

## Exploring the effect of animal captivity facility on domestic tourism in Tanzania

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### ABSTRACT

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The effect of animal captivity facilities on domestic tourism is not well-established in Tanzania. Animal captivity facilities take part in an essential role in tourism by providing room for education, conservation, and recreation, while also contributing to the local economy, yet their impact on the domestic tourism sector has never been extensively studied. This study explores the effects of animal captivity facilities on domestic tourism in Tanzania. Using both quantitative and qualitative methodology, the study reveals that animal captivity facilities remain relevant and beneficial to domestic tourism, particularly in providing educational opportunities, entertainment, and conservation awareness. However, challenges such as high operational costs, limited promotional efforts, and ethical concerns regarding animal welfare affect their full potential. This study emphasizes the need for improved facility management, enhanced visitor experiences, ethical animal care practices, community engagement, and strategic marketing initiatives to attract more domestic tourists. Furthermore, the findings provide valuable understanding for policymakers, facility managers, and also different tourism stakeholders looking to optimize the task of animal captivity facilities in domestic tourism development.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Tanzania, contributing to economic development, access to employment, and exchange of different cultures. According to Malleo and Mtengwa (2018), Tanzania's tourism industry is thriving and is rated among the fastest-growing sectors in the country by providing foreign exchange, employment, income, and public revenue. Traditionally, attention has been given to attracting international tourists to popular sites like National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Still, recently efforts have been directed towards promoting domestic tourism to diversify the market and build a more flexible tourism sector while allowing residents to visit and experience various attractions within the country. Mato and Mosoma (2022) found that there is still a need to encourage Tanzanians of all lifestyles to become active participants in domestic tourism as a way of boosting the sector.

Among the major attractions for domestic tourism is the presence of various animal captivity facilities across the country and these facilities have been able to bring various animal species and their environment closer to where people live. Animal captivity facilities represent a significant yet under-explored component of Tanzania's tourism infrastructure. These facilities provide educational, recreational, and conservation benefits, and have the potential to attract a significant number of domestic tourists. Mng'ong'o et al (2023) found that most wildlife captive facilities with attractive species (Carnivores) have a large number of visitations and most visitors are locals. However, several challenges hinder the full realization of this potential, including concerns about animal welfare, the ethical implications of captivity, and the overall quality of the visitor experience. Bais et al (2017) argue that the management of animals in captivity poses serious challenges that range from animal welfare considerations, space requirements, human skills, veterinary care, and visitor satisfaction to financial requirements. Moreover, the knowledge gap filled by this study offers valuable understanding for policymakers, facility managers, and all stakeholders on how to strengthen the role of these facilities as educational and recreational resources, while addressing ethical concerns raised by visitors.

Therefore, this study pays attention to exploring the effect of animal captivity facilities on domestic tourism in Tanzania, while focusing mainly on assessing the overall current state of animal captivity facilities, exploring the perception of domestic tourists towards animal captivity facilities, identifying factors that influence domestic tourists' decisions to visit/revisit animal captivity facilities, and assessing the overall effect of animal captivity facilities on domestic tourism in Tanzania.

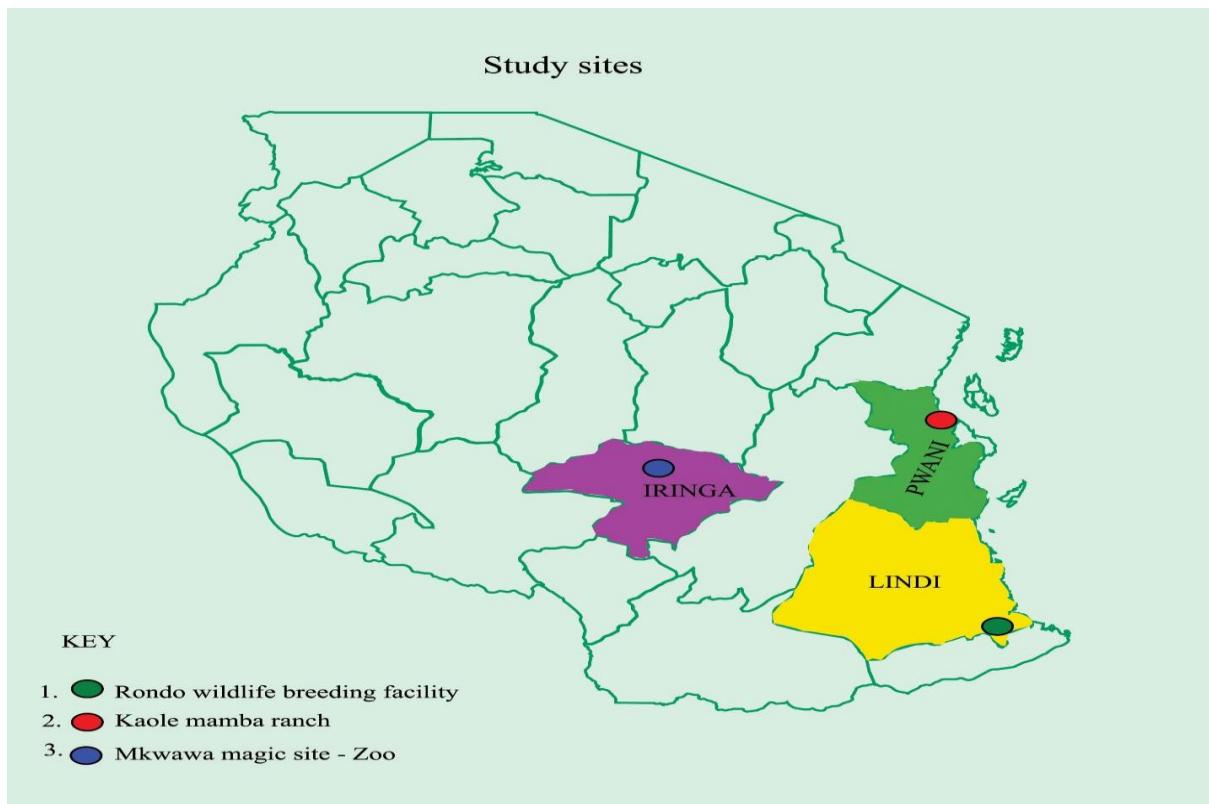
## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study draws on three complementary theoretical perspectives to frame analysis of domestic tourists' engagement with Animal Captive Facilities. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) that proposed by Ajzen (1991), is a psychological theory that explains how individuals form intentions to perform specific behaviors. According to Mahmoud et al (2022), this theory is used to understand and predict human behavior. The theory explains how tourists' attitudes, perceived social norms, and behavioral control shape their visitation intentions, offering a predictive lens for understanding demand. The dominance of education and entertainment as motivators reflects positive attitudes towards visit, while recommendations from family/friends align with subjective norms influencing behavior (Indrianto et al., 2024). Social Exchange Theory (SET) was developed by Homans (1961) and is based on the idea that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. Cook et al (2013) defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two parties. This theory provides insight into how tourists and host communities weigh

