Cultural Heritage Management and Its Influence on Sustainable Tourism Development: An Empirical Study of Destination Governance

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ABSTRACT

The cultural heritage has been a primary source of tourism competitiveness and local economic growth but at times, with fast-rising commercialization and poor institutional control, cultural commodification, environmental harm, and social inequalities among the receiving communities. This research aims at exploring how cultural heritage management (CHM) affects sustainable tourism development (STD) and the mediating effect of destination governance (DG). The approach of a quantitative research design entailed gathering information on 412 stakeholders in known heritage destinations comprising of policymakers, tourism operators, conservation specialists, local authorities, and representatives of the community. The structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to test the correlation between heritage conservation practises, the enforcement of regulations, community involvement, governance transparency and the sustainability results. The results expose that CHM seems to positively impact greatly on STD and DG has a strong mediating influence on improving sustainability performance. Places, where decision-making is open, decision-making is institutionalised, and governance is participatory, have a greater extent of economic resilience, environmental protection and socio-cultural conservation. It is important to note that the best predictive capability on long term sustainability of tourism lies in community-inclusive system of governance. The work contributes to theory by placing governance as a structural process in regard to the realisation of heritage management to sustainable development results. It contains also applied knowledge to the policy-makers, and destination managers who want to understand how conservation goals can be harmonised with inclusive, accountable, and strategically coordinated tourism plans.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concepts of cultural heritage, both tangible environments, including monuments, historic buildings, and cultural landscapes, and intangible, including traditions, rituals, craftsmanship and collective memory, become a building block of destination identity and tourism attraction. Not only do heritage resources bring in visitors, they also represent social values, historical continuum as well as community pride. With the ever-growing global tourism, the heritage tourism places more and more importance on the use of cultural resources in the positioning of different industry players in competitive markets. This increased reliance has resulted in placing cultural heritage as strategic tool of economic growth, local brand and global presence.

Although it has been found that heritage integration in tourism development has economic importance, it has complex issues. The authenticity and the environmental integrity are largely undermined by unregulated flows of visitors, commercialization of traditions, infrastructural pressure, and insufficient conservation practise. As the growth in tourism exceeds the institutional capacity, there will be erosion of the culture, dissatisfaction of the resident and degradation of the environment. Those problems show that sustainability is not calculated only through the number of visitors and its economic impact but the

efficiency of the management systems regulating the utilisation of the heritage.

Destination governance is a crucial element which determines this dynamic. Weak governance systems that are characterised by the dissemination of power, low stakeholder participation, poor monitoring frameworks, and ineffective policy implementation affect conservation efforts and long term planning. Most destinations market their heritage in a very aggressive manner to get monetary rewards without setting up coordinated institutional systems that will be able to balance the goals of preservation and development. Therefore lack of open and inclusive process of government usually transforms cultural assets into a commodity that is easily exploited instead of being a sustainable product.

It is against this backdrop that the current research explores the issues of the impact of cultural heritage management on sustainable tourism development with special regard to the mediating value of destination governance. Getting beyond the descriptive and conceptual discussion, this study undertakes an empirical study on structural interrelations between the management practises, quality of governance, and sustainability outcomes. Through the addition of governance to the heritage tourism nexus, the study will offer a more robust analytical theory on how destinations can become resilient in the long run to protect their cultural base.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Cultural Heritage management and Sustainable Tourism
Cultural heritage management (CHM) can be defined as formal policies, conservation plans, planning systems and institutional processes that have been established with the aim of preserving and exploiting tangible and intangible heritage resources. Examples of tangible heritage are monuments, archaeological sites, historic buildings, and cultural landscapes, whereas examples of intangible heritage are traditions, rituals, performing arts, and indigenous knowledge systems [5], [11]. Sustainable CHM needs a calculated balance between the preservation goals and tourism-related economic exploitation to maintain economic sustainability in the long term.

