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COVID-19, Domestic Tourism and Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwe

Abstract. This study aims to determine the role of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in rejuvenating domestic tourism in the context of suppressed international tourism demand. The current study is premised on the thinking that COVID-19 has changed the way countries do tourism and domestic tourism is now recognised for its ability to help the recovery of the tourism industry post-COVID-19. The infusion of IKS in tourism strategies is seen as important in encouraging locals to visit destinations within their countries. The study is based on a review of the literature on the nexus between indigenous knowledge systems, domestic tourism and COVID-19. The study contributes to the existing literature on domestic tourism by suggesting possible solutions to the industry based on IKS. In light of recent COVID-19 events in the tourism industry at large, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the importance of domestic markets.

Keywords: COVID-19, indigenous knowledge systems, domestic tourism, Zimbabwe

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic evolved from being a health crisis to a pandemic affecting various facets of life (Galvani, Lew & Perez, 2020). Due to its complexity, several measures were introduced to curb the spread of the disease. These measures include lockdown restrictions requiring people to stay indoors, closure of non-essential activities, ban on travelling and cancellation of major events (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2021; Musavengane, Leonard & Mureyani, 2022; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022). The restrictions resulted in a major

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decline in international tourist arrivals (Arbulu et al., 2021; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) indicated that due to COVID-19, international tourism arrivals for 2020 plummeted by 71% compared to 2019 levels, 69% in 2021 and 37% in 2022 (UNWTO, 2023).

Currently, attention is focused on the recovery of the tourism industry in the aftermath of the devastating impacts of COVID-19. In this regard, several governments across the world launched blueprints for restarting tourism, and the UNWTO has been leading the way by introducing guidelines for safe travelling (UNWTO, 2020). However, several of these efforts have been hampered by the emergence of new COVID-19 variants, necessitating further restrictions on movement (Cheer, Hall & Saarinen, 2021). Faced with limited international tourism demand, most destinations were forced to look at the domestic market to revive the tourism sector (Arbulu et al., 2021; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2022; Woyo, 2021). Domestic tourism has been noted to be more resilient to external shocks such as disease outbreaks, political crises, global financial crises, and terrorism than international tourism (Kabote, Mashiri & Vengesayi, 2014; Manwa & Mmereki, 2008; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022).

For countries in the global South, particularly sub-Saharan African countries, priority has always been given to international tourism (Dieke, 2003; Woyo, 2021), with little attention paid to domestic tourism. However, Rogerson and Baum (2020) stress the importance of the domestic and regional markets to the growth of the tourism industry. As part of restarting tourism after the initial COVID-19 lockdown, many countries across the globe introduced policies to promote the domestic tourism market (Arbulu et al., 2021). The Zimbabwean government, through the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI) launched the national tourism recovery and growth strategy in August 2020. One of the key pillars of this strategy is the promotion of domestic tourism to counter the devastating impacts of COVID-19 (MECTHI, 2020). Consequently, the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) launched the ZIMBHO targeting domestic tourists and promoting local destinations (Musavengane, Leonard & Mureyani, 2022). Another strategy implemented to promote domestic tourism is the *Shanya/Vakatsha Travel Mukando* campaign targeted at group travel, where individuals pool resources to contribute towards their travelling budget (ZTA, 2023).

Research on the role of domestic tourism in reviving the tourism industry for depressed destinations, in general, is still growing (Woyo, 2021). Several studies have been conducted to determine if domestic tourism is a sustainable post-recovery strategy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Woyo, 2021; Mzobe, Makoni & Nyikana, 2022). Manwa & Mmereki (2008) note that little is known about the behaviour of domestic tourists, impacts and their motivation in the African context. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, tourists' travel behaviour

changed (Ivanova, Ivanov & Ivanov, 2020). Sigala (2020) argues that there is a need for research to examine the attitudes and behaviours of tourists to generate proper insights for recovery. In this study, we posit a need for a nuanced understanding of the domestic market to understand how it can lead to sustainable growth during and after a crisis. In particular, an understanding of domestic tourism in the context of COVID-19 is essential to put in place the right strategies to stimulate local tourist traffic.

