

Coaching and Mentorship: A tool for Accelerating Tourism Development in Tanzania

Ladislaus Batinoluho

The Open University of Tanzania

Corresponding Author: darksky.tanzania@gmail.com

Abstract

The tourism sector in Tanzania, largely composed of small and medium-sized enterprises, faces persistent challenges, including high business failure rates, limited managerial skills, inadequate access to finance, and low service quality. Despite the sector's significant contribution to employment and economic growth, structured coaching and mentorship programs remain limited, restricting opportunities for skills development, innovation, and competitiveness. This study examines the role of coaching and mentorship in promoting tourism development in Tanzania, with objectives to assess awareness and experience, identify skills gaps, explore barriers and opportunities, and propose a context-appropriate framework. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining surveys, interviews, and document review to collect data from tourism business operators and key industry stakeholders. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Findings reveal low awareness and limited participation in formal mentorship programs, pre-entry skill deficiencies among entrepreneurs, a shortage of professional mentors, fragmented coordination among stakeholders, and insufficient financial resources, yet there is strong willingness among youth- and women-led enterprises to engage in coaching initiatives. Based on these results, the study proposes a structured, inclusive coaching and mentorship framework emphasizing practical skill transfer, service quality, innovation, and alignment with industry standards. It recommends institutionalizing well-funded, coordinated mentorship programs to enhance managerial competence, workforce development, and enterprise competitiveness, thereby fostering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable tourism growth in Tanzania.

Keywords: *Tourism, Coaching, Mentorship, MSMTEs, Tanzania, Competitiveness*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Coaching and mentorship are increasingly recognized globally as effective strategies for strengthening human capital, improving service

quality, and addressing leadership and talent management challenges in tourism, a sector characterized by high staff turnover and fragmented organizational structures (Gannon et al., 2021). Grounded in social capital theory, these developmental relationships foster cross-organizational networks that support individual career development and organizational continuity. Empirical evidence further shows that coaching and mentorship enhance innovation, creativity, and career progression among tourism stakeholders (Eissner & Gannon, 2018).

In Tanzania, coaching and mentorship are particularly relevant for youth empowerment and employment, given the dominance of micro, small, and medium tourism enterprises (MSMTEs). These enterprises play a key role in absorbing young workers, although their capacity is shaped by internal factors such as experience and access to capital, and external factors like recruitment practices (Lesseri, 2022). Structured coaching and mentorship programs can strengthen youth employability and entrepreneurial skills, especially in rural and community-based tourism (CBT) contexts, where entrepreneurial knowledge and ongoing mentorship have been shown to support poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods (Mungure & Kalwani, 2025).

Several initiatives in Tanzania demonstrate the practical application of coaching and mentorship in tourism, including sustainability training programs for tour operators and community actors (Purnomo & Purwandari, 2025), youth-focused schemes such as Tanzania Youth Tourism and the Tui Care Foundation in Zanzibar (Munthali, 2025; Baum & Robinson, 2024), and CBT initiatives like the Cultural Tourism Programme and Tengeru Cultural Tourism Programme (Labadi et al., 2021; Swai, 2015). Professionalization efforts, including the Kilimanjaro Porter Assistance Project and capacity-building programs such as Catalyste+ and the Sida–UDSM initiative, further illustrate the benefits of mentorship for service quality and enterprise development (University of Dar es Salaam, 2025). However, these initiatives remain largely localized and project-based, underscoring the need for coordinated, sector-wide coaching and mentorship strategies to achieve broader and more sustainable impacts.

The emphasis on coaching and mentorship in Tanzania's tourism sector is driven by persistent skills gaps, weak managerial capacity, and high staff turnover, particularly among micro, small, and medium-sized tourism enterprises (MSMTEs) (Lesseri, 2022). Although Tanzania is endowed with rich natural and cultural tourism resources, many operators and

employees lack the entrepreneurial, managerial, and service-oriented skills required to compete effectively. Coaching and mentorship offer structured and context-specific mechanisms for skills development, knowledge transfer, and experiential learning, helping tourism businesses, workers, and community stakeholders improve performance and service quality.

This rationale is further strengthened by the sector's reliance on youth participation, community-based tourism, and its broader economic importance. Young people and community actors often lack practical skills, professional networks, and exposure to industry standards, gaps that mentorship programs can address through guidance, innovation support, and career development (STTA Kenya, 2024). Given tourism's significant contribution to employment, GDP, and foreign exchange earnings, investing in human capital through coaching and mentorship is critical for long-term sustainability, reduced business failure, and inclusive growth (Bykova et al., 2024).

The main objective of this study is to assess the application of the coaching and mentorship in the tourism sector in Tanzania. Specifically, the study aims to: (i) determine the current level of awareness and experience with coaching and mentorship among MSMTEs in Tanzania; (ii) identify skills gaps and capacity needs among MSMTEs in the country; (iii) determine the key barriers and opportunities for implementing coaching and mentorship in the tourism sector; and (iv) Suggest ways of conceptualizing a context-appropriate coaching and mentorship framework for tourism development in Tanzania.

