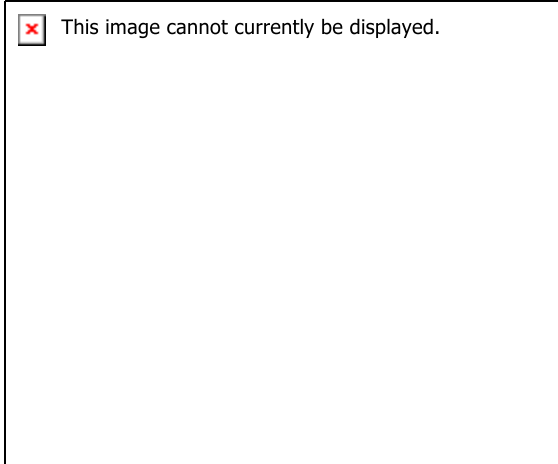


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE STUDIES



**THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND AUTHENTICITY IN TOURISM
A CASE STUDY OF GREAT ZIMBABWE**

BY

STEMBISO NDANDA

B210780B

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Culture and Heritage Studies in partial
fulfilment for the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Honours in Culture and Heritage
Studies Degree**

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role and significance of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, using Great Zimbabwe as a focal point. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Great Zimbabwe holds immense historical, cultural, and spiritual value for both local communities and international visitors. The research investigates how tourists perceive authenticity, how these perceptions influence their emotional and cognitive experiences, and how authenticity shapes overall satisfaction and return intentions. It also examines the perspectives of local communities and heritage stakeholders regarding the preservation and presentation of authentic cultural narratives. The study employs a qualitative methodology, including in-depth interviews with site guides, community members, and tourism officials. Findings reveal that authenticity is multi-dimensional encompassing physical preservation, cultural rituals, emotional resonance, and inclusive storytelling. The research highlights that authentic engagement enhances tourist satisfaction and strengthens community participation in heritage management. Recommendations are offered for heritage authorities, tourism bodies, and policymakers to foster more inclusive, culturally respectful, and sustainable tourism practices. Ultimately, the study underscores the critical importance of integrating community voices and living heritage into the fabric of cultural tourism.

Declaration Form

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Permanent Home Address:

1232 Artherstone street

Bindura

Zimbabwe

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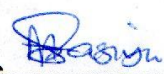
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support and belief in me have been the cornerstone of my journey. To my parents, for instilling in me the value of education and perseverance. To my lecturers and mentors, whose guidance helped shape this research . And most importantly, to the people of Great Zimbabwe, whose rich heritage, stories, and resilience inspired every page of this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, tourism has transformed from a leisurely pursuit for the privileged into a globalized industry impacting economies, environments, and societies worldwide. As tourism develops, cultural heritage has emerged as a central element, drawing tourists who seek to connect with authentic experiences and learn about different societies and histories. Cultural heritage, which encompasses the tangible and intangible legacies inherited from past generations, is highly valued within tourism because it reflects a location's unique identity. This interest has given rise to a niche known as cultural or heritage tourism, where visitors are drawn to historic sites, traditional art forms, local customs, and ways of life that embody the essence of a place. While this trend has economic benefits for communities, it also raises questions about the preservation of authenticity, the sustainability of local cultures, and the potential commodification of cultural traditions.

The concept of authenticity, closely tied to cultural heritage tourism, is an essential but often contested aspect. Authenticity refers to the genuine, unaltered nature of cultural elements and experiences. Tourists increasingly seek authentic encounters that allow them to witness and participate in the true essence of a culture, untainted by external influence or commercialization. However, authenticity is subjective, varying among tourists, locals, and other stakeholders. As destinations try to meet this demand for authenticity, they face pressures to showcase an idealized version of culture that may not align with contemporary local realities. This conflict between preserving the true cultural identity of a location and modifying it for commercial appeal has sparked significant debate in the field of tourism studies.

Cultural heritage and authenticity intersect in complex ways within the tourism industry, influencing visitor satisfaction, local community involvement, and the sustainability of tourism. On one hand, tourism can support the preservation of heritage by generating income that aids in the conservation of historical sites, revitalization of traditions, and promotion of local crafts. This revenue can strengthen community pride and identity, enabling locals to pass down cultural traditions to future generations. However, on the other hand, the commercialization of culture for

tourism can lead to the dilution or even loss of authentic practices as they are repackaged to appeal to tourists' expectations. The pressure to perform or display culture for economic gain may alter its original meanings, ultimately impacting the community's sense of identity and pride.

The dynamic interaction between cultural heritage, authenticity, and tourism also affects the social fabric of host communities. Increased tourism can influence social norms, lifestyles, and even family structures, with local residents sometimes adopting behaviors or attitudes that align with tourists' expectations rather than their traditional values. This cultural transformation, known as "acculturation," may reduce authenticity over time, eroding the unique characteristics that attracted tourists initially. Moreover, the influx of tourists can lead to over-tourism, which strains local resources, impacts the environment, and places a burden on infrastructure, thereby diminishing both the visitor experience and the quality of life for residents. Balancing these factors is critical for sustainable tourism, which seeks to minimize adverse impacts while maximizing economic and cultural benefits.

The study of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism explores these multifaceted issues, with a focus on understanding how tourism can preserve and celebrate local identities without compromising their essence. By examining case studies, theoretical perspectives, and practical challenges, researchers aim to identify strategies that enable destinations to offer meaningful, genuine experiences to tourists while protecting the integrity of local cultures. Addressing these concerns requires a collaborative approach involving government bodies, tourism operators, local communities, and tourists themselves to ensure that heritage tourism contributes positively to social, cultural, and economic development. This paper will analyze the impact of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, investigating the benefits and challenges associated with heritage tourism, and exploring strategies to promote a more sustainable, responsible, and authentic tourism experience.

In conclusion, cultural heritage and authenticity are vital components of tourism that serve as both attractions and points of contention. They shape the visitor experience, influence local communities, and contribute to the sustainability of tourism in profound ways. As cultural tourism grows, understanding and managing the complexities of heritage and authenticity will be essential to fostering a tourism industry that respects and sustains the cultural foundations it depends on.

This study seeks to explore the delicate balance between preserving cultural heritage and adapting it to meet the evolving demands of a globalized tourism landscape.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Zimbabwe boasts a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, encompassing a wide range of traditions, languages, and historical sites that reflect the country's diverse ethnic groups, including the Shona, Ndebele, and many others. From the iconic Great Zimbabwe ruins one of Africa's most significant archaeological sites to the traditional art forms, music, dance, and festivals, Zimbabwe's cultural heritage is a source of national pride and identity . As the country seeks to bolster its economy and promote tourism, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of cultural heritage as a driver of tourism.

In recent years, the concept of authenticity has gained traction in the tourism industry, with travelers increasingly seeking genuine experiences that connect them with local cultures. Authenticity in tourism can be understood through various lenses, such as objective authenticity (the inherent qualities of cultural artifacts), constructive authenticity (the ways in which cultural experiences are shaped for tourists), and existential authenticity (the personal engagement and self-realization of tourists during their experiences). Understanding how these dimensions of authenticity intersect with cultural heritage is crucial for developing effective tourism strategies in Zimbabwe.

However, the intersection of cultural heritage and authenticity in Zimbabwean tourism presents both opportunities and challenges. The commodification of cultural heritage for tourism can lead to the staging of cultural practices that prioritize tourist satisfaction over the preservation of genuine cultural expressions. This commodification can result in tensions between the economic benefits of tourism and the need to maintain the integrity of cultural heritage, potentially leading to cultural dilution and the loss of traditional practices.

Moreover, local communities play a crucial role in shaping and maintaining cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism. Their involvement is essential for ensuring that cultural practices are not only preserved but also authentically represented in tourism offerings. Understanding the

dynamics between tourism, local communities, and cultural heritage is vital for fostering sustainable tourism practices that respect and protect Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage.

Given the importance of cultural heritage and authenticity in the context of Zimbabwean tourism, this study aims to explore the impact of these factors on tourist behavior, satisfaction, and the sustainability of cultural practices. By examining the relationship between cultural heritage, authenticity, and tourism in Zimbabwe, the research seeks to provide insights that can guide policymakers, tourism practitioners, and local communities in promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices that honor and preserve the nation's rich cultural heritage. This research is timely and significant, as Zimbabwe navigates the challenges and opportunities of a growing tourism sector in an increasingly globalized world.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the complex relationship between cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, examining the impacts on tourist experiences and local communities.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cultural heritage tourism has become a significant aspect of the tourism industry, with many destinations relying on their cultural heritage sites to attract visitors. However, the increasing commercialization of cultural heritage tourism has raised concerns about the authenticity of these experiences. The tension between preserving cultural heritage and meeting the demands of tourists threatens the very essence of cultural heritage,

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the concept of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism.
2. To investigate the impact of cultural heritage tourism on local communities' cultural identity.
3. To examine the role of tourism stakeholders in promoting authenticity.
4. To analyze the relationship between cultural heritage and tourist satisfaction.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What defines authenticity in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe?
2. How does cultural heritage tourism impact the cultural identity of local communities surrounding Great Zimbabwe?
3. What role do tourism stakeholders play in promoting and preserving authenticity at Great Zimbabwe?
4. How does the perception of authenticity influence tourist satisfaction at Great Zimbabwe?

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is grounded in the assumption that authenticity plays a pivotal role in shaping tourist experiences, satisfaction, and perceptions at cultural heritage sites such as Great Zimbabwe. It is presumed that tourists seek not only to view historical monuments but also to engage with the cultural and spiritual narratives that define them.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study on cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism is significant because it contributes to the understanding of the complex relationships between tourism, cultural heritage, and local communities. By examining the perceptions and experiences of tourists and local stakeholders, this research provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of cultural heritage tourism. The findings will inform strategies for sustainable tourism development, cultural preservation, and community engagement, ultimately enhancing the benefits of tourism for local communities and promoting cross-cultural understanding.

The study's significance extends to various stakeholders, including tourism policymakers, cultural heritage managers, local community leaders, and tourism industry professionals. The research outcomes will help them develop effective policies and practices that balance tourism development with cultural preservation and community well-being. Additionally, the study's focus on authenticity will shed light on the role of tourism in shaping cultural identity and the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations. The study's contributions will also advance academic knowledge in the fields of tourism studies, cultural heritage management, and

sustainability, providing a foundation for future research and informing evidence-based decision-making.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is delimited to examining the impact of cultural heritage and authenticity on tourism at Great Zimbabwe, focusing specifically on this UNESCO World Heritage Site and its surrounding areas. It excludes other heritage sites in Zimbabwe or beyond, concentrating on contemporary tourism activities within the past five to ten years. The thematic scope is restricted to cultural heritage and authenticity, particularly their role in preserving historical narratives and shaping visitor experiences, excluding broader tourism themes such as environmental sustainability. Stakeholders included in the study are local community members, tourism operators, and visitors to Great Zimbabwe, while unrelated stakeholders are not considered. Methodologically, the research employs qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus groups, avoiding experimental or longitudinal studies. These delimitations ensure a focused analysis of the site's unique dynamics.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample size is limited , potentially restricting generalizability. The study's focus on cultural heritage tourism in Zimbabwe which may not be representative of other cultural heritage tourism contexts. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data and surveys may introduce social desirability bias. The study's theoretical framework may oversimplify the complex relationships between cultural heritage tourism, authenticity, and local community involvement. Furthermore, the study excludes political and policy aspects, focusing solely on economic, social, and environmental impacts. Lastly, the data collection time frame may not capture seasonal variations or long-term effects. These limitations suggest that findings should be interpreted with caution and that future studies should address these constraints to enhance the validity and applicability of the results.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical considerations are essential in this study to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected throughout the research process. This includes obtaining informed consent from all

participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and any potential risks involved. Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing data and using pseudonyms to protect participants' identities. Participation will be entirely voluntary, allowing individuals to withdraw at any time without consequence. Additionally, the research will respect the cultural and religious sensitivities of participants, particularly given the focus on religio-cultural heritage, ensuring that the study is conducted with integrity and respect for the community's values. Ethical approval will be sought from the relevant institutional review board to adhere to established ethical standards.

1.12 DEFINATION OF KEY WORDS

Here are definitions of key terms related to the study of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, with citations:

1. Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage includes the tangible and intangible assets passed down through generations, representing a community's history, values, traditions, and identity. Tangible heritage encompasses physical items like monuments, artifacts, and landscapes, while intangible heritage includes practices, beliefs, languages, and art forms (UNESCO, 2003). According to UNESCO, cultural heritage "provides people with a sense of identity and continuity" and is integral to a community's cultural legacy and self-understanding (UNESCO, 2003).

2. Authenticity

Authenticity in tourism refers to the genuine and original representation of cultural elements as experienced by locals, often perceived as unaltered and true to its historical or cultural origins (MacCannell, 1973). In heritage tourism, authenticity is considered crucial for providing meaningful experiences to visitors, though it is also subjective, as different groups (locals, tourists, stakeholders) may have varying perceptions of what is "authentic" (Cohen, 1988).

3. Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism, sometimes known as cultural heritage tourism, involves travel directed at experiencing and engaging with the historic, cultural, and social resources of a place. It includes

activities related to visiting historical landmarks, participating in traditional festivals, and exploring art and customs (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Heritage tourism allows visitors to gain insights into the past and cultural identity of a destination and is linked closely to the preservation of cultural sites and practices.

4. Commodification

Commodification in tourism occurs when cultural practices, traditions, or artifacts are modified, packaged, and presented to tourists in a way that makes them more marketable. This often leads to the alteration or simplification of cultural expressions to suit tourist expectations, sometimes resulting in a loss of authenticity (Greenwood, 1977). As Greenwood explains, commodification can “change the meaning of cultural expressions” when presented mainly for profit, impacting the cultural significance for the local community (Greenwood, 1977).

5. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that seeks to minimize negative impacts on the environment, culture, and society while promoting economic benefits and conserving resources for future generations (World Tourism Organization, 1993). Sustainable tourism emphasizes a balanced approach, aiming to support local communities, protect heritage sites, and provide fulfilling experiences to tourists without compromising future cultural or environmental integrity.

Cross-Cultural Understanding

Cross-cultural understanding refers to the awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities between groups, promoting effective and respectful communication across diverse cultural backgrounds. It involves recognizing and valuing different beliefs, customs, languages, and worldviews, ultimately fostering empathy, tolerance, and cooperation among people from varying cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).

Tourist Experience

The tourist experience encompasses the full range of emotions, perceptions, and interactions that a traveler encounters from the moment they begin planning a trip to their return home. It includes the activities they engage in, the people they meet, the sites they visit, and the cultural or natural

surroundings they immerse in. The tourist experience is influenced by several factors, such as the authenticity of the destination, quality of services, cultural interactions, and personal expectations (Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Local Communities

Local communities are the groups of people who live in, interact with, and shape a particular geographic area, often sharing cultural, social, and economic ties unique to their region. In the context of tourism, local communities play a vital role as custodians of the cultural heritage, traditions, and natural landscapes that attract visitors. Their customs, language, art, and way of life contribute to the distinct identity of a destination. Engaging local communities in tourism development is essential for sustainable tourism, as it empowers residents, ensures the preservation of cultural practices, and promotes a balanced relationship between economic growth and cultural integrity (Murphy, 1985).