In trying to understand the domestic tourism market it is critical to appreciate indigenous knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge refers to knowledge that originates from specific cultural, geographic, and traditional settings, often ontologically linked to self (Picard & Di Giovine, 2014), context-specific community (Schellhorn, 2010; Mapfumo, Mtambanengwe & Chikowo, 2016) and sometimes postcolonial aspects (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). The beliefs, values and perceptions that define indigenous knowledge are unique to a given society (Warren, 1991). They are passed from one generation to the next using "cosmologies, diaspora, storytelling, arts, crafts, spirituality, language and classification systems" (Tribe & Liburd, 2016, p. 52). Indigenous knowledge systems can therefore be defined as 'local, community-based systems of knowledge which are unique to a given culture or society and have developed as that culture has evolved over many generations of inhabiting particular ecosystem' (Onwu & Mogege, 2004, p. 2).

Though IKS are a major determinant of people's behaviour and how they make their decisions (Breidlid, 2009), little is known about the role they play in domestic tourism in Zimbabwe despite a growing amount of research on indigenous tourism (Tribe & Liburd, 2016). Much of the research on indigenous tourism is dominated by colonial perspectives (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature regarding the link between IKS and the behaviour of domestic tourists during and after a crisis like COVID-19. Carr (2020) argues that COVID-19 is not the first pandemic that indigenous communities have faced. Several other pandemics have previously affected indigenous communities, including measles, mumps, smallpox, tuberculosis and the 1918 flu pandemic (Carr, 2020).

This article presents a conceptual study, which is not based on primary data. We review the literature on indigenous tourism knowledge systems and argue that IKS should be part of developing strategies to promote domestic tourism, particularly in order to re-envision the post-pandemic development of indigenous tourism. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of IKS in rejuvenating domestic tourism in Zimbabwe in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to addressing a gap in the literature, the study can provide directions for future empirical research on this topic, especially to be conducted together with indigenous researchers (Carr, 2020).

Methodology

This study aims to determine the role of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in rejuvenating domestic tourism in the context of suppressed international tourism demand due to COVID-19. As the study seeks to find 'new' trends in the 'unique' environment of COVID-19, a review of the literature was used to obtain data about COVID-19, and indigenous knowledge systems. This kind of analysis is less expensive and unobtrusive (Neuman, 2011; Musavengane & Siakwah, 2020). In the first step, we studied the existing literature on IKS in general and in Zimbabwe in specific, in order to clearly identify the phenomenon. In the next step, we identified relevant literature deemed suitable and relevant for our study focus. Databases were searched using keywords including 'IKS', 'IKS AND tourism', 'IKS AND travel', 'IKS AND culture', 'tourism AND tradition'. To adequately address the research question with respect to IKS and domestic tourism, selected studies were carefully analysed to capture the holistic phenomenon, instead of focusing only on case-specific issues.

Domestic Tourism in Zimbabwe

As is the case in many African countries, Zimbabwean tourism relies more on international tourists, and little attention has been paid to the domestic market (Mutsena & Kabote, 2015; Rogerson, 2015; Woyo, 2021). As a result, research on domestic tourism in most destinations, including Zimbabwe, is limited. While statistics on international tourism arrivals are easily accessible, consistent worldwide data on domestic tourism are not readily available (Eijgelaar, Peeters & Piket, 2008). Even though it was estimated that domestic tourism in Zimbabwe generated US$379 million in 2019 (ZTA, 2019), the absence of a credible and comprehensive tool for tourism accounting makes it difficult to determine how reliable this figure is (ZimStats, 2018).