On the other hand, the study was guided by a couple of research questions, including: (i) What is the current level of awareness and experience with coaching and mentorship among MSMTEs in Tanzania? (ii) What skills gaps and capacity needs exist among MSMTEs? (iii) What are the key barriers and opportunities for implementing coaching and mentorship in the tourism sector? and (iv) How can a context-appropriate coaching and mentorship framework for tourism development in Tanzania be conceptualized?

2.0 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theoretical review

The theoretical review highlights coaching and mentorship as critical human capital development strategies that enhance skills, service quality, innovation, and sustainability in the tourism sector. Drawing from human

capital theory and social capital perspectives, coaching and mentorship are shown to facilitate knowledge transfer, experiential learning, leadership development, and network building across tourism systems (Baum, 2015; Morrison, 2013; Garavan et al., 2020). These approaches are particularly relevant in tourism, an industry characterized by fragmented structures, high labor mobility, and skills-intensive service delivery. However, theory also emphasizes persistent structural constraints, including limited financial resources, shortages of qualified mentors, weak institutional frameworks, and poor monitoring mechanisms, which undermine program effectiveness (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020; Ladkin & Weber, 2011). Additionally, theoretical work underscores the growing importance of aligning mentorship with digital transformation and contextual needs, warning that mismatches between mentor expertise and sectoral demands can reduce impact (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015; Blackman et al., 2016).

Empirical evidence from both international and Tanzanian contexts demonstrates that coaching and mentorship significantly contribute to tourism enterprise development, youth employment, community empowerment, and sector competitiveness. Studies from Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, Thailand, and Australia show that mentorship improves managerial capacity, service standards, sustainability practices, and market access for tourism MSMEs and community-based tourism initiatives (Achuti et al., 2025; Rogerson, 2007; Procknow, 2017; Chaiyakot et al., 2023; Scherrer, 2020). In Tanzania, empirical findings reveal that MSMTes dominate the tourism sector and play a vital role in youth and women's employment, yet face challenges related to informality, limited access to capital, and skills mismatches (Rhou et al., 2016; Lesseri, 2021; Tryphone & Mkenda, 2023). Evidence also shows that despite the presence of numerous tourism training institutions, weak industry linkages limit skills relevance (Mirondo, 2021). Across studies, mentorship initiatives though impactful are often localized, project-based, and constrained by financial, cultural, and technological barriers, highlighting the need for structured, scalable, and context-sensitive coaching frameworks to support the long-term growth and resilience of tourism MSMTes (Stone & Nyaupane, 2018; Xiang et al., 2021).

2.2 Conceptual framework

Figure 1 presents the coaching and mentorship conceptual framework, in which the independent variables constitute the inputs that initiate and shape developmental outcomes among employees. These include the quality of coaching, frequency of coaching sessions, and the competence

of the coach, all of which determine the level of guidance, feedback, and performance support that employees receive. Similarly, the quality of mentorship, duration of the mentorship relationship, and the industry expertise of the mentor influence the depth of career guidance and psychosocial support provided to mentees. In addition, organizational support, such as the availability of training policies, resources, and a conducive learning environment, plays a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of coaching and mentorship programmes. These independent variables collectively determine the strength and direction of developmental interventions within organizations, especially in skill-intensive sectors such as tourism.

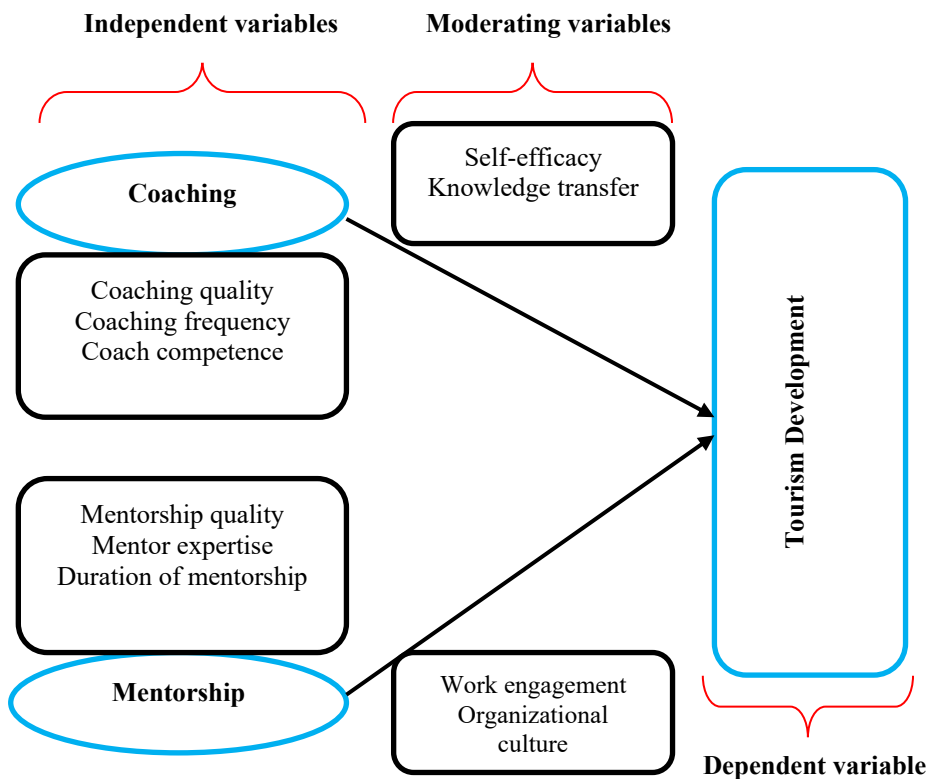


Figure 1: Coaching and mentorship conceptual framework
 Source: Author's construct, 2025

