008). These gainful employments and increased income across the world have been made possible in the tourism industry due to participation in decision-making. Participation in decision-making is the catchphrase considered to be one of the key dimensions of participation needed in serious attempts to accomplish sustainable development in African nations (Chirenje, Giliba, & Musamba, 2013). Although participation is a multidimensional construct, the decision-making aspect of it centers on individual inputs on developmental plans, labor, and other resources that are essential to society. Research shows that participation in decision-making occurs mostly with opportunities rather than threats (cf. Dutton & Jackson, 1987). This implies that participation in decision-making is contingent on certainty in organizational circumstances. In line with the above, when decision-makers scan opportunities within their reach, they participate in decision-making more than when faced with threats Gunduz (2014); hence, supporting the assertion that participation in decision-making blossoms with opportunity.

Notably, one of the major current discussions in community development is connected to the relationship between participation and empowerment. A careful review of the literature shows that the relationship between these two terms is open to several versions (McCall, & Mearns, 2021; Kabeer, 2020). It has been deduced that participation in decision-making makes people feel empowered based on their contributions. Specifically, women's empowerment is believed to be activated via their participation in decision-making on societal issues as an identical strategy in community development. In a study that investigated women empowerment through community-based tourism in Western Cape, McCall and Mearns (2021) found that five of the eleven women entrepreneurs experienced both economic and social empowerment. The women who were economically empowered fed their children and responded to their clothing and shoes needs. Equally, the socially enabled women succeeded in preventing rude home relations through safe houses and mother-and-daughter projects (McCall and Mearns, 2021). All these are products of participation in decision-making which is inextricably linked with empowerment. In line with the benefits of participation in decision-making and its resultant effects on women empowerment, the study contends that further training for women is required to bolster their confidence to participate in decision-making, and improvement of family standards through increased income.

Cultural Collectivism and Women Empowerment

Cultural collectivism is the feeling of belonging to larger ingroups or collectives whereby the group cares for them in exchange for their loyalty to the group (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). This dimension of cultural value reflects a society's position through people's self-image perceived as either "I" or "we", and a society with inhabitants filled with a perception of "we" represents a collectivist society (Hofstede, 2011). Given the above, it has been argued that cultural traits give rise to reasons for the proliferation of societies into in-groups which made the dynamics and closeness of the people in the in-groups closer than in individualistic cultures (Triandis, 1995). Cultural collectivism in the context of the present study is the examination of the roles that women ideologies play in the development of a culture of work and organization among women in societies (Bhatt & Garikipatti, 2019). This means that in-group ideologies among women shape their work and organizational culture which emboldens them in several societal engagements. Understandably, cultural restrictions could hinder women empowerment and

vice versa. However, Hofstede (2011) noted that collectivists are of the notion that harmony should be maintained to actualize a progressive in-group, and transgression of in-group norms leads to shame (Hofstede, 2011); implying that while women empowerment is believed to promote family well-being and quality of life via increased household income, absconding from any practice that will sustain family harmony and cohesion begets shame, and amounts to transgression of in-group norms.

Furthermore, in a study that investigated the role of collectivism on women empowerment in India, Devi (2023) found that collectivism has significantly succeeded in achieving empowerment among women. Collectivism has impacted the achievement levels of empowerment among women, with widows scoring high in the areas of performance, economic development, and social development (Devi, 2023). Cultural collectivism increases the chances for women to be empowered (Bastian, Wood, & Ng, 2023). This is so because when the cultural restrictions are abolished in society, women become privileged to undergo various educational and skill training, gain rewarding employment, earn more, and support their families which in turn enhances their self-esteem. Hence, it is argued that traditional restrictions have over the years resulted in not just a complex system of interrelated structure barriers but also restricted women's access to resources (Bhatt & Garikipatti, 2019). Based on the above, the study concludes that women's empowerment is an inseparable product of cultural collectivism triggered by in-group ideologies.

