

Evaluating Leisure and Recreation Study Programmes in Training Institutions in Tanzania: Implications for Tourism Development and Destination Competitiveness

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Abstract

This article evaluates the provision of leisure and recreation studies in registered training institutions in Tanzania. Data were collected from online databases and analyzed quantitatively. The analysis shows that most of the training institutions focus largely on tourism and hospitality 20.37% (n = 11), hotel management 18.52% (n = 10) and tour guiding 18.52% (n = 10). Currently, there are no institutions offering training in leisure and recreation as independent study programmes at all levels (Certificate, Diploma, Degree). The article argues that for Tanzania to take full advantage of the myriad of its natural resources, training institutions in the country should encompass leisure and recreation as standalone training programmes instead of being entrenched as a topic in other existing tourism study programmes. As tourism continues to grow in Tanzania more experts in leisure and recreation will be required to cater for various needs of tourists, since tourism is a form of recreation which occurs during leisure.

Keywords: Tanzania, Tourism Development, Leisure, Recreation, Training institutions.

1. Introduction

This article discusses the significance of inculcating leisure and recreation study programmes in training institutions in Tanzania as a way of promoting sustainable tourism and destination competitiveness. The relationship between leisure, recreation and tourism has been widely explored in literature (Chang & Gibson, 2011; Hall & Page, 2014; Magi & Nzama, 2002; Mill, 2008). The UNWTO also shows this relationship by stating that “tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (UNWTO, 2001:13). According to UNWTO definition, the purpose of the trip includes recreation, medical treatment, religious, family, sports, conferences, studies and transit to another country (UNWTO, 2001). Similarly, some authors contend that specific types of tourism can be

distinguished based on leisure aspects (Carr, 2002; Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003; Stebbins, 1996) and or recreation attributes (Buckley, 2005; Mycoo, 2014).

Some authors have also argued that tourism is a special form of leisure, having its own special characteristics (Leiper, 1990). Other researchers have also shown that tourism and leisure are indistinguishable, as “there are a number of points at which tourism and (non-tourism) leisure are interrelated, and neither can be adequately understood without reference to the other” (Shaw & Williams, 1994:6–7). Thus, it can be argued that a tourist is “a person who voluntarily travels away from home for non-instrumental purposes such as recreation or pleasure, or a traveler who is on the move for instrumental purposes such as business and so on, as well as those who are exclusively on trips for leisure, recreation, and pleasure” (Wang, 2000:6).

In few words leisure can be defined as “un-coerced, contextually framed activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both)” (Stebbins, 2017:106). ‘Free time’ in this definition is time away from unpleasant, or disagreeable, obligation, with pleasant obligation being treated here as essentially leisure (Stebbins, 2000). Thus, leisure occurs during free time or unobligated time when one is not involved in any work or any other life sustaining obligations.

Recreation on the other hand, can be widely regarded as a voluntary, non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion (Kelly, 1996; Kozechian et al., 2012). Recreation is thus, an emotionally transforming activity designed to meet individual personal needs and motivations (Kraus & Curtis, 2000). Recreation encompasses a wide range of activities that are undertaken by tourists, and for that matter tourism has sometimes been viewed within the broader framework of leisure and recreation (Inkson & Minnaert, 2018).

Despite the importance of leisure and recreation in tourism growth and development, these study programmes have largely been neglected in training programmes, particularly in developing countries where tourism is an important contributor to their economies. This paper describes a study that seeks to understand to what extent training institutions in Tanzania include leisure and recreation study programmes in their curriculum, and argues that since leisure, recreation and tourism are highly interconnected, inclusion of such study programmes in trainings can promote tourism development and destination competitiveness. The paper starts by exploring the literature about the significance of human resources training in tourism development, then it discusses the lack of trained personnel and its impacts in the tourism industry in developing countries. Next, the paper discusses the nexus between human capital theory and human resources training. This section is followed by the methodology used in the study. The paper concludes by discussing the study findings followed by conclusions and implications for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Significance of Human Resources Training in Tourism Development