1.13 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

This research study is organized into five chapters, each explained in detail in this section.

Chapter One serves as the introductory chapter, covering various components such as the background of the study, the purpose of the research, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, research questions, and the assumptions made. Additionally, it discusses the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations of the research, definitions of key terms, ethical considerations, and an outline of the dissertation timeline.

Chapter Two conducts a literature review, examining works by scholars from diverse regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa, and specifically Zimbabwe. This chapter critically analyzes various scholarly articles, journals, and research findings. It also presents the different concepts that this study adopts.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology adopted for this study, focusing on the impact of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, particularly within the context of Bindura Urban. The chapter begins by justifying the use of a qualitative research design, which is deemed appropriate for exploring the complex social phenomena related to religio-cultural heritage and its interplay

with tourism. A case study approach centered on GREAT ZIMBABWE allows for in-depth examination of local perspectives. The chapter details the sampling strategy, employing purposive sampling to identify key informants among local community members, church leaders, and tourists to capture diverse insights. Data collection methods include open-ended interviews, structured questionnaires, and focus group discussions, each chosen to facilitate rich, qualitative data. Thematic analysis will be utilized to interpret the data, revealing underlying themes and patterns. Ethical considerations are emphasized, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation are prioritized throughout the research process. Finally, the chapter acknowledges potential limitations of the study while highlighting strategies to mitigate these challenges, ultimately setting the stage for the subsequent analysis of findings in Chapter 4.

Chapter Four focuses on data presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings. It showcases the perspectives of the researcher and the insights of the study. The chapter presents the data analysis in both narrative and tabular formats, drawing from information collected through open-ended interviews with participants , questionnaires and focus group discussions.

Chapter Five concludes the study by summarizing the findings from all preceding chapters. It offers a synthesis of the key insights and provides conclusions and recommendations based on the research conducted.

1.14 PROPOSED TIME FRAME

DISSERTATION	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE OF COMPLETION		
CHAPTER 1				
CHAPTER 2				
CHAPTER 3				
CHAPTER 4				
CHAPTER 5				

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, with a specific emphasis on Great Zimbabwe. This chapter reviews existing literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key themes, including the role of authenticity in shaping cultural heritage tourism, the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage, and the socio-political dynamics of heritage management in postcolonial contexts.

The chapter begins by examining foundational theories, including MacCannell's theory of staged authenticity, Cohen's typologies of tourist experiences, and Wang's existential authenticity. It also explores African-centered perspectives from scholars such as Munjeri, Ranger, and Chirikure, who critique the dominance of Western heritage management frameworks and advocate for localized approaches. By integrating global and African perspectives, the chapter identifies gaps in the literature, particularly in the operationalization of authenticity and the inclusion of local communities in heritage tourism. Through this analysis, Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical foundation for the study, highlighting the relevance of cultural authenticity in the sustainable development of tourism at Great Zimbabwe. This chapter aims to provide a critical lens through which the interplay between heritage preservation and tourism commercialization can be understood, setting the stage for further exploration in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In cultural heritage tourism, the notion of authenticity is central to understanding how tourists engage with historical sites and how those sites are presented, interpreted, and managed. Authenticity is a complex and evolving concept, encompassing both the objective qualities of heritage artifacts and the subjective experiences of visitors. In the context of Africa—where colonial histories, post-independence nation-building, and global tourism dynamics intersect—the pursuit and presentation of authenticity are particularly contested.

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation for analyzing the impact of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, with specific reference to Great Zimbabwe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As a powerful symbol of African civilization and national identity, Great Zimbabwe serves not only as a physical site of ruins but also as a site of cultural meaning and ideological expression. The theoretical framework for this study draws on Cohen's Modes of Tourist Experience, this theory collectively allow for a comprehensive analysis of how authenticity is constructed, perceived, and negotiated by tourists, communities, and heritage institutions.

2.2.1. Cohen's Modes of Tourist Experience (1979)

Understanding how tourists engage with heritage sites requires a nuanced appreciation of their motivations, expectations, and perceptions. One of the most influential frameworks in this area is Erik Cohen's (1979) typology of tourist experiences. This theory provides a spectrum of tourist motivations, ranging from superficial leisure-seeking to deep cultural or existential quests. It is especially relevant in the study of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, where different visitors bring varied expectations to historical sites such as Great Zimbabwe.

Cohen challenged the idea that tourists form a homogenous group. Instead, he proposed that tourists fall into five distinct experiential modes: recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential. Each mode reflects a different relationship between the tourist and the culture they are visiting, as well as a different pursuit of authenticity.

The recreational mode represents tourists who are primarily seeking relaxation and entertainment. Their interest in cultural or historical depth is minimal; instead, they focus on leisure and escape from routine life. At a site like Great Zimbabwe, a recreational tourist may enjoy the visual spectacle of the ruins, take photographs, and appreciate the natural setting, but will likely engage little with the deeper historical or cultural context.

The diversionary mode is similar but slightly more inward-looking. These tourists may be disengaged or disillusioned with their own cultural environment and seek distraction in new surroundings. Their interaction with the heritage site is still superficial, though they might enjoy curated cultural performances or guided narratives without questioning their authenticity. In both

of these early modes, there is limited concern with whether what is presented is "real" or historically accurate.

In contrast, experiential tourists seek a more genuine encounter with another culture. They are motivated by a desire to connect with ways of life different from their own and often romanticize the "authentic" or "traditional." When visiting Great Zimbabwe, experiential tourists may take time to explore the historical significance of the site, listen attentively to local guides, and show interest in the customs and traditions of nearby communities. However, their engagement remains somewhat observational they want to see authenticity but remain outsiders to it.

The experimental mode involves a deeper search for meaning. Tourists in this category are not only interested in other cultures but are dissatisfied with their own cultural identity. They seek alternatives and may temporarily adopt elements of another way of life. At Great Zimbabwe, an experimental tourist might engage in immersive cultural experiences, such as participating in traditional ceremonies or volunteering in nearby villages, in an effort to find personal significance.

Finally, the existential tourist undergoes a profound engagement with the host culture. For these individuals, the visited culture is not simply interesting—it becomes a central part of their identity. They may fully embrace the values and lifestyle of the host community, feeling a deep emotional or spiritual connection to the heritage site. A Zimbabwean descendant returning to Great Zimbabwe to connect with ancestral history could represent this category, experiencing the site as a space of belonging and existential fulfillment rather than as a tourist attraction.

Cohen's typology offers a powerful lens for analyzing the diverse ways tourists relate to authenticity in cultural heritage tourism. Applied to Great Zimbabwe, it reveals that tourists are not a uniform audience, and their experiences of authenticity vary widely. This understanding encourages more nuanced and inclusive heritage management that acknowledges multiple perspectives and fosters deeper cultural engagement.

2.3 REVIEWING INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTICITY IN CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM .

The concepts of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism have been significantly shaped by the theories of scholars such as Dean MacCannell and Erik Cohen. MacCannell's (1976) theory of authenticity highlights the quest for genuine experiences among tourists, arguing that travelers seek deeper connections with cultures and histories that are often perceived as more "authentic" than their own. This quest, he suggests, frequently results in a "staged authenticity," where cultural expressions are commodified and adapted to meet tourist expectations. Similarly, Cohen (1988) builds on the idea of authenticity by proposing three modes: objective authenticity, which relates to the verifiable truth of artifacts; constructive authenticity, shaped by the perceptions of individuals; and existential authenticity, derived from personal, transformative experiences. While these theories have provided a foundational understanding of authenticity in tourism, they leave certain knowledge gaps, especially when applied to specific contexts such as Great Zimbabwe.

One significant gap in MacCannell's theory is its focus on the binary notion of authenticity, often emphasizing staged versus authentic experiences without fully addressing the fluid and dynamic nature of authenticity in diverse cultural contexts. Great Zimbabwe, for instance, represents a complex heritage that intertwines tangible monuments with intangible cultural practices and oral histories. The theory does not adequately account for how authenticity evolves when local communities actively participate in shaping the tourist experience, balancing economic opportunities with cultural preservation.

Cohen's approach, though more nuanced, also has limitations when applied to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. His modes of authenticity, while addressing varied tourist perceptions, largely center on the individual tourist's experience. This perspective often overlooks the communal and collective dimensions of authenticity in sites where the local population plays a critical role in defining and presenting cultural heritage. For example, the existential authenticity derived by a tourist at Great Zimbabwe may differ significantly from the authenticity experienced by local communities who view the site as a living heritage rather than a static monument.

Both theories also exhibit a Western-centric bias, as they were developed primarily in the context of Western tourists and their interactions with non-Western cultures. This raises questions about their applicability to African heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe, where the dynamics of authenticity may be influenced by postcolonial narratives, historical marginalization, and efforts

to reclaim indigenous identity. The role of intangible heritage, such as storytelling, rituals, and traditional knowledge systems, in shaping authenticity is often overlooked in these frameworks.

Moreover, MacCannell and Cohen give limited attention to the socio-economic implications of authenticity for host communities. While the theories explore the tourist's perspective, they do not sufficiently address how authenticity impacts the economic, cultural, and social well-being of local populations. At Great Zimbabwe, where tourism is a potential driver of development, understanding how authenticity contributes to or detracts from community benefits is crucial.

while MacCannell's and Cohen's theories have laid a strong foundation for understanding authenticity in tourism, their application to specific sites like Great Zimbabwe reveals notable gaps. These include the oversimplification of authenticity, limited focus on community perspectives, and insufficient attention to intangible heritage and socio-economic impacts. Addressing these gaps could lead to more inclusive and context-specific approaches to managing cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism.

Dallen Timothy and Gregory Ashworth have significantly contributed to the discourse on cultural heritage and tourism through their examination of heritage commodification, management, and representation. Their theories emphasize the interplay between tourism and heritage, particularly the tension between preserving cultural integrity and catering to tourism demands. Timothy (2011) explores the processes of heritage commodification, highlighting how cultural and historical sites are often transformed into marketable products, while Ashworth (2007) delves into heritage management, focusing on the challenges of balancing preservation with accessibility. While these perspectives provide valuable insights, their application to specific heritage contexts, such as Great Zimbabwe, exposes critical knowledge gaps.

One of the main limitations of Timothy and Ashworth's theories is their focus on commodification from a predominantly Western perspective. Their analyses often emphasize the risks of cultural dilution and the loss of authenticity in commodified heritage, assuming a universal reaction to these processes. However, in African contexts like Great Zimbabwe, commodification may not always be viewed negatively. Instead, it could be seen as an opportunity for economic empowerment and cultural promotion, especially in postcolonial settings where heritage sites are

reinterpreted as symbols of indigenous identity and pride. The theories do not adequately account for these nuances, which are central to understanding the dynamics of heritage tourism in such contexts.

Additionally, while Timothy and Ashworth discuss the challenges of balancing preservation with tourism, their frameworks often prioritize the demands of international tourists. This emphasis neglects the importance of local community perspectives in heritage management. At Great Zimbabwe, the local communities' historical and cultural connections to the site are integral to its identity. Their participation in tourism and their perceptions of how the site's heritage is represented are critical but underexplored in Timothy and Ashworth's work. The lack of attention to community-driven approaches to heritage management leaves a gap in understanding how local stakeholders can influence and benefit from tourism.

Furthermore, Timothy's work on commodification tends to focus primarily on tangible heritage, such as monuments and artifacts, often overlooking the role of intangible heritage. At Great Zimbabwe, intangible cultural elements like oral histories, traditional rituals, and indigenous knowledge are deeply intertwined with the physical site. These elements contribute significantly to the authenticity of the tourist experience and the cultural significance of the site, yet they remain underrepresented in Timothy's and Ashworth's analyses.

Lastly, both scholars address heritage management at a broad conceptual level, often focusing on global trends and challenges. While this provides valuable theoretical insights, it can obscure the specific challenges faced by individual heritage sites. For instance, Great Zimbabwe's unique postcolonial narrative, which involves reclaiming indigenous heritage while addressing the legacy of colonial interpretations, requires a more context-specific approach than what Timothy and Ashworth's general frameworks offer.

While Timothy and Ashworth's theories offer essential insights into the commodification and management of heritage, they leave critical knowledge gaps when applied to localized and postcolonial contexts like Great Zimbabwe. These gaps include insufficient attention to intangible heritage, local community perspectives, and the positive potential of commodification in non-

Western settings. Addressing these gaps could lead to a more inclusive and contextually relevant understanding of heritage tourism in Africa.

Richards and Wilson (2006) have made significant contributions to understanding the interplay between culture, creativity, and tourism, with a particular focus on how destinations use cultural and creative resources to attract visitors. Their theories emphasize the growing importance of cultural and creative industries in shaping the tourist experience, as well as the role of destinations in branding themselves as hubs of creativity and cultural richness. While these ideas provide valuable frameworks for understanding modern tourism dynamics, they also expose knowledge gaps, particularly when applied to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe.

One of the core aspects of Richards and Wilson's theory is their focus on the commodification of culture as a resource for tourism. They argue that destinations often use creativity and cultural heritage to differentiate themselves in a competitive global market. However, this perspective largely centers on urban or highly developed contexts where infrastructure supports creative industries. At a site like Great Zimbabwe, where the primary draw is its historical and cultural significance rather than contemporary creative industries, this framework may not fully apply. The focus on creativity often sidelines traditional heritage narratives that are central to sites like Great Zimbabwe.

Additionally, Richards and Wilson emphasize the concept of "cultural capital" as a key driver of tourism. While this concept is useful, their theories often highlight the role of external stakeholders, such as global tourists and cultural entrepreneurs, in shaping cultural tourism. This focus underrepresents the voices of local communities who live near and interact with heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. The relationship between local cultural capital—embodied in traditions, rituals, and oral histories—and tourism is inadequately explored in their work, leaving a gap in understanding how local populations contribute to and benefit from tourism.

Another knowledge gap lies in the treatment of authenticity. Richards and Wilson focus on the experience economy and how creativity enhances tourism experiences but give less attention to the authenticity of cultural narratives and heritage representation. In the case of Great Zimbabwe, where authenticity is tied to both the physical preservation of the site and the intangible heritage

of local communities, their theories do not fully capture the complexities of maintaining authenticity while promoting tourism.

Furthermore, while Richards and Wilson address the branding of destinations, their theories tend to prioritize the perspectives of international tourists and global market trends. This can obscure the importance of local and regional tourism, which plays a significant role in African heritage sites. Understanding how Great Zimbabwe is perceived by domestic tourists and how it can be positioned within African tourism markets remains an underexplored area.

Richards and Wilson's theories provide important insights into the role of culture and creativity in tourism but leave several knowledge gaps when applied to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. These gaps include a lack of focus on traditional heritage over creative industries, insufficient attention to local community involvement, and limited exploration of authenticity in heritage representation. Addressing these gaps could lead to a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of cultural tourism in contexts beyond urban or highly developed destinations.

Ning Wang's (1999) theory of authenticity is a pivotal contribution to tourism studies, offering a nuanced understanding of how tourists perceive and seek authentic experiences. Wang introduces three forms of authenticity: objective authenticity, which focuses on the authenticity of original objects or artifacts; constructive authenticity, which is based on the subjective interpretations and social constructions of tourists; and existential authenticity, which emphasizes personal, emotional, and transformative experiences derived from engaging with a destination. While Wang's framework has advanced discussions on authenticity in tourism, its application to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe reveals several knowledge gaps.