Heritage tourism plays a key part in the economic development at the local level by creating job opportunities, promoting destinations and enhancing the diversity of income sources [9], [12]. Nevertheless, due to uncontrolled growth of the tourism industry, overtourism, cultural commodification, environmental degradation, and social displacement are common occurrences [2], [13]. According to research, conservation efforts not coupled with tourism result in economic instability, where tourism develops unregulated increases the decay of heritage [6]. Carrying capacities, revenue reinvestment mechanisms, along with custom and community-oriented conservation approaches are sustainable management instruments that are progressively underlined to reduce these risks [1], [7]. Even with this expanding body of knowledge, there is still limited empirical model-based study of the direct relationship between structured CHM practises and quantitative sustainability outcome.

2.2 Destination Governance as an Institutional Mechanism
Destination governance includes institutional coordination, regulatory systems, accountability systems and process of stakeholder engagement which help to govern tourism development. The contemporary form of governance goes beyond the conventional administrative systems into multi-level governance, public-privacy alliance, and participatory planning systems [6], [8]. However, the presence of transparent decisions, inter-agency coordination, regulatory compliance, monitoring and full stakeholder involvement help indicate good governance.

Poor governance frameworks lead to disjointed authority, poor policy enforcement, lack of monitoring, and lack of community participation which exposes heritage assets to commercial misuse in the short run [10]. The quality of governance has a direct effect on the manner in which revenue is being allocated, the control of the visitors, funding on conservation and conflict management apparatus [4]. The policy frameworks and coordinated institution transparency have been pointed out as the key to sustainable transformation of destinations [3]. Nevertheless, despite the generally accepted quality of governance as a key instrument, there is a lack of empirical studies that investigate the mediating role of governance relating to heritage management and sustainability performance.

2.3 Sustainable Tourism Outcomes Mediated by Governance
The development of sustainable tourism (herein referred to as STD) is widely understood in three dimensions that are interrelated as follows, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and socio-cultural sustainability [1]. Economic sustainability can be described as the stability of income over a long period of time and employment stability; environmental sustainability can be defined as safeguarding the ecosystem and the conservation of resources; socio-cultural sustainability can involve the welfare of the community and preservation of authenticity.

Recent research proposes that sustainability performance is not entirely tied to heritage resources but relies on governance mechanisms through which they are derived [8]. Inclusive governance systems offer communities support, adherence on conservation, and cultural defence [7]. Sustainable planning and implementation processes are further nurtured by education and professional capacity-building processes [4]. On the other hand, with weak institutional institutions around certain destinations, which in spite of having good heritage resources find themselves in the overtourism pressures, show a decreasing level of resident satisfaction [2].

Conceptualising governance must therefore be with structural mediator as opposed to peripheral contextual factor. Through the incorporation of governance systems in heritage management systems, destinations are able to turn conservation actions into quantifiable and sustainable results.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1 Research Design and conceptual framework
The research design to be used in this study is quantitative research design which aims at observing the structural relationships that exist between cultural heritage management (CHM), destination governance (DG) and sustainable tourism development (STD) in an organised manner. A structured survey approach was chosen in order to receive standardised answers of various groups of stakeholders which would be compared and be statistically reliable. Quantitative method allows the objective assessment of latent constructs and allows testing hypothesis using the highly sophisticated multivariate methods.

The ideas behind the conceptual framework exist in the fact that, even the efficient management of heritage cannot necessarily lead to the achievement of the sustainability outcome unless the institutional governance mechanisms support it. In this connexion, this model assumes that CHM will be the independent construct, STD the dependent construct, and DG a mediating variable (Figure 1). The framework presumes that the structured conservation policy, the community inclusion, and the regulatory practise improve the quality of governance, which enhances the performance of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability. Governance, therefore, is viewed as a form of institutional transmission between the management practises and the quantifiable development outcomes.
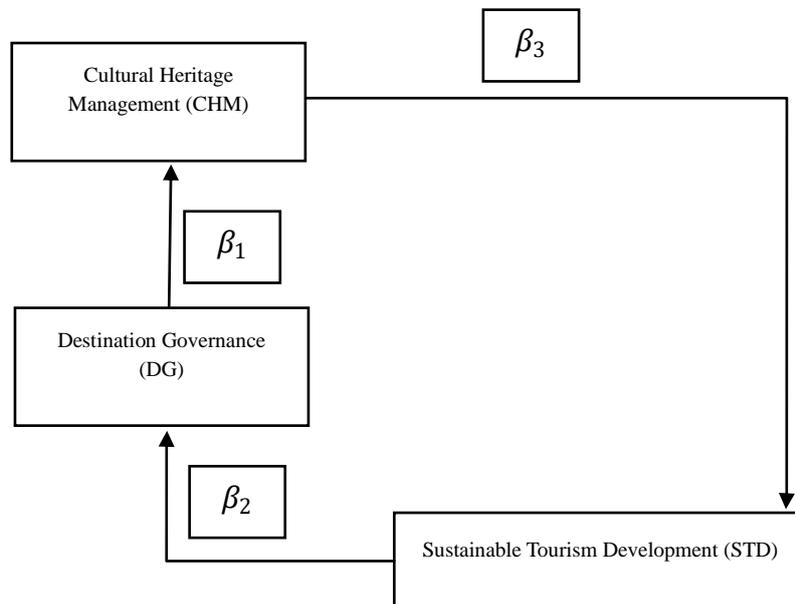