Although the country is endowed with world-class attractions (Chibaya, 2013; Marunda, 2014; Muchapondwa & Pimhidzai, 2011; Woyo & Slabbert, 2021; Zhou, 2016), most Zimbabweans are not involved in domestic tourism (Mapingure, du Plessis & Saayman, 2019; Mutsena & Kabote, 2015). One of the primary reasons is that tourism products are priced beyond the reach of many domestic consumers (Kabote, Mashiri & Vengesayi, 2014; Woyo, 2021; Woyo & Slabbert, 2020, 2021). For much of the country's population tourism remains a luxury because of the ongoing economic and political crisis in the country since 2000 (Manwa, 2007; Woyo, 2021). The economic crisis stems from controversial government policies,

including the land reform programme, indigenisation policy, and human rights abuse (Woyo & Slabbert, 2020). Because of hyperinflation that has continued for several years, the majority of Zimbabweans find it difficult to participate in tourism activities because they cannot afford them (Chibaya, 2013). According to Manwa & Mmereki (2008), only people with a high disposable income could afford to partake in tourism activities. Thus, it is difficult to improve destination competitiveness for both local and international demand (Woyo & Slabbert, 2021). This begs the question how these destinations can be competitive without domestic tourists when international mobility is suppressed due to a crisis like COVID-19?

The low demand for domestic tourism in Zimbabwe has also been attributed to high unemployment levels (Mutsena & Kabote, 2015). Past research suggests that economic and social conditions in the country, the high unemployment rate and the shrinking middle class have a negative effect on the development of domestic tourism in Zimbabwe (Manwa, 2007). It is clear from previous studies on domestic tourism in Zimbabwe that it is considerably constrained by being largely unaffordable.

In addition to the price barrier, past research also indicates a general lack of a travelling culture among black Zimbabweans (Zhou, 2016). Travelling for leisure purposes is often seen as the preserve of foreigners (Kabote, Mamimine & Muranda, 2017) and affluent members of the society. For an ordinary Zimbabwean, a holiday usually involves visiting friends and relatives (VFR), which, in most cases, means urban dwellers travelling to rural areas. This activity accounts for 49% of domestic overnight visits compared to 3% travelling for leisure (ZTA, 2019). In addition, 66% of overnight trips by domestic tourists in 2019 originated from urban areas (Kabote, 2017).

Most destinations in Zimbabwe are only accessible by road. A major challenge faced by car travellers is roadblocks set up by the police who take bribes for letting people pass (Woyo & Woyo, 2019). Furthermore, the lack of internal airline services within Zimbabwe makes it impossible to reach some of the country's tourist attractions (Woyo, 2021), e.g. the Hwange National Park and the Eastern Highlands, especially Nyanga (Kanokanga, 2019).

Several studies on domestic tourism in Zimbabwe have shed more light on the characteristics and behaviour of domestic tourists. Mapingure, du Plessis & Saayman (2019) found that the primary motivating factors behind tourist activity include novelty, nature seeking and escape, and relaxation. According to Woyo & Woyo (2019), cultural and heritage attractions are popular with domestic tourists. Since international tourism in the post COVID-19 era, will likely take time to get back to the pre-pandemic levels (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020), tourism managers must start thinking about promoting domestic tourism by leveraging IKS. Prasetyo, Filep & Carr (2021) argue that indigenous knowledge in tourism is critical for

sustainable tourism development, and Zimbabwe could benefit from tapping this resource. IKS could also be used to change Zimbabweans' negative perceptions of and attitudes towards urban tourism offerings (Makoni & Tichaawa, 2017).

Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in Zimbabwe

COVID-19 curtailed global mobility as restrictions were put in place to stop the spread of the virus, and people postponed their travelling plans due to concerns over public health and safety (Bama & Nyikana, 2021; Rogerson & Baum, 2020). Zimbabwe introduced its first lockdown in March 2020, which resulted in the closure of non-essential businesses, such as restaurants, cafes and recreational facilities (Haider et al., 2020). The lockdown measures confined Zimbabwean citizens to their homes, and borders were open to cargo and returning residents only (Nyabunze & Siavhundu, 2020), bringing the tourism industry to a standstill. This resulted in a 72% drop in international tourist arrivals in 2020 (ZTA, 2021).