Methodology

Design, Participants, and Procedures

This is a quantitative study that utilized survey and causal designs. The researchers employed a quantitative approach to enable the generalization of the findings to a larger sample. More so, a quantitative method is expedient in answering the research questions (Chinedu et al., 2021). In the same vein, the adopted designs were based on the study's objectives and to enrich the literature on the influences of cultural collectivism and participation in decision-making on women empowerment in the tourism industry. The study participants were only women (females) aged between 35 to 60 years of age who have been working in tourism activities from nine wards of Zanzibar. The data was collected using structured questionnaires from 387 women who have been directly or indirectly working in tourism activities from nine wards of Zanzibar using a multistage cluster sampling technique.

Instrumentation

The main constructs of the study were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree) with varying numbers of items. Women's economic empowerment was measured with eleven (11) items adapted from (Kabeer, 1999; Vida, 2011). Also, participation in decision-making was measured with ten (10) items adapted from the World Bank (2008); Greeley and Chaturvedi (2007), while cultural collectivism was measured with six (6) items adapted from (Yoo et al., 2011).

Reliability of the Constructs and Normality Test

The study's constructs' Cronbach alpha ranged between .62 and .89. According to Hajjar (2018), an alpha value greater than .60 with a corrected item-total correlation greater than 0.3 is acceptable for research purposes. Based on the above, the study instruments are reliable. In terms of the distribution of the dataset, descriptive findings of exploratory data analyses (EDA) were used to determine the multivariate normality of the dataset's

distribution. An approximately normally distributed data should have a skewness and kurtosis value obtained within ± 2.0 cutoff point (George & Mallery, 2010). Relying on that, the study constructs' skewness and kurtosis are within the acceptable margin as shown in Table 1. Thus, multivariate normality criteria have been fulfilled. With the mean scores of between 3.56 and 4.24 on a five-point scale, it shows that there is high economic empowerment, high participation in decision-making, and high cultural collectivism among Zanzibar women in the tourism industry.

Table 1

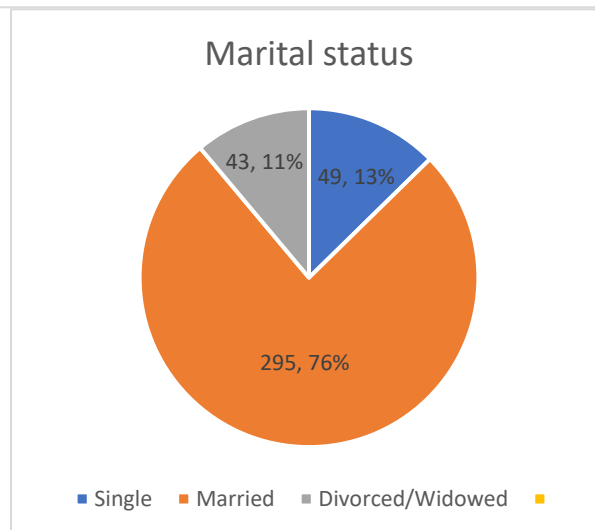
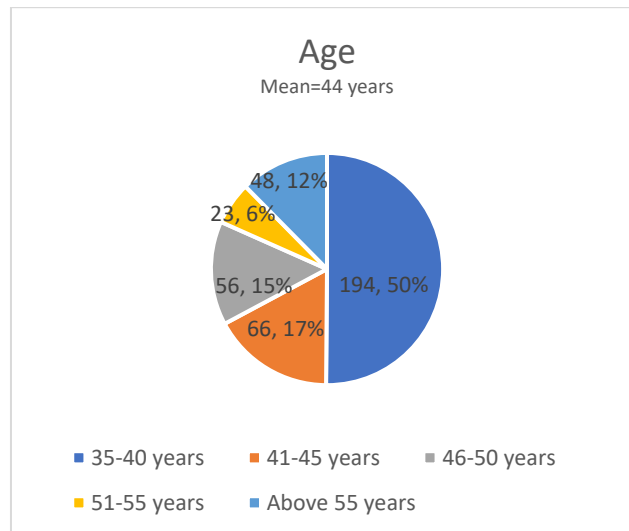
Reliability coefficients and EDA descriptive values

Constructs	Cronbach alpha	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE	Mean	SD
Economic Empowerment	.892	-.603	.124	-.486	.248	3.556	.838
Participation in Decision- Making	.850	-1.011	.124	.414	.248	3.851	.753
Cultural Collectivism	.616	-.989	.124	.791	.248	4.244	.545