One notable gap lies in Wang's emphasis on existential authenticity, which prioritizes individual experiences over collective or communal dimensions. While this focus is valuable for understanding personal tourist experiences, it overlooks the collective significance of heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe, where local communities play a crucial role in shaping and preserving authenticity. The theory does not fully address how local perceptions of authenticity influence heritage management or how community-driven narratives interact with tourist expectations.

Additionally, Wang's theory largely examines authenticity from the perspective of the tourist, paying less attention to the perspectives of other stakeholders. At Great Zimbabwe, the interaction between tourists, local communities, and heritage managers is critical to understanding how authenticity is negotiated and maintained. The theory does not sufficiently explore the dynamics between these groups, particularly how local narratives and practices might challenge or complement tourist interpretations of authenticity.

Furthermore, while Wang's constructive authenticity highlights the subjective nature of tourist perceptions, it does not delve deeply into how these perceptions are shaped by broader socio-political contexts. For instance, Great Zimbabwe carries significant postcolonial and national identity narratives, which influence both how the site is presented and how it is perceived. These dimensions are often underrepresented in Wang's framework, which tends to focus on individual or group interpretations rather than historical and political contexts.

Wang also gives limited attention to the role of intangible heritage in shaping authentic experiences. At Great Zimbabwe, intangible cultural elements such as oral histories, traditional rituals, and local folklore are integral to the site's identity. While these elements contribute significantly to the authenticity of the tourist experience, they are not explicitly addressed in Wang's focus on material artifacts and personal emotions.

Lastly, Wang's theory is more general in its application and does not provide a site-specific framework. Heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe, with their unique cultural and historical complexities, require a localized approach that considers the interplay of tangible and intangible heritage, community involvement, and socio-political narratives.

Wang's theory of authenticity offers a robust framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of tourist experiences but leaves critical knowledge gaps when applied to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. These gaps include limited attention to local community perspectives, intangible heritage, and the broader socio-political context of authenticity. Addressing these gaps could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how authenticity is constructed and experienced in diverse cultural settings.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1998) theory of heritage focuses on the processes by which cultural practices and objects are transformed into heritage through display and commodification. She argues that heritage is not inherently found in objects or sites but is a product of their representation, often framed for tourist consumption. This transformation involves re-contextualizing cultural elements to fit narratives that appeal to visitors while preserving their perceived authenticity. While Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's theory has provided critical insights into the construction and presentation of heritage, its application to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe reveals several knowledge gaps.

One notable aspect of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's work is her emphasis on the performative and staged nature of heritage, which aligns with broader discussions on authenticity. However, this focus on representation and display often sidelines the lived and dynamic aspects of heritage, particularly in contexts like Great Zimbabwe, where cultural heritage is not only preserved but actively practiced by local communities. Her theory does not fully address how these living traditions contribute to the authenticity and significance of heritage sites beyond their staged or commodified representations.

Additionally, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's emphasis on the role of tourism in shaping heritage narratives tends to prioritize the perspective of heritage managers and tourists, often neglecting the voices of local communities. At Great Zimbabwe, local populations have a deep historical and cultural connection to the site, which shapes their understanding of its heritage. These local perspectives are crucial for creating a more inclusive narrative, yet they are underexplored in her framework, which focuses more on the external packaging of heritage for global audiences.

Another gap in her theory relates to the impact of commodification on intangible heritage. While Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discusses the transformation of material culture into heritage, she pays less attention to intangible elements such as oral traditions, rituals, and community practices. At Great Zimbabwe, intangible heritage is a vital part of the site's identity and contributes to the holistic experience of authenticity for both locals and visitors. This dimension requires further exploration within her framework.

Furthermore, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's theory focuses primarily on the global context of heritage tourism and the economic imperatives driving commodification. While this is important, it often overlooks the specific historical and socio-political contexts of heritage sites. For example, Great Zimbabwe is deeply embedded in postcolonial narratives of reclaiming indigenous identity and resisting colonial interpretations of African history. These socio-political dimensions are critical to understanding how heritage is constructed and presented, yet they are not fully integrated into her framework.

Lastly, her work does not provide detailed guidance on how to balance the needs of preservation with the demands of tourism. At Great Zimbabwe, managing the physical and cultural integrity of the site while catering to increasing tourist interest presents unique challenges. While Kirshenblatt-Gimblett acknowledges these tensions, her theory does not offer practical solutions for reconciling these competing priorities.

, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's theory provides valuable insights into the processes of heritage commodification and representation but leaves several knowledge gaps when applied to sites like Great Zimbabwe. These include insufficient attention to living heritage, local community perspectives, intangible cultural elements, and the socio-political context of heritage. Addressing these gaps could enhance the understanding and management of cultural heritage in diverse and complex settings.

The theories of prominent scholars such as MacCannell, Cohen, Timothy, Ashworth, Richards, Wilson, Wang, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett have significantly advanced the understanding of cultural heritage, authenticity, and tourism. Collectively, they provide frameworks for analyzing how heritage is commodified, represented, and experienced in the context of global tourism. However, their application to specific contexts, such as Great Zimbabwe, reveals critical knowledge gaps. These include limited attention to local community perspectives, the role of intangible heritage, and the socio-political narratives that influence heritage construction and management in postcolonial settings.

Furthermore, these theories often prioritize the perspectives of international tourists and heritage managers, neglecting the lived experiences and contributions of local stakeholders who are integral

to preserving and interpreting heritage. Additionally, while many frameworks focus on the challenges of commodification and authenticity, they frequently overlook the opportunities that arise from heritage tourism, such as economic empowerment and cultural revitalization, especially in developing regions like Africa.

To bridge these gaps, there is a need for more localized and context-specific studies that integrate both tangible and intangible heritage, emphasize the active participation of local communities, and consider the historical and political complexities unique to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. By addressing these limitations, future research and heritage management practices can foster more inclusive, sustainable, and meaningful tourism experiences that benefit all stakeholders involved. This approach will ensure that cultural heritage remains a dynamic and authentic expression of identity while contributing to its preservation and economic potential.

2.4 REVIEWING AFRICAN LITERATURE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTICITY IN CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Terence Ranger and Pathisa Nyathi have made significant contributions to the study of African cultural heritage and authenticity, particularly through their focus on decolonization and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems. Their work emphasizes the need to reclaim African heritage narratives from colonial distortions and promote a deeper understanding of intangible cultural heritage. While these theories provide a robust framework for analyzing heritage in African contexts, their application to specific sites like Great Zimbabwe reveals certain knowledge gaps.

Ranger's work focuses on the decolonization of African heritage, particularly the need to dismantle colonial narratives that misrepresented or minimized African achievements. He highlights how colonial historians often attributed Great Zimbabwe's construction to non-African origins, undermining the agency and ingenuity of African civilizations. This perspective is invaluable in reclaiming the site's history, but it does not fully explore the practical challenges of integrating local narratives into global tourism frameworks. For instance, how can heritage managers balance the site's global significance with its local cultural meanings without alienating either audience?

Pathisa Nyathi's emphasis on intangible heritage, such as oral traditions, rituals, and indigenous spirituality, is particularly relevant to Great Zimbabwe. He argues that these elements are crucial

for understanding the site's cultural and historical significance. However, his theory largely focuses on the preservation of these practices within local communities, paying less attention to how intangible heritage can be integrated into the tourist experience. For Great Zimbabwe, this raises questions about how to present intangible heritage in a way that resonates with both local communities and international tourists, without commodifying or distorting it.

Both Ranger and Nyathi focus heavily on the role of heritage in fostering African identity and pride. While this is critical for reclaiming postcolonial narratives, it can sometimes overshadow the economic dimensions of heritage tourism. In sites like Great Zimbabwe, where tourism is a significant driver of local development, there is a need for more emphasis on how to balance cultural preservation with economic imperatives. Neither scholar provides detailed guidance on how to manage this balance effectively in practice.

Another knowledge gap lies in the practical aspects of community involvement. Ranger and Nyathi emphasize the importance of empowering local communities to take ownership of their heritage, but they provide limited frameworks for how this can be operationalized. For example, how can communities be meaningfully involved in decision-making processes regarding tourism development, and how can their contributions be sustained over time?

Lastly, while both scholars highlight the importance of historical and cultural authenticity, their work tends to focus on African narratives, often neglecting the diverse and sometimes conflicting perspectives of different stakeholder groups. At Great Zimbabwe, stakeholders include local communities, national heritage authorities, international tourists, and global heritage organizations like UNESCO. Understanding how these groups perceive and influence authenticity requires a more inclusive and multi-faceted approach than what is provided in their theories.

Terence Ranger and Pathisa Nyathi offer invaluable perspectives on decolonization, intangible heritage, and the role of heritage in African identity. However, their work leaves knowledge gaps in areas such as balancing cultural preservation with economic development, integrating intangible heritage into tourism, operationalizing community involvement, and addressing diverse stakeholder perspectives. Addressing these gaps can lead to more holistic and effective strategies for managing heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's theory emphasizes the importance of language, culture, and decolonization in understanding and preserving African heritage. His work advocates for the reclamation of indigenous languages and cultural expressions as central to authentic representations of African identity and history. Ngugi's perspectives are particularly relevant to the study of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, as they highlight the role of language and cultural sovereignty in shaping narratives around heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. However, while Ngugi's theory provides critical insights, its application to tourism and heritage management reveals several knowledge gaps.

Ngugi's primary focus is on the role of language as a carrier of culture. He argues that the marginalization of African languages during colonial rule led to the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural identity. This is relevant to Great Zimbabwe, where much of the site's history and cultural significance is embedded in Shona oral traditions and indigenous languages. However, Ngugi's theory does not provide a practical framework for how these languages and oral traditions can be integrated into heritage tourism. For example, how can multilingual interpretations and storytelling be effectively used to enhance both the authenticity of the tourist experience and the preservation of local culture?

Additionally, Ngugi emphasizes the need for cultural sovereignty and self-representation, arguing that African heritage must be reclaimed from colonial narratives. While this is vital for a site like Great Zimbabwe, which was misinterpreted through colonial lenses, Ngugi's work does not delve deeply into the challenges of negotiating between local, national, and international narratives. At Great Zimbabwe, there is a need to balance the local community's cultural interpretations with UNESCO's global heritage frameworks and the expectations of international tourists, a complex dynamic that Ngugi's theory does not fully address.

Another knowledge gap lies in the economic dimensions of heritage. Ngugi focuses primarily on the cultural and symbolic significance of heritage, paying less attention to its role as a driver of economic development through tourism. At Great Zimbabwe, tourism generates significant revenue for local communities and the national economy. Understanding how to balance cultural preservation with economic imperatives, while ensuring that local stakeholders benefit equitably, requires a more comprehensive approach than what Ngugi's theory offers.

Furthermore, Ngugi's critique of cultural commodification is not fully applicable to heritage tourism contexts where commodification can serve as a tool for cultural promotion and economic empowerment. For instance, in Great Zimbabwe, commodification through guided tours, cultural performances, and craft markets can help sustain local livelihoods and promote cultural heritage. Ngugi's theory does not explore how commodification can be managed in a way that preserves authenticity while supporting economic sustainability.

Finally, while Ngugi underscores the importance of decolonization, his theory does not address the practicalities of implementing decolonized approaches in heritage management. At Great Zimbabwe, decolonization involves more than reclaiming narratives; it requires concrete strategies for integrating indigenous knowledge, empowering local communities, and navigating postcolonial challenges in a globalized tourism industry.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's theory provides critical insights into the role of language, culture, and decolonization in heritage studies. However, its application to heritage tourism reveals gaps in addressing multilingual interpretation, balancing diverse narratives, integrating economic considerations, managing commodification, and operationalizing decolonized approaches. Addressing these gaps can enhance the relevance and applicability of Ngugi's perspectives in the context of heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe.

Munjeri's (2004) theory of heritage management emphasizes the importance of integrating local communities into the preservation and management of heritage sites, particularly in the African context. He advocates for a holistic approach that recognizes both tangible and intangible elements of heritage, with a strong focus on the involvement of local populations in heritage management processes. This approach challenges traditional top-down models of heritage conservation, where decisions are made by external authorities without considering the interests and knowledge of local communities. Munjeri's theory is highly relevant to the study of cultural heritage and authenticity at sites like Great Zimbabwe, where local communities hold deep cultural connections to the site and can contribute to its preservation and interpretation. However, there are several knowledge gaps within Munjeri's theory that need further exploration.

One of the key aspects of Munjeri's theory is the focus on the integration of intangible heritage, such as oral traditions, rituals, and indigenous knowledge, into heritage management. While this is a critical contribution, Munjeri's work does not provide sufficient guidance on how intangible heritage can be effectively showcased in tourism settings without distorting or commodifying it. At Great Zimbabwe, much of the site's cultural significance is tied to the intangible elements that are practiced and preserved within local communities. Finding ways to present these elements in a respectful and meaningful way for tourists, while preserving their authenticity, is a challenge that Munjeri's theory does not fully address.

Another gap in Munjeri's theory is related to the practical challenges of community involvement in heritage management. While he stresses the importance of local participation, he provides limited frameworks or strategies for how communities can be actively involved in decision-making processes, particularly in a tourism-driven context. In the case of Great Zimbabwe, local communities should be empowered to help shape tourism policies, interpretation practices, and site management strategies, yet there is little guidance in Munjeri's work on how to balance the interests of local populations with the pressures of global tourism and external heritage authorities.

Additionally, Munjeri's focus on cultural and community-based heritage management does not adequately address the economic aspects of heritage tourism. Great Zimbabwe, as a major tourist destination, plays a significant role in local and national economies. The intersection of cultural preservation and economic development through tourism requires a balanced approach that ensures the community's cultural integrity while enabling economic benefits. Munjeri's theory does not fully explore how to achieve this balance, leaving a gap in understanding the economic implications of heritage management.

Munjeri's work also overlooks the complexities involved in the preservation of heritage in a globalized tourism environment. Great Zimbabwe, as a UNESCO World Heritage site, faces challenges related to maintaining its global significance while meeting local needs. Munjeri's approach tends to focus more on local heritage practices and less on the complexities of managing heritage within a global framework, where international standards and pressures for tourism development may conflict with local priorities.

Lastly, while Munjeri emphasizes the role of heritage in fostering national identity and community pride, his theory does not fully consider the broader, more diverse social and political dimensions of heritage management. In postcolonial contexts like Zimbabwe, the political dimensions of heritage management such as issues of land ownership, tourism policies, and state involvement are crucial to understanding the tensions between national heritage policies and local community interests. Munjeri's framework does not provide sufficient tools for addressing these complex socio-political realities.

Munjeri's (2004) theory of heritage management offers important insights into the integration of local communities, intangible heritage, and participatory management practices. However, its application to heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe reveals gaps in areas such as the practical integration of intangible heritage in tourism, community involvement, economic sustainability, and the complexities of managing heritage in a globalized tourism context. Addressing these gaps can provide more nuanced and effective strategies for the preservation and management of heritage sites in Africa.