Zimbabwe began easing the lockdown restrictions in May 2020, and most businesses, including those in the tourism sector, opened their doors to the public, albeit under strict health guidelines. Tourism activities remained constrained even after the restrictions had been lifted, mainly because of travel restrictions in most countries (MECTHI, 2020). In the absence of international tourism, attention turned to domestic tourism, where demand was suppressed for various reasons (Woyo, 2021). To stimulate domestic tourism, the Zimbabwean government exempted domestic tourism services from paying Value Added Tax (VAT) to make travelling more affordable (Sibanda & Tshuma, 2020). This measure enabled tourism service providers to offer affordable tourism packages for the domestic market.

The effect of COVID-19 on indigenous and marginalised people has been largely negative (Carr, 2020; Everingham & Chassagne, 2020). Given the inequalities that COVID-19 has amplified among indigenous people, Carr (2020) argues that there is a need for "socially responsive approaches to the COVID-19 recovery. Balancing the future industry so that tourism activities directly enhance the health and education of indigenous peoples and communities is essential". Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) encompass knowledge embedded in indigenous communities based on their traditional educational processes (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Rather than being static, such knowledge evolves as people's culture changes and interacts with other knowledge systems (Onwu & Mosimege, 2004), helping people make sense of the world they live in and providing the basis for daily decision making (Monaheng, 2015).

The Role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Promoting Domestic Tourism

Despite the negative impacts, COVID-19 has also ushered in a new way of thinking (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020; Woyo & Nyamandi, 2021). According to Everingham and Chassagne (2020), it is time to admit that the dominance of Eurocentric thinking and systems is not sustainable among indigenous people. Thus, the pandemic is an opportunity for Zimbabwe and other African destinations to incorporate their IKS into the tourism value chain to promote tourism that focuses on the well-being of people and the environment.

Indigenous people acquire their knowledge through interaction with the natural world. This knowledge contributes to IKS and determines the way indigenous people view the world. Since most indigenous knowledge is highly undocumented, it is passed from one generation to another through oral tradition (Tanyanyiwa & Chikwanha, 2011; Tribe & Liburd, 2016, p. 52). In contrast, Western science is well-documented and has spread rapidly to other parts of the world, posing a threat to indigenous knowledge, particularly in Africa. The spread of COVID-19 shows that over-reliance on Western knowledge is not sustainable (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020), and tourism as we know it requires transformation. Past research on COVID-19 and indigenous cultures shows a need to include indigenous values in tourism planning (Carr, 2020). While this approach is new in Zimbabwe, countries like New Zealand have been including indigenous values in tourism planning and the development of strategies (Carr, 2020). The inclusion of indigenous knowledge could help to shape post-pandemic travel behaviour to promote the recovery of domestic tourism.

The Nexus between People and Nature and Their Role in Travel Choices

IKS can affect people's tourism activity and shape their travelling patterns and preferences. Intentions, attitudes, emotions, feelings, ideas, abilities, purposes, traits, thoughts, and memories shape tourist perceptions of destinations (Musavengane, 2019). Past studies show that indigenous cultures and knowledge are critical in developing tourism promotion materials and strategies (Bondzi-Simpson & Ayeh, 2017; Carr, 2020; Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021). Niche tourism products developed around indigenous values could drive a sustainable tourism recovery in Zimbabwe after the pandemic. Given the problems of climate change, environmental degradation, and overtourism, there is a need to integrate tourism consciousness and IKS to develop a sustainable tourism future (Carr, 2020). In this way, travellers and stakeholders can be made aware of indigenous "tourism

spaces and activities, and the ability or desire to participate in the tourism system" (Musavengane, 2019, p. 330). Carr (2020, p. 495) argues that "involving indigenous communities in tourism planning processes, or enabling self-governance, can enhance resilience in health, recreation, leisure, education and business settings." He adds that "as with any group in society, indigenous people are not perfect and have been scrutinised for poor environmental practices, nevertheless indigenous values can lead to thoughtful, nature-centric solutions". According to Walter (2009, p. 529) "local knowledge for ecotourism is thus holistic: it is integral to the fabric and rhythms of daily life, to the seasons, to local geography, to the history of the community, its lived traditions, systems of kinship, social relationships, religious beliefs and practices, ways of preparing and eating food, norms of dress, appropriate social behaviour, the community's political and social context and so on".