Note: SE= Standard error; SD= Standard deviation

Sample Characteristics

The respondents' profiles have been summarized in Fig. 1. Results showed that out of the five age categories, the age range 35 to 40 years accounted for 194 respondents, which respondents about 50% of the total sample (387). This was followed by the 41 to 45 years age range (17%), while the age range 51 to 55 years comprised the least proportion (6%) of the samples. With an age mean of 44, it indicates that most of the respondents were mature and could be seen as women in the active age category who are anxiously working to support their families. For this study, divorced and widowed respondents were merged into the same category. The married category accounted for 76% of the respondents, whereas the divorced/widowed category represented the least proportion (11%) of the samples. This indicates that most of the women who work in Zanzibar tourism sector are still married. In terms of educational level, about 43% of the respondents attained a secondary educational level, and almost one-quarter (24%) of the respondents had primary education. Surprisingly, a marginal proportion (2%) of the respondents attained a university degree. This raises a concern about the type and level of economic empowerment bestowed on the women working in Zanzibar tourism sector. Economic empowerment and educational level are inextricably linked and should be consolidated to ensure sustainability and equity in societies. However, the marginal percentage of respondents who attained a university degree portends that higher positions in the tourism sector of Zanzibar may likely not be given to women due to their low educational background. The respondents' number of household members was grouped into three, with the number of households that have 6 to 10 members accounting for 50% of the total sample, while the number of households with 11 to 15 members represented the least proportion (15%) of the sample.



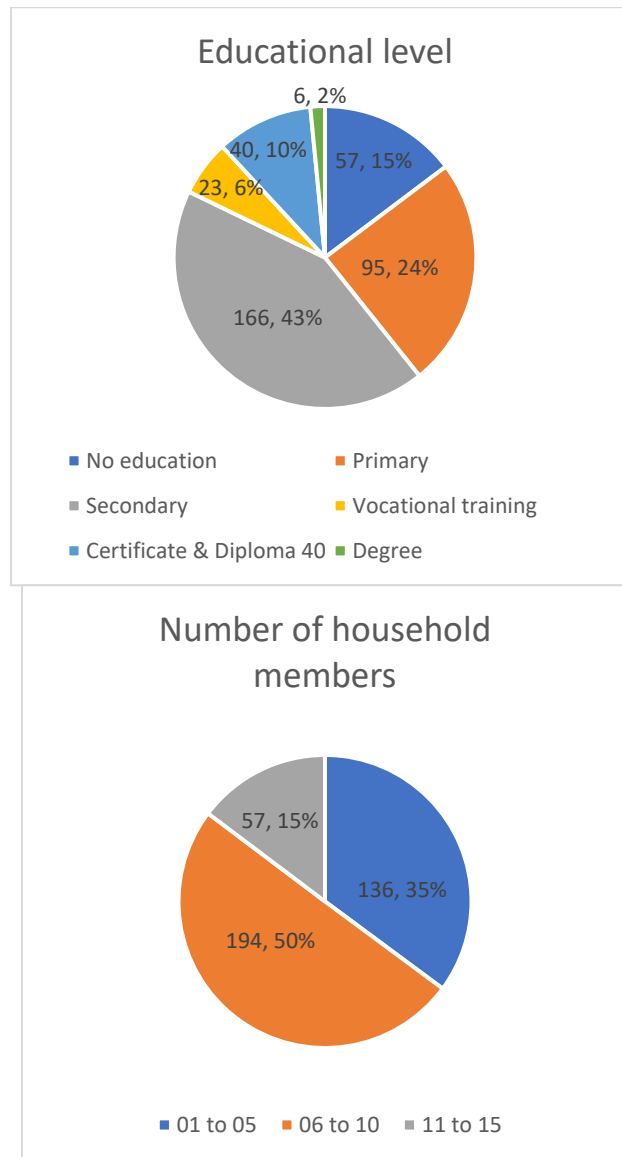


Figure 1: Respondents' background

Level of Women's Economic Empowerment in Zanzibar's Tourism Industry

The level of women's economic empowerment in Zanzibar's tourism industry was calculated based on the study's scale of measurement which is a five-point Likert scale. As shown in Table 2, the five-point Likert scale was categorized into three, namely: low, moderate, and high. Consequent to this categorization, the five-point Likert scale (1 to 5) was divided into three equal parts, with the first (low) level starting from 1 to the quotient of 5 divided by 3. The second (moderate) level ranged between the next point after the upper-class boundary of the low level to the summation of the initial quotient, while the last (high) level ranged between the succeeding point of the upper-class boundary of the moderate level to 5.