perceived benefits (e.g., education, recreation, economic gains) against costs (e.g., pricing, time, ethical concerns), thereby influencing support for Animal Captivity Facilities. Those positive impacts show tourists perceive benefits outweighing costs, supporting willingness to engage in domestic tourism. Meanwhile, the AIDA model (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action) is a marketing theory developed by E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 and it outlines the four stages a consumer goes through before making a purchasing decision. According to Ananda and Novianti (2021), the AIDA model illustrate that consumers or tourists go through four stages to buy certain products or services, namely the stage of attention, interest, desire and action. This theory illuminates how promotional strategies drive visitation by attracting attention, stimulating interest, and converting it into action. Strong emphasis on education and entertainment suggests facilities successfully attract attention and generate interest. Therefore, this study aims to integrate behavioral (TPB), exchange (SET), and communication (AIDA) perspectives to explain how perceptions, motivations, and promotional influences shape domestic tourists' visitation decisions and the broader impacts of animal captivity facilities on tourism development.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted across three types of animal captivity facilities, which are: wildlife farms, wildlife ranches, and zoos, in different three regions of Tanzania, namely Pwani, Iringa, and Lindi. These three active facilities that were selected as study sites were, the Mkwawa Magic Site (Zoo) in Iringa, the Rondo Wildlife Breeding Facility (farm) in Lindi, and the Kaole Mamba Ranch in Pwani. These regions were chosen due to their diverse wildlife attractions (including protected areas such as Selous Game Reserve, Ruaha National Park, and Saadani National Park), cultural sites, and also different types of animal captivity facilities.



**Figure 1. Locations of Animal Captivity Facilities in Three Regions of Tanzania**

### Sampling Design

All selected facilities were visited to explore the effect of animal captivity facilities on domestic tourism in Tanzania. A mixed-methods approach was adopted to ensure the inclusion of respondents directly engaged with animal captivity facilities across three different regions (Pwani, Iringa and Lindi), based on their relevance and accessibility. Moreover, a span of 3-5 days was utilized for data collection per facility. In this study, the sampling design aimed to gather views from key groups related to animal captivity facilities, including domestic tourists and facilities managers and their staff. Domestic tourists approached at the point of entry or exist of the facilities; only those who had directly visited the sites were included. Facility managers and their staff were also participated and purposive selection was appropriate as these individuals hold specialized knowledge of facility operations and their contribution to domestic tourism. This dual approach allowed the study to capture both expert insights and visitor's experience.

### Sample Size

A total of 150 domestic tourists were surveyed across three selected animal captivity facilities. Recruitment was proportional to visitation flows rather than fixed quotas, ensuring that the sample reflects actual patterns of tourist presence and strengthens the external validity of the findings. Also 15 facility managers and staff participated through interviews and

focus group discussions. These were purposively selected from those available during data collection, representing a mix of managerial and operational roles.

### **Data Collection**

At each animal captivity facility selected, data were collected using semi-structured questionnaire (containing both open-ended and close-ended questions), semi structured interviews, and observation checklist. The questionnaire for domestic tourists covered constructs such as current state of these facilities, perceptions regarding animal captivity facilities, factor influencing visitation, and perceived effects on domestic tourism. Interviews guides for managers and staff explored operational insights, management practices and visitor engagement strategies, while observation checklists focused on facility infrastructure, visitor flow, and animal welfare practices. The tools were adopted from established tourism and visitor perceptions studies (Andereck et al, 2005 and Ajzen, 1991). Moreover, content validity was reviewed by academic supervisor and tourism practitioners, while reliability of quantitative items was confirmed through internal consistency testing (Cronbach's alpha>0.70).

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 28). Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and visitation patterns, while correlation and regression analyses examined relationships between key variables. Independent variables included cost, accessibility, educational value, entertainment and family and friend influence, while dependent variables focused on visitation/repeat visitation frequency. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically using MAXQDA, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) "doing thematic analysis a step by step guide" in their journal titled "using thematic analysis in psychology". Initial coding was inductive, later refined against the study's objectives. To enhance reliability two researchers independently coded a sample of transcripts and compared results, achieving strong inter-coder agreement before final coding was completed.

