

## An Assessment of the Role of Communication Officers in Promoting Domestic Tourism in Zanzibar: A Case Study of South District Office, Zanzibar

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| ARTICLE INFORMATION  | ABSTRACT   |
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| <p><b>Article history:</b><br/>           Published: March 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b><br/>           Tourism<br/>           Domestic tourism<br/>           Tourism Promotion<br/>           Communication officers<br/>           Communications strategies</p> | <p>This article assesses the role of communication officers in promoting domestic tourism in Zanzibar. this study was fastened Integrated Marketing Communication Theory (IMC) framed the data collection analysis and interpretation. IMC provided an analytical framework in which the way to maximize effectiveness by ensuring that all communication channels work together to reinforce the brand and influence consumer behavior. The study was guided by specific objectives namely: To find out strategies used by Communication Officers at South district in promoting domestic tourism Zanzibar. The study was utilizing a case study design, The population involved South District. Sampling techniques, include random sampling for local community and domestic tourist and purposive sampling for communication officers and tour guides. Data were composed using a combination of interviews and questionnaires. Mixed research approach was employed for data collection method, Interview and Questionnaire. Data was analyzed by (SPSS) to present findings in terms of frequencies and percentages and findings. were presented in tables and wards. The findings of the study expose that Communication Officers in South District predominantly depend on traditional, one-way communication strategies namely news broadcasts, educational programs, and cultural events to promote domestic tourism. supported by adequate resources and professional development, can play a pivotal role in transforming tourism from passive awareness into active participation, thereby contributing to sustainable tourism growth and local economic development. The study recommended using (IMC) to deliver target messages through traditional and digital media by interactive campaigns, audience segmentation and partnerships to promote tourism in the South District.</p> |

### 1. Introduction

Tourism is an economic and social activity of great worldwide relevance, which involves the movement of people from one place to another for recreational, cultural or business purposes (Salgado Moreno et al. 2024). Tourism has become one of the most dynamic and significant industries globally (Meha and Zeqiri 2021). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) describes domestic tourism as the activities of individuals traveling to and staying in places outside their typical environment but within the country of residence for recreation, business, and other purposes for a duration not exceeding one year (WTTC, 2020). This means the activity of visitors taking a trip to a main destination outside their usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal purpose, other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited. (Blichfeldt, 2017). While international tourism dominates the economy, domestic tourism remains underdeveloped. International tourism flows continued to grow amidst the increasing uncertainty and whilst facing new emerging crises such as the civil war, political instability, diplomatic relation and eruption disease such as Covid 19. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), worldwide, domestic tourism is likely to be a key driver of COVID-19's initial recovery for the tourism sector (WTTC, 2020). Uncertainty and disruption are not new to the tourism industry and promotion in fact tourism has proven to be rather resilient to negative events that impacted tourist demand and operations (Pappas at ell, 2023).

In Africa, domestic tourism plays a significant role, contributing 56% of the continent's tourism revenue, with countries like Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and others experiencing growth. Several African nations, such as Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Mozambique, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Morocco and Egypt, have captured significant portions of the tourism market, drawing both domestic and international visitors (Booyens and Visser, 2010; Kwoba, 2018; Melubo, 2020; Osiako and Szente, 2021; Rogerson, 2015). Domestic tourism spent 82.3 billion dollars in Africa in 2019 (WTTC, 2019).

Although tourism is one of the five top priorities of the Blue Economy agenda of Zanzibar and main economic engine of Zanzibar. Zanzibar is blessed with many natural, historical and cultural tourism attractions (Mtumwa and Hamad 2023). Tourism has become a significant source of income in Zanzibar's economy and its contributing about 80% of foreign exchange (UNECA, 2022). Evidence suggests further that for everyone directly employed in tourism the industry creates two other employments indirectly. In that case tourism employs approximately 44,550 people which represents about 6.3% of working force age 15-64 and provide a live support of about 13.5% of the Zanzibar population (OCGS, 2021; UNECA, 2022). This is a one of the

economic activities that have been greatly encouraged in Tanzania to support the tourism sector in times of global uncertainties and during low season (Rutainurwa, & Mung'ong'o. 2021).