Human resources training is an inherent and critical component of tourism growth and development in many destinations (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Riley, 2014). Human resources training is a subcomponent of Human Resources Development (HRD) (Wilson, 2014). HRD is a “strategic dimension within the wider enhancement of quality and market positioning of tourism at the level of organizations, specific destinations, and regions within countries or whole nations” (Baum, Amoah, & Spivack, 1997:221). Well trained Human Resources (HR) is therefore, an essential tool through which the quality of a destination’s tourism products and services can be delivered to customers (Baum, 2016). Studies indicate that in many developing countries, the growth of tourism,

as an industry, is severely limited due to lack of adequately trained personnel, which is often associated with provision of poor services (Anderson, 2015; Mahesh, 2016). Lack of highly trained HR available to work in leisure and recreation facilities, and the tourism industry in general in many developing countries is often cited as one of the main constraints of tourism development (Anderson, 2015; Dieke, 2001; Najda-Janoszka, & Kopera, 2014). Similarly, the increasing demand for delivery of high quality products and services within the tourism and hospitality industry reflects an increasing need for highly trained HR (Hawkins & Mann, 2007; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2011).

Overall, effective trainings in tourism and the related disciplines such as leisure and recreation is important for tourism development in many developing countries because of several reasons.

First, in the recent past, tourism has experienced a continued growth to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in many developing countries (Malaysia, 2011; Mazilu & Sitnikov, 2010). For instance, in Tanzania, during the period from 2008 to 2018, the number of international tourists increased from 770,376 to 1,505,702 which is approximately 95.4 % increase (URT, 2019). According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism report, in 2018 tourism generated around USD 2.43 billion which constitutes about 25% of Tanzania's foreign exchange earnings (URT, 2019). This amount is significant to the contribution of the country's economy, representing about 17.5% of Tanzania's GDP in 2018 (URT, 2019). Overall the tourism sector directly employs around 600,000 people and up to 2 million people indirectly (URT, 2015). By 2025, Tanzania's tourism sector is expected to grow at a rate of 6.2% per annum, against an expected world average growth of 3.7% (WTTC, 2015). These statistical figures indicate that indeed the tourism industry is one of the significant sectors in the development of the nation.

Second, tourism growth and development is directly linked to the development of other sectors such as infrastructure, transportation, accommodation, natural resources, recreation and hospitality industry (Khadaroo & Seetana, 2007; Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). Tourism contributes to wealth creation, increases access to essential services such as water, sanitation, telecommunications and transport in some areas. Thus, well-planned training programmes in leisure, recreation and tourism can be regarded as one of the significant drivers for socio-economic progress (UNWTO, 2011a).

Third, tourism is a major player in international commerce, and represents one of the main sources of income and foreign exchange for many developing countries. Fourth, employment generation is widely considered to be the most direct and beneficial impacts of tourism to the host local destination (Liu & Wall, 2005). Therefore, in order to accrue maximum benefits from tourism, local destinations need to have a well-trained and developed HR to work in the tourism industry and also plan and manage tourism developments sustainably in their local areas.

Many scholars agree that the rapid growth of tourism in several developing countries has, in many cases, been accompanied by inappropriate planning and unskilled HR leading into undesirable social, economic, and environmental impacts on host communities (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Panta & Thapa, 2017). Professionals, prepared with the knowledge and skills to understand tourism in its totality, the interrelationships involved and the various impacts on the host community are therefore, required in order to prevent, eliminate or reduce inappropriate forms of tourism development in their destinations (Nadkarni & Venema, 2011).

2.2 Lack of Trained Personnel and its impacts in the Tourism Industry in Developing Countries

Although tourism is commended for fostering development in most developing countries (Mgonja, 2016; UNWTO, 2011b), there has been some apprehensions regarding the real benefits and negative impacts of tourism

to host communities (Jithendran & Baum, 2002). Among the concerns expressed include the inability of the host community members to participate fully in and benefit from tourism development due to lack of appropriate skills. On a similar note, Ankomah (1991) presented a daunting view on the contribution of tourism to host communities and argued that some developing countries have not benefited much as such from tourism. In an attempt to understand why developing countries particularly Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for less than 1% of the global tourism industry despite having many natural and cultural resources probably more than any other regions in the World, Ankomah (1991) lists five major sets of factors: (1) Sub-Saharan Africa's negative image abroad; (2) foreign exchange constraints; (3) political instability; (4) weak institutional frameworks for tourism planning, and (5) the lack of skilled HR. Ankomah argues further that creation of domestic capacity requires a long term tourism development approach.