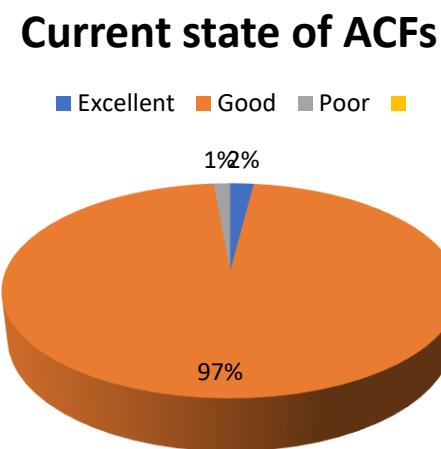
### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical consideration for this study was obtained from the relevant Open University research ethics committee. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any stage, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained prior to interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Overall Current State of the Acts in Tanzania

This study's results reveal that, 97% of respondents agree that the overall current state of animal captivity facilities in Tanzania is in good condition, 2% suggested that the current state is excellent, while 1% rate poor to the overall current state of animal captivity facilities in Tanzania.



**Figure 2. Responses on the Current State of the Animal Captivity Facilities**

The majority of respondents agreed that the facilities are in a good state, but also reflects opportunities for enhancement for better promotion strategies, improved facility structure (such as cages and animal enclosures), and stronger efforts to boost tourism appeal (e.g. built attraction, accessibility, events etc). A good enclosure will consider the physical health, well-being and safety of animals and carers at all times (Wild Welfare, n.d.). Although the study discovered that, there are areas that need improvements, the facilities still provide appropriate services and experiences to visitors, making them moderately attractive to domestic tourists. The predominance of good ratings highlights a general acknowledgement of efforts by facility Managers and their staff, but it is also signals areas where interventions are required. For instance, infrastructure issues such as outdated animal enclosure, inadequate cage spaces and inadequate visitor amenities, were commonly mentioned as area for improvement. According to Wild Welfare (n.d), facility must provide appropriate, species-specific environments that meet the physiological and behavioral needs of the animals to achieve optimum welfare.

Respondents who rated facilities as excellent noted aspect such as well-maintained infrastructure, prioritization of animal welfare, and strong contribution to domestic tourism.

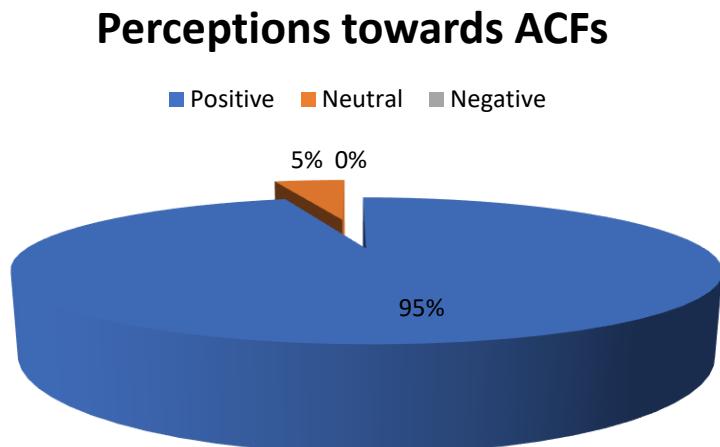
According to Karanikola et al (2014), research has shown that, by enriching their knowledge of animals, zoo visitors develop more positive views about animals kept at zoos and support the relevant efforts for their conservation. Therefore, this 1.89% of respondents who said that the current state of animal captivity facilities is in the excellent condition shows how much people are now starting to get enough understanding about the importance of these animal captivity facilities in promoting domestic tourism. They have shown their reaction to the great work of these facilities in improving the environment of the animals but also ensuring that visitors are satisfied with their services.

Also a small fraction of respondents rated the facilities as poor, highlighting neglected maintenance, inadequate animal welfare standards, and limited appeal for domestic tourists. Poor enclosure designs can negatively impact animal welfare and visitor satisfaction, potentially reducing the educational and ethical appeal of these facilities. According to Walker (2006), a bad zoo can contribute negatively towards public understanding of wildlife by providing misleading information. Moreover, respondents also pointed out a lack of sufficient promotional activities of animal captivity facilities to communities. However, this study reveals that the well-executed promotion strategies can significantly boost visitor numbers by creating awareness of the unique offerings of these facilities. Liberato et al (2020) argue that, tourism marketing is responsible not only for attracting more tourists to the destination, but mainly for developing quality goods and services to meet the needs and desire of these visitors. Furthermore, this study suggests that animal captivity facilities in Tanzania need to invest more in digital marketing, partnerships, and educational campaigns to attract a broader domestic audience.

Therefore, this study discovered that, the current state of animal captivity facilities in Tanzania is generally positive, with most facilities rated as good. However, the findings highlight critical areas for improvement, particularly in infrastructure, animal welfare and marketing strategies.

### **Perceptions Towards Animal Captivity Facilities**

The study shows that, 95.21% respondents had positive perceptions towards animal captivity facilities, followed by 4.79% of respondents with neutral perceptions, containing a mix of both positive and some negative perceptions but choose to remain neutral. But according to the results, this study did not register any respondents with negative perceptions.



**Figure 3. Domestic Tourists' Perceptions of Animal Captivity Facilities**

#### **Positive Perceptions**

The predominance of positive perceptions emphasizes the important role animal captivity facilities play in Tanzania's domestic tourism and conservation in general. Villarroya et al (2024) argue that positive perception of zoo and their animals could improve visitors' learning outcomes. Moreover, this study further discovered that the respondents with positive perceptions highlighted the significant roles of animal captivity facilities in education, entertainment, conservation, and their contribution to local and national economy growth. As explained by Mearns & Liebenberg (2018) that zoos claim to have multiple roles which include education, conservation and recreation. Therefore, this study reveals different positive perceptions of domestic tourists towards animal captivity facilities.