On the other hand, Tanzania in particular, promoting domestic tourism especially in a place like the South District of Zanzibar requires more than just classic tourist-marketing aimed at foreigners. This district has all necessary of historical, cultural such as swahili language, event like 'mwakakogwa', kizimkazi and natural tourism attractions that make Zanzibar an ideal tourism destination. Domestic tourism in Tanzania is constrained by a low awareness of tourist attractions and a weak domestic tourism culture, which hampers local participation in tourism activities (Mbilyi, 2021).

Although international tourism flows have shown resilience over time, uncertainty and disruption remain persistent challenges for the industry (Pappas et al., 2023). Cultural tourism focuses on the unique customs, traditions, history, art, architecture, and lifestyle of a particular region or community (Jape & Suleiman, 2023). Despite initiatives by the Zanzibar tourism Commission, such as subsidized entry fees for residents, the level of domestic tourism participation has not significantly increased. In response, the Government of Tanzania has increasingly encouraged domestic tourism as a strategic approach to sustaining the sector during low seasons and periods of global crisis (Rutainurwa & Mung'ong'o, 2021). Guided Integrating Marketing communication theory focusses on communication officers in domestic tourism promotion through using both traditional media like Tv, radio, newspaper and digital media like website, social platforms on the promotion of Zanzibarians in domestic tourism. Communication plays a fundamental role in the promotion of tourist destinations, reputation management and interaction with travelers (Tiago et al. 2021). Communication plays a fundamental role in the promotion of tourist destinations, reputation management and interaction with travelers (Tiago et al. 2021). Functional to Communication Officers in an area like South District, Zanzibar, are tasked with a strategic communication process to inform, persuade, and influence the local population to visit and engaging tourism activities. Using tools such as social media, radio, events and public relation (Shadrach et al., 2024).

Though, Communication officers help design and implement strategic communication plans that increase awareness to tourism among local audience. Effective communication is considered crucial for stimulating local interest and participation. Communication officers (Cos) are tasked with crafting and disseminating messages that bridges the gap between the government, stockholders and local residents. Their role extends beyond simple information delivery to managing the organization's image and strategic public relation efforts. they use tools such as social media, radio, event and public relation to determinate massaging about attraction and local tourism offering. Therefore, this study pursues to address this gap by examining the roles used by communication officers in south District of Zanzibar to engage local population in promoting domestic tourism by improving awareness and perception throughout their strategic. even the strategics occupied by the Zanzibar Tourism Bord but domestic tourism in south district Zanzibar insufficiency. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understand by examine the strategies employed by Communication officers and explores community perceptions of their effectiveness in enhancing awareness and participation in domestic tourism, with the aim of strengthening sustainable tourism development in Zanzibar

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Domestic tourism in Tanzania is important for social-economic development of the country (Bhandari, 2014; Ngari, 2017; Turner & Friermuth, 2017), and can support the tourism sector especially during low season of tourism. (URT, 1999; TTB, 2014). Zanzibar as a unique tourism destination for both international and domestic tourism such as world heritage historical site, museum, unique beaches, culture and Swahili language. Despite that true Zanzibar has large number of tourism attraction it receives little number of domestic tourists. This is due to shortage of awareness about tourism attraction as scholars Emmet et al. (2004) reiterate that the absence of tourism awareness that subsists among residents concerning the significance and purpose of tourism is detrimental to the accomplishment of the industry. On other hand Despite of policy made by tourism body for Zanzibar local residence to reduce the price on tourism services but still the number is insufficient. Shereni et al. (2023) argue that if tourism products are priced beyond the reach of the domestic market locals will find it difficult to travel

Moreover, Restrictions on travel introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to hit global tourism hard, with the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) showing a 70% fall in international arrivals for the first eight months. According to the newest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (Bakari, 2021). In case of Zanzibar also is a one of places that affected to that restriction of movement where but the amount of international tourist is reduced. The study benefits both the Zanzibar tourism body in general and south district particular with much information with respect to challenging facing promotion of domestic tourism activities in Tanzania, also adds more knowledge, currently in the world. Different stakeholders like tourists, private sectors and non-government organizations get the information and collect valuable for the current tourism environment finding.