Bassey Andah was an influential African scholar in the field of archaeology and heritage studies, known for his contributions to the understanding of African cultural heritage, especially in the context of postcolonial Africa. His work focused on the relationship between heritage preservation, cultural identity, and community involvement in heritage management. Andah's theories emphasize the importance of integrating both tangible and intangible heritage in the preservation and interpretation of African cultural sites. His approach is particularly relevant to the study of Great Zimbabwe, a site rich in both material culture and indigenous knowledge systems. However, while his contributions are foundational, there are notable gaps in his theory that warrant further exploration, especially in the context of tourism and heritage management.

One of Andah's key contributions is his advocacy for a comprehensive understanding of heritage that includes both material and intangible aspects. For example, in the case of Great Zimbabwe, while the physical ruins of the site are significant, Andah would argue that the traditions, oral histories, and indigenous knowledge systems held by the local communities are equally vital for an authentic understanding of the site. However, Andah's framework, while emphasizing the integration of intangible heritage, does not provide detailed strategies for effectively incorporating

this element into the tourism experience. How can oral traditions, rituals, and local knowledge be presented to tourists without commodifying them or distorting their significance? This challenge is critical at Great Zimbabwe, where local traditions play a key role in the site's cultural importance but are often overshadowed by the site's archaeological remains.

Another limitation of Andah's theory is its focus on the relationship between cultural heritage and national identity. While Andah advocates for the use of heritage in fostering pride and unity, especially in postcolonial contexts, his work tends to be more focused on the broad, overarching role of heritage at the national level. In practical terms, this perspective can sometimes overlook the nuances and complexities of local community involvement in heritage management. Great Zimbabwe, as a key symbol of national identity in Zimbabwe, is subject to national heritage policies and global tourism trends, but the perspectives and needs of local communities living near the site are not always adequately addressed. Andah's theory does not provide clear frameworks for how to ensure that local communities are actively involved in decision-making processes about tourism, conservation, and the preservation of cultural practices.

Furthermore, Andah's focus on the symbolic and political dimensions of heritage does not fully engage with the economic aspects of heritage tourism. While he acknowledges the potential of heritage to foster national pride and identity, his work does not delve deeply into how heritage tourism can balance the cultural integrity of sites with economic imperatives. At Great Zimbabwe, tourism is a key driver of economic development, but this growth must be managed carefully to avoid the commercialization of the site. Andah's theory lacks practical solutions for managing this balance, particularly in the context of African heritage sites where the economic pressures of tourism can sometimes conflict with cultural preservation.

Another gap in Andah's work is the limited exploration of how globalization impacts local heritage management. Heritage tourism, especially at iconic sites like Great Zimbabwe, operates within a globalized context, where international visitors bring different expectations, and global heritage standards, such as those set by UNESCO, impose certain constraints on local practices. While Andah acknowledges the importance of heritage preservation, his framework does not provide a clear understanding of how local heritage management practices can adapt to the global tourism context without losing their authenticity or cultural relevance.

Lastly, while Andah emphasizes the importance of heritage as a tool for identity and resistance in postcolonial contexts, his theory does not fully explore the complexities of managing heritage sites within a multicultural and multi-ethnic society. At Great Zimbabwe, for example, the historical and political significance of the site extends beyond the Shona-speaking communities, and it is important to consider how other ethnic groups and national stakeholders view the site. A broader understanding of how different cultural and political perspectives intersect in the management of such a site is needed.

Bassey Andah's contributions to the understanding of African heritage and cultural identity are vital in the study of heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. His emphasis on the integration of tangible and intangible heritage, the role of heritage in fostering national identity, and the importance of local involvement are key elements in the management of cultural heritage. However, there are notable knowledge gaps in his theory, particularly regarding the practical integration of intangible heritage in tourism, the complexities of local community involvement, the economic dimensions of heritage tourism, the impact of globalization on local heritage practices, and the multi-ethnic dimensions of heritage management. Addressing these gaps would provide a more holistic and practical approach to the management of heritage sites in Africa, ensuring both cultural preservation and sustainable development.

Both Ali Mazrui and Kwame Nkrumah have been foundational in shaping the intellectual landscape surrounding African heritage, identity, and the role of cultural preservation in postcolonial Africa. Their theories are crucial in understanding how heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe function not only as symbols of cultural pride but also as instruments for political and social transformation. However, despite their significant contributions, there are certain knowledge gaps within their theories, particularly in relation to the practical challenges of heritage tourism and community involvement in the management of such sites.

Ali Mazrui's work focused heavily on African identity, postcolonial cultural regeneration, and the role of heritage in shaping the future of the continent. Mazrui believed that African heritage, including its historical sites, is central to fostering unity, pride, and a sense of belonging in postcolonial African societies. His concept of "cultural renaissance" highlights the importance of reclaiming African history and heritage as a means of resisting colonial and neocolonial forces. In

the context of Great Zimbabwe, Mazrui would view the site as a key element in redefining African identity and combating the legacy of colonial misrepresentation.

However, while Mazrui emphasizes the importance of heritage as a tool for national pride and cultural revival, his theory does not fully address the complexities of integrating heritage sites into the modern tourism economy. Great Zimbabwe, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, faces the challenge of managing its cultural significance while also responding to the economic demands of tourism. Mazrui's theory overlooks how to strike a balance between preserving the authenticity of heritage and meeting the financial needs of local communities and national tourism infrastructure. He does not provide clear strategies for managing this tension, leaving a gap in understanding how heritage can be leveraged for both cultural and economic purposes without compromising its integrity.

Moreover, Mazrui's focus on the political and symbolic aspects of heritage does not account for the practical realities of heritage management. For example, at Great Zimbabwe, there is a need to involve local communities in the decision-making processes related to tourism, preservation, and interpretation. Mazrui's theory does not sufficiently address how to create inclusive governance structures that allow for the active participation of all stakeholders, especially those whose lives are directly impacted by tourism and heritage policies.

Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president and a prominent Pan-Africanist, advocated for the importance of heritage in the construction of African unity and the fight against colonialism. His concept of African liberation extended beyond political independence to encompass cultural and intellectual decolonization. Nkrumah believed that African nations needed to reclaim their cultural heritage as part of their path to true independence. This belief in the liberating potential of heritage is highly relevant to the study of Great Zimbabwe, a site that symbolizes Africa's pre-colonial achievements.

Nkrumah's vision of cultural independence ties heritage to the collective identity and political unity of the African continent. He saw heritage as not only a source of pride but also a means of challenging the colonial narratives that undermined African achievements. However, Nkrumah's theory primarily focuses on the symbolic power of heritage, often overlooking the operational

challenges in managing these sites in the modern world. Great Zimbabwe, as a site of great historical and political significance, represents a challenge in terms of balancing national identity with local community interests and global heritage standards. While Nkrumah emphasizes the importance of heritage in political and cultural contexts, his theory does not provide concrete solutions for managing the intersection of local, national, and international interests in the preservation and presentation of heritage sites.

Furthermore, while Nkrumah's theory advocates for the liberation and reclamation of African cultural heritage, it does not fully address the economic aspects of heritage management. Heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe can generate significant income from tourism, but this economic potential must be balanced with cultural preservation. Nkrumah's work does not delve into how the commercialization of heritage, through tourism and related industries, can be reconciled with the need to maintain authenticity and avoid cultural commodification. The economic pressures on heritage sites often create tensions between the desire for cultural preservation and the need for development and growth, a complexity that Nkrumah's theory does not sufficiently explore.

Integration of Heritage into the Tourism Economy: Both scholars emphasize the symbolic and cultural importance of heritage, but neither fully addresses the economic complexities of heritage tourism. At Great Zimbabwe, the site must balance its cultural significance with the economic pressures of tourism. Both Mazrui and Nkrumah fail to provide practical frameworks for how to manage this balance, particularly in a context where tourism can lead to commodification and environmental degradation.

While both scholars highlight the role of heritage in promoting national unity and pride, they do not delve deeply into how local communities can be actively involved in the management and decision-making processes regarding heritage sites. Great Zimbabwe is a prime example where local communities have a direct stake in the site's preservation and tourism, yet their involvement in heritage management is often limited. There is a need for more inclusive governance structures that empower local populations.

Mazrui and Nkrumah focus on the political and cultural significance of heritage but do not address the complexities of balancing local, national, and global narratives at heritage sites. At Great

Zimbabwe, the tension between representing local history and conforming to international heritage standards (e.g., UNESCO) is a significant challenge that neither scholar fully addresses.

Both scholars are concerned with the preservation of cultural authenticity, but they do not fully address the challenges of cultural commodification in tourism. The tension between promoting a site like Great Zimbabwe for international tourists and ensuring that its cultural significance is not diluted or commodified is a critical issue that their theories do not fully explore.

Ali Mazrui and Kwame Nkrumah's theories provide powerful frameworks for understanding the importance of heritage in the construction of African identity and the liberation of African cultures from colonial narratives. Their emphasis on reclaiming cultural heritage and fostering pride and unity is invaluable for understanding sites like Great Zimbabwe. However, their theories leave several key knowledge gaps, particularly in the practicalities of heritage tourism management, the involvement of local communities, and the balancing of cultural preservation with economic development. Addressing these gaps would provide more comprehensive strategies for managing heritage sites in a way that respects both cultural integrity and the economic needs of local communities.

The study of cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism, particularly through the lens of theories proposed by scholars such as Terence Ranger, Pathisa Nyathi, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Munjeri, Bassey Andah, Ali Mazrui, and Kwame Nkrumah, highlights the complex interplay between cultural preservation, economic development, and postcolonial identity. These scholars provide invaluable insights into the importance of decolonizing heritage narratives, integrating intangible cultural elements, and empowering local communities in the management of heritage sites. For a site as historically and symbolically significant as Great Zimbabwe, these theoretical frameworks offer a strong foundation for understanding its global and local importance.

However, while these theories emphasize the symbolic, cultural, and political dimensions of heritage, they often fall short in addressing the practical challenges associated with heritage tourism in a globalized world. Key knowledge gaps exist in areas such as the economic sustainability of heritage tourism, the commodification of culture, the integration of local communities into decision-making processes, and the balancing of local, national, and

international narratives. Additionally, the theories do not fully explore the operational complexities of managing heritage sites in ways that align with both cultural preservation and economic imperatives.

To address these gaps, a more holistic and multidisciplinary approach is needed, one that combines the cultural and symbolic insights of these scholars with practical strategies for sustainable tourism, community engagement, and economic development. For Great Zimbabwe, this means creating inclusive governance structures that empower local communities, developing tourism strategies that respect and showcase both tangible and intangible heritage, and ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism are equitably shared.

In conclusion, while the theoretical contributions of these African and international scholars provide essential frameworks for understanding cultural heritage and authenticity, the effective management of heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe requires bridging the gap between theory and practice. By addressing the identified knowledge gaps, heritage managers can ensure that such sites are preserved as symbols of African pride and identity while also contributing meaningfully to local and national development.

2.5 REVIEWING ZIMBABWEAN LITERATURE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTICITY IN CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

Beyond prominent figures like Terence Ranger, Pathisa Nyathi, and Munjeri, other Zimbabwean scholars have also contributed significantly to the discourse on cultural heritage, authenticity, and tourism. Their work provides critical perspectives on how Zimbabwe's heritage can be preserved and leveraged for economic and social development. However, as with their counterparts, these scholars' contributions often reveal certain knowledge gaps, particularly in the practical integration of heritage into tourism and the empowerment of local communities.

Shadreck Chirikure, a Zimbabwean archaeologist and heritage scholar, has contributed extensively to understanding African archaeology and heritage management. His work emphasizes the importance of African agency in interpreting and managing archaeological sites like Great Zimbabwe. Chirikure critiques the dominance of Western frameworks in heritage management, advocating for approaches that center African perspectives and knowledge systems.

While Chirikure's critique of Western frameworks is important, his work does not always offer practical methodologies for integrating local knowledge into heritage tourism. For Great Zimbabwe, for example, there is a need for more detailed strategies on how to incorporate indigenous knowledge into tourism narratives without distorting or oversimplifying it for global audiences.

Gilbert Pwiti is another prominent Zimbabwean scholar whose research focuses on archaeology, heritage management, and community-based conservation. He has emphasized the importance of involving local communities in the management of heritage sites, arguing that sustainable heritage management is impossible without community participation. Pwiti also explores the socio-economic benefits that heritage sites can provide to local populations through tourism.

Pwiti's advocacy for community-based heritage management is vital, but there is limited exploration of how to operationalize this in the face of state control and external tourism pressures. For instance, in the context of Great Zimbabwe, more research is needed on how to resolve conflicts between national heritage policies and local community interests.

Paul Hubbard, a Zimbabwean historian and archaeologist, has written extensively on Great Zimbabwe and other heritage sites in the region. His work often focuses on the historical and archaeological significance of these sites, as well as their potential for tourism. Hubbard provides detailed insights into the material culture and architectural features of Great Zimbabwe, helping to deepen public and scholarly understanding of the site.

While Hubbard's work is invaluable for its archaeological focus, it does not fully engage with the socio-cultural dynamics of heritage management. There is little exploration of how the historical significance of Great Zimbabwe can be translated into meaningful and authentic tourism experiences that benefit local communities.

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni is a scholar known for his work on decolonial theory and African identity. His contributions to heritage studies include a critique of how colonial narratives have shaped the interpretation of African heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. Ndlovu-Gatsheni advocates for the decolonization of heritage management and tourism to reclaim African agency and authenticity.

While Ndlovu-Gatsheni provides a strong theoretical foundation for decolonizing heritage, his work is less focused on the practicalities of tourism and site management. For instance, how can decolonial approaches be applied to interpret Great Zimbabwe in ways that resonate with both local and international audiences?

Webber Ndoro is a leading figure in African heritage management, with a particular focus on the preservation of World Heritage Sites in Africa. His work often examines the tensions between local, national, and international interests in heritage management. Ndoro has also written about the economic potential of heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe and the need for policies that ensure local communities benefit from tourism.

Ndoro's work on heritage policy is crucial, but it often focuses on high-level frameworks without delving deeply into the practical challenges of implementation. For example, at Great Zimbabwe, there is a need for more detailed strategies on how to distribute tourism revenues equitably among stakeholders, including local communities.

These scholars have explored the cultural and literary significance of Zimbabwe's heritage in postcolonial discourse. They examine how heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe are represented in Zimbabwean literature and culture, emphasizing their role in shaping national identity and cultural pride.

While their work highlights the symbolic importance of heritage, it does not address the practical aspects of managing heritage tourism or incorporating cultural narratives into tourism experiences. There is a need for research on how literary and cultural representations can enhance the interpretive strategies used at heritage sites.

The work of Zimbabwean scholars has significantly advanced the understanding of cultural heritage and authenticity, particularly in the context of Great Zimbabwe. Their emphasis on African agency, community participation, and the decolonization of heritage narratives provides a strong foundation for addressing the challenges of postcolonial heritage management. However, to fully address the complexities of heritage tourism, more research is needed on practical strategies for sustainable management, equitable economic benefits, and the integration of intangible heritage into tourism experiences. Bridging these gaps will ensure that Great Zimbabwe

and other heritage sites are preserved as living symbols of Zimbabwean culture and history while contributing meaningfully to national and local development.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 has explored the theoretical and conceptual foundations relevant to the study of cultural heritage and authenticity, with a specific focus on their application to tourism at Great Zimbabwe. It has provided an in-depth review of global theories, such as MacCannell's staged authenticity and Wang's existential authenticity, alongside African-centered perspectives from scholars like Munjeri, Ranger, and Chirikure. This review has highlighted the tension between global frameworks and localized interpretations of heritage, emphasizing the need for approaches that prioritize African agency and cultural integrity.

