

**DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSFORMATIVE TOURISM
EDUCATION MODEL FOR IMPROVED COMMUNITY-BASED
TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE**

by

PROVIDENCE WARINDA

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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30 June 2025

Declaration of Authorship

I, Providence Warinda, declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Tourism Education at the University of Pretoria, is my work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, although it has informed the production of a journal article written by the same author. See:

Warinda, P., & van der Merwe, C. D. (2023). Tourism and recreation in protected areas: An exploration of Community Based Tourism and local participation in Zimbabwe. *Studia Periegetica*, 43(3), 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.58683/sp.574>

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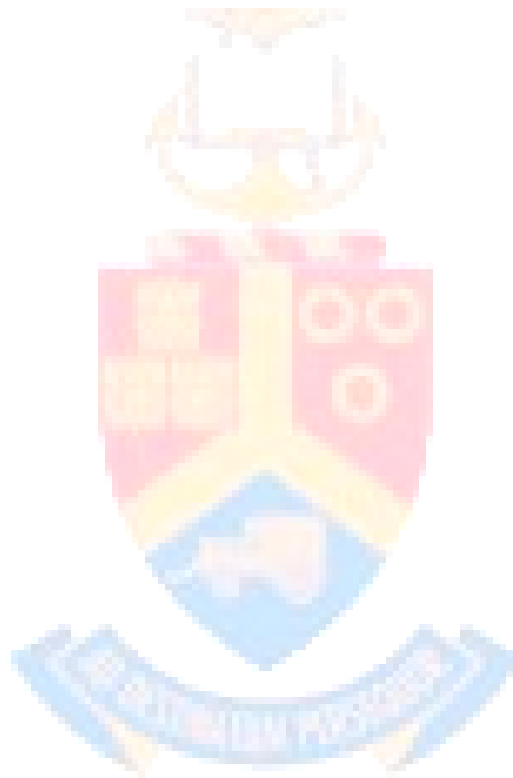
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Ethics statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained the applicable research ethics approval for the research described in this work. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's code of ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research.



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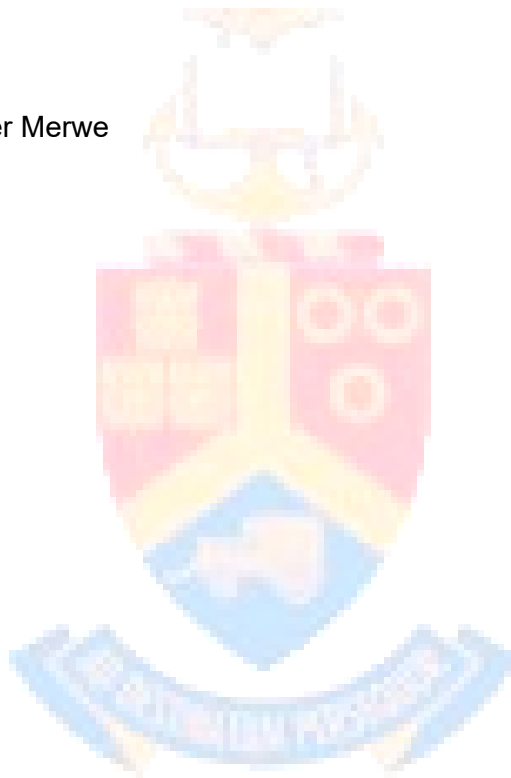
As the candidate's supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.



Prof. Clinton David van der Merwe

Supervisor

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DEGREE AND PROJECT	Phd Development of a transformative tourism education model for improved Community Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe
INVESTIGATOR	Ms. Warinda Providence
DEPARTMENT	Humanities Education
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	11 November 2022
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	11 November 2024
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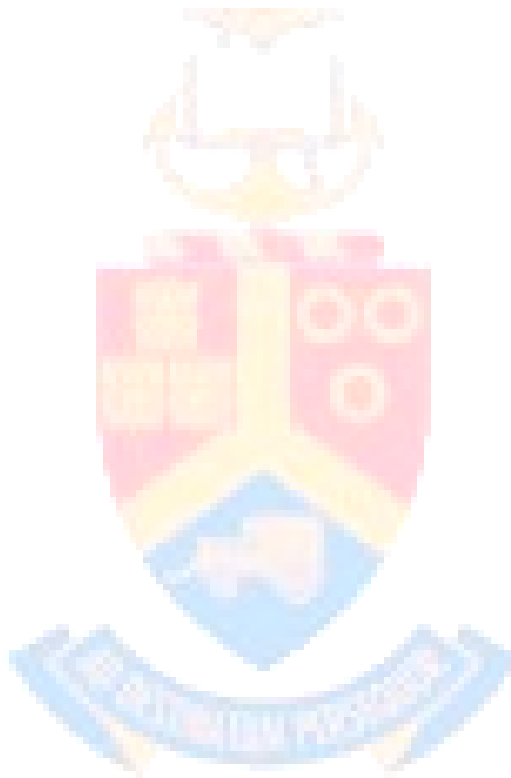
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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my beloved family, with the hope of inspiring you to dream boldly and strive fearlessly. Always remember, there is room at the top for those who face up to reach for it!



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Acknowledgements

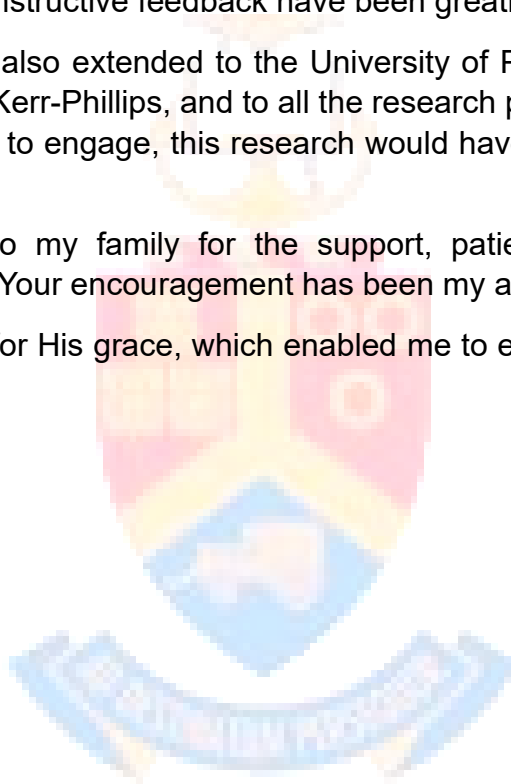
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Clinton van der Merwe for his invaluable guidance and unwavering support throughout the study. Your mentorship and encouragement made the dreaded journey more manageable; I could gladly undertake another PhD under your supervision again.

A special thanks to Dr Daniel Feather for his insightful contributions and guidance. Your assistance and constructive feedback have been greatly appreciated.

My sincere gratitude is also extended to the University of Pretoria, Professor Johan Wassermann, Frances Kerr-Phillips, and to all the research participants. Without your support and willingness to engage, this research would have not reached this stage.

I am deeply grateful to my family for the support, patience and understanding throughout the journey. Your encouragement has been my anchor and motivation.

Above all, I thank God for His grace, which enabled me to embark on and persevere through this journey.



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Abstract

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) projects in Zimbabwe thrived during donor funding but struggle afterward due to a lack of strategy and management expertise. This research explores stakeholder perceptions regarding CBT and examine whether the current bachelor's level tourism curriculum is adequately covering CBT. The research also aimed to identify strategies for equipping tourism graduates with the skills needed to develop and manage CBT initiatives effectively. The study is guided by the sustainability, Mezirow's transformative learning and the decolonisation theories, using a mixed methodology. The findings reveal that stakeholders hold diverse perspectives on CBT, and the understanding of CBT is still underdeveloped. The study highlights that CBT is inadequately covered in tourism education curricula, leading to a disconnect between academic training and industry demands. Identified gaps include a curriculum lack of focus on sustainability, pedagogical shortcomings, and the application of Eurocentric ideas and epistemologies, while undervaluing indigenous knowledge systems which could provide valuable insights especially in environmental stewardship and community resilience. This has sparked calls to decolonise the tourism curriculum and adopt a heritage-based curriculum that aligns it with the needs of the tourism industry and the local communities. This calls for revising the curricula to include indigenous perspectives, critically examining power dynamics, local perspectives, values, knowledge systems and frameworks that fosters inclusivity and self-representation in tourism narratives, practices and policies. The study suggests integrating CBT as a dedicated module at bachelor's level to foster a comprehensive understanding of the concept as well as a step towards a heritage-based curriculum. The study also advocated for the use of transformative pedagogies that encourages critical thinking such as experiential learning, problem-based learning, and emancipatory learning. A transformative education model for improved CBT management developed through this research focuses on six core areas to enhance CBT: CBT education, transformative pedagogies, partnerships and collaboration, community engagement, collective action, and local capacity building. The study calls on educational institutions to take an active role in CBT development and recommends that rural district councils establish dedicated tourism departments to ensure sustainable tourism development in their regions.

Key words

Community-based tourism, Tourism education, Transformation, Pedagogies, heritage-based education

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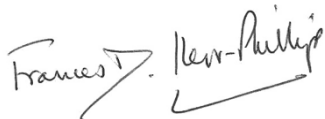
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This document certifies that I have edited the dissertation indicated above for English language, grammar, spelling, sentence construction, and clarity.



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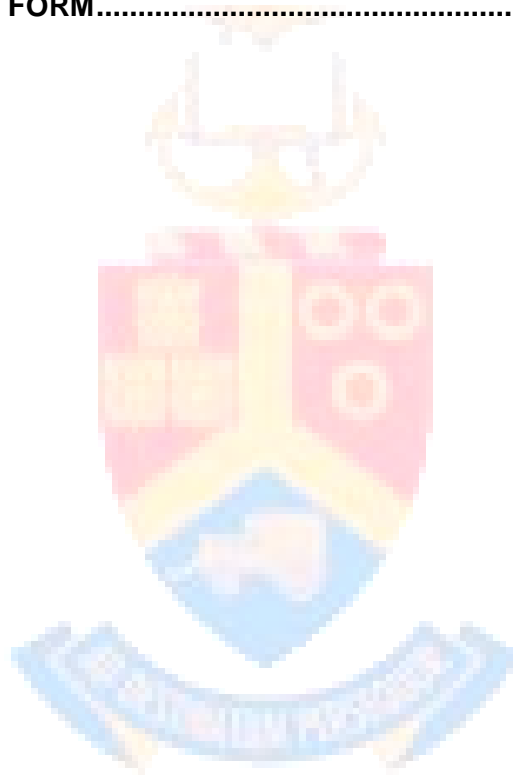
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List of Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-Based Organisations
CBT	Community-based tourism
CBTE	Community-Based tourism enterprises
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
MOTHI	Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
PA	Protected Areas
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RBL	Research Based Learning
RDC	Rural District Councils
SD	Sustainable Development
SDT	Sustainable Development Theory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TALC	Tourism Area Life Cycle
TLT	Transformative Learning Theory
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIDCO	Village Development Committees
WADC	Ward Development Committees
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
ZIMPARKS	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
ZTA	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 presents an outline of the study. This inquiry is centred on the premise that community-based tourism enterprises (CBTE) in Zimbabwe are under-performing and at the same time the tourism curriculum at the bachelor's degree level is not adequately covering the concept of community-based tourism (CBT). In this regard, the research aims to investigate the perceptions of stakeholders on CBT, the challenges faced in CBT and whether the current Zimbabwean tertiary education tourism curriculum is addressing the challenges affecting community-based tourism. The chapter highlights the rationale and motivation for the study, research focus, methodology and the research questions on which the study is centred. A brief description of the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework guiding this research are also presented.

1.1 Background and Context

Zimbabwe offers a diverse range of attractions, from natural wonders to rich cultural experiences. The country boasts several nature and wildlife tourism sites, including Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, Great Zimbabwe, Mana Pools, Lake Kariba, and Matobo National Park (Matura and Mapira, 2018). Tourists are drawn to Zimbabwe by its stunning natural beauty, vibrant culture, opportunities for adventure, and warm hospitality.

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Table 1.1 Profile of Zimbabwean Tourists

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Africa	1133541	693281	269364	567819	1872656
Americas	121953	100112	20739	17070	101156
Asia	99638	47453	12634	12306	90358
Europe	208710	174544	69815	35570	184903
Middle East	8960	6593	1002	2114	9549
Oceania	29979	21798	7266	4477	35637
Local	2598585	2406008	1374796	951408	995652

Source: Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) available at: <https://zimbabwetourism.net/download-category/tourism-trends-and-statistics/>

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry has been recovering, with a steady increase in tourist arrivals since 2019, as shown in Table 1.1. Domestic tourism significantly contributes to overall tourist arrivals, with the primary purposes for visits, being leisure, business, meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) (ZTA, 2023). In addition to local tourists, Zimbabwe attracts regional and international visitors from across the globe. The majority of tourists come from Africa, Europe, the Americas, and Asia, while Oceania and the Middle East contribute a smaller, yet significant number of visitors as illustrated in Table 1.1.

Community-based tourism (CBT) in Zimbabwe became popular during the 1990s and was implemented under the Communal Areas Management for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) Programme. CAMPFIRE projects were funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The CAMPFIRE was created to address the communal management of resources and cultural heritage. It was inspired by a vision that blends traditional practices with a modern democratic approach, (Mazambani and Dembetembe, 2010). The program initially received funding from the government, and starting around 1994, it began to receive donor support from non-governmental organisations (NGO), such as USAID and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Nyaruwata 2011). CAMPFIRE projects operated successfully during the

time of funding, however, after the pulling of donor funding some of the projects were left struggling (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). The donor funding was pulled out in the 2000s due to the political and economic instability: the government's land reform policies, characterised by the violent seizure of the white-owned farms led to economic decline and loss of investor confidence (Chikuta, Russell and Ncube, 2021). There were also concerns about mismanagement and corruption as funds intended for community development were allegedly diverted without the communities' receiving benefits (Balint and Mashinya, 2005). With the aim to enhance the country's tourism industry's competitiveness, alleviate poverty, encourage safeguarding the environment, and preserve indigenous traditions and heritage, the Zimbabwean government called for a policy that fosters the growth of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs), (Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MOTHI), 2017).

CBT is still being widely promoted by international aid programmes in developing countries (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Idziak et al., 2015; Kavita and Saarinen, 2016; Richards and Hall, 2003). According to Fitzgerald and Stronza (2016), CBT is a tool for social justice, equity, resource and wealth redistribution, and empowerment. Community-based tourism ought to empower people and encourage independence, self-development, self-management as well as be transformative and redistributive in nature (Govender and Giampiccoli, 2018). CBT is based on three main principles: community ownership, full community engagement in management and ensuring that the community remains the primary beneficiary (Manowaluilou, 2017).

It has been noted that CBT initiatives are still to make a significant step towards empowering marginalised communities. One of the major reasons is the lack of knowledge and information on how to successfully manage CBTEs (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). Local participation and ownership of CBTEs are still limited. This in turn affects the running of CBTEs as well as affecting the conservation of natural resources and preservation of heritage. Building capacity should be seen as a necessary prerequisite and used as a means of educating individuals about tourism and empowering locals to meet a variety of needs related to their livelihoods (Asker et al., 2010). According to Khartishvili et al., (2020), several aspects need to be considered when building capacity in CBT, including politics, a fair division of labour, and benefits. Tourism education at tertiary level also plays a pivotal role in capacitating tourism students to develop and manage tourism enterprises.

Education is the catalyst for social and economic change; the standard of education determines a country's ability to progress (Sarkodie and Adom 2015). Tertiary education is important because it shapes and prepares the learner for the industry (Sarkodie and Adom, 2015). Farsari (2022) reiterates that it is important to assess the module content continually and update the curriculum to match the industry requirements. The inputs determine the outputs and outcomes, therefore if the curriculum fails to address certain key concepts this will affect the quality of output and ultimately affect the problem-solving capacity of the learner (Kunwar, 2018). Higher education institutions must constantly evaluate the applicability, efficacy, and quality of the programmes they provide to adapt to the shifting demands of the travel and tourism sector (Weheba, 2017). There is a need to understand the gap between education programmes and the industry requirements.

The earliest known tourism studies in higher education occurred at a university in Rome in 1925. This pioneering effort was likely driven by Italy's rich cultural heritage, historical significance, and the burgeoning tourist industry (Airey, Dredge, and Gross, 2015). The University of Vienna followed suit in 1936, incorporating tourism studies into its academic offerings. The trend continued in Switzerland, with universities in St. Gallen and Berne establishing tourism studies programmes in 1941. Switzerland's tourism education was likely influenced by its status as a global tourism destination, renowned for its natural beauty, luxury hospitality, and international diplomacy (Airey, Dredge, and Gross, 2015). Tourism began to appear more broadly in the academic repertory of higher education in the mid-1960s. Several universities worldwide currently offer degrees in tourism and hospitality. Zimbabwe has seven state universities offering tourism and hospitality management-related honours degrees. These are the University of Zimbabwe, Midlands State University, Manicaland State University, Great Zimbabwe University, Chinhoyi University of Technology, and Lupane University and Zimbabwe Open University.

The tourism industry has become large with many different disciplines that cannot be covered in one tourism and hospitality qualification (Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, 2017). Educators need to focus on coming up with a curriculum design that will equip the students so that they can meet specific requirements to be more productive and meaningfully contribute to the tourism industry (Pirson, 2021). According to Najjar and Bukhari (2017), insufficient training often renders graduates in the tourism and

hospitality fields unable to function efficiently in the workplace. There is a need to break down the major components of the tourism industry so that students may become more mainstream and more specialised. Several academicians have questioned whether the tourism curriculum offers sufficient skills training and have chastised educators in the tourism and hospitality fields for failing to update their programmes to reflect the shifting demands (Imbaya *et al.*, 2019; Najjar and Bukhari, 2017; Sarkodie, 2015; Weheba, 2017). The tourism education system at tertiary level is failing to prepare students for employment into the new forms of tourism and what is being covered in current curricula does not meet the requirements and patterns of the industry today (Sarkodie and Adom, 2015).

An analysis of the research on tourism-related education reveals that, globally, students are not sufficiently equipped for work in the industry and there is a scarcity of specialised labour (Asirifi *et al.*, 2013; Avornyo 2013; Wang 2010; Weheba 2017). Sarkodie and Adom (2015) argue that the gap has emerged because educators and the industry do not understand each other's perceptions. Further, Sarkodie and Adom (2015) observed that the difference in perceptions between educators and the industry is one of the reasons causing the gap between the education programmes and the industry to exist. Walker and Manyamba (2020) also observed that there is a need to transform the traditional classroom-based tourism pedagogy so that it can include hands-on training, field trips, and internships to provide experiential learning opportunities. Dirx, Espinoza and Schlegel (2018) opine that for transformative learning to occur educators should ensure that their curriculum has instrumental and communicative dimensions. According to Mezirow (1996) instrumental learning is considered technical in nature, gaining technical knowledge while communicative learning is based on our need to understand each other through language.

Scholars believe that tourism education at tertiary level has mainly been shaped by the Western ideologies, epistemologies and pedagogies and this has led to a Eurocentric approach in tourism education (Ayikuru, 2024; Sercombe, 2022; Wang, 2023; Young, 2017). Calls have been made to move away from the Eurocentric approach and incorporate Afro-centric ideologies, epistemologies and pedagogies in tourism education. According to Zhang (2018), Eurocentrism, restricts student's perspectives, and narrow their focus leading to a limited worldview. Sercombe (2022) highlighted the need to decolonise the tourism education curriculum and ensuring that

it integrates diverse knowledge systems and perspectives beyond Western frameworks. In the same vein, Young (2017), emphasised the importance of indigenous perspectives in the curriculum to promote a more equitable and socially just approach to tourism education.

Race et al. (2022) advocate for the decolonisation of the tourism curricula across various educational contexts, highlighting the importance of integrating diverse perspectives and fostering critical engagement in both schools and higher education. Building on this, Roth proposed a curriculum change framework grounded in Hiatt's ADKAR model which promotes awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement as essential stages in implementing transformative education reforms. Wang (2023) further contributes by introducing decolonial tools such as critical consciousness and culture circles which engage learners in examining socio-political structure and their own identities. In the context of tourism education, decolonising curriculum involves adopting pedagogies that can effectively challenge dominant power relations, cultivate critical reflection and elevate marginalised voices. This approach calls for inclusive classroom environments that support mutual understanding and community-building among diverse learners. Abotossaway and Pitt (2024) underscore the value of storytelling in curriculum design, particularly as a means of embedding Indigenous cultural knowledge and worldviews. Despite growing support for decolonisation, significant resistance persists, often stemming from institutional inertia, entrenched epistemological norms, and a lack of sustained commitment to transformative practices (Dei & Cacciavillani, 2024).

The tourism industry is responsible for significant social and environmental impacts. It is therefore important for students studying tourism to grasp the idea of sustainability as this will enable them to make decisions that will benefit the environment for both the present and future generations (UNESCO, 2017). Furthermore, the tourism industry is ever-changing due to the changes in customer preferences, climate, culture, socio-economic aspects, technology, and ecology (Della Lucia and Giudici, 2021). In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the industry is required to apply sustainable tourism practices and to shift from mass tourism to sustainable tourism. In Zimbabwe, the tourism industry is moving towards ecotourism and CBT. "Community Tourism (CBT) is one form of sustainable tourism that is community-owned, operated and managed

or coordinated at the community level that contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued socio-cultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage resources” (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2016: 2).

Changes in the tourism management approach, tastes and preferences need to be accompanied by relevant adjustments in the tourism education curriculum to meet the industry's requirements. Sarkodie and Adom (2015) recommended a close collaboration between the industry and educators so that the curriculum can be constantly up to date with the industry requirements. Tukamushaba and Okech (2011) suggested ongoing education and training at all levels (individual, community, institutional, governmental, civil society, and private sector) to build capacity through training workshops and seminars. It is important to develop sustainable tourism management technical skills intended to comprehend issues related to social justice, community development, empowerment, power relations, sustainability, and participation (Giampiccoli, 2015). Based on a document analysis and search of the South African Qualifications Authority, Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) found that there is a gap in degree-granting programmes and curricula for community-based tourism as well as capacity building. Thus, Belhassen and Caton (2011); Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) opine that educator should consider a CBT curriculum in higher education that can foster both the production of skilled workers and critical thinking skills.

A study focusing on South Africa done by Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017), found that there was no institution offering the CBT qualification. One of the conclusions of this research was that there is a gap in the curriculum and qualifications for community-based tourism (CBT). The research also indicated that globally community-based tourism was not being adequately covered in the tourism education curriculum. They proposed that having a higher education degree in tourism with a focus on CBT could be a factor in one's capacity and level of competence. While a sustainable tourism approach is being promoted worldwide, community-based tourism education is yet to receive enough attention from academics (Govender and Giampiccoli, 2018).

To bridge this perceived gap between academia and industry, a well-established curriculum framework for industry-education cooperation is necessary (Najar and

Bukhari, 2017). A critical analysis of the current management and implementation of the CBTEs, and their ability to fulfil conservation, economic, and other stated mandates is needed (Giampiccoli and Glassom, 2020). A critical review of the current tourism curriculum is also needed to establish whether the curriculum adequately covers issues of CBT considering that the Zimbabwean government is keen in establishing projects related to community-based tourism (National Tourism Policy of Zimbabwe, 2014).

1.2 Rationale and Motivation

After completing my undergraduate studies, I was well-versed in commercial aspects of managing tourism businesses but knew next to nothing in dealing with issues of social and environmental aspects related to tourism and local communities. I was keen to learn more about the social-ecological aspects of natural resources and how they affect tourism management, but that was not adequately covered during my undergraduate degree. More knowledge was needed to enable me to understand the subject and to solve complex problems in natural resources management and tourism. When I furthered my education with a master's degree in social ecology, I realised that I gained knowledge on aspects of community development, and institutional aspects of natural resources that are essential in sustainable tourism, particularly CBT. I believe that CBT is a concept that needs to be backed with education, training, and capacity building. Managers of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) should have a strong understanding of subjects of community development; and understand institutional aspects of natural resources, as well as heritage and culture. The focus on a CBT study has been driven by its growing national significance and transformative potential within Zimbabwe's development agenda. The Government of Zimbabwe, through its Tourism Master Plan, National Tourism Policy has expressed a strong commitment to promoting CBT as a strategic approach to foster inclusive economic growth, alleviate poverty particularly in rural and marginalised communities and enhance the country's tourism competitiveness. CBT also aligns with broader global and national priorities, such as environmental sustainability and the preservation of Zimbabwe's rich cultural and heritage assets. It is within context that I am motivated to contribute meaning fully to CBT development, both as an area of academic inquiry and as a practical vehicle for social transformation. This research

aims to generate knowledge that not only addresses national goals but also advances scholarly understanding of CBT as a tool for equitable development.

This background has therefore motivated me, to pursue a study critically examining the extent to which current tourism education prepares students for sustainable CBT management and to explore how the tourism curricula can be restructured to enhance knowledge and capacity-building in sustainability, community development and institutional aspects of natural resources. CBT education at university undergraduate level is important because it equips students with the knowledge and skills to engage communities as active participants in tourism development, promoting sustainability, inclusivity and local empowerment. By understanding the social, cultural and environmental and economic dimensions of CBT, students can design tourism initiatives that preserve heritage, enhance livelihoods and foster responsible travel practices, ultimately contributing to resilient and self-reliant communities.

Over the past 30 years, CBT has increased in popularity around the world as tourists are becoming more environmentally conscious and seeking ways to minimise their impact on the environment. Across the globe, scholars are in agreement that CBT plays a pivotal role in community empowerment, rural development, and conservation (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2020; Nova, 2021; Zielinski et al., 2021). CBT projects in Zimbabwe operated successfully during the time of donor funding during the 1990s, however, after the loss of donor funding, some of the projects were left struggling (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). In addition to funding, several community development initiatives in Zimbabwe were unsuccessful due to project managers' failure to consider local conditions and the contextual nature of CBT in its local context (Blackstock, 2005; Stone and Stone, 2011). This implies that the managers were not well capacitated to manage these enterprises, therefore depicting a gap between tourism education and industry expectations. Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou (2015), argue that educators teaching tourism should ensure that their programme remains adaptable to the constantly changing demands of the industry, given the ongoing changes in the global economic landscape.

To give students a life-changing educational experience that fosters their ability to solve difficult challenges, more focus on sustainability education in tourism pedagogies is needed from educators (Cotterell, Arcodia and Ferreira, 2017). Some

tourism scholars have observed that most tourism programmes are failing to equip students to enable them to solve major social, environmental, and economic problems (Belhassen and Caton, 2011; Boyle, Wilson and Dimmock, 2015; Wilson, 2015; Wilson and von der Heidt, 2013). It is crucial to examine why the current tourism education is failing to provide important skills needed in the industry as well as to critically review the current tourism education curriculum to ensure that it covers the critical areas of sustainable tourism (Mungai *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, the current tourism education curriculum does not effectively cover CBT (Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, 2017). A significant shift in tourist education is required to solve the mounting challenges that communities around the world are currently confronting (García-Rosell, 2014; Joppe and Elliot, 2015; Walker and Manyamba, 2020).

It has been observed that there is misalignment between tourism education and skills required for sustainable community-based tourism (CBT) development. While CBT has gained a global recognition for its role in rural development, community empowerment and conservation, its success in Zimbabwe has been inconsistent, largely due to lack of managerial capacity and insufficient integration of local contextual factors. Despite the increasing need for sustainability education in tourism, existing tourism curricula fail to adequately prepare students with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage CBT enterprises effectively. This is reflected by collapse of a number of CBT initiatives that are yet to be revived. Tourism education tends to emphasise commercial aspects while neglecting critical social, environmental and institutional dimensions of sustainable tourism.

1.3 Study focus

This study examines community-based tourism (CBT) and tourism education in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on assessing whether the current tourism education curriculum effectively addresses the challenges and complexities of CBT. It critically examines the extent to which the curriculum equips students and industry professionals with knowledge and skills necessary to foster sustainable CBT initiatives. Furthermore, the study investigates existing implementation and management models of CBT in Zimbabwe, identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities for enhancing their effectiveness in promoting sustainable development and community empowerment.

1.4 Purpose of the study

This study aims to develop a transformative tourism education model for improved CBT in Zimbabwe. The proposed model seeks to improve the tourism curriculum by integrating CBT principles effectively and positioning universities as key stakeholders in CBT development. It emphasises capacity building for both tourism students and local communities, ensuring that future graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to support sustainable tourism initiatives.

Additionally, the study aims to enhance the implementation of CBT projects by strengthening the role of peripheral communities and maximising their benefits and participation. A critical aspect of this approach is educating communities on the importance of conserving their heritage, culture and natural resources while leveraging them sustainably for economic and social development. Further, the study tries to come up with strategies to ensure that future professionals understand more sustainability and be prepared to address complex challenges related to conservation, community participation, benefit-sharing, and local ownership in CBT. Currently, there is a disconnect between tourism education and industry needs in Zimbabwe, as demonstrated by failure of many CBT enterprises established during the CAMPFIRE programme (MOTHI, 2017). Addressing this gap is essential for fostering a more resilient and effective CBT framework.

1.5 Research objectives

- i. To critically examine and interpret the perspectives, concerns and misconceptions of educators, employees and key stakeholders regarding community-based tourism in Zimbabwe.
- ii. To establish the extent to which the current tourism curriculum covers the concept of CBT.
- iii. To determine how tourism students may be better equipped to develop and manage Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs).
- iv. To develop a transformative education model for improved Community-Based Tourism (CBT) management.

1.6 Research Questions

- i. What are the views, concerns, and conceptions or misconceptions of policymakers, educators, managers, employees, tourists, and other stakeholders regarding Community-Based Tourism in Zimbabwe?
- ii. To what extent does the current tourism curriculum cover the concept of CBT?
- iii. What transformative pedagogical approaches can be employed in tourism education to enhance student's skills to manage CBTs?
- iv. How can the tourism curricula be restructured to integrate CBT?
- v. What is the proposed transformative tourism education model for tourism that can improve Community-Based Tourism (CBT) management?

1.7 Conceptual framework

The main contribution of the study to knowledge is to develop a transformative tourism education model for tourism that promotes capacitation of local communities and tourism students. The ultimate goal is to ensure the preservation of heritage sites and conservation of the natural resources which are the backbone of Zimbabwe's tourist attractions as well as to strengthen community participation in CBT. Further, the model will enhance the socio-economic development of local communities and encourage participation, involvement, and empowerment of local communities. The model of community-based tourism developed will be based on such factors as CBT education at the degree level, CBT education at the community level, relevant policies, socio-economic issues, and community-related issues (culture, beliefs, concerns, needs and rights). A mixed research methodology will be used to collect relevant data.

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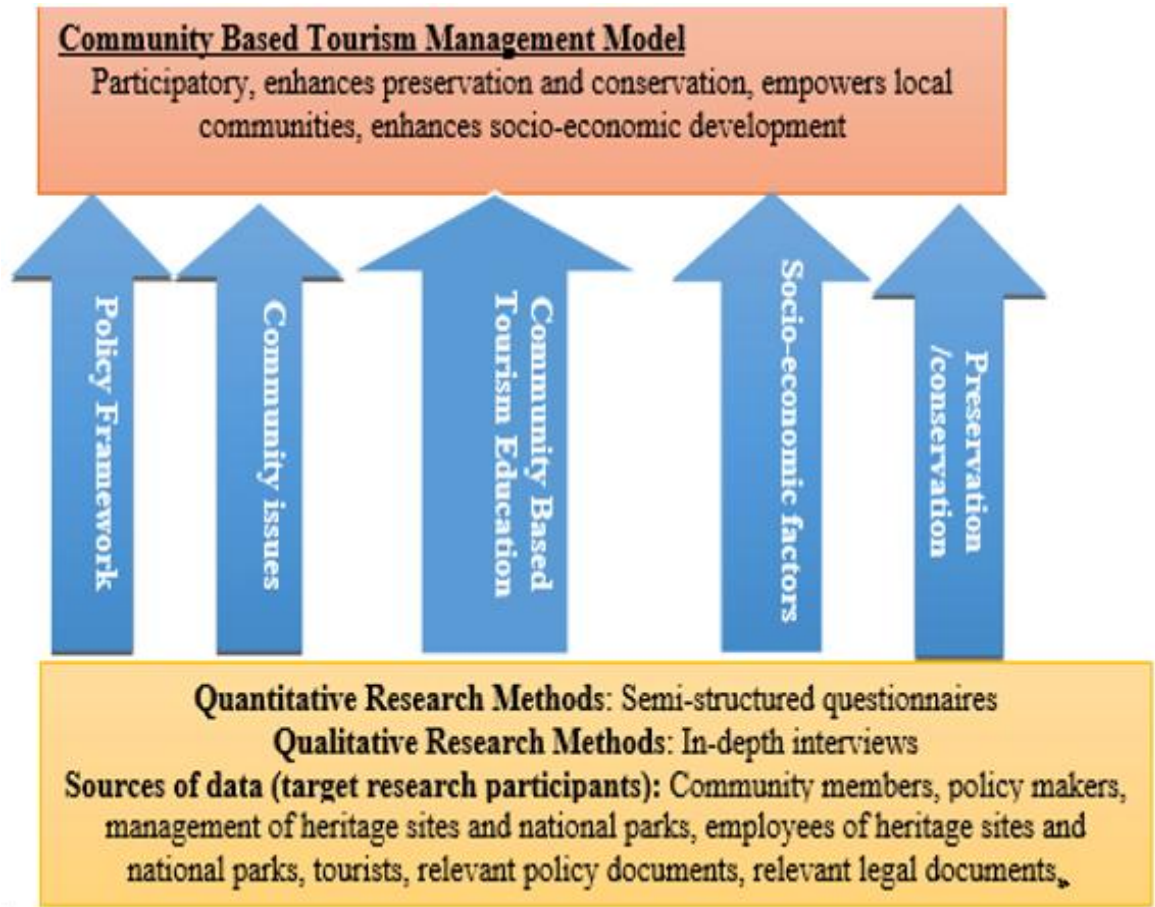


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework (Source: Author's Own Creation)

1.8 Theoretical Framework

Community-based tourism is founded on the principles of sustainable development theory. Resultantly the study will be guided by this framework. Sustainable development theory adopts a comprehensive approach aiming to harmonise economic growth, social inclusion and environmental conservation ensuring the needs of the present are met without jeopardising the ability of future generations to fulfil their own needs (Spijkers, 2018). The concept is built on three core pillars which are the economic, social and environmental sustainability (Mensah, 2019). The study will also be guided by the Transformative Learning Theory by Mezirow (1978). The theory states that learning and creating meaning is dependent on how students comprehend and redefine what they perceive. In accordance with transformational learning theory, students who receive new information should also critically reflect on what they already know, reviewing their prior concepts and understanding, and transforming their entire

worldview. It delves deeper into how learners understand and find meaning in their lives rather than just imparting knowledge. A significant change in perceptions occurs during this type of learning process; students begin to question everything they have ever been taught or believed in and view the world from new viewpoints in order to make room for fresh knowledge and understanding. This type of learning leads to complete openness to thought and understanding, according to many experts and learners alike. The study also makes use of the decolonisation theory. This theory critiques the appropriation of decolonial discourse by Western scholars and calls for a new framework that respects the epistemic value of indigenous knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatseni (2019). Decolonisation theory aims to dismantle power relations and knowledge frameworks that sustain racial, gender, and geographical hierarchies often stemming from the colonial world (Mignolo, 2005).

Community-based tourism is rooted in sustainable development theory, which provides a foundational framework for balancing economic, social and environmental priorities in tourism. This theoretical lens supports CBT's goal of ensuring that tourism benefits present communities without compromising future generations. Complementing this, the Transformative Learning Theory enriches the educational aspect by emphasising critical reflection, and personal growth enabling students to challenge conventional world views and adopt more inclusive and sustainable perspectives. Decolonisation theory further strengthens the framework by advocating for the recognition and integration of indigenous knowledge systems, challenging colonial legacies and promoting equity in knowledge production. Together these theories form a cohesive and critical foundation for understanding, teaching and practising CBT in a way that is inclusive, reflective and sustainable.

1.9 Research Methodology and Approach

This study applies a pragmatic paradigm that encourages the use of mixed approaches. The research approach will include elements of both positivist and interpretivist theoretical frameworks. The research will use a survey questionnaire, which is one of the main tools of a positivist paradigm to produce findings that can be generalised. The researcher will also use interpretivist tools such as key informants to find explanations of emerging trends from quantitative research.

1.10 Research approach

A mixed methods approach, using the concurrent triangulation design will be adopted in generating data for this study, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches enable the researcher to leverage the strength of each method while reducing their individual limitations. This method also enables a more in-depth interpretation and comprehension of the data being gathered (Hughes and Sharrock, 2016). The research will use a case study research design as well as the descriptive design. The case study approach will produce in-depth insights into the current tourism education curriculum to ensure that it covers the critical areas of sustainable tourism. Quantitative and qualitative methods will be employed to create a deep grasp of the industry's requirements. More than one method will be used for every objective to improve the reliability of the results obtained and to check for inconsistencies in some of the research methods that are going to be used in the study. Target groups or organisations where data will be collected include Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS), CAMPFIRE Association, Rural District Councils (RDCs), State Universities offering tourism degrees and university students. Incorporating insights from regulatory authorities, local governance bodies, academia and students will ensure that the transformative education model is holistic, inclusive and sustainable.

The triangulation method will be applied which includes both quantitative and qualitative techniques: such as semi-structured questionnaires, direct observation, key informants, and photographs to capture the community voices and their environments as much as possible. The research will make use of online platforms such Google Forms and Zoom as well as telephone interviews. The advantages of using online platforms are that they are flexible, and one can reach many respondents without necessarily travelling to the respondents and overcoming geographic barriers. In cases where virtual meetings will be impossible, the researcher will use the traditional ways of going physically to the respondents.

1.11 Sampling

The study will make use of convenient sampling techniques as well as purposive sampling. Using a purposive sampling technique, an informant is specifically chosen

based on their attributes (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). Once the researcher has determined what information is necessary, they search for sources who possess the necessary knowledge or experience and are willing to share it. Convenient sampling is a type of nonprobability or non-random selection in which study participants are chosen for inclusion based on practical considerations such as convenience of accessibility, closeness, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate.

1.12 The study overview

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the entire study, providing the reader with a broad perspective of the thesis. The chapter gives an introduction and the background of the study. A brief rationale, motivation, focus, and purpose of the study are also presented. The conceptual and theoretical framework guiding the study are also concisely discussed. The chapter also give a brief description of the methodology to be used in the study. Lastly, the chapter outlines the chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the entire study.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review. In this chapter, the concepts of sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, and tourism education are discussed in detail based on insights from different scholars, both nationally and internationally.

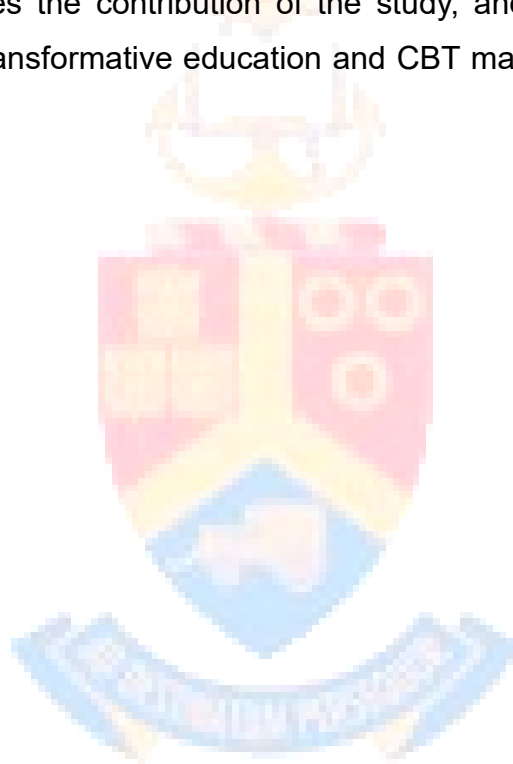
Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of the theoretical framework of the study making the study context clearer.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used in this research. The methodological issues on the data collection and methodological procedures that guided the entire thesis are laid out in this chapter. The research philosophy that guides the thesis is also covered in this chapter, with a note on how this study combines positivist and interpretivist paradigms. The chapter also discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methodology.

Chapter 5 presents the data collected and analysed. This chapter gives detailed information on what the researcher found. Distinct from other chapters, this chapter presents primary information, and empirical data generated by the researcher and respondents. Data is presented in the form of graphs, word clouds, narrations, and direct quotes.

Chapter 6: The meaning of the research findings and how these results relate to literature is discussed in this chapter. This section explores the importance and relevance of the research results. A thorough explanation and evaluation of the findings of the literature is given. The lenses and position of the researcher are also reflected in the chapter.

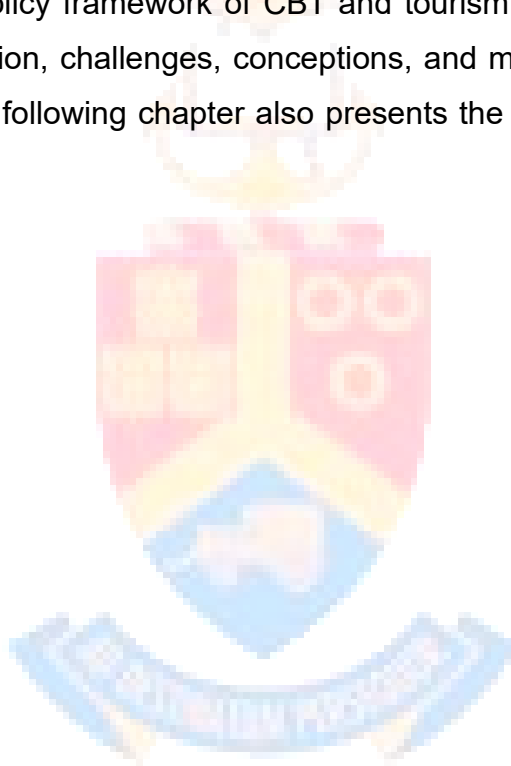
Chapter 7 gives the conclusion and recommendations of the study. This chapter highlights and discusses the contribution of the study, and the applicability of the research. Models for transformative education and CBT management are presented in this chapter.



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1.13 Summary

The main thrust of this chapter was to introduce and provide a background to the study. A brief rationale for carrying out this study was also outlined. In addition, the chapter includes a discussion of the conceptual and theoretical framework guiding the overall thesis. An overview of the whole thesis was also highlighted. The following chapter is the literature review, which concentrates on the challenges, conceptions, misconceptions, and policy framework of CBT and tourism education at the tertiary level. CBT implementation, challenges, conceptions, and misconceptions as well as tourism education. The following chapter also presents the empirical and theoretical review.



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CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the largest in the world and it is ever changing due to the changes in customer preferences, climate, culture, socio-economic aspects, technology and ecology. Thomas Cook pioneered tourism in the 19th Century, and it advanced to mass tourism in the 1950s after World War II (Hunter, 2004). Mass tourism was characterised by a high concentration of tourists in a single location, generating significant revenue that contributes to economic growth (Harrison and Sharpley, 2017). However, mass tourism had its own negative effects on the economy and the environment. There were high levels of leakages whereby the host communities would not benefit anything despite the high revenues, yet they were the ones who bore most of the negative impacts of tourism (Milano et al., 2019). The negative impact of mass tourism brought about a shift to another form of tourism, alternative tourism, then later sustainable tourism; tourism that is in line with the concerns of the sustainable development goals (Gay, Decroly, and Vonau, 2018).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) emerged in the public arena in the early 1990s and has gained so much attention from many nations because of its potential for community development. Despite being in the public and academic arena for about three decades, the concept has not been fully embraced and absorbed in the tourism education curriculum (Govender and Giampiccoli, 2019). A number of publications on CBT have been published, but it is still not very visible in the tourism education modules. Zimbabwe came up with a tourism policy that was in support of CBT but there has not been a comprehensive strategy for its development (Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, 2017). This indicates a mismatch between policy, tourism education and capacity building, as a result CBT enterprise that are not thriving.

2.1 Understanding Community-Based Tourism

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) “is one form of sustainable tourism that is community owned, operated and managed or coordinated at the community level that contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued socio-cultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage resources” (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2016: 2). CBT is a form

of tourism that aims to meet the goals of sustainable development (Stone and Stone, 2011). It emerged in the mid-1990s, stemming from the concepts of sustainability and community development (Giampiccoli, 2015). It emerged as a reaction to the negative impacts of tourism (Weaver and Lawton, 2012). The concept of CBT is also linked to the concept of community-based development, which is rooted in alternative development that can be traced back to the 1950s (Giampiccoli, 2015). Community-based development puts emphasis on self-reliance, empowerment, participation and relevance of community needs, the key concepts in CBT. According to Giampiccoli (2015), the alternative development approach is the foundation of community-based tourism and therefore, issues related to inequality, sustainability, and empowerment are present in CBT.

Scholars have different views on the classification of CBT, whether it is a form of alternative tourism or a form of sustainable tourism. Some scholars believe that CBT is a form of alternative tourism which aims to create opportunities and maximise benefits for local community members (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2019). The forms of alternative tourism began to appear in the 1970s and early 1980s under different names and various models, though all models were trying to address the negative environmental and social impacts of mass tourism. Additionally, there has been an argument made that CBT is derived from the alternative development approach, which primarily dates back to the 1970s (Telfer, 2009; Zapata et al., 2011).

The term alternative tourism has its own challenges, and there is neither an agreed definition of alternative tourism nor the forms of alternative tourism. Macleod (1998) and Herms (2006) proposed four key principles to consider when defining alternative tourism: engaging and consulting the local community, ensuring environmental sustainability, respecting local culture and religious traditions, and recognising the destination's carrying capacity. According to Holden, alternative tourism "is a process which promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities. It seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity, and equality amongst participants" (Holden, 1984, cited in Smith and Eadington, 1992:18). Therefore, alternative tourism can be described as a type of tourism that aligns with natural, social and community values, fostering meaningful interaction and shared experiences between host and guests (Smith and Eadington, 1992).

On the other hand, ASEAN (2016), Stone and Stone (2011) and Dodds et al. (2018) all recognise CBT as a form of sustainable tourism that originated from the sustainability concept. The concept of sustainable tourism evolved as a response to the idea that the positive effects that tourism could have on the host communities could be overshadowed by negative economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts (Dorin-Paul, 2013). The concept of sustainability was initially presented by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUNC, 1980) in its World Conservation Strategy, originating from the environmental movement of the 1970s. The concept of sustainability was later developed into Sustainable Development in 1987 (Fien and Tilbury, 2002).

As the need for sustainable development continued to rise, most industries looked for ways they could incorporate sustainable development in their fields. In the mid-20th century, the world experienced a significant demographic transition characterised by a sharp increase in population. This population boom intensified the demand for natural resources, leading to heightened environmental stress (Galor, 2012). As the consequences of unchecked growth became more apparent, concerns about the depletion of resources and environmental degradation grew (O'Sullivan, 2020). This period of rapid change and its impact on the planet spurred the development of the concept of sustainability, emphasising the need to balance human progress with the preservation of the environment for future generations (Reher, 2011). The concept of sustainability highlights a set of ethical values and principles that harmoniously direct behaviours, taking into account both economic objectives and the effects that actions have on society and the environment (Font and McCabe, 2017). The concept has become one of the most strategic issues for many industries; the prefix 'sustainable' is being used in various fields, including tourism.

Tourism entered the biodiversity debates because of the need to lessen its detrimental effects on the environment and to empower host communities. Regulations for Biological Diversity and Sustainable Tourism (Convention on Biological Diversity in 2001) brought forth the concept of sustainable tourism. United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2001) defined sustainable tourism as "tourism development which meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled

while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems”.

Isaak (2010) highlighted that there are various aspects of alternative tourism that foster societal and ecological restructuring. Furthermore, Isaak (2010) opined that CBT and sustainable tourism are all forms of alternative tourism, such as ecotourism and pro-poor tourism. Triarchi and Karamanis (2017) observed that the term “alternative tourism” has been replaced by sustainable tourism. Literature does not clearly state whether alternative tourism is different from sustainable tourism, or whether sustainable tourism evolved from alternative tourism, or if it is a form of alternative tourism. However, scholars are in agreement that alternative tourism and sustainable tourism are concepts that evolved as an alternative solution to the unwanted effects of mass tourism (Christou, 2012; Triarchi and Karamanis, 2017; Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2019).

Despite all the terminological contestations that surround the concept of CBT, scholars agree that CBT is an alternative to mass tourism (Dodds and Galaski, 2016). It addresses the negative impacts that are caused by tourism and endeavours to strike a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects, as well as encourage community participation and engagement. Using the definitions and characteristics of alternative tourism and sustainable tourism, CBT may therefore, be classified as a form of sustainable tourism. “Sustainable tourism development aims for economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality, social equity, visitor fulfilment, local control, community well-being, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency, and environmental purity” (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2013). Similarly, CBT prioritises community governance, community management, participation, and the improvement of the well-being and preservation of natural and cultural heritage (Graciano and Holanda, 2020). CBT is a type of sustainable tourism that converts avaricious tourism to eco-friendly travel. However, research on community-based tourism as a sustainable tourism strategy is still limited (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Joo et al., 2019), therefore scholarly literature that clearly connects CBT and sustainability lacks in-depth analysis (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023).

The understanding of CBT is still formative and complex such that so much is yet to be learned and understood (Naik, 2014). Prakoso et al (2020) also noted that a number

of studies on CBT have been mainly focusing on defining the terms and challenges without unearthing CBT as a concept, the challenges and opportunities that exist in the present and future. It is important to understand what CBT really is in order to successfully implement the projects. CBT is often confused with other forms of sustainable tourism such as rural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, and pro-poor tourism (Suansri, 2003). Hamzah and Khalifah (2009) view CBT as a development tool that supports and empowers locals living in rural areas to manage their tourism resources. This viewpoint, however, limits CBT to tourism activities that happen in rural areas only, implying that it is a form of rural tourism. In reality CBT is not only for rural communities, but it can also be implemented in urban areas and slums (Vongvisitsin and King, 2024; Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2019).

The community-based tourism guidelines of the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MOTHI) Zimbabwe state that CBTEs can be located in rural areas, urban areas, use facilities such as religious buildings, can be located near rivers, dams, mountains and protected areas (MOTHI, 2017). The Caribbean Community-Based Tourism Enterprise Handbook (2019) considers CBT as a subset of adventure tourism and cultural tourism. Suansri (2003) observed a variety of names for CBT enterprises such as agrotourism, rural tourism, community-based ecotourism, adventure tourism, and homestays.

Table 2.1 List of selected community-based tourism sites and the nature of tourism

	CBTE	Province	District
1.	Murehwa Cultural Center	Mashonaland East	Murehwa
2.	Sunungukai Eco-tourism	Mashonaland East	Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe
3.	Ngomakurira Ecotourism	Mashonaland East	Goromonzi
4.	Mukaera Arts and Crafts center	Mashonaland Central	Guruve
5.	Tengenenge Arts and Crafts	Mashonaland Central	Guruve
6.	Mamvuradonha Wilderness	Mashonaland Central	Muzarabani
7.	Nyami Nyami CAMPFIRE Project	Mashonaland West	Kariba
8.	Muni Lodge	Mashonaland West	Makonde
9.	KoMpisi	Matabeleland North	Hwange
10.	Painted Dogs	Matabeleland North	Hwange
11.	Ejikweni Crafts Centre	Matabeleland South	Matopos
12.	Bulawayo Township Tour	Bulawayo Metropolitan	Bulawayo Metropolitan
13.	Old Bulawayo	Bulawayo Metropolitan	Bulawayo Metropolitan
14.	Chesvingo Cultural Village	Masvingo	Masvingo

15.	Shona Village	Masvingo	Masvingo
16.	Gairezi Ecotourism	Manicaland	Nyanga
17.	Mahenye CAMPFIRE project	Manicaland	Chipinge
18.	Mapembe Nature Reserve	Manicaland	Mutare
19.	Harare Township Tour	Harare Metropolitan	Harare Metropolitan
20.	Naletale Ruins	Midlands	Gweru
21.	Ndawora Cultural Center	Midlands	Shurugwi
22.	Iganyana Arts and Crafts	Matabeleland North	Hwange
23.	KoS'nqoeNgekhaya	Bulawayo Metropolitan	Bulawayo Metropolitan
24.	Cecil John Rhodes Ndebele Cultural Village	Matabeleland South	Matopos

Source: (Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality, 2017)

An extract of a list of community-based tourism sites (Table 2.1) shows that CBTs can offer various forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, accommodation, and arts and craft. The thin line that separates and differentiates CBT from other similar forms of tourism is local community ownership, involvement, participation and management in the tourism activities as identified by Saayman and Giampiccoli (2016). Therefore, enterprises can venture into adventure tourism, cultural tourism, agrotourism and urban tourism. The involvement of locals goes beyond employment in the tourism activities to active participation in decision-making (Nagarjuna, 2015). Saayman and Giampiccoli (2016) further identified a number of characteristics of CBT that make it different from any other tourism enterprises which include, indigenously owned, should be part of other diverse livelihood strategies, should promote community development, empowerment of local communities, and conservation of natural resources, culture and heritage. Anuar and Sood (2017) also highlighted that CBT should support the indigenous communities in generating income, diversify their livelihood sources, preserve culture, conserve the environment and provide educational opportunities. CBT does not only contribute to household income, in some cases it contributes to the development of community assets such as clinics, schools, boreholes, roads and funding of other livelihood sources (Matura, 2022).

The question that arises then is if an individual or family within a community establishes a tourism enterprise in the community, can that enterprise be called a CBT, or it will be any form of tourism such as rural tourism? Zielinski et al., (2020) opine that individually owned rural tourism enterprises or agritourism can be considered CBTs only if they are regulated and controlled by community organisations. Suansri (2003) suggests that a CBT enterprise should benefit locals of different status directly through

provision of employment and indirectly through infrastructural developments. In any case, a tourism business in a community is usually able to provide employment and contributes to infrastructural developments (Liu, Chiang and Ko, 2023). Proceeds from CBTs do not go to an individual pocket but are shared among members of the community or channelled towards community development projects (Phuong et al., 2020; Suansri, 2003). The benefit sharing aspects then differentiates individual or family tourism enterprises in a specified community from CBT for proceeds are not used for the benefit of the whole community. Consequently, cultural tourism, agrotourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, rural tourism, slum tourism, and urban tourism can only be considered as community-based tourism (CBT) if the local community is actively involved in both the management and decision-making processes, and if the benefits are shared collectively among the community rather than with individuals. As observed, CBTEs offer different kinds of products and the key aspects that differentiate CBTs are community involvement and benefit sharing. This can however be different in the case of homestays, where the proceeds go directly to the host community, and they have proved to be more beneficial to the host communities (Pasanchay and Schott, 2021). A part or all members of the community should be involved in the decision making or management of the enterprises, and benefits should be shared within the community or contribute to community development projects according to the Zimbabwean Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MOTHI, 2017).

In Zimbabwe, separating CBT from the CAMPFIRE program is also difficult. However, it is very important to understand CBT and separating it from the CAMPFIRE projects for better implementation and establishment of more enterprises. Although both concepts emphasise community involvement, they differ significantly in their focus, implementation and objectives. CAMPFIRE is primarily focused on natural resource management, particularly wildlife conservation, in communal areas. It aims to give local communities control over wildlife and natural resources, allowing them to benefit economically from these resources through sustainable practices (Matseketsa et al., 2019). Conversely, CBT is centred on tourism activities that are owned, managed or directed by local communities (Prakoso et al., 2020). CAMPFIRE projects engage local communities primarily in wildlife conservation, empowering them to sustainably manage natural resources and benefit from conservation efforts. In contrast, (CBT)

takes a broader approach, not only promoting conservation but also involving communities in designing, managing, and delivering tourism experiences. This dual focus allows CBT to foster economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship, providing communities with greater control over tourism activities and ensuring more equitable benefits. In essence, while both CAMPFIRE and CBT aim to empower local communities, CAMPFIRE is more conservation-oriented, focusing on managing natural resources, whereas CBT is tourism-oriented, focusing on creating sustainable and culturally respectful tourism experiences. The CAMPFIRE project involved several stakeholders in the implementation process leading to bureaucratic structures (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). However, some CBTs do not require many people in authority. The community cohesion is key.

Emerging debates on CBT ownership and management are centred around, who owns the enterprises and who should manage the enterprises. Dangi and Jamal (2016) noted that CBTs should be owned and managed by the community for the benefit of the community. This then raises another question on quantifying the community, is it everyone in the community or part of the community or individual members and families that can engage in CBT? According to Zapata et al. (2011), one or more community members can own and manage the CBT enterprises. Warinda and van der Merwe (2023) opined that CBT, like any other livelihood diversification strategy, should not be for everyone in the community but for those interested in tourism and willing to partake in the development, planning and management. CBT initiatives can come in different sizes, ranging from joint ventures, individual community ownership, employment in community tourism and partnerships with external parties (Dodds et al., 2018). CBT ownership can be best explained using the different CBT ownership models as well as understanding who initiated the project. There are a number of CBT management models that have been so far identified which include community-owned enterprises, community partnerships or joint ventures with either the state or private investor (National Department of Tourism, 2016). The local community members may solely manage CBT enterprises, however, in most cases they may have limited financial resources and capacity (Yanes, 2019).

In cases where local communities do not have capacity, they can form partnerships or joint ventures with government agencies, tourism industry players, universities and NGOs (Dewi et al., 2017). Mtapturi and Giampiccoli, (2019) also suggested that these

partnerships can be internal where the partner is involved in every aspect of the CBT while in external partnerships, the partner may offer specific services such as marketing, capacity building, quality control. Giampiccoli and Glassom (2020), however, proposed that these partnerships should be transitional, mainly for expert advice. Further, Giampiccoli and Glassom (2020) also strongly suggested that communities should try to avoid internal partnerships and settle for external partnerships to ensure that they remain in full control of their enterprises. In the same vein, Prakoso et al. (2020) emphasised that the tourism product and business itself should not be part of a partnership implying that in partnerships communities should safeguard their indigenous knowledge and culture and natural resources and should remain in control of their products. Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2013) also noted that CBT initiated by the government and non-governmental organisations are usually associated with uneven power distribution and top-down models which can cause resentment within communities.

2.2 Community-based tourism products

Community-based tourism products include homestays, cultural heritage, ecotourism, nature-based activities, and culinary experiences (MOTHI, 2017). Members of the community or individual households offer homestays whereby they open their homes to offer accommodation, food and beverage as well as an opportunity to engage with their families' tourists (Suansri, 2003). Homestays provide visitors with an authentic cultural experience while generating income for local households. Homestays are a form of CBT product that can be offered by individual families and can be owned by individual households and families within a community. Zielinski et al., (2020) however, emphasised that for individual tourism businesses to qualify to be CBTs they should be regulated by a community organisation. Previous research findings also concur that CBTs should be regulated by the community. Goodwin and Santill (2009) noted that community regulation ensures that locals have control over tourism activities, leading to empowerment and ownership leading to sustainability. Tosun (2006) also observed that when communities regulate CBT, they can ensure that economic benefits remain within the community, ultimately reducing leakage and increasing local income. Conversely, Zapata et al., (2011) noted that in some cases community governance structures can sometimes be weak or prone to conflicts, especially in areas with diverse or divided cultures.

Existing culture in any given area may be an attraction in community-based tourism product making culture a community asset (Prakoso et al. 2020). Pitman and Green (2020) noted that cultural heritage incorporates the intangible aspects of an ethnic group, and the way of living that is usually passed from one generation to the other. Community members play a crucial role in cultural tourism as they can offer cultural tours and workshops giving insights to visitors on local traditions, crafts, cuisine, and lifestyles (Zielinski et al., 2020). Tourists' experiences may include visits to cultural sites, participation in traditional ceremonies and hands-on activities such as the opportunity to participate in traditional cooking, food tasting, farm to market experiences and connecting with local producers. These experiences showcase the culinary heritage of the community and support food producers by getting some income from sales to tourists (Dangi and Jamal, 2016). Community members are usually the tourists guides and the story tellers giving tourists an opportunity to learn about the community's history, customs and traditions directly from the community. Members of the community may also produce and sell artisanal crafts, handmade products and souvenirs that reflect the local culture and traditions. Visitors can purchase these items as mementos of their experience and contribute to the economy.

Cultural heritage has benefited a number of tourist destinations through stimulating their economies and community development. According to Richards (2016) during the 1980s, cultural tourism was recognised as a viable niche with a potential to attract a number of tourists. UNWTO (2019) observed that approximately 40% of all travel comprises of cultural tourism and it has contributed to economic growth of many destinations. There are a number of elements of culture that include religion, games, health, economy, arts and communication that can be converted into tourism products (Matura, 2022). Investing in the preservation, maintenance, and revival of cultural heritage sites can result in an increase in demand for cultural tourism (UNESCO, 2021). When the community is aware of the commercial value of their culture, they tend to sustainably manage and preserve their natural and cultural environment (Prakosa et al., 2020). Conversely, if not carefully planned, cultural tourism may have negative impacts on the community. Commodification of culture, overcrowding and pollution may be some of the negative impacts of cultural tourism (UNWTO, 2019).

Community-based tourism may also encompass activities such as exploring natural areas, wildlife and ecological sites, engaging in activities such as hiking, bird watching,

wildlife safaris, photography and nature walks, and this can be referred to as community-based ecotourism. Ecotourism is viewed as an ideal strategy to enhance economic development while supporting conservation efforts and sustainable resource management (Triarchi and Karamanis, 2017). Ecotourism has a potential to generate long-term benefits that can enhance community infrastructural development if proceeds are well distributed (Weaver, 2014). According to Anandaraj (2015), community-based ecotourism has the potential to cooperatively guide tourists into seeking new experiences and learn about natural areas and diverse culture. Ecotourism has been hailed as a strategy for hopefully providing sustainable development, however, if it is not well implemented, it can lead to negative environmental and social impacts (Hill and Gale, 2016.)

2.3 Rationale and significance of CBT

Over the past three decades CBT has gained recognition as nations and visitors aim to minimise their impact on the natural environment. Strong arguments have been put forward in support of CBT playing a crucial role in the conservation of wildlife and natural resources, rural development, and community empowerment around the world (Giampiccoli and Glassom, 2020). Scholars suggests that tourism can effectively stimulate rural economic development by providing economic benefits to local communities, enhancing destination promotion, improving the quality of the tourist experience and environmental awareness (Lee and Jan, 2019; van der Merwe, 2016). However, there is still much to explore in research on the connection between tourism and the widening power and wealth disparities brought about by globalisation and neo-liberal capitalism (Fletcher, 2023). Community-based tourism is believed to promote social justice and equality, as well as addressing the limited exploration of how tourism intersects with widening disparities in wealth and power linked to neoliberal capitalism and globalisation (Ateljevic et al. 2007). CBT attempts to address questions of cultural injustice and distributive justice rooted in unequal resource endowments (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2019).

In developing countries rural communities have largely depended on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, agriculture alone has not been able to guarantee sufficient food security; the poor in the rural areas have struggled to ensure food security status by participating in diversification activities (Lenao and Saarinen, 2015). Households in rural areas now earn an increasing share of income from non-farm sources. For rural

people, tourism is one component of rural development that has the ability to generate income through various business opportunities, employment opportunities and sharing of benefits in the case of community-based ecotourism developments. CBT activities in rural areas can be an important source of livelihood diversification strategies (Ashley et al., 2001). A number of opportunities have been created for rural communities to earn income through the conservation of local ecosystems and culture. Tourism is a promising alternative for rural livelihood diversification and is identified as a possible means through which sustainable development can be achieved (Rogerson and van der Merwe, 2016; Schmallegger and Carson, 2010).