Communication Officers in an area like South District, Zanzibar, are tasked with a strategic communication process to inform, persuade, and influence the local population to visit and engage with district attractions. The roles are generally multifaceted, encompassing both traditional and digital media engagement (Shadrach et al., 2024). Therefore, assessing the roles of communication officers in promoting domestic tourism in South District, Zanzibar is essential for understanding how communication practices can be enhanced to support Tanzania's broader tourism development goals. The study also supports to analyze the promotion marketing challenge with some measure to make sure the countries tourism resource are well known to both Tanzania and abroad.

## 3. Research Objective

To identify the strategies used by communication officers of south district in Zanzibar that awareness in domestic tourism promotion.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

In this study, the researcher research used Integrated Marketing Communication Theory (IMC). This theory will be essential in provide a foundation for understanding the roles communication officers play in promoting domestic tourism. Outstanding to these theories communication officers can design effective strategies that influence consumer behavior, promote destinations, and build positive perceptions of domestic tourism. In Zanzibar communication officers are pivotal in promoting domestic tourism. Their roles range from content creation and media relations to community engagement and crisis communication.

##### 4.1 Integrated Marketing Communication Theory (IMC)

According to Kotler et al. (2001), Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is the concept of an organization in combining and aligning communication channels in providing messages in a straightforward, coherent and able to give consumers confidence in the products offered/ marketed. Porcu et al. (2019) defines Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as “the stakeholder centered interactive process of cross-functional planning and alignment of organizational, analytical and communication processes that permit continuous discussion by conveying transparent and consistent messages via all media in order to foster long-term profitable relations that create value. Communication and marketing philosophers have initially referred to IMC as one of the four P’s (promotion) of the marketing mix (Kotler, 2001). Promotion strategy is a concept that is close to communication science. In the promotion, there are various forms of communication learned in communication science such as advertising, publicity, communication from mouth to mouth, personal sales, and direct marketing (Kulluvaara & Tornberg, 2003). South district applies IMC for communication offices use the tradition such as radio, Tv & newspaper and new media in ways of conducting the promotion of domestic tourism promotion in Zanzibar to the target audience.

Moreover, tourism is a service business where it has its uniqueness compared to the product through social media, has a positive impact on tourist destinations (Lim, Chung, and Weaver 2012). business because the object being marketed as something intangible (Kotler, 2012). Marketing communication includes three main objectives, namely, to disseminate information (informative communication), influence to make purchases or attract consumers (persuasive communication), and remind the audience to make purchases of reminder communication (Suryanto, 2015). Communication officers in South district they influence, informative, and persuasives communication to local audience through local and social media platforms. Moreover, the strategic consistency brand recognition and credibility, as consumers are more likely to trust brands that communicate clearly and reliably across multiple touchpoints. IMC refers to the strategic coordination of various marketing tools and channels such as advertising, public relations, digital media, and direct marketing to deliver a unified and consistent message to the target audience (Belch & Belch, 2018). In the context of domestic tourism promotion in the South District of Zanzibar, The Communication Officers plays a crucial role in ensuring message consistency across all promotional activities. This includes coordinating content for social media platform, brochures, press releases and stakeholder engagements to present a unified image of the district as an attractive and authentic tourism destination. Consistence messaging minimizes confusion and reinforces a brand’s core values and identity (Belch & Belch, 2018).

By applying theory of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), communication officers in south district it designs effective strategies that influence consumer behavior, promote destinations, and build positive perceptions of domestic tourism in Zanzibar. This is because the roles of IMC and domestic tourism need for greater integration and interaction between companies or organizations, customers and other stakeholders are needed. Furthermore, theory it applies for understanding the local context, these officers can effectively shape perceptions of Zanzibar as a prime destination for domestic travelers. Still, they can foster a sense pride and ownership in Zanzibar’s tourism offerings, ensuring that tourism benefits the local community. This theoretical framework helps to explain the key functions of communication officers and the challenges they face in Zanzibar’s south district while highlighting the opportunities to drive domestic tourism growth.