In supporting the concern for lack of skilled HR, Liu and Wall (2006:162) criticize many tourism development approaches by pointing out that "tourism's HR issues are poorly conceptualized and that many studies of tourism development approaches, both theoretical and practical, provide no consolidation of useful recommendations to situate the human dimension as an integral part of a comprehensive planning framework for tourism". In support of the need for proper HR training in tourism, (Baum & Szivas, 2008) point out that the effective deployment and management of people as critical resources within tourism does not happen without considerate planning, development and support at the level of the enterprise, the destination and the country. This signifies that the process of developing high competent HR requires a thoughtful collaboration among major stakeholders that are involved in the tourism sector. Such stakeholders may include public, private, local, national and international community, since tourism sector benefits both hosts and guests.

The question of lack of trained personnel in tourism industry in DC, was also echoed three decades ago by Cullen (1988:76) who argued that "the growth of tourism in many developing countries has been sudden and rapid" and that "this situation created an immediate demand for the facilities and personnel required to serve tourists". Cullen argues further that the development and growth of the tourism industry in any country depends heavily on the effective and proper development and utilization of its HR. Studies indicate that unfortunately when tourism started to prosper in 1980's many developing countries focused more on infrastructure development including building hotels to attract tourists and facilitate their movements, in the process, majority of these countries did not pay much attention in providing the necessary training to the local people to match with the booming tourism industry. This situation caused many developing countries to import skilled labour power from abroad due to acute shortage of properly trained local personnel, both on the front line and the supervisory role (Hegarty, 1988). Until today, in many of these countries "senior personnel are often attracted from abroad and the locals are relegated to the most unskilled, and correspondingly lowest paying, positions" (Echtner, 1995:121). As the volume of tourism in these countries continues to grow, the need for appropriate tourism education and training to the local people becomes increasingly important and inevitable if sustainable tourism is to be attained (Fidgeon, 2010; Smith & Cooper, 2000; Zagonari, 2009).

2.3 The Human Capital Theory and Human Recourses Training

The relationship between HR training and economic growth is best explained using the concepts of human capital theory. The economic prosperity and functioning of any nation depends on its physical and human capital stock (Almendarez, 2013). Human capital theory emphasizes the role of education in increasing the productivity and efficiency of employees in any organization or in a country. The theory emphasizes that training increases the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings (Almendarez, 2010). Thus, provision of high quality formal training should be seen by any nation as a productive investment in human capital, which the proponents of the theory have considered

as equally or even more equally worthwhile than that of physical capital (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). The development of any nation depends upon the development of its people in terms of human capital and how these people are organized and meaningfully utilized. The human capital can utilize the physical capital and other natural resources for development purposes. Highly developed human capital creates greater productivity and efficiency (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

Human resources is an important part of tourism operations and features prominently as a component of most tourism development plans (Baum, 2016; Hai-yan, & Baum, 2006). Improving the skills and knowledge of the workforce can assist destination competitiveness and help to establish and maintain a viable industry that reflects the local needs (Mayaka & King, 2002). In support of the need to develop a competent work force, Mayaka & King (2002) make the case that destinations which foster their HR will be best placed to develop high quality tourism products and thus, win a highly competitive tourism market. The cutting edge, skilled workforce can assist a destination to develop and maintain competitive markets and bring about equitable sustainable development. Despite its significance, HR training in tourism and hospitality has been the subject of little concern in practice in many developing countries including Tanzania (Othman, 2012; Ranis, Stewart & Ramirez, 2000).

3. Methodology

The analysis presented in this study was carried out between June 2018 and December 2019. The data about programmes offered were obtained from Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) and Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) websites. A purposive sampling approach was used in the selection of these institutions. In this approach, sampling units are selected based on the richness of information that they may contribute to the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling was necessary in this study because all colleges and Universities in the country must be registered and accredited by one of these institutions depending on the trainings they offer. The following information was specifically searched from the websites of these institutions. 1) level of trainings in which the study programmes are offered (i.e. Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor, Masters or Doctorate Degree Programme, 2) nature/name of the study programmes offered (e.g. ecotourism, tour guiding, hotel management, event management, leisure, recreation and tourism etc.), and 3) name of the training college/University and its ownership (public or private) and the year of establishment. The information obtained was then analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive statistics and presented by using Tables and Figures.