Financial benefits for both local people and private industry can be generated through tourism activities. The potential contribution of CBT to socioeconomic development of local people has led donors such as USAID, United Nations, and Netherland Development Organization to fund the development of these projects (MOTHI, 2017). CBT has gained popularity in recent years because of its ability to reduce physical, social, behavioural and psychological impacts. It fosters environmental and cultural awareness as well as respect, while creating positive experiences for both visitors and locals. This form of tourism also delivers direct financial support for environmental conservation. The activities undertaken provide guests with incredible experiences that heighten their awareness of the political, environmental and social contexts of the host countries (Weaver, 2014). Community-based tourism (CBT) is a promising future economic sector worldwide (Balmford et al., 2015; Heagney et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2019).

CBT has the potential not only to enhance the livelihoods of host communities but also to encourage host communities to ensure biodiversity conservation, and the preservation of heritage and culture in their communities (Kim et al., 2019; Lee and Jan, 2019; Mellon and Bramwell, 2016; Musavengane and Kloppers, 2020; Sene-Harper et al., 2019). This form of tourism reduces economic leakages, while strengthening local connections, empowering community members and fostering a sense of ownership among them. CBT benefits the local communities, proceeds from tourism have to be shared equally, or invested in community development (Dodds, Ali, and Galaski, 2018; Lee, 2013). If CBT is well managed, the quality of life for communities may be improved, livelihood sources increased through opportunities to sell local products and ultimately reducing poverty (Lee, 2013). CBT has the potential

of boosting family income thereby reducing poverty (Croes, 2014) and increasing the school attendance of children. It promotes infrastructural development of roads and other amenities making it easier for community members to access services that were previously inaccessible. Community development leads to job creation thereby alleviating the problem of rural-urban migration. CBT also attract investors, (Nova, 2021).

CBT enhances environmental conservation. Tietenberg and Lewis (2016) believe that valuable natural resources create incentives for local communities and other stakeholders to retain control over them. Regions with rich natural resources and unique ecosystems often develop strong environmental awareness among residents. Community-based tourism plays a vital role in supporting sustainable development by increasing social and ecological resilience, and ensuring that tourism benefits are sustainable and equitable (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Dodds et al., 2018). CBT offers residents opportunities to strengthen their social and traditional cultural identities while fostering greater social cohesion within the community (Choi and Turk,2011). Additionally, CBT promotes the recognition, appreciation and preservation of natural resources (Choi and Turk,2011). To ensure the sustainable development of community-based tourism, it is essential to enhance the local residents' overall life satisfaction. This can be achieved through addressing key areas such as ensuring the well-being of communities and addressing the health and safety issues (Woo et al., 2015). Through CBT communities can strategically enhance their capacity to adapt to thrive amidst changing environmental and economic conditions.

The Government of Zimbabwe is currently supporting the growth and expansion of community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) considering that the enterprises can boost national tourism competitiveness, alleviate poverty, increase environmental preservation and conservation as well as preserving local cultures and heritage (MOTHI, 2017). CBT is claimed to be a mediator for equity, empowerment, social justice, wealth and resources distribution (Fitzgerald et al., 2016). Resultantly, CBT ought to be transformative, redistributive, and empowering. It should also encourage self-reliance, self-planning, self-organising and management (Govender and Giampiccoli, 2018). Three main principles can be recognised in CBT: "community ownership, full community involvement in management, and the community as the primary beneficiary of the initiative" (Manowaluilou, 2017).

Community-based tourism is also in line with the sustainable development goals. Out of a total of 17 sustainable development goals (Figure 3), community-based tourism addresses about seven sustainable development goals. These include:

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 8: Ensuring a decent work and economic growth
- Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
- Goal 14: Life below water
- Goal 15: Life on land
- Goal 17: Partnership for the goals.



Figure 2.1 Sustainable development goals (Source: United Nations, 2015)

Community-based tourism can contribute to poverty alleviation by generating income for local communities through employment in CBT enterprises, provision of food and accommodation, sell of craft, agricultural products and many other tourism related services (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2020). Tourism developments in a destination can create decent employment, fostering economic growth that in rural and marginalised areas promotes destination development leading to sustainable cities and communities (Mazhande and Mamimine, 2020). Promoting CBT helps in livelihood

diversification, as well as reducing urban migration pressures and while preserving the natural environment and local cultures. CBT encourages sustainable practices through the promotion of cultural and environmental conservation, responsible consumption and use of natural resources, as well as minimising the negative impacts on the natural ecosystems (Raftopoulos, 2018). CBT also addresses Goals 14 and 15 (Figure 3), as it involves ecotourism initiatives that focus on preserving biodiversity, protecting marine and terrestrial habitats and promoting conservation efforts (Tietenberg and Lewis, 2018). On the other hand, CBT puts emphasis on collaboration between the locals and other stakeholders such as the government, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector to achieve sustainable development objectives which is the aim of Goal 17. CBT also fosters partnerships that promote inclusive and sustainable practices. Butcher and Gilchrist (2020) observed that partnerships provide expertise that might be lacking in CBT enterprises.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) occupies a strategic position within the sustainable tourism discourse, particularly in its potential to advance inclusive development and environmental stewardship. While CBT aligns with many dimensions of sustainable tourism, its effectiveness is not inherent or guaranteed. The sustainability potential of CBT is contingent upon how equitably resources and responsibilities are distributed among stakeholders, how cultural and environmental assets are protected from commodification and how deeply community empowerment is embedded in governance. Without continuous critical reflection and adaptive management, CBT risks being instrumentalised as a development panacea rather than a transformative tool. Therefore, its values in sustainable tourism lies not in its label but the extent to which it challenges extractive models and genuinely fosters social, economic and ecological resilience.

2.4.0. CBT guiding principles

Scholars have suggested several guiding principles for CBT. Suansri (2003:12) suggested ten guiding principles that guide the implementation of CBT which are:

- “Recognise, support and promote community ownership of tourism;
- Involve community members from the start in every aspect;
- Promote community pride;
- Improve the quality of life;

- Ensure environmental sustainability;
- Preserve the unique character and culture of the local area;
- Foster cross-cultural learning;
- Respect cultural differences and human dignity;
- Distribute benefits fairly among community members; and
- Contribute a fixed percentage of income to community projects;”

Hiwasaki (2006) highlighted four goals that should guide CBTs which are empowerment and ownership, conservation of resources, social and economic development and quality visitor experience. Similarly, Lela et al., (2023) noted six principles which are community involvement, cultural sensitivity, education and capacity building, respect for human rights and environmental sustainability and economic benefits. Despite the different classifications, these principles put emphasis on ensuring community involvement, participation and empowerment, community development, environmental and cultural sustainability. In this study these principles have been grouped into three main groups which are community development, community empowerment, conservation and preservation, as depicted in Figure 2.2.



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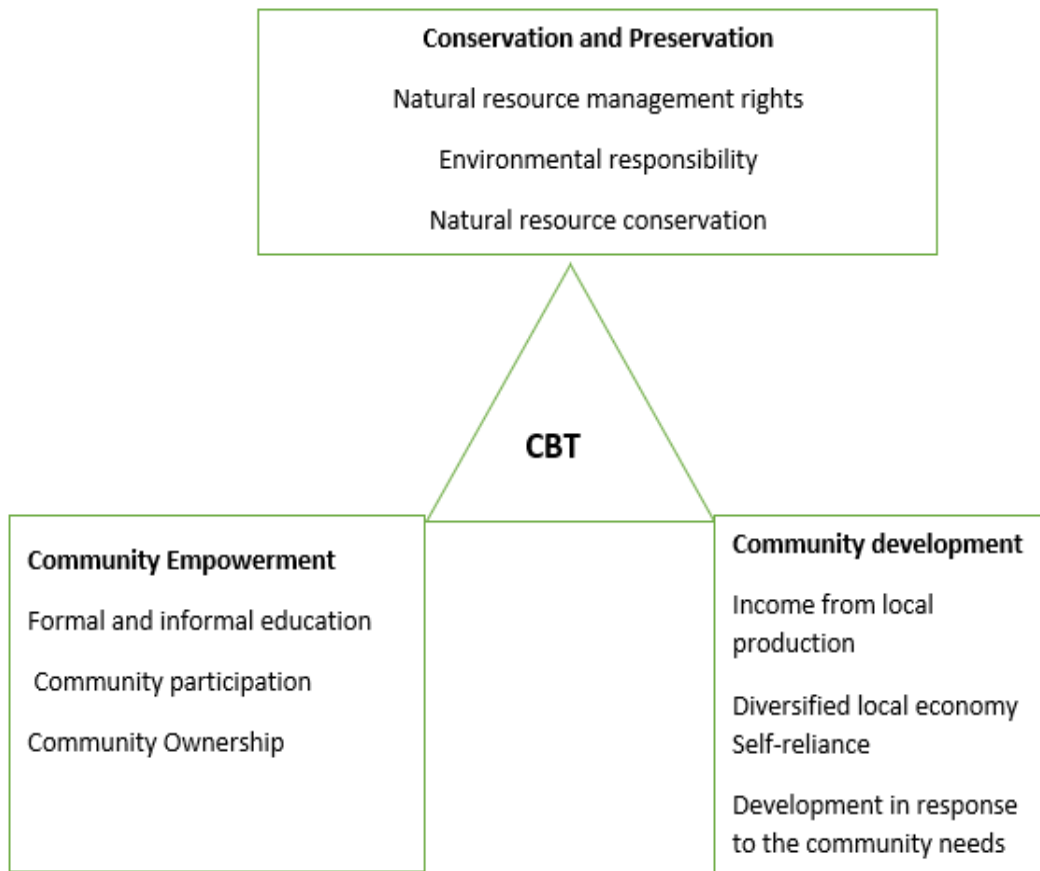


Figure 2.2 Community-based tourism guiding principles (Source: Author's own creation)

2.4.1 Community empowerment

Local participation in all aspects of the CBT and the fair distribution of resources is very important to ensure the success of CBT. Masud et al., (2017) noted that communities often lack alternative claimants. Resultantly, CBT can become a strategy that relies on marginalised communities to restore these degraded resources and improve their productivity, rather than directly accessing immediate economic opportunities (Anderson, Mehta and Schwarz, 2013). CBT should promote community pride and help in the preservation of culture and heritage of the host community while the host communities also enjoy the economic benefits.

The community must have a sense of ownership, the community must be able to set rules and regulations for environmental, cultural, and tourism management. A local organisation or mechanism, with the capacity to integrate tourism activities with community development initiatives is essential to effectively manage tourism. For CBT to function cohesively, it necessitates a communal understanding of structural division and the inclusion of external skills to achieve desired outcomes (Nova, 2021). The local leadership who holds the indigenous knowledge, norms and ideologies should be involved in all stages of development since they are the gatekeepers of the community. If properly implemented, CBT can promote cross cultural learning, encourage respect for cultural differences and human dignity while facilitating a mutual learning process between host and guest (Ladkin, 2005; Lee and Jan, 2019). A well-established CBT initiative should focus on educating both tourists and the local community about diverse cultures and lifestyles, while promoting awareness of natural and cultural conservation as well as encouraging self-evaluation (Liu et al., 2017; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014). Effective community organisation is also crucial for the success of CBT which includes forming a management committee composed of community members and fostering collaborative processes to enhance cooperation and commitment among participants (Sawatsuk et al., 2018).

The effective distribution of knowledge in CBT demands not only a willingness to participate but also the capacity for ongoing communication within the community and collaboration with external partners. For CBT to succeed, communities should avoid over-reliance on external agencies and be empowered to operate and manage their own enterprises independently (Marzuki and Hay 2013; Idziak, et al, 2015). CBT necessitates a shared understanding of societal divisions to function effectively, along with the provision of external expertise to achieve desired outcomes. It has been noted that community-based initiatives are still to make a significant step towards empowering the marginalised communities and one of the major reasons is lack of knowledge and information on how to successfully manage CBTEs (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). Local participation and ownership of CBTEs is still limited. This in turn affects the running of CBTEs as well as affecting the conservation of natural resources and preservation of heritage. Capacity-building should be seen as a crucial prerequisite, providing a foundation to train individuals in more than just tourism-related skills. It should empower community members to meet a wide range of

livelihood needs (Asker et al., 2010). Khartishvili et al., (2020) further highlights that capacity building in CBT is not an easy task, several issues should be considered such as the politics, social structures, allocation of tasks, and the fact that benefits need to be shared.

Successful community-based tourism development is dependent on local participation, perceptions and attitudes of local people towards developments. Participation of local communities in tourism contributes towards improving their quality of life, improving their sense of belonging, fosters a deeper awareness of the importance of the surrounding area, so as to guarantee sustainability (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). One of the key challenges of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is ensuring effective participation. People can “either possess the power to influence decisions or are just spectators of the process” (Yanes et al., 2019, p. 2). Participation can either strengthen or undermine a community’s involvement (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2015). A significant degree of participation is differentiating CBT from traditional tourism models (Yanes et al., 2019).

Hung et al., (2011) notes that the hindering factors to spontaneous participation are inadequate necessary knowledge and capacity of some stakeholders. Similarly, scholars such as Jaafar et al., (2014); Marzuki and Hay (2013); Timothy, (2002) observed that community’s capacity to engage in conservation initiatives and tourism development depends on various factors such as knowledge, skills and financial resources. Tosun and Timothy, 2003 identified that in rural areas, lack of knowledge is a significant obstacle to resident participation. Effective participation necessitates a certain level of skill and knowledge, while on the other hand community members must be willing to enhance these abilities. In the same vein, Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar, (2016) observed that factors influencing participation emphasised the importance of ability, which arises from awareness and knowledge, and motivation driven by perceptions and interest in encouraging rural residents to participate in economic activities rather than in executive-level decision making.

Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) are yet to reach the desired level of participation: spontaneous participation whereby communities have power to make decisions and control over the development process. Spontaneous participation of local residents in Community Based Tourism Management contributes towards

improving their sense of belonging and inculcates a greater appreciation and understanding for the value of the local area thereby ensuring sustainability (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar (2016) argued that the involvement of local communities in tourism activities can significantly maximise the socio-economic benefits derived from tourism. Engaging local residents ensures that economic gains from tourism are more equitably distributed fostering economic growth and improving quality of life within the community. It is therefore important to note that the foundation of sustainable tourism development is deeply rooted in the active participation and engagement of the local community. Their participation and involvement not only enhance economic outcomes but also ensures that tourism practices are culturally respectful and environmentally sustainable, ultimately leading to a more resilient and prosperous community (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017).

2.4.2 Conservation of the environment and the preservation of culture

With the realisation of the potential of natural resources in tourism development, CBT plays a significant role in encouraging environmental conservation and cultural preservation by involving locals who have a deep understanding of their environment. Scholars agree that CBT is a pathway to conservation of natural heritage and the preservation of culture (Burgin and Zama, 2014; Hiwasaki 2006; Musavengane and Kloppers, 2020; Shereni and Saarinen 2021). Locals may be involved in implementing practices that minimise environmental impact such as reducing waste, conserving water, reforestation, afforestation and protecting local wildlife. The conservation and sustainable use of natural resources are essential for long-term viability of nature-based tourism and ecotourism. However, the involvement of foreign stakeholders, who often prioritise economic gain, poses significant risks to both the ecosystem and the well-being of local residents. When these external investors exploit natural resources without regard for sustainability, they not only threaten the ecological balance but also leave local communities vulnerable to problems arising from resource depletion once the investors move on to new, untouched destinations (Moscardo, 2008). Tourism is often ad hoc, allowing outside investors to capitalise on opportunities within communal lands, sometimes leveraging government authority to acquire land at low prices, often to the detriment of local residents (Han et al., 2014). This dynamic severely restricts the potential for developing community-based tourism (CBT), as it undermines the

local control and the sustainable management of resources essential for the community's long-term benefits.

By directly engaging with the tourists, community members can educate them about the importance of conservation. When communities see that their environment attracts tourists, they have a direct economic incentive to protect it. Scholars have observed that the approach of allowing local communities to benefit from their indigenous resources resulted in a decline in poaching and other illegal activities and raising consciousness of the need to conserve their resources (Cooney et al., 2016; Dhliwayo et al., 2023; Gandiwa et al., 2013). Natural resources conservation however tends to be benefit driven, conservation is not guaranteed when there is no incentive. Greenfield et al., (2020) observed that during the COVID-19 pandemic which affected tourism revenues, there was an increase in poaching and encroachment as there was no income coming from wildlife conservation. Ultimately, tourism revenues become an important source of conservation financing through funding conservation projects such as reforestation or wildlife protection programs (Fletcher, 2020).

Community-based tourism (CBT) fosters the celebration and sharing of local culture with visitors while empowering communities to take pride in their cultural heritage. When locals engage with tourists who value and respect their traditions, it deepens their own appreciation and commitment to preserving these cultural practices (Ruoss and Alfarè., 2013). With the community directly involved in managing tourism, they can ensure that their cultural expressions are honoured and respected by visitors (Shahzalal, 2016). Through offering diverse and authentic experiences, communities not only generate income but also strengthen the significance of preserving their cultural identity. CBT effectively links cultural preservation with economic benefits, providing a powerful incentive for communities to safeguard their heritage. On the other hand, revenue from tourism can be reinvested into cultural preservation initiatives, such as restoring historical sites, supporting local artisans, and funding cultural festivals, thereby sustaining and enriching the community's cultural legacy (Ahmed, 2023).

However, risks of acculturation and commodification of culture are high and can undermine the authenticity and sustainability of local cultural practices. To meet the expectations and preferences of tourists, communities may alter cultural practices

causing gradual shifts in local values and lifestyles (Gocer et al., 2024). This then leads to a version of culture that is less authentic and more influenced by foreign ideas and diminishing of a community's identity (Shahzalal, 2016). To avoid the risk of acculturation, Smith (2015) suggested that cultural education for both tourists and community members, maintain authentic practices and limiting commercialisation of cultural elements. Kiarie, (2024) also suggested documentation and archiving of traditional practices, languages and knowledge. Globalisation has led several countries and communities to embrace innovative methods to preserve cultural heritage for such as the use of digital technologies to document and share cultural practices, resulting in the creation of digital archives accessible worldwide (Kolay, 2016).

2.4.3 Community development

The colonial history of many African states has arguably made it difficult for local people to support and participate in development projects because these projects have marginalised them. The colonial and post-colonial management systems have isolated the local communities from managing their cultural, heritage and natural resources through initiatives such as land reform programmes; and establishing Protected Areas (PAs) systems (Makuvaza and Makuvaza, 2013). A number of scholars have discovered that community participation in CBT is still at its lowest level and mainly coercive participation (Marzuki and Hay, 2013; Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar, 2017; Tosun, 2006; Zhang et al, 2013). Their participation is restricted to specific predefined activities focused on promoting the tourism destination, and they receive limited economic benefits. However, there are some CBTEs that are trying to move to a better level of participation: induced participation whereby community members have a say but have no actual power or control over the decisions made by those in the position of authority (Rasoolimanesh and Jaafar, 2016, Zhang et al., 2013).

The community's willingness to support tourism development largely depends on their perception of tourism's economic, social and environmental impacts as either positive or negative (Li, Liu and Song 2019; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014). The response of the host community to tourism development is strongly guided by how the benefits are generated by a tourism development. Benefits sharing is a key aspect in CBT. Benefits should be distributed fairly among community members and a fixed

percentage of profits from tourism should be contributed to a community fund for economic and social development of the community (Shereni and Saarinen, 2021). A CBTE must benefit local communities and should provide tangible advantages and aim to enhance their cultural and environmental conditions (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). Greater emphasis should be placed on the measurable benefits that community members derive from triple bottom-line approach, encompassing economic, social and environmental outcomes rather than focusing exclusively on ownership structure (Wondirad, 2017).

However, literature indicates that there are low level economic benefits if any, from CBT (Weaver, 2014). To date, the financial benefits that communities have gained from CBT have been limited (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). For CBT to be truly effective, the total benefits must outweigh the costs or trade-offs incurred by the communities. Additionally, the distribution of these costs and benefits should be equitable between the government, the private sector, and community members. CBT initiatives need to be tailored to the unique strengths and characteristics of each community (Warinda and van der Merwe, 2023). Factors such as cultural differences, community structures and varying levels of development create distinct conditions that must be taken into account during the planning process (Fan et al., 2023).

CBT has potential benefits for host communities if well practised and potential problems if not well practised. Suansri (2003:8) noted that “CBT should not be regarded as a perfect pre-packaged solution to community problems, a miracle cure or a knight in shining armour. If carelessly applied, CBT can create problems and even bring disaster upon the community.” Before establishing a CBTE it is important to conduct thorough research in the community then select communities that are interested in the development. It is important to prepare and build the capacity of the host community to manage tourism. The community should be engaged from the inception of the project, and throughout the development of the project (Nova, 2021).

2.5.0 Policies, Laws and Strategies supporting CBT in Zimbabwe

Community-based tourism in Zimbabwe is being supported by various policies aimed at empowering local communities and the conservation of natural and cultural

resources. These policies include the National Tourism Policy, the Tourism Act, Environmental Management Act, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, Parks and Wildlife Act, the Zimbabwe National Development Strategy (NDS1), Devolution and Decentralisation Policy, Vision 2030 and the National Museums and Monuments Act. Through these policies and frameworks, Zimbabwe not only promotes tourism as an economic driver but also ensures that communities remain active participants and beneficiaries of the tourism industry, fostering sustainability and local development across the country.

National Tourism Policy: The National Tourism Policy of Zimbabwe puts emphasis on the development of sustainable tourism that benefit local communities. It encourages the participation of communities in tourism planning and development, ensuring that they receive a fair share of the benefits. The policy provides a strategic direction for the tourism sector. It creates an enabling environment for CBT by setting out guidelines and objectives for inclusive growth (National Tourism Policy, 2014).

Zimbabwe Tourism Act: The Tourism Act established the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority. Section 5 of the Tourism Act outlines the functions of the authority which are to promote tourism destinations, markets, capacity building, promote tourism development, provide technical assistance as well as to provide support and advisory services to tourism establishments (Tourism Act 2009, c14:20).

Environmental Management Act: The act focuses on sustainable environmental management practices. It supports community-based tourism by promoting the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity which are critical to the success of CBT projects (Environmental Management Act 2005, c20:27).

Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act: The act aims to empower indigenous Zimbabweans by ensuring their participation in the country's economic activities. It includes provisions for supporting community-based enterprises, including tourism ventures by promoting local ownership and control (Indigenous and Economic Empowerment Act 2018, c14:33).

National Parks and Wildlife Act: The National Parks and Wildlife Act provides a framework for the conservation and management of wildlife and protected areas. It supports community-based tourism by encouraging the involvement of local

communities in the management of wildlife resources and the development of eco-tourism initiatives (Parks and Wildlife Act 1991, c20:14).

National Museums and Monuments Act: This act promotes the preservation of cultural heritage and historic and natural monuments. It supports community-based tourism by encouraging the development of cultural and heritage-based tourism (National Museums and Monuments Act 2001 c25:11).

Rural District Councils Act: This act empowers Rural District Councils (RDCs) to manage natural resources within their jurisdictions. It supports community-based tourism by facilitating the involvement of local councils in tourism development and ensuring that revenues from tourism are invested (Rural District Councils Act, 2002 c29:13).

Community-Based Tourism Masterplan: The strategic plan outlines the government's vision and strategies for the tourism sector. It includes provisions for promoting community-based tourism, improving infrastructure and enhancing the skills and capacity of local communities to participate in tourism (Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, 2017)

Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1): The National Development Strategy NDS1 is a broad economic plan that includes measures to boost the tourism sector. It emphasises the importance of community involvement in tourism and aims to create more inclusive sustainable tourism development models (National Development Strategy 1, 2020).

Devolution and Decentralisation Policy: The policy is aimed at decentralising governance and empowering local authorities to drive development in their regions. The key aspects of the policy include local autonomy, equitable development, public participation, resources management and service delivery. The policy advocates for granting more powers and responsibilities to provincial and local authorities to manage their own districts, enhancing the capacity of local governments to generate revenue and manage resources effectively. This policy also tries to address historical disparities, promote equitable resources allocation, encouraging active community participation as well promoting transparency and accountability at the local level (Devolution and Decentralisation Policy, 2020).

Vision 2030: The Government of Zimbabwe is advancing with the strategic plan of Vision 2030 which is aimed at transforming the country into an upper-middle income economy by the year 2030. This vision sets out various economic, social and governance objectives to ensure sustainable development and improved quality of life for all citizens. Community-based tourism can play a significant role in achieving Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 by promoting sustainable development, creating jobs and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. Integrating CBT into the Vision 2030 framework involves leveraging Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage, natural landscapes and wildlife to attract tourists while ensuring that benefits are equitably distributed among the local population (Vision 2030, 2018).

These policies collectively create a conducive environment for the development of community-based tourism enterprises through promoting sustainable practices, empowering local communities and ensuring that tourism development benefits both the environment and the people. Yanes et al., (2019) noted that the policies and actions of the government determine their ability to solve problems or controversies. Despite these policies supporting community-based tourism the Devolution and Decentralisation Policy and the Rural District Councils Act tends to give more power to the local authority councils and not the locals at grassroots level. Traditional leaders play a pivotal role in community-based tourism activities that happen in rural areas; however, they have not been formally acknowledged or mentioned in the National Tourism Policy. The policies and acts that support community-based tourism reflect a centralised governance model that prioritises the national and state level stakeholders over traditional authorities which might lead to the exclusion of traditional leaders who typically hold authority at a more localised level. Mendoza-Ramos and Prideaux (2018), noted that governments' approaches in tourism planning and management should put local communities at the epicentre of the tourism product development and distribution chain. The national policies tend to emphasise formal institutions such as government agencies and private operators as key players in policy implementation, however, traditional leadership plays a crucial role in policies.

The active involvement of the government in understanding, valuing, and adhering to the regulatory framework is crucial for establishing and maintaining its legitimacy. Policies and legislation must be designed to genuinely empower local communities, allowing them to significantly influence how they benefit from tourism (Simpson, 2008).

Although there has been growing interest in assessing the outcomes and processes involved in tourism policymaking, there has been a notable lack of systematic or in-depth analysis of policy outputs, such as official documents (Airey, Dredge and Gross, 2015). There is a clear need for frameworks that offer universal and applicable criteria for evaluating these policy documents. As a result, research that assesses or compares the effectiveness of tourism policy documents in achieving specific goals remains limited (Yanes et al., 2019).

2.5.1 Governance of community-based tourism in Zimbabwe

To understand the governance of CBT in Zimbabwe it is important to understand the background of natural resources management in Zimbabwe and the institutional aspects. During the precolonial era traditional leaders, chiefs and traditional beliefs formed the institutions that were responsible for management of natural resources. Chiefs were the heads of the community and custodians of natural resources. Traditional systems, practices and deep commitment to social interests helped to preserve resources. There were sacred areas strictly protected and reserved for religious and social values and these areas remained in their natural state (Sadomba, 2011). Rules and regulations of the indigenous natural resources management policy included: regulated harvesting of the forest (only dry wood was to be collected) and fruit trees were to remain in fields. Certain resources (rare species) were protected because of their scarcity and their particular value to the group (Chigwenya and Manatsa, 2007). Certain animals were to be hunted. Cultural beliefs, taboos and sacredness formed the foundation of natural resources management and conservation strategies were interwound in these cultural beliefs and were able to regulate their sustainable utilisation.

During the colonial era, settlers exploited land and other assets belonging to indigenous communities, leading to the displacement of these people into fragile and marginal lands designated as reserves. As the population in these reserves grew to unsustainable levels, the carrying capacity was strained, resulting in environmental degradation by the early 1900s (Sadomba, 2011). A number of attempts to conserve the environment through the promulgation of various statutory instruments was done but these were not meant to benefit the communal area. These attempts were not

effective since there were many structural defects (Matseketsa et al., 2019). Indigenous people could no longer manage their own indigenous resources. Management had been taken over by the colonial powers who established ministries that were involved in the management of natural resources while excluding the local people and the local leadership (Chigwenya and Manatsa, 2007). The post-colonial government inherited the natural resources management structures established by the colonial administration, making minimal changes despite significant ideological differences (Mandondo, 2000). Traditional institutions which had a proven track record in managing natural resources, continued to be marginalised in decision making processes related to these resources.

At the turn of the 21st century, a shift in natural resource management thinking emerged. The Kyoto Protocol and Agenda 21, global agreements, advocated for the involvement of local communities in managing their environment (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). During this period, it was widely believed that sustainable natural resource management should be rooted in community-based institutions (Hill & Gale, 2016). Local communities were recognised for possessing critical technical and environmental knowledge, which could be leveraged for effective resource management (Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2020). In Zimbabwe, the CAMPFIRE program has been a flagship initiative in community-based natural resource management. Its primary goal is to ensure collaboration between formal and informal institutions for the management and conservation of indigenous resources, benefiting both parties. The CAMPFIRE program raises key questions about environmental conservation, such as who should be motivated to conserve, who benefits, who bears the costs, who manages the efforts, and who holds authority over resources. It strongly advocates that authority, management, production, and benefits should be primarily vested in the local communities (Alexander & McGregor, 2000). Designed to address communal ownership of natural resources and heritage, the CAMPFIRE program integrates traditional practices with modern democratic principles. It was established in response to the declining state of natural resources and heritage, partly due to inadequate systems for resource allocation and protection (Mazambani & Dembetembe, 2010). Similarly, community-based tourism represents a shift from traditional tourism planning and management approaches, placing local

communities at the core of tourism product development and distribution (Mendoza-Ramos, 2018).

In the present day, Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs), operate under the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry. It is governed and regulated by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority. The authority is responsible for assessing whether an establishment qualifies to be a CBT, registering the establishments, providing technical assistance and marketing the enterprises (Tourism Act, 2009). CBTs in Zimbabwe have mainly been developed in rural areas, and as a result, a number of CBTEs are under the jurisdiction of the Rural District Councils (RDCs). The RDCs oversee Zimbabwe's communal lands and have become pivotal in implementing the government's policy of sustainable natural resource use in their respective districts (Rural District Councils Act). The RDCs are empowered by the Rural District Councils Act to manage and promote development of tourism in their districts. The RDCs play a crucial role in CBT by providing technical advice, providing infrastructure, approving projects and ensuring that tourism activities benefit local communities. The RDCs are also responsible for collecting revenues from tourism activities then distributing the proceeds to the community and reinvesting in community projects (National Tourism Policy, 2014). The CAMPFIRE programme gave indigenous communities the power to manage and benefit from wildlife and cultural heritage in their communal lands. Consequently, community members who take part in community development projects form community-based organisations (CBOs). CBOs are made up of the community members who form committees responsible for representing the interests of local communities in tourism projects (Warinda and van der Merwe, 2023). These members are involved in the planning, implementation and management of CBT initiatives. CBOs ensure that community members have a say in decision-making processes and ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed fairly. There are CBO structures at ward and village level identified as Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) and Village Development Committees (VIDCOs).

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also play a crucial role in supporting, financing and capacity building programmes. A number of CBTs in Zimbabwe were established using USAID donor funding (MOTHI, 2017). NGOs help to bridge gaps between communities and other stakeholders, ensuring that CBT projects are

inclusive and sustainable. NGOs assist in the mobilisation of resources for sustainable tourism development as well as assisting the government in tourism awareness programmes within communities. One of the NGOs that supports CBTs is the CAMPFIRE Association. The association is a voluntary body that represents and advocates for local community interests. The association is also responsible for marketing, local institution building and advocacy. The association operates with a board of management consisting of the members of the RDCs and is funded by donors and membership fees (Murphree, 1998).

Collaboration between the government, private sector and local communities are vital for CBT development. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) provide funding, expertise and marketing support for community-based projects. These partnerships help to enhance the quality and reach of CBT initiatives. Traditional leaders also play a crucial role in the management of natural resources and the preservation of culture. Empowered by the Traditional Leadership Act of 1998, the chief, headman and the village heads are responsible for ensuring conservation at local level. Despite the traditional leaders being the primary custodians of natural resources and culture, traditional leaders have played a peripheral role in the management of CBT. It is, however, crucial to ensure that traditional leaders play an active role in CBTs for they are the key gatekeepers in the communities.

2.5.2 CBT enterprises in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, CBT was initiated during the peak of the tourism boom in the 1990s, with significant support from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous (CAMPFIRE) projects were funded by USAID with the aim to combat poverty and provide economic benefits to local people. These projects operated successfully during the time of funding, however, after the pulling of donor funding some of the projects were left struggling (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). However, scholars proclaim that international aid programmes are still needed in developing countries to promote CBT (Dangi and Jamal, 2016; Idziak et al., 2015; Kavita and Saarinen, 2016; Richards and Hall 2003).

Notably, out of a total of 90 CBT establishments only a few sites are operational (Table 2). A survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MOTHI, 2017) revealed that the major challenges faced by CBTE was the economic downturn in Zimbabwe that affected the tourism sector in the 2000s. This led to the abandonment of the sites and vandalism. As a result, communities could not revitalise these sites due to lack of funding. The study by the Ministry of Tourism in 2017 also revealed that these CBTEs remain relatively unknown in both domestic and international markets, primarily due to inadequate marketing efforts. Additionally, there is a need for awareness campaigns, to enhance understanding within communities about the opportunities that CBTs can offer (MOTHI, 2017). The communities need skills training in business, financial management, marketing, operational, and natural resources management.

Table 2.2 The Distribution of community-based tourism enterprises by province

Province	Total number of CBTEs				Major tourism products
	Functioning	Defunct	Potential	Total	
Manicaland	2	2	5	9	Natural attractions, culture, traditions, historical heritage, and recreational water bodies
Bulawayo	5	1	0	6	Historic heritage, culture, crafts and art
Mashonaland East	4	2	11	17	Caves, scenery, ecotourism
Mashonaland Central	4	6	7	17	Wildlife, nature, cultural heritage
Mashonaland West	2	3	3	8	Hunting, ecotourism, lodges
Matabeleland North	9	4	2	15	Craft, museum, lodges, hunting concession
Masvingo	3	4	11	18	Cultural village, monuments and crafts
Total	29	22	39	90	

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry (2017).

Several community developments projects, despite receiving funding, failed because project managers neglected to consider local conditions and did not adequately address the contextual aspects unique to community-based tourism (CBT)

(Blackstock, 2005; Stone and Stone, 2011). Conversely, CBT projects have heavily relied on external funding and have struggled to remain financially sustainable when the funding stopped (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017). It is important to consider long term financial viability and self-sufficiency during project planning to prevent their collapse due to funding shortages.

Tourism is prone to external shocks such as natural hazards, political instability, economic downturns and global pandemics (Fletcher et al., 2020). CBTEs in Zimbabwe have also been affected by the political and economic situation over the past 20 years and have been struggling to run as viable businesses. The government of Zimbabwe has shown an interest in promoting and developing CBT in its National Tourism Policy. CBT is considered a promising avenue for alleviating rural poverty and empowering marginalised communities (National Tourism Policy,2014). Although the government has supported the establishment of numerous CBT projects, there has been limited effort to ensure that these initiatives develop into sustainable enterprises capable of reducing their dependence on donor and government funding. Lack of resilient planning and risk management strategies can exacerbate the impact of external shocks and disrupt operations (Fletcher et al.,2020). However, despite the keen interest indicated, the authorities have not examined the critical success factors for CBTs to thrive, so that these can be promoted as models that can be successfully replicated elsewhere (Runyowa, 2017).

CBTEs developed in Zimbabwe in the 1990s have also suffered from operational challenges due to economic instability the country has endured over the past decade, lack of strategy and lack of the necessary expertise to manage the CBTEs (MOTHI, 2017). Tourism has the potential to drive sustainable socio-economic development and create opportunities for growth in disadvantaged, marginalised and rural areas leading to poverty alleviation and enhanced rural livelihoods (Rogerson and van der Merwe, 2016). By generating financial revenues, tourism can incentivise local communities to protect natural environments and provide compensation for the challenges associated with conserving and preserving heritage sites (Dekker and Forest, 2018; Fletcher, 2009). However, if there is not a win-win situation and indigenous people do not benefit from their heritage and natural resources spiritually and economically then they are likely to sabotage the development through vandalism, graffiti and poaching (Chirikure and Pwiti, 2008). Limited community engagement has also been observed as one of

the implementation failures that have hindered the success of CBTs (Dodds and Galaski, 2018; Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2015; Idziak et al., 2015). Lack of genuine participation and consultation with local communities has led to CBT initiatives not aligning with their needs, values, and aspirations. When communities are not actively involved in decision-making processes, there is a risk of resistance, lack of support or even sabotage (Musavengane and Kloppers, 2020). Therefore, when implementing CBTEs, emphasis should be on empowering the local community, involving communities in planning, managing and participating in decision-making and getting benefit from tourism activities (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017).

There is much to learn from past unsuccessful cases of CBTE: marginalisation in decision-making and lack of education and financing, which all affect the involvement of the poor in tourism (Zielinski et al., 2021). It has been observed that CBT projects imposed by external stakeholders such as NGOs, or the government, without meaningful community engagement often fail to get community buy-in and may neglect local knowledge and priorities. Top-down approaches can lead to conflicts, mistrust and ultimately project failure (Matseketsa et al., 2019). Insufficient capacity-building also affects participation and the successful implementation of CBT. Communities usually lack the necessary skills, resources and infrastructure to effectively manage tourism activities (Imbaya et al., 2019). Without adequate training, and capacity-building communities may struggle to provide quality services, manage environmental impacts, or market their tourism offerings (Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar and Ahmad, 2017).

2.5.3 Challenges in CBT implementation

Community-based tourism enterprises (CBTE) face a number of challenges in their management. Local communities often lack the necessary skills, infrastructure, and financial resources to develop and manage tourism initiatives effectively (Dodds et al., 2018; Prakoso et al., 2020; Shereni and Saarinen, 2020). Underestimating these challenges can lead to project failures. CBT destinations are vulnerable to various risks, including natural disasters, political instability, health pandemics, and economic downturns. Building resilience and implementing risk management strategies are essential to safeguarding the long-term sustainability of CBT initiatives.

Striking a balance between economic, social, and cultural preservation is one of the greatest challenges that CBTs face (Gupta et al. 2024; Prakoso et al., 2020). Tensions between the desire to generate income from tourism and the need to protect cultural traditions, heritage sites and sacred places usually arise. On the other hand, negative social impacts on local communities, including changes in social norms, values, and lifestyles may occur within the community. Raftopoulos (2018) noted that the commodification of culture to suit tourists often leads to a loss of cultural sensitivity, social disruptions and conflicts within the communities. There is a risk of reducing the local culture to a mere commodity for tourists. Mismanagement of CBT initiatives might exploit cultural practices, turning them into staged performances rather than genuine experiences when demand for cultural experiences exceeds supply (Rotich, 2012).

Community-based tourism functions on a paradigm of community governance whereby traditional communities assume the role of initiators and participants in tourism (Abreu et al., 2024). Consequently, it is the role of the community to ensure that tourism activities do not have negative impacts on the environment such as pollution, soil erosion, loss of natural habitat, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires (Hill and Gale, 2016; Khanal and Babar, 2007). It is therefore crucial for the community to have strong institutional structures that ensure environmental sustainability. Failure to incorporate principles of sustainability into CBT planning and development can result in negative environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts. Over-exploitation of natural resources, cultural commodification and disruption of traditional livelihoods are common consequences of unsustainable CBT practices (Baloch et al. 2023). On the other hand, the commodification of nature and restructuring of local landscapes may change the relationships between the society and its environmental setting. Using a case study of Cocachimba CBT, Raftopoulos (2018) observed that when nature is commodified it changes the community's ecological cycles of production and causes the community to neglect other livelihood strategies such as agriculture. Qin and Chen (2022) also noted that overdependence on tourism income can leave communities vulnerable to economic downturns that may be experienced in tourism such as fluctuations in visitor numbers and natural disasters that affect tourism.

However, if the community reaps benefits from tourism, it may be difficult to control and limit tourism activities leading to negative environmental impacts. Adverse impacts

from tourism happen when the destination exceeds its carrying capacity (Hill and Gale, 2016), however, the challenge is sometime there are no defined capacities and limits to tourism numbers. Alexander and Whitehouse (2004) pointed out that there are ambiguous descriptors of environmental conservation and carrying capacity which do not address how to ensure conservation, what needs to be sustained and at what levels. As a result, the conflict between tourism growth and environmental conservation remains unresolved. It is crucial for CBT initiatives to incorporate principles of environmental stewardship and sustainable resource management to minimise their ecological footprint.

CBTs often rely on external funding and technical assistance from government agencies, NGOs and international organisations and this dependency can pose challenges to sustainability if the external support is withdrawn (Shereni and Saarinen, 2021). In Zimbabwe a number of CBTs were affected by the pulling out of donor funding which affected a number of communities, and these have since failed to rejuvenate the enterprises (MOTHI 2017). Giampiccoli (2020) underscored the importance of external funding for CBTs, however, it is important to come up with weaning strategies before completely pulling out external support. Mayaka, Lacey and Rogerson (2020) stressed the importance of empowering communities with business and entrepreneurial skills training in tourism. In the same vein, Avila-Foucat et al., (2021) suggested that community members should be encouraged to diversify their income streams and come up with other projects to support the enterprises. Promotion of local ownership has also been recognised as a strategy that can ensure sustainability of the enterprises after the pulling of donor funding (Mtapuri, 2015). In cases where the community fails to operate by themselves, they can then engage in partnerships with private operators (Dolezal and Novelli, 2020).

For CBTs to thrive, access to markets is very important, yet some enterprises struggle to access markets. CBT initiatives that do not adequately assess market demand, preferences, and trends may struggle to attract visitors and generate revenue. On the other hand, CBT destinations often experience seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers, with peak tourism seasons followed by periods of low demand. Managing seasonality and diversifying tourism offerings can help communities mitigate the impact of fluctuating demand on their livelihoods (Yabanci, 2023). Almeida and Machado (2020) also noted that small-scale CBT enterprises struggle to compete with

larger tourism operators and global travel agents to access markets. Similarly, Burgin and Zama (2014) concur that most CBT enterprises in developed countries fail because of the inability to position, promote and market themselves. Runyowa (2017) also observed that CBTs have limited market access, lack of visibility and insufficient marketing efforts that can hinder the growth and success of CBT initiatives. Marketing should aim to raise public awareness about the differences between CBT and conventional tourism, educating people on the significance of CBT as a tool for community-driven resource conservation and cultural preservation (Lee and Jan, 2019). Hong et al. (2021) suggested that, for CBTs to survive, there is a need for commitment by the government to support CBTs through marketing and development.

Poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and limited access to essential services such as healthcare, sanitation, and transportation can undermine the visitor experience and deter tourists from visiting CBT destinations (Odeku, 2020; Abdullah, Razak and Jaafar, 2014). Nguyen (2021) observed that lack of investment in infrastructure development hampers the growth of CBT and limits its potential. A number of rural communities usually lack the basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, sanitation facilities, telecommunications, which are essential for tourism development. Poor accessibility and transportation networks can deter visitors and limit the potential of CBT destinations (Petrova et al., 2018). It is therefore important for destination managers and the local authorities to invest in infrastructural development to make their destinations more attractive (Almeida, 2021).

Inadequate policy frameworks, unclear regulations, and bureaucratic hurdles can impede the development of CBT initiatives. Dyer et al., (2014) observed that governments usually do not make effort to come up with clear strategies for the devolution of power and authority to the locals. Harrison and Sharpley (2017) noted that failure to fully devolve power and authority to local people usually hinders the growth and sustainability of community-based projects. The CAMPFIRE project implemented in Zimbabwe is an example of a project which faced a number of policy challenges where the government failed to devolve power and authority to the traditional leaders and local people and gave more power to the Rural District Councils (RDCs) leading to power imbalances (Shereni and Saarinen, 2021; Musavengane and Kloppers, 2020). Ntuli and Muchapondwa (2017) concur that the CAMPFIRE programme managed to decentralise power and authority to the RDCs only but failed

to transfer power to the local communities as intended. Governments need to create an enabling environment for CBT by providing supportive policies, incentives, and regulatory frameworks that empower locals.

The trickle-down effect and benefits sharing important aspects in CBT. In benefits sharing there is a high possibility of elite capture, i.e., the poor benefitting less and sometimes assuming more of the cost (Hewlett and Nicholls, 2011). Another critical issue is the equitable distribution of benefits between the community, the private sector, and the government. When local elites monopolise benefits and unfair distribution schemes are implemented, social capital is undermined, and the sustainability of community-based projects is jeopardised. This is partly because such inequalities can lead to some individuals opting out or becoming free riders (Mak, Lau and Wong 2017). While scholars and tourism professionals have supported sustainable tourism, a closer examination reveals that forms of sustainable tourism have not yet achieved their intended goal of transforming the tourism sector, with limited progress in capturing narrow niche markets (Sharpley, 2020; Vogt et al., 2012; Liu, 2003).

Several communities that have implemented CBT to achieve positive livelihood outcomes have faced challenges, such as unequal distribution of benefits, inadequate leadership and the ability of their destinations to attract sufficient visitors to ensure financial sustainability (Yanes, 2019; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Simpson, 2008). Despite the failure of most CBT establishments in Zimbabwe, the government of Zimbabwe still has hope for successful CBTEs in the future (MOTHI, 2017). In order for CBTs to thrive there is a need for investing in tourism education and capacity building. Milano et al., (2019) highlighted the importance of tourism education in handling mismanagement and helping in most tourism sites. Results from their study indicated that both formal and informal tourism education are a pre-requisite in transforming the tourism industry both responsibly and sustainably. Tourism and hospitality sectors that are currently operating successfully have suitable human resources with the drive to make the sector successful.

Scholars agree that capacity building efforts are often required to train community members in areas such as hospitality, culinary, marketing and environmental management (Dangi and Jamal, 2016; Asker et al., 2010; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009).

Prakoso et al., (2020) however, noted rural communities are often characterised by ageing population as younger populations move to urban areas. Consequently, that capacity building for ageing populations in the community is often a challenge. Local community members should be educated on how to manage the day to day running, how to handle tourists and be given basic hospitality and tourism skills. But in order to capacitate the community there should be experts of CBT to educate the community, who are involved in the monitoring and evaluation, act as consultants and help communities to manage (Jugmohan et al., 2020). Community members must be involved at every stage of development and in every aspect of the running of the CBT. Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar and Ahmad (2017) also suggested that Community-Based Tourism Management should also be accompanied by training for local communities. The training is an initiative to increase knowledge and skills in supporting tourism development and management. On the other hand, Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) proposed an introduction of a new qualification in CBT at the degree level to fill the gaps in CBT capacity principally. Khartishvili et al., (2020) recommended that there is a need for the knowledge gap of tourism professionals and community development facilitators in CBT to be filled.

A collaborative and multi-stakeholder approach involving governments, NGOs, local communities, tourism industry actors, and other relevant stakeholders is needed to address the challenges being faced by CBT. By working together to overcome these obstacles, these initiatives can unlock the potential of tourism as a tool for community empowerment, economic development, and cultural preservation.

2.6. Critics of Community-Based Tourism

Community based tourism is often hailed as a sustainable and responsible approach to tourism, however, like any other concept, it is not immune to criticism. Critics of CBT often raise concerns associated with its implementation. While CBT is praised for its potential to empower local communities and promote sustainable development, Blackstock (2005) and Jafar et al., (2015) opine that CBT is just a mere slogan, is naive and imaginary. Khalid et al., (2019) noted that there is a misconception that tourism automatically empowers local communities while overlooking the complexities of power dynamics between communities and external stakeholders. Scholars have found out that unequal power dynamics are inherent in many community-based

tourism initiatives where external stakeholders such as tour operators, government agencies or NGOs exert significant influence over decision-making processes, resources allocation and the distribution of benefits in CBT initiatives (Ndlovu, 2014; Zielinski et al., 2021). Giampiccoli et al., (2015) also highlighted that this kind of influence can marginalise local voices and interests leading to conflicts and tensions within communities. Raftopoulos (2018) criticised the implementation and planning of CBT for failing to involve local communities from the outset. Instead of empowering locals to initiate projects, the current model often invites them to make decisions at later stages of development. Raftopoulos (2018) argued that for CBT to be effective and sustainable, communities should take the lead in conceptualising initiatives and then bring in external stakeholders to support and collaborate.

Tuyen (2023) criticised the concept noting that CBT initiatives often tokenise local cultures and traditions reducing them to mere commodities for tourism consumption. Raftopoulos (2018) also pointed out that communities may be exploited or marginalised in the process with the majority of profits flowing to external stakeholders rather than benefitting the local population. At the core of the socio-cultural sphere is the issue of CBT potentially eroding the integrity of the host cultures. According to Mokgachane et al., (2021) commercialisation of culture automatically erodes the host's culture as it becomes an economic activity devoid of deeper meaning. To minimise commodification of culture Mbaiwa (2011) suggested it is important to avoid creating experiences that contrive or exploit cultural practices for profit. On the other hand, Milano, Novelli, and Cheer, (2019) observed that CBT initiatives do not always guarantee environmental conservation, if not properly managed it can contribute to over-tourism, leading to environmental degradation, pollution and strain on natural resources. These critiques underscore the contradiction inherent in CBT. While it is framed as an inclusive and sustainable development model, it often reproduces the very inequalities and ecological harm it seeks to redress. This calls for more grounded, community driven and ethically guided approach to CBT that safeguards cultural integrity, ensures equitable economic returns and genuinely promotes environmental stewardship.

When implementing CBT there is an assumption that community members living in the same geographical area are homogeneous and can easily adapt to tourism (Prakoso et al., 2020). However, in reality communities are heterogenous, with unique

cultures, customs, and priorities (Tolkach and King, 2014). Oversimplification of communities often ignores the diversity within communities, including differences in socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, and age which can influence the outcomes of CBT initiatives (Fan et al., 2023). What might work with one community might not be suitable for another community. Implementing CBT requires a tailored approach rather than a one-size-fits all approach considering the unique characteristics of each community. Assuming that a single approach can be replicated across different contexts can lead to failures and disappointments. Consequently, there is a tendency of idealising the concept of community in CBT without acknowledging the internal dynamics, power structures and conflicts that exist within communities (Blackstock, 2000). As a result, issues such as inequalities, marginalisation and cultural tensions within local populations are often ignored (Guo, 2021).

CBT is perceived as an economic panacea, however economic benefits are not always guaranteed (Setokoe and Ramukumba, 2020). If CBT is not carefully implemented, communities may fail to reap any benefits. While economic benefits are a significant aspect of CBT, there is a tendency to overemphasise these benefits, neglecting other crucial dimensions like cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, community empowerment, long-term sustainability and resilience (Juma and Khademi-Vidra, 2019). In cases where it generates income, this income may not be evenly distributed and there can be challenges in ensuring that the local community gains significant rewards (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2019). Despite the rhetoric of community empowerment, critics point out that the benefits of CBT initiatives are often unevenly distributed with a small elite within the community or external stakeholders capturing the majority of profits (Blackstock, 2005; Shereni and Saarinen, 2021; Zapata et al., 2011). Local residents may receive low wages, lack access to training and education and have limited opportunities for upward mobility (Woyo and Musavengane, 2023).

Blackstock (2005) criticised CBT for being too focused on industry development rather than social justice and empowerment. Ateljevic, Morgan and Pritchard (2013) suggested a critical turn in tourism that invokes the need to challenge social justice, inequality, oppression, develop a strong critique of existing hegemonic discourses, and interrogation of structural power. Khartishvili et al., (2020) highlighted a number of reasons that impede development of comprehensive community-based tourism which are lack of empowerment of locals, lack of product diversity, poor cooperation, lack of

understanding of CBT principles, lack of community benefits, multilevel cooperation and low awareness and skills. To address such issues, Tosun and Timothy (2003) recommended public media campaigns as a means to train and educate people, thereby enhancing their awareness and preparedness for participating in tourism development.

Krittayaruangroj et al. (2023) questioned the long-term sustainability of CBT initiatives particularly those that rely on external funding or fail to address economic inequalities. Further, Dodds et al. (2018) argued that without a holistic approach to development that addresses structural issues such as poverty, inequality and lack of infrastructure, CBT projects may struggle to achieve lasting positive impacts. Despite the contentious status of CBT as a subject, term and approach it remains useful as a tool for economic development particularly to support the development of rural and marginalised areas.

These critiques collectively reveal that while CBT is often idealised as a tool for rural and marginalised community development, its effectiveness is severely constrained by structural limitations, inadequate local empowerment and the dominance of top-down, market driven approaches. Without a critical reorientation towards genuine social justice, capacity building and systematic transformation, CBT risks becoming a depoliticised development narrative that reproduces the very inequalities it claims to resolve. Therefore, the future of CBT is dependent on refining practices, confronting and reshaping the broader socio-economic and political structures within which it operates.

2.7. Tourism Education

The study of tourism in higher education can be dated back to 1925 when it appeared at the University of Rome in 1925, then later in Vienna in 1936 and St Gallen and Berne in 1941. Due to the industrialisation and advancement in transport technology tourism continued to become very popular and in the mid-1960s “tourism began to appear more generally in the academic repertoire of higher education” (Airey, Dredge, and Gross, 2015:6). To date tourism and hospitality studies are being offered by hundreds of universities around the world. Zimbabwe has more than seven universities offering tourism and hospitality related degrees.

An emerging group of scholars contends that the origins and history of tourism studies, entangled with colonial legacies, has shaped tourism education around Eurocentric epistemologies and ideologies (Mura and Sharif, 2015; McKercher & Prideaux, 2014; Tribe, 2006; Wijesinghe and Mura, 2018). Eurocentrism in tourism education denotes the predominance of Western perspectives, theories, and methodologies, which frequently marginalise knowledge systems from non-Western cultures (Wijesinghe et al., 2019). This bias is evident in curricula that foreground European history, a high level of similarity between Western and non-Western tourism degrees, values, and tourism practices, thereby restricting students' engagement with diverse global contexts (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Chang (2019) argue that this framework perpetuates neo-colonial narratives by positioning Western paradigms as universal and relegating indigenous knowledge to the periphery.

Hall (2011) suggests that the established norms within academia function as a political act, privileging certain value systems over others. This phenomenon endures as successive generations of tourism scholars play an active role in constructing and perpetuating "tourism myths" (McKercher & Prideaux, 2014). The foundational concepts, initially shaped by early tourism scholars and maintained by subsequent generations, present formidable obstacles for third-generation scholars now attempting to transform these entrenched traditions (Wijesinghe et al., 2019). Addressing these pervasive myths requires strong critical skills, empowering scholars to challenge dominant Eurocentric frameworks and conventional disciplinary narratives, thereby moving beyond the "accepted ways of doing things" (Wijesinghe, Mura and Culala, 2019)

Zhang (2018) observes that Eurocentrism in higher education tourism studies restricts students' perspectives by prioritising Western theories, models, tourism practices, and often neglecting local or non-Western viewpoints. This narrow focus fosters a limited worldview, diminishing students' capacity to engage with culturally diverse contexts and impeding the development of tourism solutions that align with local communities (Ooi, 2019). Moreover, it perpetuates neo-colonial narratives, inhibiting critical examination of power dynamics in global tourism (Bach & Nallet, 2018). To counter Eurocentric bias, scholars emphasise the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge and diverse frameworks into tourism curricula. Addressing the social inequities and disparities reinforced by Eurocentrism requires a concerted effort to

decolonise both tourism and tourism education (Ayikoru, 2024; Dieke 2020; Sercombe 2022; Wang, 2023; Young, 2017)

Dieke (2020) highlights that African tourism faces persistent challenges, including low economic returns, delayed governmental responses to global market shifts, limited skilled human resources, socio-political instability, and generally underdeveloped infrastructure. Historically, tourism infrastructure was established to serve settler and expatriate markets a framework that has continued since independence and fostered a dependency on foreign tourists and investment. This dependency reflects a neo-colonial perspective that obstructs sustainable development. Prioritising non-African tourists has often led the industry to overlook Africa's burgeoning youth demographic and expanding middle class, both of which represent valuable markets for tourism alongside international visitors (Morupisi & Mokgalo, 2017). Decolonising tourism in Africa could tap into the rising demand for domestic and regional tourism, providing a sustainable alternative that addresses both historical and contemporary challenges (Ayikoru, 2024).

Decoloniality in tourism education calls for a critical re-evaluation and transformation of how tourism is taught, with particular attention to the histories, cultures, and lived experiences of marginalised and indigenous communities (Sercombe, 2022). Wang (2023) highlights the importance of radical pedagogical reforms to foster mutual understanding among diverse learners, noting that decolonial approaches can create classroom environments where contemporary socio-political issues are critically examined. This approach not only enables community building but also supports transformational learning aimed at promoting tourism development in rural communities. Ayikuru (2024) similarly underscores the necessity for both epistemological and pedagogical decolonisation in tourism education, arguing that conventional frameworks fail to address the pervasive coloniality within Africa's tourism sector. Ayikuru (2024) critiques traditional explanations for Africa's underperformance in international tourism and the marginalisation of Africans as tourists, emphasising the importance of African representation as both tourism producers and consumers. This representation involves affirming African identities and revaluing historically marginalised socio-cultural and spiritual values, with the goal of decolonising the tourism industry to foster inclusive experiences and encourage

broader engagement across the continent (Dussel, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Mbembe, 2016; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022).

Scholars such as Sercombe (2022) and Young (2017) have underscored the critical need to decolonise the tourism education curriculum, emphasising the importance of integrating diverse knowledge systems and perspectives that extend beyond Western frameworks. Sercombe (2022) advocates for heightened attention to diversity and inclusion within both pedagogical practices and curriculum content, concluding that a well-considered approach to curriculum decolonisation fosters a more inclusive and representative educational experience in tourism studies. Young (2017) similarly emphasises the importance of rethinking tourism education by incorporating indigenous perspectives and knowledge into the curriculum through processes of indigenisation, which can enhance students' cultural competencies and advance social justice and equity regarding race and ethnicity. Young (2017) further argues that educators should actively collaborate in indigenising the tourism curriculum to promote a more equitable and socially just approach to tourism education.

Although the decolonisation of tourism education is widely promoted as a transformative and socially just approach, it has also attracted critical perspectives and debate. One of the major critiques is that there is a danger of tokenism whereby decolonisation is reduced to just symbolic inclusion without fundamentally challenging the epistemological foundations of tourism. Merely adding indigenous content without appreciating the depth of indigenous knowledge and integrating it can also lead to tokenism (Wang, 2023). In the same vein, Byrne and Alexander (2023) noted that decolonisation can be misinterpreted as a one-size fits all solution yet neglecting the unique contexts and histories of different communities. Decolonisation is often used ambiguously in academic and policy discourse, leading to varied and sometimes conflicting interpretations, or confused with diversity or inclusion (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Young (2017) also highlighted that the institutional inertia and academic conservatism may also hinder the decolonisation process. Institutional members used to Eurocentric frameworks may resist adopting indigenous or alternative worldviews due to unfamiliarity, perceived lack of academic rigor, or concerns over professional legitimacy. Institutions often lack the necessary resources and training to effectively implement decolonial pedagogies, which can hinder the development of culturally competent curricula (Roth, 2023)

In sum, while tourism education has gained global academic recognition and institutional expansion, its intellectual foundations remain deeply rooted in Eurocentric epistemologies that marginalise indigenous knowledge systems and perpetuate neo-colonial narratives. When critically examined through decolonial lens, CBT emerges not merely as developmental tool but as a potential site of epistemic resistance. It has potential to foreground local agency, affirm indigenous identities, and realign tourism practices with the socio-cultural and ecological realities of host communities. However, the transformative potential of CBT within sustainable tourism will remain constrained unless tourism education itself undergoes epistemological and pedagogical reform. Decolonising tourism curricula is not about symbolic inclusion or superficial diversity, but about dismantling entrenched academic hierarchies, confronting institutional inertia and fostering inclusive educational environment where plural worldviews are recognised, valued and meaningfully integrated. Only through such critical reorientation can CBT evolve into a genuinely empowering and contextually grounded practice that contributes to both educational justice and sustainable tourism futures.

2.8 Tourism education and sustainable development

Tourism education plays a crucial role in advancing the sustainable development goals. By integrating the principles of sustainability into the tourism curricula, educational institutions can prepare future professionals to lead the industry towards more responsible and ethical practices (Shakeela, Ruhanen and Breakey, 2011). If well-structured, tourism education can provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to manage tourism enterprises sustainably, thereby addressing the SDG 4. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2023) noted that through training students in sustainable tourism practices, educational programmes contribute to creating quality jobs and promoting economic growth that does not harm the environment or local communities thereby providing decent work and economic growth (SDG 8).

Tourism education should encompass a wide range of disciplines designed to prepare learners for careers in the tourism industry for it involves understanding various aspects of tourism, including its economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts (Milinchuk, 2017). To remain competent and in-touch with the industry requirements, universities have moved away from a purely theoretical approach towards a practical approach (Booyens, 2020). Hands-on training is now crucial: most tourism and

hospitality degrees now have internship programmes, familiarisation tours, fieldwork and research to gain practical skills and real-world experiences in hotels, travel agencies, tour operators and destination management organisations (Kumar, Suklabaidya, Gautam, 2020). Universities are now required incorporate internships, co-op programmes, or fieldwork opportunities into their curricula to provide students with hands-on experience in the tourism industry (Nyanjom et al. 2020). Students may work in hotels, resorts, travel agencies, tour operators, event management companies, or destination marketing organisations to gain practical skills and industry insights (Bilsland et al., 2020).

With the advent of new technologies and changing customer preferences, tourism education should include learning about the latest technologies in the industry such as the internet of things, social media, online booking platforms, virtual realities, data analytics in tourism marketing and management (Mandalia, 2023). Tourism is inherently a global industry; therefore, the tourism programmes should also put emphasis on a global perspective. This may involve offering modules that cover the international aspects, foreign languages, cross-cultural communication (Sonnenschein et al., 2019). It is also crucial for learners to understand the roles of governments, NGOs, and international organisations in tourism promotion. In addition to industry-specific knowledge, tourism education often focuses on developing soft skills such as communication, teamwork, customer service, problem-solving, and cultural sensitivity, which are essential for success in the tourism industry (Kaushal and Srivastava, 2021).

The advancement in technology has led to continuous changes in the tourism industry. As a result, universities should keep up to date with the recent changes in the industry (Nguyen et al., 2021). Consequently, it is important for universities to collaborate with industry partners such as hotels, tourism businesses, government agencies and non-profit making organisations to provide learners with networking opportunities (Yayla and Catir, 2023). These partnerships help in bridging the gap between academic theory and the real world. To have an in-depth understanding of the field, universities also conduct research on various aspects of the tourism industry, including market trends, consumer behaviour, sustainability practices, and destination management strategies (Arionesei, Ichim, Vranciu, 2015). Students may have the opportunity to

participate in research projects, present findings at conferences, or publish research papers in academic journals.

As the tourism industry expands, new concepts in tourism appear and the industry has become a large industry with many different disciplines that cannot be covered in one tourism and hospitality qualification (Cotterell, Arcodia and Ferreira, 2017). The expansion of the industry has led to scholars examining tourism education, whether it is still able to prepare a workforce that can be gainfully employed in the industry Hales and Jinnings, 2017; Kumar et al., 2020; Liu et al, 2017). To cater for this expansion, some universities now offer a number of elective modules that allow students to tailor make their studies according to their specific interests and career goals which may include specialised topics such as ecotourism, adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, culinary tourism, sports, health and wellness tourism, entrepreneurship and technology (Luka and Donina, 2012).