#### 5. Literature Review

##### 5.1. Theoretical literature Review

Communication officers in south district fosters positive perceptions and ultimately supporting the growth of domestic tourism. One effective branding strategic tool heritage site administrators may use in building a brand image is through Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). as scholars such as Burnett & Moriarty (1998), Sirgy (1998) and Vargas (2005) highlight that this communication strategic tool unifies a promotional mix to deliver maximum communication influences to target audiences. These actions often contain messages about the brand which enable an increase of knowledge without information about the price. (Mela.etal,1998) observed a positive, though not significant, relationship between the use of non-monetary promotions and brand differentiation. Also Belch & Belch (2018) argue that IMC offers several key strengths. Integrated Marketing Communication also leads to greater campaign impact. When multiple channels deliver a reinforced message, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015). The theory implies that Communication Officers can design effective strategies that influence consumer behavior, promote destinations, and build positive perceptions and awareness of domestic tourism in Zanzibar. These promotional techniques are used by branding and marketing strategists to ignite a desired favorable response from the targeted audience (Yeshin, 2001).

Furthermore, Communication officers based on changing the attitude of their audience so as to encourage the Domestic tourism of south district for local people as some scholars contend that Integrating Marketing Communication focuses on consumers’ attitudes, needs and motivations (Clow & Baack, 2002; Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). other hand through the effective coordination of the IMC promotional mix, Communication Officers enhance message consistency and impact, it ensures message consistency across all platforms such as radio, Tv, newspaper and blogs, WhatsApp, Instagram and X platforms, strengthening brand credibility and reducing audience confusion. thereby supporting the growth and sustainability of domestic tourism in the South

District. These messages are collectively referred to as the marketing communication mix or the IMC promotional mix (Ouwersloot & Duncan 2008; Belch & Belch 2012; Koekemoer 2014). although IMC could potentially make organizations more efficient and effective in communicating with their intended target markets (Madhavaram et al., 2005).

Moreover, the rationale behind IMC is to achieve the promotional objectives in reaching target audience and to raise awareness for local people in south district for the domestic tourism products and services. As Camilleri, (2017) demonstrate that IMC may involve the combination of different promotional a tool, including; advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, direct marketing, interactive marketing, publicity and public relations. Therefore kolter (1994) several tools used in today's public relations such as product publicity, press relations, cooperate communications, lobbying and counselling. Wells et al. (2000). Include news conferences, company sponsored events, open houses, plant tours and donation as well. It also considers the various factors which could influence the successful implementation of an IMC plan, including the measurement of its effectiveness, (Camilleri, 2017).

In context of Zanzibar particularly is relevant because prioritized domestic tourism to diversify its tourism market by using coordinated communication strategies, prince, cultural events and digital platforms as scholars note that government often promote domestic tourism through coordinated communication strategies, pricing incentives and cultural events to stimulate local travel (UNWTO, 2018; Pike, 2017). These campaigns reflect the application of integrating Marketing Communication (IMC) principles, enabling communication officers to deliver consistent, influence local travel behavior and enhance awareness and positive perceptions of domestic tourism (Belch & Belch, 2018; UNWTO, 2018

### 5.2 Empirical literature review

Domestic tourism and communication are fundamentally connected as the way in which tourism destinations are presented and promoted can significantly stimulus visitor perception and experience. As scholars Law et al. (2020) Highlight that the ability to personalize messages and segment audiences allows for more effective communication, which can attract and retain potential customers. In addition. communication facilitates instant feedback, allowing companies to adjust their strategies in real time and improve the customer experience (Pato and Duque, 2021). For Kersulić et al. (2020), creativity in communication is essential for standing out in a competitive touristic market. Using engaging visual content, such as high-quality photos and videos, can capture users' attention and convey the essence of a touristic experience more effectively than text alone (Abbasi et al. 2022). This suggests that communication plays a crucial role in the interpretation and valorization of landscapes, transforming them from simple natural or urban spaces into tourist destinations with a specific attractiveness that responds to travelers' expectations and desires (Tóth et al. 2024). Similarly, Bujdosó et al. (2024) argues that those broader landscapes, when communicated effectively, are transformed into attractive tourism landscapes. Dube & Nhamo (2016). In his study case study in Zimbabwe highlight that communication officers are the central to the determination of tourism information and shaping of destination image through both tradition and digital media channel. Similarly to Maiko, (2013) argue that role of communication officers in media relation, where they liaised with newspapers, radio and television to promote domestic tourism campaigns and improve the parks public image. Communication officers' roles According to Lisa and Christina (2003), serves four roles: regulation, persuasion, information and integration.

