ANCHORING CULTURAL PRESERVATION IN ANOTHER LAND: ETHIOPIAN DIASPORAS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract: The study aims to investigate the motivational factors and efforts made by diasporas and their descendants to maintain and preserve their heritage, customs, and traditions despite being far from their homelands. The study employed the quantitative research design and collected data from Ethiopian diaspora members who reside in Johannesburg using non-probability convenience sampling. Findings showed that the diasporas seek to keep their cultural identity alive, creating a "home away from home" through cultural events that reflect their culture. However, the study found that cultural preservations in host countries have challenges, such as a lack of awareness of where the cultural events are held and highlights the need for support to enhance cultural preservation by migrants. The study contributes to the literature on anchoring cultural preservation as diasporas. Policymakers, governments, and managers must establish targeted policies and strategies to support the integration of migrants into host societies while promoting multiculturalism, inclusiveness, resilience, and sustainable communities, thus contributing to sustainable development goal 11 and bridging the gap of missed opportunities from diaspora tourism. The study provides future research directions.

Key words: Cultural preservation, diaspora tourism, Ethiopia, South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

Diaspora tourism, a transnational mobility (Zhu, 2023), characterised as the travel of diaspora members to their ancestral homelands in search of a connection to their roots and personal heritage (Huang et al., 2013). It is a form of tourism that focuses on tourism produced, consumed and experienced by the diasporic communities in a different country (Coles and Timothy, 2014). The proliferation of migration, globalisation, technology and transportation advances have influenced transnational mobilities (Wang and Witte, 2023), while the spatial concentration of production in cities attracts international labour (Zack and Landau, 2022). A total of 281 million diasporas resided in foreign countries permanently in 2020, comprising 3.6% of the global population (Chen et al., 2023), a significant indicative number of the diaspora market, with implications for diaspora tourism and its approaches thereof (Li et al., 2020). According to the European Union Diaspora Facility (EUDiF, 2020), the eagerness of diaspora communities to preserve their heritage has recently directly impacted framing diaspora engagement initiatives. For example, New Zealand's Ministry of Pacific Peoples has established a community fund supporting Pacific language learning. At the same time, the Fiji government has developed the iVolavosa App, a mobile dictionary for iTaukei (one of Fiji's official languages), encouraging the diaspora to learn from abroad, both government initiatives which show the government's efforts to connect and preserve the country's culture diaspora communities (EUDiF, 2020).

Diaspora tourism plays a crucial role in cultural preservation, serving as a connection to the diaspora's cultural heritage (Wang and Witte, 2023). The diasporic communities maintain their cultural identity and traditions to foster connections with their heritage in various ways, such as establishing immigrant businesses that produce cultural cuisine, fabrics and spices (Rahman et al., 2021). They (diaspora members) seek a sense of belonging and cultural connection that drives their desire to visit their ancestral land (Utomo, 2020). Moreover, it enables the promotion of cultural heritage, such as the celebration of ethnic traditions, as they form an integral part of the cultural identity of diaspora members (EUDiF, 2020).

Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon continually shaped by socio-economic and political factors (Sarker and Islam, 2018). Similarly, Ethiopian migrations have been influenced by economic challenges coupled with the proliferation culture of migration embedded among the locals (Dessiye, 2021). In the current study, the Ethiopian diaspora refers to Ethiopian migrants and their dependents residing in South Africa. After the end of apartheid, South Africa opened up to the world. Economic sanctions were lifted, resulting in increased migration from other countries. (Feyissa et al., 2023). The establishment of asylum laws in South Africa, post-1994, at the end of apartheid, further facilitated Ethiopian migrations by enabling Ethiopians to seek refuge and better opportunities in South Africa (Estifanos and Freeman, 2022).