Educators need to focus on coming up with a curriculum design that will equip the students so that they can meet specific requirements in order to be more productive and meaningfully contribute to the tourism industry. Najar and Bukhari (2017) highlighted that in most cases tourism and hospitality graduates are incapacitated when it comes to working effectively in the industry. There is a need for breaking down the major components so that students may become more mainstream and more specialised. A number of scholars have criticised tourism and hospitality educators for not upgrading their curricula in order to meet the changing needs and have questioned whether tourism curricula provide sufficient skills training (Imbaya et al, 2019; Najar and Bukhari, 2017; Sarkodie and Adom, 2015; Waheba, 2017). The educators are failing to prepare students for employment in the new forms of tourism and what is being covered in current curricula does not match the current industry trends and needs.

Education and training are essential elements of capacity building. Courses in hospitality and tourism management, along with general business skills such as marketing, communication, finance, and governance are crucial for achieving success at the community level (Wisnumurti et al., 2020). The scope and level of training required for a CBT enterprise may vary, necessitating an ongoing process as circumstances evolve (Edelheim, 2020). This capacity building is crucial for equipping

communities with the tools to comprehend the opportunities associated with CBT and to become more engaged participants in the process (Hennink, Kiiti, Pillinger, and Jayakaran, 2012; Jamal and Stronza, 2009). Overall, tourism education in universities must aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience needed to succeed in diverse careers within the dynamic and ever-evolving tourism industry.

2.9 The need for a transformation of tourism education in higher education

Tertiary education in Africa is currently being guided by the continental education goals; the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 to 2025 (CESA16-25) in a bid to create an African citizen who will be an effective change agent for sustainable development. The CESA 16-25 seeks to transform Africa's education and training systems to ensure they are aligned with the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation, and creativity required to promote core African values and drive sustainable development at the national, sub-regional, and continental levels. To achieve social cohesion, democracy, and economic growth, and to position itself as a significant global player, the continent must prioritise investments in the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills. Higher education is among one of the key concerns of the African Union member states, since it provides suitable exploitation of the full potential of science, technology and innovation to support sustainable growth and socio-economic development. It is therefore important for tertiary institutions to ensure that the tertiary education curriculum enables learners to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation, and creativity needed in the industry. Given the growing concern for environmental and social sustainability, many tourism education programmes should endeavour to put emphasis on the importance of responsible tourism practices.

CESA 16-25 also emphasises that the quality and relevance of university education have become significant concerns within the sector. Post graduate education remains underdeveloped and its impact on research and innovation continues to be minimal. There is a need for reorienting enrolments, postgraduate education, research and innovation linked to economic, social and industrial development. In order to meet the goals of CESA as well as its national tertiary education goals, Zimbabwe came up with the Education 5.0. The key objective of Education 5.0 is "to come up with an education,

science and technology system that produces goods and services useful to the economy based on heritage”. Heritage-based education in science and technology aims to transform the education system by imparting knowledge tailored to the utilisation of local resources, driving the transition to an industrialised and modernised economy. Teaching and learning focus on local environment and locally available materials to develop the economy based on such resources. Given the policy framework and strategic goals for tourism as well as national education goals, Zimbabwe has laid a foundation and a conducive environment necessary for CBT development. It is critical for universities to align their curricula to the policies and strategies in order to achieve the CESA, and Education 5.0 goals.

Debates surrounding the tourism higher education curriculum have focused on whether to standardise the curriculum or diversify it by including more specialised or broader subjects (Airey and Tribe, 2005; Airey and Johnson, 1999; Koh, 1995; Riley et al., 2002). A number of scholars around the world (Liburd et al. 2018; Mungai et al. 2021; Ong et al. 2019; Sarkodie et al. 2015; Wang et al., 2013) are in agreement that there is a lack of academic— industry synergy resulting in a tourism curriculum that is failing to meet the ever-changing tourism industry. Several studies have also produced similar results. There is also palpable stream within tourism studies scholars who suggests transformation in the field (Ateljevic, Morgan, and Pritchard, 2013; Jugmoham and Giampiccoli, 2017; Morgan et al., 2018; Sarkodie et al., 2015).

Wang, Ayres, and Huyton (2010) observed that in Australia a notable gap between the existing curricula and the viewpoints of industry professionals and academic providers regarding the relative importance of various core topics in tourism modules. Their findings aligned with those of Airey (1998), Petrova and Mason (2004), and Ladkin (2005), which indicated that tourism education was not sufficiently equipping students for employment. Wang et al. (2010) recommended the creation of a consultative forum with key stakeholders, the development of exchange programs, and the establishment of curriculum development processes that incorporate industry consultations.

Another study in India undertaken by Kumar, Suklabaidya and Gautam (2020) showed that both academicians and industry representatives elucidated that the gap between industry expectation and tourism education imparted in the institutions exists. The study also revealed that the tourism degree is too packed, and it might be impossible

for a tourism student to learn all the skills required within the time of degree completion. The degree programme tries to grasp many skills over a short period of time, and it makes the student a jack of all trades and a master of none. Kumar (2014) suggested specialisation where tourism students can choose an area of tourism management that is of interest to them. Liu, Horng, Chou and Huang (2017) highlighted the importance of an appropriate module design and the learning environment which may contribute to individual thinking on sustainability.

The results of the Kumar et al. (2020) study using the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) technique suggested higher education for tourism can significantly enhance students' problem-solving skills. The study suggests that tourism education should focus on developing students' abilities to evaluate environmental impacts, initiate and manage environmental change, identify key environmental attributes, and acquire knowledge about sustainable development. Additionally, it should encourage students to adopt values that promote sustainability (Liu, Horng, Chou and Huang; 2017). Hales and Jennings (2017) stated that in order to address the problems of sustainability a transformational change is needed, as well as development of existing and new learn Ateljevic, Morgan, and Pritchard (2013) explored the role of tourism education as a catalyst for shifting societal mindsets and practices toward a sustainable and optimistic future. Their findings revealed that tourism programs primarily prepare students for employment, but in doing so, they foster compliance, encouraging potential critics of society to conform to the system without questioning it. This approach undermines student potential, transforming curious, creative, and inquisitive students into unimaginative, extrinsically motivated individuals who ultimately become gatekeepers of the professional world. However, as we move into a post-mechanical knowledge society, where environments that merely require the application of skills and knowledge are disappearing (Jaros & Deakin-Crick, 2007), there is a growing need for active contributors who can think creatively and critically. Robinson and Sebba (2010) advocated for a radical shift toward personalised education that nurtures individuals' dreams and talents, rather than suppressing creativity through institutional policies, procedures, and rigid curricula that reinforce passivity, control, and artificiality concepts in order to change the way students think and act.

The study by Mungai, et al. (2021) critically appraising the written curriculum and skills utilising the Boolean logic search on Google Scholar indicates that it is no longer

sufficient for tourism programmes to merely function as business tools or to produce job-ready graduates. Tourism educators must cultivate literate learners who possess a blend of knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities. These learners should be capable of solving problems, continuously learning to address economic challenges, enhancing employment prospects, and fostering social responsibility. The literature emphasises the importance of university-industry collaborations in adapting tourism skills and curricula to meet contemporary needs (Abbasnejad et al., 2011; Sarkodie, 2017; Mungai et al., 2021; Yang and Ong, 2020). This is crucial, given the vast and diverse skill set required by the tourism and hospitality industry.

Hsu (2018) emphasised that tourism degree graduates will increasingly require advanced soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning. Current tourism education is largely traditional, necessitating radical transformations and breakthroughs that may be uncomfortable but are essential for its sustainability. Slocum et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of imparting critical thinking as a primary goal of higher education. However, the nature of academia is evolving to meet national economic objectives, address employment gaps, promote innovation, and enhance competitiveness (Najar and Bukhari, 2017). These policies often prioritise job-specific training over critical thinking, shifting education towards developing skills in areas such as finance, accounting, and marketing to ensure student satisfaction (Caton, 2011). As a result, graduates equipped solely with traditional management competencies, such as marketing, finance, and human resources, are no longer adequately prepared for their future careers (Hsu, 2018).

There is a rising imperative for the development of innovation and entrepreneurial competences among learners. Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation within tourism education programmes can empower students to create and develop their own tourism ventures. This could involve courses or modules focused on business planning, financial management, market research, and innovation in tourism product development. Phi and Clausen (2021) noted that tourism education should include entrepreneurial education encouraging individuals to identify opportunities, take initiative and create value in the tourism industry. It is crucial for learners to have competences that can enable them to devise strategies and ideas that can address social needs. Shittu et al. (2021) pointed out that entrepreneurial education may equip learners with essential skills for business administration, planning, financial

management, marketing and customer service. In the same vein, Ahmad et al. (2022) opine that entrepreneurial education encourages innovation, and creativity, enabling learners to develop unique tourism experiences. It is therefore crucial for the tourism curriculum to embed entrepreneurial education so as to equip students with the skills and mindset to identify and address challenges and risks effectively.

There have been calls advocating for a pedagogical change and a critical turn in tourism education (Barkathunnishaa et al., 2017, Hsu, 2018; Jamal, Taillon, and Dredge, 2011). However, it is debatable whether this critical turn has truly infiltrated tourism education (Wilson and von der Heide, 2013). Despite a world brimming with innovations and disruptions, revolutionary changes in tourism education have been lacking (Hsu, 2018). Walker and Manyamba (2019) note that tourism and hospitality studies straddle the realms of business and social science, yet these programmes are typically housed within business schools, often overlooking the social science component. This creates a challenging situation for educators, who must reconcile the conflicting goals of fostering critical thinking and enhancing employability within a consumer-driven, profit-oriented market economy. Additionally, although many tourism programmes claim to prepare students for the workforce, they frequently fall short in equipping students to navigate the constantly evolving challenges of the modern workplace (Mungayi et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted tourism; in the past the sector demonstrated a strong capacity to adapt, innovate and recover from challenges (United Nations, 2020). However, this unique crisis has called for new approaches with robust multi-level response, and collaborative partnerships to effectively address the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19. The crisis presented an opportunity for the tourism sector to transform and become more inclusive, resilient and sustainable (United Nations, 2020). “This implies placing people’s wellbeing at the heart of tourism development, engaging governments, the private sector, citizens and the international community in strong partnerships for better planning and managing of tourism and setting measurement systems to evaluate the impact of the sector in the economy, on society and the environment and to guide adequately policies and operations” (United Nations 2020:16).

The UNWTO (2020) also suggested an investment in education and skills development in all tourism areas to promote added value jobs and resilience. Disaster management then becomes a critical element to be included in tourism education curricula as similar events may happen again or at a larger scale than before. In some programmes disaster management is included as a topic in a module, though such arrangements barely equip graduates with the ability to deal with these inevitable events (Torani, 2019). On the other hand, Lucia et al, (2021) suggested that in order to improve tourism education programmes there is a need for integrating human management education and the Tourism Education Futures Initiative's values-based tourism education. They also emphasised the importance of training and responsible managers who are aware of the social, cultural and environmental challenges in their destination, along with potential solutions to address these issues.

Critics of transformative learning in tourism argue that transformative learning application can be overly idealistic and difficult to implement in practice. Sahin & Dogantay (2018) noted that not all students are ready or willing to undergo the intense self-reflection and critical thinking required for transformation, especially within the constraints of formal curricula and time-limited courses. Additionally, transformative learning often relies heavily on the educator's ability to facilitate open dialogue and manage diverse perspectives, which can be challenging in multicultural or hierarchical learning environments (Hogan 2023). Some scholars also critique its Western-centric foundations, noting that it may not fully account for indigenous or non-Western ways of knowing, which are crucial in tourism contexts involving diverse cultural settings. Measuring the outcomes of transformative learning is complex, making it difficult to assess its effectiveness in tourism education (Cranton 2010, Hoggan & Hoggan-Kloubert, 2024).

2.10 Community Based Tourism Education

In as much as community-based tourism has gained popularity in the academic space, little attention has been given to community-based tourism education. Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) have noticed a gap in CBT education and have concluded that it is crucial for CBT to be incorporated as a stand-alone qualification. Chiutsi and Saarinen (2017) noted that the major challenge in CBTEs is that the host communities and managers do not know what is expected of them. There is a noticeable gap in the

strategy for developing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a specific subsector within Zimbabwean tourism, and current tourism policies do not offer a comprehensive approach to CBT development (MOTHI, 2017). To address this, it is crucial for the tourism curriculum to integrate CBT as a dedicated module, degree, or qualification. Education and capacity building in CBT are fundamental and should be regarded as essential prerequisites for its development (Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, 2017).

Incorporating CBT education into a long-term strategy is necessary to ensure community involvement, profitability, and sustainable development. Both tertiary and community-level education in CBT is needed to support these goals effectively. Establishing a specific qualification in CBT will help bridge the gap between tourism, community development, and relevant development theories. Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) advocated for introducing a new degree-level qualification in CBT to address existing capacity gaps. Emphasising community and sustainable development, with CBT serving as a strategy for community advancement, is crucial. The ultimate aim should be to achieve comprehensive community and sustainable development. Effective capacity building for CBT facilitators is essential, with tailored requirements to meet the specific needs of the context.

A study focusing on South Africa done by Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, (2017) indicated that “a search of all qualifications and unit standards in the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) shows the absence of service providers of CBT qualifications or unit standards. Specifically, for CBT labelled, ‘community-based tourism’; for search purposes, no result was found while searching all qualifications and all unit standards” (Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, 2017:52). Community Based Tourism education is an area that has not been given adequate attention by scholars despite the fact that is an approach to sustainable tourism that is being promoted globally. Their study showed that current literature reveals the existence of a gap in Community-based Tourism (CBT) curriculum, and qualifications at degree level. The research also indicated that globally CBT was not being adequately covered in the tourism education curriculum. They proposed that introducing a higher education qualification in CBT could address capacity gaps, provided the government employs graduates trained in the field. The study further highlighted the key issues that must be covered in CBT, which are community development matters, development theories and practices, all of which are currently not being addressed in the current tourism programmes.

Universities, as hubs of expertise, are ideally positioned to create platforms and an enabling environment that fosters collaboration and innovation between the state, communities, businesses, and students to address local developmental challenges. Govender and Giampiccoli (2019) advocate for University-Community Engagement (UCE), highlighting it as a crucial component of graduate education and a fundamental element of higher education institutions. To strengthen this approach, Giampiccoli (2020) suggests that updating the tourism degree curriculum to include topics such as community development, community engagement, community-based tourism, monitoring and evaluation, and related subjects is essential. Additionally, universities can play a pivotal role in uniting CBT operators, academics, students, public sector entities, businesses, and non-profit organisations, facilitating collaboration and advancing community-based tourism (Govender and Giampiccoli, 2018).

2.11 Pedagogies in tourism education

Pedagogies in tourism education refer to the various teaching methods, approaches, and strategies used to facilitate learning in tourism-related modules and programmes (Farsari 2022). Effective pedagogies should aim to engage students, promote critical thinking, and enhance their understanding of key concepts and skills relevant to the tourism industry. It is important to review current pedagogies and identify challenges and opportunities of each pedagogy in encouraging critical thinking, problem solving and innovation (Amangeldi et al., 2023). Pedagogies in tourism include experiential learning, problem-based learning, technology-based learning, reflective practices, active and blended learning.

Experiential learning was first pronounced by John Dewey who emphasised that education ought to be grounded in and transformed by experience (Kolb, 1984). It is a process whereby knowledge is shaped through alteration of experiences, and it involves hands-on experiences, such as field trips, internships, simulations, role-playing exercises, or service-learning projects, where students actively engage with real-world tourism contexts (Bowen and Dallam, 2020). Mak, Lau and Wong (2017) argue that experiences alone are not inherently educational, genuine learning requires a sequence of concrete experiences that lead to critical reflection, conceptual analysis and experimentation. This process enables students to apply theoretical knowledge in real world contexts, develop practical skills and achieve a more profound understanding of complexities within the tourism industry. Goh and King (2019)

emphasised the importance of the inclusion of experiential learning in preparing learners for the industry as well as being able to perform basic skills.

Experiential learning is one of the most effective pedagogies in tourism education for it bridges the gap between the classroom and the real world. Learning through direct experiences has its own challenges, which include, logical complexity, costs, inaccessibility, assessment challenges and time constraints. Yang et al. (2021) noted that organising for experiential learning experiences such as field trips, internships, and hands-on projects involves logistic planning which might be costly and time consuming. Aggarwal and Wu (2019) observed that not all students have the financial means or personal circumstances that enable them to participate fully in experiential learning opportunities. On the other hand, evaluating experiential learning may be complex, traditional assessment methods may not be suitable and developing a criterion that accurately measure learning outcomes from experiential activities may be difficult (Aggarwal and Goodell, 2015). Experiential learning in tourism relies heavily on partnerships with external organisations and stakeholders, making it essential but challenging to establish and maintain these relationships. Ensuring that these collaborations align with educational standards can be complex, as it requires balancing industry needs with academic goals while fostering long-term engagement (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Research-based learning (RBL) is also an important in tourism education. Research-based learning enables students to link theory and practice (Espinoza-Figueroa et al., 2021). Through RBL learners are able to explore and understand real-world situations, through cases and projects so as to come up with recommendations for the future (Gholam, 2019). Tian et al. (2022) examined the implementation of research-based learning in universities in China and the findings revealed that RBL can help in problem solving in tourism, as well as contributing to improving the quality of education. Amangeldi et al. (2023) examined the effectiveness of student-led research to troubleshoot infrastructural issues in tourism. They concluded that this approach to learning enables learners to identify problems and find solutions to the problems. While RBL can significantly enhance critical thinking, in-depth understanding and problem solving, it also has its own challenges and barriers to implementation (Gholam 2019). Conducting research usually requires more time and resources, and requires access to various research databases, which might be costly and inaccessible to

learners. On the other hand, effective research requires significant guidance and supervision, yet providing adequate supervision can be a challenge given other responsibilities for lecturers such as teaching, and administrative duties (Espinoza-Figueroa et al., 2021). Students may lack the necessary research skills such as data collection, analysis and interpretation, yet developing these skills takes time and requires effective training which can be difficult to incorporate in a packed curriculum (Plessis et al., 2024).

In problem-based learning (PBL), students are presented with authentic, real-world problems or case studies related to tourism, and they work collaboratively to analyse the problem, identify solutions, and apply relevant concepts and theories to address the issue (Kanca et al., 2018; Yumatov et al., 2017). PBL encourages critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and collaboration among students using resources available to them. Project-based learning involves students working on long-term, in-depth projects that require them to research, plan, implement, and evaluate a specific aspect of the tourism industry. PBL in tourism education fosters active learning, helps in the development of generic skills, and motivates students to solve problems (Kanca et al., 2018). Lin and Fung (2022) however, noted that in PBL students are required to effectively manage their time and should have self-discipline. While PBL has proved to have many benefits for students' learning outcomes, critics have questioned its efficacy (Albanese, 2000; Albanese & Mitchell, 1993), citing the complexity of the problem-solving design (Otting & Zwaal, 2011) and Schmidt's (2012) claim that the problem design should be customised to the specifics of each educational context (Crawford, Weber, & Lee, 2020).

Educators must also ensure active learning strategies that encourage student engagement and participation in the learning process rather than just passive listening to lectures. Active learning may be achieved through group discussions, debates, case studies, peer teaching, role-playing, brainstorming sessions, and interactive multimedia presentations. Mak et al., (2017) explored the effectiveness of teamwork on learners and concluded that teamwork is imperative to the acquiring of learner's practical knowledge and skills. The strategies encourage critical thinking, communication skills, and collaborative problem-solving. Active learning fosters critical reflection in learning experiences, personal values, and professional development within the context of tourism education (Shi, Zhang and Cai, 2020). Shekhar et al.

(2019) observed that in some cases learners may resist active learning methods and this can come in the form of passive, non-verbal, partial and open resistance. In group settings, some learners may dominate the discussions while other may become free riders (Cassidy, 2015). The use of active-learning strategies requires transitioning from a traditional lecture-based approach, a significant cultural shift within the institution as well as change of attitudes of both learners and teachers (Shekhar et al., 2019).

Technology-enhanced learning involves the integration of digital technologies, such as online learning platforms, multimedia resources, virtual simulations, and social media, into tourism education (Berger and Paul, 2021). Warmansyah et al. (2023) noted that these technologies can facilitate flexible learning environments, provide access to diverse learning resources, and enhance student engagement and interaction so as to reach out to many students. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the uptake of technology enhanced learning since the use of online platform was the only alternative method. It is therefore crucial for educators to continue to reinforce the use of technology and go beyond just the use of online learning (Chandra et al., 2022). The tourism curriculum should keep up-to date with the digital revolution. Digital learning has its own challenges, digital learning is expensive and not all institutions and students can access computers, and reliable internet (Greene, Oswald and Pomerantz, 2015). On the other hand, technology can be unreliable due to hardware malfunctions, and internet connectivity issues (Kent et al., 2016). Overreliance on the internet can reduce face-to-face interactions, yet tourism is a highly interactive field that often requires strong interpersonal and communication skills.

The use of different and effective pedagogies in tourism education is however stifled by challenges such as economic challenges, lack of professional preparation of lecturers as well as lack of appropriate infrastructure and support equipment in institutions (Amangeldi et al., 2023). Blended learning has been identified as a balanced and effective way of teaching for it combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning activities and resources (Shand, 2018). This approach allows for flexibility in learning, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences.

In the context of CBT tourism education, the integration of diverse pedagogical approaches holds transformative potential to equip learners with the critical, practical and reflective skills needed to navigate the complexities of sustainable and

community-oriented tourism. These pedagogies, when effectively implemented can foster deep engagement with the real-world community issues, enabling students to co-create knowledge, develop locally grounded solutions and challenge conventional tourism narratives. However, their practical application remains constrained by systemic barriers, including institutional capacity gaps, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to resources especially in developing contexts like Zimbabwe. Moreover, without deliberate alignment with decolonial and inclusive frameworks, even the most innovative teaching strategies risk reinforcing dominant ideologies rather than empowering students to challenge them. Therefore, advancing CBT in tourism education demands not only pedagogical innovation but also institutional commitment to equity, contextual relevance, and community partnership ensuring that future tourism practitioners are not merely industry-ready, but socially conscious and community-embedded change agents.

2.12 Critics of tourism education

In the advent of continuous technology advancement in the tourism industry and the constantly evolving changes in customer preferences and global trends it is important for learners to keep updated with the latest technologies (Berger et al., 2015). It has however been observed that in developing nations, tourism education programmes do not always keep pace with the changes in technology resulting in outdated curriculum and teaching methods (Mandalia, 2023). There's a need for greater innovation and adaptability within tourism education to ensure relevance and competitiveness in the industry. Wei (2019) alluded that given the increasing role of technology in the tourism industry, there is a need to integrate technology-related topics as well as integrating authentic virtual settings within the tourism programmes. This could include virtual trips and tour guiding training (Patiar et al., 2017), data analytics, virtual reality, training in digital marketing, (Ozdemir, 2021) and other emerging technologies shaping the future of tourism.

Tourism education has been criticised for putting more emphasis on theory over practical. Al-Romeedy, Moosa and Elbaz (2020) noted that tourism education programmes usually put more attention on theoretical concepts and academic research overlooking practical skills and real-world experience and thereby creating a skills gap in the tourism labour market. More time should be dedicated to hands-on

training, internships, industry placements, working holidays so that learners can be exposed to real work situations. Providing more hands-on experiential learning opportunities can better prepare students for the realities of the tourism industry.

The systematic changes in tourism as well as the need to mitigate negative environmental and social impacts have led to increased attention to sustainable tourism (Wilson and von der Heidt, 2013). Nevertheless, proponents of sustainable tourism believe that tourism programmes still lack a strong emphasis on sustainability principles and practices (Minguez et al., 2021; Slocum et al., 2019). Furthermore, it has been observed that tourism education programmes are too heavily influenced by industry stakeholders, leading to a focus on job-specific skills rather than broader critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Leiper 2008; Minguez et al., 2021; Slocum et al., 2019). Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are then suffocated and replaced with market-oriented learning resulting in failure to address the complex issues in the tourism discipline (Lillo-Banuls and Casado-Diaz, 2015). Despite the fact that the sustainable tourism concept has been given attention in the research arena, (Boyle et al., 2015; Hales and Jennings, 2017; McGrath et al., 2020), educators have failed to be progressive enough to come up with pedagogies that foster sustainable tourism through critical thinking (Dredge et al., 2012, Minguez et al., 2021). Navarro et al., (2020), advocate for greater integration of sustainability concepts throughout the curriculum, as well as a focus on addressing environmental, social, and cultural impacts of tourism. Boyle et al. (2015) and Minguez et al. (2021) opine that it is crucial to put emphasis on sustainability principles and practices throughout tourism education programmes. This includes incorporating topics such as sustainable tourism development, environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and social responsibility into the curriculum.

Kaiser (2023) noted that despite the significant advancement in sustainable tourism research, the tourism education curriculum has not yet fully incorporated sustainable tourism. Resultantly, there are complexities and challenges in understanding sustainable tourism, due to fragmented literature and diverse theoretical approaches. The fragmentation of literature makes it difficult to build a cohesive understanding of how tourism can contribute to sustainable development. On the other hand, the use of various concepts and theoretical frameworks borrowed from many disciplines results in a lack of a common understanding and theoretical perspectives. Álvarez-García

(2018) noted that this fragmentation and diversity limits the understanding of the role of sustainable tourism in achieving the sustainable development goals.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the tourism industry, cross-disciplinary approaches involve integrating knowledge and perspectives from multiple disciplines, such as economics, sociology, geography, environmental studies, anthropology, and business management into tourism education. This fosters a holistic understanding of tourism and its multifaceted impacts. Scholars who have analysed the tourism curriculum have observed that the past and current tourism curriculum is one-dimensional and narrowly focused (Boluk et al., 2022; Jamal et al., 2011; Tribe, 2010). Farsari (2022) also pointed out the importance of a cross-disciplinary approach, considering the social, ecological and cultural aspects of tourism and rather than a business approach only.

It is vital to have a more balanced approach that combines industry-relevant skills with a strong foundation in core academic disciplines. While theoretical knowledge is important, there should be a stronger focus on developing practical skills that are directly relevant to the needs of the tourism industry (Sarkodie and Adom, 2015). Tourism education should include practical training and not just theory in areas such as hospitality management, tourism marketing, destination management, event planning, and customer service (Radygina, 2023). Establishing closer collaboration with industry partners, including tourism businesses, government agencies, NGOs, and community organisations, can ensure that tourism education programmes remain relevant and responsive to the needs of the industry (Singh, 2019; Yayla and Catir, 2023). Industry partnerships can provide valuable insights and networking connections for students.

Tourism education programmes often adopt a global perspective, focusing on international tourism trends and destinations (Walker and Manyamba, 2020). Tribe (2010) argues that a business-orientation to tourism limits scholars to not having a chance to explore the humanities side of tourism, as well as underrepresentation of local perspectives and experiences, particularly from communities in developing countries or indigenous groups. There is a need for greater diversity and inclusivity within tourism education to ensure that local voices are heard and respected. Miguel (2024) suggested that tourism should ensure cultural competency and diversity while

preparing students to interact effectively with people from different backgrounds and cultures. This includes promoting intercultural understanding, respect for local customs and traditions, and sensitivity to the needs of diverse travellers.

Overall, while tourism education plays a vital role in preparing students for careers in the industry, it is essential to acknowledge and address these criticisms to ensure that programmes remain relevant, ethical, and effective in meeting the needs of both students and the tourism sector as a whole. Improvements in tourism education can enhance the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of programmes in preparing students for careers in the dynamic tourism industry. By addressing these areas for improvement, tourism education programmes can better equip students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical awareness needed to succeed in diverse careers within the tourism industry while also promoting sustainability, innovation, and responsible tourism practices. Through employing a variety of teaching pedagogies, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that effectively prepare students for diverse careers in the tourism industry while fostering critical thinking, practical skills, and a deep understanding of sustainable tourism principles.

2.13 Summary

This chapter unpacked the concept of community-based tourism as a form of sustainable tourism. Community-based tourism has the potential to ensure conservation of natural resources and the preservation of cultural heritage. CBT can also contribute to the rural livelihoods options through employment and service provision in the tourism industry as well as to community development. If well implemented, CBT has the potential to empower local communities. This chapter also gives a justification of why CBT is worth the research efforts: it addresses seven sustainable development goals which makes it a worthwhile subject of study. CBT like any other subject is not immune to criticism: some critics believe that CBT is still imaginary, and it has not yet been able to fulfil its intended mandate. The chapter also looks at tourism education, tourism education pedagogies as well as CBT education. Scholars believe that sustainable tourism is not being adequately covered in the tourism curriculum. There are a number of gaps that have been identified in the tourism education curriculum which need to be addressed to ensure that the programmes match the industry requirements.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical underpinning of the study. A theoretical framework uses a theory, or a collection of concepts derived from one or more theories to guide research. It provides a structured approach for analysing data and helps explain relationships between variables, thereby grounding the study in existing knowledge and ensuring a coherent understanding of the research problem (Adom, Hussein and Agyem, 2018). A theoretical framework explains why the research problem under study exists and provides a particular perspective, or lens, through which to examine a topic (Imenda, 2014, Varpio et al., 2020). By using a theoretical framework, the researcher can construct an outline for their research inquiry while demonstrating how one defines their research in terms of philosophy, epistemology, methodology, and data analysis (Adom, Hussein and Agyem, 2018). Salawu, Shamsuddin and Bolatitio (2023) assert that a theoretical framework is essential for situating and contextualising formal theories within a study. It anchors the research within a scholarly and academic context, ensuring its relevance and rigor. Furthermore, a theoretical framework is intrinsically linked to the research problem, serving as a guiding focus that shapes the study's direction and purpose.

The major thrust of the study is to develop a transformative education model for improved Community-Based Tourism (CBT). CBT is a form of sustainable tourism meant to reduce the environmental, and socio-economic impacts of CBT, and grounded in the sustainable development theory. To develop a transformative education model, it is important to understand how adults learn and create meaning to solve problems. Resultantly, the study will use the Sustainable Development Theory (SDT), Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1978) and the Decolonisation theory, as a composite theoretical framework for this research.

3.1.0 Sustainable Development Theory (SDT)

The SDT theory provides a framework for understanding and addressing the complex interrelationships between human activities and the environment, aiming for the long-

term health and viability of ecological, social, and economic systems (Mensah, 2019). The key concept of the Sustainable Development Theory is “meeting the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987).

The SDT integrates multiple dimensions including growth, social equity, and environmental protection. Sustainable development promotes broad participation and inclusivity in decision-making processes. The key concepts influencing Sustainable Development Theory include intergenerational equity, systems thinking, and the triple bottom line. The intergenerational equity principle states that current generations should manage resources in a way that does not detract from the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Mensah, 2019). The systems thinking principle prominently advanced by Ludwig von Bertalanffy involves understanding the complex interrelationships and interdependencies between various components of social, economic and environmental systems (Zhang and Ahmed, 2020). This approach recognises that actions in one area can have significant and sometimes unforeseen impacts on other areas necessitating a holistic perspective when addressing sustainability challenges (Elsawah, Ho and Ryan; 2022). The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach, introduced by John Elkington in 1997, emphasises evaluating business performance through three critical dimensions: economic, environmental, and social impacts (Correia, 2018). Elkington's framework advocates balancing financial success (profit) with responsible environmental stewardship (planet) and positive social contributions (people) (Nogueira, Gomes and Lopes, 2023). Mensah (2019) suggested that in applying the SDT theory there is a need for understanding the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic systems and the need for holistic approaches to address sustainability.

3.1.1 Evolution of the Sustainable Development Theory

The SDT evolved through practice and the origins of the Sustainable Development Theory can be traced through several key events, publications, and concepts that have shaped its evolution (Olawumi and Chan, 2018). Scholars who have studied the evolution of the Sustainable Development Theory have divided the evolution and development into the embryonic period (before 1972), the moulding period (1972-

1987), and the developing period (since 1987), (Lele 1991; Mebratu, 1998; Shi et al., 2018).

Embryonic Stage (Before 1972)

As far back as the Western Zhou Dynasty (B.C. 1100–771), Chinese emperors recognised the importance of managing natural resources sustainably. They adopted several strategies to safeguard these resources, including the creation of specialised management departments, the enforcement of state monopolies, the imposition of taxes on mountains and gardens and the implementation of restrictions to prevent over exploitation (Shi et al., 2018). This historical perspective highlights the long-standing recognition of the need for balance between development and environmental conservation, a concept still relevant today in discussions of sustainable development. Early environmentalists such as Rachel Carson (1962) (who is credited with sparking the modern environmental movement) raised awareness about the environmental impacts of pesticides (Lasher, 2012). The book highlighted the need for a more sustainable relationship between humans and the environment. Another report that contributed to the development of the SDT was the Limits of Growth report commissioned by the City of Rome and written by Donella Meadows (Meadows et al., 2018). This report used computer modelling to explore the long-term consequences of exponential economic and population growth on Earth's resources.

The Moulding Period (1972-1987)

As environmental awareness increased, various institutions and policies related to environmental protection were developed, promoting management of pollutants after they are produced through treatment technologies and by following regulations (Shi et al., 2019). According to Sun et al., (2012) the international summits caused a significant divide between developed countries in the Global North and developing countries in the Global South. Developed nations, having largely achieved industrialisation and attained higher living standards, focused more on environmental issues like pollution and climate change. In contrast, developing countries, facing challenges like poverty and economic growth, prioritised these concerns over environmental ones. This difference highlighted the complexity of achieving a global consensus on sustainable development, as different regions have varying priorities and challenges (Javanmardi, Liu, and Xie, 2023). The differing goals also reflected the

need for a balanced and fair approach that addresses both environmental protection and socioeconomic development, acknowledging the interrelated nature of these issues (Ahmed et al., 2022).

During this period, a series of summits and conferences were held. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 was focused on devising strategies to deal with environmental challenges. The summit encouraged all countries to develop and implement environmental management policies while ensuring economic development (Mensah, 2019). The Brundtland Report (1987) formally known as *Our Common Future* was produced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland. It is considered a seminal document in the development of sustainable development theory. The report popularised the definition of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987).

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (also known as the Earth Summit), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was pivotal in advancing sustainable development. It produced the Agenda 21 document, which outlined a comprehensive plan for sustainable development globally and resulted in the establishment of key environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (Shi et al., 2019). The conference resulted in the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and established the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," recognising that developed countries should finance and transfer technology to developing nations (Sun, 2012). It set goals and action plans for implementing sustainable development (SD), marking the first global effort to turn the concept into actionable policies. This established sustainable development as a key international policy, emphasising its importance in addressing the balance between economic development and environmental protection (Qiu, 1992). The conference also highlighted the role of equity and social issues, establishing the three pillars of sustainable development which are economy, society, and environment.

In 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit was held in New York and 189 countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These goals included targets

related to reducing poverty and improving environmental sustainability, further embedding sustainable development in international development agendas. These goals became a widely accepted framework for guiding national development and international cooperation for around 15 years, offering direction for humanity's progress in the new century (Li, 2005). The Johannesburg summit officially known as the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2000 also contributed to the development of the sustainability theory. The conference built on the Earth Summit and sought to integrate sustainable development principles into global and national policies. It focused on practical steps to achieve sustainability, with an emphasis on poverty reduction, clean water, and energy (United Nations, 2002).

Recent Developments (2010 - Present)

While significant political strides were made toward sustainable development, scientists struggled with defining and measuring it. In 1999, the National Research Council introduced "sustainability science," defined as the study of the interactions between natural and social systems and their management toward sustainability (Fang et al., 2018). After the 1992 Earth Summit, the tensions between economic, social, and environmental interests became clearer, highlighting the need for global cooperative governance. The 2012 Rio+20 Summit emphasised that a green economy is essential for addressing the tensions between the economic, social and the environmental interests and stressed the importance of global collaboration (Barbier, 2012). The summit expanded the concept of sustainable development to include a fourth pillar: governance, alongside economic, social, and environmental considerations. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs expanded on the Millennium Development Goals with 17 goals addressing a broad range of issues including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

3.1.2 The Three Pillars of Sustainability

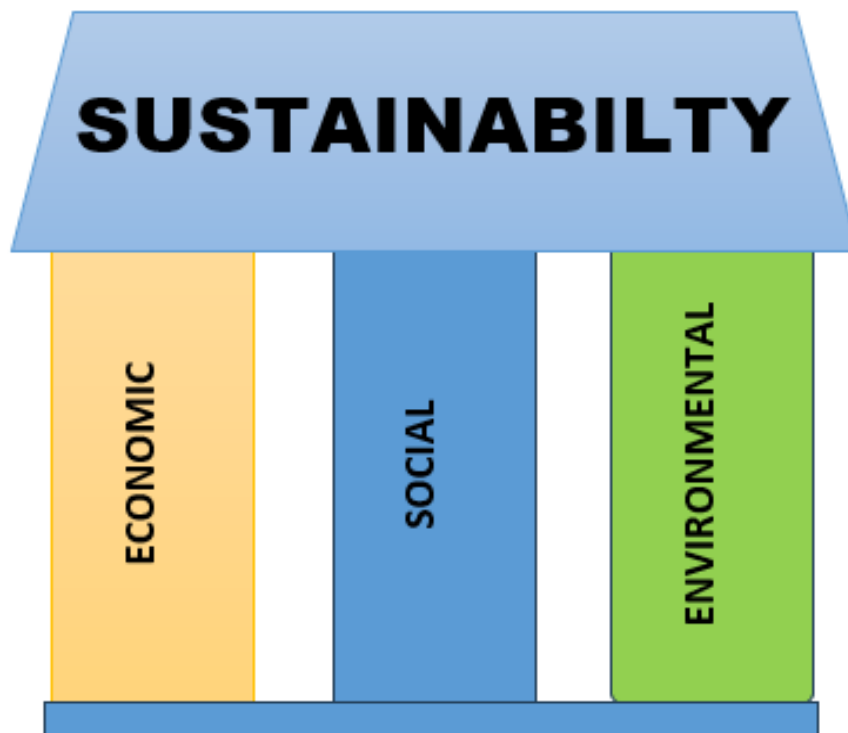


Figure 3.1 The three pillars of sustainability.

Sustainable development (SD) is often represented by three interconnected pillars which are the economic, social, and environmental sustainability pillars as shown in Figure 3.1. Economic sustainability ensures that economic activities provide long-term benefits without depleting resources. It involves efficient resource use, sustainable economic growth, and the creation of economic opportunities (Mensah, 2019). Social sustainability focuses on maintaining and improving human well-being (Davidson, 2010). This includes reducing poverty and inequality promoting social justice and ensuring that all members of society have access to basic services such as health care, education, and employment (Scopelliti et al., 2018; Kumar, Raizada and Biswas, 2014). Environmental sustainability involves protecting and managing natural resources and ecosystems to prevent degradation and ensure that they remain viable for future generations (Mensah, 2019).

3.1.3 CBT and three pillars of sustainability

The theory of sustainable development can be applied to CBT as it emphasises balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. CBT aligns closely with the three pillars of sustainability as it focuses on local benefits while promoting responsible tourism practices. Integrating the sustainable development theory into CBT can lead to more resilient, equitable, and environmentally responsible practices.

Economic Sustainability

Sustainable development promotes maximising economic benefits for the local community, ensuring present needs are met without jeopardising the ability to meet future demands (Du and Kang, 2016). This can include creating job opportunities, supporting local businesses, and ensuring that a significant portion of tourism revenue stays within the community. Sustainable development also promotes diversification in the local economy decreasing dependency on tourism alone and making the community more resilient to economic fluctuations (Zhai and Chang, 2019). Economic sustainability, in essence, demands that decisions be made in a way that is both financially responsible and fair to all stakeholders. This approach emphasises the importance of balancing immediate economic gains with long-term financial stability. Similarly, CBT aims to provide economic benefits to local communities through job creation in tourism and hospitality as well as through supporting local enterprises. Through support and business from tourism activities, locally owned enterprises have a chance to expand and grow while reinvesting profits into the community. This helps in reducing poverty and supports economic development while retaining economic gains within the community.

Environmental Sustainability

The concept of environmental sustainability revolves around the ability of the natural environment to remain productive and resilient in order to sustain human life over the long term. It focuses on maintaining the integrity of ecosystems and respecting the carrying capacity of the planet's natural resources, as highlighted by Mesah (2019). In practical terms, environmental sustainability implies that natural resources, such as wildlife, forests, fisheries, and water, should be extracted or harvested at a rate that

allows them to regenerate and renew themselves. Additionally, the environment must be able to absorb and process waste and pollutants at a pace that prevents long-term damage. As Evers (2018) notes, this balance requires that human activities, whether economic or industrial, do not exceed the capacity of nature to replenish resources and assimilate waste. Failing to do so could lead to ecological degradation, threatening both the environment and future economic prosperity. Conversely, CBT promotes sustainable use and management of natural resources ensuring that tourism activities do not degrade the environment (Ngo and Creutz, 2022). Eco-friendly practices and technologies such as renewable energy and sustainable building materials can reduce the ecological footprint of tourism activities (Mancini et al., 2022). Likewise, CBT activities should be designed to minimise ecological footprints, and tourism operations often include efforts to preserve natural habitats, manage waste responsibly and educate visitors about environmental stewardship. Community members are the stewards of the natural resources in their communities.

Social and Cultural Sustainability

The social pillar of sustainability emphasises empowering communities, ensuring equity, accessibility, participation, cultural identity, and institutional stability. Social sustainability involves creating a system that alleviates poverty without compromising environmental or economic stability (Mensah, 2019). It highlights the interconnectedness of social conditions like poverty and environmental degradation (Farazmand, 2016), advocating for poverty alleviation within the limits of available resources (Kumar et al., 2014). At its core, social sustainability seeks to foster the development of people, communities, and cultures, enabling a meaningful life through access to healthcare, education, gender equality, peace, and global stability (Scopelliti et al., 2018). However, achieving social sustainability can be challenging due to the complexity and intangible nature of social dynamics (Saner, Yiu, & Nguyen, 2019).

Success in social sustainability, as Davidson (2010) notes, means that people are not subjected to conditions that limit their ability to meet their needs. Rather than directly fulfilling everyone's needs, social sustainability aims to provide the conditions that allow individuals to realise their potential if they choose to do so (Kolk, 2016). Barriers that impede this capacity must be addressed to enable progress (Pierobon, 2019). Furthermore, understanding how social structures emerge and function from a

systems perspective is crucial (Lv, 2018). Social sustainability also encompasses broader issues like human rights, gender equality, public participation, and the rule of law, which collectively promote peace and stability, contributing to sustainable development (Saner, Yiu, and Nguyen, 2019).

In the same vein, CBT emphasises active participation and decision-making by the local community (Kolk, 2016). This ensures that tourism aligns with the community's values, needs, and cultural heritage. CBT can also be a platform for preserving and showcasing local cultures and traditions. It can foster pride in cultural heritage while educating visitors about the community's customs and way of life. On the other hand, sustainable development aims to ensure equitable access to the benefits of tourism for all community members including marginalised groups. It also involves promoting fair labour practices and ensuring that tourism development does not displace or disadvantage residents (Lv, 2018).

CBT embodies the three pillars of sustainability by integrating economic, environmental and social considerations into its core practices, aiming for balanced and holistic development that benefits the local community and the broader environment.

3.1.4 Gap Between Sustainable Development Theory and Practice

While very influential and widely used, the SDT has faced criticisms over the years which focus on the theory's implementation, conceptual foundations, and practical effectiveness. Critics argue that the concept of sustainable development is often too vague and lacks a clear, universally accepted definition whilst the current definitions do not come from the comprehensive concepts of sustainable development (Baumgartner, 2011, Broman 2017; Shi et al., 2019). This ambiguity can lead to different interpretations and applications making it challenging to develop consistent policies and measure progress effectively (Shi et al., 2019). Mensah and Enu-Kwesi, (2018) suggested that there is a need for a clearer, comprehensive definition and explanation of this concept. The theory is also criticised for its lack of concrete guidelines and actionable strategies for implementation. This gap between theory and practice can result in policies that are well-intentioned but ineffective or poorly executed (Tietenberg and Lewis, 2018). Based on the relational dialectics between practice and knowledge, and the ongoing nature of understanding, sustainable

development (SD) practice forms the basis of SD theory. The theory, in turn, guides practice and is continually refined through real-world application. To better guide SD practice, it is important to review and reorganise the evolution of both SD practice and theory.

Shie et al., (2019) argues that sustainable development continues to emphasise economic growth as a central component, which can be at odds with environmental sustainability. Tietenberg and Lewis, (2018) contend that pursuing growth within the current economic system may lead to increased resource consumption and environmental degradation. There are also concerns that sustainable development often fails to adequately address issues of social equity and justice. Scholars argue that the benefits of sustainable development are not evenly distributed and that marginalised communities may bear a disproportionate burden of environmental and economic challenges (Chigwenya and Manatsa, 2007; Mensah, 2019; Zahedi 2019).

The effectiveness of sustainable development initiatives can be undermined by weak governance structures, lack of political will, and inadequate enforcement mechanisms. Critics highlight the difficulty in achieving coordinated action across different levels of government and sectors (Kanie and Biermann, 2017). The global nature of sustainable development frameworks can sometimes overlook local contexts and specific needs. Critics argue that top-down approaches may not adequately address local environmental, social, and economic conditions, leading to ineffective or counterproductive outcomes (Lele 2017; Agrawal, et al., 2022).

Despite the shortfalls of the SDT, the theory provides a framework that integrates economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. The theory provides a robust and integrated framework for addressing complex and interrelated challenges. Its holistic, long term and adaptable nature makes it an essential tool for policymakers, businesses, and civil society in pursuing a sustainable and equitable future. The sustainable development theory can be applied in CBT as it supports the creation of a resilient and thriving world for current and future generations as it guides implementation towards balanced and inclusive growth.

3.2.0 Overview of the Learning Theories

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato questioned how a learner can learn something new if the subject itself is also new (Murphy, 2015). Learning theories therefore try to explain how best a learner can obtain, retain, and remember new information. Learning theories can be categorised into their broad areas, namely, behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism.

Behaviourism theories focus on linking stimuli and response and reinforcement (Stewart, 2021). Learning is viewed as a change in observable behaviour. Behaviourism theorists are of the opinion that all behaviours are learned through conditioning which occurs through interaction with the environment. The conditioning can be either classical conditioning or operant conditioning. Classical conditioning, first described by Ivan Pavlov, is a learning process that occurs when two stimuli are repeatedly paired, the neutral stimulus and the unconditioned response. The neutral stimulus that initially does not elicit a response is the unconditioned stimulus that naturally and automatically elicits an unconditioned response. Over time, the neutral stimulus becomes a conditioned stimulus (Pritchard, Alan, and Pritchard, 2013). Operant conditioning, developed by Burrhus Fredric Skinner, is a learning process in which behaviours are influenced by consequences that follow them. It involves the strengthening or weakening of behaviour based on outcomes it produces which can be reinforcements or punishments (Stewart, 2021). Behaviourism theories can be applicable in education where students are rewarded for good behaviour and academic performance (Ng'andu et al., 2013). Behaviourism theories are also applicable in parenting when a child is punished or rewarded for their behaviour or in workplaces when employees are given bonuses for meeting performance targets (Marsick, 2015).

Cognitivism learning is internal and is a result of a student processing and organising new information. Cognitivism focuses on the inner mental activities of the mind, emphasising the role of cognition in understanding how people learn, (Pritchard, Alan and Pritchard, 2013). In contrast with behaviourism theories, cognitivism considers the learner's thoughts, memories, and problem-solving processes. Several constructivism theorists have put forward theories which include the cognitive development theory of Jean Piaget (Piaget 1962); the discovery learning theory of Jerome Bruner (Takaya

2008); the meaningful learning theory of David Ausubel (Bryce and Blown, 2023); and the social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura (1986). Educators use the cognitivism concept to develop strategies to enhance learning, such as grouping information into manageable units, concept mapping, and the use of memory aids (Malik 2021). Cognitivism may also be used to encourage learners to think about their thinking process.

Constructivism focuses on learning that emphasises the active role of learners in constructing their understanding and knowledge through experiences and interactions with the world (Pritchard, Alan, and Pritchard, 2013). It posits that learning is an active, constructive process where learners build on their prior knowledge. Constructivism can be applied at university level learning as the theory posits that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through experience, reflection, and interaction with their environment (Holmes, 2019). Constructivism supports active learning and the development of critical thinking skills through constructing their understanding as well as encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning (Shah, 2019). Constructivism also encourages more personalised learning by allowing learners to bring diverse prior knowledge, experience and perspectives to the classroom (Holmes, 2018). Proponents and founders of constructivism include Jean Piaget who developed the theory of cognitive development, John Dewey who emphasised learning experience in education, and Jerome Bruner who pioneered the concept of instrumental scaffolding. Mezirow's TLT is also classified as a constructivism theory.

This study makes use of the transformative theory. Transformative learning theories are classified under constructivism theories. Transformative learning theory focuses on profound changes in the ways individuals perceive themselves and the world. The theories promote critical reflection, personal growth, and social change. The theory emphasises the importance of challenging existing beliefs and assumptions to foster deeper understanding and empowerment.

3.2.1 Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning can be defined as "learning that transforms problematic frames of reference, sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind,

meaning perspectives, mindsets to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow, 2003:58). The process entails a significant structural transformation in beliefs, emotions, actions and an understanding of power dynamics within societies. The theory emphasises that learners’ interpretation of their lived experiences are central to constructing meaning, which is the essence of learning. This theory belongs to adult learning theories with constructivism underpinnings, which emphasise the role of learners in constructing their meaning and knowledge through experiences (Schnepfleitner and Ferreira, 2021).

The core principle of Mezirow’s theory is the critical examination of assumptions, enabling learners to confront and question the beliefs that they have previously accepted without scrutiny. As students acquire new information, they also reassess their previous beliefs and understandings, modifying their ideologies through the process of critical reflection. This goes beyond simply acquiring knowledge and exploring how students come to understand and find purpose in their lives. This type of learning experience involves a significant shift in personal perspectives, prompting individuals to question their previously held beliefs and view things from different angles to accommodate new insights and knowledge. Learning can take place through four key processes: broadening existing perspectives, acquiring entirely new frameworks of understanding, shifting viewpoints, and altering ingrained patterns of thought (Mezirow, 2018).

Mezirow (2003) emphasised that transformative learning predominantly occurs in adults and is inherently a voluntary process. Transformation is realised only when individuals actively apply what they have learned. However, some individuals may choose to remain passive learners, avoiding critical examination of their beliefs and values. Transformative learning is often initiated by perplexing challenges or emotionally charged experiences. Consequently, educators are encouraged to adopt a transformative pedagogical approach that integrates instrumental, experiential, and participatory methods. This approach requires moving beyond conventional classroom settings to create learning environments that engage learners more deeply and foster meaningful change (Mezirow, 2018).

The major objective of transformative learning is to change the frame of reference. The application of the transformative learning theory improves the learner's problem-solving techniques. The theory highlights the importance of critically reflecting on past experiences or events to address challenging or disorienting situations effectively. The competencies developed through such reflection are instrumental in driving research, fostering innovation, and facilitating informed action. At its core, transformative learning aims to enhance cognitive and emotional skills, enabling individuals to construct new perspectives and meaning frameworks. Educators are encouraged to design programs that nurture learners to become rational thinkers, critical analysts, and adept problem solvers. This approach ensures that education not only imparts knowledge but also equips learners with tools to engage thoughtfully with complex issues (Bueddefeld & Duerden, 2022).

Learners should be empowered to address and resolve real-world challenges within the industry rather than passively adopting established practices. They must also develop the ability to critically analyse and challenge underlying assumptions and prevailing ideas. Scholars argue that transformative learning fosters an environment conducive to advancing social reforms, promoting social action, supporting social movements and advocating for social justice (Mezirow, 2003; Stone & Duffy, 2015; Walker & Manyamba, 2020).

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) identifies various domains of learning that shape the learning process, including communicative, instrumental, and emancipatory domains. Instrumental learning focuses on acquiring technical knowledge and skills, emphasising practical, goal-oriented outcomes. It involves mastering the ability to manipulate and influence one's environment to achieve desired results. This domain often includes methods such as on-the-job training, practical hands-on experiences, and retraining programs aimed at enhancing technical competencies (Mezirow, 1996). It focuses on acquiring specific skills and knowledge to address practical problems and achieve goals. Instrumental learning is applicable and important in tourism education as it aids in developing students' practical competencies, problem-solving abilities and technical expertise through internships, field projects, familiarisation tours, workshops and seminars (Radygina, 2023).

Communicative learning is based on our need to understand each other through language. According to Mezirow, learners willingly and decisively convey their way through the usage of verbal and non-verbal language (Mezirow,2018). Communicative learning focuses on dialogue and discourse as essential components for personal and professional growth. In tourism education, communicative learning can enhance students' understanding of complex issues, improve their critical thinking skills, and prepare learners for effective communication in diverse and intercultural settings (Trang and Phuong, 2023). Communicative learning supports pedagogies such as classroom discussions, group projects, guest lectures and case studies which are key in tourism education.

Emancipatory knowledge is rooted in the ability for self-introspection and reflection (Nouri and Sajjadi, 2014). It stems from the natural human drive for personal growth, freedom, development and self-awareness. When individuals have a sense of self-determination, they are able to critically examine both themselves and the broader social and cultural contexts in which they live. Emancipatory knowledge, or introspective learning, emerges from a process of questioning oneself and the societal systems one is part of. In this context, communicative and instrumental forms of learning are often seen as restrictive, as they do not foster the same level of critical self-awareness and social critique (Omodan, 2022). This approach focuses on challenging established systemic and societal notions and commonly accepted beliefs to recognise how much they are limited by inevitable errors and misconceptions. In tourism education, emancipatory learning can be applied to promote social justice, inclusivity, and sustainability, empowering students to address inequities and contribute to positive change in the industry. Emancipatory learning may also encourage innovation and entrepreneurship ultimately promoting industrialisation.

The TLT can be effectively applied in tourism education to foster critical reflection, and perspective shifts among students. By encouraging reflective practices, exposing students to diverse perspectives through case studies, and practical learning, transformative learning facilitates critical dialogue as students are challenged to reconsider their assumptions about tourism. Active learning through experiential activities, project-based learning, and community engagement allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world issues, promoting ethical and sustainable tourism practices. Integrating personal growth opportunities and emphasising lifelong

learning further supports students in their journey towards becoming thoughtful, responsible tourism professionals. This theory helps students develop a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics in tourism and empowers them to contribute positively to the industry and society. Due to its applicability to tourism studies, the theory has been selected to aid in the development of a transformative education model for improved tourism.

3.2.2 Critics of transformative learning

Mezirow's TLT has been criticised for its strong focus on rational reflection and critical thinking about past experiences as the primary means of achieving transformation. Taylor (2007) argue that the theory neglects the role of emotions, empathy, intuition, and non-rational factors in the learning process. As the theory is rooted in constructivism it tries to explain how learners create meaning from experiences. Scholars interrogated what gives meaning to an experience and what differentiates an experience that triggers transformation from any other kind of experience (Taylor and Cranton, 2013; Taylor and Laros, 2014). Van Winkle and Lagay (2012) noted that there are two types of experiences: direct experiences and imposed experiences through cultural and social history. However, the theory puts more focus on direct experiences or an individual's prior experience yet other people's experiences or family histories can foster learning. On the other hand, Merriam and Nsteane (2008) argued that the TLT assumes that one's experience can be construed by an individual without any problems, overlooking the fact that an individual can hold multiple and contrary viewpoints of an experience. Resultantly, when these experiences are contradictory, they may fail to yield positive transformation.

Mezirow's theory has also been criticised for its individualistic orientation, and the capacity for personal changes, emphasising personal transformation over collective and social change. Consequently, this affects the structural and systematic barriers that learners face in achieving transformation. The theory does not sufficiently consider the influence of social, cultural, and historical contexts on the learning process which are significant to the evolution and outcome of transformative learning (Fleming, 2018; Newman 2012; Nohl, 2009). Transformative learning is often seen as an individual process, while in reality, it is deeply embedded in social relationships and cultural norms. Merriam and Nteane (2008) emphasised the importance of power

dynamics and cultural contexts in shaping an individual's learning experiences which Mezirow's theory overlooks. Taylor and Cranton (2013) and Fleming (2018) suggested that if one is to apply the transformative theory it is important to consider the individual's sociocultural experiences, contextual experience (related to workplace or institution), and the discrepant experiences that contradict with past and socio-cultural experience.

Taylor (2009) highlighted the role of empathy, and unconscious and emotional dimensions in transformative learning, which are not fully addressed in Mezirow's rational-cognitive framework. Empathy is "the ability to subjectively experience and share subjectively experience and share in another psychological state or intrinsic feelings" (Morse et al., 1992:274). Empathy is acknowledged as being important in the literature but not adequately explored, especially concerning its relationship to key concepts within the field (Taylor, 2007; Gum, Greenhill, and Dix, 2011; Willis, 2012). Mezirow (2003) listed empathy as one of the crucial aspects of transformative learning. Despite its mention as an important component in fostering critical-dialectical discourse, empathy has not been thoroughly examined with transformative learning's core constructs (Taylor and Cranton, 2013). Willis (2012) highlighted a potential research opportunity to explore how empathy facilitates the emotional engagement necessary for transformative learning, by examining how empathy helps learners connect with others' perspectives.

Transformative learning literature does not explicitly discuss the intrinsic value of the outcomes of transformative learning or the challenging journey to achieve those outcomes. According to Mezirow (1996), the inherently good outcomes of transformative learning are achieved by going through the ten-step process of transformative learning. The ten-step process has been criticised for being too linear and prescriptive. Taylor (2007) noted that transformative learning is complex, iterative, and non-linear as it often involves multiple cycles of reflection and action, rather than a straightforward progression through discrete steps. The phases of transformation are often marked by feelings of pain, discontent, guilt, and shame. The core of transformative learning involves uncovering distorted assumptions and often results from traumatic experiences, leading to challenging emotional experiences (Cranton, Stuckey, and Taylor, 2012). While the outcomes are seen as positive, there is a need for more inquiry and debate on the assumed inherent goodness of transformative

learning since positive outcomes are not always guaranteed. In the same vein, Taylor and Cranton (2013) noted that transformative learning is achieved when there is a desire to change suggesting that willingness or motivation to change plays a critical role in the process.

Taylor (2007) argued that Mezirow's theory lacks clear guidance on how to facilitate transformative learning practice. Educators may find it challenging to implement the theory effectively without more practical strategies and examples. Ampt (2009) pointed out that while the theory is rich in describing the transformative process, it is less clear on how educators can create environments that foster transformative learning. In extreme cases, transformative learning, if not carefully applied, can lead to indoctrination and this raises ethical concerns (Taylor and Cranton, 2013). Brookfield (1995) pointed out that practitioners using transformative learning should exercise caution when encouraging their learners to challenge their values and beliefs as this process can lead to "cultural suicide" where individuals are alienated from their cultural backgrounds.

There is therefore a need for a more holistic, context-sensitive, and inclusive approach to understanding and facilitating transformative learning. While Mezirow's theory provides a valuable framework, integrating insights from other perspectives and addressing its limitations can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the transformative learning process. Taylor and Cranton (2013) also observed that the current state of the research methodologies in transformative learning has become formulaic and relies on retrospective interviews and thematic analysis within an interpretive paradigm. Taylor and Cranton (2013) suggested the incorporation of alternative methodologies such as arts-based, action research, and participatory action research to allow researchers to explore the experimental and subjective aspects of transformative learning. Despite the criticism, Mezirow's transformative theory remains a valuable framework and can be applied in this study. The theory has strengths in promoting critical reflection, perspective transformation, and lifelong learning. By applying this theory educators can facilitate deep, meaningful learning experiences that promote personal growth, empowerment, and ethical development.

3.2.3 Relevance of the Transformative Theory in Tourism Studies

TLT has been increasingly applied in the tourism sector, offering insights into how learning occurs across various contexts. This includes formal educational settings such as study abroad programs, service teaching, and internships (Stone & Duffy, 2015), as well as informal learning experiences that tourists engage in during travel. According to Stone and Duffy (2015), the application of TLT is still in its early stages, but tourism itself is inherently transformative, fostering personal growth and learning. Walker and Muyamba (2020) further emphasise that tourism learning is an interactive process that involves understanding oneself, others, new places, cultures, and belief systems. This form of learning enables individuals to reflect on their previous experiences, challenging existing knowledge and engage in activities with people from diverse backgrounds outside of their usual environments. As a result, transformative learning can be integrated throughout various stages of the tourism cycle. Tourism educators adopting TLT could deepen their understanding of how learning strategies and objectives evolve within the discipline. Furthermore, Stone and Duffy (2015) stress the significance of moving beyond traditional, classroom-based pedagogies in tourism education to embrace more dynamic, experiential learning opportunities.

A review of tourism and hospitality research articles indicates that researchers focus on educational travel as a modality for accomplishing transformative learning as opposed to typical classroom-based environments (Stone and Duffy, 2015). Walker and Manyamba (2020) suggest that transformative tourist education calls for daring and courage from both students and teachers. It calls for educators to take a stand and educate "for peace, social justice, diversity, and integral development," rather than "for the global marketplace," as it is conceptualised as a crucial component of the critical approach in tourist studies (Moore, 2005, p. 79). Walker and Manyamba (2020) observed that campus-based tourism education has not yet fully tapped into the painful, creatively destructive, and destructively creative power of travel, despite the groundwork laid by other researchers. Researchers of transformative education in tourism education have focused more on trip experiences rather than pedagogical learning theories. This exclusion paves the way for further research and publications on literature related to studies that concentrate on travel and tourism, and campus-

based pedagogy (Bueddefeld and Duerden, 2022). This study therefore endeavours to contribute to campus-based pedagogy literature.

3.2.4 Application of the Transformative Education Theory to the Study

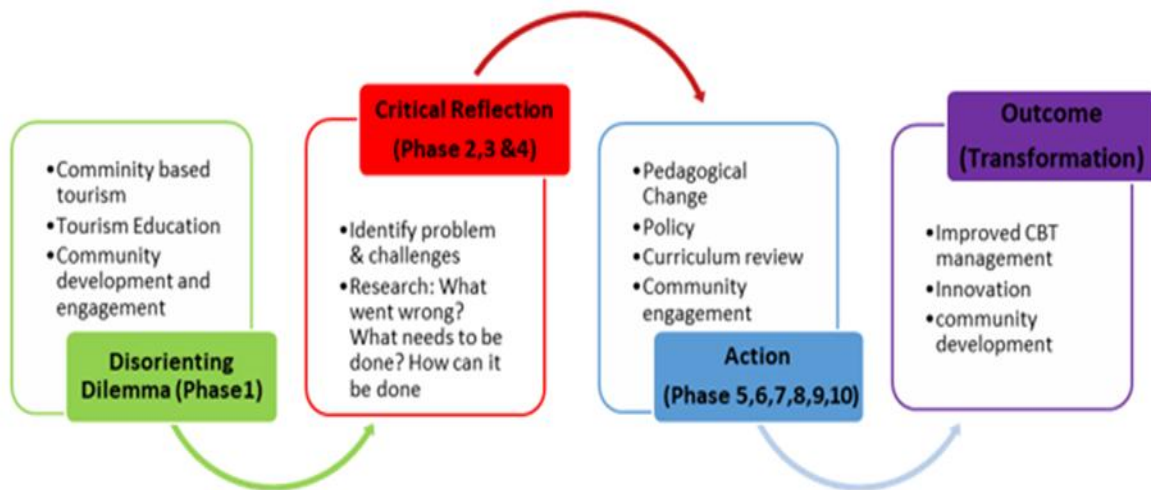
The tourism industry makes an imperative and significant contribution to Zimbabwe's economy in terms of employment creation, and contribution to the balance of payments support. The industry offers significant opportunities for local communities (Marunda, 2014). While the industry remains a key source of foreign currency, certain subsectors, particularly CBT have faced challenges in making substantial contributions to both the broader tourism industry and the local communities. In Zimbabwe, CBT has struggled for over two decades with its lack of success attributed to factors such as inadequate funding, economic downturns and limited knowledge and capacity within communities involved. These barriers have hindered the potential for tourism to generate sustainable benefits at the community level.