Briefly, tourism development is conceptualized as the dependent variable that improves through effective coaching and mentorship interventions, reflected at the individual level by enhanced skills, competencies, motivation, confidence, and career progression, and at the sectoral level by improved service quality, productivity, employee retention, and innovation (Baum, 2015; Garavan et al., 2020). The framework assumes

that consistent, high-quality coaching and mentorship strengthen employee engagement and competence, translating into better organizational performance and competitiveness in the tourism industry. However, the effectiveness of this relationship is shaped by intervening and moderating variables such as organizational culture, employee readiness to learn, time availability, management support, and the nature of tourism work, which influence how strongly coaching and mentorship affect outcomes and explain variations in results across different tourism contexts (Morrison, 2013; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020).

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the role of coaching and mentorship in advancing tourism development in Tanzania. The mixed methodology was chosen to capture measurable outcomes alongside subjective experiences, such as perceptions and attitudes, which are critical in understanding coaching and mentorship dynamics (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study enables triangulation of findings, enhancing the validity, depth, and robustness of the analysis.

A purposive and stratified random sampling strategy was adopted to ensure both depth and representativeness. Purposive sampling targeted key informants with direct knowledge of tourism operations and mentorship programs, including business owners, managers, and industry experts, providing rich and sector-specific insights (Morse, 2012). Stratified random sampling was used to proportionally include micro, small, and medium tourism enterprises (MSMTEs) across regions such as Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Dar es Salaam, and Zanzibar, thereby reducing sampling bias and improving comparability across enterprise categories (Etikan et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A total of 252 respondents were selected from over 2,000 MSMTEs, ensuring a balanced and informative sample.

Data collection combined structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to gather quantitative and qualitative evidence. Quantitative data, analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression, explored relationships between coaching practices and enterprise performance. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic content analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, allowing identification of recurring themes, challenges, and best practices in mentorship implementation (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). Ethical standards were rigorously maintained, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, while reliability and validity were reinforced through pre-testing and triangulation of multiple data sources (Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Age Groups of MSMTEs Operators

Figure 2 shows that the majority of were youth 18-35 years (43.3%), followed by adults 36-60 years (41.3%), and elderly owned tourism businesses (14.7%). There was also child headed tourism businesses below 18 years (0.8%). The dominance of youth operated tourism businesses resembles the findings by Lesseri (2021), arguing that youth comprise the largest share of wage-earning staff in the tourism operations.

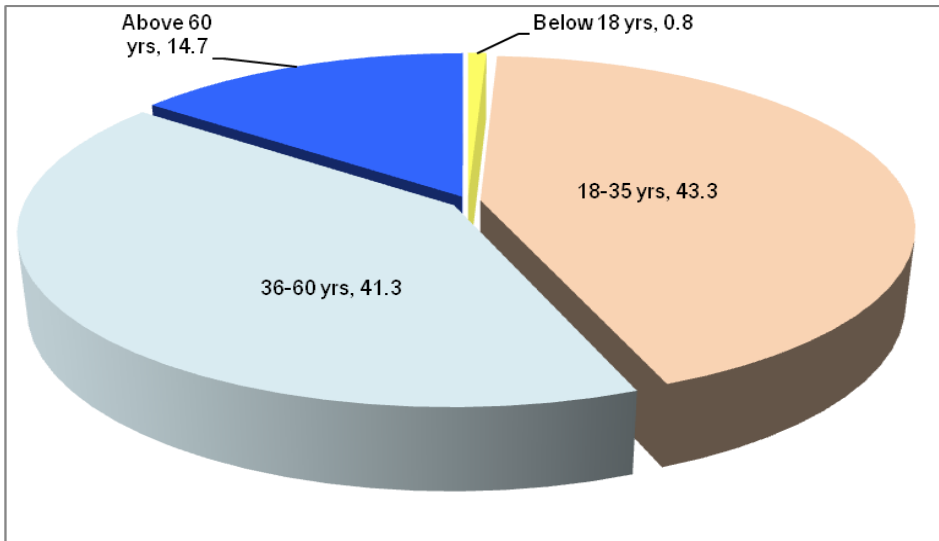


Figure 2: *Distribution of MSMTEs by age group*

4.2 Awareness on Coaching and Mentorship among MSMTEs

This study reveals that, despite the Tanzania tourism sector's rapid growth and increasing competitiveness, majority of travel and tour operators, tour guides, accommodation establishments, food and beverages providers, meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) organizers, and several other tourism value-chain actors, continue to rely on traditional business approaches, with limited awareness of how structured coaching and mentorship can enhance managerial skills, service quality, innovation, and enterprise sustainability. This lack of familiarity is partially explained by a lack of exposure to professional

development programs, a lack of industry-wide awareness of the advantages of coaching, and a lack of connections between tourism businesses and organizations that create capacity. Because of this, the majority of operators lose out on chances to enhance employee performance, implement new technology, and bolster strategic decision-making elements, all of which are critical for prospering in a fast-paced tourism sector.