The chapter has also identified significant gaps in the literature, including the challenges of operationalizing authenticity, the underrepresentation of intangible heritage in tourism narratives, and the limited involvement of local communities in heritage management. These gaps underscore the need for innovative strategies that balance heritage preservation with tourism development while addressing the socio-economic needs of local stakeholders.

By synthesizing these perspectives, this chapter has established a robust theoretical foundation for the study. It provides a lens through which the complexities of managing and presenting cultural authenticity at Great Zimbabwe can be critically examined, paving the way for the analysis and recommendations presented in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology used in the study of cultural heritage tourism and authenticity at Great Zimbabwe. The methodology is crucial as it ensures the research is conducted systematically, yielding reliable and valid results.

The study investigates the role of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its historical, cultural, and architectural significance. As tourism grows, heritage sites face challenges in balancing conservation with commercialization, often leading to concerns about the authenticity of the tourist experience. This research aims to explore how Great Zimbabwe maintains authenticity while promoting sustainable cultural tourism.

3.2 Research Design

The research design provides the framework for conducting the study in a structured and systematic manner. For this study on the authenticity of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe, a qualitative case study approach is employed. This design is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the complexities surrounding authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, considering multiple perspectives from stakeholders such as tourists, heritage managers, tour guides, and local communities.

3.2.1 Research Approach

This study primarily adopts a qualitative research approach with some elements of quantitative data collection (such as surveys with tourists). The qualitative approach is appropriate because it enables the researcher to gain deep insights into cultural heritage authenticity through interviews, observations, and document analysis. However, some quantitative data is incorporated to analyze general trends in tourist perceptions.

3.2.2. Case Study Method

A case study is used to focus on a single heritage site—Great Zimbabwe—as a representative example of cultural heritage tourism. The case study method is effective because: It allows for a detailed and holistic understanding of authenticity in a specific cultural heritage context. It enables the researcher to examine real-world challenges such as commercialization, conservation, and local community involvement. It provides rich data from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, and document analysis.

3.2.3. Justification for the Research Design

The choice of a qualitative case study approach is justified for the following reasons:

Depth of Analysis unlike large-scale surveys, a case study provides detailed insights into how authenticity is maintained or compromised at Great Zimbabwe. **Also multiple Perspectives**, the study includes various stakeholders (tourists, site managers, local communities, and tour guides), allowing for a comprehensive understanding of authenticity in tourism. **Lastly context-Specific** that is cultural heritage authenticity is influenced by local historical, social, and economic factors, making a site-specific study more relevant than a generalized approach.

3.3 Research Methodology

The methodological concept of this study is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm, which prioritizes the understanding of subjective human experiences and the meanings people attach to social phenomena. In line with Creswell (2014), who emphasizes that qualitative research is best suited for exploring complex, context-dependent issues, this study adopts a qualitative approach to investigate perceptions of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe.

The interpretivist paradigm acknowledges that reality is socially constructed, and multiple realities exist based on individual experiences and cultural contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the context of cultural heritage tourism, authenticity is not a fixed or objective entity, but a negotiated concept that varies across stakeholders—tourists, local communities, and heritage professionals. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that qualitative research enables researchers to understand such phenomena from the perspective of the actors involved, which is essential in heritage tourism studies where local voices and visitor experiences are key to understanding the broader implications of heritage preservation and presentation.

The study further adopts a constructivist epistemology, which posits that knowledge is created through interaction between the researcher and participants (Schwandt, 2000). This viewpoint aligns with the decision to use in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations, as these methods allow for rich, descriptive accounts to emerge through dialogue and reflection. As Yin (2018) states, case study methodology is particularly effective when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident—as is the case with authenticity at Great Zimbabwe, where cultural, political, and historical forces are interwoven.

3.4 Study Area: Great Zimbabwe

This study focuses on Great Zimbabwe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. It is the largest ancient stone structure in sub-Saharan Africa and was the political, economic, and religious center of the Great Zimbabwe Kingdom between the 11th and 15th centuries. Situated approximately 27 kilometers southeast of Masvingo town, the site covers about 7.22 square kilometers and is surrounded by granite hills and savanna vegetation.

Great Zimbabwe holds immense historical and cultural significance, as it was built by the Shona people and served as a major trading hub, with evidence of trade links to regions as far as China and the Middle East. The site consists of several key structures, including the Hill Complex, believed to have been a royal or religious center, the Great Enclosure, known for its towering stone walls and thought to be a royal residence, and the Valley Ruins, which contain remnants of ancient dwellings. The name "Zimbabwe" itself is derived from the site, highlighting its role in shaping the country's national identity.

Today, Great Zimbabwe is a major cultural heritage tourism destination, attracting both local and international visitors. It is managed by the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), which oversees its conservation and tourism development. However, the site faces challenges such as commercialization, environmental degradation, and balancing tourism with heritage preservation. Given its significance and the ongoing debate on authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, Great Zimbabwe serves as an ideal case study for this research.

3.5 Target Population

The target population for this study consists of stakeholders directly involved in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe. These include tourists, heritage site managers, tour guides, and local community members, all of whom play a role in shaping and experiencing authenticity at the site.

Tourists (both local and international) are included to understand their perceptions of authenticity and their overall experience at Great Zimbabwe. Their insights help assess whether the site's presentation aligns with their expectations of a genuine cultural experience. Heritage site managers, particularly officials from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), are targeted to provide information on conservation strategies, tourism management, and the challenges of maintaining authenticity while promoting the site. Tour guides are essential participants as they are responsible for interpreting the site's history and shaping visitors' experiences. Their role in storytelling and authenticity in historical narratives is a key focus of the study. Lastly, local community members, particularly those involved in cultural activities such as traditional crafts, performances, and rituals, are included to evaluate their role in heritage preservation and their perspectives on the impact of tourism on their cultural identity.

By engaging these diverse groups, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of how authenticity is perceived, maintained, or altered in the context of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe.

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

In qualitative research, the selection of participants is guided by the purpose and depth of inquiry rather than statistical representation. For this study, purposive sampling was employed as the primary sampling technique. This method involves the deliberate selection of participants who are most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse information related to the study's focus—authenticity in cultural heritage tourism (Creswell, 2014).

Purposive sampling was particularly appropriate because the study sought to explore the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholder groups at Great Zimbabwe, including tourists, local community members, and heritage professionals. These groups were selected based on their direct involvement with or impact on the heritage tourism process. As Patton (2002) explains,

purposive sampling is ideal when the goal is to gain insight from information-rich cases that offer meaningful perspectives rather than generalize findings to a larger population.

3.6.2 Sample size.

To ensure a balanced representation of voices, criterion-based sampling, a subtype of purposive sampling, was used. This involved selecting individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. For instance, tourists who had recently visited the site, community members who live nearby or participate in cultural activities, and staff from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) were included based on their roles and experiences with the site.

This approach allowed the researcher to capture multiple dimensions of authenticity from both supply and demand sides of heritage tourism. The sample size was considered adequate for a qualitative case study, where the aim is depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization.

The sample size includes 30 participants, categorized as follows:

Tourists (15) – Selected based on willingness to participate, ensuring a mix of local and international visitors.

Heritage site managers (5) – Officials from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), responsible for site conservation and management.

Tour guides (5) – Selected based on their experience in guiding visitors at Great Zimbabwe.

Local community members (5) – Chosen from artisans, performers, and elders involved in cultural activities around the site.

The sampling process was also guided by ethical considerations, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and cultural sensitivity .

3.7 Data Collection Methods

To gain a comprehensive understanding of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe, this study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. These methods include interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis. Each method is

tailored to capture diverse perspectives from tourists, heritage managers, local community members, and tour guides.

3.7.1. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders such as heritage site managers, tour guides, and local community members. This method allows for flexibility, enabling the researcher to ask open-ended questions and follow up on responses to gather rich, detailed information.

Heritage site managers: Interviews focus on the conservation strategies, challenges in maintaining authenticity, and policies that govern tourism at Great Zimbabwe.

Tour guides: These interviews explore how guides interpret the site's history, the narratives they present to visitors, and how they balance historical accuracy with tourist expectations.

Local community members: Interviews with locals examine their perspectives on how tourism has impacted their cultural practices, involvement in heritage conservation, and their views on authenticity in tourism.

The goal of these interviews is to understand how each group perceives and contributes to the authenticity of Great Zimbabwe and the challenges they face in the context of tourism.

3.7.2 .Surveys

Structured surveys are administered to tourists visiting Great Zimbabwe. These surveys include both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The closed-ended questions focus on general demographic information and perceptions of authenticity (e.g., "Do you feel the site accurately represents its historical significance?"). The open-ended questions allow tourists to elaborate on their experiences, thoughts on cultural preservation, and suggestions for improvement.

The survey helps identify trends in tourist perceptions of authenticity and how these perceptions may vary based on factors such as nationality, previous knowledge of the site, or their expectations of heritage tourism.

3.7.3. Observations

Participant observation is conducted at Great Zimbabwe to document tourist behavior, site interactions, and how heritage is presented to the public. This method helps the researcher understand the authenticity of the experience from a first-hand perspective. Observations focus on:

Tourist activities: How visitors engage with the site, including their interactions with guides and participation in cultural performances or activities.

Interpretation techniques: How historical information is presented by guides, signage, and exhibits.

Tourism management: How the site is maintained, how visitors are managed, and how conservation practices affect the presentation of the site.

This method provides valuable insights into the tourist experience and how authenticity is conveyed on the ground.

3.7.4 Document Analysis

To complement primary data collection, document analysis is used to examine existing records related to the management and conservation of Great Zimbabwe. These documents may include:

Conservation plans: Official records on heritage preservation efforts and any challenges faced in maintaining the authenticity of the site.

Tourism policies: Reports and guidelines related to the promotion and management of tourism at Great Zimbabwe, including the role of local communities in tourism development.

UNESCO reports: Documents related to the World Heritage Site status and how it influences site management and tourism.

Document analysis helps to understand the policy framework and management practices that impact the authenticity of the site, providing a broader context for the primary data collected.

3.7.5. Secondary Data

In addition to the above methods, secondary data from existing studies, articles, and books related to cultural heritage tourism and authenticity in Zimbabwe or similar sites is also reviewed. This

helps build a theoretical foundation and enables the comparison of findings with broader research trends in the field of heritage tourism.

3.7.6 Summary of Data Collection Methods

The combination of interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the multiple dimensions of authenticity at Great Zimbabwe. These methods allow the researcher to capture both subjective experiences and objective data, ensuring a holistic understanding of the role of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study involves the careful examination of the data collected from interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the authenticity of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

3.8.1 Qualitative Data Analysis (Thematic Analysis)

The majority of the data in this study is qualitative, gathered from semi-structured interviews, open-ended survey questions, and participant observations. To analyze this data, the study utilizes thematic analysis, which is a process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic analysis is particularly useful for exploring subjective experiences and understanding how stakeholders perceive authenticity in cultural heritage tourism.

The steps involved in thematic analysis are as follows:

Familiarization with the data: The first step involves transcribing interviews and reading through the survey responses and observational notes. This process allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the data and begin identifying potential themes.

Coding: In this step, meaningful segments of the data (such as phrases, sentences, or entire sections) are labeled or "coded" based on their relevance to the research objectives. For example, phrases related to tourists' perceptions of authenticity, heritage site management practices, or local

community involvement will be given codes such as "authenticity," "tourism impact," or "cultural preservation."

Theme development: After the data is coded, the researcher examines the codes for patterns and groups them into themes. For example, all codes related to challenges in maintaining authenticity might form a theme such as "challenges in heritage preservation."

Reviewing themes: The identified themes are then reviewed to ensure they accurately represent the data and align with the study's objectives. This stage might involve reorganizing themes or refining codes.

Defining and naming themes: Once the themes are finalized, they are defined and given clear labels. For example, a theme on the commercial pressures affecting authenticity could be named "Commercialization vs. Preservation."

3.8.2 Quantitative Data Analysis (Descriptive Statistics)

In addition to the qualitative analysis, quantitative data collected from structured surveys with tourists is analyzed using descriptive statistics. The survey responses provide valuable insights into general trends and perceptions about authenticity in cultural heritage tourism. The analysis of this data includes:

Frequency analysis: The responses to closed-ended questions (such as Likert scale items or multiple-choice questions) will be analyzed for frequency and percentage distributions. For example, the researcher might examine how many tourists felt the site accurately represents its historical significance or how many felt the commercialization of the site affects its authenticity.

Central tendency: Measures like the mean, median, and mode may be used to summarize key responses. For instance, calculating the average rating of tourists' satisfaction with the authenticity of the site can help identify overall perceptions.

Cross-tabulation: The study might also use cross-tabulation to compare perceptions based on demographic variables such as nationality, previous knowledge of the site, or whether the tourist had visited other heritage sites. This allows the researcher to explore patterns and differences in responses across various subgroups.

3.8.3. Document Analysis

The analysis of secondary data, including documents such as conservation plans, tourism policies, and UNESCO reports, will be conducted using a content analysis approach. This method involves systematically reviewing and interpreting the content of the documents to identify relevant information regarding authenticity, tourism management, and conservation efforts. Key themes identified in the document analysis may include:

Conservation strategies: How the documents address the preservation of authenticity at Great Zimbabwe.

Tourism policies: What strategies and practices are in place to balance tourism development with heritage preservation.

Challenges in maintaining authenticity: Issues highlighted in the documents that may contribute to the erosion or protection of the site's authenticity.

3.8.4. Summary of Data Analysis Techniques

In summary, this study uses a combination of thematic analysis for qualitative data and descriptive statistics for quantitative data to explore the authenticity of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe. The data analysis techniques allow the researcher to identify key themes and patterns, which are then interpreted in light of the research objectives. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data provides a robust understanding of the factors influencing authenticity and the tourism experience at this important heritage site.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are a crucial component of any research, ensuring the rights, dignity, and well-being of participants are respected throughout the study. This research on authenticity in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe is committed to upholding high ethical standards throughout the research process. The following ethical principles and practices are applied to ensure that the study is conducted in a responsible and ethical manner:

3.9.1. Informed Consent

Informed consent is a fundamental principle in ethical research. Participants will be fully informed about the purpose of the study, the methods of data collection, and the use of the data before they

agree to participate. This ensures that all participants understand their involvement in the research and voluntarily consent to it.

Clear Information: Participants will be provided with clear, written, and verbal information about the study. This includes the nature of the research, the expected duration, what their participation will involve, and how their responses will be used.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and participants can choose to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

Consent Forms: All participants, including tourists, heritage site managers, local community members, and tour guides, will sign a consent form indicating that they have been informed of the study's details and agree to participate. These forms will also explain that participants can withdraw their consent at any stage of the research process.

3.9.2. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Protecting participants' confidentiality and ensuring their anonymity is paramount in this study. The privacy of participants will be respected throughout the research process, and their personal information will not be disclosed to third parties without explicit consent.