Certain sectors within Zimbabwe's tourism and hospitality industry have successfully recovered from the economic downturn, largely due to the expertise and specialised knowledge within these sectors. However, CBT continues to face significant management challenges. To address these issues, adopting a transformative learning approach is essential. According to Bueddefeld and Duerden (2022), what may often be viewed as failures or logistical issues in program implementation can actually create valuable opportunities for disorientation, communication, negotiation and transformative learning. By reframing these challenges as catalysts for growth, a transformative learning approach can facilitate improved management and outcomes in CBT initiatives.

The theory presumes that the way one interprets and re-interprets one's senses is central to making meaning and ultimately learning (Bueddefeld and Duerden, 2022). To come up with a model that ensures successful CBT it is important to understand how tourism graduates and other stakeholders interpret or reinterpret the concept of CBT. Stakeholders' perceptions and assumptions, serve as the foundation for their expectations in the tourism industry and can ultimately influence "what" and "how" learners are supposed to learn. The TLT emphasises learning that transforms one's perceptions for the better. Tourism education should be able to create a shift in beliefs

and feelings as well as an understanding of the power relations within the societies to ensure community development.

Tourism Transformative Education Process



Source: Author's own

Figure 3.2 The transformative learning process in community-based tourism education.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the four phases that lead to transformation which are the disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, action, and outcome phases. Disorienting dilemmas happens when learning beings with an experience that challenges the learner's existing beliefs, values or assumptions prompting reflection. The disorienting dilemma identified in the study is the failing community-based tourism, the tourism education curriculum that does not adequately address the CBT concept, and the absence of community engagement and sound economic development. At this phase, educators should ensure that the curriculum is tailor-made to ensure that CBT is incorporated into the curriculum. After the curriculum improvements, educators should use pedagogies that challenge the students' experience or scenarios that disrupt the students' existing beliefs or assumptions about tourism and communities. Critical reflections happens when learners engage in deep self-examination of their beliefs, values and assumptions especially those formed through cultural or social norms. Critical reflection phase is critical for educators and students to be able to identify

problems and challenges of CBT, research what went wrong, what needs to be done, and how it can be done. This can involve case studies research on different CBT models. The action stage calls for an exploration of new roles, relationships, and actions that can be informed by pedagogical changes, policy, curriculum reviews, and community engagement. At this phase, there is also a need for planning a course of action, acquiring knowledge and skills, and trying new roles and approaches. The overall goal of learning is transformation which yields positive outcomes in the industry such as improved community-based tourism, innovation, and community development.

3.2.5 Phases of Mezirow's transformative learning and its application to tourism education

Table 3.0-1 Phases of Mezirow's transformative learning and its application to tourism education

Phase	Transformative Learning	Students	Educators
1	Disorienting dilemma/ new experience Depicted by anxiety, discomfort, and dissonance. Emotional disturbance and discomfort are the keys to a successful transformative learning experience.	General knowledge about CBT. New experiences can be gained through visiting CBT establishments. Discoveries.	Understanding of CBT based on assumptions, literature, and experience within the field. New experiences may be gained through tours to CBT establishments.
2	Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame A point where one realises that one's perspective might not be the only perspective.	Students get a true picture of what is on the ground. Moment of reflection.	Examine the curriculum, identify gaps in the tourism curriculum, and get a true picture of what is on the ground. Reflection.
3	A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions One begins to critically evaluate one's past assumptions, trying to remove any bias, keeping an open mind to new information.	Students do a critical assessment of what is on the ground, What went wrong? What needs to be changed? What can be done to revive or establish CBTEs?	Critical assessment of the curriculum checking whether it addresses the issues of CBT and sustainable tourism. Why our graduates are failing to revive and bring a change to CBT.
4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change.	Research Share views and ideas	Research Share views and ideas Community engagement

	Discontent and discomforts are shared and may realise that others have similar views.		
5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action One seeks new ideas, roles, or new skills that may be needed or that are compatible with new developments.	Innovation Students being able to identify potential CBT developments	Curriculum that supports CBT Pedagogical change
6	Planning of a course of action When one understands what went wrong, and that caused discontent and discomfort, one can plot a course of action and way forward.	Strategic planning	Strategic Planning
7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans Mobilising resources, and skills need, creating new roles and relationships.	Learning that encourages critical thinking and problem-solving	Teaching that encourages critical thinking and problem-solving
8	Provisional trying of new role Action, implementation of plans, experimental learning.	Identify CBTs that they can manage, promote, market, capacity building.	Capacity building, monitoring and evaluation.
9	Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships Exploration and understanding all the changes, building self-confidence, and having a greater self-awareness.	Sustainability Community Service and Industrialisation	Community Service and Industrialisation
10	Reintegration One assimilates one's new self and returns to one's everyday life with a fresh perspective.	Integrate the concepts into one's everyday life.	Integration of CBT in curriculum, Support field visits, case studies, monitoring and evaluation, and project management.

To ensure transformative learning in adult learning, educators should provide a strong curriculum that encourages problem-solving and critical thinking. Additionally, educators should ensure that they create a free environment for learning, coming up with interactive ways of learning as well as providing a platform for critical reflection. As a result, the study investigated the extent of CBT coverage in the curriculum and what students were being taught about CBT. To come up with the best models of CBT and attractive tourism products; tourism education plays a crucial role. Institutions

offering tourism degrees need to structure their degree programmes in a way that encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation. Educational institutions also need to engage in community service through interactions with communities, imparting knowledge, encouraging product innovation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Transformative learning supports problem-solving and critical thinking which is triggered by disorienting dilemmas. Understanding the current challenges hindering the success of CBT can help learners and other stakeholders troubleshoot problems within the industry through critical thinking and reflection. Therefore, the study investigates the challenges being faced in CBT, the tourism products available, and the potential for more CBT products that can attract both domestic and international markets. Host communities being the owners of CBTEs are an imperative component in the successful development and management of CBTEs. This study suggests that transformative learning creates fertile grounds for successful CBT management and development.

The TLT addressed the research problem through promoting critical reflection. Students are encouraged to question dominant tourism models, including those that exclude or exploit communities. This reflection can help learners recognise the limitations of mass tourism and appreciate CBT. On the other hand, the TLT fosters personal and collective transformation, enabling learners to reframe their understanding of tourism as not only an economic activity but a tool for empowerment, sustainability and community well-being. Transformative learning supports experiential and problem-based learning which aligns well with CBT principles. It enables students to engage directly with communities, thus gaining first-hand insight into local needs and aspirations. Graduates become more than technical experts, become critical, ethical decision-makers capable of advocating for CBT models and co-creating inclusive tourism strategies with communities.

3.3.0 Decolonisation Theory

Maldonado-Torres (2017:117) defines decoloniality as the “dismantling of power relations and knowledge frameworks that sustain racial, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies, often rooted in or intensified by the modern/colonial world.” This approach aims to reveal alternative perspectives obscured by the misrepresentations inherent

in modernity (Mignolo, 2005). Decolonisation theory critiques the appropriation of decolonial discourse by Western scholars, pointing to its limitations and internal contradictions. It calls for a new framework that respects the epistemic value of decolonisation while steering clear of historical overgeneralisations and epistemic imperialism. Decoloniality, unlike other critical theories, originates outside Europe, offering a perspective that challenges entrenched “colonial matrices of power, pedagogies, and epistemologies of equilibrium” which often contribute to a diminished self-image among Africans while fostering an uncritical admiration for Europe and America (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019: 223).

Decolonisation theory functions as a critical framework that examines the ongoing processes through which formerly colonised societies strive to reclaim their autonomy, cultural identity, and indigenous knowledge systems. Rooted in a critique of colonialism's enduring legacies, this theory seeks to uncover and address the power imbalances, historical distortions, and cultural displacements created by colonial domination (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019). Shaped by the contributions of scholars from diverse global contexts, decolonisation theory critically interrogates the long-lasting impacts of colonial rule on colonised societies, including the erosion of local cultures, traditions, and knowledge systems, and the establishment of hegemonic structures that perpetuate inequality.

At its core, decolonisation theory is a call for a transformative shift in knowledge production, which challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies and frameworks. It advocates for the revalidation and inclusion of indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning, often suppressed or overlooked by colonial powers (Mignolo, 2005). This involves not only recovering indigenous knowledge systems but also ensuring their integration into contemporary educational, social, and political structures (Young, 2017). By confronting and dismantling the Eurocentric narratives that have long dominated historical accounts, decolonisation theory aims to offer a more nuanced, multifaceted interpretation of history, culture, and social dynamics, one that embraces diverse perspectives and experiences.

Decolonisation theory also extends beyond theoretical analysis into practical efforts for societal transformation. It has inspired movements, policies, and initiatives aimed at addressing systemic inequalities particularly in education, governance, and social

justice that are rooted in colonial legacies (Fanon, 1963). These efforts include the reform of educational curricula to incorporate indigenous histories and perspectives, the promotion of cultural revival and autonomy, and the development of inclusive economic models that prioritise local communities over global capital (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019). Furthermore, decolonisation theory advocates for authentic representation in cultural, political, and academic spheres, ensuring that historically marginalised voices are heard and empowered (Wa Thiong'o, 1998). Decolonisation theory is not merely an intellectual exercise but a call to action, aiming to create more equitable and just societies by dismantling the structures and ideologies imposed by colonial powers and fostering a more inclusive, diverse, and representative global order (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

A significant body of scholarly work has contributed to the development of decolonisation theory, with influential contributions from scholars such as Franz Fanon, Walter Mignolo, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Gatsheni Ndlovu. Each of these scholars has advanced distinct yet interconnected ideas that have shaped the theoretical and practical dimensions of decolonisation.

Franz Fanon is one of the foundational figures in decolonisation theory, particularly noted for his exploration of the psychological impacts of colonialism on identity. In his work, Fanon (1961) examines the ways in which colonialism dehumanises the colonised and disrupts their sense of self. He argues that colonial violence necessitates a corresponding violence for liberation, a process he believes is essential for reclaiming dignity and autonomy. Fanon underscores the importance of both cultural and political decolonisation, asserting that true liberation requires the dismantling of colonial structures not only in governance but also in cultural practices and self-perception (Rabaka, 2022).

Walter Mignolo emphasised the need to challenge and dismantle Eurocentric epistemologies that have long dominated knowledge production and societal structures (Mignolo, 2018). Mignolo (2018) advocates for the recognition and integration of alternative, non-Western knowledge systems, positioning them as equally valid and necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the world. His work has been pivotal in rethinking the relationship between colonialism and the production

of knowledge, calling for a radical shift away from Western paradigms in favour of more inclusive, diverse epistemological frameworks (Mignolo, 2018).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1998), in his work, highlights the critical role of language in the decolonisation process. He argues that language is not merely a tool of communication but also a medium through which cultural identity is asserted and maintained. Wa Thiong'o (1998) posits that the use of indigenous languages in literature, education, and everyday discourse is vital for reclaiming and preserving cultural identity, which colonialism sought to suppress through the imposition of European languages. By advocating for the use of indigenous languages, Wa Thiong'o emphasises the importance of linguistic decolonisation as a means of resisting cultural domination and restoring agency to colonised peoples.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019) has made significant contributions to the understanding of decoloniality in the African context. His work emphasises on that decolonisation is not just a political or economic shift, but a profound cultural and intellectual reawakening. It involves critically examining colonial legacies and their impact on contemporary societies. According Ndlovu-Gatseni (2015) colonial matrices of power manifests as economic control, political power and governance, epistemic control and knowledge production and cultural and social hegemony. Economic control reflects the dominance of capitalist systems that often imposes economic structures on post-colonial societies, prioritising extractive industries, resource exploitation and models that primarily benefit external entities rather than local communities. This dynamic is visible in the tourism industry where the local communities fail to get access to the tourism products because the local market cannot afford for example hunting has been exorbitantly priced such that very few locals can participate in spot hunting.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) also highlighted those political systems in many former colonies often reflect European models of governance, and in most cases marginalising traditional leadership and local decision-making practices. This can be evident in most African states who were formerly ruled by kings but have since abandoned the kingdom and dynasty rulership. While formal political independence has been achieved in many African countries, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019) noted that economic and cultural imperialism persist and there is a need for ongoing struggles against neocolonial practices. He argues that genuine decolonisation must prioritise

African Agency enabling local communities to shape their destinies rather than being passive recipients of external influences.

Further, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) noted that colonial matrices of power extend to who controls knowledge production and validation. Western epistemologies still dominate and often dismissing or undervaluing indigenous knowledge systems which could provide valuable insights especially in environmental stewardship and community resilience. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2019) advocates for decolonisation of knowledge arguing that the education system perpetuates Eurocentric perspectives and calls for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems and voices in academic discourse.

The colonial matrix of power also points out cultural dominance and imposition of Western values, languages and norms which can overshadow or suppress local customs and social structures (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Wa Thiong'o,1998). Cultural hegemony influence's identity, education and social values leading to a gradual erosion of indigenous traditions. This scholar posits that African transformation is contingent upon a critical analysis of global coloniality which continues to affect the continent's socio-political landscapes. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2015) colonial matrices of power will be used to in this study as it can aid in rethinking how tourism systems often mirror these structures of control.

3.3.1 Decolonisation and tourism education

Decolonisation aims to dismantle the colonial structures and address the ongoing effects of colonisation in knowledge production and socio-economic systems. (Cots and Cribs,2023). Tourism education has been shaped by the western epistemologies, ideologies and theories resultantly tourism and hospitality degrees have a lot of similarities in their modules and structure across the globe (Boer,2016). Decolonisation however advocates for a curriculum that reflects indigenous knowledge, values, heritage and that is context specific to a particular nation. This goes beyond just adopting and adapting degree programs that are internationally comparable but designing degrees that are heritage-based, that speaks to the physical and socio-economic environment of a country. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) argues that that genuine decolonisation must prioritise African Agency enabling local communities to shape their destinies rather than being passive recipients of external influences.

Decolonisation in tourism education calls for reclaiming of indigenous knowledge, values and practices marginalised by western ideologies (Young, 2017). It emphasises the need to shift away from Eurocentric, hierarchical models that have historically defined tourism and in educational frameworks. This calls for revising the curricula to include indigenous perspectives, critically examining power dynamics, local perspectives, values, knowledge systems and frameworks that fosters inclusivity and self-representation in tourism narratives, practices and policies.

A decolonised tourism education curriculum encourages academics and learners to critically assess the colonial history of tourism and how it has influenced global tourism practices. This perspective also examines how colonial legacies such as land disposition, and exploitation continue to affect host communities as well as shaping the attitudes of locals towards tourism developments and conservation efforts. A decolonised tourism education emphasises the importance of ethical tourism practises, social justice and equitable community development (Young, 2017). It challenges students to consider the implications of tourism on local communities and inspiring future tourism leaders to advocate for just and equitable tourism models.

Decolonisation of the tourism curriculum paves way for indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems that could be integrated in the tourism curriculum. African epistemologies and knowledge systems offer rich culture specific frameworks that can significantly enhance tourism by providing authentic, diverse experiences and promoting cultural preservation (Yankholmes, 2017). The incorporation of African epistemologies in tourism can lead to more inclusive and representative practices fostering a deeper understanding of African cultures and traditions. Ayikoru (2024) observed the importance of incorporating indigenous narratives such as myths, and folklore in to the tourism experiences and promote authentic representations of Zimbabwean communities. Further, Gohori and van der Merwe (2024) highlighted the importance tourism students to understand indigenous governance systems, and community participation as they inform community-based tourism models that prioritise local leadership, participatory decision making and equitable benefits-sharing. Integrating these elements into the tourism curricula can foster cultural pride and support local. Bellanto et al., (2023) noted that a transformative, decolonial paradigm in tourism research can integrate indigenous knowledge systems and promote regenerative tourism. Yankholmes (2017) highlighted the scarcity of studies

and literature on indigenous knowledge in tourism as a significant barrier to its effective utilisation. It is therefore crucial to expand research and foster dialogue among African scholars to deepen the understanding and integration of IK in tourism development (Bellanto et al., 2023; Yankholmes 2017). Such efforts may lead to innovative, community-centred tourism models that leverage local knowledge, ultimately benefiting both the tourism industry and local communities.

3.3.2 Applicability of decolonisation in Community-based tourism

Education in CBT grounded in the decolonisation theory calls for incorporating pedagogies are transformative such as experiential learning, that involves direct engagement with communities. Learners are exposed to learning environments where they learn through direct engagement with communities, local stakeholders, and leaders allowing them to gain insights into sustainable practices that are aligned with community needs. Decolonisation also implies that instead of relying solely on academic resources, learners are encouraged to collaborate with local communities to co-create knowledge through participatory approaches (Cots and Cribs, 2023). A decolonised CBT education can equip community members and learners with skills to engage in and benefit from tourism initiatives. It fosters reciprocal relationships where both students and communities gain from shared learning experiences and empowering communities to sustain their tourism ventures.

Decolonisation aims to replace top-down approaches with community led initiatives. This allows for local people to have control over tourism developments, decision making processes and revenue management. It is also crucial to integrate indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices and ecological approaches to tourism. Instead of presenting communities with exotic and external lenses, decolonisation emphasises allowing communities to present themselves in ways that reflect their authentic identity, heritage and culture (Boer,2016). This can ultimately increase participation of local people. When given a platform to narrate their own story, it encourages them to be active participants, rather than passive subjects, thereby enabling tourists to engage with genuine local narratives, which fosters cultural respect and understanding.

The current tourism curriculum is rooted in Western ideologies and practices that marginalise local knowledge systems. Decolonisation theory pushes for the integration

of local, African perspectives on tourism, including those rooted in communal values, land stewardship and indigenous hospitality practices. It recognises communities not as passive recipients of tourism development but as holders of valuable, place-based knowledge that should inform both the content and delivery of tourism education. Application of this theory in tourism education calls for curriculum transformation to centre CBT as a key approach in Zimbabwe's development, not just as a peripheral or case study topic. This means embedding local cases studies, African tourism philosophies and indigenous development models within core modules. By rooting education in local contexts, decolonial approaches cultivate a sense of ownership among students and educators equipping them to drive tourism development that genuinely benefits communities.

3.3.3 The nexus between Sustainable Development, Transformative Learning and Decolonisation Theories

The selected theories guiding the study provides a comprehensive framework for rethinking education and developing practices to foster critical consciousness, equity and sustainability. The SDT aligns with the transformative learning goal of fostering critical awareness by encouraging learners and practitioners to critically think of their present actions to future generations. The theory challenges conventional tourism models that prioritise profit over community and environmental wellbeing advocating for practices that sustain natural resources, protecting their cultural heritage and promote equitable socio-economic benefits.

In the context of tourism education, decolonisation and sustainable development, transformative learning can encourage individuals to question entrenched Eurocentric models and instead embrace diverse, inclusive approaches that respect and integrate Indigenous knowledge systems. By cultivating critical thinking skills, transformative learning enables students and practitioners to challenge existing structures and practices that may be unsustainable or inequitable. On the other hand, decolonisation theory resonates with both transformative learning and sustainable development by promoting an inclusive approach that respects cultural diversity and challenges dominant narratives.

Community-based tourism is grounded in principles that align with sustainable tourism, decolonisation and transformative learning. These theories collectively promote tourism models that prioritise local empowerment, environmental stewardship, cultural preservation and mutual learning. Their synergy enhances the social, economic and ecological resilience of host communities while fostering meaningful experiences for visitors. Sustainable tourism serves as the principal framework advocating for tourism that minimises negative impacts while maximising long term benefits to host communities. It directly connects to CBT by emphasising community well-being, environmental conservation and socio-economic equity.

Decolonisation intersects with the sustainability theory by addressing power dynamics and advocating for local communities to reclaim control over their tourism narratives and resources. This process empowers indigenous and marginalised communities to challenge historical injustices, preserve their cultural identities and shape tourism activities that align with their values. Decolonisation ensures that CBT fosters self-determination, cultural pride and equitable socio-economic benefits. Transformative learning acts as a human-centred catalyst that connects these frameworks emphasising the potential of tourism to foster cross-cultural understanding and personal growth. In CBT, immersive experiences allow learners to challenge assumptions, gain new perspectives and coming up with solutions that promote long-lasting socio-cultural benefits.

The limitations of Zimbabwe's undergraduate tourism curriculum, particularly its failure to adequately address CBT can be critically examined through the intersection of Decolonisation Theory, Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, and Sustainability Theory. Together, these theoretical frameworks offer a comprehensive lens through which both the content and pedagogical processes of tourism education can be transformed. At the core of both theories is the understanding that education is not a neutral process it shapes how learners see the world and their place within it. At present, much of the tourism curriculum in Zimbabwe, like in many postcolonial contexts, remains influenced by Eurocentric paradigms and Western development narratives. Decolonisation theory challenges this dominance by calling for the dismantling of colonial epistemologies and advocating for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems, local cultural values, and community-driven tourism models like CBT. It recognises that meaningful tourism education must be rooted in the lived

realities of African societies and must validate local ways of knowing as legitimate and essential to the learning process.

While decolonisation addresses the **what** of curriculum reform, Mezirow's transformative learning theory focuses on the **how**. It calls for pedagogies that promote critical reflection, self-awareness, and active learner engagement. In the context of CBT, this means enabling students to question inherited assumptions about development, tourism growth, and community participation. Transformative learning encourages learners to engage with community perspectives, reflect on the ethical implications of tourism, and reframe their understanding of tourism from a transactional industry to a participatory development tool. By encouraging experiential learning, fieldwork, case-study analysis, and dialogue with community actors, tourism education becomes a space for deep personal and professional transformation. This pedagogical approach aligns closely with the values of CBT, which emphasise inclusion, equity, and grassroots empowerment.

Sustainability theory further strengthens this analysis by framing tourism education within the broader goal of intergenerational justice and balanced development. Sustainability in tourism extends beyond environmental protection to include socio-cultural integrity and economic viability principles that are inherently aligned with the objectives of CBT. A curriculum grounded in sustainability theory would prioritise the long-term well-being of host communities, promote responsible resource use, and instil a sense of stewardship and accountability among students. However, the current curriculum often fails to connect tourism learning to broader sustainability outcomes. By integrating sustainability theory, educators can reframe CBT not simply as an alternative form of tourism, but as a core strategy for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in tourism, especially in rural and marginalised communities in Zimbabwe.

The intersection of these three theories reveals a path forward for reforming the undergraduate tourism curriculum. Decolonisation theory ensures that content is contextually relevant and locally rooted; transformative learning theory cultivates critical, reflective, and ethically aware practitioners; and sustainability theory situates tourism education within global development priorities and community resilience. Together, they offer a holistic, integrated solution one that transforms both the

substance and structure of tourism education. Through this approach, CBT can move from the margins to the centre of curriculum design, equipping students with the knowledge, values, and skills to co-create sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven tourism futures in Zimbabwe.

3.4 Summary

Chapter 3 laid out the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The study makes use of the sustainable development theory and Mezirow's transformative learning theory. The sustainable development theory has developed over a period stemming from conference debates on how to ensure economic, environmental, and social balance. Its origins are rooted in the recognition of the finite nature of the earth's resources and the need for practices that ensure long-term ecological balance and well-being. The theoretical gaps, and the applicability of the theory to the study despite these have been discussed. To understand how adults learn, Mezirow's transformative learning theory has been applied in the study. The theory promotes critical reflection, perspective transformation, and lifelong learning which are the key factors that promote personal growth, empowerment, and ethical development. Further, the chapter highlighted the applicability of the theory to the study. To ensure a complete transformation in tourism education, the Decolonisation theory has also been applied in the study. Decolonisation advocates for a curriculum that reflects indigenous knowledge, values, heritage and that is context specific to a particular nation. The next chapter gives a detailed account of the methodology used for the study.

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. 0 Introduction

Chapter 4 gives a detailed account of the methodology used in this study to develop empirical findings. It outlines the research design, including the approach and for selecting specific methods used to collect and analyse data. This chapter delves into the data collection process, detailing the instruments and techniques employed such as interviews and observations and the reasoning behind their selection based on the study's objectives and research questions. By providing a thorough account of the methodology, this chapter ensures transparency in the research process allowing the readers to understand how the study was conducted, and the findings were derived.

4.1 Description of the study area

The study was conducted in Zimbabwe, focusing on Community-Based Tourism. Several CBT sites have been established across the country and are more concentrated around the major national parks and heritage sites. According to CBTEs provincial inventory by MOTHI (2017), there are approximately 90 CBTEs of which only 29 are functional. The thrust of the inquiry was to obtain an understanding of the perceptions of stakeholders concerning CBT, as well as to investigate the extent to which the tourism degree curriculum covers the concept of CBT. Stakeholders included in the study were organisations working with CBTEs, the Rural District Councils (RDC), Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, the CAMPFIRE Association and State Universities offering tourism and hospitality degrees. These stakeholders were included in the study because they provide insights and perspectives from different lenses that could enrich the findings of the study. A diverse range of respondents can provide a comprehensive understanding of community-based tourism challenges, opportunities and best practises. Insights form a diverse range of respondents can also help in the triangulation of data, increasing the study's validity, and reliability of findings. Increased validity and reliability of findings can inform policy and practice, supporting the development of community-based tourism.

Description of key organisations included in the study.

Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS)

Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority (ZIMPARKS) is an organisation established under the Parks and Wildlife Act 1991, c20:14. The main thrust of the organisation is to preserve and conserve Zimbabwe's wildlife heritage. ZIMPARKS is also involved in the management and marketing of the major tourist attractions in Zimbabwe (see figure 8) such as Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, Nyangani Mountain, the Chinhoyi caves, Kariba, and Gonarezhou National Park. Furthermore, ZIMPARKS is mandated to regulate all tourism establishments that intend to deal with wildlife. The CAMPFIRE project was launched by ZIMPARKS in partnership with various organisations. It aimed to discover methods for communities to benefit from natural resource utilisation while also addressing human-wildlife conflicts and poaching. The organisation had to look for other partners to establish community conservancies and CBT. The roles of ZIMPARKS in CBT include training of scouts, wildlife management, human-wildlife conflict management as well as training the community on how to manage community conservancies (Warinda and van der Merwe, 2023). ZIMPARKS was included in the study because they provide insights into challenges related to conservation policies, ecotourism, tourism regulations which are critical for a sustainable CBT model.

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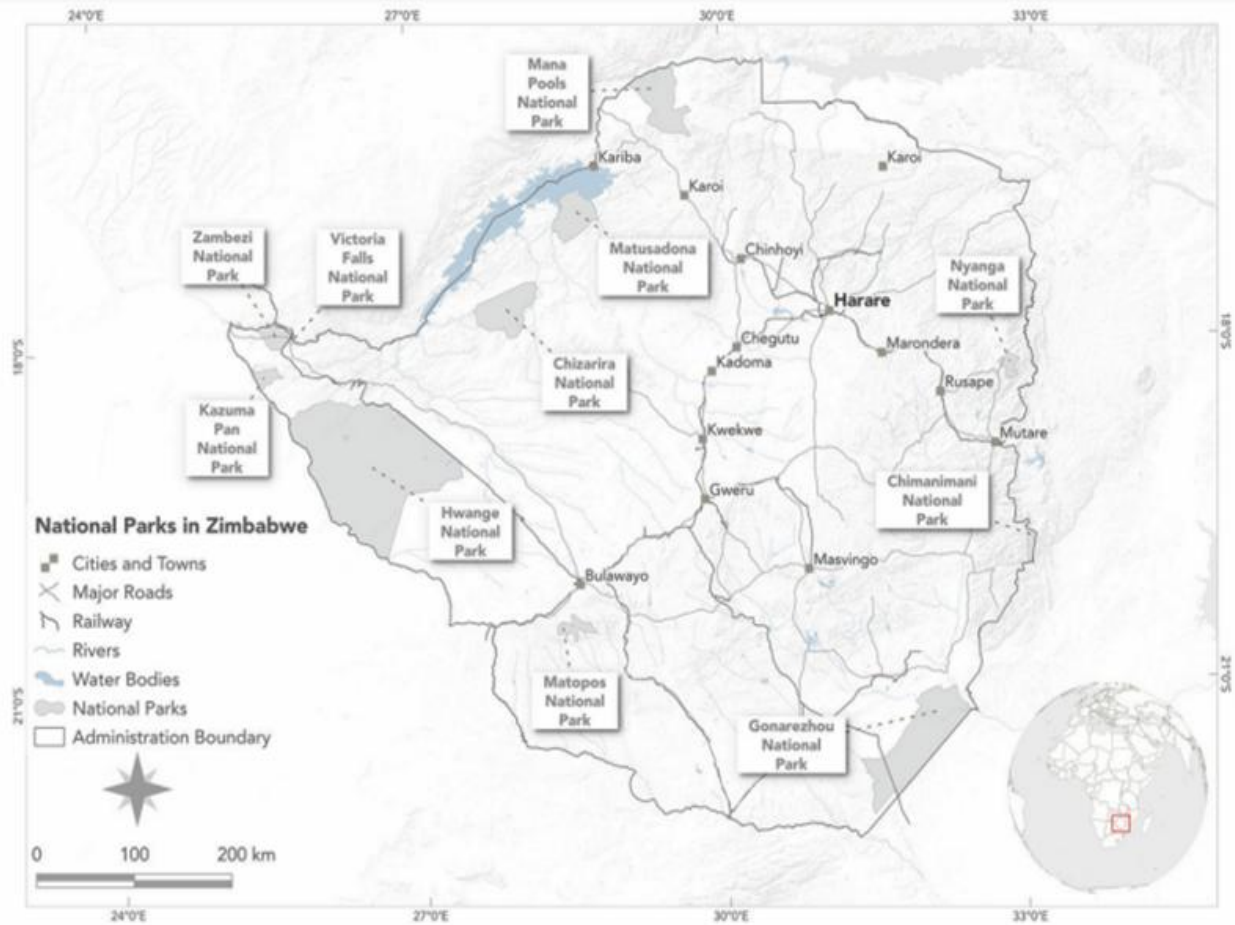


Figure 4.1 Map of Zimbabwe showing National Parks in Zimbabwe (SOURCE: Authors Own Creation).

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA)

Tourism in Zimbabwe is regulated by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, which operates under the authority granted by Section Five of the Zimbabwean Tourism Act (Tourism Act 2009, c14:20). The organisation's mandate is to plan for tourism development, conduct tourism research, enforce service and ensure that tourism operators comply with the regulations. The main thrust of the organisation is to encourage the development of sustainable tourism in Zimbabwe (Tourism Act 2009, c14:20). The organisation endeavours to ensure that tourism brings social and economic benefits to the country through establishing and enforcing standards, conducting marketing campaigns, and collaborating with strategic partners. Community-based tourism in Zimbabwe is also governed by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) and all CBT initiatives are required to be registered with ZTA. Communities identify resource elements within their communities that they can use for tourism. Then they can initiate

their projects, and with the assistance of ZTA, they can develop community-based projects. The key focus of ZTA is to ensure that CBT promotes inclusion and development, promotes community participation, and also enhances the livelihoods of communities (Tourism Act 2009, c14:20). ZTA plays a central role in shaping the tourism sector, making its contribution essential in the development of a transformative education model for improved CBT management. Their expertise in policy formulation, marketing, capacity building, and sustainability ensures that the model is comprehensive, practical and aligned with the national tourism development goals.

CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe

The CAMPFIRE Association is a registered Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) that promotes and facilitates CAMPFIRE projects by working with the Rural District Councils (RDCs). The association is membership-based, with membership coming from wildlife-based Rural District Councils (RDCs). The core business of the association is offering technical support to communities in terms of how best they can manage community-based tourism enterprises (Murphree, 1998). The association also offers technical support to communities that intend to start community-based projects. The major roles of the organisation in CBT are facilitating the establishment of trusts, capacity building, marketing, and looking for investors (Warinda and van der Merwe, 2023). The organisation helps bridge the gap between conservation, tourism development and community empowerment making. The organisation is the leading community-based conservation and tourism initiative advocating for local benefits from natural resources, therefore its insights are important and will be helpful in the achieving the study's objectives. Insights from the association are also helpful to understand the dynamics between different stakeholders such the tour operators, and government agencies.

Rural District Councils

RDCs are the lowest arm of the government at the district level and are responsible for the overall administration of the rural districts (Rural District Councils Act 2002, c29:13). Rural District Councils play a crucial role in the development and running of CBT enterprises. The RDCs, being the owners of the land in which the CBT projects are housed, have several roles in the management of CBT (National Tourism Policy, 2014). Their responsibilities often span a range of functions that aim to support

sustainable and inclusive tourism development. The key roles include planning and zoning, infrastructure development, regulations and compliance, training, and capacity development, networking and collaboration, community engagement and empowerment as well as marketing and promotion (Rural District Councils Act 2002, c29:13). Inclusion of the RDC as the study participants provides perspectives on the current challenges affecting CBT, community participation and to identify gaps and strategies for integrating CBT into local development plans.

Universities in Zimbabwe

According to Garwe and Thondhlana, 2019, Zimbabwe has twenty-three public and private universities as shown in Figure 4.1. Eight of these universities have tourism schools and departments that offer various tourism degrees. The major difference between public and private universities in Zimbabwe is on ownership and governance. Public Universities are owned, funded and regulated by the government while private universities are owned and regulated by private organisations or religious bodies. Public universities tend to be more affordable, with larger enrolments and offering a broad range of programmes, hence they were selected for the study.

Table 4.1 List of Universities in Zimbabwe

Name of University	Authority	Date Established
Africa University (AU)	Private	1992
Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU)	Private	1994
Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE)	Public	1996
Catholic University in Zimbabwe (CUZ)	Private	2001
Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)	Public	2001
Great Zimbabwe University,	Public	2002
Gwanda State University (GSU)	Public	2016
Harare Institute of Technology (HIT)	Public	2005
Lupane State University (LSU)	Public	2004
Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences (MSUAS)	Public	2016
Marondera University of Agricultural Science & Technology (MUASt)	Public	2015
Midlands State University (MSU)	Public	1999
National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe (NUST)	Public	1991
Reformed Church University	Private	2001

Solusi University	Private	1994
Southern Africa Methodist University (SAMU)	Private	2016
University of Zimbabwe (UZ)	Public	1955
Women's University in Africa (WUA)	Private	2004
Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU)	Private	2010
Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU)	Public	1998
Zimbabwe National Defence University (ZNDU)	Public	2016
Pan African Minerals University of Science and Technology (PAMUST)	Public	2016

Universities offering Tourism Degrees

Table 4.2 Universities offering Tourism Degrees in Zimbabwe

Name of State University	Tourism degrees offered
Chinhoyi University of Technology	-Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Tourism and Hospitality Management -Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Travel and Recreation Management -Bachelor of Science Honours Events Management -Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Gastronomy and Culinary Arts
Great Zimbabwe University	-Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) Hospitality, Tourism and Culture
Lupane State University	-Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Hospitality and Tourism
Midlands State University	-Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism and Hospitality Management -Bachelor of Commerce in Sustainable Tourism Management
Manicaland State University	-Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism and Hospitality Management
University of Zimbabwe	-Bachelor of Science Honours Leisure and Hospitality Management -Bachelor of Science Honours Culinary Arts and Hotel Catering

		-Bachelor of Science Honours Economic Tourism Development -Bachelor of Science Integrated Tourism Marketing and Internationalisation
Zimbabwe University	Open	-Bachelor of Science Honours Tourism and Hospitality Management

As presented in Table 4.2, Tourism and Hospitality related degrees can be either Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) Honours degrees. In this study, data was collected from five public universities: the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), Manicaland State University (MNSU), Great Zimbabwe University (GZU), Midlands State University (MSU), and Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT). These institutions were selected due to the prominence of their tourism degree programmes, authority (only Public Universities), their significant student enrolments in this field as well as the accessibility of participants. UZ, MSU, and CUT offer multiple tourism-related degree programmes, whereas GZU and MNSU each offer a single tourism degree programme. Lupane State University was not included in the study because of its geographical distance, enrolments (at the time of study). Zimbabwe Open University was not included because of its distance learning nature, and therefore the students could not adequately provide information needed regarding to experiential learning such as field trips and classroom experience. Lecturers were chosen to participate in the study as they contribute to the academic and theoretical knowledge that can enhance CBT training curricula. They also serve as knowledge transfer agents, ensuring that students acquire relevant CBT management skills. University students were also included in the study in order to understand the extent of CBT coverage in the curriculum and whether they had been taught about CBT and their perspectives on CBT management. Final years students (graduating students) with interest in CBT were selected because they had completed all the required modules and could better provide information on whether they had been extensively taught about CBT and could also have general knowledge on CBT performance.

4.2 Research Philosophy

A research methodology is guided by the researcher's beliefs and principles. These beliefs and principles shape how the researcher perceives the world. This influences how they interpret and act (research paradigm). A research paradigm is crucial because it helps the researcher to develop a foundation for coming up with a methodology, or research design (Khatri, 2020). Given that the research is constrained by the presumptions, convictions, norms, and values of a selected paradigm, the researcher must identify the paradigm within which the research is situated (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). There are four major research paradigms which are the positivist, interpretivist, critical, and pragmatic paradigms (Yong, Husin, and Kamarudin, 2021). However, this number is contested as newer research paradigms have emerged in recent years, reflecting evolving perspectives on reality, knowledge, and research methods. These paradigms often integrate elements from traditional paradigms or propose entirely new approaches. The recent paradigms include post-positivism, critical realism, feminist epistemology and methodology, post-structuralism, post-humanism, indigenous and decolonial research paradigms, complexity theory, and the transformative paradigm (Formia, Lupo, and Mehmeti, 2024; Held, 2019; Henry, 2024).

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the positivist paradigm makes conclusions from logical reasoning, the development and testing of hypotheses, the provision of operative definitions, arithmetical equations, and calculations. Exponents of the positivist approach claim that it is possible to create numerical measures of observations and to examine people's behaviour, (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Tabron and Thomas, 2023). The interpretivist paradigm is fundamentally qualitative in nature, focusing on the exploration and understanding of human experiences and social phenomena. This approach seeks to derive concepts from the subjects under study by engaging in a thorough investigation of the phenomenon of interest. Rather than imposing the observer's perspective, the interpretivist paradigm prioritises understanding the viewpoints and lived experiences of the subjects being observed, in this case, the experts in the tourism industry and institutions. This methodological commitment emphasises empathy and context, allowing researchers to capture the

complexity of social interactions and meanings. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the interpretivist paradigm not only values subjective interpretations but also recognises that knowledge is socially constructed. Consequently, researchers within this framework strive to interpret the intricacies of human behaviour, beliefs, and motivations, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the world.

The critical paradigm places social justice issues at the centre of its research, addressing the political, social, and economic issues that lead to various forms of oppression, conflict, struggle, and power structures (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2011). The critical paradigm is rooted in critical theory which seeks to expose underlying ideologies that perpetuate dominance, particularly in social, political and economic systems. It promotes social transformation by advocating the empowerment of marginalised groups and addressing systematic inequalities. This paradigm pushes researchers not only to understand and describe social realities but also actively work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

During the 20th century prior to the 1970s, qualitative and quantitative research were viewed as two competing paradigms, and adherents of each notion denied the notion of combining the two methods, (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Scholars such as Campbell and Fiske (1959) began discussing the limitations of relying solely on quantitative methods, emphasising the need for a more comprehensive approach (Roomaney and Coetzee, 2018). It was in the same period, that the field of sociology witnessed a growing interest in combining qualitative and quantitative methods, particularly in studies related to poverty, race, and education (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) leading to the adoption of the pragmatic paradigm.

The pragmatic paradigm, supported by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011) is a combination of the positivist, interpretivist, and critical paradigms. Proponents of this paradigm contend that research relationships are decided by the researcher according to what they consider suitable (Akella and Akella, 2020; Asghar, 2013; McBeath, 2023). The paradigm uses a mixed methods methodology as it uses multiple approaches to determine the truth about the world. It focuses on practical outcomes and real-world applications rather than abstract concepts, making it ideal for research in this study. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a

comprehensive understanding of the research problem, encouraging flexibility in methods and finding effective answers and solutions (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). To generate new insights from this study, the research was guided by the pragmatic paradigm, which advocates the use of a mixed methodology. Pragmatism encourages focusing on methodology linking between philosophical ideas and actual research practices. It views knowledge as a continuum between objectivity and subjectivity, rather than choosing one over the other (Kaushik and Walsh). The paradigm views knowledge as a continuum between objectivity and subjectivity rather than choosing one over the other. Pragmatism is also shaped by the researcher's worldview, beliefs, and context, which influence their choice of research questions and methods (Morgan 2014). Ultimately, the researcher decides what is important, guided by both philosophical and practical considerations.

The pragmatic paradigm was chosen for the study because it allows flexibility, and the use of multiple research approaches. The study focuses on developing a transformative education model and aims to challenge the existing structures to create a real-world change, pragmatism aligns well by focusing on actionable solutions and contextual realities. Through the use of both qualitative and quantitative, a holistic understanding of CBT and how learners and managers can be equipped to improve CBT management. Pragmatism prioritises solving real-world problems rather than being bound by theoretical debates only (McBeath, 2023) and therefore was the best for the study as the study sought to address the CBT project failures affecting Zimbabwe. The pragmatic paradigm is also compatible with the transformative learning theory as they both put emphasis on action and change. Pragmatism also allowed the researcher to draw from multiple theories which are the sustainability theory, decolonisation theory and the TLT without being confined to one single perspective leading to a more comprehensive and adaptive education model.

Critics of pragmatism argue that its problem-centred focus can overlook deeper structural issues such as systemic inequalities, and its emphasis on methodological flexibility may lead to superficial or inconsistent application of methods (Thompson 1997; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). There is concern over its limited guidance in addressing complex, multi-layered problems and its perceived lack of a strong philosophical foundation for mixed-methods research, with some scholars suggesting realism as a more robust alternative. However, despite these critiques, pragmatism

remains widely accepted for its practical utility and adaptability in addressing diverse research questions.

One of the primary tools of a positivist paradigm, survey questionnaires were utilised to obtain results regarding the concept of community-based tourism and the extent to which the concept is covered in Tourism and Hospitality Degree curricula. The study also sought insights from key informants, an interpretive tool, to find justifications for surfacing trends from quantitative data. Key informants gave the research greater scope to ask questions on why particular trends were emerging.

4.3 Research approach

As the research philosophy embodies using the strengths of the positivists and the interpretivists, this calls for the use of mixed methods.

4.3.1 Mixed methods approach

This study adopted a qualitative-dominant mixed methods approach to investigate the integration of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) into Zimbabwe's tourism education curriculum. By integrating both positivist and interpretivist paradigms, the study capitalised on the strengths of each worldview while mitigating their individual limitations (Adu et al., 2022). This methodological strategy enabled the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, allowing for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex social and educational dynamics under investigation (Dawadi et al., 2021).

The qualitative component served as the primary method, providing in-depth insights into stakeholder perceptions, curriculum gaps, and pedagogical challenges, while descriptive statistics from student and graduate surveys supported and validated emerging patterns. This balance ensured that the research did not overly rely on subjective interpretations, while still preserving the richness of narrative data. As Jogulu and Pansiri (2011) suggest, combining thematic exploration with statistical summaries enhances interpretative depth and methodological rigour.

The integration of multiple data sources facilitated triangulation, strengthened the credibility of findings, and offered a broader perspective on CBT-related issues in tourism education. This approach was particularly useful in developing a clearer

understanding of stakeholder concerns, curriculum shortcomings, and the systemic challenges that hinder CBT inclusion (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In doing so, the study achieved a more holistic representation of the social phenomena surrounding CBT, capturing both individual experiences and institutional patterns.

Philosophically, the mixed methods approach allowed the researcher to operate from both deductive and inductive reasoning, combining theory testing with theory building. This dual lens was crucial in addressing the study's practical and theoretical aims, particularly in developing a transformative educational model for CBT. Importantly, as Jogulu and Pansiri (2011) caution, the integration of qualitative and quantitative data must go beyond mere convergence; it requires critical reflection on how findings are synthesized and what new insights emerge from their intersection.

In this study, quantitative trends such as the frequency of CBT course coverage or the percentage of students exposed to CBT content were used to complement and support the dominant qualitative findings, creating a coherent narrative across data sets. As Onwuegbuzie (2012) argues, such mixed methodologies are especially valuable in pluralistic and complex research settings like education, where multiple perspectives must be understood and reconciled. By prioritising qualitative inquiry while drawing on descriptive statistics, the study was able to produce findings that were both contextually grounded and broadly applicable, ultimately enhancing the validity, relevance, and transformative potential of the research (Dawadi et al., 2021).

Through the triangulation of data from a survey with final year undergraduate students, document analysis, observations and key informant interviews from industry experts, the application of diverse approaches enhanced the validity of the research findings. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), research is less susceptible to criticism based on the shortcomings of a single approach when it combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Further, Almedia (2018) highlighted that the researchers can modify their strategy according to the nature of the research issue and can create study designs that are more dynamic and adaptable. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data offered complimentary insights that enhanced the researcher's overall interpretation. By integrating both approaches, the study ensured methodological rigor through triangulation, enhanced validity and bridged the theoretical concepts with

practical application. This approach also empowered the marginalised voices, contextualised policy recommendations and ensured the development of a transformative education model that is grounded and practically relevant for CBT stakeholders.

The use of the mixed methodology in this study was a strategic and theoretically sound to address the research problem. Grounded in the decolonisation, sustainability and transformative learning theories, this methodological approach enabled the researcher to explore the research objectives from multiple dimensions, capturing complexity, depth and breadth of the curriculum design and implementation. The decolonisation theory emphasises the importance of inclusive, contextually relevant knowledge systems, which are best explored through qualitative methods that privilege local voices and lived experiences. At the same time, quantitative methods help measure the extent of exclusion or inclusion across institutions, offering empirical grounding for broader claims. Similarly, the sustainability theory necessitates an understanding of interconnected social, economic, and environmental aspects of CBT, which calls for both empirical data and interpretive analysis. Transformative learning theory, which focuses on deep shifts in knowledge, behaviour, and worldview, benefits from qualitative insights into learners' experiences and pedagogical practices, while also requiring quantitative indicators to evaluate curriculum effectiveness. Through triangulation and the integration of diverse data sets including surveys, interviews, document analysis, and observations, the mixed methodology provided a robust, multi-layered analysis that enhanced the validity, reliability, and applicability of the findings. This approach not only allowed for a deeper understanding of CBT integration challenges but also supported the formulation of transformative, contextually grounded recommendations for curriculum reform, ultimately contributing to the development of a more inclusive, sustainable, and socially responsive tourism education model.

The mixed methodology has its drawbacks. Compared to single-method techniques, designing and carrying out mixed-methods research can be more difficult and time-consuming. Careful planning is necessary to ensure that the qualitative and quantitative components align and effectively contribute to the research question (Sharma et al., 2023). Compared to studies that use a single approach, mixed-methods research may involve a greater investment of time, money, and expertise.

This research was funded by a University of Pretoria research bursary, therefore, the researcher had adequate financial resources for the fieldwork. However, to maximise efficiency and reduce research costs, the researcher conducted online and telephone interviews with respondents outside Harare. Resultantly, the available resources were not strained while conducting surveys, interviews, and data analysis for both components. Adu et al., (2022) observed that it can be difficult to integrate qualitative and quantitative data, particularly when the two kinds of data provide contradicting findings. While mixed methods research presents certain challenges, these were effectively managed through careful planning, collaboration, and the use of appropriate tools and strategies.

Almedia (2018) identified four approaches to a mixed methodology namely, concurrent, sequential, multi-phase design, and multi-level design. This study used the concurrent triangulation approach. The Concurrent triangulation approach is a mixed method approach that uses two or more methods to verify, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a study concurrently (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 shows the sequencing of qualitative and quantitative methods.



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Concurrent triangulation design visual model

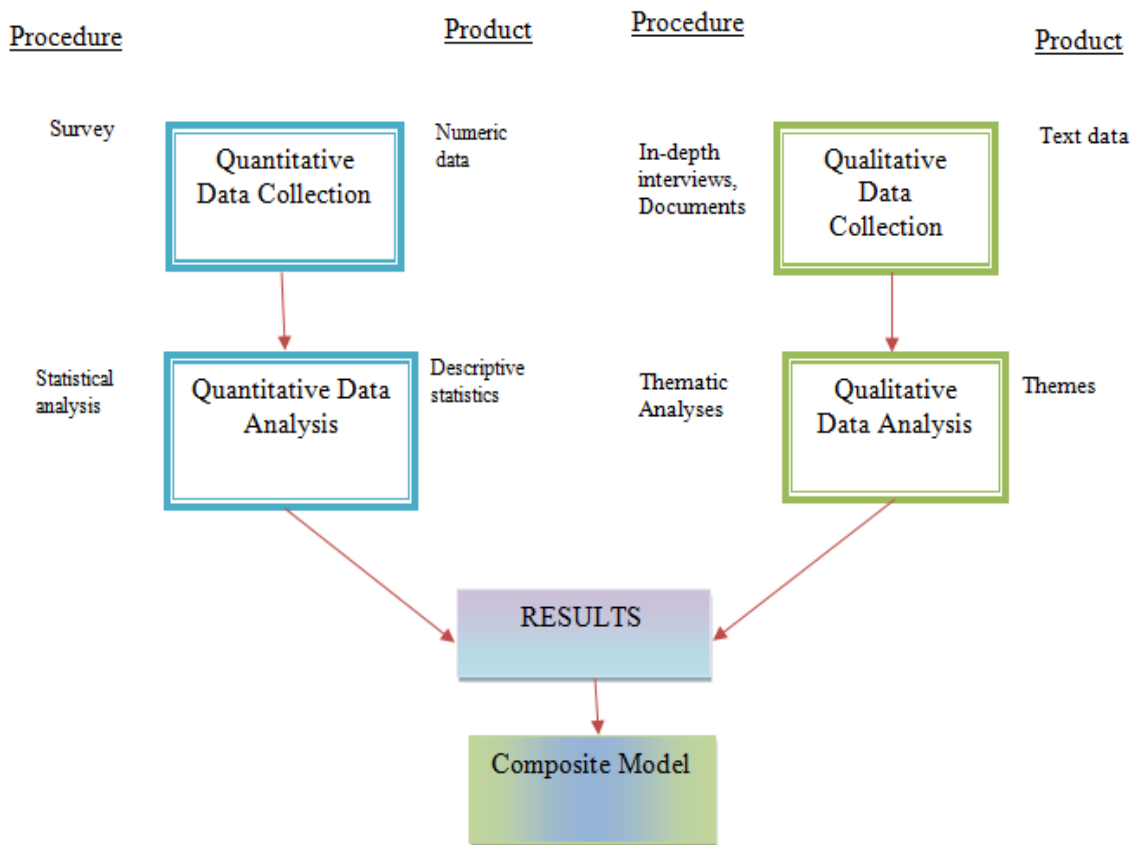


Figure 4.2 Concurrent Triangulation Design Visual Model (adapted from Creswell, 2003)

The Concurrent Triangulation Design illustrated in Figure 4.2, involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The aim is to compare and contrast the two data sets to validate the results or to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2003). When using the concurrent triangulation design, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected at the same time during the same phase of the research process. This method allows for direct comparison between two types of data (Creswell, 2003). In this design, qualitative and quantitative data are typically given equal importance. The researcher aims to integrate findings from both methods to achieve a more complete understanding of the research problem. The integration of data occurs during the analysis phase, where the researcher compares the results from both data sets (Sharma et al., 2023). One of the primary purposes of the concurrent triangulation design is to use different methods to corroborate findings. Almeida (2018) noted that comparing qualitative and quantitative data, enables the researcher to cross-validate

the results. Additionally, the complementary nature of the two data types can provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the research question.

The concurrent triangulation design was employed in the study as it allowed for the simultaneous collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data ensuring a comprehensive and a balanced understanding of community-based tourism management. Given the study's foundation the decolonisation, sustainability and transformative learning theories, this designed allowed for methodological triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of findings. Theoretical insights were cross-verified with empirical evidence reducing bias and strengthening conclusions. By employing a concurrent approach, pitfalls of sequential dependence, where one data set could unduly shape the interpretation of the other, thus ensuring that qualitative narratives and quantitative findings independently contribute to the final analysis. This integration was important for transformative learning, where subjective experiences of learning and behaviour change need to be corroborated with measurable shifts in knowledge, attitudes and practices. The sustainability theory on the other hand necessitates a balance in the environmental, social and economic dimensions, benefits from this dual approach by ensuring policy recommendations and educational models are both empirically tested and contextually grounded. The design facilitated simultaneous problem identification and solution development making it particularly effective for a study focused on model development. This enabled the researcher to develop a transformative education model that is theoretical robust, and practically effective in improving CBT management.

4.4 Research Design

To complement the concurrent triangulation design, this project utilised a case study approach which incorporated descriptive design. It guided how the research questions were answered, the type of data, methods of data collection, and approach to analysis. The scientific method of descriptive research design entails observing and documenting a subject's behaviour without exerting any kind of influence on the behaviour (Rashid et al., 2019). Piekkari and Welch (2018) suggested that the case study design enables one to present the data and provide better insights into complex behaviours. The case study approach produces in-depth insights into the current

tourism education curriculum to ensure that it covers the critical areas of sustainable tourism. The case study design enabled the exploration of real complexities within CBT settings, providing a holistic understanding of how transformative education model could be developed. Given that CBT is embedded in local socio-cultural, economic and environmental contexts, this design allowed for a nuanced, place-based analysis that considers community specific challenges, stakeholder dynamics and indigenous knowledge systems which aligns with the decolonisation agenda. A descriptive design ensured that both quantitative and qualitative data systematically documented, and enabling the identification of patterns and best practices in transformative education. The study focuses on CBT management, implementation, and education in Zimbabwe. A content analysis of the current tourism education curriculum or modules was conducted. The study also tried to establish whether the curriculum adequately covers CBT and can meet the industry and host communities' needs. were used to provide a detailed understanding of the industry's requirements. More than one method was used for every objective to improve the reliability, credibility, and validity of the results obtained. This ultimately ensured that the study only generated deep insights into CBT management but also provided a solid empirical basis for developing a transformative education model that is theoretically robust and practically applicable.

The combination of the concurrent triangulation design and the case study descriptive design offers a robust and complementary approach to investigating the extent of integration of CBT into the tourism curricula. This methodological blend is particularly effective in complex and context specific settings such as Zimbabwe, where the curriculum development often lacks alignment with local community realities. The case study design allowed the researcher to delve deeper and capture the lived experiences of students, lecturers and other stakeholders. The concurrent design enhanced the study by enabling the simultaneous collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data allowing for triangulation. The combination of these designs was appropriate for the research because the CBT concept itself is multidimensional and intersects with socio-cultural, economic and environmental dimensions of local development. Ultimately, this integrated approach aligns well with goals of decolonising and localising tourism education, enabling the researcher to produce

context-sensitive, actionable insights that promote sustainability, equity, community empowerment within the tourism education system.

4.5 Research participants

Data was collected from five state universities offering tourism and hospitality degrees at the bachelor's degree level. Data was also collected from the key organisations in Zimbabwe that deal with tourism and community-based tourism in particular. For triangulation and validation purposes, data was collected from selected Rural District Councils with CBTEs.

4.5.1 Study Population and Sampling

The study employed both purposive and convenient sampling techniques. Purposive sampling involves deliberately selecting participants based on specific characteristics or attributes relevant to the research (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). In this study, the researcher strategically identified individuals who could provide valuable insights based on their knowledge or experience. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants for qualitative data from university institutions and key organisations to ensure inclusion of knowledgeable participants. The selected organisations would assist in identifying participants who had information that could be relevant to the study. For instance at ZTA, RDCs, ZIMPARKS and the CAMPFIRE Association, the key informant selected for the study was one who directly involved or were once involved in CBT initiatives. Participants from Universities were purposely selected based on their research interests which were identified through staff profiles available on university websites. Priority was given to academics with research interests in community-based tourism, however if there were no members explicitly listed CBT as a research focus, individuals with related interest such as rural tourism, sustainable tourism or ecotourism were considered.

Purposive sampling was used for these groups of researchers to ensure that individuals with experience, knowledge and involvement in the research topic were included. This aided in answering research questions more effectively by selecting respondents with detailed information. This also saved time and resources by avoiding random selection of participants who did not have the relevant knowledge. Convenient sampling, a non-probability method, involves selecting participants based on factors such as ease of access, geographic proximity, availability at a certain time, or

willingness to participate (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). Convenient sampling was employed to select participants for the survey, ensuring accessibility and ease of data collection. The selection process focused on students who demonstrated an interest in CBT, and were will to participate voluntarily. For the hard-copy questionnaires, priority was given to students who we geographically available, allowing for direct engagement and facilitation of responses. As for the google survey, participants selected were those who could be reached online and were willing to participate in the study.

4.5.2 Determination of sample size

The following factors were taken into consideration in determining the sample size:

- The desired confidence level in the survey results
- Acceptable margin of error in the survey results
- Estimated population proportion.

Taking all this into consideration the sample size for the study was calculated using the Monkey Survey formula which is as follows:

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2} \div \left(1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N} \right) \right)$$

Whereby, n=sample size; N=population size; p=population proportion; e=margin of error; Z=confidence level

In the computations, the following assumptions were made:

- 95% confidence level: Z =1.96

- The margin of error $e=0.08$
- population proportion $p=0.33$
- Population $N=300$

The estimated population size was determined by the average number of tourism graduates per university. The average number of tourism and hospitality students enrolled each is 80. The calculated minimum sample size was 95 students. The researcher managed to reach out to 105 students. This sample size was representative enough to make conclusions because it had participants from all the universities, students with an interest in Community based tourism or sustainable tourism, although convenient sampling was used, steps were taken to ensure that the sample provides sufficiently representative sample for meaningful analysis such as engaging final years and recent graduates (Graduates from the previous year) for the program, interest in CBT and willingness to participate. According to Farhati, (2024). to if the sample size is large enough ($n \geq 30$), the central limit theorem allows us to approximate a binomial distribution with a normal distribution. The sample 105 is approximately 34% of the targeted population which aligns with acceptable sampling ratios in quantitative studies.

The sample size for qualitative research was guided by the study objectives and research questions, and data was collected until saturation point was reached. A qualitative study seeks to identify key themes from interview data and the ideal sample size follows the principle of saturation interviews continue until no new information emerges (Farhati, 2024). Data saturation was considered achieved when no new themes, patterns or insights emerged from the data across the respective respondent groups. To gather qualitative data, the study engaged three primary categories of respondents of participants: university lecturers and representatives from the Rural District Councils and key informants from strategic organisations involved in CBT. Saturation was attained within the University lecturer and RDC groups as recurring themes and perspectives consistently emerged during the data collection process. However, saturation was not formally reached for organisational key informant as only one representative from each organisation was interviewed. The individuals were purposively selected due to their specialised roles and technical expertise. Given the distinctiveness of their positions additional interviews within the same organisations

were unlikely to yield substantially new information and would have resulted in data redundancy. This approach aligns with best practices in qualitative research, where the emphasis is on information power and the relevance of expert insights, rather than numerical representation (Ahmed, 2025).

Table shows that 13 interviews were done meaning that saturation was reached at 13 interviews as not more new themes were emerging.

Table 4.3 Study respondents

Institution	Quantitative	Qualitative
Students		
Chinhoyi University of Technology	19	
Great Zimbabwe University	22	
Midlands State University	21	
Manicaland State University	21	
University of Zimbabwe	22	
Total final-year tourism students	105	
Key informant interviews:		
Lecturers		5
Campfire Association		1
Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority		1
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority		1
Rural District Councils (RDCs)		5
Total key informants		13

Table 4.3 indicates the total number of respondents for both qualitative and quantitative interviews. A total of 13 key informants were interviewed while 105 students and graduates were reached. In as much as the researcher targeted an equal number of students, achieving an equal number was not possible. Chinhoyi University had the least number of respondents which 19 and the universities with the highest response rate were great Zimbabwe and University of Zimbabwe. The target was 20 students per university and this figure was not reached for Chinhoyi university.

Table 4.4: Mapping of Research Questions to Participants, Methods, and Sample Sizes

Research question	Participating group	Data collection method	Sample size
What are the views, concerns, and conceptions or misconceptions of policymakers, educators, managers, employees, tourists, and other stakeholders regarding Community-Based Tourism in Zimbabwe?	Key organisations	Key informant interviews (KII)	3
	RDC, Lecturers	In-depth interviews	10
	Students	Survey	105
To what extent does the current tourism curriculum cover the concept of CBT?	Lecturers	In-depth Interviews Document Review (Program synopsis)	5
	Students	Survey	105
What transformative pedagogical approaches can be employed in tourism education to enhance student's skills to manage CBTs?	ZIMPARKS ZTA, CAMPFIRE Association,	KII	3
	Lecturers	In-depth interviews Survey	10
	Students	Survey	105
How can the tourism curricula be restructured to integrate CBT?	Key Organisations	KII	3
	Lecturers	In-depth interviews	10
	Students	Survey	105

Table 4.4 presents a structured overview of the data sources and methods used to address the four main research questions guiding the study on CBT. A mixed methods approach was employed, combining key informant interviews (KII), in-depth interviews, surveys and document analysis with respondents drawn from a diverse range of stakeholders including government bodies, academia and the tourism industry.

4.6 Development of data collection tools

To create data collection tools, the literature was reviewed to identify the main challenges, gaps, and perceptions related to CBT. The development of the qualitative and quantitative tools was guided by the key research question and research objectives. Questions were developed based in line with the research questions to ensure that all the research questions are adequately addressed. Literature review also played a critical role in identifying research gaps, formulating research questions that align with existing studies, and assessing whether the challenges and gaps highlighted by other scholars are also present within the Zimbabwean context. By systematically analysing previous research, the study was able to compare global regional and local perspectives on tourism education and CBT ensuring that the research contributes meaningfully to the academic discourse. Insights gained from an extensive review of scholarly works, including Kumar et al., 2020; Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, 2022; Marunda, 2014) informed the development of the questionnaire. These studies also provided valuable theoretical and methodological frameworks ensuring a more comprehensive exploration of the research problem and strengthening the study validity. Experts such as academics and practitioners were also consulted to ensure content validity. Draft questions developed were perfected through the validation and consultation processes. The draft questionnaires and consent forms underwent a thorough review by the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. All areas that needed clarity such as unclear questions, wrong wording and grammatical errors were corrected before the pre-testing. An ethics approval was issued before commencing data collection (see Page v). The draft data collection tools were also pre-tested, to ensure maximum quality before administering the questionnaires to the research participants.

Research questions

- i. What are the views, concerns, and conceptions or misconceptions of policymakers, educators, managers, employees, tourists, and other stakeholders regarding Community-Based Tourism in Zimbabwe?
- ii. To what extent does the current tourism curriculum cover the concept of CBT?
- iii. How can tourism students be better equipped to develop and manage CBTEs?

What are the views, concerns, and conceptions or misconceptions of different stakeholders regarding Community-Based Tourism in Zimbabwe?

To guarantee the validity, credibility, and reliability of findings, the triangulation method was applied which included both quantitative and qualitative techniques. To understand the views, concerns, and conceptions or misconceptions of other stakeholders, in-depth questionnaires were administered (see Appendices 1, 2, and 3) to key informants from different sectors.

A structured questionnaire (Appendix 4) was administered to final-year tourism students. The questionnaire sought to understand the views and perceptions of the students as well as determine the extent to which the aspect of CBT is covered in the degree programme.

To what extent does the current tourism curriculum cover the concept of CBT?

