



Assessment of public awareness on blue economy a case of south district in Unguja

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Abstract

The study assessed public awareness on blue economy in Zanzibar. The specific objectives was to examine the level of knowledge regarding of the Blue Economy in the South District of Unguja, to identify the perception of Blue Economy among the people of South District in Unguja and to assess the impact of public awareness towards the blue economy in South District of Unguja. A total of 300 villagers from four villages in South District of Unguja formed the population of the study. Among them, only 100 villagers were selected to represent other people from the population as a sample. Questionnaires were used as data collection tools. The results revealed that awareness to idea of Blue Economy represented 80%, Awareness on economic effects of Blue Economy represented 84% and Tourism ranked the highest towards income generation to the residents with 43%. Others were fishing (29.1%), aquaculture (15.1%) and maritime trade (12.8). The study concluded that Zanzibar communities were aware of the idea of Blue Economy and its effect on economy. Also, the study concluded that Blue Economy activities varied towards income generation of the residents. The recommended Government of Zanzibar through the Ministry of blue economy should increase Blue Economy awareness programs to Zanzibar communities and initiate or diversify more Blue Economy activities in order to provide the residents with more opportunities of income generation in the blue economy.

Keywords: blue economy, public awareness, perception of blue economy

Introduction

The Blue Economy is currently gaining traction around the world as an ocean based economy taking place in the ocean and also along the coast. The way in which the Blue Economy is conceived and understood differs significantly across different sets of actors. A particular area of contestation exists around which ocean based industries or sectors can be considered to be 'Blue'. This highlights the possibility of the Blue Economy becoming a forum through which the legitimacy of different private uses of ocean resources is contested and debated. The "blue economy" is often used interchangeably with the term "maritime economy" Anna and Judith (2020) ^[1]. According to international organizations (UN, 2014) ^[16, 7], the blue economy seeks effectively manage water resources especially seas and oceans to preserve them as significant natural resources for current and future generations. The blue economy includes all the economic activities that directly correlates with the oceans such as fishing, maritime transport coastal tourism and the like (UN, 2014) ^[16, 7]. On the other hand, Hildebrand and Schroder-Hinrichs (2014) ^[6] explained that an understanding of maritime in the context of research, aims at finding technology and innovative solutions for better use of the sea and ocean resources related to human activity. Haun (2014) ^[4] states that maritime education caters for the sea and shore side resources related activities. Against this background, the term maritime will be used in view of human related activities. Among these are: vessel operations, training, technological aspects associated with naval architecture, navigation, port facilities as well as sea and ashore resources (Cunningham, 2015) ^[2].

Small and island countries in the world harness the ocean resources for economic development due to the nature of the geographical position. Recent years have seen a rapidly growing awareness worldwide of the importance of seas and ocean as a key natural resource and engine of economic growth World Bank Report (2016) ^[19]. The ocean-based economy is not a new phenomenon in Zanzibar. For centuries, the people of Zanzibar have engaged in domestic and international ocean-based activities, and the sector has grown in size, content and significance. The blue activities are estimated to have contributed around 29% of Zanzibar's GDP in 2019 and employ about a third of Zanzibar's labor force. Traditional blue activities have included coastal and marine tourism, fishing and maritime trade, but recently aquaculture, dominated by seaweed farming, has enjoyed significant growth (RGZ, 2020b) ^[12].

Addition, the tourism sub-sector accounted for about 30% of Zanzibar's GDP while fishing accounted for another 4.8%. The latter also employed directly around 63,000 fishers and a further 14,000 workers in related activities. The seaweed industry accounted for 21% of Zanzibar's exports (34% of total crop exports), and

directly employed about 113,000 farmers, 80% being women. Further, 98% of the volume of foreign trade in Zanzibar was maritime-based (RGZ, 2020b) ^[12]. Despite of the growth potential of blue economy, the development and the well-being of Zanzibar's people has posed significant challenges. Therefore, it is essential to assess the level of awareness of Blue Economy among the coastal communities in Zanzibar.

