



Cultural Heritage Preservation in Digital West Africa: An Ethnographic Exploration in Tanzania

Changanya Kigariho¹, Yohana Nkatha², Mwinyi Mponda^{3,4}, Kabaka Mkamba^{5,6}

¹ State University of Zanzibar (SUZA)

² Department of Advanced Studies, Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Morogoro

³ Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, State University of Zanzibar (SUZA)

⁴ Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Arusha

⁵ Department of Advanced Studies, Mkwawa University College of Education

⁶ Department of Advanced Studies, Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Arusha

Published: 23 May 2010 | **Received:** 27 February 2010 | **Accepted:** 10 April 2010

Correspondence: ckigariho@aol.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18903159](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18903159)

Author notes

Changanya Kigariho is affiliated with State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Yohana Nkatha is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Morogoro and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Mwinyi Mponda is affiliated with Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, State University of Zanzibar (SUZA) and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Kabaka Mkamba is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, Mkwawa University College of Education and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Abstract

In recent years, the digital divide has widened in West Africa, particularly affecting small communities such as those found in Tanzania. Cultural heritage preservation is crucial for these communities, which often rely on traditional knowledge and practices that are at risk of being lost. A qualitative approach was employed through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions conducted among local elders, youth, and traditional healers in selected communities across Tanzania. Data collection aimed to capture the nuances of cultural practices and technological adoption. The findings indicate that there is a significant interest from younger generations in learning about their heritage through digital means (85% expressed willingness). However, challenges such as limited access to technology and insufficient training programmes for community members were prevalent. Community engagement was generally positive but varied by age group. This study highlights the potential of digital tools in fostering cultural heritage preservation among Tanzanian communities. Future research should focus on developing comprehensive training programmes and addressing technological accessibility issues. Policy makers should invest more resources into creating accessible technology infrastructure, while educators need to incorporate digital literacy as part of their curriculum. Community leaders must also be involved in planning and implementation phases.

Keywords: *African, Digital, Heritage, Ethnography, Community, Anthropology, Oral*

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