



## Influence of Maasai Cultural Orientation on Entrepreneurial Tourism Activities in Kajiado County, Kenya

<sup>1\*</sup> Sylvia Nyambura Mureu, <sup>2</sup> Bernard K. Nassiuma, & <sup>3</sup> Stephen Irura Ng'ang'a,  
<sup>1,2,3</sup> United States International University –Africa, Nairobi, Kenya  
<sup>1</sup> [mureusylvia4@gmail.com](mailto:mureusylvia4@gmail.com); <sup>2</sup> [bnassiuma@mu.ac.ke](mailto:bnassiuma@mu.ac.ke); <sup>3</sup> [dvc.fap@gau.ac.ke](mailto:dvc.fap@gau.ac.ke)

Correspondence Email: [mureusylvia4@gmail.com](mailto:mureusylvia4@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Entrepreneurial tourism is an essential part of sustainable economic development. However, the specific contribution of cultural tourism to local economic empowerment remains underexplored. The study investigated the influence of Maasai cultural orientation on entrepreneurial tourism activities in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with a sample of 168 respondents. Both quantitative and qualitative primary data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and linear regression for quantitative responses, and thematic analysis for qualitative responses. The study sample comprised 168 respondents, majority female (55%), predominantly aged 36-45 years (42%), with 73% having at least primary education and varied representation across community-based, private, NGO, and government sectors. Findings indicate that Maasai cultural orientation has a significant influence on the development of entrepreneurial tourism ventures in the region. Cultural assets such as traditional attire, beadwork, architectural styles, and music were utilized in cultural tourism, albeit to varying degrees. Products related to rites of passage and cuisine were moderately integrated, while others remained underexploited. Major barriers to effective community participation and community benefitting from cultural tourism were inherent cultural attitudes and practices, clanism, unfavourable local government policies, and lack of entrepreneurial skills and financial resources. Regression analysis revealed that forms of cultural tourism products ( $\beta = 0.212$ ), Maasai cultural orientation ( $\beta = 0.197$ ), investment factors ( $\beta = 2.109$ ), and cultural challenges ( $\beta = 0.941$ ) were all statistically significant predictors of entrepreneurial cultural tourism activities ( $p < 0.01$ ), with the strongest influence observed for investment-related factors. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between Maasai cultural orientation, cultural challenges, and tourism products in Kenya. The study recommends community sensitization, the creation of a harmonized system of 'organized culture', ownership of cultural tourism enterprises by the local community,

protection from mass tourists, and initiation of tourism economic activities through strategic investments.

**Keywords:** *Tourism, Entrepreneurial, Cultural orientation, Sustainable Development, Cultural Enterprises*

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurial tourism, particularly cultural tourism, has become increasingly prominent in discussions of sustainable development. It is widely recognized for its potential to improve the socioeconomic well-being of local communities through the integration of indigenous knowledge, heritage assets, and entrepreneurial practices (Song, 2016). In developing countries, where formal employment opportunities remain limited, cultural tourism offers an accessible, inclusive alternative. However, its success is contingent on a community's cultural orientation and capacity to engage in entrepreneurial activity. The entrepreneurial lens on cultural tourism and its influence on the socioeconomic development of local communities has emerged as a critical area of inquiry. Research increasingly highlights the importance of embedding local culture within entrepreneurial strategies to foster sustainable livelihoods, especially in contexts where natural and cultural resources form the foundation of tourism (Tosun et al., 1998).

Globally, tourism is recognized as one of the largest job-creating industries, due to its significant multiplier effects (Hegarty & Przezborska, 2005), spanning activities from community homestays and crafts to cultural performances and festivals. Within this spectrum, sustainable and non-consumptive tourism practices, such as green tourism and pro-poor tourism, have gained momentum as viable avenues for empowering local communities while preserving their cultural identity (Kalisch, 2001). These models emphasize active participation over passive receipt, reinforcing that long-term sustainability can only be achieved when communities take ownership of tourism development.

