CHAPTER EIGHT
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN TOURISM: THEIR AGENCY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH GENDER ROLES IN TANZANIA

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Abstract

Although tourism is regarded as a potential ground from which women can obtain their empowerment, their engagements are always constrained by their gender roles. This chapter, therefore, aims at exploring the ways in which women negotiate with their gender roles in order to work and benefit from tourism. The interpretive approaches, including qualitative and in-depth interviews were used to capture the way women view and review the environment that they encounter in the society as they work in tourism. Both structuralism and post-structuralism standpoints were used to identify factors that women see as their enablers and /or constraints, observing the agency of women when they interact with tourism. By working in tourism, they have been able to create their self-knowledge of the strategies to use in tourism through three factors, namely religion, family and marriage as well as education. Their agency was seen by their willingness to accept, challenge or reject the limits set by their gender roles. By doing so, women have shown the ability of being the authors of their own decisions and actions. Therefore, empowerment is about being able to freely act according to own voices; that means, creating a balance between their gender roles and the extent to which they want to achieve by working in the industry. This way, women have been able to construct the gender roles that enable them to balance between their household responsibilities and working in tourism.

Keywords: women empowerment, tourism, gender roles, agency, Tanzania

Introduction

Tourism has continuously been regarded as a potential ground from which women can obtain their empowerment (Ashley, 2000; Scheyvens, 2000). Because tourism resides in destinations and become part and parcel of people's lives, women and men have increasingly been participating by working or consuming tourism. Despite men and women participation, women's gender roles have been a subject for discussion of their empowerment, and how such responsibilities have become constraints for women. This study focuses on exploring the ways women negotiate with gender roles boundaries in order to create spaces for their empowerment in tourism. It sees empowerment through women's agencies when they interact with tourism and find opportunities and take advantage of the opportunities. Agency refers to the power that an individual has over his/her actions and choices (Kidd et al., 2010). Harris and Wilson (2007), Kabeer (2005) and Maliva (2016, 2017) viewed empowerment as women's ability to use their self-knowledge to view the existing socially sanctioned practices and find a way of (re)producing them. Moreover, empowerment is an individual's self-authoring to trust her own voice and act upon it and also it includes various strategies that an individual can use to create a variety of new spaces in order to cope, negotiate, resist and/or challenge dominant norms and values.

Agency has been one of the UN objectives of measuring the human development (UNDP, 2015), especially in seeing that women are empowered. Women empowerment is very important for national development, because women potentiality will be exploited in its totality for building economic prosperity. Statistically, women account for about 50% of the population of many countries in the world. Moreover, while tourism is recognised by policy makers as a potential means for women empowerment, it is academically recognised to be an important site where the processes of (dis)empowerment can be captured (Harris & Wilson, 2007). Therefore, by using

tourism as a lens, this study captures the different ways that women have been adjusting the meanings of their gender roles when they need to increase their spaces to work in industry.

Women's gender roles in tourism have been addressed as both enabling, Harris & Wilson, (2007) and constraining (Tugores, 2008; Thrane, 2008) as far as their empowerment is concerned. Seeing gender roles as a constraint, various factors have been identified. Since the tourism industry resides in the society and it is built up by social, economic and political structures, gender relationship is one of the social factors that is claimed to cut across all kinds of inequality in the industry because it is the one that orders the processes of tourism (Kinnaird et al., 1994; Swain, 1995; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2011). Gender roles are informed by society and tourism processes. From the society, gender roles demand that women should spend more time in their households. This limits their exposure to education; as a result, they do not reach higher levels and do not spend many hours working compared to men (Thrane, 2008; Tugores, 2008). Consequently, they end up in minimum-wage employment and become objects of tourists gaze (Gentry, 2007; Pettman, 1997; Veijola & Valtonen, 2007; Jordan & Aitchson, 2008).