Outside its economic consequence, Domestic tourism fosters national unity and builds a sense of national identity (Gedecho and Nyikana, 2023). Tourism's impact goes beyond economic and cultural benefits in environmental terms, tourism can be both a positive and negative force (Wei et al. 2023). In order to offer a more effective delivery, sales, and customer support in this knowledge-intensive business, it is essential to provide information in a timely manner that is dependable and up to date (O'Brien & Fullagar 2009). Applied to domestic tourism promotion Zanzibar Communication officers have the roles to ensure effective delivery and knowledge intensive domestic tourism for provide information timely through traditional and new media platforms.

Despite these positive trends, the development of domestic tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa has generally been slower compared to other African regions (Bakari, 2021; Novelli, 2015). Several factors hinder this growth. These factors such as lower engagement in domestic tourism, limited investment from governments to promote local travel and minimal competition among airlines in many African markets contribute to the slow development (Mato and Mosoma, 2022). Similarly to Maiko, (2013) argue that effective communication by communication officers contribute to increase the visitors number, while weakness such as limited budgets, inadequate training and insufficient use of digital media reduced the overall effectiveness of tourism promotion efforts. High travel costs, including expenses for transportation and accommodation, further restrict travel frequency for many people (Makhaola and Proches, 2017). domestic tourism to progress, it is essential to explore the leading pricing criteria of the industry and ascertain where developments in terms of prices can be improved to entice local tourists through the affordability of services and products to embrace local tourism (Friedman, 2000). Affordability and low awareness are the one of the major issues excluding domestic tourists. Approaches enable communication officers to rises awareness, shape positive perception and encourage local participation in domestic tourism activities.

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Research design

This study adopted a case study research design using both purposive and random sampling techniques to examine the roles of communication officers in promoting domestic tourism in Zanzibar. the case study approach enabled an in-depth analysis of tourism promotion within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). Purposive sampling was used to select communication officers and tour guides due to their specialized knowledge and direct involvement in tourism communication, while random sampling was applied to local community members and domestic tourists to ensure representative participation. I decided to use this study design because approach enhance the reliability of the findings by incorporating both experts and general public perspective

6.2 Population of the study

The population of this study involved local community, Communication officers, domestic tourists and tour guides who visit at that area. According to Creswell (2018) defines target population are all individuals who have the characteristics the researcher wishes to study. The study selects the population because are responsible for implementing IMC strategies and influencing domestic tourism promotion. Focusing on this group ensures that the data collected accurately represent the reality the study seeks to understand.

6.3 Sample Size

A sample can be defined as a subset of a population that is selected using systematic or conventional procedures to ensure it accurately represents the characteristics of the entire population (Creswell & Poth,2018). The number of sample size is 65 in south district. Along with this sample, the study includes 5, Communication officers and 40 is for local people who living around the area and 10 for domestic tourist and tour guides were 10. The total sample size was 65.

6.4 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using two methods: questionnaires administered to communication officers and local people, semi-structured interviews conducted with Tour guides and local tourist. This triangulation ensured rich, credible, and comprehensive information. This is the data collection method involving the direct correspondence through verbal and writing communication between the researcher and the respondent on one-to-one correspondence on the researched subject (Polak & Green, 2015).

6.5 Data Analysis

Kothari (2022), defines data analysis as the application of logical and statistical techniques to evaluate information collected during research to answer research questions. Version 28.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) employed for the cross-tabulation method of data analysis for the questionnaire responses. Before the analysis, the researcher was focus on data generation, cleansing and entry. Furthermore, the coefficients of the variables associated with each goal will be assessed using inferential statistics, including linear regression and one-sample tests. Data was presented using tables to make them reader friendly.

7. Result and Discussion

7.1 Result

7.1.1 Strategies used by Communication Officers engage domestic tourism

The finding of this study direct that Communication officers in the South district of Zanzibar trust mass communication approaches to promote domestic tourism. News and educational programs were the most commonly used strategy mentioned by half of respondents, indicating their wide reach and strong visibility within the community. Culture events and festivals ranked second, highlighting their importance in showcasing local heritage and domestic tourists. Interactive and participatory strategies such as dialogue, discussion and collaboration with local groups were less frequently. Suggesting that limited community engagement in two-way communication efforts. Particularly, Communication meetings and forums were not used at all. The result also indicates that strong preference for one-way informational strategies over interactive approaches with local residents being the most dynamic.