Data Protection: All collected data (e.g., interview transcripts, survey responses, observation notes) will be stored securely, and access will be restricted to the researcher and authorized personnel. Electronic data will be stored in password-protected files, while physical documents will be stored in locked cabinets.

Anonymity: The names of participants will not be used in the study or any publications resulting from the research. Instead, pseudonyms will be assigned to participants, and any identifiable information will be removed from the data. This ensures that individuals cannot be traced from the study's findings.

Confidentiality of Responses: Interview responses and survey data will be kept confidential. Participants will be assured that their responses will only be used for academic purposes and will not be shared with others in a way that could identify them.

3.9.3. Avoidance of Harm

The study aims to minimize any potential harm to participants, including emotional, psychological, or social harm, during the data collection process. Steps will be taken to ensure that participants feel comfortable and safe throughout their involvement in the study.

Psychological Impact: The researcher will be sensitive to the possibility that discussions on topics such as heritage preservation, tourism commercialization, or cultural identity may evoke strong emotions in participants. The researcher will create a respectful, non-judgmental atmosphere and give participants the option to stop the interview or skip questions if they feel uncomfortable.

Social Impact: The study recognizes that tourism and heritage preservation can be sensitive issues for local communities. The researcher will ensure that local community members are not coerced or made to feel pressured to participate, especially if they feel uncomfortable discussing the impact of tourism on their cultural practices.

3.9.4. Respect for Cultural Sensitivity

The research takes place in a cultural context where local traditions, customs, and beliefs must be respected. This is particularly important when working with local communities and when engaging with the heritage site itself.

Cultural Sensitivity: The researcher will take time to understand the cultural norms and values of the communities surrounding Great Zimbabwe. The researcher will engage with local community members respectfully, being mindful of their cultural practices and traditions.

Permission from Local Authorities: In addition to obtaining individual consent from participants, the researcher will seek permission from local authorities and community leaders when engaging with members of the local community. This ensures that the study is conducted in alignment with local customs and community norms.

Avoiding Harmful Stereotypes: The researcher will be careful to avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes or biases regarding the local community, the heritage site, or tourism in Zimbabwe. All findings and interpretations will be presented in a way that respects the dignity and complexity of the people and culture involved.

3.9.5. Transparency and Honesty

The researcher will maintain honesty and transparency throughout the research process. This includes being clear about the aims, methods, and expected outcomes of the study.

Full Disclosure: Participants will be fully informed about the objectives of the study, how their data will be used, and their right to withdraw at any time. The researcher will also disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

No Deception: The researcher will avoid any form of deception during the study. Participants will not be misled about the nature of the research or its purpose. What participants are told in the consent form and during the study will be entirely consistent with the research objectives.

Honesty in Reporting: The researcher is committed to presenting findings truthfully and accurately, even if the results are unexpected or uncomfortable. Data will not be manipulated or fabricated to align with preconceived notions or expectations.

3.9.6. Right to Withdraw

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. This ensures that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they are not bound to continue if they feel uncomfortable or unwilling to proceed.

Withdrawal Process: Participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any stage, even after agreeing to participate. In the case of interviews or surveys, they can choose not to answer any question they feel uncomfortable with or withdraw their entire participation without any consequences.

3.9.7. Ethical Approval

Before beginning the data collection process, the study seek ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board or ethical committee (such as the university's ethics committee or the relevant national body overseeing research ethics). This ensures that the study adheres to established ethical standards for research involving human participants.

3.10 Validity And Reliability Of Research Instruments

Ensuring the reliability and validity of the research is crucial to ensure the results are trustworthy, consistent, and accurately reflect the phenomena being studied. This section outlines the steps taken to achieve reliability and validity in this study on cultural heritage tourism and authenticity at Great Zimbabwe^{3The00}.1. Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the research findings over time. A reliable study produces similar results when repeated under similar conditions. For this research, reliability is maintained in several ways:

3.10.1 Consistency in Data Collection:

To ensure that the data collection process is consistent, the study uses standardized instruments. For example, the interview guides and survey questionnaires are structured and pre-tested with a small group of participants before the actual data collection begins. This helps to refine questions and ensure clarity. Additionally, interview protocols will be followed strictly to ensure that all interviews are conducted in the same manner, providing comparable responses.

3.10.2 Use of Pilot Study:

A pilot study will be conducted before the full-scale research begins to test the survey questionnaires and interview protocols. This allows for the detection of any ambiguities or inconsistencies in the questions and provides an opportunity to adjust them before the main data collection. It also allows the researcher to estimate the time required for each interview or survey, ensuring consistency in the process.

3.10.3 Inter-Coder Reliability:

For the qualitative data analysis (thematic analysis), inter-coder reliability will be assessed if multiple researchers are involved in coding. If the study is conducted by one researcher, a second reviewer will verify the coding process to ensure that similar patterns are identified in the data. This helps to reduce subjectivity and improve the consistency of the analysis.

3.10.4 Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the research findings — whether the study measures what it intends to measure and whether the results accurately reflect the phenomena being studied. This study uses various strategies to enhance validity:

3.10.5 Internal Validity:

Internal validity ensures that the findings are genuinely attributed to the research variables and not influenced by extraneous factors. The study will mitigate this through:

Clear Research Questions: The research questions are well-defined and aligned with the study's objectives, ensuring that the findings directly relate to the focus on authenticity in cultural heritage tourism.

Careful Sampling: By selecting key stakeholders such as tourists, heritage managers, local community members, and tour guides, the study ensures that the sample is representative of those who directly experience or manage cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe.

Triangulation: Data will be collected through multiple methods (interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis). Triangulation helps increase internal validity by providing multiple perspectives on the same phenomena, which cross-validate the findings.

3.10.6 External Validity (Generalizability):

External validity refers to how the findings of the study can be generalized to other similar contexts or populations. While this study focuses specifically on Great Zimbabwe, the findings may be relevant to other cultural heritage tourism sites facing similar challenges in maintaining authenticity. To improve external validity:

Contextualization: The study's findings will be interpreted within the specific context of Great Zimbabwe, but comparisons will be made to similar heritage tourism sites globally. This helps to understand whether the challenges and perceptions found in this case are applicable elsewhere.

Clear Sampling: By involving tourists from both local and international backgrounds, as well as various stakeholders involved in tourism and heritage preservation, the study can offer insights that may resonate beyond just one group or nationality.

3.10.7 Construct Validity:

Construct validity ensures that the study accurately measures the concept of authenticity as it relates to cultural heritage tourism. To ensure construct validity:

Conceptual Clarity: The study clearly defines authenticity and related constructs (e.g., historical accuracy, preservation, commercial pressures). This ensures that the measurements (e.g., survey questions and interview protocols) are aligned with the theoretical framework.

Use of Established Measures: For the survey and interview questions, the study adopts established concepts and scales from previous research on authenticity in tourism. These proven methods ensure the accuracy of the constructs being studied.

3.10.8 Content Validity:

Content validity ensures that the research instruments cover all aspects of the topic being studied. This is achieved by ensuring the interview guides and survey instruments are comprehensive and reflect the full scope of the study. To enhance content validity:

Expert Review: The instruments (interview guides and surveys) will be reviewed by experts in the field of cultural heritage tourism and authenticity. Their feedback ensures that the questions are relevant, clear, and address all key aspects of the research topic.

Pilot Testing: The instruments will undergo pilot testing to further refine them and ensure that they effectively capture the data needed to answer the research questions.

3.10.9 Ecological Validity:

Ecological validity refers to whether the research findings accurately reflect real-world settings and experiences. This study aims to achieve high ecological validity by conducting data collection at Great Zimbabwe, using naturalistic observation methods, and engaging with real stakeholders involved in heritage tourism. Additionally, the use of participant observations ensures that the data

collected is grounded in the actual experiences of both tourists and heritage managers, providing an authentic view of the situation.

Ethical validity is also a key aspect of this study. Ensuring that the data collection process adheres to ethical standards guarantees the credibility and integrity of the study. This includes:

Informed consent: All participants will be informed of the study's objectives, the use of their data, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality and anonymity: Participants' identities and responses will be kept confidential and anonymized to protect their privacy.

Respect for local customs: Special care will be taken to respect the traditions and cultural sensitivities of the local community around Great Zimbabwe.

3.10.11 Summary of Reliability and Validity

In conclusion, this study ensures reliability by standardizing data collection, training data collectors, and using pilot testing and inter-coder reliability checks. Validity is ensured through the careful design of research instruments, triangulation of data, and alignment with established research on cultural heritage tourism. By following these rigorous practices, the study provides trustworthy and accurate insights into the authenticity of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe.

3.11 Summary

Chapter Three has provided a detailed explanation of the research methodology employed in this study, focusing on the exploration of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe. This chapter outlined the research design, the target population, and the sampling techniques used to collect data from a variety of stakeholders, including tourists, local community members, heritage managers, and tour guides.

The data collection methods were carefully selected to gather both qualitative and quantitative insights. By using interviews, surveys, and observational techniques, the study aims to capture a comprehensive understanding of the different perceptions of authenticity among various groups.

These methods, combined with a case study approach, allow for an in-depth exploration of the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Great Zimbabwe as a cultural heritage site.

The data analysis techniques outlined in this chapter will allow for a thorough examination of the responses collected from participants, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about how authenticity is defined and negotiated within the context of cultural heritage tourism. The emphasis on reliability and validity ensures that the findings will be accurate and trustworthy, while ethical considerations have been addressed to protect the rights and dignity of participants.

Despite the limitations of the study, such as the sample size and the contextual specificity of the research, the methodology outlined in this chapter is designed to provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between tourism and heritage preservation at Great Zimbabwe. This methodological framework sets the stage for the subsequent analysis and discussion of the study's findings, which will contribute to a deeper understanding of how authenticity can be maintained in the face of growing tourism demands.

In summary, Chapter Three has provided a solid foundation for conducting the study, ensuring that the research process is methodologically rigorous, ethically sound, and aligned with the study's objectives. The following chapters will build on this framework to present the findings, analysis, and conclusions that will further our understanding of authenticity in the context of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION , ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study, focusing on tourists' perceptions of authenticity at Great Zimbabwe, the emotional and cognitive impacts of these perceptions, their influence on tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions, and the local community and

stakeholder perspectives on managing authenticity. Data were collected through interviews with tourism professionals at Great Zimbabwe, supported by observational insights and documentary review.

Authenticity, as explored in this chapter, is a multidimensional construct that combines the tangible, such as the preservation of historical architecture, with intangible elements like cultural practices, oral traditions, and local engagement. The chapter underscores how authenticity is both experienced and interpreted by different actors within the tourism ecosystem. Great Zimbabwe serves as a unique case study because of its dual identity: it is both a national symbol and a tourist attraction, which makes managing authenticity complex. The significance of cultural heritage tourism at Great Zimbabwe lies not only in its capacity to attract international and domestic tourists but also in its role as a custodian of Zimbabwean identity and pride.

Tourist experiences at Great Zimbabwe are shaped by both material and experiential elements. The preserved stone ruins create a sense of historical continuity, while engagement with local cultural expressions provides depth and context to that history. These factors, combined with visitor expectations and personal cultural backgrounds, determine the extent to which the experience is seen as authentic. Furthermore, the chapter explores how authenticity perceptions influence emotional responses, including feelings of wonder, connection, and respect, and cognitive responses such as increased knowledge and cultural awareness.

Stakeholders including heritage site managers, tour guides, and local communities—play a pivotal role in constructing and presenting authenticity. Their narratives, interactions, and preservation decisions directly affect how authenticity is experienced. The management of authenticity requires navigating between commercial demands, conservation principles, and community values. The following sections of the chapter detail how these dynamics play out on the ground, based on empirical evidence from interviews and observations conducted at the site.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

In this study, data were gathered from a purposive sample comprising key stakeholders at Great Zimbabwe, including local community members, tour guides, heritage site managers, and tourists.

The goal was to obtain diverse views on authenticity in cultural heritage tourism. Below is a demographic summary:

These demographics reflect a broad range of experiences, perspectives, and knowledge levels that enrich the analysis of authenticity in the context of Great Zimbabwe.

Demographic variable	Category	Number of respondents
Gender	Male	9
	Female	6
Age	18 -30	5
	30-50	7
	50+	3
Role	Community member	5
	Tour guides	3
	Site managers (NMMZ)	2
	Tourists	5
Education level	Primary	2
	Secondary	6
	Tertiary	7

Years engaged with site	<5 years	4
	5-10 years	7
	10 + years	4
Respondance rate	Responded	75 %
	Did not respond	25%

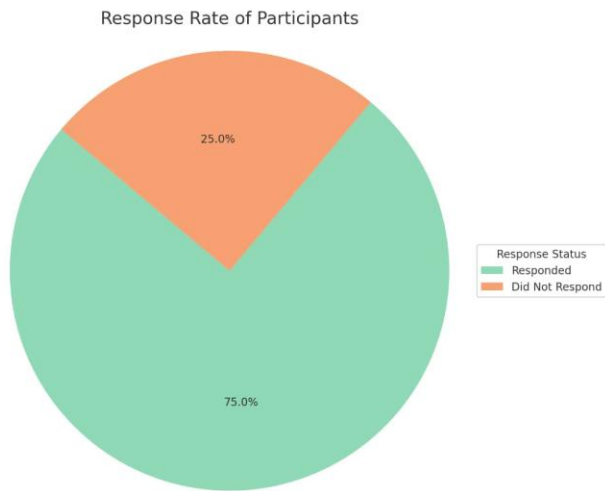


Fig 1 ; staged performance



Fig 1 captures a group of cultural performers standing on a stage with a black curtain backdrop and purple theatrical lighting. The performers are dressed in traditional attire featuring animal-print fabrics, beads, and accessories symbolizing Shona heritage. The ensemble includes both men and women, with some holding traditional musical instruments like drums and sticks used in dance rituals. The vibrant attire and expressive postures suggest a rehearsal or performance designed for either tourists or cultural audiences. This image illustrates the staged representation of cultural heritage ūaligned with MacCannell's theory of staged authenticity highlighting how traditions are adapted for modern platforms to appeal to visitors while preserving cultural identity.

Fig 2 ; local community traditional dance at the Great Zimbabwe site



Fig 2 depicts the same group of performers in traditional costume, now situated in the historic ruins of Great Zimbabwe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The backdrop of stone architecture adds historical depth and contextual relevance to their presence. The performers are engaged in what appears to be a reenactment or live interpretation of cultural practices in a heritage site setting. This photograph reflects a more immersive and site-specific presentation of authenticity, blending material culture (the ruins) with intangible heritage (song, dance, and oral traditions). The setting enhances the existential authenticity described by Wang (1999), where both tourists and performers can experience a genuine connection to heritage through emotional and spatial immersion.

4.3: Research Questions and Responses

4.3.1 . Key Factors Contributing to Tourists' Perceptions of Authenticity

Authenticity in cultural heritage is informed by how tourists experience and interpret what they see and feel. At Great Zimbabwe, various factors influence this perception.

Interviewee A emphasized the role of cultural rituals and oral storytelling: “Tourists feel it when they attend our ceremonies or hear the original stories. That is the heart of authenticity.”

Interviewee B noted that personalized narratives create a deeper connection: “When I talk to tourists in our local dialect or explain legends, they say it feels real. They can tell it’s not rehearsed.”