In developing contexts, including Kenya, these ideals are both relevant and urgent. While entrepreneurial tourism is gaining policy traction, critics caution against simply transferring Western planning models without adaptation to local social, economic, and cultural realities (Tosun, 2000; Jenkins & Henry, 2001). Kenya's tourism sector has historically generated significant national revenue and employment, contributing approximately 12.5% to GDP in 2005 and supporting 8.7% of total employment (RoK, 2006; WTTC, 2008). More recent figures project that tourism will contribute KES 1.15 trillion to Kenya's economy in 2024 and KES 1.7 trillion by 2034, creating over 2.2 million jobs (WTTC, 2024).

As part of Kenya's Vision 2030, entrepreneurial tourism has been positioned as one of the six pillars for inclusive economic growth. This is especially significant for communities like the Maasai, whose cultural heritage, rituals, attire, language, and traditional architecture, is both globally celebrated and deeply woven into the national tourism identity. Yet, despite their visibility and long-standing involvement, the Maasai continue to experience poverty and limited socioeconomic mobility. This contradiction underscores the need to examine the cultural, institutional, and economic structures shaping entrepreneurial tourism outcomes. While tourism-related micro and small enterprises (MSEs) provide flexible entry points for entrepreneurship (RoK, 1994), their success hinges on institutional access, skills training, and the compatibility of tourism models with local traditions.

Drawing on cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986), institutional theory (North, 1990), and cultural sustainability theory (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017), this study investigates how cultural orientation facilitates or constrains entrepreneurial tourism participation among the Maasai in Kajiado County. It critically analyzes how these theoretical frameworks can help reconcile cultural preservation with economic participation, informing locally grounded and sustainable tourism strategies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Kenya's tourism sector presents vast economic opportunities, particularly for local communities through entrepreneurial tourism, an intersection of cultural heritage and enterprise. Unlike many industries, entrepreneurial tourism is inclusive, allowing participation regardless of age, education level, or geographic location. Among communities with the potential to benefit from this inclusivity are the Maasai, whose rich cultural heritage has long been central to Kenya's national tourism identity. Paradoxically, despite the global prominence of Maasai culture and the presence of numerous community-owned cultural enterprises, poverty remains widespread among the Maasai people. This raises a critical question: Why has sustained engagement in cultural tourism not translated into tangible economic gains for the community? It is unclear whether this disconnect stems from cultural barriers, structural limitations, or missed opportunities in leveraging their cultural capital.

Notably, there is a lack of empirical research examining how Maasai cultural orientation influences entrepreneurial tourism outcomes. This is a significant gap, considering that Maasai cultural expressions, such as attire, rituals, architecture, and oral traditions, are among Kenya's most marketable cultural assets. Misconceptions persist that all communities in least developed nations uniformly resist entrepreneurial tourism due to cultural norms, yet this generalization fails to capture the unique dynamics within specific communities like the Maasai. The problem is further compounded by geography. Kajiado Central is strategically located within one of East Africa's most prominent tourism circuits, bordered by Amboseli National Park, the Maasai Mara, and the Serengeti. Despite this, the region remains underutilized in cultural tourism development. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the extent to which Maasai cultural orientation supports or hinders participation in entrepreneurial tourism, and how this can be harnessed to drive inclusive, community-based economic growth.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were;

- i. To identify the existing forms of cultural tourism products that enhance entrepreneurial tourism in the Maasai community.
- ii. To determine the entrepreneurial dimensions of cultural tourism in the Maasai community.
- iii. To examine the factors influencing investment in cultural tourism in the Maasai community.
- iv. To analyze the cultural challenges to successful investment in entrepreneurial cultural tourism.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Literature Review**

This study is guided by three interconnected theoretical frameworks. Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986) provides the lens to analyze the Maasai community's traditions, language, and rituals as valuable intangible assets that can be leveraged for economic gain in the tourism market. Institutional Theory (North, 1990) is employed to examine how both formal structures (e.g., policies, access to credit) and informal norms (e.g., clanism, cultural attitudes) shape and often constrain entrepreneurial behavior. Finally, Cultural Sustainability Theory (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017) offers the normative principle that sustainable tourism must balance economic development with the preservation of cultural integrity, ensuring community identity is not eroded by commercialization.