Some other authors see women using the constraints caused by gender roles and relations, society position and tourism industry processes as grounds for their empowerment (Harris & Wilson, 2007). Through their agency, they challenge these constraints by manipulating the gender role limits in order to cope with the structures that limit their possibilities of empowerment (Aitchison, 2000a, 2000b, 2001b; Ateljevic & Hall, 2007; Ateljevic et al., 2005; Harris & Wilson, 2007). They have identified the agency of women in challenging the structures by going beyond the limits or affirming by accepting and carrying them. However, there are limited studies that identify the agency of women in manipulating their gender roles. This gives

opportunity for this study to identify the structures that constrain women because of gender roles and what they do in order to cope and find empowerment out of them.

Gender roles are importance in tourism and particularly in this study due to its influence in enforcing the limits that are informed by social norms and shared rules that guide women's behaviour, privilege, responsibility and status (Lindsey, 2011). The study has therefore, drawn from Harris and Wilson (2007) to explain gender roles as a means that society uses to construct boundaries on individual behaviour and practices in tourism. This behaviour is explained to eventually create constraints that may inhibit their ability of accessing and/or practicing out of the given boundaries. Due to the fact that these constraints revolve around social and cultural acceptable boundaries that also moderate individual behaviour, they similarly affect women's perception of appropriate female behaviour (Harris & Wilson, 2007).

Empowerment and agency have been discussed in previous studies including Kidd et al. (2010). Moreover, empowerment is a about gaining power to make choices. Kidd et al. (2010) show that empowerment can be a way to make decisions about and for ourselves. Another definition of empowerment is found in Harris and Wilson (2017), thus: "……an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organisations and institutions which affect their lives and the communities in which they live" (p. 239). In most cases, empowerment is defined in terms of individual's agency. Kabeer (2005) sees agency as "people's ability to make and act on their own life choices, even in the face of others' opposition".

Agency explains how much say individuals do have over their actions on a day-to-day basis; it is about the extent of the freedom they have. Agency can be explained in relation to structures. In this context, structures explain how rooted and integral power relationships within the overall

makeup of society are. Furthermore, it explains the extent to which society as a thing weighs down upon individuals by regulating their decisions, actions and options (Kidd et al., 2010). Also, agency can be defined in terms of different forms of self-knowledge, (un)conscious consent to (re)produce existing socially sanctioned practices, self-authoring to trust their own voice and act upon it and various strategies to create a variety of new spaces in order to either cope, negotiate, resist and/or challenge dominant norms and values (Harris & Wilson, 2007). The power of human agency in this study is shown by women's determination to find a way that they think will meet their aims to win their goals.

Empowerment is therefore about actively exercising choice in ways that challenge power relations. In the realm of agency, empowerment begins from within and encompasses decision making, observable action, meaning, motivation, and purpose that individuals bring to their actions. Empowerment is rooted in how people see themselves – their sense of self-worth. This in turn is critically bound up with how they are seen by those around them and by their society.

The theoretical framing in this study is embedded in the empowerment theory which embraces the concept of power. Various perspectives have been used to view women's ability to work in tourism and get empowered (Ateljevic & Hall, 2007; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Henderson, 1994a, 1994b; Veijola & Valtonen, 2007). This study explains empowerment through the concept of power which according to Kidd et al. (2010) is "the ability to get what you want – to be successful in your goals" (p. 5). This study focuses on two views of power. The first is the ability of the available structures to assign power to individuals, namely, structuralism; the second, is the ability of the individual to use his/her agency by his/her effort to find spaces by challenging structures, namely, post-structuralism.

Structuralism is used to explain women empowerment. By this approach patterns and elements in the society and tourism industry are analysed in order to determine the enabling and constraining factors. Structures are factors such as norms, values or culture, and the patterns of these structures can be viewed in terms of the way they relate to each other to form the overall system (Levi-Strauss, 1999). Structuralism emphasises the causal force of relations among elements in a system while taking account of emerging patterns occurring as a result of those forces (Giddens & Turner, 1987).