Table 1: Strategies used by Communication Officers engage domestic tourism.

| Kind of strategies               | Tour guider | Domestic tourist | Local residence | Total frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| News and educational programs    | 6           | 4                | 16              | 26              | 50.00%     |
| Cultural event and festival      | 2           | 2                | 8               | 12              | 28.10%     |
| Collaboration to Local group     | 1           | 3                | 1               | 4               | 12.50%     |
| Dialogue and discussion          | 2           | 3                | 4               | 9               | 9.40%      |
| Communication meeting and forums | -           | -                | -               | 0               | 0.00%      |
| Total                            | 11          | 12               | 29              | 52              | 100        |

Source: Researcher, 2025

7.1.2: Views from the people on how they rate the effective of Communication Officers'

The research explore on how the local people views on the effectiveness of Communication Officers content from communication Officers in promoting domestic tourism. based on the response categories: Very effective, Effective, Fair, and Poor, and the provided percentages.

Table 2: Views from the people on the effectiveness of COs in tourism promotion

| Respondents      | Very Effective | Effective | Neutral | Ineffective | Total |
|------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|-------|
| Local resident   | 4              | 10        | 14      | 6           | 34    |
| Domestic tourist | 1              | 4         | 4       | 1           | 10    |
| Tour guide       | 1              | 2         | 3       | 2           | 8     |
| Frequency        | 14.81%         | 29.63%    | 38.89%  | 16.67%      | 52    |

Source: Researcher, 2025

The table above examination that high number of respondents the study generally leans toward a positive or neutral. The high number of neutral responses indicates a significant opportunity for Communication Officers to increase their visibility or clarify their promotional strategies to move the public toward a more effective or very effective compromise in domestic tourism promotion in south district, Zanzibar.

## 7.2 Discussion

### 7.2.1 Strategies used by Communication Officers engage domestic tourism

The findings from the research study expose that Communication Officers in South District, Zanzibar predominantly depend on traditional, one-way communication strategies namely news broadcasts, educational programs, and cultural events to promote domestic tourism. Also finding suggest that dissemination of information is periodized over interactive and participatory communication. This pattern faithfully aligns with Chiguvi (2022) found that traditional and online advertising platforms are more or less equally competitive and argued that tourism authorities should adopt a media-mix, combining traditional media (radio, TV, print) with online channels to maximize reach and effectiveness. the existing finding supports this argument by indicating the mass media continues to be the most visible and widely recognized communication tools among stakeholders in Zanzibar. However, using engaging visual content, such as high-quality photos and videos, can capture users' attention and convey the essence of a touristic experience more effectively than text alone (Abbasi et al. 2022). The limitation mirrors Sharma's (2024) argument that communication systems centered solely on mass media often generate passive awareness rather than fostering deeper audience engagement or behavioral change. the mass media in South District raising awareness that may be limited in their ability to stimulate sustainable engagement or behavioral change among domestic tourists.

Furthermore, Creative campaigns that use visual narratives and storytelling can generate greater engagement and emotional resonance with the audience (Yayla et al. 2023). to approaches in the South District implies that Communication Officers may not be fully leveraging creative and narrative-based communication techniques that have been shown to enhance tourists' motivation. In addition, the study exposed challenges such as insufficient funding, inadequate communication tools, and limited professional skills among communication officers in south district Zanzibar. Such structural barriers reduce the ability of communication officers to diversify communication tools. Tourism communication in resource constrained settings often struggles to achieve meaningful impact due to shortages in technology, training, and logistical capacity (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2020). Finding indicate that there are limited technological capacity and insufficient training to Cos. A shift toward IMC-based approaches supported by improved resources, capacity building, and more interactive engagement platforms would strengthen the role of Communication Officers in stimulating domestic tourism participation in Zanzibar.