#### ***Educational Value***

This study reveals that most respondents appreciated the educational opportunities provided by animal captivity facilities, particularly in raising awareness about wildlife and conservation efforts. Animal captive facilities serve as an accessible platform for learning, especially for families and schools. Mearns and Liebenberg (2018) argue that the learning environment (facilities), the design of enclosures, interpretation and even the commercial activities within the zoo all play a part in influencing the education. Also Yanti et al (2024) found that outing class learning strategies such as visiting the zoo contribute to stimulating children's interest in learning. So this study reveals that education value provided in animal captivity facilities has been a major catalyst that attracts many local tourists to visit these facilities to learn about wildlife conservation and environment in general, while enjoying seeing

various animal species so closely. Therefore, this study has proved that most domestic tourists are very interested in the education values available in animal captivity facilities.

### ***Entertainment***

The results also showed that visitors valued the entertainment experiences offered by animal captivity facilities, considering them as family-friendly destinations that combine leisure with learning. According to Fennell and Coose (n.d.), entertainment is defined as the diversion and/or enjoyment experienced by an audience from viewing an animal performance, with “performance” defined as an animal exhibiting a behavior for an audience. The results of this study discovered that the presence of various entertainments in animal captivity facilities is a positive factor that leads these facilities to attract domestic tourists. Various entertainment activities provided in these facilities have made these places have a significance contribution in promoting domestic tourism in Tanzania, where people of all ages visit these facilities to have fun and enjoyment. According to Ahmad et al (2015), zoos have been the sites of display of wild animals and source of entertainment for public. Therefore, this study reveals that entertainments contribute to the positive perceptions of domestic tourists towards animal captivity facilities in Tanzania.

### ***Conservation Impact***

Based on the findings of the study, positive perceptions also extended to the role of animal captivity facilities in protecting endangered species and promoting biodiversity conservation. According to the study several respondents acknowledged that this facility helps safeguard species that might otherwise face extinction. According to Ahmad et al (2015) zoos are either considered as conservation centers or refuge centers for animals, which protect them from threats due to anthropogenic activities. Also this study exhibited that domestic tourists recognize significance of these facilities through their conservation efforts of various animal species and believe when they visit they are involved in contributing to wildlife conservation.

### ***Economic Contribution***

The results also showed that, respondents recognized the potential of animal captivity facilities to boost local economies through job creation, tourism revenue, and supporting local businesses. Spooner et al (2023) argue that the facility like zoo are hugely valuable to the economy as businesses and tourist destinations and they address decent work and economic growth by employing local people, using local suppliers, and also bringing people into an area. Furthermore, this study has revealed that most domestic tourists believe the presence of these facilities contributes to the economic growth of the people around them by providing various

jobs; stimulate local business which is the opportunity for local to sell various products to tourists and also to these facilities hence contributing to the economic development from local to national level.

### ***Neutral Perceptions***

This study discovered the presence of neutral perceptions that points to areas that require attention. According to the study a minority of respondents expressed mixed perceptions, recognizing the benefits of animal captivity facilities but raising concerns about certain aspects including:

### ***Animal Welfare***

According to Sueur and Pele (2019), animal welfare is defined as the absence of suffering and the respect of animal's needs, not only imperative and nutritional – which would mean good treatment – but also behavioral. The results showed that some respondents questioned the conditions in which animals are kept, particularly regarding cage sizes, hygiene, and overall care. Ethical considerations play a significant role in shaping perceptions, as poor welfare standards can weaken the appeal of animal captivity facilities. Ensuring that animals are kept in environments that closely mimic their natural habitats and adhering to international welfare standards can enhance public trust and satisfaction. Respecting animal welfare is an ethical issue (Sueur and Pele, 2019). Therefore, this study suggests that, in order to eliminate or discourage doubts about some negative perception of animal care in these facilities, are the responsibilities for facilities Managers and Staff to improve the environment of these facilities by making them attractive to visitors by maintaining hygiene, and ensuring animals are properly maintained and are in good shape all the time.

### ***Cost of Access***

This study also reveals neutral respondents highlighted concerns over entrance fees, which they perceived as high, potentially limiting accessibility for average domestic tourists. Affordable entry fees can make animal captivity facilities more inclusive, encouraging visits from broader demographic domestic tourists. Mato and Mosoma (2022) suggested that affordable price is important in increasing visitors to the destination. Also, this study suggests that, balancing affordability with operational costs is essential for maintaining visitor numbers without compromising facility quality. Moreover, this study has revealed the importance of animal captivity facilities to review the entrance fees so that they do not become the reason for the local tourists to fail to visit these important attractions of domestic tourism, while great efforts are being made to inform tourists about significance of these fees in the conservation of various types of wildlife being kept in these facilities. Furthermore, this study also suggests

that, as the communities will be educated regularly on the importance of their contribution to the conservation, the number of visitors will increase and eliminate the negative views concerning the access cost to these facilities.