To determine the extent to which the current curriculum covers the concept of CBT a structured questionnaire was administered to tourism graduates. A content analysis of the tourism module outline was also conducted to discover if there were modules that covered the concept of CBT or a stand-alone module in CBT. Lecturers were also interviewed to shed more light on how they are currently covering the concept of CBT, especially in cases where there was no module on CBT management.

How can tourism students be better equipped to develop and manage Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs)?

To find solutions on how tourism students can be better equipped to develop and manage CBTEs, key informants and tourism students were approached. Literature was also reviewed to understand how tourism education can be improved and can prepare learners for the industry.

4.6.1 Pretesting

Before actual data collection, the research tools were pre-tested to ensure their clarity, flow, and effectiveness. This pre-test was conducted with a group of students who were not part of the main study to identify any potential issues or areas needing improvement. Key informant questionnaires were pre-tested on colleagues already in

the industry who could also assess the quality and relevance of the questionnaires. However, no changes were made to the instruments after the pre-test, as the questionnaires had already undergone thorough review and approval by both the supervisor and the ethics committee. Data collection proceeded immediately after the pre-testing phase.

4.7 Data collection and analysis process

4.7.1 Qualitative data collection and analysis

Qualitative data were collected from key informants, including lecturers from five state universities, representatives from five Rural District Councils (RDCs), the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS), the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), and the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) Association. Prior to conducting the interviews, potential participants were contacted via email or telephone to confirm their availability and their preferred mode of communication.

To ensure informed consent, each participant received a consent form (Appendix 7), ethics approval documentation (see Page v), and a brief description of the study. This facilitated their decision-making process regarding participation. Respondents were given the option of either in-person interviews or virtual meetings conducted via Zoom or Google Meet, particularly for those located in geographically distant areas. It is crucial to note that the study commenced during the COVID-19 era, and the ethics approval process also started during the COVID-19 period. Although data collection was done in the post-COVID-19 period, the choice of mode of communication was highly influenced by the COVID-19 period. Several participants preferred online interviews due to convenience, reduced travel requirements, and the minimisation of physical contact an adaptation that was further reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic significantly influenced data collection methods, accelerating the normalisation of remote work and virtual engagements. As a result, there was an increased reliance on digital communication platforms, which not only minimised costs but also enhanced efficiency in terms of time management. This shift underscores the

broader adoption of information and communication technologies in research methodologies and professional interactions.

All key informant interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the respondents. Audio files were treated with strict confidentiality and were stored in password-protected computers in accordance with the University of Pretoria Research Compliance Regulation. The audio files were translated and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The recorded interviews had an average of 45 minutes each both from the online and face to face interviews. Seven of the interviews were done online while 6 of these interviews were face-to-face interviews. Qualitative data were also collected from the program synopses of selected degree programs included in the study as well as lecturers from different universities.

4.7.2 Quantitative data collection and analysis

Quantitative data was collected using both electronic and non-electronic tools. Google Forms were used to collect quantitative data from final-year tourism students in different institutions. Google Survey is an online data collection tool that is offered for free. It allows one to collect information simultaneously from people who are located in different geographical regions and in an easy and efficient manner. One can create a survey and get feedback in a few minutes. Using online platforms was ideal as it eliminated the need for travel, making the method cost-effective and safe, and the researcher managed to reach a broader number of people. Initially, a Google form link was shared with the final-year students, however, due to internet data challenges, some students could not access the forms. The researcher had to re-strategize and look for the best way to access the respondents. The researcher took advantage of the graduation ceremonies and engaged one research assistant from each university to collect data during the graduation ceremony. A total of 25 questionnaires was initially collected from the google survey, while 80 were collected during the graduation ceremonies. Data that that was collected with hard copy questionnaires were also entered into the google survey.

4.8 Data analysis and presentation

Qualitative data were analysed using narrative and content analysis. Data from key informants were presented through narrative analysis, incorporating direct quotations where relevant. Content analysis is a research method used to identify patterns in

secondary data which may be written, or visual (Drisko and Maschi, 2016). Content analysis may be qualitative or quantitative and results are categorised as themes, codes, or concepts. Content analysis in qualitative data involves interpreting the underlying meaning, context, and patterns within the data (Nicmanis, 2024). In this study, content analysis was used to identify a CBT module in the tourism degree curriculum using the thematic analysis technique. The key themes that the researcher was looking for in the curriculum for each university were modules related to community-based tourism and sustainable tourism. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data from in-depth key informant interviews. The analysis included searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. The final themes were derived from both the data and literature. Expressive coding was used where labels were assigned to data extracts to summarise phrases of emerging patterns. Narrative analysis was also used to examine, interpret, and understand the contents of the tourism degree where there was no stand-alone module in CBT.

A content analysis of the program synopses was conducted, with findings visually represented using word clouds to highlight key themes and terminologies. Data analysis and coding were conducted using ATLAS.ti 23, a qualitative data analysis software provided by the university. ATLAS.ti 23 is widely utilised by researchers for processing large volumes of textual, graphical, audio, and video data.

Recorded interviews from key informants were transcribed verbatim, the transcripts were then imported to ATLAS.ti. Codes that represent key ideas were inductively generated from data. Data was sorted and being grouped into similar codes. Patterns and themes were then analysed to find the deeper meaning of the data. Data was then visualised as themes, word clouds quotes and as descriptive narratives. The software facilitated data organisation, coding, visualisation of relationships, and the identification of patterns and themes. While ATLAS.ti 23 offers a wide range of analytical functions, the researcher primarily employed its basic features for data sorting, theme development, and word cloud generation. To maximise the potential of ATLAS.ti 23, future researchers would benefit from comprehensive training in its advanced functionalities.

Quantitative data was downloaded from Google Surveys as an Excel document and was then exported to SPSS 21 and STATA 13 for data cleaning and analysis.

Quantitative data was analysed and presented as descriptive statistics using tables, pie charts and graphs. Sand (2022), highlighted that when interpreting and analysing data, it crucial for the researcher to critically understand and explain research results, and relate the to the research questions, justifying the use of descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics were not used in this study because data was collected through purposive, and convenient sampling therefore it lacked randomness needed for generalising findings. The study adopted a descriptive design which intended to describe patters and explore perceptions rather than test hypothesis or make population-level predictions therefore descriptive statistics were more appropriate. Ordinal Likert scales were also used to measure participant's perceptions therefore this limited the use parametric inferential statistics. The Curriculum cover index was also used to determine the extent of CBT coverage.

Curriculum Coverage Index (CCI)

To calculate the CCI, degree program outlines were reviewed (see Appendix). Lecturers were asked to identify the courses in which CBT content is either covered or not. For the identified courses, they then applied a scoring matrix to evaluate the extent to which each module incorporates CBT related content.

The following scoring rubric was used

Score	Coverage level	Description
0	Not Covered	Not mentioned at all
1	Slightly covered	Briefly mentioned in the mentioned with minimal detail.
2	Somewhat covered	Discussed to a limited extent with some relevant information.
3	Moderately covered	Covered as a sub-topic, given fair attention.
4	Well covered	Covered as a topic, discussed in depth with substantial and relevant content.
5	Extensively covered	Covered as module and thoroughly explored with comprehensive detail and strong emphasis.

To calculate the CCI all modules with a score of 0 were excluded from the analysis. The CCI was then calculated using the following formula:

$$CCI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i \times s_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i}$$

Were

w_i is the weight assigned to the module

s_i is the for the module (Using predefined scale of 1 to 5)

n Total number of module assessed

Interpretation of the CCI

CCI Score	Level	Interpretation
0 - 1	Not Covered	The curriculum does not address CBT at all
1.1 - 2	Slightly covered	The topic is slightly covered in one or 2 modules but coverage is minimal and not well developed
2.1 - 3	Somewhat covered	The content is included in several modules with meaningful discussion but lacks depth.
3.1 - 4	Well covered	The curriculum covers the topic in multiple areas with moderate to strong detail and relevance.
4.1 - 5	Extensively covered	CBT is deeply and consistently integrated across the curriculum, with strong emphasis and comprehensive content

4.8.1 Integration of qualitative and quantitative data

The integration of qualitative and quantitative data in this study was operationalised using a concurrent triangulation design where both data strands were collected and analysed simultaneously to ensure a comprehensive and cross validated understanding of how transformative education can improve community-based tourism. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously but analysed separately during the initial stages of analysis. The integration of findings occurred at the interpretation stage, guided directly by the research questions and objectives. A side-by-side comparison strategy was used to examine the convergence.

To enhance the validity, credibility and reliability of findings, insights from the students' survey, program synopsis, interviews and observations were cross verified to ensure consistency. Perspectives of diverse stakeholders were also integrated to avoid bias

and enhance inclusivity. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic coding to identify patterns related to transformative learning, sustainability and decolonised education models. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings from both data sets presented using visual presentations and narratives were also integrated ensuring that both perspectives contributed equally to final conclusions. The theoretical framework also guided the data analysis, the decolonisation theory was used to interpret qualitative narratives from key informant interviews and the program synopsis from different universities. The sustainability theory also assisted in establishing performance indicators in CBT. Transformative learning was also linked with both qualitative accounts of educational experience and quantitative measures of knowledge retention and behavioural change.

4.9 Validity and Reliability of Data

The credibility of conclusions and recommendations depends on the trustworthiness of the data from which they are derived. The collection of quality and reliable data from the field was therefore very important. Several mechanisms and strategies were put in place to ensure that high-quality data for analysis was collected. In research, validity refers to the degree to which the research process adheres to the principles of the scientific method, ensuring that the findings accurately represent the phenomena being studied. It involves both the appropriateness of the research design and the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the data collected (Cohen et al., 2011; Golafshani, 2003). Validity ensures that the research measures what it intends to measure, and that the results are both reliable and relevant to the research questions (Surucu & Maslakci, 2020). The research ensured that the data collected covered all the research objectives and the whole area of investigation. The researcher also avoided using an excessively broad content area of measure in the questionnaire design. The researcher made sure that the data collection methods used were in line with the research design. Results for the study were also validated through a presentation to a group of academics and players in tourism at a CBT workshop in Buhera.

Reliability in research refers to the recurrence of results. Reliability of quantitative data, the questions were structured in way that it was easy to understand, pre-testing was

done to ensure that there were no issues with the questionnaire. Data collection was standardised, with same instructions.

To ensure reliability of qualitative data the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to avoid misinterpreting or missing information. To ensure the reliability of research findings, the triangulation method was used. The pragmatic paradigm encourages the use of mixed research methods with support triangulation methods. The triangulation method facilitates the process of validation of results and also helps in producing rich and productive data.

4.9.1 Anticipated Challenges vs Challenges Faced

When using the case study methods, the participation of the individuals or entities involved is required to ensure the success of the data collection process. (Rashid et al., 2019). Before the inception of the data collection process, the anticipated challenges were the unwillingness of participants to respond, accessibility challenges when using online platforms, and fear of delay due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. There were challenges faced during the data collection process that were almost the same as the anticipated challenges: therefore, it was easier to come up with solutions to some of the challenges. In collecting quantitative data through Google Forms, the major challenge faced was accessing students who had an interest in CBT, the link was shared with all the students and only those interested in CBT were encouraged to participate. Most of the potential students did not have access to data so the researcher resorted to hard-copy questionnaires. In cases where internet challenges were faced, the researcher used telephone interviews.

The collection of qualitative data was mainly hampered by protocols which then delayed the data collection process. To collect data in government organisations and universities, one has to submit an application which has to be reviewed and approved by the relevant authorities. Approval to collect data from relevant authorities took a long time and the researcher had to wait patiently for the approvals before proceeding to collect data.

4.9.2 Ethical Considerations

Field entry

In preparation for data collection, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria after a thorough review of all the research tools by the ethics committee. All relevant authorities were contacted before entry into the field. Permission to collect data was sought from all key organisations and universities. The researcher sought permission from the relevant authorities and potential participants. No participant was forced to take part in the study and all those who agreed to take part had to sign a consent form (Appendix 7). Research participants were assured of anonymity: no name, address, or contact information was going to be stored or shared after the interviews as pseudonyms were to be used. Participants were also assured that the data collected would only be used for academic purposes only. The researcher sought consent from the target respondents before conducting interviews. The researcher also made sure that the data collection method used was in line with the research design.

Informed consent

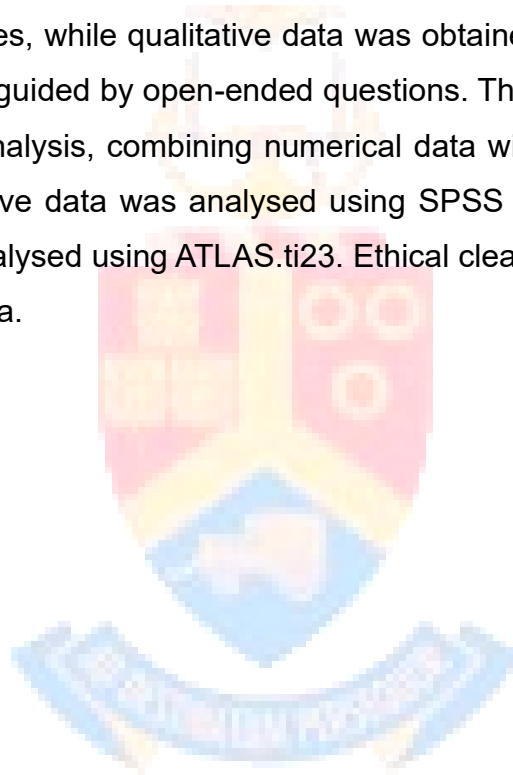
The ethical principle known as informed consent states that people ought to be given all pertinent information before voluntarily and intelligently choosing to engage in a specific activity or procedure (Dooly, Moore, and Vallejo, 2017). A thorough explanation of the purpose, procedures, advantages, and possible risks of the research was clearly explained to the respondents. The research ensured that all the potential respondents were aware of the purpose of the study. Nobody was forced or unfairly persuaded to take part in the study.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity refers to the fact that the participant's identity is not known to the researcher or anyone else associated with the study. Participants were promised that their identities would remain a secret. The researcher made sure that no personally identifiable information was used in the data collection process or in the presentation of the results. Instead of using their true names, they went by pseudonyms and the names of organisations. The researcher assured the participants that their private information was not shared with unauthorised parties.

4.10 Summary

The chapter gave an overview of the methodology guiding the research, study area, target population, and sample size. The research was done in Zimbabwe with participants drawn from universities and key organisations that are involved in the management of CBTs. The study employed a mixed methodology and a justification for the use of this methodology is given. Quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaires, while qualitative data was obtained through key informant interviews, which were guided by open-ended questions. This dual approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis, combining numerical data with in-depth insights from respondents. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS 21 and STATA 13, while qualitative data was analysed using ATLAS.ti23. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria.



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CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The previous four chapters concentrated on introducing the concept of community-based tourism, the conceptual framework underpinning the study and the methods used for data collection. This chapter provides an analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings from the fieldwork and data collection. The findings have been grouped and presented as guided by the research questions. Data presented in this chapter were collected in pursuit of answers to the research questions and hypothesis.

5.1.0 Qualitative and quantitative data collection

Qualitative data was collected from key informants from the Rural District Councils (RDC), the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS), the CAMPFIRE Association and the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). A total of 14 key informants were interviewed: five representatives from the RDC, five lecturers and three respondents from the key organisations which are ZIMPARKS, ZTA and the CAMPFIRE Association. To ensure the anonymity of respondents while maintaining the human and professional element of the respondents, pseudonyms were used. Thus, pseudonyms were assigned corresponding to the groups or organisations respondents belong to for effective data representation, for instance, Lecturer 1 and 2. Respondents from the RDC were differentiated by numbers such as RDC 1, RDC 2 and RDC 3, while respondents from key organisations were assigned based on their organisation's names, ZIMPARKS, ZTA, and CAMPFIRE Association.

Quantitative data was collected from university graduates from five state universities. A total of 105 tourism graduates who had completed tourism and hospitality degrees at five public universities. The sample was selected to represent a diverse cross-section of students from their respective institutions. These participants provided valuable insights through structured questionnaires designed to gather data on their knowledge of CBT, the extent of CBT coverage and the relevance of their education to current employment and tourism development. Data collected aimed at identifying patterns and trends that could inform improvements in tourism education and curriculum development at university level.

5.1.1 Demographic information of respondents

The demographic section provides an overview of the general profiles of university students, including details on the gender distribution and the breakdown of respondents by university. This section aims to give insight into the composition of the study sample, highlighting any significant demographic patterns that could influence the study's findings. Data analysis and presentation was not disaggregated by gender or institution, as this level of analysis did not align with the primary objectives of the study. The focus was on broader patterns and insights rather than subgroup comparison. However, demographic information, including gender distribution and institutional affiliation, was presented separately to provide context and helps the readers understand the composition of the sample. This background information supports transparency and allows clearer interpretation of the findings within the scope of the study.

Gender Distribution of respondents

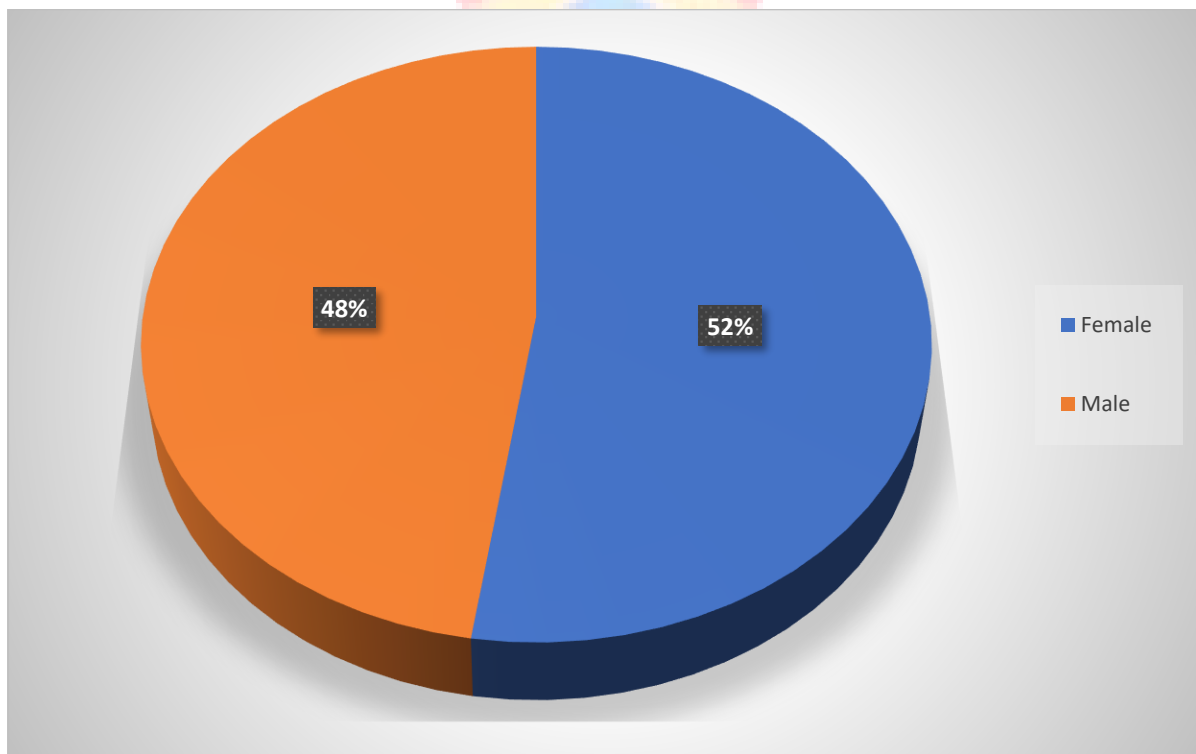


Figure 5.1 Distribution of tourism graduates.

To gather quantitative data, 105 respondents were interviewed in the study. This sample size was adequate enough to determine the reliability and generalisability of

findings. Figure 5.1 reveals that slightly more females participated in the study, a total of 55 females and 50 men. Although the researcher aimed to achieve an equal number of male and female participants, this was not feasible due to a higher proportion of females in the population. This outcome aligns with global statistics, which show that women slightly outnumber men worldwide and that the tourism industry, in particular, tends to employ more women than men.

The mean age of the respondents was 25 while the standard deviation was 3.9. The mean age and the standard deviation suggest that respondents are approximately between the ages of 21 and 29 years therefore results will be more reflective of youth's perceptions. However, to ensure a broader perspective, qualitative data was collected from industry professionals who had a mean age of 53 and a standard deviation of 6 years suggesting that the professionals age roughly ranged between 47 and 59. By incorporating viewpoints from both younger students and seasoned industry professionals, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of perceptions, bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world industry experience.

Distribution of respondents by university.

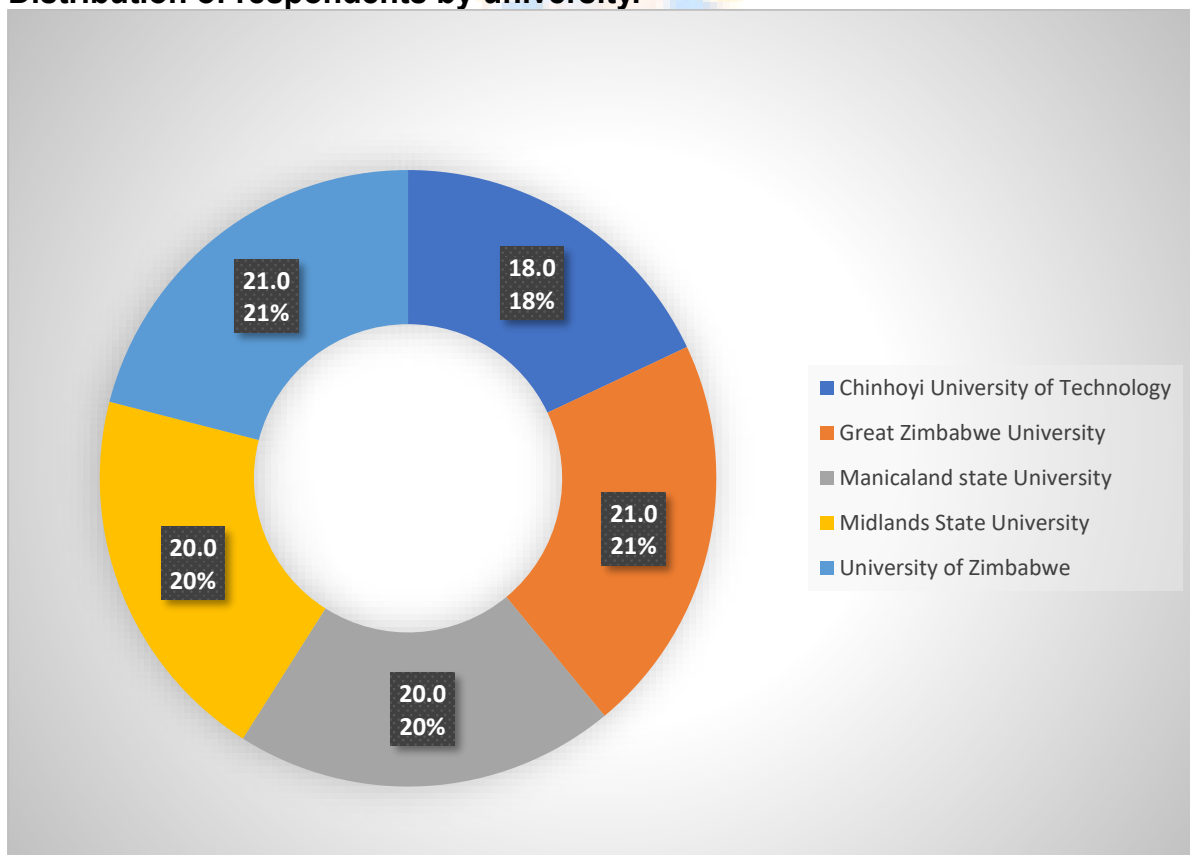


Figure 5.2 Distribution of respondents by university.

The distribution of respondents by university provides insights into the spread and proportional representation of participants in the study. The researcher targeted 20 respondents per university, aiming for equal representation across five state universities that offer tourism and hospitality degrees. However, the actual participation varied with Chinhoyi University having a slightly lower response rate, contributing 18 respondents which accounts for approximately 15% of the sample. In contrast, both the University of Zimbabwe and Great Zimbabwe University had the highest number of respondents each contributing 21% slightly exceeding the target. This suggests a generally well-balanced distribution with minor deviations that are unlikely to significantly bias the findings, although the slight under representation of Chinhoyi should be acknowledged.

5.2.0 Stakeholder roles in CBT development and management

Key informants provided detailed insights into the roles of their respective organisations in the management and support of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives.

The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) plays a pivotal role in promoting and developing CBT by focusing on marketing, promotion, and product development support. In addition to these functions, ZTA offers advisory services at every stage of CBT project from inception to commissioning and beyond through ongoing support in marketing, monitoring, and evaluation. This comprehensive involvement helps to ensure that CBT ventures are sustainable and aligned with national tourism goals. Given this background ZTA plays a crucial role in ensuring environmental, social and economic sustainability through ensuring that communities engage in tourism activities that conserve and preserve the natural environment and culture and that also economically viable. The organisation supports locally-driven CBT projects, promoting authentic narratives and experiences rather than externally curated or commodified versions of the local culture which is in-line with decolonisation. Transformative learning is also encouraged through capacity building of locals, encouraging critical reflection among communities about their own values, practices and tourism opportunities that they can tap into. This fosters deep learning, not just skills acquisition, empowering communities to re-think roles in tourism and development.

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS) also plays a significant role in CBT, especially as one of the early champions of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programs. ZIMPARKS assists communities in identifying sustainable ways to benefit from their local natural resources. Their support decentralises conservation efforts, challenging the colonial legacies by restoring local agency and valuing indigenous training. They provide essential training on wildlife conservation, natural resource preservation, and strategies for managing human-wildlife conflicts which are the key pillars of sustainability. This guidance is crucial for fostering community engagement and stewardship over local wildlife and ecosystems. On the other hand, the hands-on training fosters transformative learning enabling communities to critically reflect, gain new skills and take ownership of resources management, ultimately shifting their role from passive beneficiaries to active stewards of their natural environment. The roles of ZIMPARKS directly advances the sustainability, decolonisation and transformative learning theories.

The CAMPFIRE Association complements these efforts by offering technical and advisory support specifically tailored to community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs). This includes assisting communities in developing management strategies and organisational structures suited to CBT and CBNRM goals. The association helps communities establish settlement patterns and organisational arrangements that align with CBTE needs, ensuring a balance between tourism development and community interests. CAMPFIRE also offers guidance to communities interested in launching CBT initiatives or participating in broader CBNRM programs, empowering them with knowledge and tools for long-term success. Through helping communities design management strategies, the organisation promotes socio-ecological balance and long-term resilience which is a key principle of sustainability. Additionally, by equipping communities with the knowledge and tools needed to initiate and manage their own CBTs, transformative learning is encouraged, enabling communities to reflect critically, building capacity and transition into active agents of sustainable development.

These three organisations play essential and interconnected roles in supporting CBT. Their roles advance the principles of the sustainability theory, decolonisation theory and transformative learning. Through their technical support, capacity building and policy guidance, they foster sustainable practices that balance economic development, environmental conservation and social equity. Furthermore, their

support for training, strategic planning and adaptive management promotes transformative learning enabling community members to develop critical consciousness, gain new skills and reframe their roles as proactive stewards of the land and livelihoods. The integrated support system not only enhances the effectiveness of CBT initiatives but also fosters resilience, empowered communities capable of leading their own sustainable development journeys.

5.2.1 Perceptions of different stakeholders regarding CBT

Stakeholders in the tourism industry hold diverse perspectives on Community-Based Tourism (CBT), with each stakeholder's understanding of the concept varying considerably (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2015). These differing perspectives are influenced by individual backgrounds, priorities, and worldviews, leading to varying opinions on the effectiveness and management of CBT.

This study aimed to explore these varying views, including stakeholders' conceptions, misconceptions, and attitudes toward CBT management. By employing a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of stakeholders' perceptions. The investigation focused on examining stakeholders' understanding of CBT, their knowledge of its performance, and their views on both the operational and managerial aspects of CBT.

5.2.2 Understanding of the CBT concept

To accurately assess tourism graduates' views on Community-Based Tourism (CBT), it was essential to first determine whether they had a foundational understanding of the concept. Establishing this baseline knowledge helped ensure that subsequent responses were informed and reflective of genuine insights into CBT.

The findings revealed that a substantial majority of the graduates (98%) reported having an understanding of CBT, indicating familiarity with its principles, goals, and applications within the tourism sector. The overwhelmingly high level of understanding among respondents provides a strong foundation for analysing tourism graduates' perspectives on CBT, particularly regarding its implementation, benefits, and challenges within communities. This knowledge allows for deeper insights into how tourism education has equipped graduates to contribute to or critique CBT initiatives,

making their views especially relevant to stakeholders aiming to develop or enhance CBT programs.

In contrast, a small percentage (2%) of the graduates indicated that they did not understand the concept of CBT. This minority might reflect differences in curriculum focus, levels of practical exposure, or access to CBT-related learning opportunities within their education.

In addition to determining whether tourism graduates had a basic understanding of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), it was essential to assess how confidently they rated their own knowledge on the subject. Participants were asked to rate their understanding of CBT on a 10-point scale, designed to capture a wide spectrum of self-assessed knowledge. This scale provided three distinct levels of comprehension:

Low Understanding (0 to 4): Graduates who rated themselves within this range were considered to have minimal or no understanding of CBT. A score within this range suggested limited exposure to the principles and practices of CBT which could be due to lack of field experience or gaps in their education on community-based approaches in tourism.

Average to Good Understanding (5 to 7): Graduates with ratings in this category indicated an average to good level of understanding. Graduates within this range likely have a fair grasp of the CBT's fundamental concepts and possibly some knowledge on its implementation.

Very Good to Excellent/Expert Understanding (8 and above): Graduates rating themselves at 8 or higher exhibited a strong to expert level of understanding, suggesting a thorough familiarity with CBT. This group likely possessed comprehensive knowledge of CBT concepts, possibly through a combination of academic study, practical experience, or advanced training in community-based tourism initiatives. The high rating may imply a readiness to actively participate in CBT planning and management, with confidence in their ability to critically analyse CBT frameworks and make informed decisions.

This 10-point scale provided a clear framework for categorising graduates' self-perceptions of their CBT knowledge, allowing the study to identify both strengths and areas for improvement in tourism education. By understanding how graduates rate

their own knowledge, the research highlighted on their readiness to contribute to CBT initiatives and where targeted training might enhance their confidence and expertise in this field. This information is valuable for curriculum developers, industry trainers, and policymakers looking to build a well-equipped workforce capable of driving successful CBT projects.

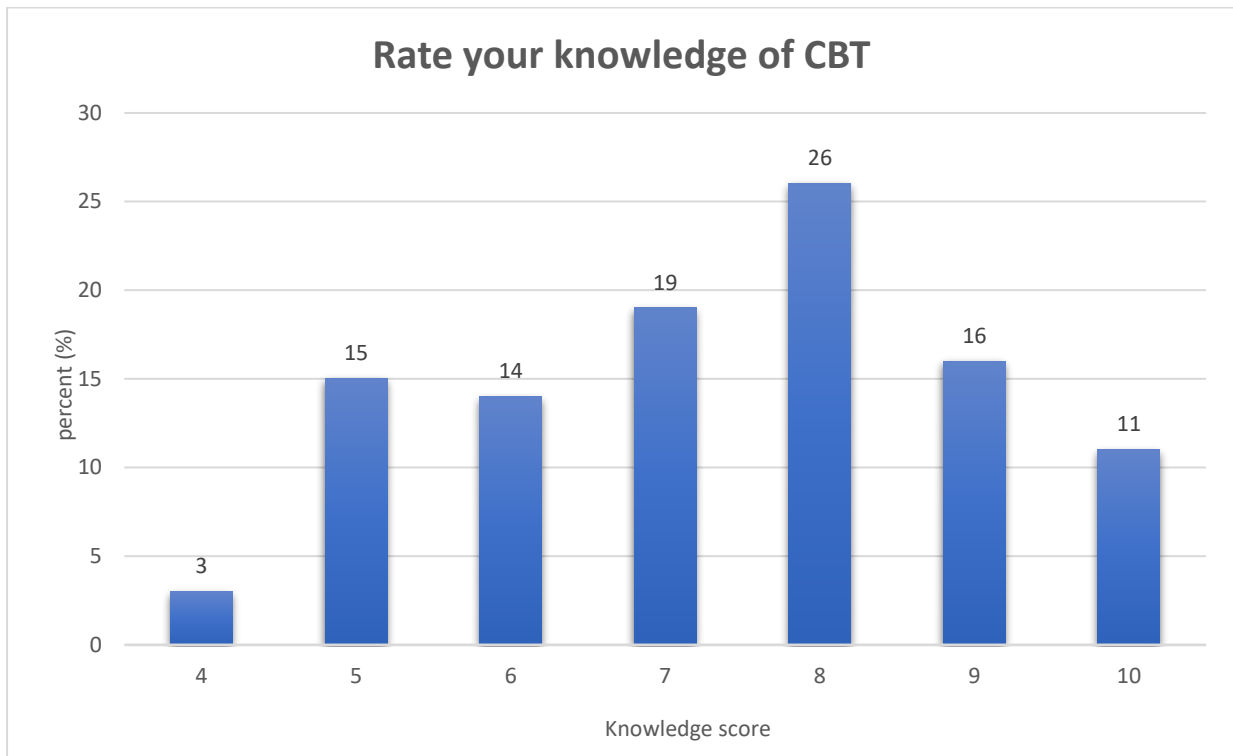


Figure 5.3 Rating of CBT knowledge (n= 103)

Figure 5.3 illustrates the distribution of respondents according to their self-assessed understanding of CBT, offering insight into the depth of their familiarity with the concept. A considerable proportion of respondents, comprising 53%, indicated a self-assessed understanding of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) rated between 8 and 10 on a 10-point scale. This rating suggests that these respondents possess a strong to expert-level comprehension of CBT, demonstrating a substantial familiarity with its principles, practices, and potential impacts. This group's high ratings reflect a depth of knowledge that may equip them for active engagement in CBT-related roles. Approximately 48% of the respondents rated their understanding between 5 and 7, indicating an average to good grasp of CBT concepts. This range suggests that while these graduates have a foundational knowledge of CBT, there may be room to

enhance their understanding of more complex aspects of CBT management and implementation.

Interestingly, 3% of the respondents reported a limited understanding of CBT, rating their knowledge between 0 and 4. This finding is unexpected given their backgrounds as tourism students with an interest in CBT. This low self-assessment may suggest gaps in their educational exposure to CBT or a lack of confidence in their comprehension of the subject. Addressing these knowledge gaps through targeted educational interventions may be essential for fostering a well-rounded understanding of CBT across all graduates. This distribution of self-assessed knowledge highlights the varied levels of preparedness among graduates and underscores the need for continued curriculum refinement to enhance competency in CBT across all levels.

Key informant had generally a similar view in the understanding of CBT. Respondents commonly described CBT as a form of tourism that occurs within a specific community context, where members work collectively, engage in joint decision making and share profits equitably. This perspective aligns with the core principles of the sustainability theory, particularly the emphasis on participatory governance, equitable benefit-sharing and community empowerment.

However, while this interpretation reflects understanding of CBT, it reveals potential gaps in conceptual depth. For instance, there was limited evidence on critical engagement with environmental and cultural sustainability dimensions of CBT. Their understanding of CBT did not indicate a conscious awareness of CBT being a form of tourism that challenges dominant tourism narratives and power structures and how it might serve as a vehicle for reclaiming agency, resisting external exploitation and reshaping tourism in ways that reflect indigenous knowledge systems and local world views. This suggests that while key informants grasp the operational and economic aspect of CBT, there may be a need for capacity building and critical education around its transformative potential. Without this deeper understanding, CBT risks being reduced to a form of small-scale tourism that produces mainstream models under the guise of community participation, rather than a truly decolonised and sustainable tourism alternative.

5.2.3 Community-based tourism performance knowledge

Respondents were asked to assess their knowledge regarding the performance of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Zimbabwe. This inquiry aimed to gauge not only the graduates' awareness of CBT outcomes and developments but also their level of interest in tracking and understanding CBT's success and challenges within the country. By exploring their knowledge on this subject, the researcher sought insight into the extent to which these graduates remain informed about CBT performance metrics, such as economic impact, community involvement, conservation success, and overall sustainability. This understanding is essential, as it reflects the graduates' engagement with real-world outcomes beyond theoretical concepts and signals their readiness to contribute to or critically evaluate CBT initiatives in professional contexts.

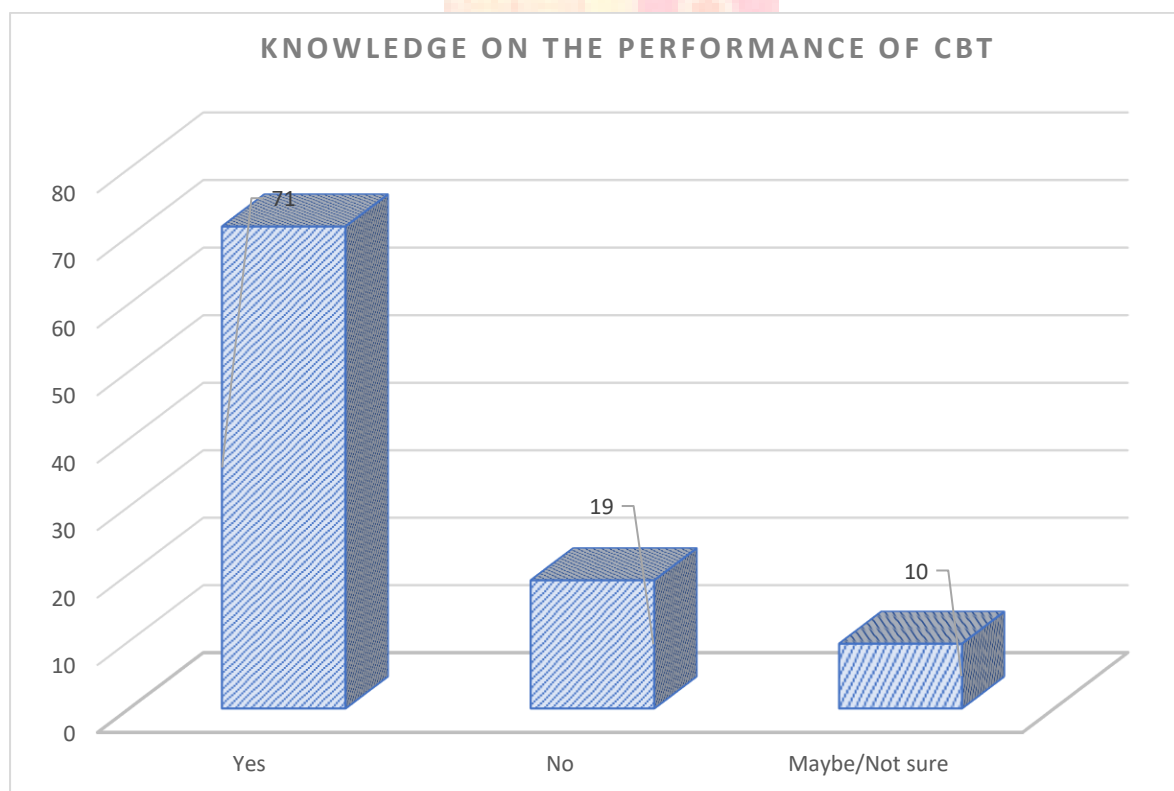


Figure 5.4 Knowledge of the performance of CBT(n=105).

As illustrated in Figure 5.4, a significant majority of respondents (71%) reported being aware of the performance of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) and staying up to date with developments in the sector as shown in Figure 5.4. In contrast, 19% indicated that they had no knowledge of CBT performance, while 10% were

uncertain about their level of awareness. For those who were informed about CBT performance, the researcher further explored the sources of their knowledge. Respondents cited a range of sources, including journal papers, newspaper articles, and reports from the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA). Notably, none of the respondents mentioned conducting independent research or in-depth examination of CBT as a specific area of interest. This suggests that while the graduates are informed to some extent, their understanding may be primarily derived from secondary sources rather than active, self-directed inquiry into the field. These findings also reflect informational learning which may not be adequate enough to encourage transformative learning, critical reflection and experiential engagement. The dominance of sources like ZTA reports, newspapers and academic journals often produced from expert driven and top-down perspectives also reflects a colonial hierarchy where knowledge is seen as something generated by experts and consumed by learners.

Perception of performance

Participants who reported having some knowledge of the performance of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) in Zimbabwe were asked to evaluate the performance of these enterprises on a scale from 0 to 10. The scale was designed to capture a range of perceptions regarding the effectiveness and success of CBTEs, with lower scores (0 to 4) reflecting a perception of minimal or low performance. A mid-range score (5 to 7) indicated an average level of performance, suggesting that respondents viewed most CBTEs as functioning at a moderate or acceptable level but perhaps lacking in certain aspects of their operation, sustainability, or impact. Scores in the higher range (8 to 10) signified a perception of strong to excellent performance, suggesting that respondents viewed some CBTEs as exceptionally well-managed, effective, or impactful, potentially excelling in areas such as community engagement, environmental sustainability, or economic benefits. This rating scale provided a means to assess the respondents' perceptions of CBTE success. By analysing these ratings, the researcher sought to gain insights into the general sentiment surrounding CBTE performance and identify areas where improvement or further support may be needed.

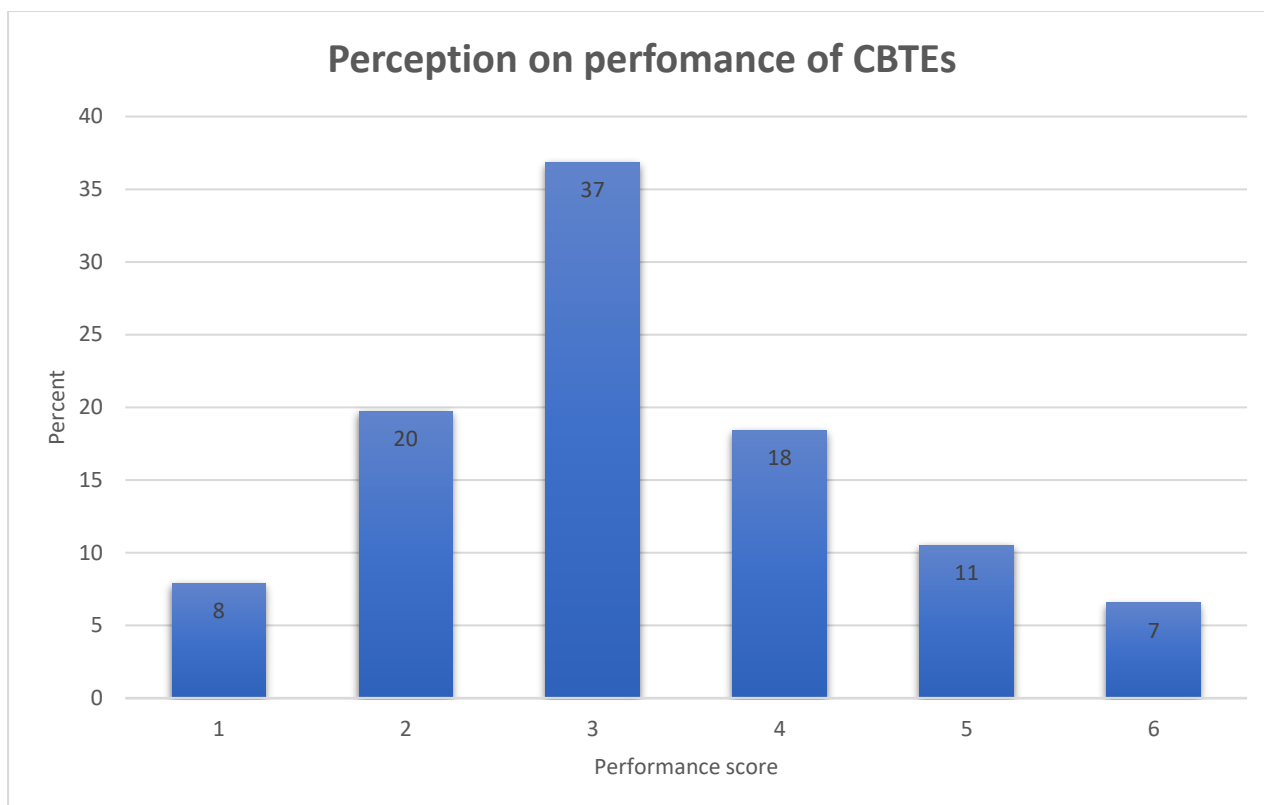


Figure 5.5 Perception of the performance of CBT.

Figure 5.5 illustrates the respondents' perceptions of the performance of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) in Zimbabwe. When asked to rate the performance of CBT, approximately 82% of the respondents assigned scores between 1 and 4, indicating a widespread belief that CBTEs are underperforming or not meeting expectations. It is evident a number of stakeholders view CBTEs as failing to meet their intended objectives, possibly due to challenges in governance, capacity, market access or benefits sharing. Only 18% of respondents perceived the performance of CBTEs as average, scoring between 5 and 7. Notably, no respondents rated CBTEs as performing excellently, highlighting a general sense of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of these enterprises. The widespread dissatisfaction in the results points to systematic issues such as inadequate support structures, limited community empowerment or misalignment with community needs and sustainability goals. The findings highlight the urgent need for strategic interventions to strengthen the performance, visibility and benefits of CBTEs, particularly by reinforcing local capacity, improving management practices and ensuring and ensuring that tourism initiatives are truly community-driven and aligned with sustainable development principles.

The quantitative data on CBTE performance was further corroborated by insights from key informants. A respondent from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS) shared that when the CAMPFIRE projects were initially launched, 58 districts were awarded CAMPFIRE status and supported by donor funding. However, the withdrawal of donor support led to the collapse of many of these projects. While some wildlife-based initiatives are still operational, they continue to struggle with performance. Similarly, a respondent from the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) confirmed that the withdrawal of donor funding and market support resulted in the decline of many CBTEs. Initially, over 200 CBTEs were registered with ZTA, but less than 100 remain active to date.

Key informants emphasised that one of the primary reasons for the poor performance and failure of many CBTEs is the lack of adequate capacity building for communities. Communities involved in these initiatives often did not receive sufficient training in key areas such as enterprise management, sustainability, and marketing. This gap in capacity building has significantly hindered the ability of CBTEs to thrive and sustain themselves, ultimately contributing to the widespread underperformance observed in the sector. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing support, training, and capacity development to ensure the long-term viability and success of CBTEs in Zimbabwe.

Similarly, the Rural District Councils (RDCs) identified challenges impacting the performance of CBTEs. Respondents pointed out that most CBTEs are heavily reliant on international tourists, with limited engagement from domestic visitors. One of the key reasons for this is that many local communities do not consume CBT products, as domestic tourists already have a deep appreciation for local culture and wildlife, and often do not perceive these aspects as valuable touristic experiences. Additionally, the financial constraints of many locals were noted as a barrier to participation, as activities such as hunting, which are central to some CBTE offerings, are beyond the financial reach of most domestic tourists due to their low disposable incomes. This highlights a significant challenge in diversifying the customer base and ensuring the sustainability of CBTEs, as the local population is both less likely to engage with these products and less able to afford them.

The RDC members also indicated that they were not well capacitated to manage the enterprises both at the community and district levels. This is reflected by the engagement of a private operator. The RDCs pointed out that they engage private operators to manage and market the CBTEs. These private operators are often white-owned and have strong connections with external companies that assist in marketing the hunting concessions. The private safari operators then remit the proceeds to the RDC, which then distributes the funds to the communities.

The responses from the Rural District Councils (RDCs) reveal a significant capacity gap in the management of Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) at both the community and district levels. This deficiency in local management skills is reflected in the RDCs' reliance on private operators to manage and market the CBTEs. This reliance on private operators underscores a critical challenge: the lack of local expertise and capacity to effectively oversee and promote CBTEs independently.

University lecturers also expressed the view that most Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) are currently performing below average, although they acknowledged the significant potential these enterprises hold for improving the livelihoods of local communities. According to the lecturers, while CBTEs are not yet achieving their full potential, they possess untapped opportunities that, if properly harnessed, could offer substantial socio-economic benefits.

5.3.0 CBT Management and Challenges

This section presents findings derived from key themes that emerged during key informant interviews. These emerging themes provided valuable insights into the management of CBT initiatives as well as the various challenges that hinder their effectiveness and sustainability. The analysis highlights participant's knowledge and understanding of how CBT is managed at community level, along with the perceptions of the obstacles commonly faced by CBTEs. By exploring these perspectives, the section contributes to a deeper understanding of both internal and external factors influencing the success of CBT initiatives.

5.3.1 Management of CBT in Zimbabwe

All key informant interviewees believe that CBTE has the potential to improve the lives of host communities. Key informant interviews brought to light that management structures, community participation, policy implementation, knowledge and expertise, benefits sharing, and tourism innovations are the key elements to be considered to ensure the success of CBTEs.

CBTEs Management

Key informants' interviews brought to light that there are mainly two management models of CBTEs that are common in Zimbabwe. There are Private-Public Partnerships (PPP) between RDCs, community and private operators and situations where communities run the enterprises by themselves individually or as a community. Currently, in Zimbabwe, the most common management model is the partnership between RDCs, and partnership between the community and the private operator.

Public-Private Partnerships

Key informant interviews revealed that RDCs oversee the overall management of community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs), while ZIMPARKS is responsible for monitoring best practices related to hunting. The emerging trends reveal that most CBTEs are being managed through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) which are made between the RDC and the private operator. The private operator reports to the RDC who then gives an update to the community. At the community level, community members have their committees which are elected by the community and change periodically. According to the RDCs, these committees are responsible for updating the community on the CBTEs project as well as organising and leading the community. These committees also work with the community members in deciding how they can make use of the proceeds gained from CBTEs. The community conservancies are manned by trained scouts or rangers who patrol around the park to ensure the safety and conservation of wildlife. However, due to low financial benefits, there is a high labour turnover of these rangers who are in search of better-paying jobs. This then calls for training for more scouts to replace those who have left.

Respondents had mixed perceptions of the PPP management model. CAMPFIRE Association supported the PPP model as the ideal model for the management of CBTs. To support this view, the respondent from the CAMPFIRE Association noted that, based on experience, communities collaborating with private players are thriving, as

these private players often contribute valuable expertise in managing the enterprises. Furthermore, the respondent indicated that in as much as communities can run these enterprises, there is also a need to boost that capacity through PPPs. In addition, the respondent mentioned that communities can manage CBTs by themselves if well trained over a reasonable period and therefore if they do not get adequate capacity building, they should always resort to PPPs. PPPs will enhance or probably bring to full potential the communities that have been trained already in a particular area.

Some respondents felt that the current management structure of CBT favours RDCs. One participant added that there is a challenge of transparency between the private operator, RDC and the community. RDCs enter into a lease agreement with operators, and in most cases, the community is not aware of the terms and conditions of the lease agreement. Another angle of opacity described by one of the respondents was when the private operator withholds important information from RDCs. The respondent shared a striking example that illustrated the challenges of working with private operators. In one instance, a private operator repeatedly claimed there was no business activity and failed to remit expected returns to the RDC. Progress reports from the operator seemed to confirm this, stating that nothing significant was happening on the ground. However, the story took an unexpected turn when a ZIMPARKS representative conducted a routine monitoring and evaluation visit. To their surprise, they discovered that the establishment was, in fact, fully operational and functioning smoothly, contradicting the reports.

This incident highlighted the importance of transparency and regular oversight, as it revealed how misleading reports can obscure the true state of operations on the ground. Community members were left with no benefits and felt exploited, leading to significant tensions between the operator and the local population. The locals perceived the arrangement as unfair and felt excluded from any advantages. At the onset of the lease agreement, the operator dismissed all community workers and replaced them with their own staff, exacerbating feelings of marginalization and injustice. This situation highlights the importance of fair and inclusive practices in community-based tourism, where local engagement and benefit-sharing are essential to maintaining positive relationships and sustainable outcomes.

The community was not aware of the terms and conditions of the lease, and they did not dispute them. However, they started to engage in illegal mining and poaching within the conservancy.

Another key informant also expressed concern over the lack of uniformity in RDC structures.

There is no uniformity in the RDC structures. In some districts, the area of natural resources management is a standalone department but in some RDCs, it falls under the administration of some social amenities. As a result, the management and development of Community Based Tourism (CBT) is usually dependent on the interests of the district head. The natural resource officer may be reporting to the engineer who has different interests, and they also report to different ministries. Consequently, some of the districts fail to get the necessary support from the RDCs because there are no standalone departments that are concerned and passionate about the issues of tourism.

The lack of structural uniformity within the RDCs in Zimbabwe presents a significant barrier to the sustainable development of CBT. From a sustainability theory perspective, fragmented institutional arrangements where tourism management is inconsistently placed within different departments undermine coherent policy implementation, and long-term strategic planning. Moreover, when tourism is subordinated to departments with competing unrelated mandates such as engineering or social amenities, its potential as a tool for community development and environmental stewardship is diminished.

RDC 2, RDC 3 and RDC 4 concurred that in PPPs, sometimes the operators get a bigger percentage of the resources since they are involved in the management and marketing of the products. They further explained that there are standard fees for tourism activities: for example, in sport hunting the standard fee for elephant hunting is currently US\$12 000, but when the safari operator sells the elephants, they might sell it for US\$18 000 or more and they receive more money.

ZIMPARKS also indicated that there were a few cases where the communities entered into these partnerships by themselves without the involvement of RDCs. Communities can organise themselves and apply for a concession through the tender process at ZIMPARKS. When a community wins a concession, they are free to manage it by

themselves or engage a private operator. The model has proved to be more efficient in terms of benefit sharing, community participation and empowerment when the community is running the project by themselves without a private operator. The respondent expressed concern over communities that engage private operators after winning a concession. He indicated that some communities cannot operate the concession because of a lack of adequate management skills, marketing and technical know-how. As a result, communities opt for private safari operators to run the business. ZIMPARKS stated that:

We have a community conservancy that is managed by the community itself. They participated in the tender process, successfully bidding for and winning the concession. However, they subsequently subcontracted a local operator, which has hindered them from fully realising the benefits of the concession. The agreement with the operator stipulates that they will pay lease and concession fees to the national parks, which will then remit a certain percentage back to the community. Unfortunately, the communities are frequently hiring and firing operators due to the proceeds not meeting their expectations. We have attempted to guide them by highlighting the gaps and identifying where they are losing out. Therefore, the communities need capacity-building in specific areas to improve their situation.

This case illustrates both the potential and the challenges of achieving sustainability and decolonised governance in community-based natural resources management. From a sustainability theory perspective, while the community's initial success in acquiring the concession through formal tendering reflects a move towards self-determination and economic participation, the decision to subcontract operations to local private operators has created a dependency that undermines long-term viability. It also portrays that without adequate training and capacity-building initiatives, the long-term sustainability of the conservancy may be jeopardised. Communities may struggle to negotiate effectively with operators or to run the conservancy independently in future. In as much as the community conservancy was established to empower local communities through direct management and control of resources, subcontracting to a private operator has ceded some control and diluted their ability to get maximum benefits.

From a decolonisation standpoint, the scenario reflects lingering structural inequalities and asymmetries in knowledge and power. Although communities appear to exercise agency through formal participation, the persistence of externally mediated financial flows where national parks collect fees and determine what is remitted suggests that communities do not fully control or benefit from their resources. True decolonisation requires not only formal inclusion but also the dismantling of top-down financial and administrative arrangements that constrain local authorities. Building of local capacity must therefore be accompanied by reconfiguration of governance structures that allows communities to directly manage and benefit from their ecological assets on their own terms.

5.3.2 Management of CBT by communities

Results from key informant interviews indicated that lack of capacity has affected the management and participation of locals. Communities are failing to reap many of the benefits because they are not managing the enterprises by themselves. The CAMPFIRE Association also highlighted that community members receive training in various essential skills, including accounting, project planning, financial management, communication, and record-keeping. Additionally, they are educated on the importance of preserving and conserving the natural resources they manage. This training aims to equip them with the necessary knowledge to handle the economic and environmental challenges tied to community-based resource management. However, the communities are not fully capacitated to manage the CBTE by themselves. On the other hand, the emerging trends indicated that at the district level, there are no dedicated tourism departments with tourism experts who can monitor tourism activities in the districts. As a result, CBTEs are struggling and failing to attract both local and international markets.

Lecturers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 all agreed that significant improvements are needed in tourism product development and packaging to fully capitalise on the potential benefits of tourism. The respondents pointed out that the primary tourism offerings in these areas are hunting and game viewing, with hunting generating more income than other activities. However, the lack of marketing expertise and capacity in the districts has led to a reliance on safari operators for both marketing and managing these

enterprises. This highlights a critical gap in local capabilities, which hinders the potential for self-sustaining growth in the tourism sector.

Tourism marketing in Zimbabwe is primarily managed by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), which oversees marketing efforts for the entire country, as all tourism establishments are required to be members of this organisation. While ZTA handles the broad marketing strategies, wildlife-based community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) often rely on safari operators in partnership with local communities to market these specific ventures. The challenge with this centralised marketing model lies in its broad focus, which tends to overlook the unique attributes of individual sites. Although ZTA effectively markets Zimbabwe as a whole, it struggles to provide targeted marketing for each specific tourism product, which can limit the visibility and appeal of smaller or more niche destinations. This issue highlights the need for more localised marketing strategies to ensure a more comprehensive promotion of all tourism offerings. It then calls for each site to be in a position to market its products by themselves. One lecturer also expressed concern about the recruitment processes in the industry:

The current problem we are facing in Zimbabwean tourism companies or regulators is talent management. The regulators are failing to identify the resourceful people to employ and operate certain administrative offices. In some cases, you would find out that they are taking students from a certain discipline who have little knowledge of tourism administration. In a simple sense, there is no need to employ a marketing person to market tourism operations, they should take tourism graduates instead because they also have marketing modules. So instead, they are employing people with a good marketing background without tourism understanding and a passion for it. It then just becomes a desk operation where people are just behind computers but failing to get into the industry.

The statement highlights a critical issue in the Zimbabwean tourism sector: poor talent management. The core problem lies in the failure of tourism companies and regulators to adequately match the right talent to the right roles, particularly when it comes to administrative positions. The practice of hiring individuals with strong backgrounds in fields such as marketing, but without a proper understanding of tourism operations,

undermines the effectiveness of these roles. By hiring professionals without a passion for or knowledge of the tourism industry, organisations are creating a disconnect between the staff and the actual workings of the sector. This leads to ineffective operations where employees may excel in administrative tasks but fail to engage meaningfully with the tourism industry, limiting their impact and hindering growth.

5.3.3 Participation of Locals

According to the RDC and CAMPFIRE Association, there is active participation of locals in the CBT project. In wildlife-based CBTEs, local people are responsible for scouting the area, taking anti-poaching measures, problem animal control, and human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures. In heritage and culturally based CBTs, selected members are responsible for tour guiding and educating tourists on the local heritage and culture. Participating communities organise themselves into environmental sub-committees, from district, ward to village level. Interviews with the RDC also revealed that the major role of the local community is conserving the natural heritage, culture, and wildlife as well as organising themselves and deciding on which projects, they can do with proceeds from tourism.

Respondents from universities and ZIMPARKS had a different perception of the participation of locals believing that participation and inclusion of local people in CBTEs are still minimal. They revealed that community members are just on the receiving end without taking part in the day-to-day running of the enterprises. Overall decision-making is done by the RDCs. ZIMPARKS made reference to a community conservancy, which was initiated by the community. The community decided to relocate from an area frequented by wildlife to curb human-wildlife conflicts as well as pave the way for a community conservancy. The community lacked the necessary capacity and expertise to register the conservancy on their own. As a result, they sought assistance from the Rural District Council (RDC), which successfully registered the conservancy and later formed a partnership with a private operator. This collaborative effort between local authorities and private stakeholders highlights the importance of external support in empowering communities to manage resources effectively, especially when local knowledge and capacity are insufficient.

Lecturer 1 had a different perspective on community participation. She indicated that community participation in such initiatives has its pros and cons. She indicated that a

business is sustainable when it is managed by the initiator: if one initiates, one can sustain it. However, when it comes to communities, most of them are not the initiators but rather the followers. Community members do not usually initiate these projects but come in as takers of projects that have been initiated by external investors. There are also problems with oneness, leadership, opaque constitution and lack of funding. Lecturer 4 further highlighted that:

When a funding partner is introduced, the community may feel exploited or undervalued, leading to potential conflicts and disagreements. These tensions can sometimes escalate into mismanagement, vandalism, or sabotage. In contrast, when the initiative is community-led, there is often a sense of shared ownership, where everyone feels they deserve a voice. However, achieving consensus within such a structure is frequently challenging. Additionally, a significant issue is the lack of robust business-to-business and customer-to-business linkages, as well as inadequate positioning within the broader tourism value chain, which hampers the full potential of the sector.

The dynamics described can be critically examined through the lens of sustainability theory which emphasises the interplay between social equity, economic viability and governance. When external funding partners are introduced without equitable collaboration, communities may perceive the initiative as exploitative or disempowering. This undermines social sustainability, as feelings of marginalisation can lead to conflict, mismanagement or even deliberate sabotage. From an economic sustainability perspective, the lack of strong business-to-business and customer linkages, along with poor integration into wider tourism value chain, limits opportunities for value addition and long-term financial resilience. Ultimately, sustainability in tourism requires not only environmental and cultural consideration but also a deliberate effort to create governance frameworks and market systems that support local agency and economic integration.

5.3.4 Benefits Sharing

Proceeds from CBT are shared between the community, RDC, and CAMPFIRE association using the ratio of 50%, 46% and 4 % respectively in cases where the CBT

is affiliated with the CAMPFIRE Association. This sharing ratio, however, differs for cultural-based CBTs that are not affiliated to the CAMPFIRE association, or in cases where the CBT is run by a private operator. During the inception of the CAMPFIRE projects dividends were shared between each household. However, this did not work for communities with a large number of households. As a result, some districts have opted for sharing the proceeds at the ward level. Community members have managed to establish several development projects using funds from tourism. The RDC indicated that several development projects have been completed, such as building clinics, schools, roads, boreholes, shops and payment of school fees. The elected representatives collaborate with other community members to determine how the revenue should be allocated. Each ward is assigned a share of the funds and is responsible for deciding how to use it. Additionally, communities have invested in various income-generating initiatives within their respective wards to enhance local development and financial sustainability. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and accountability within the community.

In certain districts, the benefit-sharing system through the RDC was ineffective, with the communities expressing dissatisfaction over not receiving any tangible benefits. In response, some communities attempted to establish direct payment systems, where operators would deposit funds directly into community accounts. However, in some cases, there was a lack of transparency and feedback to the broader community, with a significant portion of the proceeds being consumed by RDC administration and management costs, leaving little for community development. While successful systems in some areas have led to visible community improvements, there is no evidence of reinvestment into the tourism sector. Interestingly, key informants did not report any reinvestment or further tourism development within the districts, suggesting a gap in the expected benefits of tourism-driven growth.

From a sustainability theory perspective, the benefits sharing model reflects social and economic sustainability especially where proceeds from CBT are re-invested in community development projects. The emphasis on local decision-making and ward level allocations fosters community ownership and long-term resilience. However, the lack of reinvestment into the tourism sector, undermines economic sustainability, as it may hinder growth and improvement of CBT ventures over time. From a decolonisation lens, the community-led planning and control over fund allocation in

some districts represent a shift away from top-down, externally controlled development. However, the dominant role of the RDC especially where transparency is lacking, can reinforce centralised control and reproduce colonial-era power imbalances, reducing community autonomy. The varied success across districts also highlights the need for stronger governance, accountability, and local capacity-building to fully realise both the transformative and liberatory potential of CBT in decolonising tourism and promoting equitable, sustainable development.