Previous studies have explored migration factors (Estifanos and Freeman, 2022; Feyissa et al., 2023) and the challenges Ethiopian migrants face (Atnafu and Adamek, 2016; Markos, 2023). Feyissa Dori et al. (2024) investigated migration decision-making and argued that intangible factors, such as religious

beliefs, norms, imaginations, emotions and feelings, and tangible factors, such as livelihood opportunities, inform and reinforce each other when making migrating decisions. Zack and Estifanos (2018) researched the social connections and dislocation of Ethiopian migrants in Johannesburg. Their study found that the strength of formal and informal ethnic social networks affects social relations. However, despite Zack and Estifanos' (2018) study, which has implications for managing cultural heritage, it lacks ways to anchor cultural preservation. Globalisation and technology can erode traditional practices, values, and cultural identity without clearly defined ways of preserving culture. This calls for constant research on motivational factors, which constantly change due to increased globalisation. Moreover, most studies of diaspora tourism have focused on inbound and outbound travel (Cater et al., 2019). To address these gaps, this study's objectives are to investigate the motivational factors and explore how the Ethiopian community in Johannesburg preserve their cultural heritage.

The study contributes to literature and policy as it offers a comprehensive understanding of the migration factors and the cultural preservation of the Ethiopian community in Johannesburg, South Africa. This study can help promote cultural exchange with mutual respect between the Ethiopian community and the population of South Africa. Stakeholders can host major Ethiopian festivals open to the public, fostering multiculturalism through diaspora tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Diaspora and migration

The concept of diaspora has been of interest to multidisciplinary scholars and studied from the perspective of sociology, anthropology, history and political science, exploring a wide range of topics in the context of cultural, political and economic dynamics within and across nations (Klarenbeek, 2024; Tichaawa, 2017; Sheller and Urry, 2006). The term 'diaspora' originates from the Greek word. 'dispersion', which means to spread out or scatter abroad (Cater et al., 2019) and stems from the emigration of the Jewish people from Israel to other countries. In academic literature, the term diaspora has acquired a wide range of semantic domains such as immigrants, political refugees, overseas communities, and ethnic and racial minorities (Shuval, 2000). It is used increasingly as the dispersion of a group of people from their homeland to another country, encompassing voluntary and forced migration experiences to search for employment, trade, or escape conflict or persecution (Huang et al., 2013; Karagöz, 2023). Thus, diaspora tourism has a notable and intertwined relationship with migration, as they are both important forms of human mobility (Karagöz, 2023).

Migration is driven by economic and survival purposes, giving rise to movements of different communities from one place to another (Li et al., 2020). Migration factors encompass push-pull dynamics that drive individuals away from their home countries or attract them to host nations (Tsegay, 2023). In contrast, Lee's theory of migration argues that migration has four factors: factors associated with the area of origin, factors associated with the destination, intervening obstacles, and personal circumstances (Veljanovska-Blazhevska, 2017). Push factors that influence migration worldwide include economic factors (such as lack of job opportunities, high cost of living), social factors (like low

standards of healthcare facilities, the lack of educational opportunities and religious tolerance), political push factors (like unfair legal systems, war and terrorism, and the lack of governmental tolerance) (Estifanos and Freeman, 2022; Tsegay, 2023). Pull factors are attributes of the host country that attract individuals to migrate, often referred to as place utility, which is the desirability of a country that pulls people to migrate (Veljanovska-Blazhevska, 2017). They can be categorised into economic factors (which include better job opportunities, improved working conditions and higher wages), political factors (like freedom from persecution and better legal protections), social factors (like enhanced healthcare and transportation facilities), and miscellaneous factors (Urbański, 2022). Miscellaneous factors include family presence, educational opportunities, cultural diversity, and community vitality (Urbański, 2022).

In migration, diaspora plays a fundamental role as it influences the formation of diasporic community communities, whose motivations significantly determine tourism offerings and destination marketing strategies (Li et al., 2020). Diaspora members are transnational, as their families, feelings, social networks, and cultures are shared between distinct societies (Huang and Chen, 2021). They foster connections among themselves and create supportive networks that help build relationships within the migrant communities by providing each other with resources, such as legal assistance and language classes to improve their competence in host languages, vital for migrants to adapt to the new environment while strengthening their cultural identity (Klarenbeek, 2024). Carbajal (2020) posits that the younger generations who come from migrant parents and were born in different countries other than their parent's country of origin have a lower attachment to their country of origin than their parents or those born in their parent's country of origin.