### ***Community Engagement***

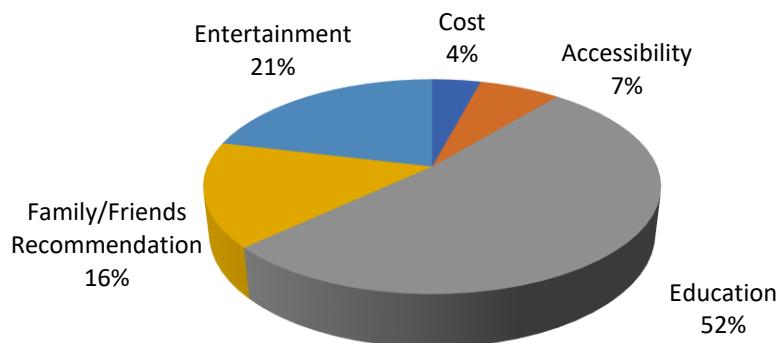
The result also showed that some respondents indicated doubts about the extent to which animal captivity facilities engage and benefit local communities, suggesting a need for greater involvement in community-related initiatives. Kabote (2020) argue that once happy with income from tourism the local communities would embrace tourism in their community making tourists feel welcome in these areas and reduce animosity and hostility towards the tourism industry. Therefore, the study discovered that, strengthening ties with local communities through employment opportunities, educational programs, and direct support (e.g.; offering school trips, creating community gardens, organizing clean-ups, promoting conservancy etc) can improve perceptions and ensure the long-term sustainability of animal captivity facilities, and reducing this doubt of community engagement in animal captivity facilities activities.

### ***Negative Perceptions***

Notably, the results showed that, there were no respondents who expressed completely negative perceptions of animal captivity facilities, indicating a generally favorable public attitude towards these facilities. This study demonstrates that, domestic tourists in Tanzania generally have favorable perceptions of animal captivity facilities, recognizing their importance in education, entertainment, conservation and economic growth.

### **Factors Influencing Decision to Visit /Revisit Animal Captivity Facilities**

This study reveals that majority of respondents (52.05%) indicated that education was their primary motivation for visiting or repeat visitation to animal captivity facilities, followed by entertainment (21.23%), family and friends recommendations (15.75%), Accessibility (6.85%), and cost (4.11%), while none of the respondents identified ethical issues as a motivating factor for their visitation.



**Figure 4. Factors Influencing Tourists' Decisions to Visit or Revisit Animal Captivity Facilities**

### ***Education Values***

Due to the fact that more than half of the respondents (52.05%) selected education as the main reason for visiting/revisiting animal captivity facilities underscores the importance of these facilities as learning environments. These facilities serve as stand for raising responsiveness regarding wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and ecological importance of various animal species. Most domestic tourists visit or revisit animal captivity facilities with the intent to gain knowledge, often in the context of educational trips organized by schools, families, or community groups. Greenwell et al (2023) found that a school, college or University trip, or family and friends visit to the zoo, to learn more about the natural world. Educational benefits can be further enhanced by offering guided tours, interpretive signage, and interactive learning experiences. These discoveries line up with prior studies by Ab Dulhamad et al (2022) suggesting that, the motivation to want to seek knowledge and innovation is the main thrust that drives travel generation. Therefore, this study suggests that since education is the primary motivator, animal captivity facilities should invest in creating rich, informative experiences. This can include workshops, guided tours, and partnerships with schools and universities to develop specialized programs in order to motivate more people to visit these facilities with the aim of increasing their knowledge.

### ***Entertainment***

These results also showed that, recreational appeal of animal captivity facilities was the second most cited factor. These facilities offer engaging and enjoyable experiences, such as animal shows, interactive exhibits, and visually appealing environments, attract visitors seeking leisure and relaxation. Hence, entertainment is regarded as an important motivator while making holiday decision (Soteriades and Gowreesunkar, 2015). This emphasizes the dual role of animal captivity facilities as both educational and entertainment venues, combining fun with learning to cater to diverse visitor preferences. Also Soteriades and Gowreesunkar

(2015) found that leisure, entertainment and recreational facilities are a pull factor for tourists to visit an exotic destination.

Moreover, this study suggests that, facilities should ensure that their entertainment offerings are diverse and engaging, appealing to visitors of all ages so as to boost the number of domestic visitors.

### ***Family and Friends Recommendations***

The results showed that, recommendations from family and friends were identified as the third most significant factor, reflecting the social nature of tourism. Visitors often rely on trusted opinions when deciding on travel destinations, and positive word-of-mouth can significantly influence visitation patterns. According to Hallman and Benbow (2007), family leisure such as a trip to the zoo is the sort of activity understood by experts and parents alike as central to satisfactory family life. This finding highlights the importance of maintaining high quality experiences at animal captivity facilities to encourage positive recommendations. Moreover, this study discovered that, encouraging visitors to share their experience online and offline can help increase awareness and visitation. Social media is one of the developments in digital technology that allows people to easily communicate with many others regardless of location using the internet (Ramadhani and Fikri, 2024). In addition, offering discounts or group packages could capitalize on the social influence factor.

### ***Accessibility***

According to the results accessibility was cited by a smaller percentage of respondents. Factors such as proximity to urban centers, transportation availability, and infrastructure quality likely played a role in influencing this choice. According to Swantari et al (2024) tourism accessibility is the ease or difficulty with which individuals or groups can visit and enjoy specific tourist destinations, and this includes aspects of transportation, facilities for people with special needs, available information, safety and health, and the availability and quality of accommodation. This study discovered that improving access through better roads, public transportation options, and clearer signage could help attract more visitors to these facilities.