“I have been in the travel and tour operations for the past 30 years here in Tanzania. I have never experienced coaching and mentorship among the peer companies. We actually see each other as rivals and business competitors. Generally, allow me to say that we are not familiar with coaching and mentorship in our operational practices” (Tour Operator, Arusha)

This idiom illustrates a natural tendency toward mentorship-like relationships within small tourism businesses, where information sharing ought to take place throughout the nation's tourism industry. This draws attention to the gap that has the potential to greatly improve professional growth in the industry.

4.3 Willingness to Participate in Coaching and Mentorship

According to this survey, willingness to participate in coaching and mentorship within Tanzania's tourism sector is generally high, particularly among micro, small, and medium tourism enterprises (MSMTEs) seeking to improve business performance, service quality, and competitiveness in an evolving market. The majority of travel and tour operators, tour guides, accommodation establishments, food and beverages providers, meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) organizers, and community-based tourism actors acknowledge that coaching and mentorship could help address skill gaps in digital marketing, customer service, financial management, product diversification, and sustainability standards. Conversely, the study observes that, despite this positive perception, participation remains constrained by limited awareness of available programs, high training costs, inconsistent access to qualified mentors, and the absence of structured industry-wide mentorship platforms. Younger entrepreneurs and women-led tourism enterprises show especially strong interest, driven by a desire for professional growth and improved market access. Overall, the sector demonstrates significant willingness, which could be unlocked through affordable, accessible, and industry-coordinated coaching and mentorship initiatives.

4.4 Possession of Tourism Business Skills before Entering into Business

This study reveals that the majority of tourism employees and entrepreneurs, especially owners of micro-small and medium tourism enterprises, enter the industry without adequate managerial skills, business development knowledge, customer care training, or innovation capacity. Without mentorship and coaching from experienced professionals, they struggle to adapt to changing market dynamics, digital trends, and international service standards.

In addition, the research found that the majority of prospective tourism entrepreneurs enter the sector with limited formal training in core areas such as hospitality management, digital marketing, financial planning, customer service, and sustainable tourism practices. Similar studies on tourism entrepreneurship such as Ntshangase and Ezeuduji (2025) indicated that, inadequate pre-entry skills often lead to poor business planning, weak branding, ineffective product development, and inability to respond to market dynamics, particularly in the highly competitive safari, beach, and cultural tourism segments. Furthermore, this study has discovered that entrepreneurs who possess foundational skills before launching operations demonstrate stronger business growth, maintain higher service standards, and adapt more effectively to technology-driven trends such as online bookings, social media promotion, and dynamic pricing.

“As a country, we have a serious problem of the skills gap between the requirements in the market and what is taught in the training institutions, not only in the tourism industry but also in other economic sectors. To be very specific, our tourism landscape, which is mainly dominated by MSMTEs, pre-entry skills training through vocational colleges, tourism training institutions, incubators, and mentorship programs is badly needed for addressing the problem of business failure, enhancing professionalism, and promoting sustainable tourism development” (A retired chairperson for Tourism Confederation of Tanzania).

4.5 Skills Gap between Classroom and Tourism Market

The study found the gap is also evident in vocational and higher learning institutions, where practical training and industry linkages are often limited. As a result, new graduates lack exposure to real-world industry challenges. Furthermore, formal mentorship programs led by tourism

associations, government agencies, or private sector networks remain fragmented and underfunded.

“Last year, our hotel hired 2 university graduates (1 food & beverage officer, and another housekeeping & laundry officer) to support us in some operations, especially during peak season, which runs from June through September. I am not saying they failed to cope with the duties they were assigned to, but they really proved that what is taught in the classroom differs from the requirements of the industry” (A five-star accommodation facility Manager, Arusha)

The skills gap issues in the Tanzania’s tourism sector are cited by the majority of scholars. Mhando (2016), reported that Tanzania has a growing number of graduates from tourism, hospitality, and related fields, many lack the practical and entrepreneurial skills required by employers. Mhando notes that, the discrepancy often results in graduates being unprepared for the dynamic and service-oriented nature of the tourism industry.

4.6 Inadequate Coordination of the Efforts

Weak inter-agency collaboration, limited information sharing, and fragmented planning processes create overlaps, inconsistencies, and competition instead of synergy. The study establishes that policies and strategies are sometimes developed at the national level without full alignment with regional and local tourism priorities, leading to gaps in implementation. Additionally, private-sector actors, especially MSMTes, are not always fully engaged in decision-making platforms, reducing the relevance and uptake of policy initiatives. This lack of coordinated mechanisms reduces the efficiency of resource use, slows innovation, weakens marketing efforts, and undermines the country’s ability to deliver a unified tourism brand. Strengthening coordination through integrated planning frameworks, joint stakeholder platforms, and clear communication channels is therefore essential for unlocking the full potential of Tanzania’s tourism sector.