Cultural preservation

Diaspora tourism plays a fundamental role in the preservation of culture as it allows individuals to engage with their heritage, fostering a sense of identity and belonging (Utomo, 2020), while cultural preservation helps maintain cultural traditions and provides a sense of security and community (Rutagand, 2024), ultimately enhancing their mental well-being and social cohesion of the diasporas. According to Adinolfi (2019), diasporas, like the Portuguese, have used their traditional scout uniform to maintain their identity in South Africa. Food plays a crucial role in cultural preservation as it serves as an expression of cultural heritage and a means of community connection. Saputra et al. (2024) argue for the importance and utilisation of cultural heritage knowledge to achieve sustainable urban agriculture. For example, the use of traditional cultivation methods and carefully selected plants commonly found incorporated into the residential areas of diaspora communities showcase the cultural and historical essence of migrants. These gardens showcase a variety of plant life, including culinary crops and decorative and medicinal plants (Saputra et al., 2024). This way of life is passed down from generation to generation.

On the other hand, traditional recipes, cooking techniques and dining etiquette, which reflect the values of different cultures, facilitate cultures to travel globally when one has migrated to another country and wants to bring a 'taste of home' with them (Sibal, 2018). Traditional recipes must be maintained because they are ingrained with their cultural roots and losing them would result in a part of their culture being lost. Similarly, Ethiopians find pride in

their cuisine, which they use to preserve their cultural history and pass down traditional recipes from generation to generation (Wahome, 2018).

Mexican and Nigerian cuisines used in celebrations feature rich and diverse culinary traditions that reflect the country's culture and history, rooted in religion and regional diversity. For example, Cinco de Mayo is a holiday observed in Mexico and among Mexican communities where food and wine play a vital role in cultural celebrations as they make traditional Mexican dishes such as salsa, enchiladas and guacamole whose flavours and colours of these dishes reflect the spirit of pride and celebration that the holiday represents (De Jesús Contreras and Medina, 2021). The Ethiopian coffee ceremony holds cultural significance as the coffee rituals consist of roasting, grinding, and brewing coffee beans whilst the aroma of the incense surrounds the room's ambience. The ceremony allows people to engage in conversations by interacting with others and establishing connections (Brinkerhoff, 2011). In the same vein, Nigerians, in their food culture, emphasise hospitality and generosity in which guests feel like royalty, driving cultural connection, identity and sense of belonging (Brown et al., 2019). Consequently, food establishes a sense of community and strengthens social relationships through communal dining, coffee rituals, and celebrating cultural diversity (Dejen and Tadese, 2022), while the cultural festivals and celebrations held in host countries are important means for diaspora members to honour and promote their cultural heritage (Mukherjee, 2021).

Ethnic restaurants and shops are vital in preserving cultural heritage and promoting cultural exchange. It enables them to preserve their culinary traditions and spread them to a broader audience, fostering cultural exchange (Aybek and Özdemir, 2022). This demand has enabled migrants to start businesses that cater to the needs of fellow migrants and locals (Idris, 2015; Zack and Estifanos, 2018). Cultural restaurants serve as custodians of cooking techniques, traditional recipes and ingredients passed down through generations (Aybek and Özdemir, 2022). They provide platforms where locals are presented with traditional cuisine and allow them to learn about the cultural identity and traditions of migrants, fostering cultural exchange (Wahome, 2018) and promoting authenticity because of the unique dining experience potential consumers may encounter, such as their dishes and the décor of the restaurant (Li et al., 2023).

Some shops sell incense, traditional art, and equipment for the ritualised coffee ceremony (Idris, 2015), contributing to the host destination's economic development. Traditional arts and crafts allow people to express their culture while preserving cultural heritage (Tichaawa and Chamboko-Mpotaringa, 2024). Utomo (2020) contends that diasporas use arts and crafts to preserve their cultural heritage, which they share with others in the host country and amongst themselves, reaffirming their feelings of belonging.