4. Results

4.1 Nature of Training Levels Offered

Figure 1 indicates that the percentage of registered training institutions offering certificate education is 62.2% (n = 51), while the percentage of registered institutions offering diploma is 18.3% (n=15), bachelor degree is 14.6% (n = 12) and master's degree is 3.7% (n = 3) and doctorate degree is 1.2% (n=1). Certificate in this case refers to basic technical education and is normally a one-year training programme. Diploma refers to advanced level technical education and is normally a two years training programme. Candidates who perform well at the diploma level can join the University for Bachelor Degree Programme, while the candidates who perform well at the certificate level can join the diploma programme.

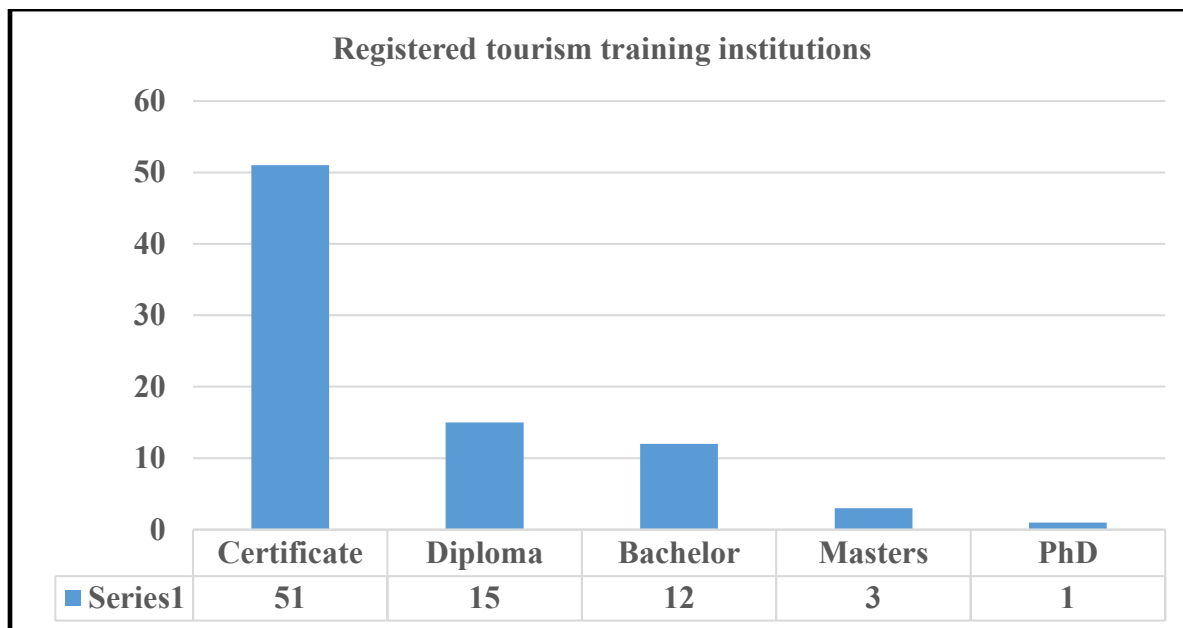


Figure 1. Registered Tourism Training Institutions (NACTE, VETA, and TCU), 2019

All training institutions in the country are registered and accredited by either, the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) - mostly basic certificate programmes, National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) – mostly technical certificate, diploma and bachelor degree programmes in some colleges or Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) – mostly bachelor, masters and PhD degree programmes. VETA was established by an Act of Parliament No. 1 of 1994 and is charged with broad tasks of coordinating, regulating, financing, Promoting and providing vocational education and training in Tanzania (VETA, 2019). NACTE is a corporate body established by the National Council for Technical Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 9 of 1997). The Act provides a legal framework for the Council to coordinate provision of technical education and training and establish an efficient national qualifications system that will ensure that products from technical institutions are of high quality and respond to changing needs as well as technological innovations in the world (NACTE, 2019). TCU was established on 1st July 2005, under the Universities Act (Chapter 346 of the Laws of Tanzania). TCU is a body corporate mandated to recognize, approve, register and accredit Universities operating in Tanzania, and local or foreign University level programmes being offered by registered higher education institutions. TCU also coordinates the proper functioning of all university institutions in Tanzania so as to foster a harmonized higher education system in the country (TCU, 2018).