Post-structuralism, on the other hand, goes beyond the causation patterns by questioning them (Aitchison, 2000; Radford & Radford, 2005). The central concern of post-structuralism is the power of human agency and the contribution of individuals in construction of socio-economic patterns (Aitchison, 2000b; Ateljevic& Hall, 2007). While structuralism centres the power on the dominant structures, for example, culture and systems such as patriarchy (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000), post-structuralism conceptualises power in terms of individuals' capability to view their worlds. Within this context, power prevails everywhere in social relations; it has no fixed anchor point and has mostly been related to knowledge (Oksala, 2008).

Several studies have been carried out to explain women empowerment in tourism. Pritchard and Morgan (2000) and Veijola and Valtonen (2007) explain women empowerment as the way economic structures position women in the tourism industry. They argue that because the tourism industry as a business entity embraces the wealth creation objective, such objectives have led to the creation of inequalities informed by global capitalism (Aitchison, 2001b; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). It is also observed that because tourism is an industry that invites first world western tourists to consume third world places and people as pleasure products (Aitchison, 2001b, p.135) women's engagement in tourism is influenced by what tourists expect to see. This

also influences tourists' practices which go beyond the purchase of goods and services towards the consumption of signs (Rojek & Urry 1997). Again Cohen (2001) supports this view as he propounds that tourism is about the exoticism of places and people.

Researches on women employment in the tourism industry have increasingly been showing the effects of their engagement in tourism works in different settings (O'Riordan, 2003; Thrane, 2008; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2011; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Generally, gender has been proved to show its influence in shaping a woman's position in society as well as in the industry in both developed and developing countries (Aitchison, 2001b). Gender norms and values have been given a key role in many aspects including division of responsibilities and determination of individuals' ability to make decisions. The prevailing patriarchal patterns in many societies are argued to have contributed towards the peripheral positioning of women (Gentry, 2007; O'Riordan, 2003; Thrane, 2008; Tucker, 2007; Tugores, 2008). However, differences between men and women vary among societies, depending on the cultural values that inform these patriarchal systems. For example, according to Islamic values, patriarchal patterns seem to be more conservative compared to westernised countries and thus making gender differences in access and control of socio-economic resources more pronounced (Tucker, 2007).

Though gender has been one of the major socio-cultural characteristics that are used in determining women's position, education as a key employment criterion has also been shaping current gender inequality (Thrane, 2008). The assigned women roles which limit them within the domestic scope, especially in Muslim oriented and African societies, makes formal education an unnecessary requirement for girls (Gentry, 2007; Kibera & Kibera, 1999). To the contrary, the tourism sector employment prioritises education as a criterion for placing employees. In this respect, therefore, women find themselves limited and placed in low cadres and non-skilled

positions. In other settings, other characteristics such as marriage and parenthood are used in employment contracts to determine salary levels (Gentry, 2007). In such settings, women may be advantaged because most of them are married and they are also parents (Gentry, 2007). Generally, literature on tourism shows the impact of assigned gender roles in their engagement in the tourism industry. These roles have been shaped by the norms and values that define their domestic and family obligations, restrictions in their social and economic engagements and perceived gender specific jobs (Gentry, 2007; O'Riordan, 2003).

Drawing from other sociology and development studies, gender differences in Tanzania are mostly explained in terms of the overriding patriarchal gender power (Koda & Ngaiza, 2004; Rutashobya & Nchimbi, 1999). It is further argued that gender is mostly informed by the complex cultural and traditional prejudices that are argued to influence women's business behaviour at a large extent (Rutashobya & Nchimbi, 1999). It has been argued that cultural and traditional norms have strongly influenced the ability of Tanzanian women to realise their potential in economic development processes (Ellis et al., 2007). The patriarchal system is overriding and women's lives are dominated by their household position, the constraints of patriarchal marriage contacts and the ensuing lack of resources (Creighton & Omari, 1995; Kissawike, 2008; Nchimbi, 2003; Spring & Rutashobya, 2009). This position was justified by a study done by Tanzanian Women Entrepreneurs in 2006, which reinforced the presence of culturally-based obstacles to women's participation in economic activities. One of the striking obstacles is the reluctance of husbands to allow their wives to engage in business activities, and time constraints due to competing domestic responsibilities (Ellis et al., 2007).