### **Empirical Literature Review**

Empirically, cultural tourism is recognized as a key driver of sustainable development and community empowerment (WTO, 2002), a trend reflected in its growing contribution to Kenya's economy, particularly in indigenous regions (WTTC, 2024). Furthermore, tourism-oriented micro and small enterprises (MSEs) are well-established as a critical bridge between local heritage and global markets, with their success contingent on access to capital, skills, and supportive policies (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2016; Jenkins & Henry, 2001).

While prior research confirms the sector's broad economic potential (Ondicho, 2010; Song, 2016), a significant gap exists. Few studies provide a contextualized analysis of the specific intersection between deep-seated cultural orientation, local institutional dynamics, and entrepreneurship within indigenous communities. This study addresses this gap by investigating the precise cultural and institutional factors that facilitate or hinder the Maasai community in Kajiado Central from converting their cultural capital into viable entrepreneurial tourism ventures.

## **Hypothesis**

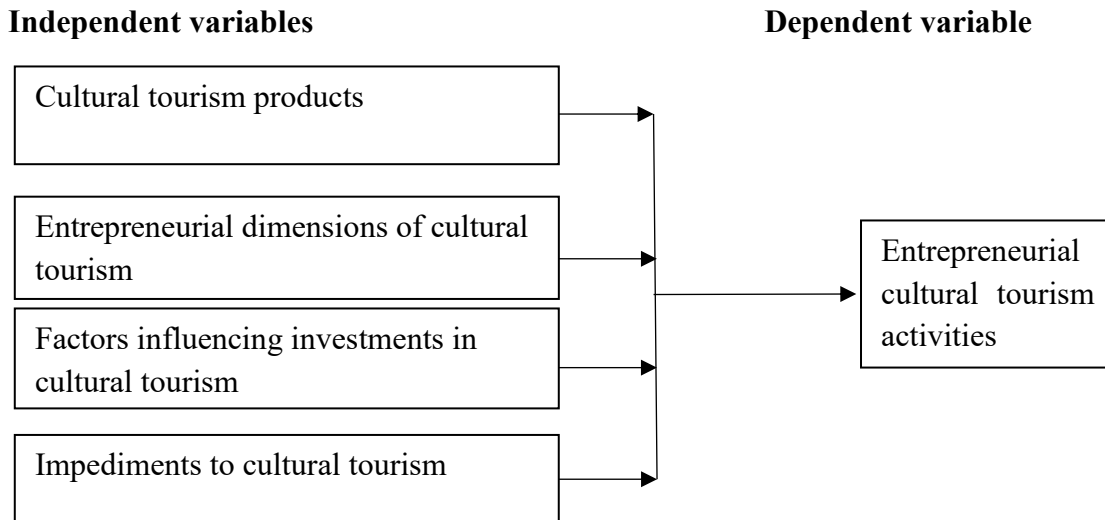
**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant relationship between Maasai cultural orientation and the success of entrepreneurial cultural tourism activities in Kajiado Central, Kenya.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) presents the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables include: (1) forms of cultural tourism products, (2) entrepreneurial dimensions of cultural tourism, (3) factors encouraging investment, and (4) factors impeding investment (cultural and institutional challenges). These variables directly influence the dependent variable: the success of entrepreneurial cultural tourism activities. The presence of cultural products enables enterprise creation, while the balance between enabling and constraining factors determines entrepreneurial outcomes. This model provides a contextual understanding of how cultural assets, under specific institutional conditions, shape tourism entrepreneurship opportunities within Kajiado County.

**Figure 1:**

*Conceptual Framework Linking Culture, Entrepreneurship, and Outcomes*



### **Research Methodology**

This study was conducted in Kajiado Central Sub-County, Kenya, a region predominantly inhabited by the Maasai community. The area, which covers approximately 8,089 km<sup>2</sup> and had a population of 162,278 at the 2009 census, was selected purposively due to its status as an economic hub and its strategic location within a major tourism circuit. It is surrounded by renowned wildlife-based tourism sites, including Amboseli and Maasai Mara National Parks, presenting a significant opportunity for diversifying the tourism product through entrepreneurial cultural tourism.