The problem of inadequate coordination among the MSMTes is acknowledged by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism ([MNRT], 2021), that limited stakeholder coordination is a major barrier to effective tourism governance. MNRT’s strategic plan identifies inadequate inter-agency collaboration, poor information-sharing systems, and inconsistent monitoring mechanisms as key issues affecting resource management and tourism promotion. It emphasizes that improving

collaboration between government bodies, private-sector associations, and local communities is essential for strengthening destination branding, improving visitor experiences, and enhancing revenue generation.

“Majority of the businesses here in Zanzibar, do not talk to each other in the fear of revealing secrets of operations. We are actually rivals and competitors, and that is how it has always been”
(Restaurant Operator, Urban Unguja).

4.7 Inadequate Professional Mentors for Coaching and Mentorship

This survey observed that the majority of tourism businesses, especially micro-small and medium-sized firms, struggle to find experienced professionals who can guide employees and entrepreneurs in developing essential skills. The shortage of skilled mentors is partly a reflection of the broader skills gap in the sector, where a large proportion of tour guides and hospitality staff lack advanced training or formal education in tourism management. This gap limits the ability of businesses to offer high-quality services and stifles opportunities for professional growth among local staff.

Furthermore, the study found that tourism training institutions in the country often lack the capacity to provide structured mentoring programs, and where such programs exist, they are usually limited to major urban centers or popular tourist destinations. This leaves many rural areas and emerging tourism hubs underserved. Additionally, many tourism organizations have unclear career pathways, reducing motivation for employees to seek professional growth and diminishing the perceived value of mentorship. Without a formal structure or incentives, senior professionals are less likely to invest their time in coaching junior staff, which exacerbates the shortage of mentorship opportunities.

Similarly, the study notes that without adequate professional guidance, staff may not acquire the necessary skills to provide high-quality services, which can affect the overall competitiveness of Tanzania as a tourist destination. Career growth opportunities remain limited, leading to high turnover rates and the loss of talented individuals to other sectors or countries. Moreover, communities and youth who could benefit from tourism-driven economic development may be left behind, limiting the inclusive growth potential of the sector. Addressing this shortage requires a combination of formal mentorship programs, strengthened training institutions, public-private partnerships, and innovative approaches such as virtual mentorship to extend the reach of experienced professionals to underserved areas.

“Our hotel has been looking for someone who could coach some of our staff on anti-money laundering and fraud, which is done electronically, without success. We resolved to hire a person from South Africa” (Accommodation Operator, Arusha).

The lack of professional mentors for coaching and mentorship in the tourism sector was also revealed by Sanga (2020), in their research on skills development in Tanzania, arguing that there is a serious mismatch between what training institutions produce and what the tourism and hospitality industry requires. They discovered that many graduates lack the competencies needed by employers, such as practical and soft skills.

4.8 Inadequate Financial Resources for Coaching and Mentorship

This research found that the majority of tourism institutions, especially the government bodies and private sector actors, often operate under tight budgets, limiting their ability to implement comprehensive mentorship programs. It was further discovered that, although the bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) occasionally support capacity-building initiatives, these are often project-based and unsustainable over the long term. Likewise, the dominance of foreign professionals in senior management positions in some tourism businesses, such as accommodation establishments and travel and tour operators, confines the availability of local intellectuals for aspiring Tanzanian tourism professionals. As a result, young employees and community-based entrepreneurs often lack access to guidance that could help them advance in the sector.

Several scholars have reported the problem of inadequate financial resources for coaching and mentorship, particularly among micro, small, and medium tourism enterprises (MSMTEs). Ngalesoni et al. (2020), in their study on the effectiveness of mentoring programs for women entrepreneurs in Babati District, found that while mentorship positively influenced business empowerment and decision-making, limited access to financial resources significantly constrained the ability of women to fully benefit from such programs. The study emphasized that without sufficient funding, entrepreneurs could not sustain or expand the skills and guidance gained through mentorship initiatives. Likewise, Mbowe (2021) revealed that although mentoring improved business knowledge and operational skills, many enterprises lacked the financial capacity to implement the recommended strategies or scale their businesses. The scholar notes that

the lack of financial support not only hinders the effectiveness of mentorship but also limits long-term business growth, highlighting the interdependence between financial resources and mentorship outcomes.

4.9 Experience and demand for coaching and mentorship in tourism sector

This research establishes that the apparent skills gap in the industry has further driven the need for structured mentorship programs. Several local tourism businesses struggle with a shortage of qualified managers and operational staff, as well as gaps in soft skills such as leadership, communication, and strategic planning. While higher education institutions, including universities and technical colleges, provide formal training, there is often a mismatch between the skills imparted and the practical demands of the tourism sector. Mentorship and coaching programs, therefore, serve as critical interventions to bridge this gap, offering practical guidance and experience-based learning that cannot be fully captured through classroom education alone. The same aspects were mentioned by the Tanzania Commission for Universities ([TCU] (2024) and The Citizen (2023). This study found that the majority of the tourism entrepreneurs, especially those running micro, small, and medium tourism enterprises, have limited exposure to structured mentorship programs. The majority of the operators in the tourism sector rely on informal peer learning or on-the-job experience rather than formal coaching mechanisms.

