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THE ROLE OF OPERATIONS CONSULTING IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES FACING TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

The tourism and hospitality sector in Tanzania is confronted by multifaceted challenges including skilled labor shortages, service quality issues, sustainability concerns and compliance issues. Operations consulting is promising solution but it's underexplored in the academic literature for this sector. This study investigates how operations consulting can address these challenges, enhancing customer satisfaction, operational efficiency and industry competitiveness. To achieve these objectives, the study employs an inductive approach, embracing a constructivist research philosophy and a qualitative research design. Data were gathered through review of relevant literature such as books, articles and reports and explorative analysis is used to examine the data. The findings reveal that operations consulting plays pivotal roles in Tanzania's tourism and hospitality sector including managing risks, developing specialized strategies, enhancing service quality, fostering collaboration, promoting sustainability as well as training and skill development. This study also identified several challenges that operations consulting face within this dynamic industry including seasonal nature of the industry, integration of technology, environmental concerns and sustainability, cost management and human resources needs. These challenges demand a multifaceted and adaptive approach from operations consultants to stay updated on industry trends and be flexible in their strategies. Keywords: Operations Consulting, Consultants, Consultant firms, Tourism and Hospitality

1. Introduction

The consulting industry, despite its multibillion-dollar stature, remains a complex and multifaceted domain, often lacking a comprehensive definition (Buono, 2001; Gray, 2002). Perhaps this might be due to the reasons that consulting industry is large, complicated, and fragmented based on its key players, clients and sectors involved (Wickham et al. 2008). However, while Management Consulting has garnered substantial attention in the literature, operations consulting remains an underexplored domain despite its vital role in addressing operational challenges and fostering efficiency. This imbalance in scholarly raises research questions about (1) What is the role of operations consulting in addressing challenges within the Tanzanian tourism and hospitality industry? and (2) What specific challenges do operations consultants encounter in contributing to the growth and sustainability of businesses in this sector? Therefore, the scope of this paper encompasses a detailed exploration of the roles and challenges faced by operations consulting in the Tanzanian tourism and hospitality industry while providing a comprehensive understanding of both management and operations consulting, explore the specific contributions of operations consulting in mitigating these challenges and enhancing the overall performance of businesses in the Tanzania's tourism and hospitality sector

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of The Key Terms and Concepts

2.1.1 Meaning Consulting Industry

Despite been the mult-billion-dollar industry, consulting has neither been well understood nor well defined (Buono, 2001; Gray, 2002). It on this backdrop this article attempts to define consulting industry as *totality of all professional large, small and medium consulting firms and their consultants at either on organization or individual level committed to deliver a consulting services in a specific industry or sector aligned to their areas of specialization with the main purpose of rendering a professional advice and assistance to their respective clients in helping them to achieve organizational goals and objectives by solving specific business problems, identifying and seizing new opportunities and improving their business performance related to management and operational intricacies of their business.* Greiner et al. (2010) contended that consulting industry is slowly developing from stand-alone-firms to new organizational involving combination of firms into networks and alliances to deliver values to the clients. Therefore, consulting industry is expected to deliver their values to their clients related to management, operation, or hybrid consulting services by using their professional consultants or consultant.

2.1.2 Consultants

Newton, (2019) define consultant as an independent professional advisor who adds value by helping managers to identify and achieve beneficial challenge appropriate to their situations. Using Kubr, 2002; Kubr et al. (2005) concept of management consulting and Jacobs et al. (2018) operation consulting concept, this article define *consultant as an independent professional person committed to provide advisory service or consulting service to their clients to achieve organizational purposes and objectives by solving both managerial and operational intricacies of the business, identifying and seizing new opportunities, enhancing learning, and implementing the required changes.* Sadler, (1998) argued that they render independent advice and assistance about management and operation issues of the consulted organization by identifying and investigating problems and opportunities, recommending appropriate action, and helping consulted organization to implement those recommendations. Greiner et al. (2010) inform the literature that Consultants are attracted to consulting careers because they work itself is interesting and it often provide a career gateway and shortcut to securing a senior executive position upon leaving the consulting firm.