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Mediating Role of Destination Governance in the Relationship between Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Tourism Development

The structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used in order to test both direct and indirect (mediated) relationships between the constructs. SEM will be particularly appropriate in this research since it can be used to estimate several interdependent relationships at once and the measurement error in latent variables at the same time. SEM combines confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis in a single model, unlike conventional regression analysis, which allows the intensive validation of the measurement model, as well as structural model simultaneously.

The conceptual model thus offers a theoretically based and empirically falsifiable model on the evaluation of the role of governance mechanisms in

determining sustainability impact of cultural heritage management in tourist destinations.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The sampling approach that was used involved multi-stakeholder in order to collect various institutional and community views that have been related to the governance of heritage destination. Since sustainability of tourism is affected by the relationship between the public authorities, the private players or the people and the environment, it was necessary to seek answers to questions posed to the actors who have a direct influence on the development of policies, heritage preservation, and tourism practises. Tourism policy makers, heritage conservation officers, local government officials, tourism business operators, and community leaders were the target population therefore. This was seen to provide representation as regards administrative, managerial and grassroots governance.

The sample used purposive sampling to obtain respondents whose responsibility involved direct involvement in management of heritage tourism either in one way or the other. The data have been gathered using identified heritage destinations both during physical deliverance of the questionnaires and via safe online survey sites in order to enhance accessibility and response rates Table 1. On completion and consistency screening, 412 valid responses were analysed statistically. The selected sample has met the desirable limits as that of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the necessary statistical power and stability of the model.

Constructs were measured with the help of a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale of the type of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale format enabled normal measurement of perceptions concerning the management practises of cultural heritage, effectiveness of governance and sustainable tourism outcomes. The instrument was checked (before a complete implementation) regarding clarity and content validity.

The Kaiser- Meyer -Olkin (KMO) measure and the test of sphericity by Bartlett were used to measure sampling adequacy and factorability of the data. The value of KMO was greater than 0.80, hence good sampling adequacy and the test of Bartlett was also significant (p = 0.001), which proved that the correlation matrix obtained was appropriate to perform the factor analysis and successive SEM.

Table 1. Sampling and Data Adequacy

Component	Description
Sampling Technique	Purposive Multi-Stakeholder Sampling
Total Sample Size	412
Data Collection Method	Physical & Online Survey
Measurement Scale	5-Point Likert Scale
KMO Value	> 0.80
Bartlett's Test	p < 0.001

3.3 Measurement and Data Analysis

This proposed study operationalised three latent constructs including Cultural Heritage Management (CHM), Destination Governance (DG) and Sustainable Tourism Development (STD). Individual constructs were assessed based on a series of reflective indicators of each construct which were based on existing literature in the sustainability and governance literature that were modified to fit the heritage tourism case. They all were rated on a five-point liker scale, with the 1 (strongly disagree) on the one end, and 5 (strongly agree) on the other.

The management of Cultural Heritage (CHM) was scaled on four dimensions namely conservation effectiveness (degree of preservation and restoration success), visitor management systems (carrying capacity control, visitor regulation and monitoring), regulatory enforcement (enforcement of heritage protection policies) and inclusion of communities in the process of preservation Table 2. These indicators represent technical and participative sides of heritage management.