4.10 Proposed coaching and mentorship framework for Tanzania

Figure 3 presents the proposed framework for coaching and mentorship in Tanzania's tourism sector for enhancing the capacity, professionalism, and competitiveness of tourism enterprises. This framework requires six consecutive steps, starting from the design and plan of the programme and ending with the graduation and follow up of the programme.

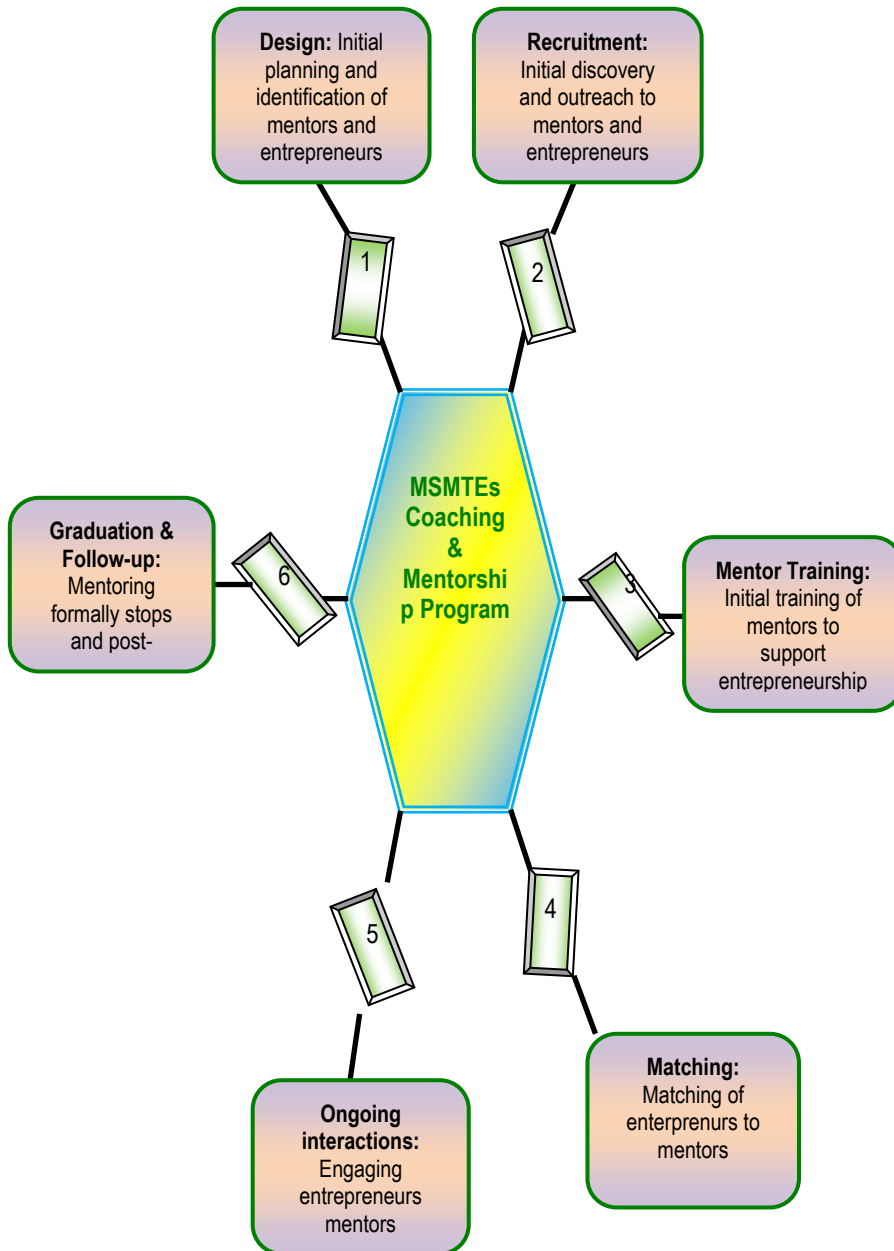


Figure 4: Coaching and mentoring process

Source: Author's construct (2026)

With a focus on micro, small, and medium-sized tourist enterprises (MSMTEs), the framework is intended for managers, employees, business owners, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Transferring practical knowledge and skills, enhancing service quality and company management, encouraging innovation, supporting sustainable and community-based tourism

practices, and bridging the gap between formal education and the real-world needs of the tourism industry are the main goals.

Many stakeholders must actively participate in order for this framework to be implemented effectively. While tourism boards like the Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB) and Zanzibar Commission for Tourism (ZCT) are crucial in organizing mentorship programs and certifying participants, the government, in particular the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, provides funding support and policy guidance. Mentors, training sessions, and industry expertise are shared by private sector players such as hotels, tour operators, tour guides, MICE organizers, arts and crafts, hunting firms, and travel agencies. While educational institutions connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, non-governmental organizations and development partners provide financial support and technical assistance. Lastly, MSMTEs and local communities actively engage in mentorship programs, putting newly acquired skills to use and offering constructive criticism for ongoing development.

