

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

The analysis of the data collected and the results thus generated have led to specific conclusions for the study. These conclusions have theoretical, research and practical implications. Recommendations for further studies are also formulated from these conclusions.

7.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study clearly indicate that there is a relationship between human activities and urban design elements within the old town of Mombasa. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that; “A relation does not exist between human activities and urban design elements” is rejected. This implies that urban design characteristics influence human activities within the Old Town of Mombasa.

The study has also established a relationship between human activities, urban design characteristics and restoration of historic streets.

Some urban design characteristics have been established to jointly influence human activities within the old town. These characteristics include the width of the streets, average building height, number of columns per meter run and average height of the windows among others. It has also been established that the residents

of old town not only use the urban design elements to enhance their activities, but also rely heavily on spiritual and cultural values to influence their activities on the streets. The residents of old town attach emotional, spiritual and cultural values to their public and semi-private spaces.

The study has also established certain key concerns of the residents of the old town with regard to protecting the built fabric as a cultural, historical and architectural heritage. It is this built fabric in form of urban design elements that formulates the urban experience within the old town.

The scale and proportion of the streets have a significant influence on the intensity of human activities within the old town streets. This has been established in form of the width of the streets and the average building height. Other urban design elements, such as, columns, canopies and urban street furniture have also been established to play a significant role in enhancing human activities within the old town.

The general contention among the residents is that the old town must be conserved while at the same time enhancing human activities within the public spaces so as to ensure a sustainable livelihood, security, environmental protection and social order.

7.2 Implications

The findings of this study have a number of implications, such as, theoretical, research and practical implications. These implications are discussed in the following sections.

7.2.1 Theoretical Implication

There is a strong relationship between human activities, urban design elements and restoration of historic streets. It is therefore important to recognize that urban design issues for a historic street cannot easily be disassociated with conservation issues. The problems experienced in a historic street are therefore urban in nature but require a multidisciplinary approach incorporating both urban design and urban conservation principles.

7.2.2 Research Implication

An effective urban design research within a historic street requires a thorough understanding of background information of the urban space under study. The techniques used in conducting the research must be carefully selected to capture both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects of the urban space. Specific attempts must be targeted to capture human experiences within the study area.

7.2.3 Practical Implication

The study has established a number of practical approaches that are required as part of seeking solutions for a historic street. Issues relating to economic, social

and environmental sustainability were established as main concerns among the inhabitants of the Old Town. There is a need therefore to develop urban design policies that address practical issues affecting historic streets. Addressing practical issues among other urban design issues shall enhance the urban experience.

7.3 Recommendations

Further studies are recommended in areas of environmental degradation of the urban spaces within the Old Town. This includes studies on the changing urban form and experiences with time.

The study recommends the formulation of urban design guidelines to be used in conjunction with the existing physical planning regulations, building by laws and architectural conservation guidelines, for the purpose of ensuring an efficient and sustainable urban environment. In formulating urban design guidelines, the study recommends the involvement of all stakeholders such as the residents of Old Town, public institutions as well as the private sector. The National Museums of Kenya, the City Council of Mombasa are among the public institutions that need to co-ordinate policy formulation efforts within the Old Town.

The study further recommends that an effective mechanism of regulating the built environment within the Old Town be put in place to arrest the deteriorating situation of the old urban character of the town. Effective methods of enforcing

the existing by laws and conservation guidelines need to be devised if the character of the Old Town is to be preserved.

The study also recommends the effective dissemination of knowledge from regulating authorities to the inhabitants so as to create an understanding of the national importance of urban and architectural conservation. The human resource capacity at the Mombasa Old Town Conservation Office needs to be upgraded so as to undertake effective public awareness programmes while at the same time ensuring that urban design and conservation guidelines are adhered to within the Old Town. Such efforts and initiatives will also ensure that the needs of local inhabitants of the Old Town are addressed without compromising on the requirements set out in physical planning, urban design, architectural conservation and existing building by laws.