5.4.0 Hindrances to successful CBT

During the interviews with key informants, several hindrances and challenges to the successful implementation and sustainability of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) were highlighted. These challenges included issues such as human capacity, limited financial support, weak governance structures, and insufficient marketing and promotion of CBT initiatives.

5.4.1 Capacity (human capital)

The RDCs indicated that capacity building at the community level was lacking. Community members need to be well-capacitated so that they can participate in the management of CBTEs. RDCs admitted that even at the district level they cannot run the CBTE and as a result they employ safari operators to run the projects. Community members select committee members who are involved in the passive management of CBTEs. These committee members are not involved in the day-to-day running of the enterprises. The major role is working with the community and making decisions on how they can use the proceeds allocated to their community. The RDCs are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the project, while private safari operators are responsible for the day-to-day running of the enterprises. Safari operators are responsible for marketing and creating tourism packages and activities to satisfy the market needs. RDC 1 explained why they engage private operators. RDC 1 pointed out that it is difficult for the community members and the RDC to manage wildlife based CBTEs because most of the tourism activities such as game viewing and hunting attract the international market and only safari operators have the capacity to reach out to the international market. In the same vein, RDC 2 highlighted that:

The marketing to the international market is primarily handled by the safari operators. Our biggest challenge in Southern Africa is the difficulty black

professionals face in successfully managing these establishments. It feels like a closed market, where white operators dominate with their own networks and clients. We have attempted to involve black professional hunters in marketing efforts, but in the end, they often find themselves overshadowed by their white counterparts.

The response from RDC 2 indicates dominance of white-owned safari operators in the management and marketing of wildlife-based Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) in Southern Africa. The above statement highlights persistence of racialised perceptions of expertise, and inequalities that are a product of the colonial-era power dynamics that continue to privilege white operators who have greater access to wealth, international networks and social capital. The attempt to involve black professional hunters in marketing efforts highlights the efforts made to diversify and promote inclusivity within the industry. However, the fact that these efforts often fall short, with black professionals being overshadowed by their white counterparts, suggests deep-rooted barriers to equality in the tourism sector. These barriers could be related to historical inequalities, racial discrimination, and unequal access to resources and networks, which continue to limit the opportunities available to black professionals.

5.4.2 Financial challenges

Lecturers, ZIMPARKS, the RDC, CAMPFIRE Association and ZTA all agree that the lack of funding was another challenge that had crippled CBTEs. ZTA further highlighted that following the economic meltdown of Zimbabwe in the 2000s most CBTEs were negatively affected and have not been revived. Furthermore, Lecturer 1 highlighted that the current economic meltdown in Zimbabwe has limited the propensity to spend on leisure activities for most citizens. People no longer have a leisure travelling culture, and as a result, CBTEs rely more on international tourists.

Analysed through the lens of the sustainability theory, the challenge of inadequate funding reflects failure to support the economic pillar of sustainable development, which emphasises the need for financial viability and resilience of tourism enterprises. The collapse and stagnation of CBTEs due to prolonged economic crises highlights how macro-economic instability can undermine local tourism initiatives making it difficult for them to contribute to long-term community development, job creation and poverty reduction. From a decolonisation perspective, the overreliance on

international tourists reinforces colonial patterns of dependency and marginalisation. This dynamic reflects how local tourism systems are still shaped by external forces and global tourism trends rather than being rooted in indigenous knowledge systems, local cultural values, and community-driven priorities.

5.4.3 Devolution of power

Devolution of power from RDCs to the community was also identified as one of the challenges affecting the participation and involvement of local communities in CBT. Devolution of power was identified by key informants as one of the most important steps to be taken to ensure the success of CBTEs. CAMPFIRE Association highlighted that, as the lowest arm of the government, the RDC is supposed to be in the management of CBTEs. Another respondent expressed their lack of confidence in the management of CBTEs by the RDCs indicating that there have been reports of serious problems of accountability in terms of resource management. They further indicated that more power has been vested in the local authority than the traditional leadership and community members. Some key informants believe there is a need for devolution from RDCs to local-level communities so that communities can take ownership of the enterprises to reap more benefits. However, some respondents felt that the RDCs should be actively involved and continue running the enterprises since they have the human capital that manages proceeds from tourism as well as get into lease agreements and negotiate with private operators.

A respondent from ZIMPARKS advocating for devolution articulated that:

The major challenge is devolution of power to the local level. That is what is needed. The challenge we are facing is that the elite people get a large share, and there is an issue of transparency. Some community members feel that they are being short-changed: as a result, they resort to poaching and other illegal activities. There is also a need to help communities to establish community-based organisations or community trust as well as being tracked and capacitated to manage these CBTEs.

This indicates a situation of power imbalances and elite capture, with the elites getting a large share of benefits while local communities are excluded. This also indicates a colonial legacy of centralised control and economic exploitation which persist even in post-colonial contexts. The need for devolution of power also aligns with decolonial

principles which advocate for community autonomy and ownership. The above statement also highlights how perceived social injustice (inequitable benefit-sharing) can lead to unsustainable behaviours like poaching.

In the same vein, one lecturer expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of CBTs. The lecturer also highlighted the lack of diversity in CBT planning. Currently, CBTEs are being established in rural areas and no CBTE establishments are in urban areas. He stated:

From my perspective, I would say when you look at CBT, especially from the operational perspective, we can say it is at the bottom, because we have not been able to devolve operation down to the local community. If we compare our CBT with South Africa, you can see the gap. The Makuleke community in South Africa own a cultural CBTE and they benefit directly from it. Looking at that perspective we would say it is functional. Then you look at Zimbabwe, there is little income flowing to the community members. An example of such is the Gairezi ecotourism project, they are receiving 1 bag of fertilizer and 10kg mealie meal yearly. At the moment the only functional CBTs are in the rural areas. We should have township tourism, but there is nothing like that happening.

In this statement the respondent gives a candid critique of CBT in Zimbabwe and contrasts Zimbabwe's CBT and South Africa which seem to be operational. The core concern that operations have not been devolved to the local community reflects a colonial legacy of centralised control despite. Despite CBT's rhetoric of community empowerment, control remains with external stakeholders or elites denying communities agency and autonomy. The respondent also points to lack of economic sustainability since the benefits are not sufficient to support livelihoods or community development thereby undermining the long-term viability of CBT initiatives.

5.5.0 The extent to which the current tourism curriculum covers the concept of CBT.

The thrust of this study is also to establish whether the concept of CBT is being adequately covered in tourism degrees curricula. To assess the extent to which the

concept is addressed, the Curriculum Coverage Index (CCI) was calculated, and a content analysis of the tourism degree modules was conducted. In addition, tourism graduates were engaged so that they could contribute their perceptions on the coverage of CBT based on what they had covered during the four years. Emerging trends from the CCI, content analysis and interviews with tourism graduates were then supported and clarified by key informant interviews with lecturers from the five state universities.

5.5.1 CBT Coverage

Table 5.1 Extent of CBT coverage for each university

Name of University	Number of courses with CBT	Standard deviation	Mean	Curriculum Coverage Index (CCI)
Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) BSc Travel and Recreation	3	0.471	1	1.1
Great Zimbabwe University BCom Hospitality, Tourism and Culture	9	1.247	2.33	3.5
Midland State University ₁ BCom Tourism and Hospitality	4	1.166	1.8	1.8
Midlands State University ₂ BCom Sustainable Tourism	16	0.785	3.2	4.2
Manicaland State University BCom Tourism and Hospitality	4	1.166	1.8	1.8
University of Zimbabwe BSc Leisure and Hospitality	2	0.47	1.66	1.3

Results in table 5.1 shows the number of courses in which CBT is discussed at different levels and the CCI. Chinhoyi University of Technology and University of Zimbabwe recorded CCI scores of 1.1 and 1.3 respectively indicating that CBT is slightly covered in one or two modules, with minimum coverage overall. These scores indicated that CBT is marginally addressed with limited emphasis on sustainability

principles, participatory community engagement or alternative models. The minimal integration suggests a conventional, possibly Western-centric curriculum that offers the little space for transformative learning or reimagining of tourism through localised, and community-driven approaches. A similar pattern is observed in Midlands State University and Manicaland State University both with a CCI of 1.8 indicating that the topic is slightly covered in one or two modules but coverage is minimal and not well developed. While the inclusion of CBT signals some awareness of sustainability discourse, the lack of depth and coherence undermines its potential to promote critical thinking, reflexivity or active citizenship among learners- core elements of transformative education. The low scores also suggests that these programs are yet to meaningfully challenge dominant tourism paradigms or integrate indigenous knowledge systems, thus falling short on decolonial aspirations.

In contrast, Great Zimbabwe State University achieved a CCI of 3.5, reflecting that CBT is integrated into a number of courses with moderate to strong detail and relevance. This indicates a shift towards sustainability education that values equity, local participation and socio-cultural preservation. This level of integration provides a more fertile ground for transformative learning by encouraging students to engage with real-world challenges, critique existing models and explore tourism's role in community empowerment and environmental stewardship. Furthermore, it indicates a partial move towards decolonisation but recognising the value of contexts and knowledge. The MSU₂ Sustainable Tourism degree had the highest CCI of 4.2 indicating that CBT is deeply and consistently integrated across the curriculum, with strong emphasis and comprehensive content. The program exemplifies sustainability education in practice as it has potential to foster holistic understanding of tourism's socio-ecological impacts, promotes ethical decision-making and prepares students to be change agents in their communities. The curriculum's emphasis on CBT also demonstrates a strong commitment to transformative learning, encouraging students to reflect critically, question normative assumptions and engage in value-driven practice. Importantly, the comprehensive CBT integration suggests meaningful steps towards decolonising the curriculum by centring community narratives, promoting inclusivity and embracing indigenous knowledge systems.

Chinhoyi University, Midlands State University¹ and University of Zimbabwe had a mean score below 2 indicating that a number of courses have a slight CBT coverage.

Figure 5.6 depicts a word cloud for the Great Zimbabwe University, Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Hospitality, Tourism and Culture. 'Tourism management' and 'hospitality' are the popular words in the module outline. Neither community, sustainable nor ecotourism words are visible within the module outline. Lecturer 1 indicated that CBT was not covered as a stand-alone module, but it was covered within other modules. Despite the fact that CBT is not covered as a dedicated module, the degree programme puts focus on understanding the relevance and importance of the African culture, arts and heritage to the tourism industry. The module outline indicates that the programme also put focus on African heritage and cultural aspects making the programme more context relevant to Zimbabwe tourism.

Midlands State University (MSU)



Figure 5.7 Midlands State University module word cloud

Figure 5.7 shows the word cloud for Midlands State University Bachelor of Commerce Tourism and Hospitality Management Honours Degree. The most common words in the module outline are 'tourism management', 'hospitality', and 'food and beverage management'. The word 'sustainable' is visible within the module outline, while the

word 'community' does not appear in the module outline. Lecturer 2 confirmed that CBT was not covered as a stand-alone module but infused within other modules such as sustainable tourism development, tourism geography in Zimbabwe, and regional tourism in Africa. He further indicated that the university had started a new degree programme in sustainable tourism management where most aspects of sustainable tourism were to be covered in-depth. This degree programme also has a module on CBT. There was not any quantitative data collected about this degree programme as it was still at its inception with no final-year students. Lecturer 2 also indicated that CBT was also covered in detail at the master's degree level. Lecturer 2 also stated that:

We have introduced another degree program in sustainable tourism with the intension to adequately address the issues of sustainable tourism. In this program concepts such as ecotourism, CBT, rural and urban development, parks and wildlife management and culture and heritage are comprehensively covered in this program.

The Sustainable Tourism degree program did not have any final-year students at the time of the study, as it was still in its early stages of development. Consequently, no data was collected from students enrolled in the program. However, the program was included in the analysis due to the statement from Lecturer 2, who confirmed that the institution had recently introduced this degree with a strong focus on sustainable tourism. According to Lecturer 2, the program was designed to provide in-depth coverage of sustainable tourism principles, with an emphasis on integrating environmental, social, and economic sustainability into tourism practices.

Despite the lack of student data, the program's inclusion in the analysis was essential to understand the evolving landscape of tourism education and its potential contribution to the broader tourism sector, particularly in terms of preparing graduates with the knowledge and skills required for managing sustainable tourism initiatives.

Manicaland State University



Figure 5.9 Manicaland State University word cloud

Figure 5.9 shows the word cloud for Manicaland State University, Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management degree. The common words in the module outline are 'tourism management' and 'business'. The word 'sustainable' is present in the module outline while the word 'community' is absent within the literature. Lecturer 3 confirmed that CBT is not covered as a stand-alone module but is infused within other modules. He further explained why there was no degree in CBT or a stand-alone module in CBT:

Universities look at the market. Currently in Zimbabwe CBT is still at the development stage, as a result, if there is a degree programme in CBT there will be no organisations to absorb the graduates. As a result, universities try to offer degree programmes that are marketable to the industry. We are trying to

come up with short modules which students may take, and CBT is one of those short modules being considered.

The statement highlights the challenges faced by universities in Zimbabwe when it comes to developing degree programs in Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The key issue is that CBT is still in the developmental stage in the country, meaning there are limited organisations and enterprises within the industry that can absorb graduates with a specialised degree in CBT. As a result, universities are cautious about launching full degree programs in CBT, as they risk producing graduates who may struggle to find relevant employment opportunities. In response to this, universities are opting for more flexible and market-responsive approaches, such as offering short modules instead of full degree programs. By incorporating CBT as one of these short modules, universities aim to introduce students to the concept without overcommitting to a full-fledged degree that may not align with the current state of the industry.

While the long-term potential for CBT in Zimbabwe remains promising, the immediate focus is on offering programs that align with the needs of the industry and the current market demand. The inclusion of CBT in short modules could also serve as a stepping stone for future, more specialised programs once the sector matures and begins to generate more opportunities for graduates. It underscores the importance of adaptability in higher education, particularly in sectors like tourism, where market conditions and industry development can significantly influence program offerings.

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broader tourism modules, it is not yet given specialised attention within the undergraduate curriculum at UZ.

She also highlighted that:

CBT is so wide. At the undergraduate level, it is not a stand-alone module, but it is within other modules such as environmental management. It's not that CBT is not covered in undergraduate modules, but it is not visible, as a stand-alone module. The reason why it is covered at the master's level it is because at this level we will be identifying each industry, and each industry has its module. For example, CBT is a stand-alone module and covers the whole section alone and policy issues. At the undergraduate level, we have a generic approach while at the master's level, we are industry specific."

Further, Lecturer 4 revealed that, although there is no stand-alone CBT module, the university is working on a CBT project. As part of community service, the tourism department is working with a community in Makonde which they are helping to establish a Korekore cultural village. The department is offering training and capacity building to the community. In addition to training and capacity, the department is working on establishing a website for the Korekore village.

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The module analysis of the tourism and hospitality degrees revealed that the concept of CBT was infused in other modules and not as a separate module. Tourism students were asked if they felt that the concept of CBT was adequately covered at the undergraduate level.

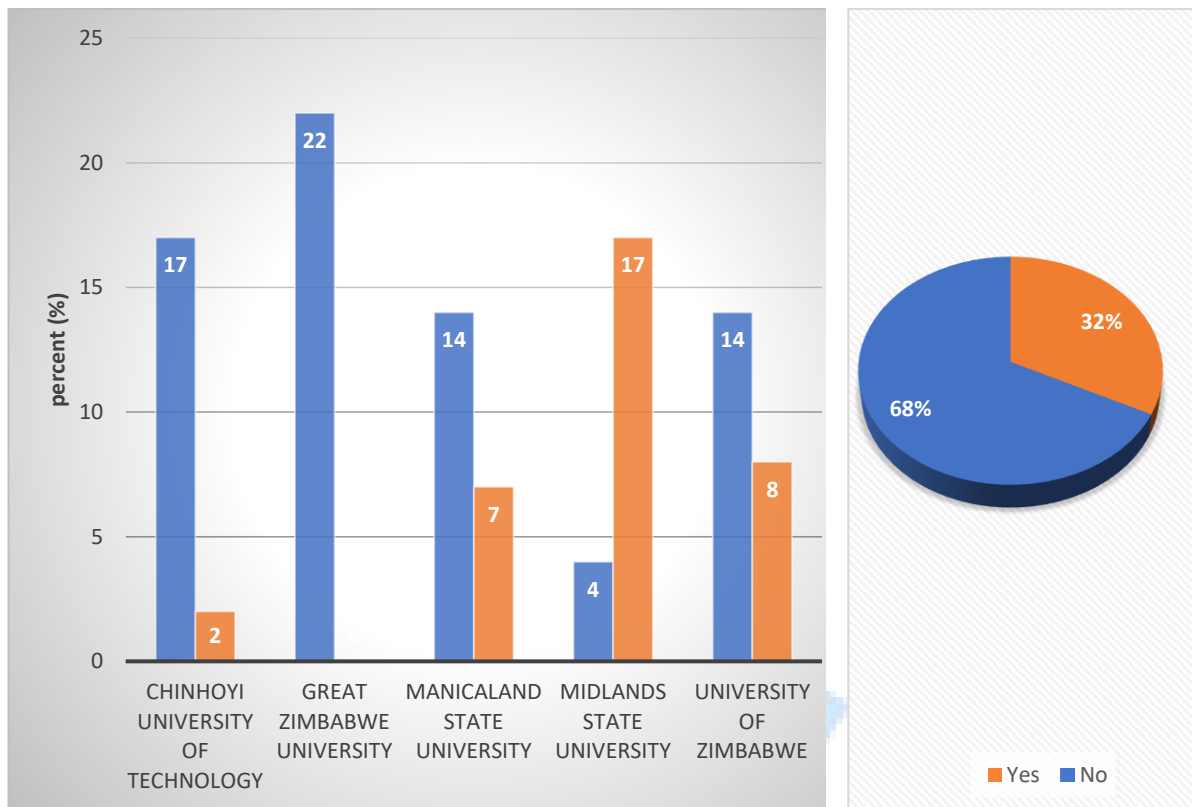


Figure 5.12 Perception of students on CBT coverage.

Figure 5.12 shows the perception of the tourism graduates on the coverage of CBT. Asked about their perception of CBT coverage in the tourism curriculum, 68% of the tourism graduates from the five state universities indicated that CBT was not being adequately covered in the tourism curriculum. Midlands State University had the highest percentage of graduates who felt that the concept of CBT was adequately covered. Surprisingly, all the students engaged from Great Zimbabwe University felt that the degree programme did not adequately cover the concept of CBT.

5.8.3 Perception of preparedness to manage CBT

Tourism graduates were also asked if the tourism curriculum prepares students to manage CBTE. Tourism graduates were asked whether they felt prepared to manage CBTEs.

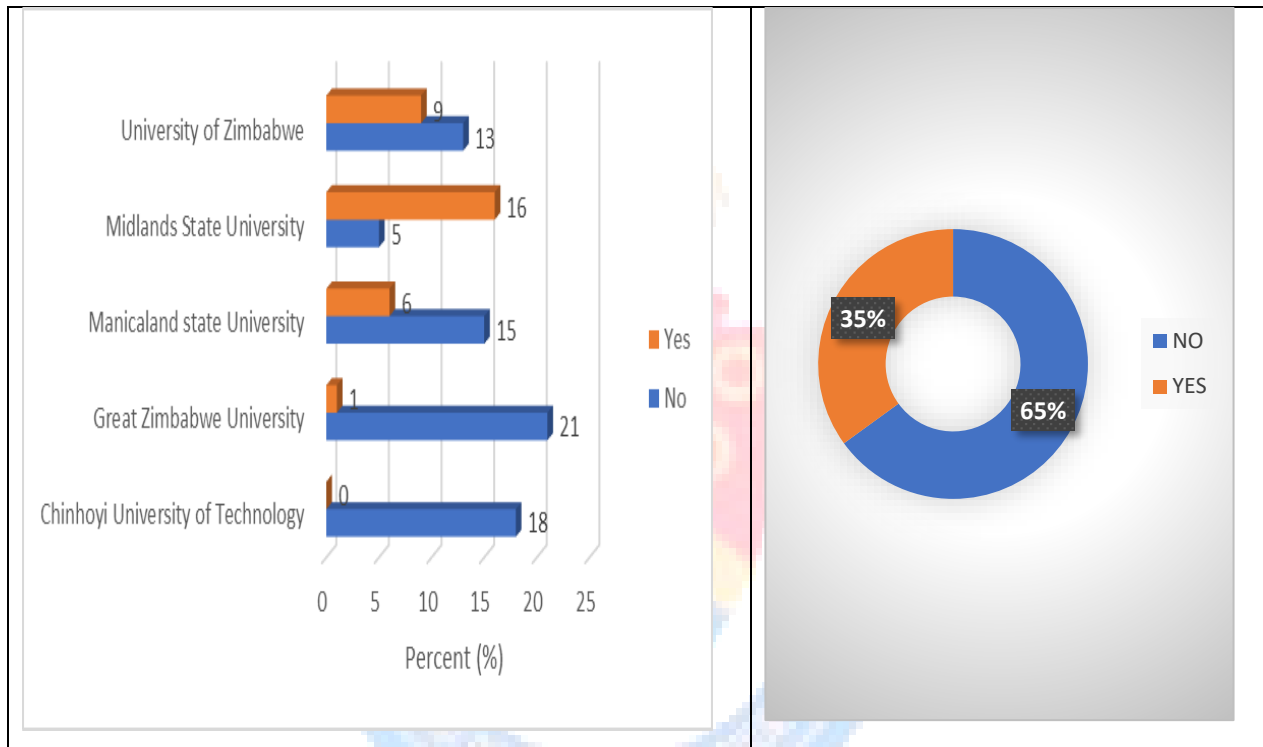


Figure 5.13 Perception on preparedness to manage CBT.

Figure 5.13 shows the distribution of the perception of the degree programme's ability to prepare students to manage CBTs. A considerable proportion of students (65%) indicated that the current tourism curriculum does not adequately prepare students to manage CBTEs. This suggests a lack of transformative learning opportunities within the tourism curriculum. The curriculum may not adequately foster reflective thinking or provide real-world experiences that enables learners to understand the complexities and socio-cultural dimensions of CBTEs. From a sustainability perspective, the students' perception points to a curriculum that prioritise economic aspects of tourism over environmental and social sustainability. Effective management of CBTEs requires strong sustainability approach and the reported inadequacy suggest that the programme might lack integration of sustainability principles.

Representatives from ZTA and ZIMPARKS were probed on their perception of whether the tourism degree adequately prepares the student to manage CBTEs since they are some of the organisations that absorb tourism graduates. They pointed out that the students are equipped theoretically to some extent, but not practically. ZTA alluded that universities are producing raw graduates who have never had a chance to engage with communities and have had limited exposure to expos and even tourism debates. He further highlighted that the students lack practical experience and exposure after they graduate despite being on attachment for one year. ZIMPARKS pointed out that the major challenge that is limiting students from being attached to these CBTEs is that some of the CBTEs are not economically sound and cannot accommodate these learners.

The responses from ZTA and ZIMPARKS highlight a significant theory-practice gap in tourism education, particularly regarding the management of CBTEs. While students are said to possess some theoretical grounding, the lack of practical experience undermines their readiness for real-world challenges. This aligns with transformative learning which emphasise experiential learning and critical engagement which are essential for deep learning and personal growth. The comment about “raw graduates” underscores a missed opportunity for students to reflect, apply, and adapt knowledge through community interaction and industry engagement. From a sustainability perspective, the absence of exposure to CBTEs means that students are not developing adequate competencies needed to support socially and ecologically responsible tourism models. The economic instability of some CBTEs, as noted by ZIMPARKS further reflects structural weaknesses in linkage between academia and community tourism initiatives, potentially limiting sustainable human capacity development in the sector.

5.6 Tourism and Hospitality degree content

Tourism and Hospitality programs are often characterised as overly packed due to their attempt to cover a wide range of skills and knowledge in a relatively short time frame (Kumar, 2020). This condensed curriculum aimed at equipping students with diverse competencies often leads to challenges in thoroughly mastering each skill, potentially resulting in a superficial understanding rather than in-depth expertise. Graduates and lecturers were asked whether they also felt that the tourism degree

was too packed. About 86% of graduates believe the tourism degree program is overly packed which limits students' ability to develop a well-rounded understanding of key concepts by the end of the program. This suggests that the curriculum may focus too much on breadth rather than depth leaving little room for specialised knowledge or practical skills development.

Insights from lecturers were sought to get a further understanding of the emerging trends. Lecturers 1 and 5 also supported the statement that tourism and hospitality degrees are too packed. Lecturer 1 pointed out that universities are making an effort to try and come up with new degree programmes that ensure that students specialise in their areas of interest. The University of Zimbabwe has 4 new degree programmes in the department focusing on leisure and hospitality, culinary arts, economic tourism development, and tourism marketing. Lecturer 5 also indicated that Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) also has degrees focusing on culinary arts, tourism and hospitality, leisure and recreation and events management. Furthermore, CUT has a hotel where students do their practical learning to ensure that they have both theoretical and practical knowledge. A respondent from ZTA also commented on the programmes offered by UZ and CUT:

Universities are increasingly specialising in fields like culinary arts, with institutions such as Chinhoyi University and the University of Zimbabwe leading the way. However, there is a need for curriculum revisions to improve relevance and effectiveness. Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) deserves commendation for establishing its own hotel, which offers practical training for culinary arts students. Additionally, tourism and hospitality management programmes should integrate community-based tourism (CBT) projects into their curriculum, allowing students to engage in hands-on learning throughout their studies, rather than through a limited year-long programme. This approach would enhance both theoretical understanding and practical experience in the tourism sector.

Lecturer 3 concurred that the tourism and hospitality degrees are too packed and as a result, graduates fail to meet the demands of the industry. The lecturer indicated that:

I agree and that's true. The degree is too packed such that at the end of the programme one is not well equipped and has to go for other professional

diplomas. If you take a university tourism graduate, and a polytechnic student who has done professional cookery, a polytechnic graduate is better. Our focus as universities is more theoretical, whilst when you are looking at the demands of the tourism industry, we need more practical students. The major issue is we are producing theoretical graduates, with no specialisation who are not competitive enough.

Both respondents from ZTA and ZIMPARKS agreed that tourism and hospitality graduates are well-equipped theoretically and lack practical skills. Lecturer 2 and Lecturer 4 were of the view that the tourism and hospitality degrees are not too packed but rather give room for students to choose an area they would want to specialise in later on. Lecturer 2 pointed out that:

The tourism and hospitality degree has a wide fraternity, we have the tourism angle, the hospitality angle, and upon doing this module, it is not an operational module, it is now a management level module. We have polytechnic colleges, that are taking students for professional cookery, bakery, travel and tourism, and many other operational modules. A person can decide to go the chef route. So, the current tourism and hospitality students are failing to understand these basics. When we reach the final year, our curriculum is structured in a way with modules enough to help a student decide which angle or route one is going to take. We have events management, aviation, tourism and national parks, hospitality, culinary, marketing and many other specialities one can choose from. It is well-packed, and one may choose any angle which they want. If one wants to go and take an operational route, then it becomes a problem. One cannot start cooking with this degree level.

Lecture 4 emphasised that university degrees are designed to equip students with a strong foundation in the managerial aspects of the industry. Upon completing these degrees, students are often encouraged to pursue post-graduate diplomas in specialised areas of interest. Further he explained that the degree programs are designed primarily at management level rather than focusing on operational and technical skills which are typically the domain of polytechnic colleges. This distinction raises important considerations regarding curriculum orientation and professional preparedness. The current university-level tourism and hospitality degree tends to

prioritise theoretical and managerial knowledge aimed at producing graduates capable of critical decision-making, and strategic planning. Comments from ZTA, Lecturers 2, 3 and 4 indicates that there seems to be a misalignment between student expectations and program outcomes particularly among those entering the program with limited foundational knowledge of industry basics or operational practices. This gap becomes apparent in later years, as students are expected to specialise or choose a career path without having fully grasped the practical distinctions between various industry roles.

Moreover, the observation that "one cannot start cooking with this degree level" underscores a fundamental disconnect between vocational and academic pathways. It signals a need for better integration of applied and theoretical learning, perhaps through partnerships with polytechnics or industry placements, to ensure that students acquire a holistic and experiential understanding of tourism and hospitality. Without this, students may graduate with strong managerial knowledge but insufficient appreciation of the technical and service-level competencies that underpin successful industry practice. The responses also highlight a critical concern of misalignment between academic training and industry needs. This reflects the limitation of an overly theoretical and densely packed university curriculum that leaves little room for skills specialisation or practical application.

From a sustainability and decolonisation perspective, this gap may also limit student's ability to engage with context-specific, grounded knowledge such as local culinary traditions or indigenous hospitality practices which are often acquired through practical immersion. It is crucial to rethink of the curriculum to include blended learning pathways that combine vocational and academic strengths to foster more inclusive and transformative education allowing students to move fluidly between operational knowhow and strategic leadership and better serve diverse community and industry needs.

5.7.0 Equipping students to manage CBT

Equipping students to effectively manage Community-Based Tourism (CBT) involves more than delivering theoretical knowledge it requires a holistic, interdisciplinary, and practice-oriented approach. Students must gain a deep understanding of the social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions that influence the success of CBT initiatives. The following sections explore the key factors that hinder or promote the

performance of CBTs, as well as the ways participants believe they can be better prepared to manage CBTEs. This includes insights into appropriate pedagogical approaches, curriculum design, and the practical experiences needed to strengthen their capacity for community-based tourism management.

5.7.1 Factors that hinder or promote performance of CBT

To assess how learners can be better equipped to manage CBT, respondents were asked a few questions related to key factors identified in literature as barriers to effective management and preparedness of graduates. These factors include knowledge and expertise, product diversity and innovation, tourism education and marketing. Tourism graduates were asked whether they believed these factors influenced the management and overall performance of CBT. Their responses are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Factors that hinder or promote performance of CBT

Factor	YES (%)	NO (%)
Lack of knowledge and expertise affects CBT management and performance.	61	39
Lack of tourism product diversity affects CBT performance.	75	25
Tourism education can contribute to the success or failure of CBTEs.	65	35
Marketing can contribute to the performance of CBTEs.	71	29
Field visits to CBTE enterprises can assist in identifying problems and solutions affecting CBTEs.	71	29

About 61% of the respondents believe that the lack of knowledge and expertise is affecting CBT performance while 65% of the respondents agree that tourism education can contribute to the success or failure of CBTs. About 71% of the respondents believe that marketing affects the performance of CBT. The findings reveal critical insights into perceived challenges and opportunities for the performance of CBT particularly in education and capacity development. With 61% of respondents identifying a lack of knowledge and expertise as a key barrier to CBT success, and 65% acknowledging the role of tourism education in shaping the outcomes of CBT initiatives, there is a

clear consensus on the foundational role of education in sustainable community tourism development. From a sustainability education perspective, these results highlight the urgent need to embed practical, locally relevant, and skills-oriented content within the tourism curricula. Knowledge and expertise in areas such as community engagement, environmental stewardship, cultural sensitivity, and small-scale enterprise development are essential for equipping students and practitioners with the tools to support resilient and inclusive CBT models.

In terms of transformative learning, the data point to an opportunity for tourism education to go beyond content delivery and promote deep, reflective and participatory learning processes. By engaging learners in critical inquiry about the social, environmental and cultural dimensions of tourism, education can inspire a shift in worldview from passive consumption to active co-creation and community empowerment. This form of learning encourages students to question dominant tourism narratives and become change agents who support grassroots development, equity and justice within the tourism.

The findings also carry significant implications for decolonising tourism education, the recognition that knowledge, skills and innovation are central to CBT success suggests a need to recentre indigenous knowledge systems, indigenous perspectives and community voices within the curriculum. Historically, tourism education has been rooted in Eurocentric and corporate-driven models that often marginalise rural and community-based approaches. Reimagining the curriculum to include locally generated content, case studies of successful CBTs in African contexts, and collaborative learning with communities can help dismantle epistemic hierarchies and promote contextualised, empowering forms of knowledge.

Emerging trends from quantitative data were also supported by qualitative data from key informants. Key informant interviews also highlighted that the lack of knowledge and expertise at the community level was affecting communities in the management of CBT. As a result, there is the engagement of private operators in the day-to-day running of the business. Key informants from the RDCs noted that they are unable to access the international market for promoting their tourism products; as a result, they rely on ZTA marketing and private operators. CAMPFIRE respondents highlighted that some individuals within the communities are engaging in CBT establishing cultural

homes where they show visitors their ways of life. However, some of these operators lack the necessary expertise in customer handling and satisfaction.

CAMPFIRE also mentioned that:

Some of the enterprises that have been operating have failed, most probably because there were not enough experts to sustain the operations. Remember when community members are engaged, we can capacity-build a manager for a week but remember there is more to that. Communities just learn the basics. As a result, RDCs and communities opt for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

The above statement highlights a critical issue in the sustainability of CBTEs of the lack of deep, sustained capacity-building and expertise. While short-term training may equip community members with basic skills, it often falls short of fostering the comprehensive knowledge and strategic thinking needed to effectively sustain tourism operations in the long term. This gap reflects a limitation in transformative learning, where education fails to move beyond surface training towards deep, reflective and empowering learning experiences that enable local ownership and innovation. The turn to Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) signals both a pragmatic response and a potential compromise. While PPPs can bring technical expertise, funding, and market access, they may also limit community autonomy if not managed equitably. This raises important decolonisation concerns, namely, the risk of reinforcing power imbalances where external actors dominate decision-making, rather than empowering communities as knowledge holders and leaders of their own development.

The respondent from ZIMPARKS also commented on the need for universities to take part in the training and capacity building of locals.

If universities are to be involved in training of communities, they should come up with modules that are tailor-made to a specific community. They should train and remove the barriers in terms of the community needs. They must be tailor-made to a specific community depending on the tourism products they have and level they can understand so that they can look for funding they can get to capacitate communities.

The above quote emphasises the need for developing a heritage-based based curriculum that is tailor-made to specific communities. It calls for tailormade modules

that align with each community's unique tourism assets, capacity levels and learning needs. Such an approach reflects the principles of both sustainability education and transformative learning which advocates for learner centred, locally relevant and action-oriented knowledge that empowers communities to take ownership of their development. By understanding the local customs, resources and tourism products universities can create programmes that are more relevant and effective.

About 75% of the graduates agree that the lack of tourism product diversity is affecting the performance of CBT. Respondents from ZTA and the RDCs also indicated that the available tourist attractions are not very attractive to the domestic market but rather are attractive to the international market. The respondents also alluded that there is a need for tourism development and innovation for successful CBT. ZTA also added that heritage and local culture (music, dance, arts, traditions and customs, cuisine) are becoming more and more attractive to international and local markets and therefore there is a need for promoting, marketing and packaging the culture and heritage products. ZTA also felt that universities have a role to play in ensuring tourism development and innovation. ZTA stated that:

Universities have a role to equip students with the necessary skills and to encourage innovation. As ZTA we have recently run a tourism innovation challenge, a competition that was meant for youths 30 years and below. In this competition, participants were supposed to develop project proposals, which we then evaluated. In 2022 it started at the provincial level and then to the national level. There was one that was done that was community-based. However, looking at all the proposals, there was an inclination to ICT and marketing, and some were developmental in nature. The idea is the participants should develop prototypes that should contribute to development and empowerment. Universities have to try to nurture students so that they come up with pragmatic product ideas, that address the needs of the industry, and then contribute to job creation.

The statement above highlights the crucial role of universities in fostering innovation, practical skills and industry aligned thinking among tourism students. The focus on ICT and marketing in the proposals reflects a growing awareness among students of the digital and promotional aspects of tourism, which are vital for competitiveness.

However, the emphasis on developing prototypes also points to a shift towards transformative learning, encouraging students to move from theoretical knowledge to applied, problem solving approaches that can generate real-world impact. The call for universities to nurture pragmatic, locally relevant product ideas suggest a move from imported or generic tourism models. Instead, it promotes context sensitive innovation that responds directly to the needs of local communities and realities of domestic tourism industry empowering students as agents of change within their own cultural and socio-economic landscapes.

Experiential learning

5.7.2 Exposure to CBT

When questioned about their practical exposure to Community-Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs), a significant proportion of respondents (80%) indicated that they had never visited a CBTE, while only 20% reported having had such an experience. This discrepancy suggests that the majority of students' knowledge of CBTEs is largely theoretical, derived from academic study rather than first-hand engagement with the product. This lack of direct experience may have implications for the depth and quality of their understanding of CBT. Without first-hand exposure, students may form impressions of CBTEs based solely on textbook knowledge, case studies, or classroom discussions, which might not fully capture the complexities and contextual realities of operating within a community-based tourism setting. The lack of active inquiry or experiential research suggest that learners may not be skills, and attitudes for to cultivate disorienting dilemma necessary of transformative learning. While theoretical knowledge is valuable, practical experience can significantly enhance students' comprehension by providing insight into the nuances of CBTE dynamics, including the challenges, operational intricacies, and community interactions that underpin such enterprises. This limitation in experiential learning may also affect the students' confidence and self-assessed expertise in CBT. Without grounding in real-world contexts, their capacity to support CBTEs meaningfully is limited.

The responses in the knowledge and understanding of CBT by tourism graduates have reflected that student believe that they have the adequate knowledge and understanding of CBT. Although some may feel they have a robust grasp of the subject, the absence of practical experience could lead to an overestimation of their

knowledge depth, resulting in a potentially superficial understanding. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating experiential learning opportunities, such as field visits, internships, or direct engagement with CBTEs, within tourism education programs. While awareness of CBTs is a good starting point, sustainability education requires more than just cognitive knowledge, it demands practical engagement and value-based orientation towards social and environmental responsibility. Such initiatives would provide students with a more comprehensive and authentic perspective on CBT, better preparing them to contribute meaningfully to the field upon graduation. Integrating these practical experiences can bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and applied knowledge, fostering a well-rounded, critical, and contextually informed approach to CBT management.

5.7.3 Field visits to CBTE through the University

To be able to address problems in the tourism industry, institutions must include practical learning experiences in their curriculum. Students and lecturers were asked whether they had any field visits or used case studies as teaching methods. About 71% of the students (Table 5) agreed that field visits to CBTE enterprises can help to identify challenges affecting CBTEs. University lecturers also mentioned the importance of field visits by tourism students and lecturers. All the lecturers from the five state universities indicated that besides attachments, students should also go for field visits, however, their greatest challenge is the lack of finance to fund these field visits. Resultantly, these field visits are not compulsory but for those who can afford to pay for the trips. The researcher detected that these field visits were mainly for the students' recreational purposes and familiarisation with the tourism products. These field trips were neither meant to cover aspects of a specific module nor examine the lessons learnt from a particular field trip. However, non-compulsory field visits for tourism students raise critical concerns about class inequalities and access to experiential learning opportunities. Financial barriers prevent many students from fully participating in experiential learning, leading to disparities in skills development, social capital and career prospects.

The current optional nature of field visits, accessible mainly to those who can afford reproduces colonial legacies of exclusion and privilege. These field visits have potential to instil sustainable tourism values, particularly if students engage with real

world community challenges and co-develop solutions. However, without integration into modules and compulsory visits, the opportunity to foster long-term thinking, community engagement and environmental responsibility is lost. This undermines efforts to promote socially and ecologically sustainable tourism education. For learning to be transformative, students must critically reflect on their experiences and challenge their assumptions. In this case, field visits seem recreational and disconnected from academic inquiry, limiting opportunities for deep reflection, skill acquisition, and value formation. Moreover, economic barriers hinder inclusive participation, preventing the kind of personal and collective transformation needed to develop socially conscious tourism professionals. The current approach to field visits limits their transformative, sustainable and decolonising potential. There is a need for structural reform to embed field-based experiential learning in a way that is inclusive, critical and contextually grounded.

5.7.4 Incorporation of CBT in the curriculum

Respondents were asked to provide insights on how CBT could be incorporated into the curriculum. Figure 23 illustrates perspectives of tourism graduates on approaches for incorporating CBT into tourism education.

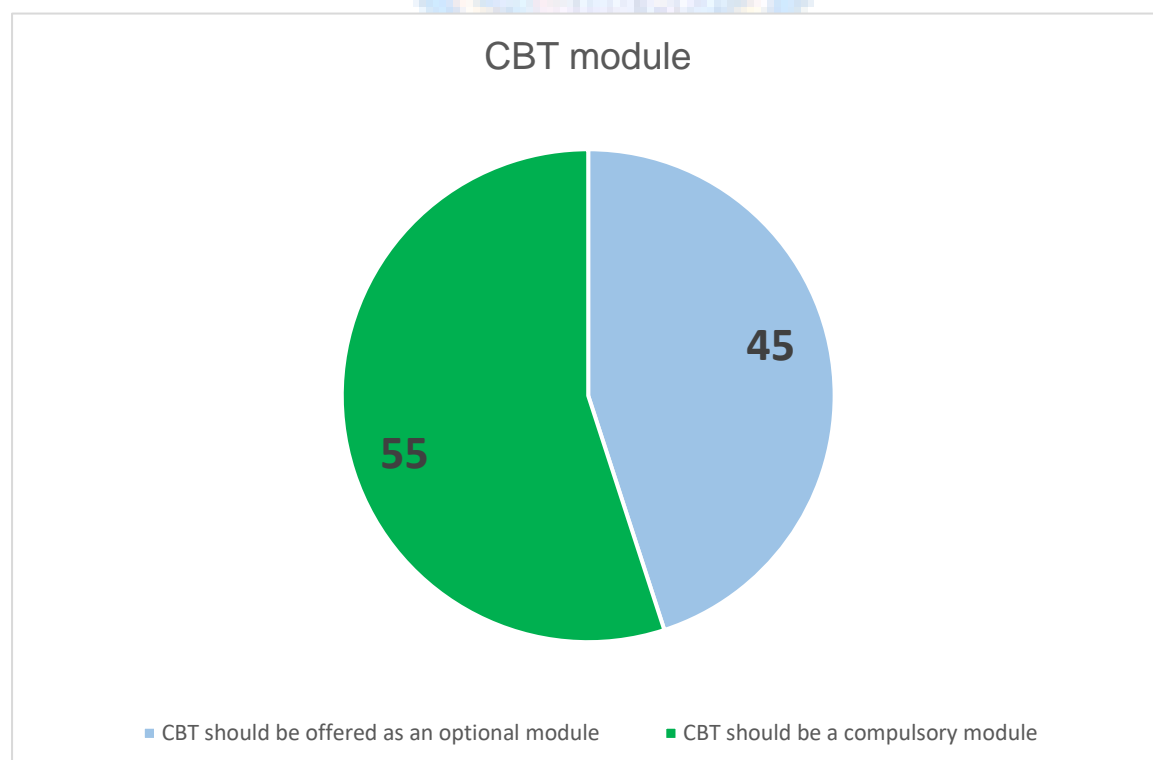


Figure 5.14 CBT module incorporation.

About 45% of the graduates agree that if CBT is offered as an optional module this can improve the management of CBT while 55% agree that it should be offered as a compulsory module. The preference for making it compulsory points to a growing awareness of CBTs roles in sustainable tourism development and the need to equip students with foundational knowledge in this area. From a transformative learning perspective, making CBT a compulsory module could encourage deeper critical reflection and experiential learning, helping students to internalise the social, cultural and ecological dimensions of tourism. In terms of sustainability, integrating CBT into the core curriculum supports a more holistic approach that values community empowerment and long-term resilience. Prioritising CBT challenges dominant Western-centric tourism models by centring local knowledge systems and community-led development, fostering more inclusive and context-relevant education.

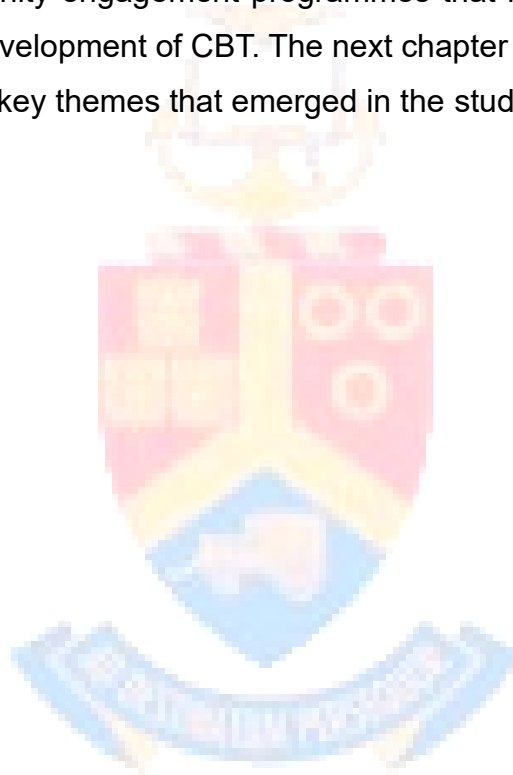
Responses for university lecturers highlighted that several approaches could be adopted such a post-graduate qualification in CBT, incorporating practical hand-on-learning experiences as well as encouraging experiential learning through field visits to CBTE. Lecturer 3 also indicated the need for developing modules focused on sustainable tourism principles. This highlights the need for transformative and applied learning approaches that move beyond theory. These methods align with sustainability goals by fostering direct engagement with communities and real-world tourism challenges.

Respondents from the CAMPFIRE Association and ZIMPARKS highlighted the need for including the local voices through case studies to ensure that students gain genuine understanding of community perspectives and values towards tourism. Insights from CAMPFIRE Association and ZIMPARKS stress the importance of centring local voices through case studies. This supports a decolonial a decolonial approach to tourism education that values indigenous knowledge, promotes cultural understanding and challenges top down models of tourism development.

5.8 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study. The study revealed that CBT has potential, however, there is a need for tourism product diversity to attract both international and domestic markets. This study also brought to light how CBTEs are

being managed, the level of community participation, involvement and the current challenges being encountered in CBT management. CBT is currently dependent on private operator management. CBT is currently not covered as a stand-alone module at the bachelor's degree level but covered at the master's level as a stand-alone module. With the introduction of Education 5.0, universities are encouraged to do research, innovation and community service. Resultantly, the tourism departments are coming up with community engagement programmes that may benefit communities and contribute to the development of CBT. The next chapter will focus on the analysis of results based on the key themes that emerged in the study.



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CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the presentation of the research findings of data collected from tourism students, lecturers, key organisations and the Rural District Councils (RDC). This section concentrates on the interpretation, assimilation, and discussion of findings. To ensure the quality of the presentation, Atlas.ti was used to carry out a content analysis of the findings and literature. This chapter will discuss the findings using the following thematic areas; perceptions of stakeholders on CBT; community-based tourism ownership and management, factors hindering the success of CBTs; CBT development, and community-based tourism education.

6.1 Perceptions of Stakeholders on CBT

This study aimed to explore and critically analyse the perceptions, conceptions, and potential misconceptions held by various stakeholders regarding community-based tourism. This inquiry revealed that although stakeholders understand what CBT is, there are still some misconceptions that tend to impact the implementation of CBT projects. There are several misconceptions surrounding CBT arising from the lack of a clear understanding of the concept. Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2015) noted that there is still a high level of confusion about the concept and practice of CBT. This confusion stems from various factors including differing interpretations among stakeholders, inconsistent application of CBT principles and overlap with other tourism models such as ecotourism, rural tourism and pro-poor tourism. The results are also comparable with the findings of Khartishvili et al. (2020) who also discovered that there is not one single definition of CBT, the definition of community differed from one person to another, people associated CBT with mountainous areas and also confused CBT with rural tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism.

From a theoretical perspective, the lack of a universally accepted definition of CBT has led to divergent understandings. Practically, this conceptual ambiguity leads to inconsistent practices in the field. Fan, Ng, and Bayrak (2023), observed that the term "community" in CBT is used to identify a group within a pre-set or geographical boundary presumed to be homogeneous yet communities can be extremely

heterogeneous. Resultantly, this lack of clear understanding of the concept affects the development, implementation, and success of CBT projects. This underscores the need for clearer guidelines, stronger governance, and a more cohesive understanding of CBT among all stakeholders to ensure that its potential for fostering development and social equity is fully realised.

The findings revealed that CBTs became popular in Zimbabwe during the CAMPFIRE programme. The literature also states that several CBTs were established during the CAMPFIRE project (Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality, 2017). Consequently, distinguishing between CBT, Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) and CAMPFIRE seems to be a challenge in Zimbabwe. CBT is seen to be part of CBNRM and the CAMPFIRE programme. The management approaches used in CBT are the same approaches used in CAMPFIRE. This indicates a gap in the understanding of CBT and leads to implementation challenges. Stakeholders need to have an understanding that CBT projects may be established outside the CAMPFIRE projects and adopt different approaches to CBT in its implementation. Boonratana, (2010), emphasised the importance of a proper operational definition and understanding of CBT because it helps stakeholders and the local communities to comply with the principles, fulfil the objectives of CBT and make decisions in supporting CBT.

Empirical findings reflected that there is a misconception that CBT is meant for communities in rural areas and yet it may be practised in both rural and urban communities. Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2020) noted that in as much as CBT is usually practised in a rural setting, it can also be practised in urban areas. Further, Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2020) observed that CBT in urban areas aids in infrastructure development and alleviates urban poverty. There has been a growth of urban tourism in townships and slums around the world. In Africa, slum tourism is becoming popular in countries such as Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, and Namibia (Booyens and Rogerson, 2019; Frenzel and Blakeman, 2015; Sunusi et al., 2023). Slum tourism has its origins in social justice movements in Brazil and South Africa during the 1990s, when trips to favelas and townships were promoted as a way to engage with communities involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. These tours aimed to raise awareness of the social issues faced by marginalised groups while providing economic benefits to the communities. (Frenzel and Blakeman, 2015). Since then, international

visitors have visited slums, favelas, or townships to observe the lifestyles of people living in these communities. Mazhambe and Mamimine (2020) recognise the grand potential for township CBT in Zimbabwe due to the abundance of township resources such as informal sector activities, arts and crafts, community markets, and monuments of colonial history. Sunusi et al. (2023), however, noted that planning and managing urban CBT is not an easy task since urban areas expand rapidly, face radical changes, and constantly change landscapes. It is therefore crucial that the concept of CBT is well conceptualised and well covered in the tourism education curricula so that future managers are well-trained to manage and troubleshoot any obstacles in both urban and rural CBT.

The confusions surrounding the definitions of CBT, assumptions of community homogeneity. Failure to distinguish between CAMPFIRE and CBT and the misconception that CBT is meant for communities in rural areas reflects a deeply colonial knowledge framework. The failure to recognise the context specific, plural and evolving identities of communities, dominant narratives often impose external meanings on CBT. It is important to decolonise the knowledge system to reclaim local definitions and understandings of community and tourism, valuing indigenous knowledge systems, governance models and cultural values shaping CBT. It is also crucial for students and practitioners to critically interrogate the voices and interests that are represented in CBT discourse and practice least CBT can become just an imaginary concept that does not exist. On the other hand, sustainability is undermined when CBT is inconsistently defined, poorly implemented as this may lead to fragmented goals, misaligned stakeholder expectations and diminished community ownership. The findings suggests that to advance the sustainability theory through CBT it is crucial to have stronger governance frameworks that reflects local realities.

Persistent misconception about CBT indicates a gap in critical reflection and experiential understanding in tourism. Transformative learning requires challenging assumptions, engaging with complexity and learning from diverse perspectives. The results therefore indicate a need to incorporate real-world case studies, and community narratives into the curriculum. There is also a need to foster critical consciousness among learners, encouraging them to question power dynamics and the role of tourism in community development.

6.2 CBT development

The study brought to light that most of the CBTEs in Zimbabwe were not initiated and developed by the community members but rather they were initiated by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the government then handed them over to the community. Respondents perceive this as an ideal arrangement because communities do not have the capacity and capital to initiate CBTs. Yanes et al. (2019) have similar sentiments, stating that ideally CBTs should be developed by the community, however, it is not easy for communities to establish CBTs. As stated in the Malaysian CBT handbook, based on case studies of ten counties, CBT projects can either be initiated by the government, NGO, community, or industry (Hamzar and Khalifah, 2009). The findings of this study indicated that communities relied on CBT developments that were initiated by NGOs and no further developments were done by the community. Yanes et al. (2019) noted that the development of equitable and sustainable CBT is heavily reliant on power dynamics, it needs support from influential, multifaceted, and frequently antagonistic parties that control the local populace. Results indicated that local communities have limited bargaining power, face significant market entry barriers, and are unable to effectively participate in tourism development as also observed by Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2015).

CBT can be established by small groups or even families within a community. With this understanding in mind groups of people with similar interests can collaborate and establish their enterprise. CBT ventures can be established with very small capital injection with households offering accommodation (homestays), community tourist guides, craft work, food and beverage, and entertainment to tourists (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). Bello, Lovelock, and Carr (2016), however, noted that communities in developing countries fail to acquire the required financial capital or affordable financing to establish viable CBT enterprises. Salazar (2012) also observed that small CBT ventures usually have limited expertise in terms of customer service, and cleanliness, and usually fail to maintain standard quality of accommodation, food, and beverage. Aref and Redzuan (2009) emphasised the importance of training and capacity building for communities to ensure quality services and the smooth running of the enterprises.

The fact that most CBTEs in Zimbabwe were initiated by NGOs and government agencies rather than by communities themselves raises concerns about power

dynamics and ownership. While well-intentioned, externally driven models risk perpetuating neo-colonial structures where communities are passive recipients of development rather than active agents. Colonial legacies are reinforced when control, planning and decision-making power lies outside the community. On the other hand, the perception that communities lack capacity reflects a deficit view rooted in colonial paternalism, rather recognising indigenous knowledge, agency and potential. To advance decolonisation, tourism development must support community-led planning, promote self-determination and respect and local knowledge. Sustainability is undermined when communities are not empowered to maintain and grow CBTEs. The study reveals a gap between initial project set-up and sustained operation highlighting the need for inclusive financing models, market access and governance. Sustainable CBT cannot thrive without economic empowerment, institutional support and community capacity building.

For CBT to be successful, it is important to change the approach from imposing projects on communities to educating them until they develop interest and initiate their own projects. The government, learning institutions, private sector, and NGOs can identify and support communities ready to initiate their enterprises rather than initiating developments and then handing them over to the community. Training and capacity building for the local people is important. It is important to adopt a transformative learning approach that facilitates education, training, and empowerment of local people to the extent where they are able to evaluate situations objectively and where they can identify opportunities and alternatives. Communities should be empowered with knowledge to the extent where they can make independent decisions. As long as the local communities are not educated, it will be difficult for them to identify opportunities in tourism, be innovative, and manage CBTs independently as communities. Nugroho and Numata (2021), noted that changes that inspire adults' attitudes and strengthen their knowledge occur through learning. Adult learning focuses on critical thinking, problem-solving, and creating meaning (Dirkx, Espinoza and Schlegel, 2018), therefore it is important that before any programme is initiated for the community, they should undergo adult learning. Transformative education encompasses both formal and informal learning, therefore there is room for adults in the community to learn even through non-formal learning. However, there are dangers of manipulation in transformative learning. People may be easily convinced and

persuaded to take a certain direction, to behave in a particular manner which they did not initially intend to do (Hoggan and Hoggan-Kloubert, 2022).

6.3 Perceived socioeconomic factors hindering the growth of CBT

If well implemented CBT has potential benefits that can be rendered to the community. However, empirical findings indicated that some communities are yet to reap benefits from CBT due to several challenges currently being faced as depicted in Figure 24. Shereni and Saarinen (2021) observed that if communities fail to reap the expected benefits from the sustainable use of their natural resources, problems are likely to arise leading to deviant behaviours such as poaching. Negative perceptions towards CBT programmes may hinder the success of CBT.]

Socio-economic factors

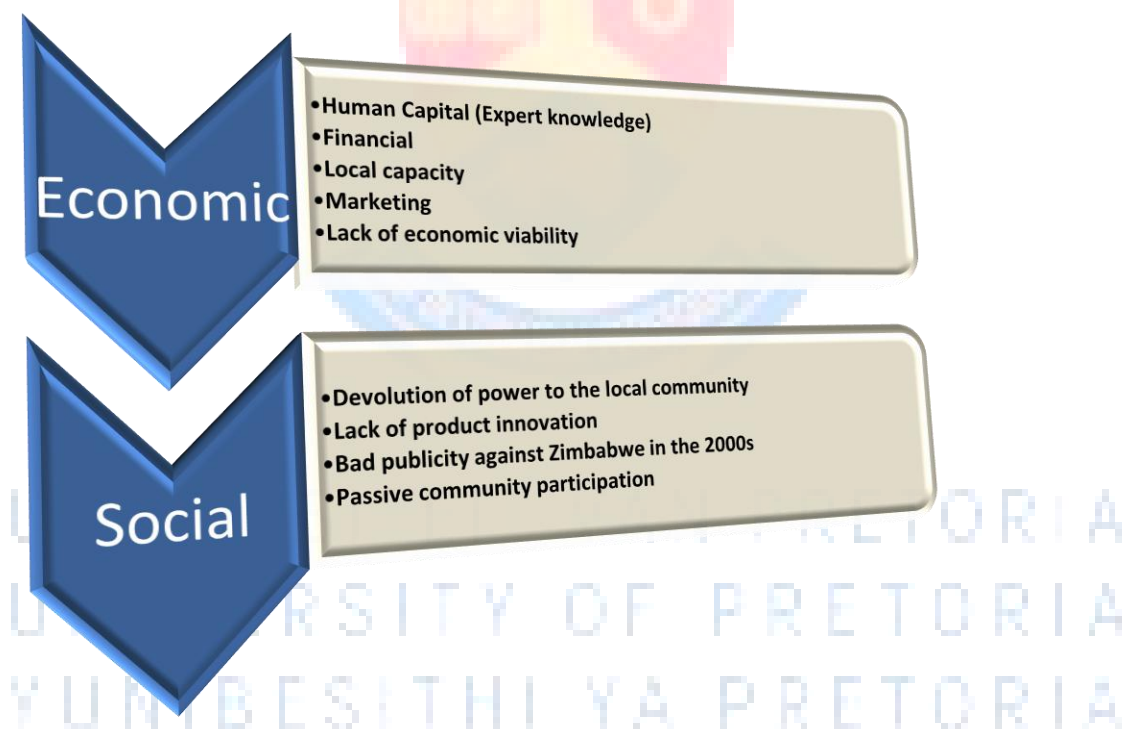


Figure 6.1 Socio-economic factors (Source: Author's own creation)

The results indicated that CBTs are facing several socioeconomic challenges such as lack of finances, human capital, local capacity, low marketing coverage, devolution of power, lack of economic viability, and lack of product diversity and innovation. Several enterprises were affected by these constraints to the extent of being defunct (MOTHI, 2017). The findings are similar to the findings of Zielinski et al. (2018), based on a

content analysis of 68 papers on CBT. Zielinski et al. (2018) identified lack of capital (social skills, education, financial), lack of market linkages, lack of community participation, unequal power relations, and inadequate product design and presentation as being some of the factors affecting the growth of CBTs. In the same vein, Tesfaye (2017) analysed 13 research studies carried out in Ethiopia and concluded that the main obstacles to CBT in that country are the lack of basic infrastructure and facilities, conflicting interests, a lack of trained labour, low societal awareness, ineffective marketing and promotion, low public involvement, and inadequate finance. Saayman and Giampiccoli (2018), observed that implementation challenges, marketing, and lack of economic viability were some of the challenges stifling the success of CBTs. Yanes et al. 2019 also noted that CBTs fail due to governance problems and lack of support. The sustainability of CBT development is dependent on the ability of stakeholders to address these challenges.

It is, however, consoling that the participants of the study have confidence that CBT has the potential to grow and enhance the lives of host communities if measures are taken to address the challenges. The research participants believed that capacity building, devolution of power, community empowerment, participation, product innovation, transparency in benefits sharing, and private-public partnerships (PPTs) were some of the possible solutions to the challenges faced. Gebreyesus et al. (2022) suggested that developing efficient marketing strategies to promote CBT, improving and investing in tourism infrastructure as well as supporting infrastructure, and investing in accommodation facilities can aid in maximising the potential of CBT. Further, Gebreyesus et al. (2022), emphasised the importance of community awareness of tourism development to gain community acceptance. To overcome the challenge of inadequate local capacity, Jugmohan, Giampiccoli, and Mtapuri (2015) proposed that training and capacity building must be carried out before the establishment of the CBT. Zielinski et al. (2018) also observed that capacity building for the local community is a key facilitator to the success of CBT.

The emphasis on community empowerment, devolution of power and transparency in benefits sharing directly challenges top-down, externally imposed tourism models. These elements reflect a colonial shift by promoting community control over tourism development process, recognition of communities as knowledge-holders and active participants rather than passive beneficiaries. These results highlight how CBT, when

grounded in empowerment, participation and equitable benefit distribution, can serve as a platform for self-determination and cultural resurgence. From a transformative learning lens, the participants' belief in CBT's potential despite current challenges demonstrates a reflective and hopeful mindset, a key precursor to transformation. The identification of practical solutions such as devolution, partnerships and innovation suggest a move towards problem-solving and agency.

To address the challenges related to financial capital, Musavengane and Kloppers (2020) emphasised the significance of social capital in enabling communities to withstand financial shocks. Further, Musavengane and Kloppers (2020) contend that communities should have strong external networks such as local and international donors, the private sector, and banks that can help communities absorb financial shocks. Warinda and van der Merwe (2023) proposed developing tourism products to attract more tourists thereby increasing CBT revenue. To improve the economic viability of CBT Zielinski et al. (2020) suggested an improvement in more the tourism product design, marketing, and offering of cultural products which they can showcase to visitors.

6.4 CBT ownership and management

The model used for the management of CBTs is important because it determines the level of local participation. The National Department of Tourism in South Africa (2016) identifies four key management models for Community-Based Tourism (CBT). These models include community-owned ventures, where the local community has full control and management of tourism operations, allowing for greater autonomy and direct benefits from tourism activities. Another model is the partnership between the community and the state, which fosters collaboration between local residents and governmental bodies to manage tourism and its impacts. A third model involves a lease agreement between the community and a private investor, where the community may lease out land or resources to private enterprises for tourism purposes, with the investor handling operations. Finally, a joint venture model between the community and the private sector blends local input and private expertise, enabling shared ownership and management of tourism initiatives. These models offer different structures for community involvement in tourism, with varying levels of collaboration

and control between the community and external stakeholders, providing flexibility in the development and sustainability of tourism ventures (National Department of Tourism, 2016).

Findings revealed that several CBT projects are owned by the RDCs and the communities who then engage private operators in the day-to-day running of the business. The partnership between the community and the state is the most popular CBT model used in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the community and the state are then engaging the private sector with resources and expertise to manage the enterprises. These management models have been criticised by many scholars since this model does not guarantee local participation and poverty alleviation (Knight and Cottrell, 2016; Raftopoulos, 2018; Zapata et al., 2011). Partnerships between the community and RDC (state) tend to encourage a top-down approach to management. The RDC manages and makes decisions on behalf of the community. Warinda and van der Merwe (2023) argue that it is important to investigate and explore new sustainable management models, that can guarantee local empowerment.

The current management model reveals a significant reliance of local communities on private operators for resources and access to markets, which heightens their vulnerability. This aligns with the observations of Bello, Lovelock, and Carr (2016), who note that private operators often exhibit opportunistic behaviours, prioritising profit maximisation while marginalising local communities from meaningful economic participation. This dynamic reinforces existing inequalities and limits the potential for local communities to fully benefit from the tourism sector. The concentration of control and resources in the hands of private entities often leads to the exclusion of local populations, undermining their ability to independently manage and profit from tourism activities.