Generally, researches in this stance are centred in the influence of socio-economic structures and cultural patterns in determining gender power relations ranging from household, community and

workplace and their impact in tourism development (Swain, 1995). The argument is that gender differences in tourism have been engendered by the dominant masculine tendency of industry, which accord more power and status to men (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). As a result, women's power is subsumed into dominant male patterns (Aitchison, 2001b). Thus, this tends to create gender inequality in which women's position is generally labelled the lowest in the hierarchical categories (Aitchison, 2001b; Kinnaird et al., 1994; Thrane, 2008; Tugores, 2008; Wall & Norris, 2003).

Methodology

The study was done in Zanzibar, which forms part of the United Republic of Tanzania. It is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean in East Africa that encloses several islands but the major ones are Unguja and Pemba. Due to its geographical location and its ancient historical popularity that dates back to the first millennium (AD), Zanzibar is one of East Africa's most famous tourism hotspots, comprising various touristic attractions including sandy beaches, historic sites, traditional sailing dhows, festivals as well as Swahili cultural heritage sites (Anderson, 2013; TTB & TCT, 2019). Zanzibar was selected because of the availability of myriads of tourism activities and investments caused by increasing number of tourists. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Bank of Tanzania (BOT) (2017), tourists who arrived in Zanzibar for leisure and holidays in 2016 accounted for around 87% of total tourist arrivals. The majority of these tourists were from Italy, United Kingdom, Germany and United States of America. At the same time, Zanzibar is characterised by Swahili traditions that contain socio-cultural factors which inform women's gender roles and local people's attitudes concerning tourism and tourists (Sindiga, 1996; Eastman 1995).

The study was informed by an interpretative approach. It explored women's experience of working in tourism in order to capture their views of the environment they encountered in their day-to-day lives. The environment then was interpreted in terms of the enabling/constraining factors and how women had been coping with such factors. In-depth interviews were used. This was an approach which was appropriate in capturing women's self-knowledge of their world and how they interacted with it and assigned their meanings (Jennings, 2010). Moreover, this approach created a natural environment where the researcher and the researched came together; this situation created an environment of confidence which was able to capture multiple realities from the respondents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Reflexivity strategies were used during interviews to create an environment which motivated women to tell their in-depth stories and enabled them to have mutual sharing with the researcher (Ateljevic, et al., 2005). Reflexivity means that the researcher shared her own experiences with the interviewees during the interview. It was possible to share stories because the researcher is a Tanzanian woman and was able to use her own experiences to mediate interview conversations. A purposive sampling method was used to select women basing on the interviewer's judgement and the respondents' willingness to narrate their stories. A total of 22 women were reached. The interviewees included women who were employed in hotels and those who had established their own businesses along the tourist attraction areas. The interviews were conducted in their workplaces in different locations ranging from areas that are busy with tourism activities such as Stone Town, beach areas, north-eastern and south-eastern Zanzibar, as well as less busy areas such as Kidoti and Pete.

Analysis was done following transcription of recorded interviews. The transcribed empirical materials were translated from Kiswahili to English in order to achieve language consistency. ATLAS.ti was used for coding and organising the data. The categorisation and interpretation of factors and agencies was done by noting the patterns when describing the criteria that they used to choose to work in tourism.