2.1.3 Consulting Firms

World Bank. (2006) define Consulting firms as any registered consultant(*s*) whose core business is exclusively provision of consulting services inform of intellectual and advisory in nature provided by their qualified and experienced hired consultants to study, design and organized specific projects, advice clients and conduct training and transfer knowledge related to the issues being addressed. Czerniawska, (2007) furtherly clarify that for a consultant or consultants to be able to do what a client wants they need the support of a "firm" behind them as consulting projects become more specialized and complicated it become so harder for an independent consultant or a stand along person to undertake the whole project alone. While Czerniawska, (2007) reported independent consultants accustomed to working by themselves are searching out network of linkminded individuals to deliver values to their clients. Greiner et al. (2010) noticed consulting industry changing slowly developing from stand-alone-consultant for firms to new structure involving combination of firms into networks and alliances. Perhaps this supports the metamorphosis nature of the industry and what Kubr et al. (2005) captured that consulting industry was going through a profound changes, the phenomenon that necessitated both practitioners and clients needs to be aware of these changes

to ensure that their clients value continue to be delivered. Therefore consulting firms are those registered consultants or consultants inform of organization, network or alliance come together for the purpose of providing professional advice or assistance to their clients inform of individual or organization and help them to solve their specific identified business problems, identify and seizing new opportunities, recommending new action and helping the consulted individuals to implement those suggested recommendations to achieve client's business goals and objectives related to management and operations intricacies through value creation process. Understanding clearly what consulting industry all is about, brings us near to conceptualization of major key players or components of consulting industry which include consultants, consultant firms, clients, client sectors.

2.2 Overview of Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Tanzania

Tourism and Hospitality Industry Performance in Tanzania for many years has continued to punch below her economic weight as compared to that of neighbour's countries which account for 17% of GDP reaching 2.44billion USD in 2018 from 2.25billion USD in 2017(Melubo et al. 2022). In 2019, Tanzania received 1,527,230 million international tourists which generated about TZS 5 billion and employed about over a million tourism jobs representing 11.2% of the total workforce in the country (Anderson, 2015; Anderson et al. 2018). The current government's objectives is to increase the number of overseas tourists to five million by 2022 and it hope to join the league of the top global lang-haul destination. The economic incentives of nature-based tourism have led to the establishment of 22 national parks by 2019 (from only one in 1951), 38 game reserves and 56 controlled areas and wildlife management areas. As such, almost a third of 945,087 km2 of tanzania's total land area has been set aside for conservation and tourism(Melubo, 2019; Melubo et al. 2022)

2.3 Challenges facing tourism and hospitality industry in Tanzania

One of the prominent challenges facing tourism and hospitality industry in Tanzania is lack of skilled personnel with the necessary specialized knowledge and operational competencies required by the industry (Anderson, 2015; Anderson et al. 2018). None of the curriculum exist in Tanzania teach students operational complexity of their profession at higher education institution offering tourism and hospitality management unlike in India where the hospitality curriculum reflects about 70% operational (Parvadhavardhini, 2013) Anderson et al. (2018) highlights the issue of Insufficient lecturers with relevant expertise and up-to-date knowledge and skills in the discipline which hinder the quality of education and the ability to adequately prepare students for the industry. Hospitality and tourism sector in Tanzania is not strictly regulated especially hospitality sector where a lot of people who are working in most of the hotels are not professional in that filed. The dependence on importing skilled labour from nearby nations like Kenya is evidence of the gap in the domestic talent pool and the dearth of qualified professionals in the sector (Kazuzuru, 2014). The industry has been affected by the low service quality resulting from the shortage of skilled labour and a lack of quality assurance mechanisms. Most of individual employed in most of the hospitality business are untrained and inexperienced individuals who contributes to deterioration in the overall service quality. These people could be lacking in the expertise, abilities, and commitment to providing excellent customer service. However, there has been no established mechanism in place to allow the nation to utilize the highly qualified professionals and skilled workers that are already present in the nation. This means that when qualified tourism professionals graduate and apply for jobs in the country, there is no simple way for them to be recognized. The absence of an established mechanism to recognize and utilize highly qualified professionals and skilled workers within the country can have several negative effects on the industry.