Religion offers a space that serves as a source of social capital, facilitating socialisation and the continuation of cultural traditions (Wu et al., 2021). Religious sites, such as churches and temples, hold deep sacred significance and have rich symbolic and artistic meanings (such as statues and carvings in cathedrals which symbolise biblical stories). Though they are physical structures, these spaces are expressions of faith, embodying the cultural heritage and spiritual connections that shape ethnic identities (Sibal, 2018). Historically, religious beliefs have significantly influenced artistic expressions and modern societies (Chukwudebelu, 2024), highlighting the deep-rooted

connection between religion and culture. Orthodox churches in host communities help maintain cultural identity using a variety of factors such as language (Guglielmi, 2022) and clothing, where congregants wear their traditional attires (Tadesse et al., 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The study area chosen for this study is Johannesburg, South Africa, the significant focal point and desired destination for migrants (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2008) who enter South Africa with aspirations of having a better life, economic opportunities and the established social networks Johannesburg offers (Estifanos and Freeman, 2022). Similarly, Johannesburg has become a centre for Ethiopian migrant businesses and socio-cultural gatherings. Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa, with 126.5 million people in 2023 and one of the fastest-growing economies in the region (World Bank, 2024). Nevertheless, it remains one of the poorest African countries, with a per capita gross national income of $1, 020 (World Bank, 2024). Ethiopian economic needs and aspirations have driven migration across Ethiopia. An estimated 120 000 Ethiopians live in South Africa (Feyissa et al., 2023). Thus, Ethiopian migrants have been selected as the study's population and study area. Non-probability convenience sampling was used, where respondents were selected based on accessibility and convenience. This study adopted a quantitative research design to measure the common reasons for Ethiopian migrants to investigate the motivational factors and explore how the Ethiopian community in Johannesburg preserve their cultural heritage. This study used self-administered questionnaires to solicit information on the profile of the respondents, their motivation for migration, and the ways they preserve their cultural heritage. The analysis utilised SPSS software.

RESULTS
Demographic characteristics

As shown in Table 1, 53.3% of respondents were male and 46.7% were female. Most respondents (46.1%) were aged 18-30, followed by 21.8% in the 41-50 range. Most (53.3%) had secondary/high school education, while 46% were self-employed, which is the highest. Respondents have stayed in Johannesburg for 11-20 years (45.5%) and over 20 years (37.6%).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics
(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Variables	Key Findings	Frequency in %
Gender	Male	53.3
	Female	46.7
Age	18-30	46.1
	31-40	20.0
	41-50	21.8
	51-60	12.1
	61 and older	0.0
Highest level of education	Primary school	0.6
	Secondary/high school	53.3
	Diploma	16.4
	Bachelor's	23.7
	Master's	3.6
	Doctorate	2.4
Employment status	Self-employed	46
	Employee	21.2
	Unemployed	7.9

Variables	Key Findings	Frequency in %
Duration in Johannesburg	Student	24.9
	Less than a year	1.8
	1-5 years	4.8
	6-10 years	10.3
	11-20 years	45.5
	More than 20 years	37.6

Motivations for migration

Results show that most respondents' primary motivations for migration were better job opportunities (44.8%) and business/investment opportunities (37.6%). Additionally, 23.6% migrated to join family and friends, 17% indicated they were born in South Africa, and 13.3% sought to escape political instability. Further studies and career growth motivated 10.9% and 8.5% of the participants, respectively. Notably, only 3% indicated they wanted to escape persecution, and none cited the vibrant Ethiopian culture in Johannesburg as a reason for migration.

Table 2. Motivations for migration
(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Motivations*	Yes (in %)
Better job opportunity	44.8
Better business and investment opportunity	37.6
Join family and friends	23.6
Born in South Africa	17.0
Further my studies	10.9
Escape political instability	13.3
Career growth	8.5
Escape persecution	3.0
Vibrant Ethiopian culture in Johannesburg	0.0

Notes: *Respondents could select more than one motivation for migrations. Only yes responses are shown.