A descriptive survey research design and a mixed methods were employed. The target population consisted of Maasai cultural tourism entrepreneurs and local opinion leaders. Using stratified random sampling, a representative sample size of 168 respondents was calculated. Primary data were collected via structured questionnaires using five-point Likert scales, while secondary data were sourced from county and national government offices. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and linear regression models in SPSS to assess associations between key variables reporting the regression coefficients and corresponding p values. Furthermore, in line with Hsieh & Shannon (2005) qualitative content analysis was done. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, and informed consent and confidentiality were ensured for all participants.

## Results and Findings

The study examined the characteristics of the respondents and the cultural products possessed by the Maasai community. A total of 168 respondents participated in the study.

### Characteristics of Study Respondents

The demographic breakdown of the respondents is presented in Table 1. The sample comprised a slightly higher proportion of females (n = 92, 55%). The most represented age group was 36-45 years (n = 70, 42%), followed by respondents aged 46 years and above (n = 50, 30%). Smaller proportions were aged 25–35 years (n = 28, 17%) and 18-24 years (n = 20, 12%). In terms of educational attainment, the largest group had no formal education (n = 45, 27%), followed by secondary school leavers (n = 39, 23%) and those with college certificates (n = 37, 22%). Respondents who had completed primary school were (n = 28, 17%), and university graduates were the smallest group (n = 19, 11%). Overall, 73% (n = 123) of the respondents had attained at least a primary level of education.

Regarding sector involvement in cultural tourism, most respondents were engaged through community-based organizations (n = 64, 38%), followed by the private sector (n = 52, 31%), non-governmental organizations (n = 34, 20%), and government offices (n = 18, 11%). Respondents' experience in the cultural tourism industry varied. The largest group had between 11 and 15 years of experience (n = 66, 39%), followed by those with 6 to 10 years (n = 50, 30%). Respondents with 1 to 5 years of experience were (n = 34, 20%), and those with 15 years or more were (n = 18, 11%).

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	92	55
	Male	76	45
Age Group (Years)	18-24	20	12
	25-35	28	17
	36-45	70	42
	46 and Above	50	30
Education Level	No School Education	45	27
	Primary School Leaver	28	17
	Secondary School Leaver	39	23
	College Certificate	37	22
	University Graduate	19	11
Sector of Involvement	Community-Based Org.	64	38
	Private Sector	52	31
	Non-Gov. Org.	34	20
	Government Offices	18	11
Years in Industry	1-5	34	20

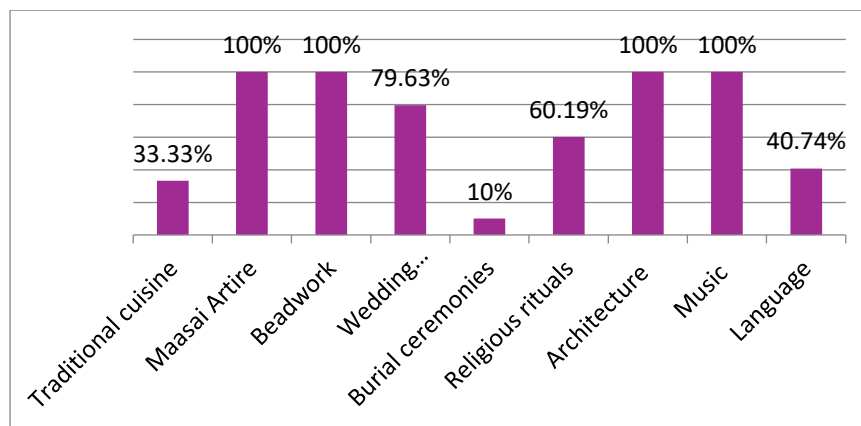
6-10	50	30
11-15	66	39
15 and Above	18	11

