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Factors influencing local residents' intentions to conserve the built heritage in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study used the dominant cognitive-based theory of planned behaviour (TPB) complemented by the affection-based attachment theory (AT) to investigate factors influencing local residents' conservation intentions. Thus, in addition to TPB's variables, such as attitudes towards conservation, perceived social pressure and perceived control over conservation, the study considered the effects of heritage affection on conservation intentions. Cross-sectional questionnaire-based data gathered from the three historic towns of Zanzibar Stone Town, Kilwa Kivinje and Pangani in Tanzania were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling. The TPB's variables and heritage affection all showed a positive and significant correlation with conservation intention. The empirical data therefore supported using the TPB, complemented by the AT, to explain engagement in conservation in the built heritage setting. The study concludes that conservation intention is best viewed as a mixture of cognitive and affective factors. Theoretical and managerial implications as well as suggestions for future studies are provided.

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Introduction

Historic buildings and their setting, known as the built heritage, form one of the most dynamic segments of the cultural tourism industry, which accounted for around 40% of international tourist flows in 2013 (World Tourism Organization, 2014). Along with the growing number of visits to built heritage sites is the increasing amount being spent on local products, thereby implicitly increasing local incomes and reducing the poverty level in Sub-Saharan Africa (Anderson, 2014). The built heritage also preserves the socio-cultural identity, history and character of historic towns (Henderson, 2011; Lee & Chhabra, 2015). While efforts are ongoing to promote conservation of the built heritage, it is being destroyed at an alarming rate, partly by local residents (Mabulla, 2000; Mapunda, 2001, 2013; Moon, 2009; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Consequently, local residents' engagement in conservation is currently being universally emphasized as a fundamental strategy for achieving conservation and development goals (Ashley, Osmani, Emmitt, Mallinson, & Mallinson, 2015; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009; Tracey & Lu, 2009). However, the factors that stimulate local residents' intentions to conserve the built heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa remain unclear.

An ongoing debate about factors influencing an individual's engagement in conservation hinges on the rational and non-rational school of thought. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) dominates the rational-based explanations by positing that attitude towards conservation, social pressure and perceived control determine intention to conserve, which in turn determines engagement in conservation (Alonso, Nikolaos, & Pritchard, 2015; Clark & Finley, 2007; Garrod, Willis,

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