Further analysis examined variations in motivations for migrations among the different groups of respondents according to the highest level of education attained. Findings (Table 3) show statistically significant differences for better job opportunity (F=3.523, p=0.005), better business and investment opportunity (F=4.785, p=<0.001), join family and friends (F=7.682, p=<0.001), further my studies (F=6.333, p=<0.001) and career growth (F=14.062, p=<0.001). No statistically significant differences could be established for those born in South Africa (F=1.843, p=0.107), those who escaped political instability (F=2.090, p=0.069) and those who escaped persecution (F=0.451, p=0.812).

Table 3: Results of one-way ANOVA testing the variations in motivations for migrations among different groups based on the highest level of education attained
(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Motivations for migration	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig. P
Better job opportunity	4.071	5	3.523	0.005
Better business and investment opportunity	5.062	5	4.785	<0.001
Join family and friends	5.794	5	7.682	<0.001
Born in South Africa	1.274	5	1.843	0.107
Further my studies	3.639	5	6.333	<0.001
Escape political instability	1.176	5	2.090	0.069
Career growth	3.928	5	14.062	<0.001

Motivations for migration	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig. P
Escape persecution	0.068	5	0.451	0.812

Cultural activity participation

The results of the chi-square test (see Table 4) showed that there were significant relationships between the frequency of cultural participation in cultural festivals and celebrations (x^2=57.004, p<.001), religious ceremonies (x^2=19590, p<.001), traditional music and dance (x^2=40855, p<.001), food (cooking and cuisine) (x^2=26.981, p<.001) and community meetings (x^2=17.990, p<.001). Almost two-fifths (37.1%) of the respondents very frequently attended community meetings. In comparison, traditional music and dance (35.6%), festivals and celebrations (35.3%), and arts and crafts (35.2%) had an almost equal representation of respondents who attended these activities very frequently. Similarly, 32.2% very frequently engage in food (cooking and cuisine) activities, while 35% frequently attend religious ceremonies. About one-quarter (23.9%) attend language classes. In contrast to these cultural activity participation rates, there is no significant difference in frequency participation in arts and crafts (x^2=5.497, p<.240) and language classes (x^2=1.106, p<.893).

Table 4. Cultural Activity Participation.
(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Activity		Participation Rate				X^2	p
		Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently		
Festivals and celebrations	Yes	6.5	19.4	38.8	35.3	57.004	<.001
	No	57.7	34.6	3.8	3.8		
Religious ceremonies	Yes	12.1	21.0	35.0	31.9	19.590	<.001
	No	62.5	37.5	0.0	0.0		
Traditional music and dance	Yes	5.9	16.1	42.4	35.6	40.855	<.001
	No						
Food (cooking and cuisine)	Yes	11.0	22.6	34.2	32.3	26.981	<.001
	No						
Arts and crafts	Yes	5.6	24.1	35.2	35.2	5.497	.240
	No	18.9	20.7	32.4	27.9		
Language classes	Yes	19.0	19.0	38.1	23.9	1.106	.893
	No	13.9	22.2	32.6	31.3		
Community meetings	Yes	7.4	19.4	36.1	37.1	17.990	.001
	No	28.1	26.3	28.1	17.5		

Cultural preservation

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with different statements related to ways to ensure cultural preservation (Table 5), challenges they face in cultural preservation when in the host country (Table 6) and assess support services needed (Figure 1), using a five-Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

Ways to ensure cultural preservation

Findings (Table 5) indicate that the Ethiopian participants strongly agreed that enhancing pride in the cultural background (68.5%), celebrating Ethiopian traditions (65.5%), strengthening connections to roots (64.2%), connecting with

cultural heritage (59.4%), fostering a sense of belonging (58.8%) and meeting other Ethiopian diasporas (51.5%) are effective ways they ensure cultural preservation. These statements had the highest mode of 5 and mean scores ranging from 4.28 to 4.58. However, there was a low value for strongly agreeing (7.9%), a low mode of 1 and a low mean score of 2.42 for tourism promotion in Ethiopia.