Table 2

Summarized Levels of Women's Economic Empowerment

Variable Category	Score range	Frequency	Percentage	Min.	Max.
Low	1-1.666	9	2.3	1	
Moderate	1.667-3.333	123	32.1		
High	3.334-5.00	254	65.6		5
Total		387	100		

Note: Freq.= Frequency; %= Percentage; Min.= Minimum; Max.= Maximum.

The present study has revealed an interesting finding: over 65% of Zanzibar women in the tourism industry are highly economically empowered, while only 2.3% are in the low economic empowerment category. While our result is very interesting, it contradicts Maliva's (2016) and Shettar's (2015) studies which stated that women in Zanzibar are victimized by social evils and denied opportunities that could raise their well-being in various tourism departments. This underscores the stance of UNWTO (2023) that the tourism sector is endowed with enormous potential to empower women of all backgrounds. The high level of women's economic empowerment revealed by this study aligns with the extant argument by several researchers on the benefits the tourism sector has provided to society, including gainful employment as well as income across the world (Fayissa, et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2010). This result is anticipated to spice up other sectors that can incorporate women in their industry for not just basic empowerment, but to boost household income and enhance the national economy. Therefore, in the face of high economic empowerment inroad, the Zanzibar government/region is expected to create an enabling environment in other sectors so that the existing economic empowerment momentum in the tourism industry could be replicated in other sectors for sustained regional economic advancement.

Influences of Cultural Collectivism, and Participation in Decision-Making on Women Economic Empowerment

Standard multiple regression was conducted to accurately assess the ability of two constructs (cultural collectivism, and participation in decision-making) to influence economic empowerment among women in the Zanzibar tourism industry. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. The model was statistically significant $F(2, 384) = 143.33, p < .001$, and explained 42.8% variance in economic empowerment among women in Zanzibar tourism industry. As depicted in Table 3, the two constructs were statistically significant, with participation in decision-making ($\beta = .64, p < .001$) contributing more than cultural collectivism ($\beta = .09, p = .021$). The findings imply that women's economic empowerment is positively dependent on participation in decision-making and cultural collectivism respectively. Thus, the more women participate in decision-making and the more culturally collectivistic they are, the more they are economically empowered. The significant influence of participation in decision-making on economic empowerment among women in the Zanzibar tourism industry is consistent with previous studies by (McCall and Mearns, 2021; Perkins, 2010). Similarly, the significant influence of cultural collectivism on economic empowerment among women in the Zanzibar tourism industry is in tandem with Bastian et al (2023); Devi (2023) studies.

Table 3

Summarized Results of Multiple Regression

Constructs	Unstandardized beta	SE	Beta	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Constant	.227	.292		.775	.439		
Participation in Decision- Making	.713	.043	.640	16.514	<.001	1.007	.993
Cultural Collectivism	.138	.060	.090	2.310	.021	1.007	.993
R² = .428; Adjusted R² = .425; F = 143.332							

Note: The dependent variable was women economic empowerment; *t*= *t*-statistics; *P*= Probability power, significant at 0.05; VIF= variance inflation factor

In line with our findings, women's economic empowerment transcends individual or group restrictions. Hence, active participation in decision-making ought to be underscored as the hub of economic empowerment. This further echoes the importance of Perkins (2010) who noted that empowerment is the outlook and changing outcome of the process for people and communities. Participation in decision-making's weighty influence on economic empowerment demonstrates that it is an inevitable factor of women economic empowerment. Additionally, the significant influence of participation in decision-making on women economic empowerment shows the practical benefits of individual contributions and involvement in societal engagements. Community-based participation via tourism activities begets economic empowerment among women (McCall & Mearns (2021). When women participate in the decision-making of the tourism sector, they earn money, support their families, abate poverty, and improve national or regional economic development which is a product of economic empowerment.