### Types of cultural products possessed by the Maasai community

The study also examined the prevalence of various cultural products within the Maasai community. As shown in Figure 2, all respondents reported possessing Maasai attire, beadwork, architecture, and music/dance. A substantial majority (80%) possessed products used in wedding ceremonies, and 60% possessed products used in religious rituals. Possession of products related to the Maasai language was reported by 41% of respondents, while 33% reported possession of Maasai traditional cuisine items. Materials used in burial ceremonies were the least commonly possessed cultural products, with only 10% of respondents reporting ownership

**Figure 2**

*Types of cultural products possessed by the Maasai community.*



The study confirmed that attire, beadwork, architecture, and music were the most utilized products, while cuisine, ceremonies, and language remained underexploited. Respondents cited ignorance (50%) and lack of appreciation of cultural tourism's economic value (36%) as key reasons. One government officer bluntly observed:

*"Maasai's are laid back people, wanafikiri ng'ombe ni kila kitu"* (Govt-A).

At the same time, innovative suggestions for diversification emerged. For example:

*"Cultural sports should be promoted positively... spear throwing and moranism should be promoted to empower the youths... it would eliminate the negative moranism of going to the bush"* (Govt-B).

These insights highlighted both the barriers of cultural rigidity and the opportunities for youth-focused innovation.

### Level of Utilization of Maasai Products in Cultural Oriented Tourism



Majority, (n=149, 89%), of the respondents felt that the Maasai cultural products have not been utilized in cultural oriented tourism. Table 2 presents the level of utilization of various Maasai cultural products in cultural-oriented tourism. The utilization levels are rated on a scale where higher values indicate more utilization (with a maximum value of 3 and a minimum of 1). Results indicate that the highly utilized products were: Burial ceremonies (mean = 2.95), Maasai traditional cuisine (mean = 2.7), wedding ceremony materials (mean = 2.6), products used Maasai language (mean = 2.47), and religious rituals materials (mean = 2.29).

**Table 2**

***Level of Utilization of Maasai Products in Cultural-Oriented Tourism***

<b>Maasai Cultural Product</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Minimum</b>
Traditional cuisine	2.7	3	3	1
Maasai attire	1.08	1	3	1
Beadwork	1.28	1	3	1
Wedding ceremonies	2.6	3	3	1
Burial ceremonies	2.95	3	3	1
Circumcision/Initiation to adulthood	1.4	1	3	1
Religious rituals	2.29	2	3	1
Architecture (e.g., manyattas)	1.12	1	3	1
Spears	1.83	2	3	1
Music (i.e., dance and songs)	1.1	1	3	1
Language	2.47	3	3	1

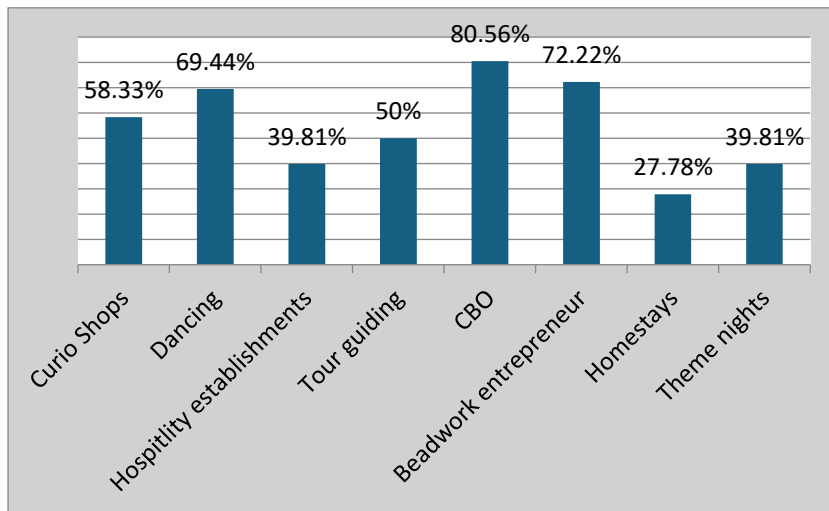
**Existing Cultural Enterprises in the Maasai Community**

The primary reason for engaging in cultural tourism was the availability of cultural resources (77%), followed by the need to make a living (56%) and the need for independence (48%). The majority of respondents (81%) indicated that Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that utilize Maasai cultural products form the largest number of enterprises, as shown in Figure 3. Beadwork entrepreneurs represent 72% of respondents, and cultural dancers make up 69%. Homestays represented the smallest portion of enterprises, at 27.78%.