Table 5. Ways to ensure cultural preservation (in %)
(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Ways to ensure cultural preservation	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Mode
Enhance pride in cultural background	0	1.2	7.9	22.4	68.5	4.58	5
Celebrate Ethiopian traditions	0	1.2	10.3	23.0	65.5	4.53	5
Strengthen connections to roots	0	1.8	10.3	23.6	64.2	4.50	5
Connect with cultural heritage	0	2.4%	10.3%	27.9	59.4	4.44	5
Foster a sense of belonging	0.6	1.2	17.0	22.4	58.8	4.38	5
Meet other Ethiopian diaspora members	0	1.8	19.4	27.3	51.5	4.28	5
Promote tourism in the home country	36.4	15.8	24.8	15.2	7.9	2.42	1

Notes: *1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree*

Challenges in cultural preservation

Respondents (as shown in Table 6) indicated by either agreed or strongly agreed that lack of awareness of cultural events (frequency=58.7%; mean score=3.56), language barrier (frequency=52.8%; mean score=3.16) and lack of time (frequency=55.2%; mean score=3.48) as the highest challenges they face in trying to preserve their culture. Distance from cultural events (frequency=35.8%; mean score=2.85) and the influence of South African culture (frequency=21.2%; mean score=2.27) were indicated as the least challenging factors.

Table 6. Challenges faced in cultural preservation (in %)
(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Challenges	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Lack of awareness of cultural events	4.8	17.6	18.8	34.5	24.2	3.56
Language barrier	20.0	14.5	12.7	35.2	17.6	3.16
Lack of time	5.5	13.3	26.1	38.2	17.0	3.48
Distance from cultural events	13.9	30.9	19.4	27.9	7.9	2.85
Influence of South African culture	40.0	21.2	17.6	13.9	7.3	2.27

Notes: *1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree*

Support services

Table 7 indicates that most participants strongly agreed that they need awareness of where Ethiopian cultural events are held (58.2%) and cultural exchange programs (52.1%). In contrast, 32.1% strongly disagreed that respondents need support with language classes.

Table 7. Support services (in %)

(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Support services	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness of Ethiopian cultural events	1.8	7.3	9.7	23.0	58.2
Cultural exchange programs	4.2	9.1	18.8	15.8	52.1
Language classes	32.1	10.9	13.3	18.2	25.5

Notes: *1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree*

Table 8 shows the results of the chi-square tests, which were performed to explore the relationship between challenges faced in cultural preservation and the support services required. The results show significant relationships between language barriers as a challenge and required support services like language classes (x^2=38.508, p=0.001), cultural exchange programs (x^2=42.627, p<0.001) awareness of Ethiopian cultural events (x^2=35.010, p=0.004); distance from cultural events. Significant relationships were also established between challenges of distance from cultural events and support of cultural exchange programs (x^2=30.921, p=0.014) and awareness of Ethiopian cultural events (x^2=33.588, p=0.006). Likewise, lack of awareness of cultural events had a significant relationship with the need for language classes (x^2=41.837, p<0.001), cultural exchange programs (x^2=57.286, p<0.001) and awareness of Ethiopian cultural events (x^2=31.142, p=0.013). A significant relationship was established between the influence of South African culture with the need for language classes (x^2=26.869, p=0.043), cultural exchange programs (x^2=68.048, p<0.001) and awareness of Ethiopian cultural events (x^2=62.158, p<0.001).

Table 8. Chi-square analysis of challenges faced in cultural preservation and support serves required

(Data source: Authors based on fieldwork)

Challenges	Support services	Chi-square value	Df	Sig. (p-value)
Language barriers	Language classes	38.508	16	0.001
	Cultural exchange programs	42.627	16	<0.001
	Awareness of Ethiopian cultural events	35.010	16	0.004
Lack of time	Language classes	20.668	16	0.192
	Cultural exchange programs	10.583	16	0.834
	Awareness of Ethiopian cultural events	18.886	16	0.275
Distance from cultural events	Language classes	19.309	16	0.253
	Cultural exchange programs	30.921	16	0.014
	Awareness of Ethiopian cultural events	33.588	16	0.006
Lack of awareness of cultural events	Language classes	41.837	16	<0.001
	Cultural exchange programs	57.286	16	<0.001
	Awareness of Ethiopian cultural events	31.142	16	0.013
Influence of South African Culture	Language classes	26.869	16	0.043
	Cultural exchange programs	68.048	16	<0.001
	Awareness of Ethiopian cultural events	62.158	16	<0.001