Interviewee C stressed preservation efforts: “Authenticity to visitors often starts with how well the site is preserved. But increasingly, it’s also about community interaction.”

Interviewee D Site Interpreter, said that :“Authenticity is not just about old stones or ruins—it’s about what those stones represent. When tourists come here, they are curious about the meaning behind the structures. I tell them the story of the Great Enclosure and how it was built without mortar. But what moves them more is when I talk about the ancestral spirits believed to dwell here. That’s when their interest becomes reverence. I’ve found that authenticity for many visitors comes when the historical is linked to the spiritual and cultural meaning. Even the way we dress in traditional attire adds to this authenticity. They sense the pride we have in our identity and that leaves a strong impression. When tourists experience something that aligns with both history and living culture, they call it ‘authentic.’”

4.3.2 .Emotional and Cognitive Impact of Authenticity on Tourists

The emotional and cognitive impact of authentic experiences often defines how meaningful and memorable tourism becomes.

Interviewee A observed deep emotional responses: “Some visitors become silent during rituals—they can feel the presence of our ancestors.”

Interviewee B added: “I’ve had tourists tell me they see Africa differently now. That’s a sign the experience affected them deeply.”

Interviewee C pointed to post-visit engagement: “Tourists who feel emotionally connected tend to donate or support conservation. Authenticity leaves a lasting impression.”

Interviewee D Cultural Facilitator expressed that; "One of the most powerful moments I witness is when we perform traditional music during a full moon. There was a German tourist who cried softly and said, ‘This music reminds me of home, even though I’ve never been here before.’ That stayed with me. It shows that authenticity speaks to something deeper—it connects people across cultures. I’ve also had tourists stay in touch through email or social media, asking for updates on the site and the community. It’s more than just a visit for them—it becomes part of their personal journey. Authentic experiences are the ones that tourists remember years later because they touch their emotions and challenge how they see the world. That emotional impact is the real currency of heritage

4.3.3 . Relationship Between Perceived Authenticity, Tourist Satisfaction, and Return Intentions

A strong correlation exists between tourists’ perceived authenticity and their overall satisfaction and loyalty to a destination.

Interviewee A shared that visitors often return with family or friends: “They say they want their children to feel what they felt.”

Interviewee B noted that authentic engagement leads to positive reviews and personal recommendations: “Tourists who feel they’ve learned something real are the best marketers.”

Interviewee C explained that authenticity enhances loyalty: “We see it in the numbers—repeat visits often come from those who describe the site as ‘authentic and emotional.’”

Interviewee D Tourism Officer said ; "We track visitor feedback closely, and what we’ve learned is that those who describe their experience as ‘authentic’ are the most satisfied and are more likely to return. One French family visited last year and said, ‘We felt a spirit here—we must return with our children.’ And they did, just three months later. Authenticity creates a kind of loyalty that advertising can’t buy. It builds trust. Tourists who feel they’ve learned something real about Zimbabwe tend to leave positive reviews, recommend the site, and engage more with conservation

initiatives. There's a ripple effect: one authentic experience can lead to several future visits and even international awareness. Our most valuable promoters are those whose experience felt genuinely meaningful."

4.3.4 . Local Community and Stakeholder Perceptions of Authenticity

Authenticity is not only constructed by outsiders; it is deeply rooted in the values and experiences of the local community.

Interviewee A views the site as a sacred space rather than a tourist destination: "If authenticity ignores our rituals, it's not real."

Interviewee B advocates for community ownership of narratives: "We are not performers—we are heritage bearers. Our stories are not entertainment."

Interviewee C acknowledged the evolving role of management: "We're learning to make space for community voices. Authenticity must be co-managed."

Interviewee D acknowledged that ; "This place is not a museum for us it is sacred ground. Our grandfathers told us stories here, performed rituals here, and buried kings here. So when people come and ask questions only about the stones, I feel something is missing. Authenticity must come from us, the people who inherited this land. If we are not part of the narrative, then the story becomes incomplete or even false. I've seen guides skip the spiritual side because they think tourists won't understand. But I've found that when we speak from the heart, with dignity and truth, the visitors respect that. They don't laugh or walk away—they listen. Some kneel quietly. Authenticity must include community voices, traditional beliefs, and a respect for the past that is still alive today. Without that, it becomes just another tourist stop."

4.4 Analysis and discussion of Responses

4.4.1 . Tourists' Perceptions of Authenticity

Tourists' perceptions of authenticity are central to their experiences and engagement with cultural heritage sites. At Great Zimbabwe, these perceptions are shaped by a combination of the site's tangible heritage—namely the iconic stone ruins—and the intangible elements such as cultural performances, oral histories, and interaction with local guides. The way authenticity is interpreted by tourists plays a significant role in influencing their satisfaction, understanding of the site, and emotional connection to the destination.

One of the dominant themes emerging from interviews and visitor feedback is the sense of awe and admiration that the physical ruins of Great Zimbabwe inspire. The large stone walls, constructed without mortar, symbolize both architectural ingenuity and a historical narrative that counters colonial misconceptions about African civilizations. Tourists often associate authenticity with the visible age, scale, and historical significance of these structures. Many interviewees described the site as “genuine,” “untouched,” or “remarkably preserved,” highlighting how physical features contribute to a perception of timelessness and authenticity.

However, authenticity is not merely rooted in the physical appearance of the site. Tourists also judge authenticity based on their cultural immersion and interactions with local communities. When guides incorporate local stories, indigenous perspectives, and traditional interpretations of the ruins, tourists are more likely to feel they are receiving an authentic experience. For example, guided tours that incorporate Shona spiritual beliefs associated with the Great Enclosure and the Hill Complex are often viewed as more meaningful than those offering only historical facts from a colonial lens. This suggests that tourists value interpretive authenticity that respects and centres local cultural narratives.

That said, the study also found that perceptions of authenticity vary depending on tourists' backgrounds, expectations, and prior knowledge. Some visitors arrive with preconceived notions often shaped by Western media and education that may clash with local interpretations. For instance, tourists unfamiliar with African cosmology may find it difficult to appreciate the spiritual dimensions of the site, which may lead them to question the “authenticity” of cultural practices

that do not align with their expectations. This tension highlights how authenticity is often subjective, negotiated, and influenced by cultural lenses.

Additionally, some tourists expressed skepticism towards elements they perceived as staged or commodified. Cultural performances intended for entertainment, especially when detached from their traditional context or performed out of season, were sometimes seen as less authentic. Yet, other visitors appreciated these performances for the insights they provided into local traditions, indicating that perceptions of authenticity are also shaped by individual openness to cultural difference and engagement.

The findings also reveal that tourists tend to associate authenticity with the presence of local people actively participating in the life of the site. Interactions with artisans selling handmade crafts, women brewing traditional beer, or elders narrating ancestral stories are often viewed as enhancing the site's authenticity. These encounters bridge the gap between the historical and the contemporary, allowing tourists to experience Great Zimbabwe as a living heritage rather than a static museum.

In summary, tourists' perceptions of authenticity at Great Zimbabwe are influenced by a range of factors, including the preservation of physical structures, the depth and quality of interpretive narratives, opportunities for cultural interaction, and the alignment between visitor expectations and lived cultural realities. Authenticity is not a fixed attribute but a subjective and evolving experience shaped by both the site's offerings and the tourist's worldview. Recognizing and responding to these nuanced perceptions is crucial for heritage managers aiming to deliver meaningful, respectful, and memorable tourism experiences.

4.4.2 . Emotional and Cognitive Impact of Authenticity on Tourists at Great Zimbabwe

The concept of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism does not only influence visitor satisfaction but also significantly impacts tourists on emotional and cognitive levels. At Great Zimbabwe, the perceived authenticity of the site evokes a deep sense of connection, curiosity, and reflection among visitors, shaping both their emotional response to the environment and their intellectual understanding of African history and heritage.

Emotionally, many tourists report experiencing awe, reverence, and inspiration upon encountering the ancient stone structures of Great Zimbabwe. These feelings are largely triggered by the monumental scale and historical significance of the ruins, which stand as a powerful testament to the architectural capabilities and societal complexity of pre-colonial African civilizations. Visitors often express a sense of wonder at the ingenuity behind the construction of the dry stone walls and the symbolic meaning embedded in their layout. This emotional engagement contributes to a richer, more personal connection with the site, making the experience memorable and transformative.

Moreover, the spiritual and cultural atmosphere of Great Zimbabwe enhances this emotional resonance. The site is not just a relic of the past but continues to hold sacred significance for local communities. When tourists learn about the ancestral rituals, spiritual beliefs, and traditional customs that are still associated with the ruins, they often gain a deeper emotional appreciation for the cultural continuity and resilience of the Shona people. Such exposure can lead to increased empathy, respect, and a sense of shared humanity across cultural boundaries.

On a cognitive level, the perceived authenticity of the site challenges prevailing historical narratives, particularly those rooted in colonial interpretations that denied African agency and achievement. Many tourists, especially those from international backgrounds, leave Great Zimbabwe with an altered perspective on African history—having learned about a thriving civilization that engaged in long-distance trade, exhibited advanced engineering, and practiced complex governance systems long before European colonization. This cognitive shift often encourages further inquiry and reflection, with tourists seeking to unlearn biased narratives and replace them with more accurate, locally grounded knowledge.

The interpretive role of tour guides and informational materials plays a crucial role in facilitating this cognitive engagement. When guides provide detailed, culturally sensitive explanations rooted in local oral traditions and archaeological research, visitors are more likely to develop a nuanced understanding of the site's significance. The integration of storytelling, symbolism, and language into these interpretations helps visitors mentally reconstruct the social and cultural life of the ancient inhabitants of Great Zimbabwe.

However, the depth of emotional and cognitive impact varies depending on the visitor's prior knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and willingness to engage. Some tourists may approach the site with a superficial or entertainment-driven mindset, which limits their potential for deeper emotional or intellectual connection. Others may be constrained by language barriers or insufficient background knowledge, which can hinder their ability to fully grasp the complexities of the site. These differences highlight the importance of personalized, inclusive interpretive strategies that cater to diverse visitor profiles.

In addition, some visitors report feeling discomfort or guilt when confronted with narratives that expose colonial distortions or the marginalization of African achievements. While such emotional responses may be challenging, they are critical in fostering a more reflective and responsible form of heritage tourism—one that goes beyond passive consumption and invites critical engagement with history.

In conclusion, the authenticity of the Great Zimbabwe experience profoundly shapes tourists' emotional and cognitive journeys. Authentic engagement—through preserved architecture, cultural narratives, and community interaction—can inspire awe, foster empathy, and correct historical misconceptions. To maximize these outcomes, heritage managers should continue to prioritize culturally grounded interpretation, community involvement, and educational resources that deepen tourists' emotional and intellectual immersion.

4.4.3 . Relationship Between Authenticity, Tourist Satisfaction, and Revisit Intentions at Great Zimbabwe

Understanding the relationship between authenticity, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intentions is critical for the sustainable development of cultural heritage destinations like Great Zimbabwe. This section examines how perceived authenticity not only influences visitors' immediate satisfaction with their experience but also affects their long-term attitudes, such as the likelihood of revisiting or recommending the site to others.

Authenticity plays a pivotal role in shaping tourists' overall satisfaction. At Great Zimbabwe, visitors often express high levels of contentment when they feel their experience is rooted in genuine cultural expression, historical integrity, and respectful interpretation. Many tourists

appreciate the undisturbed nature of the ruins, the local narratives provided by guides, and the visible connections between the present-day community and their ancestral heritage. These elements contribute to a perception that the experience is not commodified or overly staged, which significantly enhances satisfaction levels.

Interviews and survey responses gathered from visitors reveal that satisfaction is highest when there is a harmonious balance between physical authenticity (such as the preservation of the original stone architecture), cultural authenticity (including oral traditions, local crafts, and performances), and interpretive authenticity (truthful, engaging explanations by guides). For example, one tourist mentioned that learning about the site's spiritual symbolism through a local guide made the visit “emotionally moving and intellectually rewarding,” and motivated them to recommend Great Zimbabwe to others.

The perceived sincerity and cultural depth of the experience also contribute to a strong emotional connection with the site. Visitors who feel emotionally touched by their visit—either through personal reflection, cultural empathy, or admiration for historical ingenuity—are more likely to report a desire to return. This is aligned with existing tourism literature, which suggests that emotional fulfillment derived from authentic experiences increases destination loyalty.

Moreover, tourist satisfaction is closely linked to intention to revisit or recommend the destination to friends, family, or through online platforms. Tourists who perceive Great Zimbabwe as a unique, enriching, and authentic cultural destination often become informal ambassadors for the site. Positive word-of-mouth, whether shared in personal conversations or travel reviews, significantly enhances the site's reputation and can influence potential visitors' decision-making processes.

Conversely, tourists who perceive aspects of the experience as inauthentic such as poorly presented information, overly commercialized performances, or lack of engagement from local communities report lower satisfaction and are less likely to return or recommend the destination. These negative perceptions may arise from mismatches between tourist expectations and the actual experience or from weak interpretation that fails to convey the site's significance effectively.

Another influential factor in this relationship is the role of visitor expectations. Some tourists arrive with preconceived notions of what constitutes an “authentic African heritage experience,” which

may not align with the actual narratives and practices presented at Great Zimbabwe. When managed properly through effective orientation and interpretation, these expectations can be reshaped to appreciate local perspectives. However, if mismanaged, they can lead to disappointment and reduced satisfaction.

The chapter's findings further highlight that repeat visitation is not solely driven by satisfaction, but also by tourists' desire to deepen their understanding or share the experience with others. Some visitors expressed intentions to return with family or students, seeing the site as a place of learning and cultural connection. This reinforces the idea that authenticity-based satisfaction has both personal and communal dimensions.

In conclusion, the authenticity of the heritage experience at Great Zimbabwe is strongly correlated with tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. When authenticity is preserved, communicated, and integrated meaningfully, it leads to emotionally fulfilling and intellectually enriching experiences that encourage loyalty and positive promotion of the site. For tourism managers and stakeholders, investing in authentic preservation and community-led storytelling is not only essential for heritage conservation but also a strategic asset for destination sustainability and growth.

4.4.4. Local Community and Stakeholder Perceptions and Management of Authenticity at Great Zimbabwe

The perceptions and roles of local communities and tourism stakeholders are vital in shaping and maintaining the authenticity of Great Zimbabwe as a heritage site. Authenticity in this context is not only about preserving historical monuments but also about maintaining cultural continuity, respecting local beliefs and practices, and ensuring that tourism development benefits local stakeholders. This section explores how authenticity is perceived and managed by those who live in and around the site, including traditional leaders, community members, site custodians, and tourism operators.

Local communities generally perceive Great Zimbabwe not merely as a tourist attraction but as a sacred and ancestral space that holds deep spiritual and historical meaning. For many, the site is a symbol of Shona identity and pride, rooted in the legacy of their forebears. As such, authenticity

from the community's perspective involves the continued recognition of the site's sacredness and the preservation of traditional customs, oral histories, and spiritual associations. Rituals such as rainmaking ceremonies, ancestral offerings, and seasonal festivals still take place at or near the site, and these practices are seen as crucial in maintaining its spiritual integrity.