However, the integration of IKS into the tourism value chain is not without challenges, and one of them is associated with decoloniality, i.e. efforts to delink from Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies, since, as Grimwood, Stinson & King put it (2019, p. 1), "Tourism's entanglement with colonial power is deeply rooted and complex". Consequently, in Zimbabwe, IKS were dominant during the pre-colonial era as they helped people adapt to various survival challenges (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013). Zimbabwe was a British colony from 1890 until it gained its independence in 1980. During the colonial period, white settlers imposed a European governance system on the people of Zimbabwe, which, among other things, marginalised local forms of knowledge (Andersson, 2002). This led to IKS being viewed as inferior to Western forms of knowledge (Muyambo, 2019). Though there is an extensive amount of research and literature on decolonization and tourism, mostly from Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand (Coulthard, 2014; Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019; Grimwood, Muldoon & Stevens, 2019; Grimwood & Johnson, 2021; Regan, 2010), empirical research on decoloniality and tourism in Zimbabwe remains limited. Zimbabwean tourism and its development are still rooted in colonial patterns. Grimwood, Stinson, & King (2019, p. 1) argue that the production, consumption, and development of tourism continue to "(re)inscribes colonizing structures, systems, and narratives across time and space". Because of tourism development in Zimbabwe, several indigenous people were displaced. As in other countries, especially Canada, New Zealand, the United States and South Africa, settler colonialism was often associated with legislation (Land Apportionment Act of 1930) and policies aimed at removing indigenous people from their cultural territories (Coulthard, 2014; Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019; Regan, 2010).

Though there has been growing interest in IKS in the post-colonial period in Zimbabwe, as people are trying to re-establish their local knowledge lost due to colonisation (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013), tourism research has not yet recov-

ered from the effects of colonisation. As is the case in Canada (Grimwood, Muldoon & Stevens, 2019; Grimwood & Johnson, 2019), "settler stories still proliferate through tourism and tourism research" (Grimwood, Stinson & King, 2019). For instance, there is a lot of literature about Zimbabwean tourism that argues that David Livingstone discovered Victoria Falls in 1855 (Arrington, 2010; McGregor, 2003; Molyneux, 1905). This is a classic example of misrepresentation since in this case David Livingstone's contribution only consisted in giving the falls its present English name. According to Woyo and Slabbert (2019, p. 151), before the arrival of David Livingstone, the falls were called "Mosi-oa-Tunya (a name that derives from Tonga-speaking people), who have lived around the falls for many years". As argued by Grimwood, Stinson & King (2019), this is a "pervasive story where land discovered by European explorers was deemed unowned, untouched, uncivilized" and unknown.

While Mapara (2009) argues that the growing importance of IKS in post-colonial Africa is seen as a way of dispelling the myth of Western superiority and an attempt to show the world the past achievements of local knowledge, we argue that more needs to be done in this respect. According to Grimwood, Stinson & King (2019), a great part of settler stories border between "the fantasy of entitlement to knowing" and suggest that indigenous people do not know anything. Therefore, the narrative of tourism research needs to change by giving proper recognition to IKS. This, in turn, could help to dispel the myth that tourism is meant for white people and stimulate local demand for tourism. Critically diagnosing how these stories become mobilized concerning specific contexts and positionalities is an important aspect of decolonization (Mackey, 2015). So far, studies on IKS in Zimbabwe have focused on traditional agricultural practices, climate adaptation, disaster management and natural resources management (Mapara, 2009; Mawere, 2010; Rusinga & Maposa, 2010; Mavhura et al., 2013; Ngara & Mangizvo, 2013; Monaheng, 2015; Mapfumo, Mtambanengwe & Chikowo, 2016; Dube & Munsaka, 2018; Mugambiwa, 2018; Kupika et al., 2019). This is why Stinson, Grimwood & Caton (2021) argue for more research on decolonization projects to facilitate the process of decolonizing tourism and tourism research.