The framework places a strong emphasis on creating structured mentoring and coaching programs that are adapted to the demands of the industry. One-on-one counseling, group mentoring for peer learning, and virtual coaching for companies in remote locations are all examples of coaching and mentoring. Business management, providing exceptional customer service, sustainable tourism practices, digital capabilities for operations and promotion, and adherence to regional and global tourist standards are important areas of attention. Experience, professional accomplishments, familiarity with Tanzanian tourism regulations, and effective coaching and communication abilities are taken into consideration when choosing mentors and coaches. To guarantee that women and young people participate meaningfully, gender balance and inclusivity are given top priority.

While mentees are evaluated to determine knowledge gaps, business difficulties, and growth potential, coaches should receive training in adult learning principles, communication tactics, and mentorship methodologies. A sector-wide needs assessment is the first step in the systematic implementation process, which then carefully matches mentors and mentees according to sector and experience. In order to monitor learning outcomes, difficulties, and advancements, mentoring sessions—which include both in-person and virtual interactions—are regularly held and recorded.

To guarantee efficacy, monitoring and evaluation are integrated into the structure. Enhancements in customer happiness, revenue growth, job creation, and service quality are examples of key performance indicators. The curriculum is continuously improved by gathering feedback from mentors and mentees. Integration with current tourist initiatives, sponsorship from the commercial sector, and accreditation or certification for mentees who finish the program are ways to encourage sustainability. In order to facilitate continuous information exchange and peer support throughout the industry, a mentorship network should be developed. The framework's ultimate goal is to achieve quantifiable results, such as improved service delivery, higher MSMTEs' revenue and growth, increased youth and women's involvement in tourism entrepreneurship, and the development of a culture of ongoing professional development, coaching, and learning. The framework aims to improve the overall competitiveness and sustainability of Tanzania's tourist industry by methodologically connecting mentors, stakeholders, and tourism businesses.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusively, this study demonstrates that coaching and mentoring are not peripheral interventions but central mechanisms for strengthening organizational performance, human capital development, and competitiveness within the tourism sector in Tanzania. Through haphazardly addressing the persistent skills mismatch between formal education and industry demands, coaching and mentoring enhance service quality, managerial effectiveness, and strategic decision-making across tourism enterprises. The findings further illustrate that these interventions are particularly vital for MSMTEs, where they foster resilience, innovation, and inclusive participation of women and youth, key pillars of sustainable tourism development.

This study contributes to theory by extending human capital and organizational learning perspectives to the context of tourism in emerging destinations, such as Tanzania, demonstrating how structured coaching and mentoring function as dynamic capability-building tools rather than ad hoc support mechanisms. Furthermore, the findings provide evidence to support the integration of formalized coaching and mentorship frameworks into national tourism development strategies, emphasizing their role in long-term sectoral growth and global competitiveness. In addition, the study highlights the need for coordinated mentorship programs linking industry experts with emerging professionals, closer

collaboration between higher education institutions and tourism firms, and targeted capacity-building initiatives for MSMTEs.

In view of these findings, the study recommends the institutionalization of inclusive, well-funded, and industry-aligned coaching and mentoring programs within the tourism ecosystem in Tanzania. Priority should be given to leadership development, enterprise-level skills in digitalization, financial management, and sustainable practices, and mentorship models that deliberately support women, youth, and marginalized groups. Such measures will not only enhance firm-level performance but also contribute to a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable tourism sector in the country.

REFERENCES

- Achuti, E. O., Nyaboga, Y. B., Mongare, O. (2025). Influence of mentorship practice on the sustainability of family-owned tourism businesses in Mahe Island, Seychelles. *International Academic Journal of Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurship*, 2(4), 426-450.
- Baum, T. (2015). *Human resource development in tourism: Principles and practice*. Routledge.
- Blackman, D., Kennedy, M., & Quazi, A. (2016). Corporate coaching and mentoring: Challenges for tourism enterprises. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 29(1), 64–72.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Buhalis, D., & Amaranggana, A. (2015). Smart tourism destinations: Enhancing tourism experience through digital technologies. In Z. Xiang & I. Tussyadiah (Eds.), *Information and communication technologies in tourism* (pp. 377–389). Springer.
- Bykova, V., Khasanova, M., & Polonkoeva, F. (2024). the Role of Human Capital in Economic Development: an Analysis of Factors Contributing To Economic Growth. *Reliability: Theory & Applications*, 19(SI 6 (81)), 1676-1682.
- Chaiyakot, P., Ruksapol, A., Chaiyaket, W., & Sakunchannarong, N. (2023). Community-based tourism management: Southern Thailand. *Central European Management Journal*, 31(1), 333-349.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Eissner, S., & Gannon, J. (2018). Experiences of mentoring in the UK hospitality sector. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism, 17*(3), 296-313.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1–4.
- Gannon, J., Clayton, D., & Klenert, A. (2021). Mentoring initiatives as talent management innovations. In *Talent management innovations in the international hospitality industry* (pp. 99-125). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Garavan, T. N., McCarthy, A., & Morley, M. (2020). Managing talent development and coaching effectiveness in tourism organizations. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 32*(2), 437–456.
- Labadi, S., Giliberto, F., Rosetti, I., Shetabi, L., & Yildirim, E. (2021). Heritage and the sustainable development goals: Policy guidance for heritage and development actors. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*
- Ladkin, A., & Weber, K. (2011). Tourism employment, mentoring practices, and knowledge transfer. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(3), 1135–1155.
- Lesseri, G. (2022). Leveraging youth employment in the Tanzania tourism sector: The role of MSMEs. *Tanzania Economic Review, 12*(1), 1–18.
- Lesseri, G. P. (2021). Leveraging Youth Employment in the Tanzania Tourism Sector: The Role of MSMEs. *Tanzanian Economic Review, 11*(2).
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Mbowe, W. J. (2021). Entrepreneurship mentoring programme and market performance: Evidence from SIDO-supported micro and small enterprises in Arusha, Tanzania. *Journal of Research in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 8*(1), 45–60.
- Mhando, D. G. (2016). Education and skills gaps in Tanzania's tourism industry. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 14*(3), 203–217.
- Mirondo, R. (2021). *Why Tanzania needs to bridge skills gap in tourism sector*. Mwananchi Communications Ltd. Dar es Salaam.