4.2 Nature of Study Programmes Offered

Figure 2 shows that most of the training institutions in the country focus more on tourism and hospitality 20.37% (n = 11), hotel management 18.52% (n = 10) and tour guiding 18.52% (n = 10). Very few institutions focus on ecotourism & nature conservation 1% (n = 1) or tourism and leisure 1% (n = 1). Further review shows that currently there are no institutions in the country offering trainings in leisure and recreation as an independent

study programmes. Most of the study programmes related to leisure and recreation are offered as courses/units within other study programmes and not solemnly as core certificates, diplomas or degree programmes.

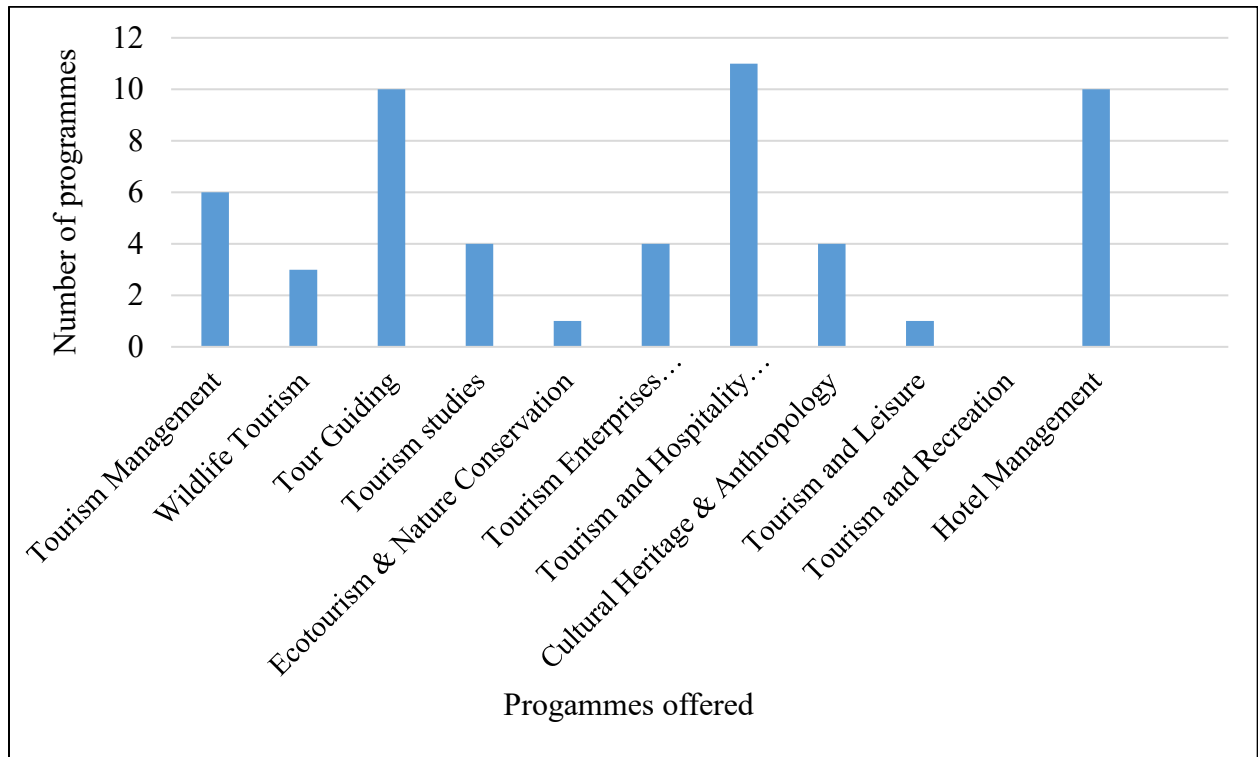


Figure 2. Training Programmes Offered in Various Tourism Registered Institutions in Tanzania

4.3 Nature of Ownership of Training Institutions

Table 1. Ownership of The Registered Tourism Related Training Institutions

Ownership	Number	Percentage
Public	25	35.7
Private	45	64.3
Total	70	100

Table 1 indicates that the percentages of registered public institutions is lower 35.7 % (n = 25) than that of private registered institutions 64.3 % (n = 45). The escalating growth of private training institutions in Tanzania has been a result of government transitioning from a command economy to a market economy which occurred in the country in late 1980’s. Beginning in 1986, the government of Tanzania started an adjustment programme aiming to dismantle the socialist (Ujamaa) economic controls and encouraged more active participation of the private sector in the economy which led to the rapid growth of tourism industry (URT, 2001).