Results and Discussion

Both structuralism and post-structuralism have been considered in the findings of this study. Through a structuralist's point of view, some factors identified in the literature have also been mentioned by women. Through their conversation, women always mention their household responsibilities. By doing so, the gender role showed its contribution in shaping women's ability to work in the industry, and three factors were identified, namely, religion, family and marriage as well as education. Likewise, through post-structuralism, the study has been able to reveal and identify the agency when they negotiate with the structures. The agency of women is also presented by showing their positions in either accepting these factors as they are or challenging them by adjusting meanings or rejecting them totally, and finding their own ways.

In reference to religion, all interviewed women were affiliated to a religion, either Islam or Christianity. Although they were affiliated to different religions, most of the interviewed women claimed that Islam influences their decisions because the majority of people who live in Zanzibar are Muslims. As a consequence, even the Swahili culture is also partially Islamised. Thus, Islam plays an important role in everyday life and women realise that the Zanzibar society expects them to live like 'Swahilis' and to follow and maintain Islamic values and norms in everyday life. In general, women who live in Zanzibar are expected to follow Muslim values and norms especially with respect to working in decent places, dealing with acceptable products in their business (example, henna, spices, but not sculptures), performing their household responsibilities and revering their husbands and parents. Alcohol consumption and unethical dressing are prohibited for all people who live in Zanzibar, not just Muslims.

However, this study revealed that women differ in their ways of interpreting and dealing with these issues. For example, some women avoid working in public places, and choose to work in their households or very close to their homes. They also avoid working in areas that are busy with tourists, including shopping areas. Those who were allowed or chose to work in public and open areas were required to cover their bodies. Those who have to wear uniforms following hotel dress codes when they are in their workplaces, and have to change to their traditional clothes immediately after working hours, or if they have to go to the Mosque after work to pray.

By using religion as a lens, women interpret working in hotels and restaurants in quite different ways. While some Muslim women see working in tourism as violating the norms, others argue that by serving tourists and enabling them to do the things they love doing is also a gesture of paying 'respect to their culture'. This last group of women believe that they will be blessed by serving the tourists and being hospitable.

Some of the restrictions, such as not selling sculptures or having no direct contact with tourists, give opportunity to non-Muslim women to take advantage. Most of the non-Muslim women feel that they are freer to work in many areas because Christianity does not disallow them to enter or work in open areas. Although many of them do not originate from Zanzibar and thus should feel freer to make their own choices, some of these non-Muslim women also feel somewhat unaccepted by society. Some of the women therefore decide to convert from Christianity to Islam; some have even got married to the local people in order to become more accepted.

All in all, the influence of religion on women's participation in tourism is mixed – to some of them, the tourism industry offers limited space for them to work, while to other Muslim women, the tourism industry has provided an opportunity to practice hospitality, pay respect to visitors and also maintain their Swahili culture by selling cultural items.

In family and marriage, this study found that family relations influence the way women enter and work in tourism. Most women admitted that their families have various expectations from them, respect being the most important one. Women feel that they need to engage in respectable marriages, have descent jobs, such as teaching, and at the same time support their families financially. Most interviewed women were of the opinion that a married woman is perceived as more respectable than a single one; therefore, parents are pleased when their daughters are married and traditionally the parents are responsible of deciding the right partner and time for their daughters to be married. Many interviewed women, especially those who originate from Zanzibar, accept and live with the partners chosen by their parents. Some got married when they were still fourteen years old; as a result, these women had to drop out of school.

For the women who originate in Zanzibar, the family is very important because it includes parents as well as clan members. Women's decision to work in tourism depends much on the

support that they get from their family members, and the perceptions they have of tourism. Jobs like bar-tenders, receptionists, waitresses and vendors in the streets are perceived negatively; these jobs are seen as jeopardising the possibility for women to enter into respectable marriages. Similarly, because of the long working hours in tourism, these jobs are claimed to limit the availability of women in performing their household tasks. It should be noted that married and unmarried women have roles to play in the family households and daughters are expected to assist with the chores.