Destination Governance (DG) became operationalized in the form of institutional coordination (agencies liaise), transparency and accountability (understandability of the decision making process and distribution of revenues), participatory planning (involvement of the stakeholders in the tourism development), policy consistency (coherence and consistency of the regulatory frameworks). These aspects indicate institutional capacity and quality of governance.

Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) was assessed on the basis of the economic resilience (constancy of local earnings and work), environmental protection (resource precaution and ecological security), cultural protection (preservation of authenticity), and social inclusivity (local gains and equity).

The tests to ensure reliability were Cronbach alpha and composite reliability with all the scores more

than the recommended criteria of 0.70 which verified that internal consistency was high. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to measure convergent and discriminant validity, and as such, the measurement items should have had significant loading on their construct. To test the

hypothesised direct and indirect relationship, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was then used. To assess mediation effects, the bootstrapping procedures were performed to give very strong estimates of the indirect pathways and confidence interval.

Table 2. Measurement Model (Construct Operationalization)

Construct	Dimension	Sample Indicator	Scale
CHM	Conservation Effectiveness	Heritage sites are effectively preserved	5-point Likert
CHM	Visitor Management	Visitor numbers are properly regulated	5-point Likert
CHM	Regulatory Enforcement	Heritage protection laws are enforced	5-point Likert
CHM	Community Inclusion	Local communities participate in preservation	5-point Likert
DG	Institutional Coordination	Agencies collaborate effectively	5-point Likert
DG	Transparency	Decision-making processes are transparent	5-point Likert
DG	Participatory Planning	Stakeholders are involved in planning	5-point Likert
DG	Policy Consistency	Tourism policies are stable and aligned	5-point Likert
STD	Economic Resilience	Tourism provides stable income	5-point Likert
STD	Environmental Protection	Environmental impacts are controlled	5-point Likert
STD	Cultural Preservation	Cultural authenticity is maintained	5-point Likert
STD	Social Inclusiveness	Tourism benefits local residents equitably	5-point Likert

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Assessment of Measurement Models
Reliability and construct validity were initially tested through measurement model before the test of hypothesis. The internal consistency reliability was established and Cronbach alpha scores were between 0.82 and 0.90 with the composite reliability of 0.84 and above which meets the recommended threshold of 0.70. The convergent validity was justified because the values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were greater than 0.50, which implied that more than half of the variability in the indicators was explained by the latent variables. Goodness-of-fit was measured using model fit indices; the indices showed a good fit with CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.052, which within the professional boundaries of a structural modelling. All these findings indicate that the measurement model is statistically sound and can be structurally analysed.

4.2 Hypothesis testing and Structural Relationships
The constructs analysis showed that the relationship between the constructs was statistically significant. Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) showed a valuable and significant impact on Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) (0.41, p < 0.001), meaning that governed conservation and regulation exercise directly leads to sustainability results. The positive influence of CHM on Destination Governance (DG) was also significant (0.63, p = 0.001), which can be explained by the impact of good management practise on the institutional coordination and policy implementation. In addition to that, DG had

a strong effect on STD (0.52, p < 0.001), which supports the governance as an important factor of sustainability performance. Part of mediation was confirmed to be true through bootstrapping analysis which states that there is enhancement of action of heritage management on sustainable tourism development through governance.

4.3 Governance as a Mediator Mechanism
The mediation results are that heritage management in itself is not sufficient to ensure sustainability. Conservation policies help directly to provide sustainability, but their effect is more powerful with the help of clear, participative and coordinated governance systems Table 4. Governance serves as an institutional instrument that transforms management practises to quantifiable economic health, environmental impacts and socio-cultural conservation. Destinations that are inclusive in planning and enforcement of regulations have a greater trust level among stakeholders and are operational. These results highlight the role of governance as a systemic process and not an administrative periphery aspect.