### ***Cost***

These results also showed that only a small percentage of respondents identified cost as a critical factor in their decision to visit *or revisit* animal captivity facilities. This suggests that the majority of domestic tourists perceive the entry fees as reasonable and they are willing to pay for the educational and entertainment value provided by these facilities. Novarlia (2022) when studied the influence of price on visiting decisions suggested that “the better the price, the better the decision to visit will be. However, this study discovered that making pricing

strategies inclusive, such as offering discounts for students and families, can help attract a wider audience and stimulate domestic tourism sector within the country.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

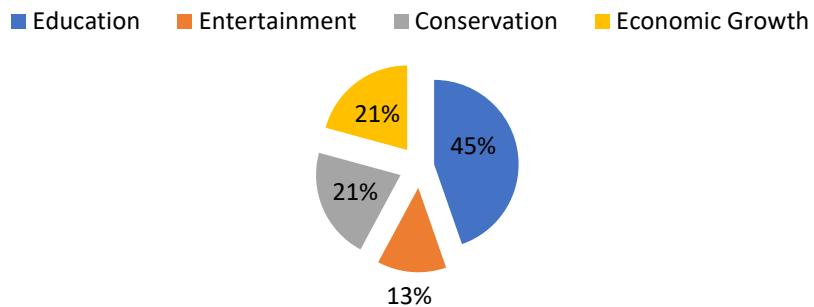
It is notable that based on the findings, no respondents selected ethical consideration as a factor influencing their visitation. This could indicate a lack of awareness or concerns regarding issues such as animal wellbeing and the right treatment of captive creatures. Also the study discovered that, most respondents are primarily focused on the personal benefits of visiting animal captivity facilities, such as education and entertainment, rather than the conditions under which animals are kept. While no participants selected ethical concerns as a direct motivator, ethical issues emerged as recurrent theme in observation and during the interviews, where some participants raised concerns about animal welfare and the implication of captivity. For instance, one facility staff member noted that “some visitors question whether keeping animals in cages aligns with conservation goals” (Interview, Facility Staff, Mkwawa Zoo) underscoring the presence of ethical tensions. However, ethical considerations are not cited as a motivating factor for domestic tourists to visits such facilities, but according to Shani & Pizam (2009) the international trend in zoos of improving animal welfare through environmental enrichments is valuable (in addition to ensuring the animals’ well-being) for creating more acceptable, pleasant and interesting zoo visit experiences.

Moreover, this study suggests that while ethical consideration was not a factor for respondents to visit, animal captivity facilities should proactively promote their commitment to animal welfare and conservation, and this can help to enhance public trust and attract ethically minded visitors.

## **The Overall Impacts of Animal Captivity Facilities on Domestic Tourism**

### ***Benefits/Positive Impacts***

According to the results respondents were asked to identify the key benefits that animal captivity facilities provide to domestic tourism and education was the most significant benefit with 44.65% of respondents, followed with conservation (21.38%), economic growth (20.75%), and entertainment with 13.21%.



**Figure 5. Perceived Benefits of Animal Captivity Facilities for Domestic Tourism**

### ***Education***

This study revealed that education emerged as the most significant benefit, with 44.65% of respondents identifying it as the primary reason for visiting animal captivity facilities. These facilities are viewed as crucial platforms for learning about wildlife conservation, animal behavior, and environmental sustainability (Basera & Godfrey, 2025). Ballantyne and Packer (2016) found that, with a large and growing number of visitors, zoos and aquariums present themselves as enthusiastic and important players in the delivery of free-choice conservation learning experience. Also this study reveals that, schools, families, and community groups frequently organize trips to animal captivity facilities to educate students and young people, making animal captivity facilities essential for raising awareness about Tanzania's biodiversity. Therefore, this study suggests that given the importance of education as a key benefit, animal captivity facilities should prioritize creating engaging and informative programs for visitors. Also collaborating with schools and universities to design curricula and offering interactive exhibits can enhance the learning experience as a key benefit that animal captivity facilities provide to domestic tourism within the country.

### ***Conservation***

The outcome also unveiled that, second leading benefit was conservation, highlighted by 21.38% of respondents. This study discloses that, these facilities perform an essential function in protecting endangered species, providing safe habitats for animals that might not survive in the wild, and supporting breeding programs. By showcasing these efforts, animal captivity facilities foster a sense of responsibility and awareness among domestic tourists about the importance of wildlife preservation. Sherwen & Hemsworth (2019) suggests that, visitors can also contribute financially to zoo-based conservation through donations and entry fees. To solidify their role in conservation, this study also suggests that, animal captivity facilities should continue to invest in breeding programs, habitats restoration, and partnerships with conservation organizations. The prominent argument for legitimizing animal-based

attractions is their role in conservation, realized notably by activities such as genetic management and captive breeding (Shani and Pizam, 2010). Therefore, this study discovered that, educating visitors and public in general about these efforts can foster greater appreciation and support for wildlife preservation.

### ***Economic Growth***

The result showed that animal captivity facilities also contribute to economic growth, with 20.75% of respondents recognizing their role in generating revenue for local communities and the national economy. This study further discovered that, these facilities create employment opportunities for locals, attract domestic visitors, and stimulate other sectors, such as transportation, hospitality, and food services. Kabote (2020) found that, domestic tourism is a key driver of local economic development in destination region. In addition, this study suggests that, highlighting the economic benefits of animal captivity facilities, such as job creation and community development, can increase public and government support, and offering opportunities for local businesses to collaborate with animal captivity facilities can further enhance their economic impact.

### ***Entertainment***

Finally, the results showed that 13.21% of respondents cited entertainment as also a benefit. This study reveals that animal captivity facilities offer enjoyable and recreational experiences, making them popular destinations for families, groups, and individuals seeking leisure activities. Also the study discovered that, features such as animal shows, interactive exhibits, and aesthetically designed facilities add to their appeal as entertainment hubs. Entertaining visitors is arguably necessary to ensure effective learning experiences, especially when these are aimed at children and people who feel they are visiting zoos as part of a leisure experience (Carr & Cohen, 2011). So this study advises animal captivity facilities to continue improving their entertainment services so that they can quench the thirst of entertainment for all ages and this will increase the number of domestic tourists visiting these facilities.

### ***Negative Impacts/Challenges***

The negatives effect mentioned included: negative perceptions of captivity, ethical concerns and lack of skilled personnel to guide visitors and care for animals diminishes the overall experiences and satisfaction of domestic tourists.