The findings on current CBT management models reveals critical challenges, the reliance on top-down governance where state (RDCs) and private operators make decisions on behalf of the communities. This reflects enduring colonial power structures within contemporary tourism management. This approach marginalises voices and fails to challenge the historic exclusion of communities from control over their resources. External entities such as the State and private sector often dominate resource control and strategic direction, stifling the community autonomy and

suppressing indigenous governance systems. This then calls for a radical rethinking of tourism governance that promotes community self-determination, reclaiming of decision-making power, recognition of indigenous knowledge system and governance systems. This strengthens the decolonial argument for redistributing power in tourism development and embracing bottom-up participatory models. From a sustainability perspective, the dominance of state and private sector partnerships in CBT reflects a fragile, externally dependent model that threatens long term sustainability. These models also lack institutional sustainability due to its reliance on entities whose interests may not align with those of the local population. The findings also reinforce that true sustainability in tourism must go beyond environmental and economic indicators to include equity, justice and local empowerment. There is a need for the development of community-centric, transparent and accountable management models that distribute benefits equitably and build resilience.

The empirical findings reflect that the operators get the larger share of the proceeds since they are the ones involved in the day-to-day running of the businesses. Nelson (2004) also observed that external operators tend to benefit at the expense of local people. A heavy reliance on private operators undermines both the sustainability of community-based tourism and the active involvement of local residents. This dependency diminishes the overall financial benefits that the community receives, as it often results in the majority of the proceeds being siphoned off by external actors. Such an imbalance not only limits the local community's capacity for economic self-sufficiency but also reduces their control over resources, thereby exacerbating inequality and hindering long-term development (Bello, Lovelock, and Carr, 2016). Moreover, this lack of local ownership can discourage meaningful participation and weaken the community's role in tourism management and decision-making processes, leading to a less equitable distribution of benefits.

If communities could be well organised and capacitated, community-owned ventures would be ideal because they guarantee community participation as well as maximised returns. However, locals do not have economic, and social capital and are not well-capacitated to run the enterprises. As a result, they need external support as reflected in the study. Giampiccoli and Glassom (2020) emphasised the significance of external support from financial institutions, organisations, and universities in strengthening community-based tourism initiatives. Such external assistance is crucial for helping

communities develop sustainable business models that integrate both social and economic strategies. This support can drive the growth and success of tourism enterprises, offering communities the resources and expertise needed to adopt a more professional, market-driven approach. By blending business principles with community-focused goals, these models can create long-term benefits, improve local resilience, and ensure that tourism contributes more meaningfully to community development. Giampiccolli and Saayman (2018), also acknowledged the importance of external influences and power structures since internal structures are limited, mediated, and may fail to manage CBTs by themselves.

At the community level, CBTs are overseen by village committees, with members elected through formal voting. However, a key issue, as highlighted by an RDC respondent, is that elections often prioritise personal traits over expertise, diverting attention from the core objectives:

At the community level, village committee members manage CBTs and they're elected periodically through a formal voting process. The challenge with this system is that people tend to prioritise personalities, and fame over expertise when selecting members, which pulls focus away from the main goals.

For committee members to effectively advance the tourism agenda within their respective committees, a set of criteria or qualities should be taken into account during the selection process. These may include individual interests, talents, expertise, and abilities. If CBTs are to be successful, there is a need for proper management based on qualification and expertise (Giampiccolli and Saayman, 2018). This then calls for a close working relationship between communities and universities in order to educate locals on tourism management. Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2018) also noted the importance of external facilitators in providing knowledge that can empower communities to run enterprises.

It has been observed that there are no uniform RDC structures across Zimbabwe and no tourism departments within the RDCs. The government should prioritise having active tourism departments within the districts since tourism has proved to be a great vehicle for community development. To ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of CBTEs there is a need for active tourism departments within the RDC structures that are responsible for product innovation, development, and management (Bello,

Lovelock and Carr, 2016). Cameron, et al. (2001) identified the importance of the district councils in sustainable tourism which provide an enabling role, public relations, marketing, research, and training. If the RDCs are well equipped, they may be able to provide tourism expertise needed in CBTs in their districts. The absence of a tourism department within the RDC that deals with the environment and tourism reduces the chances of tourism development because of a lack of personnel with an interest in tourism. As a result, decisions made by the RDC may not be beneficial to tourism but rather to other departments.

6.5 Participation and involvement of locals in CBT

Data gathered from key informant interviews did not provide evidence of active community participation in the management and running of these CBTEs. There is still passive community participation in CBT as observed in previous studies by Bhatasara et al., (2013); and Chiutsi and Saarinen (2017). The current models do not encourage communities to take part in the management of CBT. Management of CBTs is transferred to private safari operators because CBTs, like any other businesses, require a certain level of expertise in the running of the projects. Seweryn et al. (2018) pointed out that barriers to participation emanate from unequal power relations within the community. In the same vein, Zapata et al. (2011); and Giampaolo and Glassom (2020), noted that the relationships between the community and stakeholders are top-down leaving no room for community participation. On the contrary, bottom-up models encourage local participation and generate a higher trickle-down effect (Nugroho and Numata, 2021). The level and extent of participation of locals in CBTEs are still arguable. An analysis of the responses indicates that local people are participating in other livelihood projects that are being funded by proceeds from tourism. However, they are not participating in the actual management, marketing, and development of the enterprises.

Scholars have different opinions concerning involvement and participation of locals in CBT. Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2018) argue that the communities must wholly own and manage CBT projects. They further argue that the term 'involvement' cannot be used because communities should completely own, manage, and make decisions on their own. The term 'involvement' implies that local people are being called to take part and

yet they should be the ones wholly managing the enterprises. However, Setokoe, and Ramukumba, (2020) believes that community involvement is one of the basic principles in CBT planning. On the contrary, Yanes et al. (2019) perceive that if communities are solely the managers and decision-makers, these enterprises are likely to collapse due to a lack of knowledge, resources and capacity. Chiutsi and Saarinen (2017), also opine that emphasis should be put on ownership and devolution of power to local communities and community development so that they may be able to manage the enterprises by themselves. Therefore, to ensure the sustainability, profitability, and further development of these enterprises, it is important to engage management experts.

Participation in CBTE needs to be clearly defined, whether it is participation in tourism activities, conservation, or other livelihood projects. Data has revealed that communities are participating in the protection of natural resources and other livelihood projects that are funded by tourism revenue. However, participation in the actual tourism activities, direct employment, and management is not visible. Community participation is also being affected by the narrow range of tourism products. Most CBTEs in Zimbabwe just offer accommodation, hunting, game viewing, and showcasing their culture and heritage. There is a need for external agents to work with locals in developing more tourism innovations in arts, crafts, agriculture and culture. In Uganda's Buhoma CBT, experts were brought in to train locals in handicraft production. Additionally, an ornithologist and bird-watching guide provided specialised training in tour guiding, while community members collaborated with external specialists to survey and develop sites for village cultural walks (Ahebwa and van der Duim, 2013).

Community members have so much they can offer in the tourism value chain that can be attractive to both the international and local markets (Warinda and van der Merwe, 2023). More tourism products could be developed to ensure active participation in these projects. Supporting agriculture-related livelihood projects, such as poultry farming, market gardening, goat rearing, and cattle ranching, can serve as valuable sources of input and supply for culinary activities within community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives. This will ensure the sustainability and conservation of natural resources, heritage, and culture. The increase in the variety of tourism products will increase the number of community members being employed in the enterprises,

increasing participation while reducing the negative aspects such as poaching, high labour turnover, and community resistance (Bello, Lovelock and Carr, 2017).

6.6 Product innovation and development

Zimbabwe has the potential for CBT, what is needed is innovativeness in product development and packaging to ensure tourism development that attracts both the local and international markets. The respondents also pointed out that the current CBT products are not attractive to domestic tourists and that there is a need for innovation and designing tourism products packaged to attract domestic tourists. Understanding that tourism business is highly dependent on customer satisfaction is crucial. However, most CBT models tend to overlook the business and marketing orientation to their enterprises. There is a need for business development, innovation, and marketing expertise to take a business approach. However, a market-based approach has been criticised by Raftopoulos (2018) as it limits the ability of tourism to be a long-term strategy for environmental protection because it is aligned with customer demand. If customer demand increases or decreases, it affects the income of tourism. If the income decreases, this then leads to other economic activities which may be unsustainable (Boley and Green, 2016). This is also reflected by the finding of this study: when the local community is not satisfied with the proceeds of tourism, they engage in other activities such as mining and poaching within the protected areas to cover the income gap.

One of the key issues community conservancies are dealing with has been identified as poaching. People tend to defend things that benefit them, so if communities gain more from wildlife conservation, poaching will decline. Even though poaching cannot completely be stopped, if the underlying cause is addressed, some steps can be taken to lessen poaching. According to Mataruse, Nyikahadzoi and Fallot (2022), addressing the socio-economic and natural factors that drive such behaviours is important because conservation is particularly challenging when locals are faced with food insecurity. Given that wildlife frequently destroys crops and livestock, poaching may be a sign of true food insecurity. Thus, the RDCs, NGOs that work with communities and ward committees should attempt to start livelihood projects that also address the

communities' needs for food security rather than concentrating exclusively on development projects (Warinda and van der Merwe, 2023).

To guarantee the long-term profitability of their projects and their sustainability, the RDC ought to think about reinvesting a portion of the hunting proceeds back into the development of tourism. Approximately 46% of the proceeds are allocated to the RDC administration, which is one benefit of the current model that benefits the RDC. For the benefit of those who coexist with wildlife, the RDC ought to think about adjusting its sharing ratio. The community as a whole benefit less from models that involve the community, RDC and private sector, as the elite tend to receive a larger share of the benefits. Removing the RDC from community conservancy management is a difficult task. To make sure the community receives the majority of the proceeds, the benefit-sharing ratios could be adjusted.

Empirical findings revealed that community members receive basic business management training over a short period. However, communities cannot be empowered to manage their businesses through this community-level training and capacity building which is of a period of two weeks or less. The time devoted to capacity building is insufficient to develop employees who can manage the businesses. If community members only receive basic training, they will continue to rely on the professional advice of private operators (Warinda and van der Merwe 2023). Aref and Redzuan (2009) also acknowledged the importance of capacity building for local people in enabling them to be able to troubleshoot and solve problems in CBT. Further, they observed that training and capacity building empowers the community and encourages participation in the decision-making process.

The superficial training received by communities do not foster deep, reflective learning required for transformation and the time frame is insufficient for community members to gain the confidence, skills and autonomy needed to manage business effectively. To ensure transformative learning, training must be contextual, sustained and participatory, enabling learners to critically reflect, apply knowledge and gradually shift from passive recipients to active leaders. Sustainable CBT requires long term investment in human capital, ensuring that locals are equipped not only with operational skills but also with problem solving, strategic planning and leadership competencies. Empowering communities through meaningful, ongoing training

contributes to self-reliance and enhances participation in governance and ensures resilient, locally-led tourism enterprises. There is a need for a deep, sustained transformative capacity-building processes in CBT. Short-term training may offer basic awareness but to truly support sustainable development and transformative learning, communities must be equipped with long-term support systems, mentorship and practical learning opportunities.

6.7 Benefits Sharing

Benefits sharing is also an important aspect of CBT. Results indicate that benefits are not shared at the individual level but rather at the ward level. Proceeds from tourism are channelled to infrastructure development such as the building of schools, shops, roads, dams, boreholes, and other income-generating projects such as poultry, livestock rearing, and handicraft. In as much as this is a fair arrangement, direct household benefits are also essential. Nonetheless, some respondents felt that there was a lack of transparency in benefits sharing, with the elite getting a larger share of the proceeds. The results are consistent with the findings of Shereni and Saarinen (2021) in Hwange National Park which indicated that there is a lack of transparency in revenue sharing and low or no economic revenues at the household level creating negative perceptions by local people. There are other ways in which community members may benefit directly from CBT. Individual households or families may provide accommodation, entertainment, food, and beverages to tourists which can increase their income. If community members can have a variety of products, they can offer in the tourism value chain this may improve the household income from CBT. Community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) offer significant opportunities for individual economic benefits through various activities beyond tourism itself. These opportunities include employment within the enterprises, as well as the establishment of cultural centres where the community can showcase its talents and traditions. These centres could feature local art, dance performances, culinary experiences, and even traditional medicine practices and herbal knowledge. Such initiatives not only support the local economy but also preserve and promote cultural heritage, contributing to both economic and social development (Bello, Lovelock, and Carr, 2016). By creating spaces for cultural expression and engagement, CBTEs can foster community pride while generating income.

6.8 CBT Performance and the Tourism Area Life Cycle

Empirical findings revealed that CBTEs are underperforming and not being well managed. This resonates with the findings of the CBT audit by MOTH (2017) which revealed that after the pulling of the donor funding, some CBTEs collapsed. The CBT audit disclosed that some CBTEs are now defunct, stagnant, or at the decline stage. This implies that CBTs like other tourism destinations go through a Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC). Figure 25 depicts a TALC adapted from Butler's TALC (Butler, 1980) with stages through which a tourism area goes during its life cycle. These stages are those of exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and decline or rejuvenation. Each stage of the TALC has its human capacity requirements for both the local and externals. The applicability of the TALC in CBT has been under-explored in the tourism literature though it is useful in understanding the changes in residents' attitudes toward residents, tourist arrivals, and the dynamics of tourism development (Nugroho and Numata, 2020)



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The tourism area life cycle

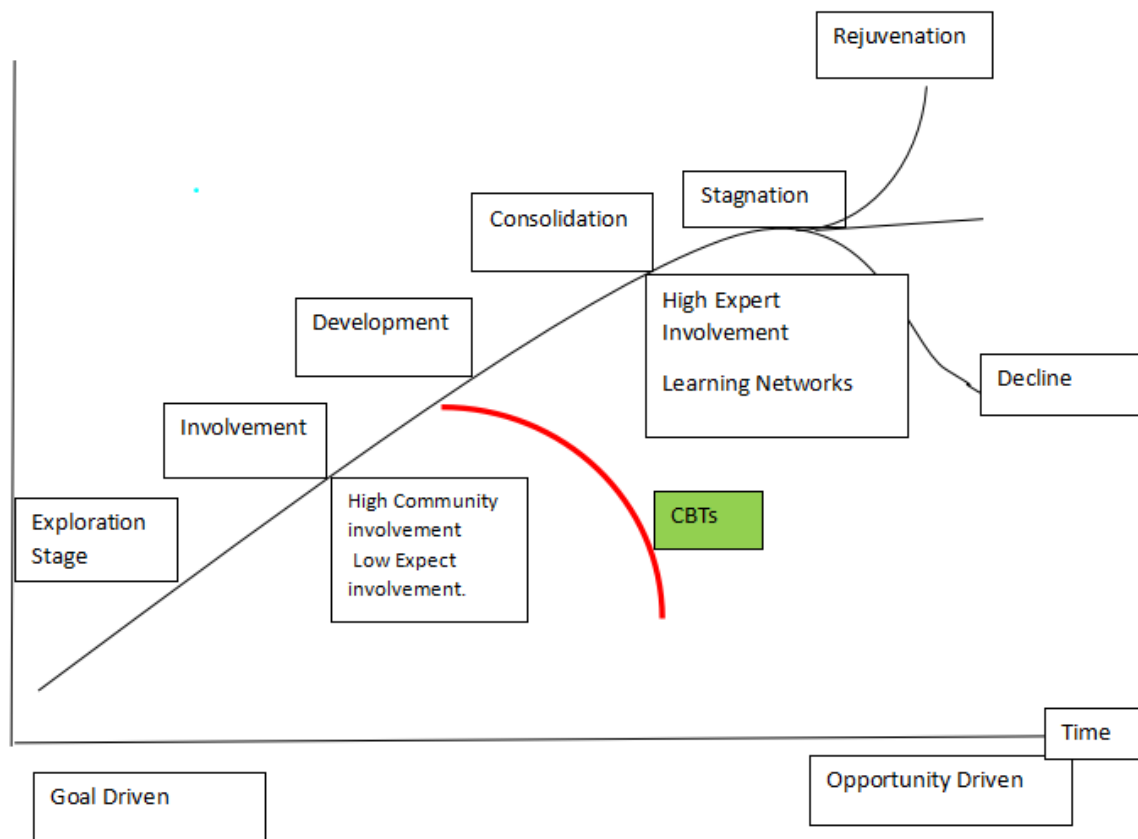


Figure 6.2 Tourism area life cycle for CBTE (Adapted from Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle Model (Butler, 1980:7)

At each stage of CBT development, there is either low or high community involvement. Each stage of the cycle requires certain levels of expertise from the community and external agents. At the exploration stage, the destination is characterised by a small number of tourists who are attracted to the natural and cultural beauty of the destination as well as few tourist facilities. During the exploration stage facilities such as accommodation are offered by local people. However, as the CBTE moves along the cycle, investors are attracted to the area offering more competitive tourism facilities (Giampiccoli and Saayman, 2018). If local communities fail to offer competitive products, they lose business to other investors in the area. It is therefore important for the RDC and host communities to consider re-investing in tourism so that they can offer competitive tourism products. At the involvement stage, there are certain skills needed by the community members to ensure tourist satisfaction. Currently, there are committees trained in aspects such as accounting, project management, record keeping, leadership grievance management, and problem animal control. However, in

tourism, there are important skills needed such as customer care, tour guiding, culinary skills, housekeeping, and facilities management that are needed by the community. For communities to be able to provide attractive tourist facilities there is a need for transformative learning at the community level, so that communities understand the basics of tourism, and are able to find solutions to challenges arising.

A tourism area should, in theory, attract more visitors as it develops over the course of its life cycle and contributes to the growth of the destination. When visitor numbers in a region sharply decline, it then becomes a cause for concern. A destination in a developing country might not go through the TALC stages as predicted, according to some academics, and it might even skip the early stages of development (Mbaiwa and Stonza, 2011; Nugroho and Numata, 2020). Secondary data and research findings verify that CBTs did not proceed as anticipated, some of the enterprises failed during the development stages. The fact that these CBTEs collapsed during their early development is the most concerning. Some of the CBTs were not fortunate enough to complete their life cycle's growth stages. This suggests that there are substantial issues with the CBT framework and its application as a whole, necessitating a redesign of the CBT models.

From a sustainability theory perspective, the collapse of CBTEs in their early development stages highlights the critical systematic weaknesses in the planning and implementation of sustainable tourism models. The fact that CBTEs failed to follow the expected TALC progression underscores a disconnect between theory and practice. The collapse of these enterprises signals deeper structural issues, such as lack of investment, poor governance or insufficient policy support. For tourism to be sustainable, the supporting structures, training infrastructure, financing and governance must be in place and tailored to community needs. The findings call for a reconceptualisation of CBT frameworks, guided by sustainability theory that prioritises resilience, adaptability and inclusive development over rigid life cycle models.

6.9.0 CBT and Tourism Education

This section focuses on tourism education, both formal and informal CBT education. The discussion above revealed that there are gaps in the implementation of CBT as well as community education in tourism. Several studies on tourism education have so far concluded that tourism education is not adequately preparing students to meet

the ever-changing industry requirements (Liburd et al., 2018; Mungai et al., 2021; Sarkodie, 2017; Wang, 2013; Yang and Ong, 2020). Several research publications on CBT have been conducted, however, there is still a gap in CBT education literature. The research findings on CBT education in Zimbabwe have revealed that there is no dedicated module on CBT but that content regarding CBT is infused in other modules. Tourism graduates also indicated that the CBT concept was not adequately covered in the degree programmes and is not offered as a separate module at the undergraduate level.

CBT education may be discussed by looking at both formal and informal education. In this study, the discussion on formal education focuses on CBT education at the undergraduate degree level while informal education covers CBT education acquired by host communities through experience, training, and capacity building by external agents. Informal learning in tourism can also happen to tourists and students when they engage in tourism activities. Buckley (2019) indicated that tourism itself fosters learning: when a person travels and enjoys tourism facilities, they engage in a form of informal learning. Walker and Manyamba (2020) also noted that tourism experiences are transformative and can foster transformative learning. Tourism encourages tourists to explore natural landscapes and wildlife habitats while promoting conservation efforts. By experiencing the beauty and fragility of ecosystems first-hand, tourists gain a deeper appreciation of environmental issues and the importance of sustainable practices (Tietenberg and Lewis, 2018). This kind of informal learning is also important for tourism students and academics because it can create disorienting dilemmas necessary for the further improvement of CBT.

6.9.1 Coverage of CBT in Tourism Education

Della Lucia et al. (2021) noted that universities play an essential role in the capacity building of tourism students. University educators agreed that there is no standalone module on CBT management at the undergraduate level and that it is infused within other modules. In the same vein, university students also pointed out that the concept of CBT was not extensively discussed during their undergraduate studies. A subject search for a module or literature on CBT education has proved that CBT is not yet visible and not yet treated as a module and there is still a gap in the literature on CBT

education. These results are consistent with the results of Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) who identified a gap in CBT education.

A plethora of researchers have also discovered that sustainable tourism education has not been fully embraced in the curriculum. McGrath et al. (2021) noted a gap in the theory and the development of a sustainable tourism pedagogy. Dzingai and Mashava (2009); Boluk et al. (2022) and Farsari (2022) also argue that sustainability education has not been fully incorporated and is more visible in the curriculum but limited to a few topics within other modules. Boyle et al. (2015) insinuate that the incorporation of sustainability as a topic within a module is a weak approach to sustainability and they suggest a whole curriculum approach to be taken in sustainable tourism education. It can be argued that the limited attention to CBT in tourism education has stifled the growth and development of CBTs due to a lack of adequate knowledge and capacity. This implies that the important concepts, and principles of sustainable tourism and CBT are not being adequately addressed in the curriculum. Consequently, it is important for universities to fully incorporate sustainable tourism in their curricula ensuring that their programmes encourage innovative thinking and transformation in sustainable tourism. Furthermore, Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) noted that if CBT education is incorporated into the tourism curriculum, it could solve some capacity challenges within the industry.

The marginalisation of CBT knowledge reflects a curriculum that is still heavily influenced by mainstream, market-driven tourism models, which often exclude grassroots, community-based perspectives that are central to decolonial thinking. This underrepresentation of CBT and sustainability in the curriculum contributes to the continued marginalisation of local and indigenous approaches to tourism development, silencing alternative knowledge systems that could empower learners and communities. The MSU sustainable tourism curriculum have presented a degree of epistemic rebalancing where CBT is not treated as a peripheral topic but as a core component, grounded in lived experience and values of local communities. This integration offers students the opportunity to deeply engage, challenge assumptions or reframe their understanding of tourism as a tool for justice, empowerment and sustainability. Integrating a stand-alone CBT and substantiality related modules could catalyse transformative leaning experiences, enabling students to understand and advocate for more equitable and locally grounded tourism models.

Of note is that the concept of sustainable tourism emerged from the environmental and social sciences disciplines (Weaver, 2021). However, the CBT concept has not been wholly embraced and given a business and entrepreneurial orientation in tourism education and its implementation. Jones et. al (2016) also noted that there is a growing emphasis on sustainable tourism, however, many tourism education programmes are yet to cover the subject comprehensively. Furthermore, Ndou et. al (2019) noted that sustainable tourism education lacks an entrepreneurial and innovation orientation and incorporating a business orientation in CBT education is hindered by several challenges. Integrating CBT with business orientation and moving away from traditional tourism models focussed on large-scale operations requires a shift in the curriculum focus and pedagogy (Sharpley, 2020; Walker and Manyamba, 2019). CBT involves collaboration with local communities, sustainable natural resources management, cultural preservation, and fair distribution of benefits. Therefore, to integrate business aspects into the subject requires educators to navigate the complexities of balancing economic, social, and environmental goals.

There are several reasons why CBT has not yet been fully incorporated as a separate module in tourism education at the undergraduate level. One of the respondents noted that universities are reluctant to have a standalone module in CBT because there are few functional CBTs to absorb these students. The World Tourism Organisation (2018) noted that the tourism industry and other stakeholders have not fully recognised the value of CBT and perceive it as less profitable as compared to other conventional models of tourism and as a result it is not prioritised in the tourism curriculum. Furthermore, in some cases, educators are reluctant to fully incorporate CBT in the curriculum due to a scarcity of teaching resources such as textbooks specifically addressing the aspect of CBT. Cooper (2018) alluded to the fact that limited collaboration between academia and industry has hindered the development of relevant and practical educational programmes. Tourism education may also face resistance to change from established norms and practices, so that moving away from the traditional curriculum and programme structures may be difficult. Tourism education also exists in an environment with rigid bureaucratic structures, therefore constantly changing the modules can be impossible. When read through the lenses of decolonisation, transformative learning and sustainability, it becomes clear that these barriers are not just logistical but deeply political and ideological. Addressing these

barriers requires a radical shift in educational priorities, moving away from market imperatives and towards more inclusive, ethical and sustainable forms of knowledge and practice.

While the long-term outcomes of the current transition in higher education remain uncertain, several key elements and underlying political factors are becoming increasingly apparent, raising significant concerns. These political shifts are redefining the nature of universities and the process of knowledge production. A global survey by Zapp et al. (2021) on the state of higher education revealed that universities view the commodification and commercialisation of educational programs as among the most pressing risks. The concern raised by Zapp et al. (2021) highlights a shift away from education as a public good, which compromises the sustainability of higher education itself as a space for inclusive and critical knowledge. These developments challenge the foundational principles of academia, where the emphasis is shifting from critical, knowledge-based inquiry to market-driven approaches, further complicating the broader objectives of higher education in the 21st century. The increasing focus on profitability and market demands poses a threat to the integrity and accessibility of education. Consequently, subject areas like CBT are not given much attention as universities tend to focus more on programmes that will attract more students to the institution rather than addressing the industry needs.

The reluctance to incorporate CBT as a stand-alone module highlights the on-going dominance of conventional, Eurocentric tourism education. This undermines indigenous and local knowledge systems which CBT embodies. A decolonial approach would push institutions to challenge existing power dynamics in knowledge production and prioritise curricula that honour community voices and alternative models such as CBTs. The resistance to curriculum changes and bureaucratic hurdles show how rigid institutional cultures can limit opportunities for critical reflection and transformation in learners and educators. The findings in in this study highlight missed opportunities of transformative learning that could be helpful to CBT management. CBT can encourage students to engage directly with communities, reflect on power relations and develop socially responsible tourism models.

Bueddefeld and Duerden (2022) contend that Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) can be used to develop tourism modules and curriculum ensuring that

the modules are transformative and responsive to the ever-changing tourism industry needs. Mezirow's TLT emphasises learning that can transform elusive ideas, which ensures critical learning and the development of problem-solving techniques. The TLT also puts focus on how people learn, and how best to support adult learning. Jost's (2018) study concluded that transformative learning could enhance the problem-solving skills of tourism students. It is therefore important for tourism educators at the tertiary level to seriously consider incorporating CBT as a module at the undergraduate level. Incorporating CBT in the curriculum can be a step towards decolonising the curriculum as CBT is centred around the indigenous communities, indigenous heritage and culture as well as improving the wellbeing of host communities as suggested by Young (2017).

Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) proposed the introduction of a new qualification in CBT at the degree level to fill the gaps in CBT capacity. However, empirical findings revealed that it is not feasible to have a degree qualification in CBT because it would be difficult to absorb these students within the industry. This indicates that universities may be taking a market orientation approach, where designed programmes prepare students for available roles and ensuring that qualifications are relevant and enhancing the employability of graduates within the industry. However, Tran, Blankston, and Roswinato (2015) noted that a market orientation approach in degree programmes might prioritise market demands leading to the dilution of academic rigour leading to compromised academic standards. Degree programmes should aim to address a specific industry gap rather than just focusing on employability and immediate job readiness. A focus on market trends may stifle innovation and curriculum development leading to a lack of new ideas and perspectives in education that could better prepare students for future challenges. Sercombe (2022) noted the need for a thoughtful approach to decolonising the curriculum and move away from the market-oriented approach which is mainly informed by Eurocentric perspectives to a curriculum that is inclusive and representative of the African perspectives.

The study brought to light that even though CBT is not yet covered as a separate module at the undergraduate level, academics are coming up with ways in which they can engage in CBT through community engagement programmes. The University of Zimbabwe has been working with the Korekore villagers in the development of their CBT project through training and capacity building. The other universities indicated

their willingness to work with communities in research, training, and product development. Bello et al. (2017) acknowledged the importance of external support from educational institutions in the development of CBT. Further, Salazar (2012) emphasised that communities might have the ideas but sometimes they need professional training on the key components of tourism in terms of how to handle tourists, culinary art skills, customer service, and housekeeping. It is, therefore, important that universities and other stakeholders support CBT initiatives based on what they can offer, be it education, finance, marketing, or product innovation until communities can operate by themselves.

Universities in Zimbabwe are currently being guided by the Education 5.0 footprint, which emphasises teaching, research, community service, innovation, teaching and industrialisation. This footprint encourages transformative learning, community engagement, innovation, and research which are the most needed tools for successful CBT. On the other hand, the heritage-based philosophy firmly supports CBT initiatives as the philosophy emphasises the importance of cultural, historical and social heritage in shaping development. Community engagement is also important in CBT as most communities do not have the adequate knowledge and capacity to manage these enterprises. The interaction of communities with universities helps in bridging the knowledge and capacity gaps. Communities need proper education on tourism management rather than just a few days of training and workshops. In line with Education 5.0 attachments, field visits and trips should be part of the tourism education pedagogy, however, due to financial challenges, universities are not able to fund these field visits as indicated by the research results.

6.9.2 Gaps in Tourism Education

This study reflected gaps in tourism education in areas of sustainability education, a lack of industry-specific skills, and the lack of entrepreneurial innovation and creative thinking skills and pedagogies. The findings are also consistent with those of several studies that discovered similar gaps in tourism education. A number of researchers have observed that university degree programmes are failing to meet industry requirements (Booyens, 2020; Kim and Jeong, 2018; Mungayi et al., 2021; Nhuta et al 2015). Edelman (2020) believes that the reason why the programmes are failing to meet the industry requirements is that tourism education is built on shaky premises.

Further, Edelheim (2020) noted that some academics have lost touch with the industry requirements, while some academics have never worked full-time in the fields they specialise or teach in, and in some cases, the academics have never been tourists themselves. Due to the ever-changing nature of the industry, sometimes the tourism faculties may find themselves lacking the required expertise needed to cover the concept of sustainability comprehensively. *The Herald Zimbabwe* report of 25 April 2023 on the ZIMPARKS knowledge conference reflected on the lack of academic-industry engagements which continues to affect the tourism industry. Prof Mapfumo from the University of Zimbabwe argued that educators should be attached to organisations to keep updated with what is trending in the industry. Further, Professor Mapfumo emphasised that industry engagements will also help to establish critical skills for the economy as well as match the demand.

To meet the ever-changing industry requirements, Bagheri et al. (2020) suggested that tourism programmes should also include sector-specific modules, addressing the needs of each sub-sector in tourism. Further, Bagheri (2020) acknowledged that most tourism and hospitality programmes offer a broad overview of the tourism industry, and there is a need for more specialised education in niche areas like adventure tourism, ecotourism, and heritage tourism. Bridging the gaps between the industry and tourism education is important and requires collaboration between educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and policymakers. It is important to review the curriculum content regularly, integrate experiential learning opportunities, incorporate sustainable tourism principles, promote diversity in learning and use technology in education delivery to ensure that tourism education remains relevant and effective.

McGrath et al. (2021) and Farsari (2022) noted a gap between the theory and the development of a sustainable tourism pedagogy. McGrath et al. (2021) noted that areas such as agrotourism, CBT, responsible tourism practices, environmental conservation, and community engagement are not yet adequately covered in the tourism curriculum. Sustainable tourism is increasingly becoming visible in tourism, though it has not yet received sufficient emphasis in tourism education programmes. Sustainable tourism is multi-disciplinary, cutting across other disciplines such as sociology, environmental studies, geography, economics, and anthropology. It is therefore important for tourism educators to find ways in which the other disciplines are included in the tourism programmes. The current situation results in a gap in the

understanding and skills gap needed to promote, implement, and manage sustainable practices. Wijesinghe, Mura and Culala (2019) also observed that gaps between the industry and tourism education emanate from the Eurocentric nature of tourism and hospitality degrees. The degrees have adopted the Western frameworks, values and tourism models which often misrepresent or overlook the unique dynamics of non-Western destinations. This marginalises indigenous knowledge systems and imposes Western ideas that may not align with local cultures, leading to cultural alienation and loss of authenticity. Eurocentrism stifles innovation and inclusivity by neglecting diverse tourism practices better suited to non-Western contexts, hindering the development of more sustainable and culturally relevant tourism education.

A lack of innovation and entrepreneurial skills has been observed in CBT. Key informants from the RDC also observed a lack of product innovation and entrepreneurial skills at the district and community levels. Ndou et al. (2019) observed a gap in entrepreneurial and innovation skills among tourism graduates. Tourism studies have been well equipped with conventional management skills such as financial management, marketing, and human resources management which are no longer adequate to manage sustainable tourism, (Hsu, 2018). Hsu (2018) also argued that entrepreneurial and innovation skills should be embedded in the curriculum. This aforementioned gap in tourism education needs to be filled with a qualification in sustainable tourism focusing on all forms of sustainable tourism and developing management models that can balance social, environmental, and economic goals, (Farsari, 2022).

The goals of CBT to achieve environmental and social goals; participation and empowerment of local people, and the preservation of culture and the environment have been explicitly discussed by several scholars (Chiutsi and Saarinen 2017; Giampiccoli and Saayman, 2016; Runyowa 2017; Setokoe and Ramukumba, 2020). The important question that has not been answered is, 'How can CBTs be economically viable while ensuring environmental sustainability and achieving social goals?' It is therefore important to align environmental and social goals with the business concept. On the other hand, issues of ownership, management, participation, involvement, and benefits sharing in CBT remain elusive. It is crucial to have a curriculum that focuses on CBT so that the subject can be well understood so that managers are able to solve the current challenges being faced by CBTs as well as

improve the implementation of CBT projects. Looking at the current implementation of CBT, the approach lacks a business management orientation. Resultantly, it is important for tourism educators at a higher level to add a clearly defined business management angle to ensure further development of CBTEs, improved implementation and management.

6.9.3 Tourism Education Pedagogy

The methods of teaching, modes of teaching, and strategies are very important in tourism education. The tourism education pedagogy encompasses the teaching methods and strategies used to impart knowledge and skills in tourism education. These approaches include experiential learning, case studies, simulation and role play, industry engagement, project-based learning, technology integration, reflective practices, and active learning strategies. Incorporating several pedagogical approaches into tourism studies can create dynamic and engaging learning experiences that prepare students for success in the diverse and evolving tourism industry.

This study revealed that the main methods used for teaching are face-to-face lectures, online lectures (especially during the COVID-19 period), internships, and project-based learning, and depending on the lecturers' preferred teaching styles, case studies may be used. However, university lecturers indicated that due to limited financial resources, they are not able to regularly go on field trips, attend industry engagement workshops or do hands-on practical projects. The universities indicated that their curricula encourage the use of modern education pedagogies but due to financial, technological, and infrastructural challenges, they are not able to regularly use modern and more effective approaches. Robertson and Olds (2017) also noted that universities face several challenges that hinder them from operating as expected.

The experiential learning approach emphasises learning through direct experiences such as field trips, internships, and hands-on projects. Mezirow (2003) noted the importance of experiential learning, reflective practices and active learning in adult learning because it fosters transformative learning (Tomasi et al., 2020). This approach enables students to apply theoretical concepts in real-world settings fostering a deeper

understanding of the tourism industry. According to the respondents, undergraduate students undertake an internship during their third year and are encouraged to be attached to one organisation. The challenge with internships is that one has to be attached to one organisation for the whole year. At the end of the internship, the student has experience in one field or area. Walker and Manyamba (2019) recommended working holidays where students can be attached to an organisation during their vacation periods such that at the end of the study programme, they would have been attached to several organisations.

According to the informants, students are supposed to go on field trips but due to limited financial resources some of the students are unable to do so:

Our students participate in field trips each semester. The university subsidises a portion of the expenses, while students are responsible for covering the remaining costs. Participation in these trips is not mandatory; only those who have made the required payment will be eligible to attend.

Regular field trips are seen to be an effective way to engage in experiential learning. The structure of the field trip programme reflects broader class dynamics within higher education. While the universities' partial funding supports some students, the requirement for a personal financial contribution can reinforce socioeconomic disparities. Technological advancements can be advantageous in bridging the financial gap as educators can make use of virtual trips whereby students get to see the real world through the use of videos. It is, therefore, important for the universities and the industry to invest in virtual realities that help students to have a visual appreciation of resorts, attractions, and documentaries with success stories and the challenges faced by different sectors within the industry. With the advent of ever-improving technology in the tourism industry, the use of technology may be used to bridge some gaps within tourism education through the use of virtual trips, attending virtual industry engagement workshops, and informative tourism and hospitality videos.

The case study approach can also be a valuable tool in tourism education because it allows scholars to engage with practical scenarios, analyse complex situations and develop problem-solving skills applicable to the industry. An analysis of case studies can help students understand how theoretical concepts can be applied in practical

situations. Examining real-life scenarios helps learners assess situations, identify key problems or challenges, and propose viable solutions while fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Herreid, 2011). When dealing with real-life situations, learners are presented with situations where they are supposed to be decision-makers. This allows learners to practise making informed decisions based on available information and resources. The case studies approach can be very helpful in CBT education. Lecturers should be encouraged to use the case study approach given that it can be used with limited financial resources.

Project-based learning was highlighted as another approach used by universities to promote collaboration, problem-solving and creativity among tourism students. Wahbeh et al. (2021) noted that project-based learning encourages authentic learning experiences, interdisciplinary collaboration, acquiring life skills, and experiential learning. These projects equip students with practical skills and competencies such as communication, research, and project management needed for success in the tourism industry. According to the findings of this study, project-based learning is primarily undertaken by students in their fourth year of study, highlighting its significance as a culminating educational experience that allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical, real-world contexts. This approach not only enhances their learning outcomes but also prepares them for the complexities of their future professional environments. Students have an opportunity to choose an area of interest to research. Given the current little attention given to CBT, students may not be interested in choosing CBT because of a lack of a comprehensive understanding of the subject. To encourage more projects on CBT, lecturers may develop topics that cover various subject areas also including CBT-related research areas to ensure that students are researching in the subject area.

The study also revealed that university lecturers make use of active learning strategies such as group work and discussions, debates and brainstorming sessions which encourage students' participation in the learning process leading to comprehensive learning outcomes. The results are consistent with the results of O'Connor (2021), who examined the effectiveness of using active learning strategies in tertiary education and concluded that active learning techniques maximise the student's learning. Active learning is also accompanied by reflective practices which allow students to reflect on their learning experiences and strengths and also promote self-awareness and

continuous professional development (Colomer et al., 2020). Furthermore, Colomer et al. (2020) observed the relevance of reflective learning in the advent of technology advancement and ever-changing environments because it allows contemplation about new experiences and their association with experience as well as focusing on future transformations. The use of active learning strategies in tourism pedagogies is crucial because it encourages transformative learning.

To keep updated with the changes in the sector, Huang (2014) emphasised the critical role of industry engagement in tourism education. Such engagement can be facilitated through initiatives like guest lectures, industry panels, and networking events, where professionals from the sector are invited to share their experiences and provide valuable insights. This study revealed that universities engage with the industry through guest lectures and attending local and international tourism exhibitions such as the Sanganai and the Indaba tourism exhibitions. Participation in these exhibitions helps both the learners and lecturers to keep updated with the changes as well as the emerging trends in the industry. The only challenge with exhibitions is that not every student and lecturer get an opportunity to attend due to financial challenges. As a result, the lecturers are limited to the use of pedagogical approaches that are achievable with the available resources.

Tourism education pedagogies change over time due to changes in technology and changes in the industry. Hsu (2018) noted that there is a need to keep up to date with modern technologies and teaching methods due to the ever-changing demands of the industry. Several pedagogies can be applied in tourism education. While there is a need for keeping up with technological changes, decolonial perspectives caution against a purely technocratic orientation that ignores cultural relevance and the political economy of education. A decolonised pedagogy should ensure that technological and methodological advancements serve local needs and knowledge systems not just industry demands. The current challenge is that CBT is incorporated into other modules and, consequently, lecturers may not have the opportunity to make use of the different pedagogies for the benefit of CBT. Hales and Jennings (2017) observed that most tourism programmes do not have a critical dimension such that the social, economic and environmental problems are not pedagogically addressed resulting in the failure to produce tourism experts who are critically reflexive. The absence of a critical lens reveals how colonial structures of knowledge continue to

shape tourism education. These structures often prioritise neutrality, objectivity and technical competence over contextual, social engaged learning that includes perspectives from the Global South or indigenous communities. It is, therefore, important for educators to come up with a dedicated module or short course on CBT to tackle the issues affecting the sector adequately and effectively. Walker and Manyamba (2019) emphasised that the pedagogies used in tourism education should be able to create discomfort and should be emotion-focused to foster transformative learning.

Incorporating a variety of pedagogies requires lecturer commitment and motivation. Nevertheless, several challenges inhibit the use of a variety of pedagogies such as traditional teaching habits, lack of training, time constraints, resource limitations, institutional culture, student resistance, and fear of criticism. Gratz and Looney (2020) noted that some lecturers may be accustomed to traditional teaching methods and may exhibit reluctance or resistance when it comes to adopting new approaches or deviating from established practices. In some cases, some pedagogies require more time and financial resources which may be a challenge in most African institutions. Robertson and Olds, (2017) also noted that in some cases, institutional policies, expectations and cultures may be more favourable towards traditional lecture-based approaches, discouraging lecturers from experimenting with new methods. Lecture-based approaches are also cheaper for universities. Hafeez (2021) also noted the importance of regular staff training workshops whereby all lecturers are trained in using a variety of pedagogies and encouraged to modify their traditional teaching habits. Addressing these inhibiting factors requires a combination of institutional support, professional development opportunities, and a willingness to experiment and adapt to the evolving students' needs.

6.10 Equipping students to better manage CBTs

The thrust of this study is to identify what can be done to improve CBT. Stakeholders had different, unique views and perceptions on what can be done to improve CBT management. To improve the current management of CBT there is a need for strengthening community participation, CBT education, capacity building, sustainable resource management, tourism product development, adjustment of community

benefit sharing, monitoring and evaluation of CBT projects and devolution of power to the community.

This research identified formal and informal CBT education as one of the major solutions to the current CBT challenges. This position also resonates with the findings of Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) who remarked that a CBT education could solve several misconceptions in the understanding of CBT as well as capacity challenges within the industry. Furthermore, they acknowledged that currently there are experts in CBT, who have mainly acquired their CBT expertise through extensive research. However, there is room for the training of more experts in the field through a qualification or modules in CBT. Kumar et al. (2020) argue that tourism and hospitality degree programmes are often overly comprehensive, resulting in students only acquiring a superficial understanding of various concepts by the end of their studies, ultimately making them 'a Jack of all trades'. However, the tourism industry requires scholars to have a level of expertise in one area.

Due to the diverse nature of tourism, it is important to consider developing optional courses that are industry-specific so that at the end of the programme students will have majored in a specific area to avoid a 'Jack of all trades and master of none' situation. Tourism students and lecturers agreed that there should be a module on CBT offered as an optional course rather than being incorporated within other modules. However, some lecturers felt that CBT education can just be infused within other modules since there are few companies or CBT enterprises that can absorb the students after they have graduated. As much as there are a few companies to absorb these students at the moment, careful planning and implementation of CBT can create more job opportunities. CBT in Zimbabwe has potential given the growing demand for sustainable tourism. It is therefore important for universities to consider offering a module on CBT at the undergraduate level. A module in CBT in Zimbabwe aligns with the objectives of the heritage-based philosophy of Education 5.0. A dedicated module on CBT at the undergraduate level promotes the preservation of culture and sustainable development. CBT education can aid in ensuring that traditions, crafts, and indigenous knowledge are actively practised and passed down through tourism activities, while also fostering local participation and economic empowerment through jobs and governance in tourism ventures.

To improve the management of CBT, it is also important to reach out to communities educating them on the fundamentals of CBT, how communities should be involved, how they should manage the CBT, and how they can improve their products to attract more tourists. The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS), and the CAMPFIRE association have made efforts to educate the communities on basic management skills and accounting skills. However, the skills are not adequate: there is a need for universities to educate and train on tourism product innovation, customer services, housekeeping and culinary art skills that are needed in the industry. Ashely et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of capacity building in empowering local communities to enhance their ability to manage tourism activities. In the same vein, Imbaya et al. (2019) observed that it is crucial to provide training and capacity building programmes to community members in tourism management, hospitality, tour guiding, marketing and environmental conservation. Resultantly, key organisations in tourism and universities have a lead role in training and skills development for locals.

Empirical data revealed that local participation in tourism activities is still passive. Several researchers with interests in CBT have discussed extensively the barriers to the participation of local people in CBT. Nunkoo and Smith (2014) observed that limited access to resources prevents some community members from participating in tourism development. Hosting tourists requires certain resources, yet many households lack the financial means, infrastructure, and technological capacity necessary for active involvement in the tourism sector. Active participation is hindered by a lack of education and skills as observed by Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021); while Perez Garcia et al. (2021) highlighted that cultural norms and social structures may restrict the participation of certain individuals. Jamal and Stronza (2009) alluded that lack of access to market opportunities on information about tourism can hinder locals from successfully promoting and selling their products and services. Resultantly, it is crucial to strengthen community participation through capacity building and decision-making processes involving community members in all stages of planning and development and ensuring that the community voices are heard, and their interests are well-represented.

To rejuvenate CBT enterprises, key informants also emphasised the need for devolution of power to the community. In many 'community-owned' enterprises, while

ownership is technically vested in the community, key decisions, including the determination of profit-sharing ratios, are typically made by the (RDC). Devolution of power in CBTs is important for ensuring local ownership, sustainability, and equitable distribution of benefits. It is essential for the RDCs to encourage locals to take full control of the enterprises as well as make decisions on the profit-sharing ratios as mentioned by respondents. Jamal and Stronza (2009) advocated for legal frameworks and policies that empower the community members as well as protect the rights of local communities in tourism developments. Zhang et al. (2020), also emphasised the importance of supporting community-owned enterprises such as homestays, craft cooperatives, and tour guiding services ensuring direct economic benefits to the locals.

Revenue sharing is also a key factor in CBT. Empirical findings have reflected that community members tend to sabotage conservation initiatives that do not benefit them by engaging in activities such as poaching, and mining within the conservancies or vandalising the establishments. Consequently, it is important to ensure the trickle down of proceeds to the community. According to Hall and Williams (2019), it is important to have transparent mechanisms for revenue sharing so that every beneficiary of the enterprise is satisfied with the sharing ratios. Further, Hall and Williams (2019) emphasised the importance of reinvesting a portion of the proceeds for community development projects, infrastructure improvements and social welfare. The findings indicated that the RDC has managed to facilitate community development projects as well as infrastructure improvements, but more could be done to ensure that some of the proceeds are channelled into tourism product developments and improvements.

Cultural preservation is also important in CBT. Several CBTs in Zimbabwe are located in more conservative areas where culture and tradition are still part of their day-to-day living. It is important to integrate cultural preservation efforts into tourism initiatives, ensuring that indigenous knowledge and traditions are respected and safeguarded (McLeod, 2022). Holden and Fennel (2012) acknowledged the importance of offering diverse tourism experiences, showcasing the unique culture, tradition, and natural attractions in community tourism. For this reason, CBTEs needs to be strongly rooted in tradition and culture so that the locals can participate in offering tourist services based on what they know and can deliver perfectly.

The success and progress of any establishment also need continuous monitoring and evaluation. It is crucial for key stakeholders such as the ZTA, ZIMPARKS, and universities to extend their expertise in monitoring and evaluation of these CBTs. Specific indicators that reflect the progress and impact of the CBT project should be identified. These indicators should be relevant to the project objectives and measurable over time. Monitoring and evaluation may include the assessment of visitor arrivals, revenue generated, employment created, community participation rates, and changes in biodiversity. It is also crucial to come up with a system for regular monitoring of project activities and the progress of the projects and ensure that monitoring and evaluation of CBTs occur throughout the project life cycle.

6.11 The transformative education model for improved CBT

This study has so far reflected that:

- **Current state of CBTs:** Ever since the pulling out of donor funding and the socio-economic instability in the early 2000s CBT enterprises have been struggling to the extent that some enterprises have become defunct while some are still running but failing to yield meaningful benefits for the communities.
- **CBT management:** There are challenges with the current CBT management systems and there is a need to capacitate communities and RDCs so that they can manage CBTs by themselves without overreliance on private operators.
- **Participation of the local community:** Communities either participate passively or not at all. Participation is affected by the management structures, as well as the lack of viable and attractive tourism products.
- **Tourism product:** The current CBT products are mainly wildlife, culture and heritage. However, the products are not well-developed or packaged to attract tourists. Some of the CBTs have become defunct and need rejuvenation.
- **Tourism education:** The success of tourism is dependent on the ability of tourism practitioners to identify and troubleshoot challenges in the industry. The results of the study indicated that CBT is infused within other modules and not as a standalone module. Yet, the curriculum needs to cover CBT more comprehensively at the undergraduate level. The teaching pedagogies should also be effective enough to encourage critical thinking, ideation and innovation.

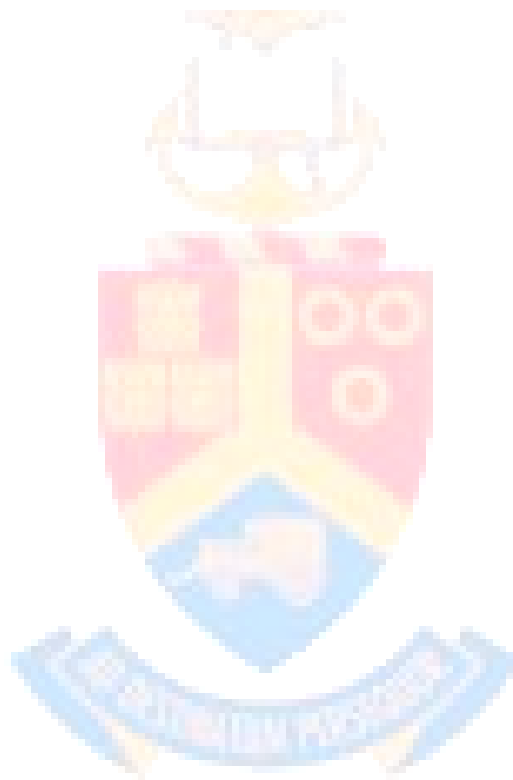
To improve CBT management in Zimbabwe it is crucial to address these key issues. This study posits that for CBT in Zimbabwe to be successful, CBT education and capacity building are crucial. It is important to strengthen community participation through capacity building and community empowerment. Improving the CBT product, capacity building, innovation and technical support is also crucial. One of the key thrusts of this study is to develop a transformative education model that can improve current CBT management. Guided by Mezirow's transformative learning and decolonisation theories, this model is aimed at enhancing how tourism students and community members learn about CBT and how they can be engaged in CBT initiatives. The transformative learning theory posits that adults go through profound cognitive and emotional shifts through critical reflections and dialogue. This model recognises the importance of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical learning to empower learners and foster sustainable development, as well as to enact positive changes within the local communities. Informed by Education 5.0, this model recognises the importance of teaching, research, community engagement, innovation and industrialisation.

6.11.1 Transformative education model for improved CBT

This model can be illustrated by a simple fruit tree analogy.

Tree A represents the current state of most CBTs in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that some CBTs are defunct which is represented by a half-dead tree which is still standing but lacks the required nutrition and water to come back to life and produce fruit. The sun and rain represent the environment in which any business operates and does not have control over. The environment may be a positive or negative one for any business to operate in and survive. Tree B is receiving water supply from different cans to revive it. The tree is also getting a manure (nutrition) supply and energy from the sun. The cans represent elements that have to be added to CBT so that it can be revived. Tree C represents the desired outcome, the ideal CBT. The ideal CBT is represented by a tree full of life and producing fruit. The green leaves represent a well-functioning CBTE, and the fruit represents the economic benefits to the local people. The watering cans represent all the factors that can be input and controlled to supply the required nutrition to the tree. A tree also sheds its leaves which become the

required nutrient for the tree in the future. The model suggests that if CBT is well supported by education, and community participation, it has the potential to be like a tree full of life that can produce benefits for the community and also sustain itself.



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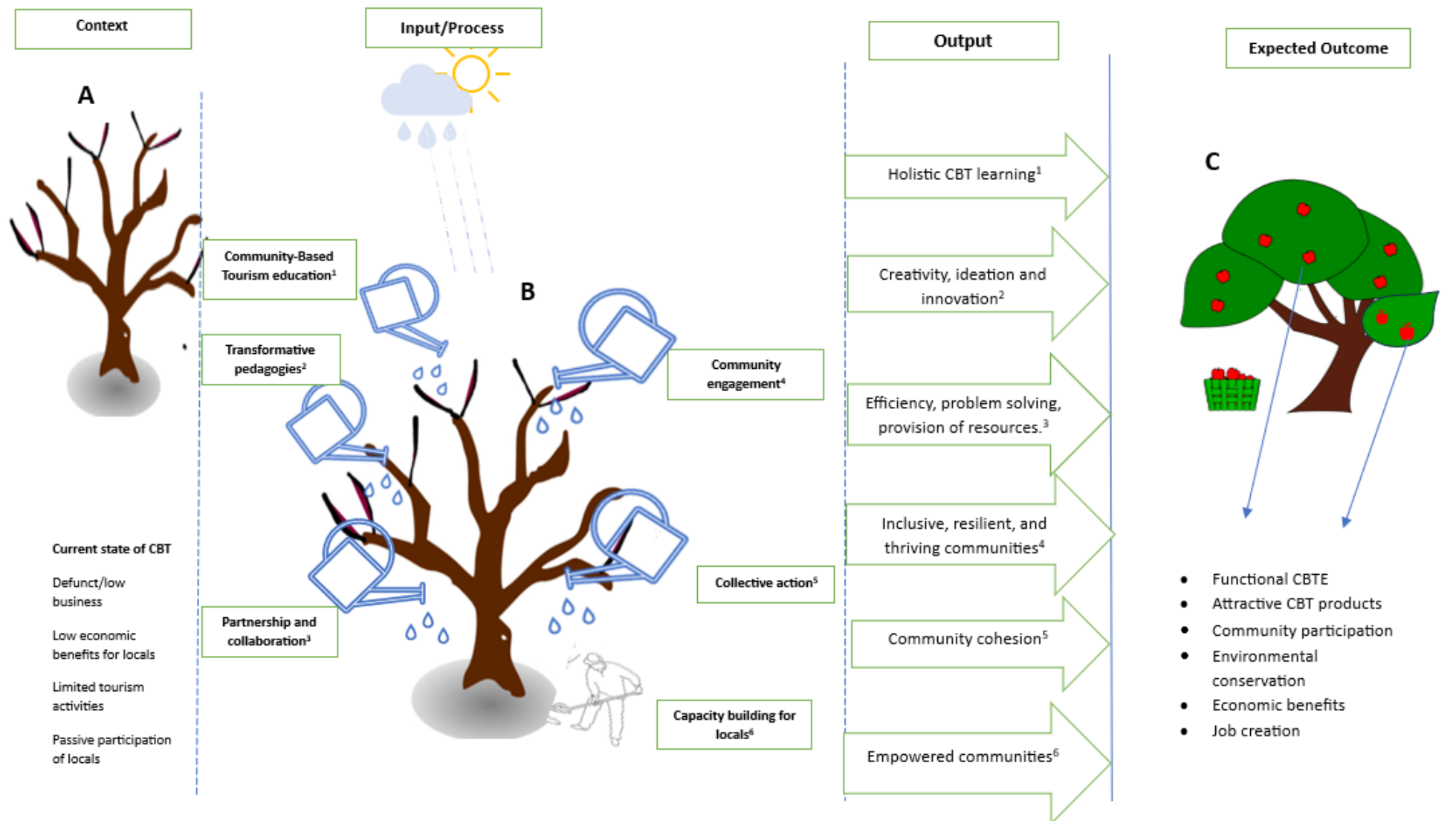


Figure 6.2 Transformative education model for improved CBT Source: author's own creation)

Figure 6.3 illustrates a model with four processes that can be applied to improve CBT management and development. The four processes include the context, inputs, outputs and outcomes. The contextual variables are the variables that denotes the current state of CBT enterprises which are low business, low economic benefits, limited tourism activities and passive participation. In order to address these issues, the six indexed factors have been suggested as the major inputs that can produce expected outputs. Each input corresponds with an expected output, for example CBT education¹ input corresponds with holistic CBT learning¹. This section discusses the inputs of the model and the expected outputs.

i. CBT education¹

This model suggests that CBT should be incorporated into tourism education as a standalone module or as a specialisation module in the final year. An interdisciplinary approach to CBT education should be taken when developing the CBT curriculum. It is crucial to note that integrating CBT into the curriculum indicates a significant move towards a decolonised, heritage-based approach to tourism education that is specifically contextualised to Zimbabwe. Embedding CBT into the curriculum can help educators to shift away from traditional Eurocentric tourism models and instead focus on frameworks that prioritise local heritage, indigenous knowledge and sustainable community engagement. A decolonised curriculum challenges students to critically analyse colonial legacies in tourism, promoting a tourism model that respects local traditions, environmental stewardship and social well-being.

Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017) also proposed a qualification in CBT at degree level to fill the gaps in CBT capacity. CBT involves various disciplines such as tourism, anthropology, ecology, business management and economics. To address the current gaps in tourism McGrath et al. (2021), proposed that an interdisciplinary approach should be taken to enrich the students' perspectives, equipping them with a holistic understanding. CBT emerged as a socio-ecological concept that is intended to address the issues of equity in natural resources management as well as promote cultural and environmental preservation. The concept, however, lacked a sound commercial and business orientation and, as a result, after the pulling of donor funding some of the CBTs could not self-sustain and became defunct. CBT education must be

well balanced so that managers of CBT establishments have an understanding of how they can work with communities, encouraging culture and heritage preservation as well as valuing the local people. Conversely, it is important to understand aspects of environmental management. CBT also involves interactions with community members. Tourism education must incorporate skills such as empathy, communication, collaboration and conflict resolution skills so that learners are able to navigate relationships, manage emotions and work effectively in diverse settings. Addressing these areas lead to **holistic CBT learning**¹.

Implementation strategies:

- Develop a standalone module or short course focusing on the philosophy, principles and practices of CBT
- Embed case studies, field visits, virtual trips and indigenous tourism models to contextualise learning.
- Promote interdisciplinary learning by linking CBT to subjects like environmental management, sociology and development studies so that learner have knowledge on ecological conservation, understand social structures, power relations and community identities as well as understanding economic development, community empowerment and sustainability.

ii. CBT education pedagogies²

The pedagogies used in CBT education should encourage critical thinking and self-reflection and should influence students to develop interests in a particular subject. Azadovna (2023) observed the importance of using modern pedagogies to shape a student's orientation to the priority of national values. To identify and troubleshoot challenges in CBT and find solutions to rejuvenate CBT it is important to encourage critical thinking. Formal CBT education should be structured in a way that encourages students to question, analyse and evaluate situations and proffer solutions to identified problems. This can be achieved through the use of pedagogies such as experiential learning that encourage independent thinking, problem-solving creativity and making well-informed decisions. Tourism students should go on field trips to CBT enterprises to get an appreciation of CBT. Students need to have a visual appreciation of the tourism products so that they may be able to link the theory and what is on the ground. Instead of just studying theories in a classroom setting, students must participate in

real-world projects, gaining practical skills and insights that deepen their understanding of CBT principles. Yeager et al. (2022) observed that the use of transformative pedagogies encourages the development of the student's self-efficacy.

Technology integration in the learning process enables students to acquire digital literacy and access diverse resources. With the advent of new technologies, virtual trips to CBT establishments may be used to bridge the financial difficulties of physically visiting the establishments. This then calls for the relevant stakeholders such as universities, the ZTA and other private institutions to collaborate and develop virtual materials that can be used for CBT learning. Providing ongoing training and support for educators to enhance their teaching practices, staying updated with research and pedagogical trends, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning within educational institutions are also essential.

Industry engagement workshops and working holidays can foster self-reflection and awareness. Tourism is a broad discipline, and offering career guidance, and industry engagement workshops could help the learners develop self-awareness, and understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, interests, values, preconceptions and misconceptions. Successful self-reflection leads to critical reflection where learners begin to question their assumptions, analyse power dynamics and consider the ethical implications of their actions. Critical reflection enables learners to develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of CBT.

Pedagogies used should encourage ideation and innovation among tourism students. Project-based learning approach can also be used whereby students work on real-world projects which foster creativity, innovativeness, problem-solving, entrepreneurship and practical application of knowledge. Students can design CBT project plans, tourism products, tourism activities and pricing of the products for an ideal CBTE. University students should not be just passive learners waiting for employment after completion of their degree but should take part in solving problems in the industry. Stone and Duffy (2015) highlighted the importance of transformative learning in tourism studies and emphasised that tourism educators should incorporate teaching strategies that are experiential and facilitate critical reflection. Transformative pedagogies can ultimately lead to **creativity, ideation and innovation**².

Transformative pedagogies strategies for implementation

- Incorporate emotion-focused, discomfort-inducing methods such as storytelling, critical debates, role plays and discussions.
- Encourage critical reflection journals, group dialogues and learner led inquiries to allow to process their experiences and assumptions.
- Use experiential learning throughout CBT immersion projects, service learning and community-based research.
- Evaluate learning through reflective assessments such as presentations, action plans, research assignments rather than tests only.

iii. Partnership and collaboration³

Improving CBT also requires collaborations with various stakeholders to ensure that initiatives are sustainable, culturally sensitive and beneficial for both tourists and local communities. Scholars have observed the importance of collaborative partnerships in the success of CBTEs (Backman and Munanura, 2015; Butcher and Gilchrist, 2020; Ngo, Lohmann and Hales, 2018) through the provision of expertise, finance, and support infrastructure. By engaging diverse stakeholders and fostering collaborative partnerships, CBT initiatives can achieve greater impact, resilience, and sustainability while promoting inclusive development and empowerment with local communities. These stakeholders include local communities, tourism operators and businesses, government agencies, finance institutions, NGOs and academic and research institutions. Successful CBT is a product of capital and skills investments. Collaborations and partnerships with different stakeholders can bring diverse resources into the basket for the development of the CBT product. Collaborative partners and universities should engage in continuous monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of educational initiatives and identify areas of improvement. This process ensures that the curriculum remains relevant, responsive and effective in addressing the evolving needs of both students and communities. Education institutions should also play an active role in the research, monitoring and evaluation of CBT projects assessing the impacts of the projects on the community. Feedback loops or channels should be put in place where communities can also give feedback

on the challenges, opportunities and successes of their enterprises. Successful partnership and collaboration can lead to **efficiency, problem solving and provision of resources**³.

Implementation strategies

- Forge partnership with local CBTs, NGOs and tourism enterprises to co-design and co-deliver modules.
- Involve practitioners, community leaders and alumni guest lecturers, mentors and co-facilitators.
- Work with government tourism departments to align CBT education with national strategies and policy frameworks.
- Develop Memoranda of Understanding with community organisations to formalise collaboration.

iv. Community engagement⁴

Engaging students in meaningful community service projects and civic partnership activities instil a sense of social responsibility, empathy and understanding of the importance of contributing to the well-being of others. There is a need for active involvement with local communities through collaborative projects, research, field visits and internships where students work directly with communities to understand their needs, challenges and aspirations. An analysis of selected papers on the importance of community engagement by Giampiccoli (2019) revealed that community engagement learning develops learners' and educators' capacity for social responsibility. Manowaluilou (2017), concluded that the present environment implies an increase in the expectations placed on higher education to educate socially responsible citizens and graduates capable of solving complicated challenges in an increasingly complex world and therefore community engagement is crucial. If the community is engaged in CBT projects this can ultimately lead to inclusivity, as well as **resilient and thriving communities**⁴.