**Figure 3**

*Existing Cultural Enterprises in the Maasai Community.*



### **Challenges to Local Engagement and Role of Stakeholders**

The primary reasons why local people did not engage in cultural tourism, according to the respondents, were: inherent cultural attitudes and practices (78%), clanism and community politics (72%), and a lack of entrepreneurial skills (61%).

The roles of government, community, and NGOs in supporting cultural tourism were enumerated. The majority (42% and 30%, respectively) of respondents believe the government's primary role is to enhance marketing and promote cultural products and provide social amenities that complement cultural tourism. A significant portion (52%) of respondents indicated that the community should cultivate interest and an enterprise culture in cultural tourism. Additionally, 36% felt the community should abandon cultural rigidities and negative attitudes to better support and appreciate cultural tourism. The majority, 63% of the respondents, believe that the NGOs should offer grants and donations to the marginalized groups in support of developing cultural tourism. Finally, the majority, 54% of respondents, felt that mentorship and apprenticeship programs were required, while 40% suggested cultural product innovations and diversification by private organizations.

### **Suggestions to Improve Cultural Tourism**

Most of the respondents, 35%, recommended that increasing the marketing and promotional campaigns would improve cultural tourism, as shown in Table 3. Besides, 27% recommended that providing social education to change negative attitudes and perceptions would improve cultural tourism.

**Table 3**

*Recommendations to Improve Cultural Tourism*

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Social education to change negative attitudes and perceptions	45	27
Increasing marketing and promotional campaigns	59	35
Access to financial resources (loans and grants)	34	20
Establishing a legal framework favoring entrepreneurship in cultural tourism	12	7
Offering counseling and consultancy services	10	6
Providing adult education for technical and managerial skills	8	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

**Note.** Responses reflect recommendations provided by study participants.

**Regression Analysis Results on Factors Associated with Entrepreneurial Cultural Tourism Activities**

Table 4 presents the results of a linear regression analysis examining the relationship between several independent variables and entrepreneurial cultural tourism activities. The analysis revealed that all independent variables - Forms of Cultural Tourism Products, Inverse of Maasai Cultural Orientation, Inverse of Factors Influencing Investments in Cultural Tourism, and Inverse of Cultural Challenges to Successful Investment - had a statistically significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial cultural tourism activities ( $p < 0.05$ ). The Forms of Cultural Tourism Products had a positive and significant effect ( $\beta = 0.212$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), suggesting that diverse cultural tourism offerings enhanced entrepreneurial engagement. Similarly, the Inverse of Maasai Cultural Orientation was significantly associated with increased entrepreneurial activities ( $\beta = 0.197$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), implying that reduced cultural rigidity may facilitate entrepreneurial initiatives. Furthermore, the Inverse of Factors Influencing Investments in Cultural Tourism demonstrated a strong positive relationship ( $\beta = 2.109$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that fewer investment barriers significantly promote entrepreneurial ventures. Lastly, the inverse of Cultural Challenges to Successful Investment also showed a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.941$ ,  $SE = 0.285$ ,  $t = 3.306$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), suggesting that mitigating cultural challenges fosters entrepreneurial success in cultural tourism.