### ***Negative Perceptions of Captivity***

This study reveals that, some domestic tourist's views animal captivity facilities as unethical due to the confinement of animals, raising concerns about animal welfare. Negative

animal welfare perceptions were commonly reported to have a negative impact on zoo visitor experience, though welfare perception was not always a contributing factor to visitor satisfaction (Phillips et al, 2024). This discovered that, this is one of the negative feelings about the attitude of some people on these facilities. Some people see these facilities as the places which are not treating animals fairly by keeping them in custody and taking away their freedom. Furthermore, these negative thoughts affect to some extent the image of these facilities to the public. Therefore, this study suggests that, facilities managers should make sure that, they care about animal welfare in order to reduce these negative perceptions about animal captivity facilities to the public.

### ***Ethical Concerns***

Zoos are one of these animal-based industries that have experienced increased public scrutiny and are unique in that the standards of care and welfare of the animals are generally on display to the public and, therefore, open to judgments (Sherwen & Hemsworth, 2019). This study discovered that issues such as insufficient space for animals, enclosure hygiene and inadequate veterinary services, can affects the overall ethical concerns of these facilities. For instance, one facility staff member noted during discussion: "Many visitors enjoy the experience at first, but later some complain about the welfare of animals, especially when they see limited space or feeding conditions" (FGD, Staff Member, Mkwawa Magic site). These insights suggest that while ethical concerns do not drive visitation, they influence post-visit perceptions, potentially shaping repeat visitation and word of mouth recommendation.

### ***Inadequate Skilled Personnel***

One key area in which zoos need to focus, however, is the recruitment of professional field conservation scientists onto their staff, also zoos need to be seen by conservation graduates as attractive places to work (Zimmermann, 2010). A shortage of trained staff can lead to poor visitor experiences and dissatisfaction among tourists. Musa et al (2015) argued that the tourist experience is created through the process of visiting, seeing, learning, enjoying and living in different life models. Therefore, to mitigate the negative effects and enhance the positive contributions of animal captivity facilities to domestic tourism, the following measures are recommended.

### ***High Costs***

The results showed that some respondents highlighted the high entrance fees as a challenge, particularly for families and low-income individuals. Mearns and Liebenberg (2018) found that some users of the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa have reported that entrance fees are too high. Moreover, this study discovered that, while the majority of visitors

considered the cost reasonable given the value provided, lowering fees or offering discounts could make animal captivity facilities more accessible to a broader audience. Mearns & Liebenberg (2018) suggested that discount entry fees could be made available to users that purchase their tickets online, making it an attractive option and this would also be attracting users to visit zoo website more often. Therefore, this study discovered that making facilities more affordable by introducing tiered pricing structures, discounts for families and students can make animal captivity facilities more accessible to a larger audience.

The study finally reveals that, animal captivity facilities produce a substantial and largely beneficial effect on domestic tourism in Tanzania. Their contributions to education, conservation, economic growth, and entertainment make them invaluable assets to the domestic tourism sector. While minor concerns about ethics and costs exist, these issues are manageable and should not overshadow the benefits these facilities provide.

### **Results from Regression and Correlation Analyses Examining Factors Influencing Repeat Visitation**

The regression model examining factors influencing repeat visitation was statistically significant, explaining 55% of the variance in return visits ( $R^2 = 0.55$ ,  $F(5,14) = 3.42$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Among the predictors, education (52%) emerged as the strongest and significant determinant ( $p < 0.05$ ), while entertainment (21%) showed a positive but marginal effect ( $p < 0.10$ ). Other factors, including accessibility (7%), cost (4%), and family/friends' recommendation (16%), were not significant predictors. Correlation analysis further confirmed that repeat visitation was positively associated with education and entertainment, whereas cost and social recommendation had negligible influence. These findings highlight the importance of educational and recreational values in sustaining visitor loyalty, suggesting that captivity facilities should prioritize enriching learning experiences and engaging entertainment to encourage repeat visit. For instance, one facility manager state that "Most of our domestic visitors come because of the educational programs – schools, parents, and families see real value in bringing children here to learn about wildlife (Interview, Facility Manager, Rondo Farm).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study examined the effects of animal captivity facilities on domestic tourism in Tanzania, focusing on their roles in promoting tourism through education, conservation, recreation, and economic contributions. This study has proved that animal captivity facilities play a crucial role in enhancing domestic tourism by providing accessible wildlife experiences, contributing to local economic development, and fostering conservation awareness among visitors. Furthermore, the study identified various factors influencing domestic tourists'

decisions to visit these facilities, including educational value, entertainment, and recommendations from family and friends.

This study also reveals that, despite their significance, these facilities face several challenges, including high operational costs, inadequate skilled personnel, ethical concerns related to animal welfare, and limited promotional efforts. While the majority of respondents perceive animal captivity facilities positively, a small proportion raised concerns regarding the welfare of animals, the affordability of entrance fees, and the overall management of these facilities. Moreover, the study highlighted that effective promotion strategies, improved facility infrastructure, and enhanced community involvement are necessary to maximize the potential of animal captivity facilities in boosting domestic tourism in Tanzania. The findings suggest that policymakers and facility managers should prioritize educational programming, recreational values, ethical standards, and community engagement as central strategies to enhance tourist experiences and ensure sustainability of these facilities within the domestic tourism market. While the study was limited by its relatively small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and concentration on selected facilities in Tanzania, which may constrain the generalizability of results across broader contexts. Moreover, further studies should adopt larger, more diverse samples and apply longitudinal or comparative designs across different regions. Also, integrating advanced qualitative analysis and experimental approaches could provide deeper insights into visitor perceptions, ethical debates, and the long term impact of animal captivity facilities on tourism development.