5. Discussions

The main goal of this research was to explore to what extent training institutions in Tanzania include leisure and recreation study programmes in their curriculum. In the research conducted to date, a number of observable parallels between leisure, recreation and tourism have been found that suggest these concepts are highly related. Tourism is a form of recreation which occurs during leisure, therefore, sustainability of the tourism industry to a large extent depends on how well leisure and recreation programmes are integrated in the tourism systems including training institutions.

In relation to the types of study programmes offered by registered training institutions, the analysis shows that currently about 62.2% (n = 51) of all registered training institutions in the country offer study programmes leading to certificate in tourism and the related fields. The analysis shows further that the proportions of institutions offering diploma credentials is approximately higher 18.3% (n = 15) than that of institutions offering bachelor credentials 14.6% (n = 12). Although provision of trainings at lower levels (certificate and diploma) is important as these credentials produce employees who can do basic jobs in the tourism industry, there is a need for the country to pay a special attention in training higher levels (e.g. Masters and Doctorate degree) in tourism and the related studies within Tanzania. Currently, the majority of Tanzanians who aspire to pursue Masters and Doctorates degrees in tourism and the related fields, are obliged to go to abroad to acquire such kind of trainings because there are very few training institutions offering such programmes in the country as indicated in Figure 1. Although studying abroad is good for a number of reasons, the majority of Tanzanians cannot afford such trainings from abroad because many universities abroad charge higher tuition and fees for international students.

Providing trainings at higher levels in tourism in Tanzania has many advantages. One of the main advantages includes getting highly qualified local experts in the field who can; 1) do research related to tourism, 2) provide trainings to the lower level (certificate, diploma and bachelor degree) instructors and 3) serve at the national level as well as work in the tourism industry at the supervisory and managerial levels. It should be noted here that currently, a number of the tourism industry operators in the country are already opting to employ individuals from outside the country for supervisory and managerial positions due to lack of highly trained local personnel in tourism and the related fields.

In relation to the focus of the study programmes taught, the analysis show that the majority of training institutions focus more on tourism & hospitality management, hotel management and tour guiding particularly at the certificate and diploma level. Very few training institutions focus on wildlife tourism, ecotourism and nature conservation. While the current taught programmes are important, the training institutions seem to disregard leisure and recreation programmes. As suggested by Liu & Wall (2006) tourism education programmes in the country require an integrative approach that not only aim to achieve high level of “professionalism” but also that address the constraints to its achievement. Leisure and recreation are important components of tourism and thus, absence of these study programmes in training institutions constitutes a significant constraint for tourism development in the country.

In order to take fully advantage of the myriad natural resources that the country is endowed with, training institutions should diversify the training programmes to encompass fields which have not been given much priority in education curricula. Such fields may include trainings in leisure and recreation programmes, sport tourism, beach tourism etc. Both leisure and recreation are often considered to be prerequisites for tourism and are taught as distinct degree programmes in many universities and colleges teaching tourism around the globe.

With regard to public and private institutions offering training programmes, the analysis indicates that institutions offering trainings in tourism and the related fields in the country are largely private. Since the Government's adjustment programme in 1990s, the private sector has played a substantial role in stimulating the growth and development of various sectors including training institutions. The contribution of private sector is fundamental because, Tanzania like any other developing country, has many economic challenges and thus the public sector alone cannot efficiently and effectively manage to develop the required human resources in tourism and the related fields. It has to be noted that Tanzania has a huge population (Approximately 59 million people with estimated annual growth rate of 3%) (Worldometer, 2020) and the geographical size of the country is (947,300 square kilometres).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

With the private sector having a greater share in providing education services in tourism and the related disciplines in the country, it is indeed vital that the government should play a stewardship role in setting up an effective regulatory environment to make sure that the quality of education provided in these private schools and colleges remains high and competitive. A report by Anderson (2015) indicates that currently private training institutions in the country are not properly administered.

The study concludes that in order to provide high quality services and remain highly competitive in the tourism industry in the region, it is important for tourism planners and training institutions in Tanzania to analyse the training gap in their training programmes. Such analysis requires tourism planners, managers and training institutions to understand well the nature of the tourism industry in the region. This is particularly important because the tourism industry is highly pervasive in nature, competitive and diverse.

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