Cultural Sites

Since Zimbabweans believe in the existence of a supreme spiritual being, the country has several traditional and cultural sites of spiritual significance (Woyo & Woyo, 2019). Matobo Hills is a place where traditional rain-making ceremonies are conducted during droughts (Ngara & Mangizvo, 2013). Hills, forests, and caves are also regarded as part of the spiritual world and places of worship (Nhamo, & Chikodzi,

2021; Ndumeya, 2019), as evidenced by the existence of rock paintings. Christianity brought to the indigenous people through missionaries has reduced the importance of traditional worship methods. Most people, especially the younger generations, have embraced it and compounded coloniality in Zimbabwe. Though the African Traditional Religion (ATR) is still practised in some parts of the country, more research is needed to establish the influence of Christianity on travel behaviour to sacred places in Zimbabwe. Understanding this relationship could also be crucial in establishing Zimbabwe's position concerning decolonization, tourism, and tourism research (Stinson, Grimwood & Caton, 2021).

Cultural sites can also be attractive destinations for educational tourism (Saarinen, 2015). For example, Great Zimbabwe monuments are regarded as the epitome of the Shona civilisation. The Old Bulawayo cultural heritage site gives an insight into the traditional way of life of the Ndebele people. Zimbabwe has many such cultural sites that exhibit people's culture and connect with their roots. Zimbabwe needs tourism managers and policymakers to integrate indigenous values in tourism planning, strategies, and promotion (Carr, 2020). This can be achieved by allowing indigenous people to participate in storytelling to promote their worldwide views (Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021). de Beer, van Zyl & Rogerson (2022) argue that storytelling is widely used in destination promotion, helps to enhance tourist experiences and differentiates destination brands. Storytelling could also serve as a strategy to promote tourism activity among locals, thus contributing to the decolonisation of tourism in Zimbabwe. Such participation is critical (Carr, 2020) in supporting not only the development of tourism but also the well-being, environment, and livelihoods of local people (Hutchison, Movono & Scheyvens, 2021), especially in destinations with perennial challenges (Woyo & Slabbert, 2020).

Festivals and Ceremonies

Traditionally, festivals and ceremonies were part of the life of the Zimbabwean people since time immemorial (Mamimine & Madzikatire, 2015). These events were held to celebrate life and appease the ancestors (*Vadzimu*), who are seen as supreme spiritual beings in the Zimbabwean culture (Maunganidze, 2016; Mawere, 2010). The colonisation of the country by the Europeans disrupted these traditional practices (Muyambo, 2019), such as rainmaking ceremonies, which usually take place at the Matobo Hills (Ngara & Mangizvo, 2013), the Intwasa festival in Bulawayo and the Great Limpopo cultural fair in Chiredzi. These events were used for spiritual and physical healing. However, nowadays, cultural festivals and traditional ceremonies are less commonly practised, which limits opportunities available for

culturally oriented tourists. Therefore, one way of boosting domestic tourism is to promote attendance at traditional ceremonies by people seeking spiritual and mental healing from the COVID-19 pandemic. This, however, requires managers to have a comprehensive understanding of tourism, especially from the perspective of indigenous people. Furthermore, there is a need to allow communities in Zimbabwe to be conceptualised as complex and adaptive systems. This is critical in generating insights into how cultural tourism needs to be designed for the domestic market.

Indigenous Agriculture

Traditional subsistence farming practices like *Nhimbe, Humwe, ilima and Zunde RaMambo*, are now much less common in Zimbabwe (Andersson, 2002). They involve community members working collectively in the fields, usually during the weeding and harvesting season (Muyambo, 2019). After working, they gather to drink traditional beer and eat food. These practices were supposed to ensure food security and foster community cohesion. The resurgence of such practices could be an opportunity to include authentic rural experiences as part of domestic tourism packages. These traditional agricultural practices need to be promoted to attract urban dwellers to rural areas so that they can experience life in the villages. This can promote VFR travel and agritourism and boost the domestic tourism recovery strategy after the pandemic.