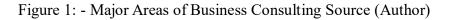
294 | PROCEEDINGS THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECONOMICS, BUSINESS, AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH (ICEBMR)

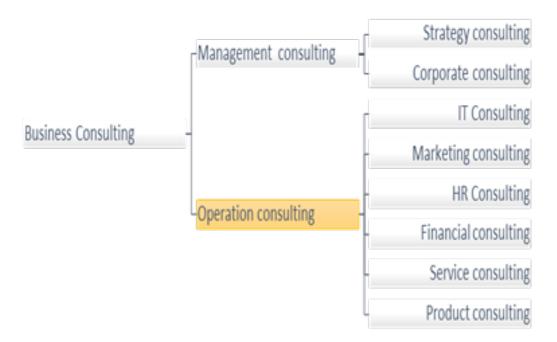
2.4 The Conceptualization of Business Consulting in Tanzania

In Tanzania the conceptualization of the consulting business is not different form other part of the world. it was not until the mid-1970s the management consulting firms both public, private, and foreign management consulting firms started emerging in Tanzania (Kaijage, 1993, 2016). Most foreign consulting firms come from United Kingdom, North America, Finland, and Norway and employed high-calibre local consultant (Kaijage, 2016). Today Universities are key player of the consulting industry in Tanzania playing a key role in providing management consulting to their clients in need. It is common practice in Tanzania for the public enterprises to use private consulting service though it might be a bite costly but guarantee extreme quality. The use of foreign constancy has long history in Tanzania dating from 1960s when government was suffering from poor management of rural areas, poor performance of tourism industry and the foreign consultant was hired to provide solution to these problem. There recommendation resulted to abolishment of city, municipal, town and district authorities but in late 1970s government decided to reintroduce city, municipal and town authorities. Since the consultant was not locally based, they could not assist in evaluating the implementation of their recommendation. Development of cashew nut processing factories due to decline of cashew nut production.

2.5 Major Areas of Consulting Business in Tanzania

The literature review on consulting business has been given much considerable attention by researcher having the interest on this filed who rigorously debated and documented several publications on the subject matter authored by Newton, (2019); Hartley, (2017); World Bank, (2006); Burtonshaw-Gunn, (2010); Baaij, (2022); Czerniawska, (2002); Buono, (2001); Czerniawska, (2001); Wickham et al. (2008); Kaijage (2016). However, the emerging themes underling the major areas of consulting business were management consulting by Biswas et al. (2001); Kubr et al. (2005); Wickham et al. (2008); Wickham et al. (2008); Buono (2001); Kaijage (2016) ;(1993); Biswas et al. (1999); Burtonshaw-Gunn (2010); Greiner et al. (2010) and Operation Consulting which has been narrowly receiving a considerable attention from recited literatures. This information suggests the major two areas of business consulting that are also applicable in Tanzania.