### 7.2.2 Views from the community on Communication Officers effort on tourism promotion

The study's findings indicate that domestic tourism promotion in South District, Zanzibar, is moderately effective, with Communication Officers' efforts widely acknowledged but constrained in overall impact. Respondents largely rated communication efforts as Fair, indicating that while the content ranging from public education programs to advertisements and event coverage is relevant and useful, it suffers from one-way dissemination, limited interactivity, and low audience engagement. This is consistent with Sharma (2018), who argues that mass media-focused tourism promotion often generates passive awareness rather than active participation, particularly in contexts with minimal feedback mechanisms. Underutilized in Zanzibar's domestic tourism promotion due to effective of Communication Officers leads to rise the engagement and positive responds from the audiences. Similarly, Chiguvi (2022) demonstrates that traditional media remain effective for domestic tourism marketing despite growing digital adoption, reinforcing the study's observation that local populations still respond positively to these channels.

Also, the research finding supports the adoption of multi-channel, participatory approaches. With integrating traditional and digital media, along with culturally relevant and interactive campaigns, could bridge the gap between communication efforts and local tourism participation. However, the finding also demonstrates that despite their wide coverage, these strategies produce only moderate effectiveness in stimulating domestic tourism engagement. Bayraktar (2024) highlights that digital content marketing and social media campaigns significantly enhance engagement and destination image, particularly among younger audiences, while Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al. (2024) demonstrate that interactive strategies such as storytelling and influencer marketing increase tourism interest and behavioral intent. The study also reveals a disconnect between promotion efforts and actual domestic tourism behavior, as most residents travel primarily for social or familial purposes rather than leisure. This because most of domestic peoples traveling for leisure and visiting friend instead of tourism. This aligns with Chiwaridzo and Masengu (2023), who argue that in developing country contexts, domestic tourism promotion often fails to convert awareness into active participation when messaging is not audience-centered or culturally resonant.

Though, while Communication Officers in Zanzibar play a crucial role in disseminating tourism information and engaging communities, the findings and literature suggest that traditional, unidirectional communication alone is insufficient. To enhance domestic tourism growth, authorities should adopt an IMC framework that combines traditional and digital channels, fosters interactivity, and delivers culturally relevant content tailored to local leisure preferences. Such integrated strategies are likely to improve reach, engagement, and the overall effectiveness of domestic tourism promotion.

## 8. Conclusion

The research findings indicate that these professionals perform complex functions that extend far beyond simple promotional activities, encompassing strategic planning, content creation, stakeholder coordination and community education. Findings als o reveal a clear pattern while Officers play a recognized role in disseminating tourism information and organizing awareness initiatives, the current communication practices rely heavily on traditional. limited technological infrastructure, and skill gaps

among Communication Officers, which collectively restrict the adoption of more innovative, interactive, and multi-channel strategies. As a result, domestic tourism engagement remains moderate, and local participation is often driven by social and familial obligations rather than leisure-oriented tourism. It is evident that the effectiveness of domestic tourism promotion in Zanzibar is constrained by a disconnect between communication strategies and audience needs. Traditional media alone, while valuable for reach and familiarity, cannot sufficiently foster engagement, behavioral change. Communication Officers, supported by adequate resources and professional development, can play a pivotal role in transforming domestic tourism from passive awareness into active participation, thereby contributing to sustainable tourism growth and local economic development.

## 9. Recommendations

The study recommends that communication officers adopt Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) by combining traditional media (radio, TV, community events) with digital platforms to deliver consistent, audience-targeted messages. They should develop interactive and participatory campaigns using storytelling, cultural events, and online engagement to foster local involvement, while segmenting audiences to tailor messages for greater relevance and impact. Building capacity and optimizing resources through staff training, partnerships, and funding is essential for sustainable tourism promotion in south district.

Moreover, enhancing stakeholder engagement and collaboration allows knowledge sharing among districts, cooperation with village leaders and communities, and improved understanding of communication challenges. Therefore, the government, tourism operators, and local communities will all need to work together to craft policies, investments, and practices that allow cultural tourism to sustainably grow and flourish. Finally, improving public awareness is critical to drive positive change and encourage community participation in tourism initiatives.

Further research is recommended on digital engagement strategies, the cultural relevance of communication, and the long-term impact of IMC on domestic tourism growth and sustainability, to guide evidence-based improvements and encourage local tourism development. should investigate the impact of technology and innovation on the adaptability of communication strategies. Specifically, studies could examine how digital technologies facilitate connections with new business networks, and create diverse opportunities for growth and expansion.

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