**Table 4**

*Linear Regressions - Results Predicting Entrepreneurial Cultural Tourism Activities*

<b>Predictor: Entrepreneurial Cultural Tourism Activities</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Model 1</b>					
Constant	2.875	0.256	-	11.211	< .001
Forms of Cultural Tourism Products	0.212	0.070	0.230	3.036	.003
<b>Model 2</b>					
Constant	2.928	0.186	-	15.726	< .001
Maasai Cultural Orientation	0.197	0.050	0.291	3.912	< .001
<b>Model 3</b>					
Constant	3.068	0.260	-	11.800	< .001
Inverse of Factors Influencing Investments in Cultural Tourism	2.109	0.579	0.605	3.645	.001
<b>Model 4</b>					
Constant	2.631	0.405	-	6.504	< .001
Organizational Structure Approach	0.941	0.285	0.568	3.306	.003

*Note.* B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient.

### Qualitative Results

With respect to entrepreneurial dimensions, results showed that Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) dominated cultural enterprises. Regression findings showed that collective entrepreneurship positively predicted cultural tourism outcomes, but the lack of infrastructure was a recurring limitation. Entrepreneurs described the struggle vividly:

*“Hizi area zote tunakokwenda hamna soko kama vile Maasai Market in Nairobi. Wanawake inabidi tukae kando ya barabara ilituuze shanga na nguo za kimaasai”* (CBO Leader-A).

This illustrated how entrepreneurial potential was undermined by poor infrastructure and a lack of formal market spaces, despite the community’s willingness to engage.

Concerning forms of Cultural Products, the study confirmed that attire, beadwork, architecture, and music were the most utilized products, while cuisine, ceremonies, and language remained underexploited. Respondents cited ignorance (50%) and lack of appreciation of cultural tourism’s economic value (36%) as key reasons. One government officer bluntly observed:

*“Maasai’s are laid back people, wanafikiri ng’ombe ni kila kitu”* (Govt-A).

At the same time, innovative suggestions for diversification emerged. For example:

*“Cultural sports should be promoted positively... spear throwing and moranism should be promoted to empower the youths... it would eliminate the negative moranism of going to the bush” (Govt-B).*

These insights highlight both the barriers of cultural rigidity and the opportunities for youth-focused innovation.

Looking at barriers and challenges, cultural attitudes (77.8%) and clan politics (72.2%) emerged as the strongest barriers. Interview data reinforced these findings, emphasizing internal rivalries and cultural rigidity:

*“Maasai people are naturally jealous especially because of inter-ethnic rivalry... cannot progress with that kind of mind-set” (Govt-D).*

*“The cultural practices... jeopardize the efforts of NGOs. Maasai’s are a community that highly believes in communism. This creates a form of safety nets and thus very difficult to establish poverty levels” (NGO-B).*

Such perspectives deepen the quantitative results by showing how informal institutions, politics, and cultural norms restrict innovation and equitable participation in cultural tourism.

## **Discussions**

This study set out to examine the influence of Maasai cultural orientation on entrepreneurial cultural tourism activities in Kajiado County. The findings provide important insights into the intersection of cultural resources, community practices, and entrepreneurship.

The results highlight the widespread availability of cultural products, such as attire, beadwork, architecture, and music, yet show that these assets are significantly underutilized in cultural tourism. Products embedded in social rituals, such as cuisine, weddings, and burial materials, remain largely overlooked in tourism ventures. This underutilization reflects Gerard and Shaker’s (2002) argument that culture strongly shapes venture creation and management, and it reinforces Tshikuku’s (2001) findings that African societies often face challenges in translating cultural wealth into entrepreneurial initiatives due to barriers in adapting traditional practices to market demands. Recent evidence from Kenya echoes this pattern, showing that cultural tourism is still constrained by limited community participation and weak policy support despite its potential for socio-economic development (Rajwais, Rotich, & Mapelu, 2025).

Regression analysis highlighted that resource availability, cultural orientation, investment factors, and structural barriers significantly predict entrepreneurial performance in cultural tourism. The prominence of investment-related variables underscores that cultural wealth alone is insufficient without supporting structures. The systematic review by Rajwais, Rotich, and Mapelu (2025) affirms these findings in a broader Kenyan context: cultural tourism presents promising opportunities for socio-economic development—particularly in Mount Kenya, yet

faces policy gaps, poor infrastructure, and limited community participation (Rajwais et al., 2025).