Local Cuisine

Indigenous agricultural activities enable local communities to grow food ingredients used in preparing traditional dishes. Zimbabwe has various traditional dishes that have recently become popular in hotels and other catering establishments. Small grain cereals are used to brew traditional beer, which plays a key role in all traditional functions in Zimbabwe (Mugambiwa, 2018). According to Bon Bondzi-Simpson (2017), indigenous foods are critical in promoting cultural practices and festivals of a destination. Zimbabwean tourism establishments, especially hotels, need to increase their reliance on local dishes in their menus. This is a critical element of the process of decoloniality in tourism, and more research is also required in this regard. There is currently not much research on factors that influence menu decision-making, especially the inclusion of indigenous dishes (Bondzi-Simpson & Ayeh, 2017). Therefore, more studies should be conducted to examine the role of indigenous cuisines so that their results can be used to make destination marketing more effective.

Myths and legends

Songs, riddles, dances, folktales, legends and proverbs are part of the tradition of the Zimbabwean people (Mapara, 2009). All of them foster socialisation and cohesion within local communities (Muyambo, 2019). Myths and legends are metaphors that communities use to empower the landscape to protect itself from desecration and point to what communities perceive as significant (Sinamai, 2017). The role of these practices has been obscured by rapid urbanisation, which exposes people to Eurocentric cultures at the expense of their traditional way of life. Several myths and legends are associated with a number of tourist attractions in Zimbabwe (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013), for example, the *Nyaminyami* legend (the river god of the BaTonga people in the northwest of Zimbabwe). Also, in Mount Inyangani (the highest peak in Zimbabwe), it is believed that if one behaves disrespectfully, they disappear, and numerous cases of people disappearing have been recorded in the past (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013). In addition, there is a widely held belief that water from hot springs has healing properties, and if one immerses themselves in the water, they chase away bad luck. Local people believe in these myths and are likely to travel to get first-hand experience. If such legends are amplified, they can generate interest in a place, especially among locals who can relate more to the myths. This can help increase the significance of domestic tourism post-COVID-19.

Conclusion

Several important conclusions can be drawn from the above analysis:

- domestic tourism in Zimbabwe is not well developed because tourism products are priced beyond the reach of domestic consumers and there is a lack of a travelling culture among Zimbabweans;
- for a long time, the country has been focusing on international tourists with little focus on the domestic market;
- the recovery of the tourism industry from the COVID-19 pandemic very much depends on the previously overlooked domestic market;
- colonial mentality is still dominant in tourism, which is seen as a preserve of the white and affluent members of society;
- indigenous knowledge systems could play a significant role in motivating more Zimbabweans to travel and could help to decolonise domestic tourism;

- for this reason, IKS need to be included in the development of the country's domestic tourism policy;
- without a strong policy framework that integrates IKS and domestic tourism development, there is a risk that local consumers will continue to remain at the periphery of the tourism system.

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COVID-19, turystyka krajowa i systemy wiedzy tubylczej w Zimbabwe

Streszczenie. Niniejsze badanie ma na celu określenie roli systemów wiedzy tubylczej w ożywieniu turystyki krajowej w kontekście osłabionego popytu na turystykę międzynarodową. Autorzy wychodzą z założenia, że pandemia COVID-19 zmieniła charakterystykę ruchu turystycznego w poszczególnych krajach, czego przejawem jest rosnąca rola turystyki krajowej we względu na jej potencjał do odbudowy branży turystycznej po pandemii. Włączenie systemów wiedzy tubylczej do strategii turystycznych jest postrzegane jako ważny element zachęcania mieszkańców do odwiedzania krajowych destynacji turystycznych. Badanie opiera się na analizie dokumentacji dotyczącej powiązań między systemami wiedzy tubylczej, turystyką krajową a pandemią COVID-19. Badanie stanowi wkład do literatury na temat turystyki krajowej i przedstawia możliwe rozwiązania dla branży w oparciu o systemy wiedzy tubylczej. W świetle ostatnich wydarzeń związanych z COVID-19 w całej branży turystycznej znaczenie rynków krajowych staje się szczególnie istotne.

Słowa kluczowe: COVID-19, systemy wiedzy tubylczej, turystyka krajowa, Zimbabwe

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