2.5.1 Management consulting

Baaij, (2022) define management consulting as a knowledge-intensive service that independent business professionals offer to managers of client organizations and that entails providing management with unbiased guidance on decisions regarding the solutions to the challenges and opportunities facing the client organization and, in some cases, also consist of assistance with the management's tasks regarding the implementation of these solutions. Burtonshaw-Gunn, (2010) make important point that Management consulting helps managers and organizations achieve their business goals and objectives not only resolving management and business issues but spotting and seizing new opportunities, fostering learning, and making changes. Wickham et al. (2008) highlighted that planning, organising, Directing, and controlling are also the key areas of management consulting. In Tanzania perspective as Kaijage, (2016) contended that the use of foreign consultancy has a long history dating from 1960s when government was suffering from poor management of rural areas the government decided to hire a qualified foreign consultancy to provide solution to such problem. This information suggest that the nature of the problem require the consulting firm to deliver management consulting capability or value to the government of Tanzania to get out of that problem. Though the government accept the report from the consultant and with immediate effect start implementing the recommendations of the report advising the government to abolish governance system of city, municipal, town and district authorities in 1970s the government reintroduce city, municipal, town authorities and district council. This suggest that the consultant provide a report to the government and government implement those recommendations without the help of the consultant simply because after delivering the service and since the consultant was not indigenous there is no, they can ensure the effective implementation of such management consulting service. While Kubr et al. (2005) highlighted the purpose and objective of any management consulting that should help the organization to achieve their goals and objectives, solving management and business problems, identifying, and seizing new opportunities, enhance learning and implementing changes Baaij, (2022) proposed five important steps that any management consultancy should adhere:- identifying the problem or opportunity, Diagnosing of the problem, Developing solutions, making decision and implementing the decision. Therefore, any management consulting that do not take an effective responsibility of any of the five step is a "bogus management consulting". The bogus consulting of the foreign firm did not effectively play its part in implementation stage as a result the desired outcome was not achieved. I dare say it was a bogus consulting service to the government of Tanzania. The term bogus consultancy has been also used to describe the similar situation by (Baaij, 2022).

2.5.2 Operations consulting

Kubr et al. (2005) offer the portrayal of the world "operations" as the process of transforming a certain input into a required outputs in form of goods and services. Therefore, operations are not restricted to manufacturing but apply also to activities and all kinds of services. It adds value to the value chain which comprise of product development, marketing, logistics, productions, service quality and sales-and-after sales. Though Operations Consulting has its root from industrial consulting it has been narrowly receiving a considerable attention from literature (Sharma, 2020). While there a mushroom growing of management consisting of to deliver management consulting services the same trend is yet to be found in operations consulting. operation consulting has been defined *as consultant as an independent professional person committed to provide advisory service or consulting service to their clients to achieve organizational purposes and objectives by solving operational challenges of the business, identifying, and seizing new opportunities, enhancing learning, and implementing the required changes. Baaij, (2022) contend that operations should contribute to costs reduction, speed of*

296 | PROCEEDINGS THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECONOMICS, BUSINESS, AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH (ICEBMR)

service and service quality. Operations consulting also follow five steps as proposed by Baaij, (2022). The government of Tanzania higher the foreign consultant to provide the consultation on poor governance of the tourism industry in 1960s. It was noted that the consultant provided a detailed report and recommendations to the problem identified and diagnosed by the consultant, but the same consultant report was criticised by having a lot of information that any busy manager cannot comprehend and implement such report.

2.6 Legal status of consulting business in Tanzania

Depending on the kind of entity you choose to set up, a consulting business's legal status in Tanzania vary. Like in other countries legal status of the consulting business in Tanzania is like other form of business that an individual or company should follow though the profession seems to be not a legally enforced profession. While in some countries professional associations provide such registration in other country the legal structure for other business is also supportive to consulting firms especially int Tanzania. since the consultant need to work as a legal entity to acquire the status of firm the legal registration therefore is of paramount important. In Tanzania business consulting can take either of the following legal form sole proprietorship, partnership, Limited Liability Company (LLC), Company Limited by Share and Non-governmental Organization (NGO).



Figure 2: - legal structure of Business consulting in Tanzania

3. Research Methods

This study uses constructivism research philosophy that holds the view that individual seek understanding of the world in which they live and work by developing subjective meaning from their experience directed toward a certain objects or things (Creswell, 2014). The chosen research paradigm supports the decision of the researcher to use Qualitative research design (Dubey et al. 2022). Inductive approach is used to develop explanations based on role and challenge of operation consulting in tourism and hospitality industry in the context of Tanzania. Data were gathered through review of relevant literature such as books and articles from

different journals to explain the phenomenon under the study. Explorative analysis was used to analyse the data. To ensure the validity of the finding's researcher use books and articles concord to validate presented findings. This article uses Tanzania as a case study to explore the roles and challenges of operation consulting in hospitality and tourism industry. In this regard researcher use relevant books and articles indexed in quality ranked journals together with as a source of data collection.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1.Role of operations consulting in tourism and hospitality industry