4.4 implications on Sustainable destination development
The findings also indicate that participative models of governance are linked with such positive aspects as increased community support, adherence to conservation rules, tourism revenues stability, and better environmental performance. Transparency within institutions and inter-agency coordination became the conclusive variables with regard to results of sustainability Figure 2. This implies that

sustainability does not only rely on how the conservation policies should be designed but on the institution capacity to apply, track and further carry out those policies Table 3. The research is thus an empirical confirmation that governance systems do turn cultural heritage into a weak economic resource to effectively become a strategic resource that contributes to the sustainable long-term development of tourism.
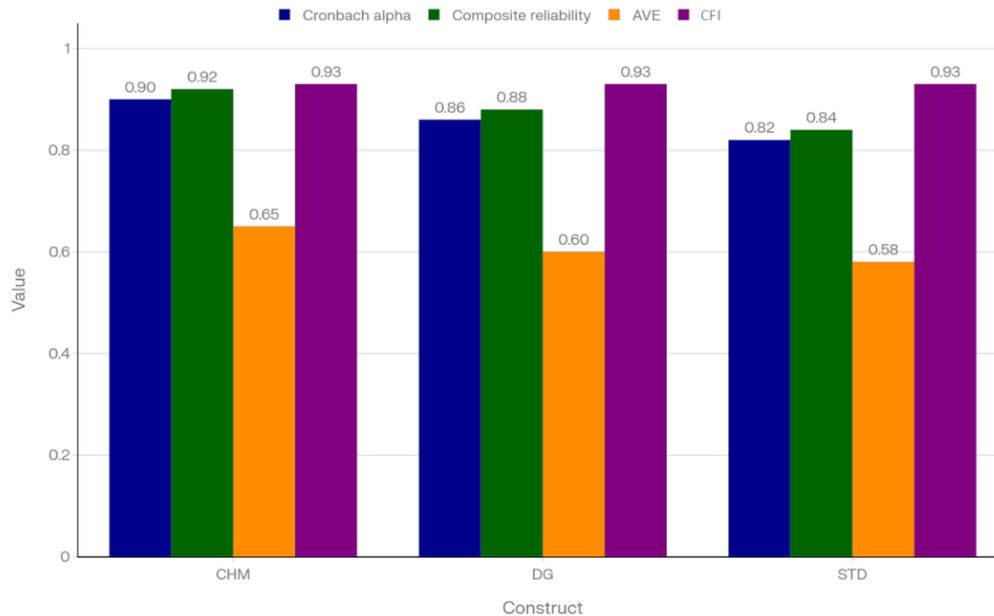

Fig. 2. Reliability and Validity Assessment of Measurement Constructs (Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, and Model Fit Indices)

Table 3. Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value	Result
H1	CHM → STD	0.41	< 0.001	Supported
H2	CHM → DG	0.63	< 0.001	Supported
H3	DG → STD	0.52	< 0.001	Supported
H4	CHM → DG → STD (Mediation)	Indirect Effect = 0.33*	< 0.001	Partially Supported

Table 4. Measurement Model Fit and Reliability Indices

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	Model Fit Indicators
CHM	0.90	0.92	0.65	
DG	0.86	0.88	0.60	
STD	0.82	0.84	0.58	
Overall Model Fit				CFI = 0.93
				TLI = 0.91
				RMSEA = 0.052

5. CONCLUSION

This paper proves that cultural heritage management contributes largely to sustainable tourism development, but its efficiency is strongly influenced by the quality of governance systems of destinations. Although conservation practise, regulatory enforcement and community participation directly affect the sustainability outcomes, in a significant way, when incorporated into transparent, coordinated, and participatory governance systems, they have a better impact. Governance functions as the institutional process which connects heritage conservancy to economic development, stakeholder partnership, and responsibility frameworks, and in so doing, turns cultural properties into long term developmental drivers as opposed to commercial temporary facilities. The results highlight the fact that sustainable tourism requires preservation efforts in order to be attained but needs to be integrated with cultural, consistent alignment of policy, institutional capacity as well as involvement of

decision makers. Resting on reforms in the sphere of governance, absenteeism and systemic control, heritage-based tourism will continue to be vulnerable to over-exploitation, loss of authenticity, and socio-cultural imbalance. Longitudinal designs and comparative cross-national analyses would be the preferred approach to study in future in the way in which the changing governance models affect the sustainability performance of various heritage destinations.

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