- Mkenda, B. K. (2023). Economic empowerment of Tanzanian women through ownership of tourism MSMEs. *Tanzania Economic Review*, 13(2), 45–62.
- Morrison, A. (2013). *Entrepreneurship in the hospitality and tourism industries*. Routledge.
- Morse, J. M. (2012). *Qualitative health research: Creating a new discipline*. Left Coast Press.
- Mungure, J. S., & Kalwani, J. D. (2025). Rural tourism entrepreneurship skills and knowledge as strategy for poverty reduction: A case of Bagamoyo District, Tanzania. *Pan-African Journal of Business Management*, 9(1), 95–113.
- Munthali, M. M. (2025). *The unsung heroes: the role of Archibald Kapote Mwakasungula, 1942-2004* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Ngalesoni, O., Mwakifwamba, G., & Pandisha, H. (2020). The effectiveness of mentoring programs on empowering women entrepreneurs in Tanzania: A case of Babati District Council. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Project Management*, 5(2), 23–38.
- Ntshangase, S. D., & Ezeuduji, I. O. (2025). The influence of education, entrepreneurial capabilities and external business environment on tourism business success: A Partial Least Squares path modelling. *Cogent Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025>.
- Procknow, G. (2017). International briefing 35: training and development in Rwanda. *International Journal of Training & Development*, 21(1).
- Purnomo, S., & Purwandari, S. (2025). A comprehensive micro, small, and medium enterprise empowerment model for developing sustainable tourism villages in rural communities: A perspective. *Sustainability*, 17(4), 1368.
- Rhou, Y., Singal, M., & Koh, Y. (2016). CSR and financial performance: The role of CSR awareness in the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 57, 30-39.
- Rogerson, C. M. (2007). Supporting small firm development in tourism: South Africa's Tourism Enterprise Programme. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 8(1), 6-14.
- Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2020). Tourism SMEs and local economic development in the Global South. *Local Economy*, 35(4), 316–331.
- Sanga, J. (2020). The role of local government authorities in supporting small and medium tourism enterprises in Tanzania (Doctoral thesis, Open University of Tanzania). Open University of Tanzania Repository.

- Scherrer, P. (2020). Tourism to serve culture: the evolution of an Aboriginal tourism business model in Australia. *Tourism Review*, 75(4), 663-680.
- Stone, M. T., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2018). Ecotourism and community development: Lessons from global practice. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 17(3), 236–250.
- STTA Kenya. (2024). *Youth Mentorship (Young Change Makers) Programme: Skills development and employability in sustainable tourism*. STTA Consulting.
- Swai, E. V. (2015). Challenges of urban youth unemployment in Tanzania: Perspectives of youth and employers. *Urban Youth Unemployment in Eastern and Southern Africa*, 266.
- Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). (2024). *Benchmarks for hospitality and tourism cluster*. https://www.tcu.go.tz/sites/default/files/file_uploads/2024-09/BENCHMARKS%20FOR%20HOSPITALITY%20AND%20TOURISM%20CLUSTER.pdf
- The Citizen. (2023). *Why Tanzania needs to bridge the skills gap in tourism sector*. <https://thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/-tz-60-why-tanzania-needs-to-bridge-skills-gap-in-tourism-sector-3569344>
- The United Republic of Tanzania, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. (2021). *Strategic Plan 2021/22–2025/26* (Situation analysis of tourism governance and sector challenges). Government of Tanzania
- Tryphone, K., & Mkenda, B. K. (2023). Determinants and constraints of women’s sole-owned tourism micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Tanzania. *Development Southern Africa*, 40(2), 329-349.
- University of Dar es Salaam. (2025). *UDSM - Sida Cooperation Programme*. <https://www.udsm.ac.tz/overview>
- Xiang, Z., Du, Q., & Ma, Y. (2021). Digital transformation in tourism: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Information Technology & Tourism*, 23(2), 145–162.
- .
- .