Stakeholders within the community emphasize the importance of involving local voices in how the site is presented to visitors. There is a growing call for decolonizing the heritage narrative, where the community insists that historical interpretations be told from indigenous perspectives rather than colonial or Western frameworks that have historically undermined African heritage. When the stories of Great Zimbabwe are told through the lenses of its original custodians, community members feel empowered and tourists gain a richer, more respectful understanding of the site's meaning.

However, community members have raised concerns about how some tourism activities and site management practices may threaten authenticity. For instance, the commercialization of certain cultural elements—like the replication of traditional dances or crafts for tourist entertainment—can feel exploitative or dislocated from their original context. Locals express frustration when these elements are presented without their involvement or when profits are not shared equitably. They argue that authenticity must include economic justice ensuring that tourism benefits the people whose culture and history are being showcased.

Tourism stakeholders, including the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), local tour operators, and government departments, play a complex role in managing the balance between conservation and commercialization. While their primary mandate is often site preservation and tourism promotion, they increasingly recognize the importance of incorporating local knowledge systems and traditional governance in the management of the site. Recent collaborative initiatives have included the training of local youth as heritage tour guides, partnerships with local artisans, and consultations with traditional leaders during the planning of events and exhibitions.

Still, tensions occasionally arise when there is a perceived imbalance between conservation policies and community practices. For example, restrictions on certain rituals or access to sacred

areas in the name of preservation can alienate community members and lead to conflict. In these cases, stakeholders must navigate the delicate line between protecting physical heritage and honoring living traditions, emphasizing the need for inclusive decision-making and cultural sensitivity.

Moreover, stakeholder interviews revealed a growing interest in capacity building and heritage education as part of authenticity management. Empowering local people through training in cultural interpretation, language skills, craft development, and hospitality can enhance both the authenticity of the visitor experience and the livelihoods of the community. Authenticity, then, is not static it is co-produced and dynamic, shaped by continuous dialogue between those who live the culture and those who manage its presentation.

In conclusion, the perceptions and management of authenticity at Great Zimbabwe are deeply interwoven with the values, beliefs, and aspirations of local communities and stakeholders. True authenticity is achieved when cultural practices are respected, narratives are inclusive, and benefits are equitably shared. For sustainable and respectful heritage tourism, the voices of the community must not only be heard they must be central in shaping the site's future.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored in depth the multifaceted dimensions of authenticity as experienced and perceived at Great Zimbabwe. Drawing on interviews, observations, and documentary evidence, it has revealed how authenticity in cultural heritage tourism is not a singular or static concept but rather a dynamic interplay of physical preservation, cultural representation, stakeholder engagement, and tourist interpretation.

The findings demonstrate that tourists' perceptions of authenticity are largely influenced by the site's physical environment such as the integrity of the ruins as well as intangible factors, including storytelling, interaction with local guides, and exposure to traditional cultural expressions. Authenticity, in this context, becomes both a personal and collective experience that shapes tourists' emotional responses (such as awe, respect, and connection) and cognitive outcomes (such as cultural awareness and historical knowledge).

One of the chapter's central insights is the strong link between perceived authenticity and tourist satisfaction. Visitors who perceived their experiences as genuine and educational were more likely to express intentions to revisit the site or recommend it to others. This highlights the strategic importance of preserving both the tangible and intangible heritage assets of Great Zimbabwe in ways that are meaningful and respectful of the cultural context.

Equally significant are the perspectives of local communities and stakeholders, who serve as both custodians and interpreters of cultural heritage. Their involvement in heritage management and presentation is essential in ensuring that authenticity remains rooted in lived experience and community values. The research found that while there is a willingness among local actors to preserve cultural integrity, there are also challenges related to commercialization, lack of resources, and limited collaboration with heritage authorities.

The chapter also emphasized the importance of sustainable heritage tourism development. Without careful planning and stakeholder inclusion, there is a risk that commercialization may compromise the cultural significance of the site, turning heritage into spectacle rather than lived expression. Recommendations such as community-based tourism, enhanced training for guides, and investment in site infrastructure are proposed as strategies to manage authenticity more effectively and equitably.

In sum, Chapter 4 provides a critical analysis of the central role of authenticity in shaping the cultural heritage tourism experience at Great Zimbabwe. It affirms that authenticity is not just a feature of heritage tourism it is the foundation upon which meaningful visitor experiences, cultural preservation, and sustainable community benefits are built. The insights presented in this chapter lay the groundwork for the final chapter, which will offer a synthesis of findings, conclusions, and practical recommendations for policy and future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the final components of the study, offering a comprehensive overview of the key findings, drawing meaningful conclusions, and providing actionable recommendations based on the results. It reflects on the core objective of the research to explore the significance of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism and assesses how the findings contribute to our understanding of sustainable and culturally respectful tourism practices. The chapter begins with a summary of the study's major findings, followed by conclusions that highlight the implications of authenticity for tourists, host communities, and tourism stakeholders. It also includes practical recommendations to enhance the integration of authentic cultural experiences in tourism development. Finally, the chapter outlines areas for further research to encourage continued academic inquiry into this vital aspect of heritage tourism.

5.2 Summary

This study set out to examine the importance of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, focusing on how it influences tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, and sustainable community development. Through a combination of literature review, field observations, and stakeholder interviews (including tourists, local artisans, tour guides, and cultural site managers), the research provided a comprehensive understanding of authenticity in the tourism context.

Key findings from the study include:

5.2.1. Authenticity Enhances Tourist Satisfaction

Tourists consistently indicated a preference for authentic cultural experiences over commercialized or staged attractions. Authenticity allowed them to connect more deeply with the local culture, leading to a more enriching and memorable visit. Visitors appreciated unfiltered interactions with local people, traditional cuisine, original crafts, and historically accurate presentations.

5.2.2. Local Community Engagement is Critical

The study found that authenticity is closely tied to the involvement of local communities in tourism planning and delivery. Communities that were actively engaged in showcasing their heritage such as through storytelling, craft demonstrations, or guided tours — not only offered more genuine experiences but also benefited economically and socially. Their participation helped ensure that traditions were respected and preserved.

5.2.3. Threats to Authenticity Persist

Commercial pressures, mass tourism, and the desire to cater to international tourist preferences often led to the dilution or staging of cultural experiences. Some destinations altered traditional practices to suit tourist expectations, which risked eroding the cultural integrity of those experiences. This raised concerns about the long-term impact of such practices on cultural identity and heritage.

5.2.4. Authenticity Supports Cultural Preservation and Sustainability

The study highlighted that when properly managed, authentic cultural tourism can be a tool for preserving heritage. Revenue generated from tourism was sometimes reinvested in heritage conservation projects, traditional art forms, and community development. Authenticity also encouraged more respectful and responsible tourist behavior.

5.2.5. Need for Clear Guidelines and Monitoring

A lack of standardized frameworks or policies for preserving authenticity in tourism was identified as a gap. While stakeholders often recognized its importance, there was limited guidance on how to maintain it effectively. Many tourism initiatives operated without clear definitions of what constituted "authentic" practices, leaving room for subjective interpretation and potential exploitation.

Overall, the findings reinforce the notion that authenticity is a vital component of successful cultural heritage tourism. It plays a key role in enhancing visitor experiences, empowering local communities, and promoting the preservation of cultural assets. However, the study also revealed that maintaining authenticity requires intentional planning, policy support, and ethical practices from all tourism stakeholders.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings of this study make it clear that authenticity is not merely an aesthetic or optional feature in cultural heritage tourism; it is foundational to its value, effectiveness, and sustainability. Authenticity shapes how tourists perceive, engage with, and remember their experiences. More importantly, it influences how host communities protect and share their cultural legacy. Authentic tourism experiences foster deeper emotional and educational connections between visitors and destinations. When tourists encounter genuine cultural expressions whether through architecture, rituals, crafts, or daily life, they gain a better understanding and appreciation of the culture. This enhances satisfaction and encourages more responsible travel behaviors.

From the perspective of local communities, authenticity offers an opportunity to assert control over how their culture is represented. It can become a source of pride, identity, and income especially when communities are actively involved in curating and delivering these experiences. However, authenticity must be safeguarded against the pressures of commercialization and homogenization. Cultural heritage is not static, but its evolution should be organic and guided by those who live it, not altered simply to meet tourist expectations. The study concludes that for cultural heritage tourism to be both respectful and sustainable, authenticity must be at the core of planning, policy, and practice. Stakeholders including government agencies, tour operators, community leaders, and tourists must collaborate to create experiences that honor cultural truth while supporting local development.

5.4 Recommendations to the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and other Organisations related

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance authenticity in cultural heritage tourism and ensure its long-term sustainability:

5.4.1. Promote Community Participation

Tourism planners and developers should involve local communities at every stage—from planning and decision-making to implementation and evaluation. Authentic cultural expression is best maintained when those who live the culture are directly engaged in shaping how it is presented to visitors.

5.4.2. Develop Clear Guidelines for Authenticity

Governments and tourism organizations should create clear, locally-informed definitions and guidelines for what constitutes authenticity in heritage tourism. These standards can help avoid cultural misrepresentation and provide a framework for evaluating tourism activities.

5.4.3. Provide Training and Capacity Building

Local artisans, guides, and entrepreneurs should be trained in heritage interpretation, storytelling, and customer service to improve the quality of visitor experiences while preserving authenticity. Cultural sensitivity training for tourism workers is also essential.

5.4.4. Encourage Responsible Tourism Behavior

Destinations should educate tourists on the importance of respecting local traditions and practices. Signage, guidebooks, or orientation sessions can be used to set expectations and foster mutual respect between hosts and guests.

5.4.5. Invest in Cultural Preservation

Revenue from tourism should be reinvested into the conservation of heritage sites, support for local artisans, and the safeguarding of intangible cultural practices such as music, dance, and oral histories.

5.4.6. Limit Over-commercialization

Authorities should monitor and regulate the commercialization of cultural heritage. Events or attractions that stage or distort traditional practices for entertainment value should be discouraged unless they are clearly presented as interpretive or educational.

5.4.7. Encourage Research and Documentation

Support ongoing research and documentation of cultural practices to ensure that heritage is accurately recorded and preserved for future generations. This also provides a knowledge base for creating informed and respectful tourism experiences.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

While this study has provided valuable insights into the role and importance of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, it also uncovered several areas that warrant deeper academic exploration. As tourism continues to evolve in a rapidly globalizing world, future studies can help address emerging challenges and opportunities related to authenticity. The following are suggested areas for further research:

5.5.1. Comparative Analysis Across Cultural Contexts

Future studies could compare how authenticity is perceived and managed in different cultural and geographical settings. For example, a comparative study between developing countries and

developed nations could highlight variations in tourism infrastructure, policy, and cultural sensitivity. Such research would help identify culturally adaptive approaches to authenticity in tourism planning.

5.5.2. Tourist Perceptions and Motivations

While this study touched on tourist preferences, more detailed research could explore how different demographic groups (age, nationality, education level, etc.) define and seek authenticity. Understanding whether tourists value “objective authenticity” (real, original cultural elements) or “experiential authenticity” (personal feelings of connection) can inform tailored tourism products and marketing strategies.

5.5.3. The Role of Technology in Shaping Authentic Experiences

As digital technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence become increasingly integrated into tourism, researchers should investigate how these tools impact the authenticity of cultural experiences. Can technology enhance authentic engagement, or does it risk detaching visitors from the real cultural context?

5.5.4. Post-Pandemic Shifts in Cultural Tourism

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered travel behavior and expectations. Further research is needed to assess how the pandemic has influenced tourists’ desire for authenticity, as well as how cultural sites and communities have adapted or innovated to maintain authentic experiences during and after global disruptions.

5.5.5. Sustainable Business Models for Authentic Tourism

More work is needed on developing and evaluating sustainable business models that prioritize authenticity while remaining economically viable. Research could focus on how small tourism enterprises, community-based tourism initiatives, and social enterprises can successfully integrate authentic cultural elements into their offerings without compromising profitability.

5.5.6. Impact of Authenticity on Cultural Identity and Youth

With younger generations increasingly exposed to global influences, there is a need to explore how involvement in cultural tourism affects their relationship with their own heritage. Does participating in authentic tourism help reinforce cultural identity among local youth, or does it lead to shifts in traditional values?

5.5.7. Policy and Governance in Heritage Protection

Finally, more research could be done on the effectiveness of existing legal and policy frameworks in protecting authenticity. This includes examining the roles of UNESCO, national heritage bodies, and local governments in enforcing standards and preventing cultural exploitation in tourism settings.

These areas for further research aim to expand the academic discourse on authenticity in tourism and provide a foundation for evidence-based policy and practice. They also reflect the evolving nature of cultural heritage tourism in the face of globalization, technology, and environmental challenges.

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APPENTIXS

APPENDIX 1 ; RESEARCH LETTER

The Manager

Great Zimbabwe Monuments

Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Ref: Request for Permission to Conduct Research at Great Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a student currently pursuing culture and heritage studies at Bindura university of Science Education. I am conducting a research study titled: “The Impact of Cultural Heritage and Authenticity in Tourism: A Case Study of Great Zimbabwe.”

The purpose of this research is to assess how the concept of authenticity affects both the management of the site and the experience of tourists visiting Great Zimbabwe. This study will contribute to a better understanding of heritage preservation, community engagement, and sustainable tourism development in Zimbabwe.

I am kindly requesting permission to conduct interviews with key site personnel, local community members, and tourists. The research will involve non-invasive, voluntary participation through questionnaires and interviews. All information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

I would be grateful for your support in allowing access to the site and relevant stakeholders. Please find attached the interview guide and questionnaire for your review.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at my cell 0787535595 or my email stembisondanda76@gmail.com.zw

Thank you in advance for considering my request. I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Stembiso ndanda

B210780B

Interview Guide

Target Group: Heritage Site Managers, Tour Guides, Local Leaders

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your name (optional)?

.....

2. What is your role or position at or around Great Zimbabwe?

.....

3. How long have you worked in this role?

.....

Section B: Understanding Authenticity

4. In your view, what does authenticity mean in relation to Great Zimbabwe?

5. Do you think the site reflects an authentic cultural heritage experience for visitors? Why or why not?

6. What challenges do you face in preserving or communicating authenticity?

Section C: Community and Stakeholder Involvement

7. Are local communities actively involved in heritage site management or tourism activities?

8. How is their traditional knowledge or culture incorporated into the presentation of the site?

Section D: Tourist Experience

9. What kind of feedback do you receive from tourists about their experience at Great Zimbabwe?

10. What do you think can be improved to increase both the authenticity and the quality of the tourist experience?

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

Bindura University
of Science Education



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

P.O. Box 1020
Bindura
Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 05216129
Mrs Zimucha-Sagiya
+263 73811111
Email: zimuchasagiya@buse.ac.zw

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE STUDIES

5 February 2025

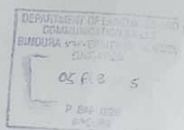
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

This serves to introduce the bearer, Stembiso Ndanda, Student
Registration Number B21078013, who is a Culture and Heritage Studies
student at Bindura University of Science Education and is carrying out a research project in your
area/institution.

May you please assist the student to access data relevant to the study, and where possible, conduct
interviews as part of a data collection process.

Yours faithfully



T.H Zimucha-Sagiya (Mrs)
Acting Chairperson