

Review Report ISVSej_12.01.06_Mamdouh
Compiled from Reviews of Two Anonymous Reviewers

Please use this number to identify the revision.

Title of paper: **Dwindling Vernacular Architecture of the Swahili Coast: A Cosmopolitan Enclave in East Africa**

General

This paper examines an issue related to vernacular settlements. Although the paper is poorly written and has some issues that need to be resolved, it has a great potential to be developed as a very insightful and valuable research paper about architecture of the Swahili Coast.

Language: There are serious language issues. Please pay attention to grammar and to appropriate use of definite and indefinite articles. Write short and meaningful sentences. Separate the paragraphs when the ideas change and construct an argument supported with evidence. Take extreme care about the punctuation marks, which are not appropriately done. Ensure that the paper constructs a good line of argument. This is essential. Please use the proper research language and Harvard reference system. What is used currently is not acceptable.

Formatting: There are serious formatting issues. The paper has not been formatted as per the template at all. The margins are narrower. Text is all left justified when it should be justified. Sub titles are not 12 points. They must always be. General text must be in Times New Roman 11 points; There are some paragraphs in different fonts. sometimes they are 12 and sometimes 10. Fig titles must be 10 points. Leave no spaces between the paragraphs, except when the section ends and a new sub title emerges. There should be a space between a figure and the text above it too. Please use the ISVS e-journal template to the last dot.

Abstract

The abstract is poorly written. It has major issues. First paragraph must introduce the issue and say what is investigated. It should not talk about the aim, but what is examined. Second paragraph must explain briefly the research methods employed, followed by the data gathering techniques. The third paragraph must say what the conclusions are. This abstract introduces the issue and says that it aims to at studying Swahili architecture as a part of the Indian Ocean architecture. Research methods require more details. There are no conclusions. An abstract must be succinct but communicate the essential ideas clearly. Please produce three paragraphs as indicated above.

Paper

1. **The introduction:** Introduction is written reasonably well. It constructs the argument logically by introducing the Swahili Coast and how architecture is unique there. After introducing the issue, it should conclude the introduction with a statement about the aims and objectives. Current introduction introduces the issue well, and explains how Swahili coast was a trading port which made it a cosmopolitan place. However, it has no clear aims and objectives: Instead, it says 'This study is trying to look at vernacular Swahili architecture'. That is a poor statement. Do not use phrases such as 'trying to'. Be assertive and say what it did. Afterwards, please say what the aim is and produce a list of the objectives starting with 'To'. There must be at least one aim and two or three objectives. Aim must be properly defined. Terms such as 'examine', and 'explore' are aims and not objectives. Please note that aims are noble, unmeasurable, long term, almost impossible-to-fully-achieve expectations while objectives are practical, measurable, short term, achievable intentions.
2. **Theoretical Framework:** There is no theoretical framework. This paper deals with key ideas such as 'dwindling vernacular architecture', and 'cosmopolitan enclave'; the concepts this paper deals with. It therefore requires definitions of these terms, what they mean and how they are interrelated. Use the theoreticians' voices. Authors of this paper cannot theorize as yet. Provide extensive references.

3. **Review of Literature:** There is no review of literature. This is problematic. A review of literature should present the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. Write it in the present tense because it discusses current knowledge. Sum up at the end and show the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. You may look at the instructions in the journal website about how to write a proper review of literature.
4. **Research Methodology:** Currently, there is a reasonably well written research methodology. However, it is brief. It is understood that the research employs 'observations, documentation, literature study, and interviews'. Please explain these activities in detail. These details must enable another person to repeat the research to see if they will get the same results. That is the test of science.
5. **Case Study:** The case study must be introduced afterwards. What is written under the sub title 'Swahili Coast'. Current description is good, but it requires elaboration.
6. **Findings:** Findings are reasonably well presented, although not presented under this sub title. They are presented as a continuation of the introduction to case study. Please confine the description of the Swahili Coast to only an introduction to the place. Place all the information derived from research about the activities of the place and its architecture under the sub title: Findings. Some information does not have sources acknowledged. Please indicate where these information were derived from. Currently, few literature sources are cited, although the research methodology said that literature was a data gathering technique. It is written more like an essay without much references to the literary sources. Given the fact that the research employed 'literature' as the research method, findings must cite them well. Please also refer to all the other sources of data gathering such as interviews. It is suggested that the responses are cited to support the findings.
7. **Discussion:** Discussion is well done. It summarizes the findings and then presents how a complex interaction of various factors are responsible for this deviation from the expected typology. It offers insights into the socio- cultural interaction of the Arabs, Persians and Indians through trade and intermarriage which have helped in shaping the Swahili architecture. However, It also points out that detailed studies are unavailable.
8. **Conclusions:** Reasonably written well. However, it makes remarks which are not appropriate for a conclusion. It says that it 'highlighted', and that 'this study tried to uncover'. These are not conclusions. Please also do not use 'will' and make future predictions which are personal opinions rather than conclusions. Please note that 'concluding remarks' for an essay is different from conclusions for a research. This paper needs solid conclusions derived from research substantiated by data.
9. **References:** References are not well done. Many issues exist. First, do not number them, but list according to the alphabetical order. Use Harvard system, which requires the year to be after the names and not at the end. They should be within brackets. Do not italicize the Vol. No. of a journal. Page numbers must not have pp. There should be no comma before '&' when listing names of authors. Books must have place of publication followed by a colon and the publisher; not a comma. Follow the template to the last dot in producing the list of references.

Final Decision: Major Revisions

Summary of the overall observations of the paper:

This paper has the potential to make a valuable significant contribution to knowledge about the vernacular architecture of the Swahili Coast: an unknown yet significant port in East Africa. It offers insights into its complex making and the way in which they are now disappearing. The paper is not well written and does not have some of the major components. However, it has potential. Please revise the abstract to make the research methods and conclusions clear. Produce a theoretical framework and a literature review to establish the status of current knowledge and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. Explain how the research was conducted under methodology more clearly spelling out the details of activities in every stage. Findings need to have more citations given the fact that one of the methods adopted is examining literature. Cite the responses from the interviews. Conclusion needs to be articulated. Re-examine the references for completion and to be compatible with the ISVS e-journal template.