4.1.1. Training and skill development:

Operation consultants can help with the education and training of the labour force in the tourism and hospitality sectors. They can pinpoint the precise training gaps and needs in the sector and create specialized training programs to fill them. This can involve offering training in relevant fields like financial management, sales and marketing, customer service, and hospitality management. Consultants help to improve the overall service quality and guest experiences by raising the workforce's skill levels. Training and skill development has also been reported as core role of the operations consulting in tourism and hospitality management (Yuldashev et al. 2022). Study also conducted by Anderson, (2016) human resource needs and skills gaps in the tourism and hospitality in Tanzania demonstrate the intervention of the consultant in skill development and training. By creating and implementing training programs, operation consultants can help increase the industry's capacity. They can help educational institutions improve their curricula, offer workshops and seminars to professionals, and facilitate the dissemination of knowledge from international experts. This aids in bridging the knowledge and skill gap that exists among professionals working in the tourism and hospitality industries.

4.1.2. Creating specialized strategies and strategic planning

To address the problems identified, operation consultants can create specialized operational strategies. They can collaborate closely with tourism companies, educational institutions, and governmental organizations to create operational strategies that are in line with the local situation and consider Tanzania's particular needs and limitations. Operational consultants can assist tourism-related businesses and organizations in creating strategie plans to address the challenges they face. To find opportunities and create strategies that complement the goals and objectives of the company, consultants can carry out market research, industry analysis, and feasibility studies. This entails determining target markets, developing marketing plans, and developing business models that can boost sustainability and competitiveness.

4.1.3. Increasing service quality

By conducting service audits, creating customer service training courses, and putting in place quality control procedures, consultants can assist businesses in providing better services. Tourism businesses can improve service quality by establishing and implementing quality assurance mechanisms with the aid of operation consultants. This entails creating norms, procedures, and rules for various aspects of business operations, such as orderliness, hygienic practices, customer care, and safety. Consultants can help businesses achieve and maintain high standards of quality by conducting audits and inspections, offering feedback and suggestions for improvement.

4.1.4. Sustainability and responsible tourism:

Consultants can help the industry adopt sustainable and ethical tourism practices. They can help companies adopt eco-friendly procedures, cut back on waste and energy use, and

implement initiatives for responsible tourism. Giving advice on sustainable tourism certifications, community involvement, and cultural preservation is one aspect of this that contributes to the industry's long-term viability and positive effects.

4.1.5. Compliance with policies and regulations:

Organization consultants can help companies comprehend and adhere to the laws and regulations governing Tanzania's tourism and hospitality sector. In addition to other legal obligations, they can offer advice on licensing requirements, tax laws, and employment laws. Consultants assist companies in avoiding fines and conducting business within the law by ensuring compliance.

4.1.6. Risk assessment and crisis management:

Operation consultants can assist tourism businesses in creating backup plans and crisis management strategies. They can identify potential threats and weak spots, create action plans, and offer direction in the event of crises like pandemics, natural disasters, or political unrest. Consultants can help businesses implement recovery plans, ensure the safety of visitors and staff, and minimize disruptions.

4.1.7. Process optimization and improvement:

Consultants can evaluate the operational procedures used by tourism and hospitality businesses to find areas for enhancement. To improve productivity and efficiency, they can aid in streamlining procedures, removing bottlenecks, and allocating resources more effectively. This may entail implementing technological solutions, enhancing workflow management, and incorporating industry best practices. Consultants assist businesses in increasing their competitiveness and providing better customer experiences by enhancing operational processes.

4.1.8. Collaboration and networking:

Within the industry, operation consultants can promote collaboration and networking. To exchange knowledge, share best practices, and tackle shared challenges, they can bring together various stakeholders, including tourism businesses, educational institutions, governmental organizations, and industry associations. To promote collaboration and educational opportunities, consultants can plan workshops, conferences, and networking gatherings. Consultants help the tourism and hospitality industry grow and develop overall by encouraging collaboration.