Statement of the Problem

The emerging of Blue Economy is being pioneered by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, (Rio +20) as a mechanism for sustainable development of their ocean-based economies. Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) share common drivers of socioeconomic progress, energy and food security as well as common realities with regard to the adverse impacts of climate change. An integrated and holistic approach is essential to enable growth and innovation in multiple maritime sectors within a Blue Economy, while fully accounting for the social, ecological and economic consequences (Greenh *et al.*, 2015) ^[3]; World Economic Forum (2019) ^[20]. Zanzibar as a Small Island Developing nation has introduced a blue economy as a government agenda which however is not a new concept in the island. The blue economy activities in Zanzibar employ about one third of the population which contribute to 29% of Zanzibar Gross Domestic Product and about 98% of the Zanzibar's international trade by volume is seaborne (Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy, 2020). Marine resources as a part of blue economy provide other opportunities such as sustainable fishing, renewable marine energy, marine and coastal tourism which are particular importance to livelihood in Zanzibar. According to (Semboja, 2021) ^[14], 65% of the livelihood of Zanzibar relied mainly on coastal and maritime services, as the economy of Zanzibar has been dominated by tourism (including beach), small-scale fishing and maritime trade.

Public awareness is important of growth potential of coastal and marine resources, public awareness is important for sustainable blue economy. However, different scholars who have conducted studies on the blue economy in Zanzibar such as Hafidh and Mkuya (2021) ^[5]; Semboja (2021) ^[14]; Semboja and Hafidh (2022) ^[13] and Anna *et al.*, (2022) have explained about blue economy essentially about the multitude of ocean resources available in the country that can be harnessed to aid the production of goods and services because of its linkage with economic growth, environmental sustainability and national security. The issue of awareness by local residents about the blue economy has not been emphasized making the residents less enthusiastic on the opportunities it can provide. Therefore, this study assessed the level of public awareness on blue economy among Zanzibar communities.

Specific objective

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding Blue Economy in the South District of Unguja

Theoretical literature review

1. Theory of Access

The study used the theory of Access to map the different ways of knowledge and perception of the communities on blue economy and how power relations are created through different mechanisms of access. It shows that right base access agreements are highly questionable for their fairness and sustainability but bring benefits such as funding for fisheries. Therefore, according to the theory of access to ensure fisheries and communities contribute to the blue economy of Zanzibar islands; stakeholders need to balance between the diverse benefits produced by the fisheries and the uneven power relations that can rise, and to integrate the impact of a sea materials and blue economy in this reflection.

2. The attention Scheme Theory

The attention scheme theory was proposed by Taylor and Michael (2015) ^[15] as a novel way to explain the brain basis of subjective awareness. The theory explains how awareness and attention can sometimes become dissociated; the brain's internal models are never perfect, and sometimes a model becomes dissociated from the object being modeled. Thus, attention is applied as it provides nexus between independent variable towards dependent one (level of public awareness and the level of Blue Economy when government attention and citizens willingness are made).

3. Empirical Literature Review

Tena (2021) conducted a study on awareness of community on fisheries and aquaculture production in Central Ethiopia. The study was mainly focused on three districts of Gumer, Enemornaener and ChehaWoreda. In this study, a poor but significant correlation ($r=0.0169$, $p < 0.05$) was found between favoring aquaculture expansion and perceived environmental concerns.

A study conducted by Pouvenet. *al* (2019) assessed the understanding community perception on aquaculture: lessons from Mauritius as an ocean state. A total of 385 questionnaires were administered for the study and response rate of 100% was recorded. The descriptive statistical methods revealed that 69.1% of the respondents were in favor of expansion of the Aquaculture industry in Mauritius.

Methodology

The study used an evaluation-based research design. This design measures the problems based on a predetermined time frame and tends to reveal the reality Kombo and Tromp (2006) ^[8]. This strategy is

complemented by a quantitative research approach that aims to quantitatively explain the degree of public awareness Kothari (2004) [7]. The researcher chose to use the South District as a case study since the majority of its residents are involved in the blue economy, particularly in the fields of fishing, seaweed farming, sea cucumbers keeping, tourism, and blue product entrepreneurship. 100 participants in the study were chosen from the 300 villagers at random to complete questionnaires, and data were analyzed using frequency tables and descriptive statistics in SPSS V.23, Pallant, (2007) [9].