Implementation strategies for universities:

- Create community-led learning spaces where locals share their knowledge and practices with students.

- Establish community advisory boards to inform curriculum content, assessment methods and student projects.
- Conduct needs assessments with local stakeholders to understand their tourism development priorities and align them with the educational activities.
- Design joint community-university projects such as tourism mapping, homestay design and tour guide training.

v. **Collective action**

Collective action by communities makes it possible for communities to form networks with the government to achieve conservation. By pooling resources, expertise, and efforts, collective action amplifies the impact of individuals or groups, giving them greater influence and bargaining power. This enables them to advocate for their interests, demand change, and address issues that may be beyond their reach as individuals. According to Musavengane and Kloppers (2020) collective action enables local communities to form networks that can help in achieving conservation. Collective action allows for the sharing of resources, knowledge, and responsibilities between participants, making it more efficient and cost-effective to achieve common objectives and participate in CBT projects. The major driver for collective action is the benefits to be gained after the collective action and this also encourages **community cohesion**⁵.

Implementation strategies

- Establishing strong local governance structures CBT committees with representatives from different groups such as women, youth, men and the elderly. Set up clear roles, responsibilities and decision-making protocols
- Develop a community tourism constitution or charter to guide operations and protect community interests.
- Facilitate inclusive participation through use of participatory tools such as community mapping, and focus group discussions to involve all community voices.
- Design transparent systems to distribute income, invest part of the revenue to tourism developments and community wide benefits such as water access, schools and health facilities.

vi. Capacity building for locals⁶

Currently, locals play an insignificant role in the management and development of CBTs due to inadequate knowledge. It is important to capacitate the local people so that they can participate in CBT projects. It is important to identify local people's interests and provide skills training for those particular interests. In any given community people have diverse talents and skills which they use for survival such as catering, sculpture, tailoring, agriculture, basketry, carpentry, building, dancers, herbalists, etc. All these skills and talents can be cultivated to find a group of locals who can provide attractive curios for tourists, standard food and beverage facilities, standard accommodation facilities and entertainment for tourists. When locals are well-capacitated, this leads to **empowered communities**⁶.

Implementation strategies

- Offer short but ongoing courses, workshops and certificate programs in CBT management, and areas such as housekeeping, culinary arts, marketing, customer services and sustainability practices for local community members.
- Support peer-to-peer training models where experienced CBT practitioners train newcomers within their communities.

Implementing this model requires a strategic, inclusive and flexible approach. It is important to have institutional support from university leadership and align the model with broader strategic goals. Continuous monitoring and evaluation is needed to ensure success of the model. There is also a need to ensure that all voices are represented. Funding is also an important aspect that should be considered. Institutions and communities can leverage government grants, donor funding and industry sponsorship to support CBT education and community initiatives.

An implementation of this framework can lead to the following expected outcomes:

- ✓ Functional CBTE;
- ✓ Attractive CBT products;
- ✓ Community participation;
- ✓ Environmental conservation and cultural preservation;
- ✓ Improved economic benefits and;

- ✓ Job creation.

Summary

This chapter gave a detailed discussion of the perception of different stakeholders of CBT and its current state. The chapter also unveiled the extent of CBT coverage in the tourism education curriculum. CBTs are currently underperforming and there is a need to revive these enterprises. Currently, the tourism education curriculum at undergraduate level does not have a standalone CBT module. To address the challenges affecting CBT a Transformative Education Model was recommended to assist with the revival of CBT. The next chapter presents the conclusion of this study as well as recommendations.



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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the study's key findings, draws conclusions based on the research objectives, and offers strategic recommendations for the future design, implementation, and sustainability of community-based tourism (CBT) projects. The findings synthesised in the chapter provide insights into the challenges and gaps in CBT implementation, and education, highlighting critical areas for improvement to enhance local community engagement, environmental sustainability, and economic impact. In addition, the chapter identifies best practices that emerged from the study and suggests practical, actionable steps for policymakers, institutions, and development agencies to optimise the outcomes of CBT initiatives in rural and underserved regions. The chapter also provides recommendations which aim to promote the long-term success of CBT projects, ensuring that they provide tangible benefits to host communities while preserving cultural heritage and natural resources.

Chapter 1 introduced the study laying out its foundations. Chapter 2 focused on the literature review: the key findings from the literature were that scholars agree that CBT is a viable livelihood option for marginalised communities as well as an effective strategy for natural resources conservation and preservation of culture. However, the concept is yet to be understood as an academic subject leading to gaps in understanding and implementation. These gaps include a limited understanding of community-based tourism (CBT) as both a concept and field of study, as well as the misconception that CBT is exclusively applicable to rural contexts and is commonly associated only with initiatives like CAMPFIRE projects. Additionally, CBT is insufficiently integrated into undergraduate curricula, resulting in inadequate foundational knowledge among students at this level. As far as policy is concerned; Zimbabwe has come up with policies and strategies that support CBT development. However, the policies still give more power to the formal structures marginalising the traditional leaders. The chapter also examined the perspectives of various scholars on tourism education and its capacity to address existing gaps within the industry. Most scholars argue that tourism education in tertiary education could be improved to

address the gaps in the industry. Chapter 3 presented the theoretical underpinnings of the study which are the sustainable development theory and Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. The pathway that the study took was presented in Chapter 4, in the methodology section. The study used a mixed research methodology using triangulation methods. Chapter 5 presented the findings of the study, revealing that CBT is not adequately covered in undergraduate programmes. Out of the six-degree programmes included in the study, only one university was offering CBT as a module while in four other universities CBT was embedded in other modules. The discussion of the findings supported by relevant literature, as well as the model for improved CBT was covered in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 is the final chapter aimed at summarising the key findings of the study and providing conclusions to emerging issues on community-based tourism and tourism education. The chapter also highlights the contribution of the study as well as giving recommendations.

The study sought to:

- i. To critically examine and interpret the perspectives, concerns and misconceptions of educators, employees and key stakeholders regarding community-based tourism in Zimbabwe.
- ii. To establish the extent to which the current tourism curriculum covers the concept of CBT.
- iii. To determine how tourism students may be better equipped to develop and manage Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs).
- iv. To develop a transformative education model for improved CBT management.

Participants from key organisations, university lecturers, and students contributed to establishing the perceptions of different stakeholders regarding CBT. University students and lecturers contributed to establishing the level and extent to which CBT is covered in the Zimbabwean tourism education curriculum and to determine how tourism students can be better equipped to develop and manage CBTEs.

7.1 Perceptions, conceptions, and misconceptions of different stakeholders regarding CBT

The study revealed that stakeholders have different views concerning CBT as does the extant literature reviewed. In Zimbabwe, separating CBT from the CAMPFIRE programme is still a challenge. Consequently, new enterprises use the same implementing strategy as that of the CAMPFIRE programme which has been criticised for bureaucracy due to the excessive administration process which hinders timely decision-making and is unresponsive to community needs (Murphree, 1997). This has also led to passive community participation since communities are not actively involved in decision-making. It is therefore important for future enterprises to learn from the criticisms of the CAMPFIRE model and adopt more flexible approaches that allow for local input and customisation based on community feedback.

Empirical findings showed that some respondents believed that CBT is a project that every member of the community should participate in and benefit from. Yet in reality, not every community member should be a direct beneficiary as postulated by Warinda and van der Merwe (2023). Understanding that CBTs can be established by individual families and smaller groups from the community is crucial to facilitating a change in the current approach and implementation of CBT projects. A community is defined as a group of individuals residing within the same geographical area; however, as highlighted by Fan, Ng, and Bayrak (2023), such groups are not necessarily homogeneous in terms of interests and objectives. In reality, communities are often characterised by a heterogeneous composition, reflecting a wide array of interests and aspirations. Given the existing gaps in understanding CBT, this study advocates for the inclusion of CBT as a stand-alone module within the tourism education curriculum. This addition would provide students with a comprehensive understanding of CBT, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage effectively with diverse community dynamics in tourism development.

Respondents agreed that, if well implemented, CBT can be a viable rural livelihood diversification option just like any other rural livelihood strategy like agriculture and mining. The development and growth of community-based tourism (CBT) have faced significant obstacles, including insufficient local capacity and expertise, financial

constraints, and inadequate marketing strategies that undermine economic viability. These findings align with the research conducted by scholars such as Shereni and Saarinen (2021), Zielinski et al. (2020), and Tesfaye (2017). Additionally, there are several other challenges which have further hindered progress, notably a lack of product innovation, minimal community engagement and the centralisation of authority within formal structures. To ensure the growth and development of CBTs it is crucial to address these challenges through strategic partnerships and collaboration, community engagement, devolution of power, capacity building for locals and collective action at the community level.

The results of this research show that there is still a passive participation of locals in CBT projects due to a lack of capacity and financial incentives as noted in other studies (Chiutsi and Saarinen, 2017; Giampiccoli and Glassom, 2020). Encouraging community participation in CBT is essential for creating sustainable and inclusive tourism experiences that benefit both locals and visitors. Empirical findings suggest that participation may be encouraged through education and awareness, inclusivity and representation, capacity building and through encouraging local leadership and ownership.

The current CBT management model reveals that local communities are heavily dependent on private operators for resources and market access, which increases their vulnerability. This is in agreement with Bello, Lovelock, and Carr's (2017) assertion that private operators often engage in opportunistic behaviour to maximise their profits while excluding locals from meaningful economic participation. Research findings revealed that reliance on private operators undermines sustainability, limits community involvement and reduces the overall benefits received by the community. Empirical findings have also reflected that community-based tourism enterprises have relied on NGO funding and are now reliant on the private sector for management as also observed by Chiutsi and Saarinen (2017). This indicates that communities cannot fund and manage their enterprises.

However, if communities were better organised and empowered, community-owned enterprises would be more favourable, as they would ensure both greater local participation and maximum financial returns. In cases where community members do not have the capacity to manage the enterprises, they could hire managers to report

directly to the community, aiding in both management and development. Giampiccoli and Glassom (2020) emphasise the crucial role of external funding from diverse sources (such as financial institutions, private operators, NGOs, and universities) in improving community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives. This diversity funding model fosters collaboration across sectors, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of CBT projects by combining financial resources with local knowledge. Furthermore, it supports capacity building and innovation, allowing communities to develop essential skills and adapt strategies for long-term viability. However, there are risks associated with dependency on external funding, including potential misalignment of goals and loss of local autonomy.

Sakata and Prideaux (2013) suggested that the methods and techniques used in the implementation of CBT may result in problems and failure of CBTs if not carefully implemented. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the right people are put in place to help the community in the management of their enterprises. The government should prioritise having active tourism departments within the districts since tourism has proven to be a great vehicle for community development. Village and ward committees are typically constituted through electoral processes that often emphasise personal appeal over professional competence, which can undermine their core objectives. To advance tourism initiatives more effectively, the selection of committee members should be guided by their relevant interests, skills, and expertise.

The study also revealed that current CBTs do not have a diversified product range. CBTEs should aim to provide competitive tourism products and tourism activities that are interactive in nature. The current understanding and perception of CBT have, however, limited the participation of locals in tourism activities, product development, as well as the economic benefits from CBT. In an ideal model of CBT, local community members can provide homestays, cultural tours and workshops, community guided tours, artisanal craft and souvenirs and culinary, cultural, and performance festivals supporting the main tourism products such as wildlife and cultural villages. Exploring additional tourism activities to enhance the tourism product offering is essential. These activities may include guided nature walks, hiking excursions, agricultural tours, outdoor cooking classes, craft workshops, traditional outdoor games, and storytelling sessions around the campfire. By incorporating these low-cost experiences, tourism operators can provide visitors with a richer, more diverse range of activities that

promote cultural engagement and environmental appreciation, ultimately strengthening the overall tourism experience. Support activities should attract different age groups and also support community participation.

7.2 The extent of CBT coverage in tourism degrees

As observed by Jugmohan and Giampiccoli (2017), there is a need for a qualification or a module in CBT since it is now a topical concept. This thesis highlights that CBT is currently infused within other modules at the undergraduate level, with only one university (MSU) offering a module in CBT. A random check of several university websites across the globe indicated that CBT is yet to be incorporated as a stand-alone module in their degree programmes, too. There are also still very few proponents in literature advocating for CBT to be incorporated as a stand-alone module.

Empirical data suggests that tourism curricula should have a stand-alone module on CBT as it covers many tourism aspects, such as agrotourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, and urban tourism. The inclusion of CBT in the curriculum as a module aligns with the heritage-based philosophy, which promotes education that equips students with the knowledge to effectively utilise local resources, driving the transition towards an industrialised and modernised economy. It is crucial to have a dedicated module on CBT that covers aspects of CBT such as the principles, concepts, sustainable development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Incorporating these elements into the tourism curriculum will help students gain a deep understanding of CBT, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to support sustainable tourism development and community empowerment in future careers (Jugmohan and Giampiccoli, 2017). The curriculum should also try to encourage students to develop their own CBT project proposals as part of their coursework, focusing on aspects such as community engagement, sustainability, and business planning. Universities can also promote collaborative research opportunities where students and lecturers work closely with local communities to study and document their tourism resources.

The history of tourism studies can be traced back to the nations of the Global North and therefore tourism studies have been shaped by the context in which they have

been developed. Consequently, the majority of formal tourism education is based on Eurocentric perspectives. An example in the hospitality sector is in the culinary industry: some of the most renowned cuisines originate from European countries, such as French, Italian, and Portuguese dishes. However, there is a need for an Afrocentric perspective in tourism education that emphasises unique African contexts and cultures, thus reflecting the specific socioeconomic and environmental contexts of African nations. This study, therefore, proposes that tourism education adopts an African perspective, a heritage-based philosophy, and becomes more country-specific so that universities are able to produce graduates that can address industry challenges and gaps. The current failure and stagnation of CBT reflects a curriculum that has not emphasised the specific gaps in the industry. The tourism and hospitality fields are very broad and there is a need for Zimbabwe and other developing countries to come up with a tourism curriculum that addresses gaps and develops tourism in their own countries.

Operationalising transformative and heritage-based models requires educational institutions to critically reframe their curricula, pedagogies and institutional practices to move beyond superficial inclusion (tokenism) and truly centre indigenous knowledge systems, cultural values and lived experiences. It is important to co-create the curriculum with the traditional leaders, community leaders and cultural practitioners. This involves re-imagining curriculum design by collaborating directly with indigenous communities as co-creator of knowledge, embedding local languages, oral traditions, cultural practices and ecological wisdom into tourism education. Transformative learning theories advocates for pedagogies that are dialogical, critical and emotion-driven encouraging students to confront their assumptions and power dynamics while engaging with real-world community experiences (Mezirow, 2000; Walker and Manyamba,2019). Heritage as a pedagogical tool, offers a gateway for students to learn through lived cultural expressions and dynamic traditions, not as static artefact but evolving forms of identity and resilience (Hale and Jennings,2017).

To avoid tokenism, institutions must implement structures such as indigenous knowledge advisory committees composed of traditional leaders, elders, cultural custodians and local CBT practitioners who can guide curriculum development and validate content from an indigenous epistemological standpoint. Academic institutions should also adopt alternative assessment strategies such as storytelling, participatory

action research and community presentations (Hsu, 2018). This approach can transform students from being passive learners into critically conscious practitioners and positions CBT not merely as tourism model but as a site of cultural affirmation, decolonial resistance and community empowerment.

Operationalising transformative and heritage-based models requires strategic, low cost, and community-driven approaches that leverage existing local assets, partnerships and non-financial resources. Indigenous knowledge could be embedded with existing courses, thereby reducing curriculum development costs. Institutions can engage traditional leaders, elders and local cultural practitioners as guest speakers. The use of virtual trips, digital storytelling platforms university educational resources, and mobile-based or electronic content could be used to support teaching and assessment aligned with indigenous and transformative pedagogies while reducing while minimising travel and accommodation costs.

While many tourism students argue that tourism degree programmes are overly packed, lecturers maintain that these programmes are appropriately designed to equip students with the foundational knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about future specialisations. Kumar et al. (2020) contend that the extensive nature of these programmes results in graduates becoming "Jacks of all trades but masters of none". Lecturers generally advocate that specialisation and mastery of particular concepts should be reserved for postgraduate studies, such as at the master's level, rather than during undergraduate education. The lecturers' perspective emphasises that specialisation should occur at the postgraduate level, where students can delve deeper into specific areas of interest. However, this approach may overlook the benefits of introducing some level of specialisation or practical application at the undergraduate stage, which could better prepare students for immediate employment. The study therefore suggests that university institutions should consider re-evaluating the structure of undergraduate tourism programmes to integrate core foundational modules with opportunities for students to choose elective modules or areas to specialise in. This hybrid approach could allow for both breadth and depth, enabling students to explore specific areas of interest while still receiving a comprehensive education.

Empirical findings revealed that undergraduate programmes in tourism and hospitality are intended to offer a comprehensive overview of the industry, exposing students to multiple facets and opportunities. It is, therefore, crucial that bachelor's degree curricula are structured in ways that address key industry needs and fill potential gaps. Some universities provide avenues for specialisation; for example, in South Africa, the University of South Africa (UNISA) offers Honours programmes that allow students to focus on specific areas of interest. This study emphasises the importance of integrating CBT into the curriculum as an elective module, particularly in the final year. Including CBT would better prepare students to engage with sustainable tourism practices and meet emerging industry demands.

Policy reforms in tourism education are therefore essential to bridge the gaps revealed in the current curriculum. Policy should promote the adoption of transformative pedagogies such as experiential learning, community engagement and reflective practice that move beyond theoretical instruction. In as much there is Education 5.0 that tries to encourage innovation, research, community engagement and entrepreneurship, there is a need for reforms that can better align tourism education with the real-world demands of sustainable and community centred tourism, ultimately contributing to the revival and resilience of CBTs. Policies that strengthen industry-academia linkages, that facilitate easier formalisation of partnerships between universities and tourism organisations. This will help to enhance student exposure and create mutual benefits. Government regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) could work with universities in developing curriculum standards that include CBT as a core module, provide funding, subsidies and grants for universities and CBTEs to support student placements and curriculum development. The Government bodies could also monitor and accredit tourism programmes based on inclusion of sustainability and CBT-related competencies.

To successfully incorporate CBT in the curriculum, it is important for academic institutions to co-design relevant training programmes and internships and also advocate for policies that align industry needs with educational outcomes. Rural District Councils also play a crucial role in supporting CBTEs. It is therefore important that RDCs have functional tourism departments where students can also be placed and have experience in CBTE management.

7.3 Equipping students to manage CBT

Current programmes appear to lack sufficient visibility and emphasis on CBT as many students demonstrated only a superficial understanding of the subject and approximately 70% of the students reported that they were not adequately prepared to manage CBTEs. Empirical evidence indicates that the effective preparation of students for managing and developing CBTE necessitates the incorporation of a specialised module within the curriculum. This dedicated module would provide students with targeted knowledge and practical skills critical for addressing the unique challenges and opportunities associated with CBTE, thereby enhancing their competence and readiness for the tourism industry. This module should be offered either as a mandatory or elective module in the final year, rather than being integrated into other subjects, to ensure focused and comprehensive learning. Industry professionals emphasised the importance of adopting more practical learning methods to deepen students' grasp of CBTE. While students seem well-prepared theoretically, their practical skills were reported to be underdeveloped, raising concerns about their readiness for real-world application. To bridge this gap, incorporating experiential learning opportunities such as practical workshops, guest lectures from industry experts, and research projects focused on CBTE would enhance students' competencies and better align academic outcomes with industry expectations.

As reflected by research findings there is still difficulty in engaging black professionals to market safari and hunting concessions, highlighting the persistence of racialised perceptions of expertise. There is an implicit suggestion that black professionals are not yet equally capable of reaching the international markets or as qualified as their white counterparts. Colonialism often positioned indigenous people as inferior and incapable of managing or leading complex economic ventures, and those perceptions still linger. This aligns with Maldonado-Torres's concept of "racial capitalism," which underscores how colonial histories have constructed hierarchies of knowledge and authority based on race, perpetuating notions of inferiority among indigenous populations (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The reliance on white operators could be a reflection of ingrained biases both locally and internationally about who is seen as more qualified or trustworthy in leading high-end tourism ventures. This reflects a

postcolonial critique of how knowledge and expertise are racialised, continuing to disadvantage black professionals.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's and Ndlovu-Gatsheni exploration of the decolonisation of the mind emphasises the need to challenge and dismantle colonial narratives that have historically positioned indigenous people as incapable of managing or leading complex economic ventures (Wa Thiong'o, 1998). It is imperative that tourism education curricula actively work to dismantle these legacies of colonialism and promote genuine inclusion and equity. This can be achieved by integrating indigenous perspectives, fostering critical discussions about race and expertise and developing partnerships with black professionals to ensure their voices and experiences are represented in tourism practices. By doing so, educational institutions can contribute to the creation of a more equitable tourism landscape that recognises and values the expertise of all professionals, regardless of race.

Pedagogies used in tourism education should also support the heritage-based philosophy, emphasising experiential learning, critical thinking, community engagement research, and fostering a deep appreciation of the local heritage and culture. Approaches such as project-based learning enable learners to work on real-world initiatives, encouraging creativity and problem-solving while linking theory to practice (Wahbeh et al., 2021). Incorporating field trips to CBTs and local tourism enterprises allows the students to visualise and engage with tourism products while enhancing their understanding of heritage preservation. Additionally, the integration of digital tools facilitates access to diverse resources and virtual experiences to make heritage-based education more inclusive. Collaborative partnerships with local communities, stakeholders, and industry professionals may further enrich the learning experience, and promote self-reflection and ethical considerations in tourism practices.

As revealed in the study, incorporating effective and practical pedagogies in tourism education is hindered by a lack of adequate financial resources. Some students are not able to go on field trips due to lack of financial resources. This then creates inequitable learning experiences and uneven skills acquisition. To bridge this gap universities may mobilise financial resources through developing industry partnerships and sponsorships, as well as engaging in research and consultancy projects. The

financial gap can also be bridged by organising cost-effective fieldwork and leveraging technology for remote learning through the use of virtual realities, and virtual trips. Nonetheless, the cost of accessing these technologies can be prohibitive for institutions. To mitigate this challenge, they can implement a comprehensive strategy that involves forming public-private partnerships to enhance infrastructure, establishing community access centres that provide free or low-cost technology resources, and utilising mobile technology to facilitate educational opportunities.

7.4.0 The transformative education model for improved CBT

The findings of the study revealed that approximately 70% of the CBTEs in Zimbabwe have become defunct. The study recommended a mix of strategies that can be employed to revitalise the establishments and a transformative education model aimed at improving the management of CBTEs. The major contribution of the study is a framework for improving CBT implementation through tourism education, capacity building for locals, and community engagement. Universities play a pivotal role in the success of community-based tourism (CBT) by equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective industry participation. Therefore, tourism degree programmes must be designed to address specific gaps within the industry, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the tourism sector. By aligning curricula with industry needs, universities can enhance the relevance and impact of their programmes, fostering a new generation of professionals capable of contributing to sustainable and effective CBT practices.

The ultimate goal of the study was to develop a transformative education model for improved CBT management. This model is informed by the reviewed literature, theoretical framework, and empirical data. They suggest six important factors that can be used to come up with strategies that can improve the management as well as revive CBTs. These are:

- CBT Education.
- Transformative pedagogies.
- Partnership and collaboration.
- Community engagement.

- Collective action.
- Capacity building.

7.4.1 CBT education

Tourism education plays a crucial role in reviving and sustaining the tourism industry. If graduates and researchers are well-equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and innovation-driven mindset, tourism education can foster a stronger and more resilient industry. Incorporation of CBT in the tourism curriculum equips graduates with knowledge in managing, developing, and expanding CBTEs and managing the everchanging market demand. This can also enhance service quality, promote responsible tourism, and foster entrepreneurship. CBT is a form of tourism that is heritage centred, aimed at empowering the indigenous community thereby in line with the heritage-based philosophy.

7.4.2 Transformative pedagogies

Transformative pedagogies can aid in reviving CBT by fostering critical thinking, active engagement, and empowerment of both tourism professionals and community members. These pedagogies put emphasis on participatory learning, encouraging learners to collaborate with local communities in developing sustainable tourism practices that respect the cultural heritage and conservation of natural resources. By promoting experiential learning, such as fieldwork and direct interaction with communities, transformative pedagogies help students and practitioners understand the real-life challenges and opportunities within CBT. This ultimately encourages inclusive decision-making and problem-solving, allowing communities to take ownership of the tourism projects. Locals are also encouraged to create tourism experiences that benefit them economically while preserving their identity and revitalising CBT sustainably and inclusively.

7.4.3 Partnership and collaboration

Strategic partnerships and collaboration are crucial for reviving CBT by pooling resources, expertise and networks to create sustainable and inclusive tourism models. Collaborative efforts between local communities, government agencies, tourism operators, and educational institutions can help in the development of authentic tourism experiences that reflect local culture and traditions. Partnerships can provide access to funding, training, and marketing support, allowing communities to enhance their tourism infrastructure and services. By working together stakeholders can address common challenges such as resource management, product development, and promotion, ensuring that CBT initiatives are not only economically viable but also socially and environmentally sustainable. This collective approach strengthens the resilience of CBT by fostering community ownership, increasing tourist interest, and improving the overall quality of the tourism experience.

7.4.4 Community engagement

Community engagement by universities can aid in reviving CBT through actively involving local communities in research, planning, and capacity-building initiatives. Through service-learning programmes, internships, and participatory research, universities can connect students with community members to co-create tourism strategies that reflect local values and needs. This engagement allows communities to benefit from academic expertise in areas such as sustainable tourism, marketing, and management, while also empowering them to take ownership of CBT initiatives. By facilitating workshops, training, and knowledge exchange, universities can help build the skills and capacity of locals to manage tourism enterprises.

7.4.5. Collective action

Collective action by local communities can aid in reviving CBT by fostering cooperation, shared decision-making, and resource pooling to develop sustainable tourism ventures. When communities work together, they can collectively identify local assets, such as cultural heritage, and natural attractions, and develop tourism products that reflect their shared values and traditions. Through joint efforts, communities can address common challenges like infrastructure development,

marketing, and visitor management, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed equally. Collective action also strengthens local ownership and accountability enhancing the quality and authenticity of the tourism experience. By uniting around a common vision, CBT communities can attract more tourists, boost local economies, and ensure that tourism growth is sustainable and aligned with their cultural and environmental goals.

7.4.6 Capacity building for locals

Capacity building for locals can significantly aid in reviving CBT by equipping the community members with the skills knowledge and resources necessary to manage and promote tourism initiatives effectively. Through training programmes, workshops, and mentorship, locals can learn essential skills such as hospitality management, culinary arts, tour guiding, marketing, and sustainable practices enabling the local community to deliver high-quality tourism experiences. Capacity building also encourages collaboration among community members, promoting teamwork and a shared vision for sustainable tourism development. By enhancing local capabilities, capacity building ultimately leads to more authentic and sustainable initiatives that attract visitors, generate income and preserve cultural heritage while benefiting the community as a whole.

7.5 Reflection on the study

The study managed to give answers to the research questions, unpack the issues around CBT and show how CBT can be improved at the education and industry levels. The study was not exhaustive and did not cover all state universities offering tourism degrees, for example, Lupane State University, and Zimbabwe Open University were not discussed. The study was also limited to state universities; future research could also focus on private universities such as Women's University in Africa and other state universities that were not included in the study.

While this study concentrated on community-based tourism (CBT), there remains a significant need for future research to assess how comprehensively emerging forms of tourism are integrated into the curriculum. Additionally, further studies could

examine the extent to which tourism and hospitality programmes are context-specific and adapted to the unique socio-cultural and economic conditions of each country. Investigating the degree to which these programmes and modules have undergone decolonisation would also offer valuable insights into their alignment with local values and indigenous knowledge systems, ensuring relevance and inclusivity in tourism education.

7.6 Contribution of the study

This study makes significant contributions to CBT literature, and tourism education by critically examining the principles, current management practises and implementation gaps within CBT initiatives. The study sheds light on the disconnect between academic preparation and practical realities of managing CBTs, revealing a need for more responsive and contextually grounded education models. By proposing a Transformative Education Model for improved CBT, the study offers a strategic framework that can guide the reorientation of the tourism curricula, ensuring community participation and capacitation. This model emphasises the importance of experiential learning, critical reflection, sustainability and community engagement which are important in equipping graduates with competencies needed to support and manage CBTs effectively. As such it serves not only as a roadmap for strengthening CBT management on the ground but also as a catalyst for reforming tourism education to align more closely with principles of sustainable and inclusive development.

The researcher had the valuable opportunity to present the PhD research findings at a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Conference held at Mai Chimuti's Integral Village in Buhera in February from the 26th to 29th of March. This platform proved particularly significant as it brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including Rural District Councils (RDCs), representatives from universities, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZIMPARKS), the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), and the Save Conservancy. Academics in attendance expressed agreement with the research findings and emphasized the need to develop concrete implementation strategies for the recommendations presented. Representatives from ZTA and the Ministry of Tourism acknowledged the ongoing challenges in clearly defining CBT in both policy and practice. They observed that, in many cases, it is difficult to distinguish CBT from other

forms of tourism, such as rural tourism enterprises, which complicates classification and support mechanisms. They also noted the importance of revisiting the National Tourism Policy to ensure broader recognition of alternative tourism models and called for these forms such as ecotourism, agrotourism, and cultural tourism to be formally integrated into educational frameworks.

RDCs, on their part, admitted that most of their offices currently lack active tourism departments, which hampers the development and support of local tourism initiatives. They agreed that establishing such departments could significantly contribute to structured tourism planning and development at district level.

University representatives also welcomed the study, highlighting how it aligns with their growing efforts to engage in community-oriented projects, particularly around CBT. However, they pointed out that resource limitations have meant that only a few lecturers are actively participating in such engagement activities. To address this, they are exploring alternative platforms such as rural-based educational conferences to strengthen local CBT awareness and development. Furthermore, the universities acknowledged the structural and bureaucratic challenges involved in integrating CBT as a standalone module within tourism curricula. They suggested that, as a starting point, CBT could be incorporated as a topic within existing modules, while long-term efforts are made to introduce it as a full module. Another concern raised was the low enrolment in newly named degree programmes, such as the Bachelor of Sustainable Tourism, as many prospective students remain more familiar and comfortable with traditional degree titles like Tourism and Hospitality Management. To address this, a flexible structure the researcher proposed a situation, where students could undertake a general tourism degree in the first three years, followed by a specialised honours year, a model that has reportedly worked well in countries like South Africa. A similar approach has been adopted by the Health Sciences School at the University of Zimbabwe, where all students pursuing health sciences begin with a common general foundation programme before specialising in their respective fields later in the course of their studies.

The study therefore has important implications for key stakeholders in Zimbabwe's tourism sector. For ZTA, it highlights the need to support curriculum alignment with national tourism goals and to advocate for the formal recognition of Community-Based

Tourism (CBT) within policy frameworks. ZIMPARKS is encouraged to strengthen partnerships with academic institutions to support practical student training and integrate CBT into conservation and community engagement strategies. For universities, the findings call for urgent curriculum reform to reflect local tourism realities, enhance practical learning, and deepen community engagement, ensuring graduates are better prepared to manage and support sustainable and inclusive tourism initiatives.

7.6.1 Theoretical contribution of the study

This study makes significant theoretical contributions by integrating and extending existing frameworks within sustainability, transformative learning and decolonisation theories to develop a transformative education model for improved community-based tourism in Zimbabwe. The key theoretical contributions include:

Contribution to the Transformative learning theory in Tourism Education

The study extends the TLT by demonstrating how experiential, research-based and problem-based learning can foster critical consciousness among tourism students. By applying these pedagogies, it highlights how tourism education can move beyond passive knowledge transfer to an active process of reflection, critical thinking and engagement with real-world CBT challenges. This contributes to the broader discourse on how education can empower learners to become change agents in sustainable tourism development.

The theory puts emphasis on critical reflecting, dialogue and perspective transformation yet it often lacks practical guidance on how to implement these principles in diverse, real-world contexts like tourism education. A key gap lies in its general focus on individual change without fully addressing the structural and cultural dimensions of learning in community-oriented sectors such as CBT. This study on CBT education addresses this gap by contextualising transformative learning within the lived realities of tourism students and communities. It proposed a practical education model that blends critical reflection, with community engagement, experiential learning and local knowledge integration. By so doing the study extends transformative learning theory beyond classroom demonstrating how it can be applied to develop ethically grounded socially responsive and community-empowered tourism practitioners.

Decolonisation of Tourism education Frameworks

The research contributes to decolonisation theory by highlighting the Eurocentric biases in existing tourism curricula and advocating for the integration of indigenous knowledge systems. It challenges dominant Western paradigms in tourism education and provides heritage-based curriculum model that incorporates local narratives, community values and African philosophies of sustainability. This strengthens theoretical discussions on how tourism education can be structured to reflect diverse epistemologies and empower historically marginalised communities.

While the decolonisation theory has laid important foundations in challenging Eurocentric knowledge systems and advocating for indigenous voices, it often lacks practical frameworks for transforming curricula, particularly in professional and practical fields like tourism (Dakhli, 2023). A key gap lies in the limited application of decolonial principles to curriculum design, pedagogy and industry-academia-community linkages. This study focusing on tourism education looking at CBT in particular addresses this gap by highlighting how conventional tourism education marginalises knowledge systems, undervalues community agency and privileges theoretical over experiential learning. By proposing a Transformative Learning Education Model rooted in community engagement, context specific learning and inclusion of indigenous knowledge, and transformative pedagogies, the study offers a tangible approach to decolonising tourism education. It advances the discourse from theoretical critique to actionable strategies that empower communities alike, making decolonisation a lived educational practice rather than a theoretical ideal.

Reconceptualising sustainability in CBT education

While sustainability is well-established theoretical concept in tourism, this study reframes sustainability education within the context of CBT by highlighting the need for collective action, participatory decision-making and long-term community empowerment. It underscores that sustainability in CBT is not just about environmental conservation but also about social and cultural resilience, making a valuable contribution to the interdisciplinary intersection of sustainability, education and community development.

The sustainability theory provides a comprehensive framework for balancing environmental, social and economic goals; however, it remains abstract and

disconnected from context educational practices. One of the gaps in sustainability theory identified by scholars such as Sousa (2023) and Huckle (2023) is its limited focus on how sustainability competencies are cultivated through education. Freire and Sen advocated for reflective and dialogic approach to education through fostering critical consciousness among students to promote awareness, responsibility and action towards sustainability (Sousa, 2023). Additionally, sustainability theory has tended to emphasis policy and planning over human capacity development. This study on CBT education addressed these gaps by grounding sustainability in the practical realities of tourism training and curriculum design. It demonstrates that without equipping students with place-based knowledge, community engagement skills and deep understanding of local dynamics, sustainability remains an unfulfilled ideal. The proposed model bridges theory and practice by embedding sustainability into experiential learning thereby producing graduates capable of implementing and advocating for truly sustainable, community driven tourism.

The Transformative Education Model for CBT

The six-pronged transformative education model developed in this study offers a new framework for restructuring CBT education. By emphasising CBT education, partnerships, community engagement, collective action and capacity building, it provides an integrative approach that aligns with critical pedagogy, participatory development and sustainability education theories. This model can serve as a foundational framework for future research and curriculum reforms in tourism education.

By integrating transformative learning, decolonisation and sustainability theories, this study broadens the theoretical discourse on tourism education and challenges traditional approaches to curriculum design. The proposed heritage-based curriculum and the transformative education model provide a new lens for improving CBT education thereby contributing to tourism studies, education and sustainable development scholarship.

7.7 Future research

Building on the findings, future research could further explore decolonisation of the tourism curriculum focusing on how decolonised tourism curricula could be effectively

integrated into higher education institutions in Zimbabwe and other post-colonial contexts. Institutional barriers to curriculum transformation and the strategies to overcome resistance from policy makers, faculty and industry stakeholders could also be explored. Future research should focus on implementing and assessing decolonised curricula, expanding CBT education beyond Zimbabwe, integrating critical pedagogy, addressing power dynamics, leveraging digital technologies, and ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience.

A comparative analysis of CBT education in Africa, Latin America and Asia to identify best practises and adaptable frameworks could also be considered for future research. Research could also focus on examining how cultural, economic and policy context influence the effectiveness of CBT education. Future studies could also investigate how indigenous knowledge is incorporated into tourism education across various regions and its impact on sustainable CBT development. These studies will help refine CBT education models and enhance their practical impact on students, communities and tourism development worldwide.

7.8 Recommendations

To education institutions

- Universities as the wellsprings of the industry should participate in the development of CBT through playing an active role in research and development. Their involvement should go beyond classroom instruction to include active participation in research, capacity building and community engagement. They should conduct applied, context specific research that addresses the unique needs, challenges and opportunities within local tourism settings. This research should not remain confined to academic publications, but rather be translated to accessible formats and shared with local communities, policy makers and CBTE managers. Through workshops, public seminars and collaborative planning sessions and universities can empower communities to develop informed, evidence-based strategies that enhance the sustainability and resilience of CBT initiatives. Such engagements not only strengthen the impact of high institutions on local development but also

enriches student's learning experiences through real-world application and meaningful contribution to community well-being.

- Institutions ought to reassess the framework of undergraduate tourism programmes to combine essential foundational modules with options for students to select elective modules or specialisations. This blended approach enables a comprehensive yet focused educational experience, allowing students to explore specific areas of interest while gaining a broad, well-rounded foundation. Integrating such a model within the curriculum also supports the inclusion of emerging tourism forms, such as community-based tourism (CBT), ecotourism, agrotourism, pro-poor tourism, urban tourism, adventure tourism, and volunteer tourism. By doing so, the curriculum can better prepare students for diverse and evolving career and development opportunities within the tourism industry. Universities also need to invest in training academic staff in transformative and decolonising pedagogies.
- There is a need for a curriculum review of the tourism degrees so that they reflect the African perspective and the heritage-based philosophy and become context-relevant to Zimbabwe. To achieve this, tourism and hospitality programmes must integrate modules that addresses diverse and locally relevant forms of tourism such as rural tourism, cultural tourism ecotourism, CBT, agrotourism and religious tourism into the tourism and hospitality programmes. Incorporating them into formal education will better prepare students to manage tourism enterprises that are inclusive, sustainable and rooted in the values and aspirations of local communities. The curriculum should promote experiential learning, community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration to foster graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also socially conscious and practically equipped to contribute to the development of a resilient and culturally grounded sector.
- Universities should continue to establish partnerships with local communities to co-create tourism products ensuring that community voices are heard and included in decision-making processes. These partnerships should be grounded in mutual respect, shared ownership and inclusive dialogue, ensuring that community voices are genuinely heard, valued and embedded in all stages of decision-making from product conceptualisation to marketing and evaluation.

By adopting participatory approaches, universities can ensure that tourism developments align with the core values and communities involved. Universities can also play a critical role in supporting community-led initiatives through funding schemes and innovation hubs. These finance mechanisms can help remove barriers that communities often face in accessing capital, technical expertise and business development support. This can be done through offering targeted funding, training and mentorship, encouraging locals to develop and promote their own tourism products such as cultural festivals, guided nature trails, homestays or traditional cuisine experiences.

To the Rural District Councils and Urban Councils

- To fully harness the tourism potential within their districts, it is imperative for local councils to establish dedicated tourism offices or personnel capable of effectively coordinating tourism activities and developments within the region. The establishment of such offices will facilitate the decentralisation of tourism marketing efforts, enabling councils to tailor their strategies to the unique characteristics and needs of their localities. By doing so, councils can develop targeted marketing initiatives that enhance the visibility and attractiveness of their tourism offerings, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic development in the area.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborating with the private sector stakeholders, NGOs, and local businesses through PPPs can aid in accelerating CBT development. These partnerships can provide much-needed financial investment, technical expertise marketing support and infrastructure development that many CBTEs lack. By leveraging the strengths of different actors, PPPs can create synergies that enhance tourism product quality, improve service standards and open access to broader markets. However, there is a need to ensure that these PPPs do not disadvantage the local community members. The partnerships should be structured in ways that prioritise the interests of local communities and protect them from exploitation and marginalisation. Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that

community members retain ownership and control over their resources and that their cultural and environmental values are respected. Contracts and agreements should be transparent, equitable and participatory, with clear benefit sharing arrangements. Community representative such as traditional leaders, political leaders must be actively involved in negotiations, planning and implementation to avoid asymmetrical power dynamic. Well governed partnerships can foster inclusive development, build resilience and promote long term sustainability in CBT.

7.7 Conclusion

The findings reveal that these gaps are largely attributable to a lack of comprehensive understanding of the CBT concept. Empirical data further indicate that at the undergraduate level, CBT content is generally integrated into other modules. Notably, only one institution, Midlands State University (MSU), offers a dedicated CBT module at the undergraduate level. To equip students with the necessary skills to manage CBT enterprises, both the study and existing literature advocate for the inclusion of a specialised CBT module as an elective within tourism programmes. Drawing on Mezirow's transformative learning theory, the study underscores the importance of using transformative pedagogies in tourism education. These pedagogies promote critical reflection and deeper understanding, enabling students to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

The findings also highlight a need for more practical and experiential learning opportunities, such as field trips, that allow students to engage with tourism products first-hand. Experiential learning fosters critical thinking and creativity by placing students in unfamiliar contexts that provoke reflection and innovation. However, the high cost of such activities presents a challenge for universities. As a cost-effective alternative, institutions could integrate virtual reality technologies to simulate field experiences, thereby enhancing students' learning while managing financial constraints.

A transformative education model for enhancing the development and implementation of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) was formulated. The model posits that effective

development, revitalisation, and improvement of CBT require tourism education to integrate CBT concepts comprehensively into all aspects of the curriculum. Furthermore, the adoption of transformative pedagogies is essential, as they foster critical thinking, innovation and capacity building among both students and local communities to facilitate meaningful participation. Active community engagement is identified as a critical component for ensuring the involvement and empowerment of local stakeholders in CBT initiatives. Additionally, the model emphasises the importance of establishing strategic partnerships and collaborations with external stakeholders to address gaps in funding, capacity, and expertise. These collaborations can strengthen the sustainability and impact of CBT projects, contributing to long-term tourism development.



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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire for University lecturers

1. Do you think that community-based tourism is being well practiced in Zimbabwe?
2. What are the success factors for Community Based Tourism Management?
3. What are the hindrances to successful Community Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe?
4. A number of Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) are struggling, what do you think should be done to ensure that CBTEs are managed successfully and profitably?
5. What are the key subjects that a learner should learn in order to successfully manage CBTEs?
6. Do you do university-industry engagements or interactions?
If yes, how do you interact?
7. 'The tourism and hospitality degree tries to grasp a lot of skills over a short period of time and it makes the student a jack of all trades and master of none,' Kumar et al 2020. In your own opinion, do you think Tourism and Hospitality degree is too packed?
8. Do you have a standalone course in Community Based Tourism? Yes or No
 - b) If no, in which course is CBT concept covered
9. In your own opinion do you think the tourism curriculum at bachelor's degree level sufficiently prepare learners for managing Community Based Tourism Enterprises?
10. The Zimbabwean Government has taken a keen interest to develop community-based tourism projects, believing firmly that they can be a useful tool in alleviating poverty of the rural and marginalized communities. What are educators doing to ensure the success of CBTs?
 - b) Has there been any adjustment in the curriculum to facilitate this?
 - c) How can the tourism curriculum be improved to prepare learners and put them in a position to reap maximum benefits out of Community Based Tourism in Zimbabwe?
11. Do you think it is necessary to have a graduate level qualification in CBT management?
12. Are you involved in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation of Current CBTE projects? Yes or No
 - b) If no, why are you not involved?
13. Zimbabwean institutions are now required not only to teach, research and community serve but to innovate and industrialise Zimbabwe (Education 5.0). Are there any CBT related initiatives that are being done by the university in line with education 5.0.

Scoring Weighted Curriculum Coverage Index

Great Zimbabwe University Program

	Not covered 0	Mentioned briefly in another course 1	Moderately covered. 2	Covered As a subtopic in a module 3	Fully covered as a topic with Practical application and can be examined	Extensively Covered as a module case studies, examined, and Fieldwork
Aviation						
Communication						
Culture And Heritage						
Culture Houses And Museums						
Economics						
Entrepreneurship						
Events Management						
Food And Beverage Management						
Foreign Language (French, Chinese,						
Green And Agritourism Management						
Hospitality Management						
Human Resources						
Information Technology						
International Tourism Management						
Introduction To Tourism And Hospitality						
Marketing						
Regional Tourism						
Supply Chain Management (Logistics)						
Sustainable Cultural Tourism Management						
Tourism Finance And Accounting						

Tourism Law						
Tourism Products						
Tourism, Culture And Heritage						
Work Related Learning						
Total						

MSU

	Not covered 0	Mentioned briefly in another course 1	Moderately covered. 2	Covered As a subtopic in a module 3	Extensively Covered as a module case studies, examined, and Fieldwork	Fully covered as a topic with Practical application and can be examined
Communication						
Digital Tourism						
Economics						
Entrepreneurship And Innovation						
Event Management						
Finance And Accounting						
Food And Beverage Management						
Foreign Language						
Hospitality Management						
Human Resources/ Organizational Behaviour						
Information Technology						
Introduction To Tourism And Hospitality						
Management						
Marketing						
Regional And International Tourism						
Research Methods						
Strategic Management						
Sustainable Tourism						
Tour Operations						
Tourism Law						
Tourism Transport Logistics						
Zimbabwe Tourism Geography						
Work Related Learning						
Total (Courses 4)						

MSU Sustainable Tourism

	Not covered 0	Mentioned briefly in	Moderately covered. 2	Covered As a subtopic	Extensively Covered as a module	Fully covered as a topic

		another course 1		in a module 3	case studies, examined, and Fieldwork 4	with Practical application and can be examined 5
Community Tourism Management						
Conflict Management						
Culture And Heritage						
Destination Management						
Economics						
Ecotourism						
Entrepreneurship						
Finance And Accounting						
Innovation						
Introduction To Tourism And Hospitality						
Marketing						
Natural Resource Governance						
Parks And Wildlife Management						
Political Ecology						
Regional And International Tourism						
Research Methods						
Risk And Disaster Management						
Rural And Urban Development Management						
Strategic Management						
Sustainable Tourism Management						
Tourism And Environmental Law						
Tourism And The Environment And Ecological Systems						
Tourism Geography						
Tourism Policy						
Work Related Learning						
Total						

University Of Zimbabwe

Leisure And Hospitality Management

	Not covered 0	Mentioned briefly in another course 1	Moderately covered. 2	Covered As a subtopic in a module 3	Extensively Covered as a module case studies, examined, and Fieldwork 4	Fully covered as a topic with Practical application and can be examined 5
Critical Consciousness And Life Skills						
Destination Development						
Finance						
Food And Beverage Management						

Foreign Language						
Foreign Language						
Hospitality Property Management						
Information Technology						
International Hotel Management						
Introduction To Tourism And Hospitality						
Leisure And Recreation						
Marketing						
Research And Innovation						
Rooms Division						
Tourism Law						
Tourism Logistic And Transport						
Environmental management						
Total						

Chinhoyi University Of Technology

	Not covered 0	Mentioned briefly in another course 1	Moderately covered. 2	Covered As a subtopic in a module 3	Extensively Covered as a module case studies, examined, and Fieldwork 4	Fully covered as a topic with Practical application and can be examined 5
Finance and Accounting						
Communication						
Economics						
Management						
Information Technology						
Travel and Recreation						
Marketing						
Hospitality Management						
Tourism Operations						
Recreation						
Reservations and Ticketing						
Tourism Law						
Foreign Language						
Entrepreneurship						
Tourism Logistics						
Sports tourism						
Tourism Planning						
Destination Management						
Human resources Management						
Environmental Management						
Cooperate governance						
Regional and International tourism						

Manicaland State University

	Not covered 0	Mentioned briefly in another course 1	Moderately covered. 2	Covered As a subtopic in a module 3	Extensively Covered as a module case studies, examined, and Fieldwork 4	Fully covered as a topic with Practical application and can be examined 5
Communication						
Digital Tourism						
Economics						
Entrepreneurship And Innovation						
Event Management						
Finance And Accounting						
Food And Beverage Management						
Foreign Language						
Hospitality Management						
Human Resources/ Organizational Behavior						
Information Technology						
Introduction To Tourism And Hospitality						
Management						
Marketing						
Regional And International Tourism						
Research Methods						
Strategic Management						
Sustainable Tourism						
Tour Operations						
Tourism Law						
Tourism Transport Logistics						
Zimbabwe Tourism Geography						

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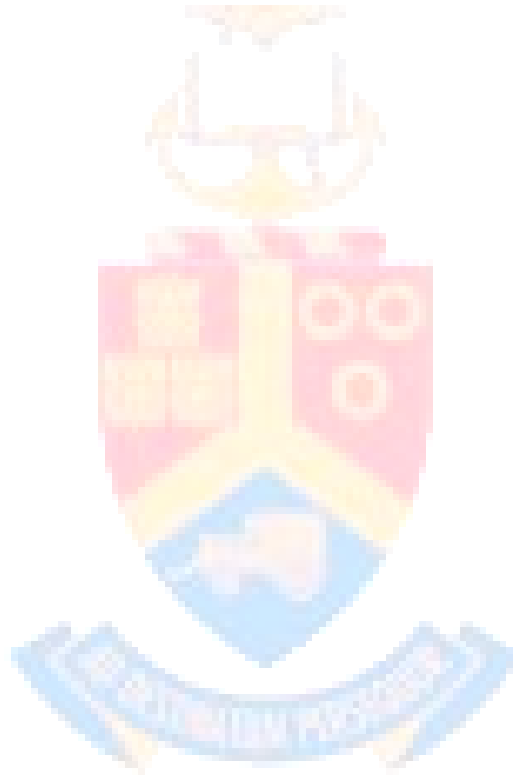
APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire for key organisations in tourism

1. What is your role in Community Based Tourism in Zimbabwe?
2. How are you involved in the development, and management of CBTEs?
3. Who are the key actors in Community Based Tourism Development?
 - b) How do you interact with these key actors?
4. Zimbabwean Government has taken a keen interest to develop community-based tourism projects, believing firmly that they can be a useful tool in alleviating poverty of the rural and marginalized communities. Do you think CBT in Zimbabwe has the capacity to alleviate poverty in rural areas and marginalized communities?
5. Can you comment on the performance of CBTEs in Zimbabwe?
6. Describe the kind of working relationship between the host communities and your organisation that can enhance and promote community-based tourism in Zimbabwe?
 - ii. How do ensure community participation, involvement and empowerment in CBT projects?
 - iii) Have the participating community members been trained to manage CBT projects?
Yes/No
 - iv) If yes by who?
 - v) Which aspects were covered?
 - vi) If no, give reasons why they have not been trained.
7. Describe the kind of working relationship between the universities and your organisation that can enhance and promote community-based tourism in Zimbabwe?
8. Are the tourism graduates well equipped to successfully develop and manage CBTs?
Yes or No
If no explain your answer.
9. Do you think it is necessary to have a graduate level qualification in CBT management?
10. The tourism industry has been affected by COVID-19. What can be done in order to build a more resilient tourism industry in future?

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire for the Rural District Councils

Questions

1. What is the current state of CBT in your district? How are they being managed?
2. Community based Tourism products in your districts eg cultural, wildlife?
3. How are benefits from Community based tourism being shared?
4. What are the challenges that are being faced in managing CBT projects?
5. Do you have adequate expertise to help in the management and marketing of CBT projects?



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APPENDIX 4: Questionnaire for tourism graduates

You are being asked to participate in a research study on the **Development of a transformative tourism education model for improved Community Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe**. You have been invited to participate in this research because you have valuable knowledge about the subject that will be helpful to the study. The purpose of the study is to understand the views, concerns, conceptions or misconceptions of different stakeholders regarding Community Based Tourism in Zimbabwe. The study also seeks to establish whether the current tourism education curriculum is adequately addressing the issues of sustainable tourism, looking at community-based tourism in particular. This study will also try to develop a model for tourism education that will improve the current implementation of community-based projects as well as strengthening the role of periphery societies and optimizing their participation in the sharing of benefits.

Expected time to be taken: 2 minutes (tick where applicable)

i. Age

ii. Gender Male Female

iii. Name of University attended

Chinhoyi University Great Zimbabwe University Midlands State University
University of Zimbabwe

SECTION B

1. a) Do you understand the concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT)? Yes No

b) On a scale of 0 to 10 (0 do not know anything ,1 being very little understanding and 10 full understanding)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. a) Have you ever visited a CBTE?

b) Do have an idea of the performance of CBTEs in Zimbabwe? Yes NO

bii). Knowledge source _____

c) If yes can you rate the performance of CBTEs on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 not performing well and 10 performing very well?

3. Do you think that the tourism degree adequately covers he concept community-based tourism? Yes No

4. Do you think that the current tourism curriculum adequately prepares the students to manage CBT? Yes No

4b. If no, what can be done to prepare students to help communities in the management of Community Based Tourism Enterprises?

- Offer CBT as an optional course in the final year
- Introduce a CBT module
- It should be covered as a topic in another module
- Other (specify).....

5. **The tourism and hospitality degree tries to grasp a lot of skills over a short period of time and it makes the student 'a jack of all trades and master of none,' Kumar et al 2020.** To what extent do you agree/disagree with this statement?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5b. Do you think that the tourism and hospitality degree is too packed and has to be split so that students may focus on one area of interest? Yes No

6. Are there any courses that you feel they were not relevant to the field of study? Yes or No

6b. If yes, may you please state the courses?

7. Do you think the following factors have an effect on CBT development and management?

Factor	YES	NO
Lack of knowledge and expertise affects CBT management and performance.		
Lack of tourism product diversity affects CBT performance?		
Tourism education can contribute to the success or failure of CBTEs?		
Marketing can contribute to the performance of CBTEs?		
Field visits to CBTE enterprises can assist in identifying problems and solutions affecting CBTEs?		

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APPENDIX 5: Permission letter for key organisation

Campfire Association

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM YOUR ORGANISATION

Reference is made to the above subject; I am writing to request for permission to carry out a study on the **Development of a transformative tourism education model for improved Community Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe**. I have chosen this organisation because you have empirical information on the area of study.

The purpose of the study is to understand the views, concerns, conceptions or misconceptions of different stakeholders regarding Community Based Tourism in Zimbabwe. The study also seeks to establish whether the current tourism education curriculum is adequately addressing the issues of sustainable tourism, looking at community-based tourism in particular. This study will try to develop a model for tourism education that will improve the current implementation of community-based projects as well as strengthening the role of periphery societies and optimizing their participation in the sharing of benefits. The research project is being conducted by Providence Warinda, a PhD student at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Dr Clinton van der Merwe.

The data will be collected through administering a questionnaire to one representative from your organisation, the interview may take at least 45minutes. The research will be done using virtual platforms or face to face interviews, the organisation or potential respondents may choose the platform they prefer. In the case of face to face interviews the researcher will come to your institution to conduct the interview. The interviews will be done during working hours for all platforms. However, in the case where virtual platform will be used, the respondents may choose time that is convenient to them.

The study will strictly adhere to the COVID-19 prevention measures. The interviewer will observe a physical distance of one meter or more from the interviewee during the interview. Where possible the researcher will also make use of virtual methods or telephone in order to minimise contact. In the case of a face-to-face interview, the researcher and the

participant will both wear masks during the interview, observe social distance and use of an alcohol-based sanitiser before and after the interview.

This research study is in fulfilment of the researchers PhD study in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Dr Clinton van der Merwe.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

I sincerely appreciate your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Providence Warinda

Dr Clinton van der Merwe

Mobile number: +263772637932



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APPENDIX 6: PERMISSION LETTER UNIVERSITIES

The Head of Department

Department of Tourism and Hospitality

Zimbabwean State Universities

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM TOURISM LECTURERS AND FINAL YEAR TOURISM STUDENTS

Reference is made to the above subject; I am writing to request for permission to carry out a study among tourism lectures and final year tourism students. I have chosen this institution because it offers bachelor's degrees in Tourism and Hospitality.

The study is on the **Development of a transformative tourism education model for improved Community Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe**. The purpose of the study is to understand the views, concerns, conceptions or misconceptions of different stakeholders regarding Community Based Tourism in Zimbabwe. The study also seeks to establish whether the current tourism education curriculum is adequately addressing the issues of sustainable tourism, looking at community-based tourism in particular. This study will try to develop a model for tourism education that will improve the current implementation of community-based projects as well as strengthening the role of periphery societies and optimizing their participation in the sharing of benefits. The research project is being conducted by Providence Warinda, a PhD student at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Dr Clinton van der Merwe.

The data will be collected through administering a questionnaire to one representative from the Tourism and Hospitality department, the interview may take at least 45minutes. The researcher will also request access to the degree course outlines. Final year students will respond to an online questionnaire that will take at least 5 minutes to respond to. A google link will be sent to interested final year students.

The study will strictly adhere to the COVID-19 prevention measures. The interviewer will observe a physical distance of one meter or more from the interviewee during the interview. Where possible the researcher will also make use of virtual methods, telephone and online

questionnaires in order to minimise contact. In the case of a face-to-face interview, the researcher and the participant will both wear masks during the interview and alcohol-based sanitiser will be used before and after the interview.

This research study is in fulfilment of the researchers PhD study in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Dr Clinton van der Merwe.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

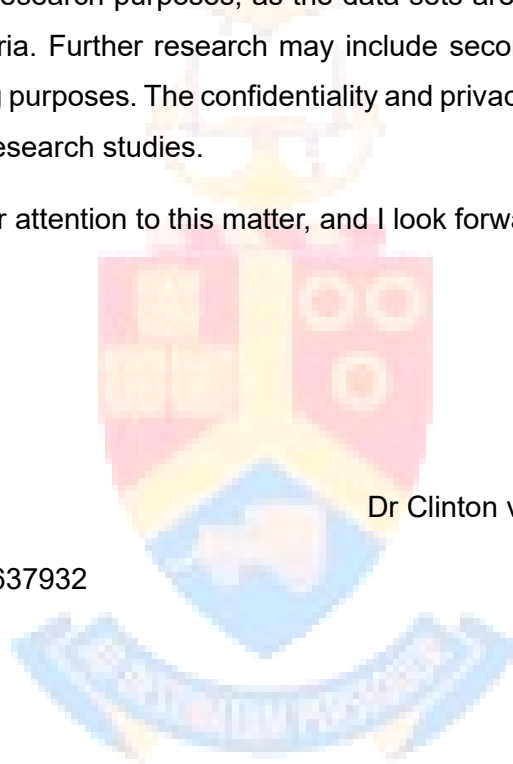
I sincerely appreciate your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Providence Warinda

Dr Clinton van der Merwe

Mobile number: +263772637932



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APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM

Title of study: Development of a transformative tourism education model for improved Community Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe

Principal Researcher:

Providence Warinda

Institution: Humanities Education

Faculty of Education, Groenkloof Campus,

University of Pretoria

Email: warindaprovy27@gmail.com

Cell: +263772637932

Supervisor

Name: Dr Clinton van der Merwe

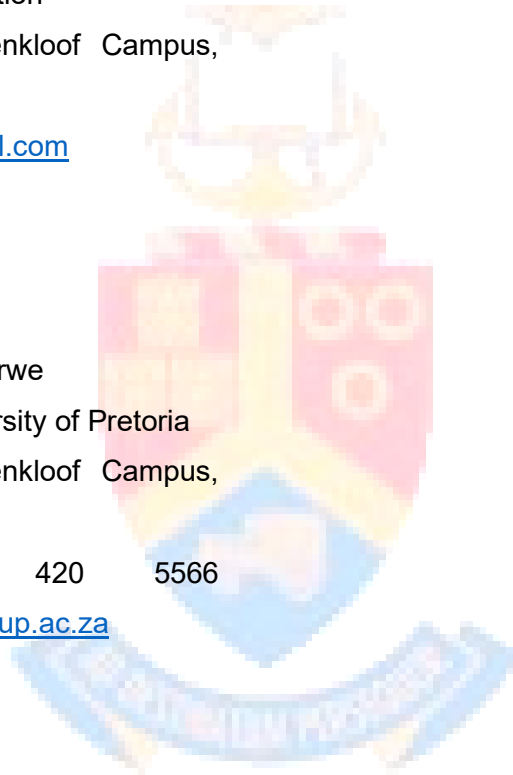
Humanities Education, University of Pretoria

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Dear Prospective Participant, (KEY INFORMANT TOURISM ORGANISATIONS)

What you should know about this research study:

- I give you this consent form so that you may read about the purpose, risks, and benefits of this research study.
- You have the right to refuse to take part or agree to take part now and change your mind later.
- There will be no negative consequences for any decision.
- Please review this consent form carefully. Ask any questions before you decide.
- Your participation is voluntary.

PURPOSE

You are being asked to participate in a research study on the **Development of a Transformative Tourism Education Model for Improved Community-Based Tourism Management in Zimbabwe**. You have been invited to participate in this research because you have valuable knowledge about the subject that will be helpful to the study. The purpose of the study is to understand the views, concerns, conceptions or misconceptions of different stakeholders regarding Community Based Tourism in Zimbabwe. The study also seeks to establish whether the current tourism education curriculum is adequately addressing the issues of sustainable tourism, looking at community-based tourism in particular. This study will also try to develop a model for tourism education that will improve the current implementation of community-based projects as well as strengthening the role of periphery societies and optimizing their participation in the sharing of benefits. The research project is being conducted by Providence Warinda, a PhD student at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Dr Clinton van der Merwe.

PROCEDURES AND DURATION

If you decide to participate, the researcher will come your institution during your working hours for the interview. You will be asked open-ended questions on community-based tourism management and education. The questions will be asked as part of an in-depth interview aimed at finding out your views, conceptions, pertaining to community-based tourism management and education. The interview may take at least 45 minutes long and many questions about CBT will be asked. If there are any questions you do not want to answer, please feel free to let the interviewer know and you will be free not to answer those questions. If you give consent, the interview will be audio-recorded, but if you do not want the interview to be audio-recorded it will not be recorded.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no known risks and discomforts that may be caused by the study. However, if there are any questions about CBT and tourism education that you are not comfortable answering, please feel free to let the interviewer know and you will be free not to answer those questions. You are also free to stop participating in the study and withdraw at any point during the in-depth interview.

BENEFITS AND/OR COMPENSATION

Participating in the study may cause one to reflect on issues surrounding CBT in terms of management, implementation and CBT education. Participants will not receive any direct benefit for participating in the study. Participation will be entirely voluntary. The researcher will travel to the participants so that participants do not incur any transport costs. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher may use other communication channels such as a telephone interview.

ANONYMITY:

Your information will be stored **ANONYMOUSLY**. We will not store any personal information like your name, address or contact information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any personal information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. Reports and publications will contain analysed information which does not reveal your personal details.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study, your decision will be respected and will not affect you negatively in any way. We **do not** keep records of those who decline to participate. If after initial agreement you decide to withdraw from the interview, the interview will stop immediately.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Data from this interview will only be used for study purposes and the data provided will be an intellectual of the University of Pretoria. We request your permission to use your data confidentially and anonymously, for writing up findings for this study, or for further research purposes or teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

AUTHORISATION

You are deciding whether or not to participate in this study. Your signature indicates that you have understood the information provided and explained to you about the study, have had all your questions answered, and have decided to participate.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

Providence Warinda

Signature

Date

Dr Clinton van der Merwe

Signature

Date