Moreover, some social responsibilities are interpreted differently by different women. Some women feel that they cannot afford to miss out on social events like funerals and weddings. Perhaps these are the opportunities by which most women manage to go out of their homes and socialise. This makes women's absence rates high in Zanzibar and this is used as one of the criteria by companies when they decide to retrench employees during the low season. The few who are committed to their jobs manage to make up time for such social responsibilities, especially during the off-duty periods.

Women have also different views on the costs and benefits of marriage. Since marriage is informed by religion and tribal culture, marriage is one of the ways of maintaining/preserving culture. Divorce is perceived to be a failure and therefore something that brings shame to the family. Thus, when women are considering to get married, all they see in tourism at first are the long working hours, night shifts, and bargaining with male customers. However, like with other issues that have been explained above, women have different opinions in the ways they perceive marriage. Some women feel that they must be at home to attend to their husbands; and those who have had some quarrelling with their husbands about their jobs have decided to change these jobs, for example, to avoid long working hours or night shifts. Other women entrepreneurs have

decided to work as producers at home or in groups to avoid unnecessary nagging from their husbands. However, there are a few women who involve their husbands in their businesses as advisers or partners or who are using their husband's resources such as capital to do their business. A good number of women make use of their husband's shops to do their businesses.

From the education perspective, women believe education is one of the most important requirements for them to do business in the tourism industry because such business involves people from different parts of the world. For them language skills, especially English, are crucial. They also understand that to do business such as vending and selling items to tourists requires the ability to calculate and be competitive, because there are many sellers selling similar items, and who are targeting the same customers.

The constraints related with education as a qualification to work in the industry are also interpreted differently by different women. Women that were privileged to achieve a higher level of education clearly see the opportunities that are related to their professions, for example storekeeping, housekeeping, and management. Women with no or little education interpret education as the competence that they have acquired through life, including the ones acquired by assisting their mothers. Also, because they are being prepared to become housewives many of them are trained to manage chores such as cooking, cleaning, and craft making. Women of this group take advantage of their domestic competencies to work in the hotels or to work as entrepreneurs producing different types of souvenirs, decorations and cosmetics.

Conclusion

The agency of women demonstrated in this study has shown that working in tourism gives them exposure that enables them to realise and review their gender roles. Women have been able to

view and review the environment when they intend to strike a balance between their gender roles and working in the industry. Knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, they have been able to pinpoint what constitutes the environment around them, including religion, family and marriage as well as education. The more they engage in tourism, the more they get more knowledge; this enables them to adjust their gender roles and be able to extend their limits in order to get more benefits from tourism. This empowers them to author their own choices and actions to a large extent. Women have been adjusting the meanings of their gender roles and working in tourism. They have been taking decisions according to what they think is going to give them benefits. Therefore, empowerment is about being able to freely act according to one's own voices. That means creating a balance between their gender roles and the extent to which they want to progress by working in the industry.

Implications

The implications of this study are that women are always able to identify factors that enables or constraints their abilities to work in tourism industry. So, the empowerment means the decisions to work by encountering the environment in negotiable ways. This is because they want to balance their relationships with their families, marriages and religion. Education, whether formal or informal will enable them to gain power that will help them to decide and act according to their own will. Another implication is for policy makers when they design some programs for women, they should find ways to involve their families and institutions such as churches and mosques.

Recommendations

The recommendations are for women not cease to do what they want in their lives because of the constraints but they should find ways of negotiating. To the policy makers, they should design the educational programs that will enable women to be able to develop different ways of dealing with opportunities and constraints in their lives.

Limitations

This chapter has limitations in that it involved women who reside in Zanzibar where there is a domination of the Muslim religion. The situation might have been different to the Christian dominated areas of the country. Also, the use of qualitative method means that the results cannot be generalised.

Further Research

More research can be done especially by using statistical analysis to establish the relationships among the variables namely religion, family, marriage and education with the extent to which women can participate in tourism activities.

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