Results and Discussion

1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In this study, Demographic data are given a lot of emphasis since they are crucial to understanding the predicted variable. Gender, age, education level, and area of origin are the four categories used to group this data. The results are summarized in Table 1:

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	male	54.7
	Female	45.3
Age	18-35	40.7
	36-45	31.3
	46 and above	28
Education	Primary Education	9.3
	Secondary Education	40.7
	Bachelor Degree	3.5
	No Formal Education	46.5
Area of origin	Paje	22.1
	Bwejuu	25.5
	Michamvi	23.3
	Makunduchi	29.1

Source: Field Data, 2022

Table 1. shows that, majority of Zanzibari who aware about the Blue Economy are male (54.7).this is because most of male in Zanzibar engaged in oceanic or blue economic activities as a primary economic activity.

Second, both male and female participated in Blue Economic Activity at the age of 18 to 35 (40.7%).this is because this age category is more active and powerful than all other group in Zanzibar.

Based on their Education, Education Policy Reform of 2006 conditioned that all admitted students should complete secondary education. This influence higher participation and awareness of educated youth to oceanic and/or blue economic activity in Zanzibar. However, a number of oceanic or blue products services or activity could also perform effectively by people regardless their education level. This influences a selection of more than 46.5% of respondents with non-formal education in this study.

Other influence is performance of other sector of production like agriculture. This influence majority of people from poor agricultural village like Maunduchi of South District to engage more in oceanic or blue economic activity. And this rise their awareness and positive attitude towards Blue Economic Policy in Zanzibar.

2. The level of knowledge (awareness) regarding of Blue Economy in Zanzibar

The research investigated the level of knowledge regarding blue economy in Zanzibar local communities by using three probing statements. The Table 2. displays the findings.

Table 2: Level of Knowledge regarding blue economy

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
My Awareness to idea of Blue Economy	Yes, am aware of idea of blue economy.	69	80
	No, am not aware of the idea of blue economy.	18	20
My Awareness on economic effects of Blue Economy	Yes am aware of economic effects of blue economy.	72	84
	No, am not aware of economic effects of blue economy	14	16
My rating towards Blue Economy activities with high income generation in this area	Aquaculture	13	15.1
	Maritime trade	11	12.8
	Fishing	25	29.1
	Tourism	37	43

Source: Field Data, 2022

The results on Table 2. shows that, 69 (80%) aware about the idea of blue economy in general. Specifically, 72 (84%) of respondents aware that Blue Economy is very important and has positive effects of Economic growth for both people and Country. These findings revealed that majority of respondents have an idea about the Blue Economy.

Rating scale analysis by the respondents shows that blue economy activities rated higher than the other on the concern of income generation. Tourism activity was ranked first activity scoring 43% of the respondents; this was followed by fishing with 29.1%. Aquaculture and maritime trade followed with 15.1% and 12.8% respectively. The results imply that, Tourism, Aquaculture, Maritime trade and Fishing generate income to the residents and the governments since the respondents were villagers who paid taxes to the government. The results concurred with findings of Williem (2019) who studied the potential impact of blue economy on developing countries' economies as a tool to guide public policies oriented to economic growth.

Conclusion

The study after analysis of the field data concluded that Zanzibar communities were aware of the idea of Blue Economy the effect of the awareness on the Blue Economy. Also, the study concluded that Blue Economy activities varied towards income generation of the residents.

Recommendations

In this study, the following recommendations are proposed;

Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar through the Ministry of blue economy should increase Blue Economy awareness programs to Zanzibar communities since Blue Economy activities generate income to residents and revenue to the government. Also, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar through the Ministry of blue economy should initiate or diversify more Blue Economy activities in order to provide the residents with more opportunities of income generation in the blue economy.

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