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study aimed to investigate the motivational factors and explore how the Ethiopian community living in Johannesburg, South Africa, preserves their cultural heritage. Inspecting the demographic profile of the respondents showed more male respondents, aged 18-30 years, and had secondary/high school education. These findings align with previous studies, which showed that men are more likely to undertake risky migration journeys, which may stem from

African societal norms encouraging men to seek employment abroad to financially support their families, as they often exhibit greater risk tolerance for such perilous journeys (Lemma et al., 2024). Most Ethiopian migrants in South Africa are young adults seeking better opportunities due to high unemployment in Ethiopia (Estifanos and Freeman, 2022). The International Labour Organization (ILO), 2023) noted that individuals migrating for low-skilled labour often lack higher education, making many migrants self-employed and primarily engaging in the informal trading sector (Dori et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). Many respondents have stayed in Johannesburg for more than ten years, aligning with those who state that many Ethiopian migrants have lived in South Africa since the early 2000s (Feyissa et al., 2023), resulting in many Ethiopian migrants establishing themselves in South Africa due to the established communities and social networks.

The study revealed that the top motivational factors for migration were better job opportunities and business or investment opportunities. Perhaps these findings are related to the Ethiopian migrants' view of South Africa as a land of employment opportunities due to the high unemployment rates in their home country (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2023; Megersa and Tafesse, 2024). Similar to Feyissa et al. (2023), who emphasised the critical role of social networks and showed that family connections provide essential support during the migration process, easing transitions and fostering community among migrants, this study found that joining family and friends is a strong motivational factor for migration.

The study further shows festivals and celebrations, religious ceremonies, traditional music and dance, food (cooking and cuisine) and community meetings as valuable platforms that enable the Ethiopians to express themselves culturally and have a community bond, reinforcing social ties and helping foster a sense of belonging conforming to Rahman et al. (2021). This is because religious ceremonies, central to Ethiopian identity, reflect the nation's long-standing Christian heritage (Sembiring, 2023), while cultural food (Rogerson, et al., 2024) and community meetings are vital for preserving cultural identity and addressing migrants' needs (Oladipo et al., 2022). The study revealed the need for awareness of where Ethiopian cultural events are held and cultural exchange programs correlating with Rutagand (2024). Even though no significant relationship could be established between cultural participation rate in arts and culture and language classes, it is important to note that some respondents indicated participating in these activities. Similarly, the study did not find language classes as a support mechanism needed by many. Perhaps language classes were taken by those born in South Africa.

The high frequency of cultural heritage, meeting other Ethiopian diasporas, celebrating Ethiopian traditions, strengthening connections to roots, enhancing pride in the cultural background and fostering a sense of belonging as ways of cultural preservation signifies the high popularity of cultural festivals and community gatherings. These findings align with Megersa and Tafesse (2024), who highlight how migrants maintain their cultural heritage and identity in South Africa and how important it is to maintain their cultural roots and community ties. However, the low mean score for tourism promotion in Ethiopia indicates a disconnect between migrants and the promotion of their home country's tourism industry, supporting Karagöz (2023), who found that visits to home countries are primarily for familial reasons rather than tourism. The main

challenges faced in participating in cultural events include a lack of awareness, time constraints, and language barriers. It is not surprising that time constraints emerged as a significant challenge, particularly since many respondents were self-employed. In addition, the respondents disagreed that the influence of South African culture poses a significant challenge to their cultural preservation efforts, indicating confidence in maintaining their identity despite external pressures. This finding contradicts Dejen and Tadese (2022), who noted restrictions faced by Ethiopian migrants in Saudi Arabia regarding cultural expression, where they were not allowed to express and practice Ethiopian religious beliefs, could not listen to Ethiopian music or wear traditional attire. The significant association established of the relationship between the challenges faced in cultural preservation and the support services needed supports the need for strategies to anchor cultural preservation in diaspora tourism, aligning with previous literature (Wahome, 2018)

Theoretical implications

This research adds to the literature on diaspora tourism, specifically in the context of motivational factors for migration and cultural preservation. These areas need constant literature updates due to increased globalisation and can guide future research. The study identified socio-economic (social and cultural connections, education, economic and career opportunities) and political (political instability, persecution) factors that drive Ethiopian migrants to Johannesburg. This contributes to the migration theory by emphasising the complexity of migration motivation. The study showed how actively Ethiopians participate in cultural activities, emphasising the importance of cultural identity in the African context. Moreover, the identified ways of cultural preservation and support services expand the literature on how diasporans utilise cultural resilience strategies to anchor cultural preservation, aligning with social integration, cultural resilience and transnationalism theories.