4.2. Challenges facing Operations Consulting in Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Tanzania4.2.1. Dynamic, Complexity and Seasonality Nature of the Industry

Tourism and hospitality are highly dynamic and complex industries, with ever-evolving market trends, consumer preferences, and competitive environments. To deliver pertinent and useful advice, operations consultants must stay current on market trends and have a thorough understanding of the nuances of the industry. however, many businesses in the tourism and hospitality sectors encounter seasonal demand fluctuations, with high seasons followed by low ones. The need to create strategies that address the variability in demand, such as optimizing staff scheduling, managing inventory, and maintaining service quality during peak and off-peak periods, presents a challenge for operations consultants.

4.2.2. Integration of Technology

The tourism and hospitality sectors are changing because of the quick development of technology. The most recent technological advancements and their applications in fields like

reservation systems, guest experience management, data analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Augmented, Virtual and Mixed reality, metaverse technology, block chain technology and online marketing are things that consultants need to be knowledgeable about. It can be difficult to effectively integrate technology into operations because it requires infrastructure investments, staff training, and change management.

4.2.3. Environmental concerns and sustainability:

With heightened awareness of environmental problems, sustainable practices have become essential for the tourism and hospitality sectors. The recommendations made by operations consultants need to take sustainability into account, including energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, and eco-friendly initiatives. It can be difficult to strike a balance between sustainability goals and financial viability.

4.2.4. Cost management:

Businesses in this industry must be able to keep costs under control while maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and maximizing profits if they are to succeed. By creating plans and putting them into action that reduce costs, operations consultants are essential in tackling this problem. For companies in the tourism and hospitality sectors, cost control and profitability are essential. Optimizing costs without sacrificing service quality, controlling operating costs, and spotting opportunities for revenue generation are difficult tasks for operations consultants. They must create plans that support businesses in keeping their competitive edge while ensuring their financial sustainability.

4.2.5. Human resource need

Operations consultants are crucial in addressing the challenge of human resource management, which is a major issue in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The ability of employees to provide customers with exceptional services is crucial for the success of businesses in this industry. Operations consultants can help with the design and implementation of efficient human resource plans that consider the labour needs of the sector and fill skill gaps. A crucial component of human resource management is recruitment. Businesses can develop recruitment strategies that draw in and keep qualified candidates by working with operations consultants. They could help with choosing the best methods for hiring, writing job descriptions, evaluating candidates, and setting up efficient onboarding procedures. Additionally, consultants can collaborate with businesses to create initiatives for employer branding that will improve their standing as the industry's top employer.

5. Conclusion

To address the issues, the Tanzanian tourism and hospitality sector is facing, operation consulting is essential. To help businesses and organizations with skill development, process improvement, quality assurance, strategic planning, sustainability, risk management, and collaboration, consultants bring expertise, industry knowledge, and best practices to the table. Consultants aid in the expansion, viability, and long-term growth of Tanzania's tourism and hospitality industries through their assistance. Increasing operational effectiveness, enhancing customer experiences, implementing technology solutions, adopting sustainable practices, managing risks, and fostering business growth are the main objectives of operating consulting in the tourism and hospitality sectors. It's crucial to remember that establishing and operating a consulting business in Tanzania also necessitates adhering to regional rules, laws, and tax obligations. Getting advice from a local business advisor or attorney can help you to navigate the registration process and advise you on the best legal structure based on your company's needs. Additionally, make sure that your consulting business complies with all tax obligations,

licensing requirements, and any regulations that may be applicable based on the industry. Overall, the role of consultants in Tanzania's consulting industry is crucial for fostering organizational growth, resolving challenging issues, and offering valuable knowledge and guidance to clients in a range of industries. Their contributions aid companies and organizations in boosting productivity, effectiveness, and competitiveness.

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