In the same vein, cultural collectivism's significant influence on economic empowerment among women in Zanzibar tourism industry is a clear indication of the gains of group interest and togetherness. The existence of cultural constraints can hamper the incorporation of useful ideologies from women. Cultural collectivism creates more opportunities for women's empowerment (Bastian et al., 2023). In the tourism sector, opportunities for women's economic empowerment arise when women are given the right and power to control or be part of the major roles of different tourism departments devoid of cultural limitations. Accordingly, this finding signifies that the abolition of cultural restrictions in a society gives women the privilege to undergo various educational and skill training, gain rewarding employment, and enhance their self-esteem. Cultural collectivism increases the performance and economic development of widows (Devi, 2023). This further explains the empiricism and relevance of cultural collectivism on women's economic empowerment. Hence, the abolition of cultural restraints empowers people socially, economically, and psychologically including women.

Conclusion and Limitations

Consequent to the expectation that the contribution of tourism to global GDP will reach 10.8% by 2026 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016), and tourism's input of about 25 percent of Zanzibar's GDP and 80 percent of the annual foreign exchange earnings (Ministry of

Information, Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2016) together with the consensus among experts that most women employed in formal and informal tourism sectors have been economically empowered, the study employed a quantitative approach that utilized a multi-stage cluster sampling technique to ascertain the level of economic empowerment, and the influences of cultural collectivism and participation in decision-making on economic empowerment among women in Zanzibar tourism industry. The study revealed that more than half (over 65%) of women in Zanzibar's tourism industry are highly economically empowered. It was also concluded that participation in decision-making significantly influenced economic empowerment more than cultural collectivism among women in Zanzibar's tourism industry. Remarkably, the findings somehow contradicted extant studies (Maliva, 2016; Shettar, 2015; World Bank, 2010) on the level of empowerment of women in Zanzibar's tourism industry. Although it is a new piece of information, it depicts the level of improvement in the developmental programs in Zanzibar's quest to empower women economically and enhance family well-being. Thus, the study asserts that high economic empowerment among women is crucial to family well-being and national or regional economic development.

Interestingly, the study supported McCall and Mearns (2021); Perkins (2010) on the influences of participation in decision-making on economic empowerment, and Bastian, Wood, and Ng (2023); Devi (2023) on cultural collectivism on economic empowerment among women in Zanzibar tourism industry. Hence, the study concludes that women economic empowerment is a product of participation in decision-making and cultural collectivism respectively, with participation in decision-making being a stout catalytic factor of economic empowerment. Consequently, the gains of women's participation in decision-making, and inclusivity and equality via cultural collectivism cannot be overlooked to ensure high economic empowerment among women, especially in the tourism industry for sustained economic development and societal well-being. This will further sustain the inroads of the tourism industry toward the improvement of GDPs and offer a new wave of human and economic development through the abolition of cultural restrictions on women. Therefore, societies seeking to improve their GDP ought to increase women's participation in decision-making and adopt cultural collectivism for women's economic empowerment.

Our study's limitation is mainly on the utilization of women in Zanzibar's tourist sector as the study subjects. Despite the consensus on the benefits of the tourism sector to women's economic empowerment, and the sector's 80 percent contribution to the annual foreign exchange earnings of the semi-autonomous State, the incorporation of women from other industries such as health, education, and agricultural settings could enhance the generalization of the influences of participation in decision-making and cultural collectivism on women economic empowerment. The reason is that sampling women from three to four different sectors is expected to be more representative of Zanzibar's women's economic empowerment. Hence, generalization of the findings should be done cautiously. In addition, the model lacks some constructs that could have improved the explained variance in women's economic empowerment. Therefore, future studies should incorporate women from other sectors to reduce sentiments and bias among the respondents. Following the study's regression sum of squares results, it is essential to explore the unexplained variance (57.2%) because the residual mean square was greater than the regression mean square. Thus, more predictors such as participation in implementation, social equity, and participation in economic development should be added to enhance variance explanation in women's economic empowerment.

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