Therefore, this study uncovers that animal captivity facilities remain an essential component of Tanzania's domestic tourism sector. However, their full potential can only be realized through sustainable management practices, ethical considerations and strategic investment in infrastructure and marketing. Strengthening collaborations between facility managers, policy makers, and stakeholders will be crucial in addressing the existing challenges and ensuring that animal captivity facilities contribute meaningfully to the growth of domestic tourism while promoting conservation and economic development.

## **Recommendations**

In order to address the challenges and enhance animal captivity facilities contribution to domestic tourism, the following recommendations are proposed under this study:

### ***Improving Facility Infrastructure***

The study recommends that, animal captivity facilities should upgrade animal enclosures and visitor amenities to meet International standards and visitor's satisfactions. Also these facilities should prioritize animal welfare by ensuring proper veterinary care, enrichment programs, and adequate living spaces. Furthermore, the finding of this study

indicate that, this recommendation will help animal captivity facilities to meet the expectations of visitors, thus increasing the number of domestic tourists visiting these facilities, hence contributing to the growth of domestic tourism within the country.

### ***Strengthening Promotion Strategies***

It is strongly recommended that, animal captivity facilities should enhance e- marketing efforts through social media initiatives, brand ambassadorships, and website optimization, while collaborate with local media to increase awareness and visibility. Also it is recommended that, these facilities should introduce innovative visitor experience, such as interactive tours, promotional merchandise and educational programs, to attract diverse audience hence increase number of new domestic tourists and also return tourists.

### ***Addressing Cost and Accessibility Issues***

The findings of this study indicate that, offer discounted entrance fees for specific groups, such as students and families will help these groups to find it easy to pay entrance fees and make animal captivity facilities more accessible, thus leading to different social groups within the communities seeing that they can also afford to visit these facilities while in their groups. Also it further recommended that the improvement of the infrastructure, especially the roads that connect animal captivity facilities and other areas, contributes to the ease for visitors to reach these facilities without spending a lot of money.

### ***Building Community Engagement***

The study also recommends that, these facilities should involve local communities in animal captivity facilities operations through awareness campaigns, volunteer opportunities and partnerships. Also these facilities should create initiatives that ensure local communities benefit directly from tourism revenue. This will increase the participation and support of the communities surrounding in various animal captivity facilities activities. But it will also increase the enthusiasm of these community members to visit these facilities, thus contributing to the growth of domestic tourism in the country.

### ***Developing Human Resource Capacity***

It is recommended that, animal captivity facilities should organize regular training programs for staff in areas such as animal care, tourism management, and customer service. This will help in the provision of professional services to meet the need of customers. But it also helps employees to grow in practice and to be confident with the service they provide to their customers. Also the study recommends that, animal captivity facilities should also partner with educational institutions to provide internships and skills development opportunities. So by

providing internship programs with practical skills and knowledge will also help to build the capacity of employees and volunteers, hence provide decent services to visitors. Therefore, by developing employees in various professional training will help them providing good services to visitors hence leads to an increase in visitors' number and even many will prefer to return to visit these facilities while build good relationships with the communities surrounding these facilities.

### ***Diversifying Revenue Streams***

Based on the suggestions given by respondents, animal captivity facilities management should introduce additional activities such as guided tours, themed events, and merchandise sales to generate income. Innovation in various field of service delivery will contribute to increasing the values of these facilities, thus attracting more visitors and leading these facilities to earn more income, thus operating efficiently. Also, it is further recommended that, animal captivity facilities management should seek partnerships with Government agencies, NGOs, and private investors for funding and support. This will lead these facilities to get more money to run themselves and improve their infrastructure and services rather than relying only on entry fees from visitors.

### ***Increasing Funding***

This study discovered that animal captivity facilities can seek partnerships with government-owned companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private investors in order to secure financial support. The development of more collaborative links and strategic alliances with other components of both business and government, in this way, zoos are more likely to develop new marketing opportunities, rise funding for their capital works projects, and contribute to and promote their contribution to wildlife conservation (Kimeto & Mkwizu, 2024). Therefore, this study suggests that animal captivity facilities management should increase some efforts to increase funds and by collaborating with some governmental and non-governmental institutions, these facilities will obtain financial support to operate these facilities smoothly.

### ***Promoting Ethical Practices***

The findings of this study indicate that, animal captivity facilities should implement transparent policies that emphasize ethical treatment of animals. This will help to awaken the spirit of trust, especially by those who have negative opinions about the services that animals receive in these facilities. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that, not only to have a good policy but these facilities should show in practice that they give these animals their basic rights and services. Also, this study recommends that, animal captivity facilities should

educate visitors about the conservation role of animal captivity facilities to address ethical concerns and improve public perception. The provision of education on the importance of these facilities in the conservation of wildlife to visitors who come to visit these facilities will increase the influence and raise the spirit of more people to visit these facilities and have the feeling of contributing to the conservation of wildlife in general.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Finally, this study recommends that, animal captivity facilities should establish a system to regularly assess the performance of animal captivity facilities in term of visitor satisfaction, animal welfare, and economic impact. This efficiency measurement will help to know if the services provided satisfy visitors or best way to improve them to meet the interest of different visitors. Moreover, the study also suggests that, animal captivity facilities should use feedback from visitor and stakeholders to guide continuous improvement. Visitor's feedback also helps in building motivation for the staff of these facilities if the comments compliment the services they provide, but also to adjust and improve the services based on the visitors' opinions. Therefore, measuring yourself is the best way to make these facilities provide better services to visitors, thus creating an influence on visitors and society in general and contributing to the development of domestic tourism in the country.

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