The dominance of community-based organizations (CBOs) as the primary enterprise form underscores the communal orientation of Maasai culture, where collectivism takes precedence over individual gain. This structural preference resonates with Manyara and Jones (2005), who argued that community-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in achieving sustainable development. Similarly, Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Wanhill (1998) emphasized that localized tourism enterprises foster backward and forward linkages that multiply community benefits. Recent global studies confirm that community-based tourism (CBT) continues to serve as a catalyst for inclusive growth and for achieving Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty reduction and decent work (Community-Based Tourism Study, 2025). In this sense, the Maasai model of entrepreneurship aligns with participatory and sustainable tourism practices, though it diverges from the profit-maximizing orientation typical in mainstream entrepreneurship.

Engagement in cultural tourism was found to be primarily driven by resource availability and livelihood security, rather than profit maximization. The low levels of perceived economic exploitation suggest that entrepreneurship in this context is embedded in a social logic that prioritizes community welfare. This finding supports Mueller and Thomas's (2000) cross-cultural evidence that entrepreneurial orientation is stronger in cultures marked by individualism and an internal locus of control. By contrast, collectivist settings like the Maasai demonstrate a weaker orientation toward competitive entrepreneurial values, limiting the degree of commercialization. Odunga (2024) similarly found that in rural Kenya, cultural tourism participation is often motivated by necessity and opportunity recognition rather than profit maximization, illustrating the hybrid nature of entrepreneurship in indigenous communities.

The study also found that inherent cultural attitudes, clan politics, lack of entrepreneurial skills, and limited access to capital are key barriers. These reflect the importance of informal institutions, as emphasized by North (1990), in shaping economic outcomes. The persistence of these constraints demonstrates how cultural rigidity and political fragmentation can stall enterprise growth even in resource-rich communities. Saleemi (2009) similarly argued that rigid cultural norms often inhibit adaptive problem-solving. Recent research highlights that without institutional support and capacity building, community tourism initiatives struggle to reach scale and sustainability (Morong', 2025).

The respondents' recommendations, greater government support, improved marketing, skills training, and access to finance, point to the need for external facilitation. Government and development partners can play a catalytic role in reducing institutional barriers and strengthening human capital for entrepreneurship. Aligning interventions with community values is essential to avoid imposing exogenous models that overlook cultural realities. Furthermore, embedding cultural sustainability principles (Swanson & DeVereaux, 2017) can ensure that commercialization does not erode the authenticity and identity of Maasai cultural practices. Similar recommendations emerge globally, with integrated conservation-tourism

initiatives in Kenya showing that community ownership and equitable benefit-sharing are central to sustainable outcomes (Condé Nast Traveler, 2024).

## **Conclusions**

This study concludes that Maasai cultural orientation presents a significant, yet underutilized, potential for entrepreneurial tourism activities in Kajiado Central. The necessary cultural resources, including attire, beadwork, architecture, and music, are readily available within the community. However, the critical link of effectively harnessing these resources for maximum economic gain is missing. The study further concludes that while community-based organizations are the predominant form of enterprise, economic benefits from cultural tourism remain low due to a combination of factors. Primarily, engagement is driven more by resource availability than a belief in high profitability. Major impediments to success include inherent cultural attitudes, clanism, unfavorable local politics, and a critical lack of entrepreneurial skills and financial capital. Ultimately, without strategic intervention, the vast economic potential of cultural tourism in the region will remain largely untapped.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that a multi-faceted strategy be implemented to harness the full potential of cultural tourism in Kajiado Central. This should begin with government-led community sensitization programs to highlight the economic benefits of cultural tourism, coupled with comprehensive training to build essential entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, the county government should invest in critical infrastructure by establishing a cultural tourism information center and designated market spaces for local artisans, while also facilitating access to capital through existing enterprise funds to empower local ownership. To ensure sustainable growth, destination marketing must strategically position Kajiado as a niche for authentic cultural experiences, promoting unique attractions and festivities. Finally, policymakers must foster a harmonized and supportive environment that encourages collaboration between all stakeholders to overcome structural and cultural impediments.

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