Practical implications

Cultural activities serve as important platforms for sharing stories, traditional music, dance, cuisine, and rituals, thereby ensuring that the richness of Ethiopian culture is not only celebrated but also passed down through generations. The study's demographic findings are vital for policymakers to establish targeted strategies that resonate with the demographic profile to promote cultural sustainability, continuity and community cohesion. Findings revealed the need for youth-centred cultural programmes to engage the Ethiopian youths through immersive-technology-driven cultural activities. Since the findings showed most respondents have secondary/high education, implementing education-based strategies such as integrating vocational skills like traditional arts and crafts and culinary practices can empower Ethiopians. Collaboration between community organisations and local institutions would help promote cultural exchange programs and enable intercultural understanding and appreciation between the Ethiopian culture and the broader South African community.

The study highlighted the cultural practices of Ethiopian migrants, which reinforce identity and solidarity within the diaspora. This allows individuals to feel rooted despite being far from home. Taking cognisance of these findings encourages initiatives that foster community engagement, such as having local

stakeholders host festivals to celebrate the Ethiopian heritage. Community centres and urban spaces in Johannesburg could be established as cultural hubs. This will assist in providing safe, secure and accessible locations for cultural exchanges. The promotion of 'inner-city' and 'off-the-beaten tracks' tours in Johannesburg has been argued as an innovative strategy that can be adapted to showcase Ethiopian cultures (Rogerson, et al., 2024). Online platforms (like social media) and community centres can be used to distribute information about upcoming events and cultural gatherings, ensuring that all diaspora members are aware of these festivals and celebrations. These efforts will solve the identified challenges, such as a lack of awareness of Ethiopian cultural events and cultural exchange programs, promote diaspora tourism and benefit the local economy.

It is clear from the study that there is a lack of promotion of Ethiopian culture to non-diasporans in Johannesburg. This implies missed opportunities for cultural exchange between diasporans and locals, while the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) misses' opportunities to attract cultural tourists and investors. Furthermore, the study can serve as a foundation for developing policies to support the integration of Ethiopian migrants into South African society while promoting multiculturalism. This further contributes to achieving sustainable development goal 11 (SDG11-sustainable cities and communities).

CONCLUSION

The study investigated motivational factors and explored how the Ethiopian community living in Johannesburg, South Africa, preserves their cultural heritage. It concluded that Ethiopian migrants migrate to Johannesburg due to political, social, and economic motivational factors. Moreover, despite their challenges, they have successfully navigated their cultural preservation in South Africa by engaging in different popular cultural activities such as attending community meetings, traditional music and dance, festivals and celebrations, and arts and crafts, engaging in food (cooking and cuisine) activities, attending religious ceremonies and language classes. The study concludes that meeting other Ethiopian diasporas, celebrating Ethiopian traditions, strengthening connections to roots, enhancing pride in the cultural background and fostering a sense of belonging can be used to preserve culture. The study further concludes the need for support services such as creating awareness of where Ethiopian cultural events are held, cultural exchange programs and language classes and support mechanisms needed for engagement and promoting awareness of Ethiopian traditions within the locals and diaspora communities. The study discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the study and provides recommendations. Future research should expand their study area to include Ethiopian migrant communities in other South African cities and incorporate qualitative research methods such as focus group observations or in-depth interviews for in-depth comparative analyses that highlight varying individual experiences and strategies for cultural preservation. Furthermore, exploring the role of technology and how it influences cultural preservation among diasporic members can provide insights into modern methods of maintaining cultural ties.

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