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Profiling the South African Recreational Domestic Tourist in the Era of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The profiling crisis-induced domestic tourist behavior in contemporary tourism is a burgeoning discourse. This study addresses the urgent need to proactively predict and manage domestic tourist behavior. Therefore, the study aimed to profile the South African domestic tourist to predict better tourists' behavioral and demand responses considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were generated from a pre-recruited panel of South African consumers as potential domestic tourists via an online survey, resulting in a sample of n = 427. Exploratory Factor analysis and a two-step cluster analysis were used to identify the clusters based on the respondents' socio-demographic variables, intrinsic (push) and destination attribute-related pull motives, and constraints and willingness to pay. South African domestic recreational tourists are primarily motivated to travel by their relaxation and self-fulfillment needs and seek primarily nature and adventure activity, with palpable differences in their perceived intrinsic and extrinsic constraints and their willingness to pay for domestic tourism. The study is novel in profiling (the contemporary South African domestic tourist) and contextualizing (tourist behavior during a crisis) domestic tourists within an African tourism context. Thus, providing empirical evidence-based insights into the heterogeneity of domestic tourists based on innate psychographic characteristics and salient perception-oriented attributes as viable market segmentation bases.

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Domestic tourism; travel motivation; willingness to pay; travel constraints; two-step cluster analysis; South Africa

Introduction

The deleterious impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on global tourism is unprecedented (Altuntas & Gok, 2021; Yu et al., 2020) and has been the subject of a growing number of tourism studies. Typically, contemporary tourism studies focus on various COVID-19 pandemic-related aspects, including the effects of the pandemic on the psyche of tourists (Hussain & Fusté-Forné, 2021; Matiza, 2020; Salman et al., 2022) and their tourist behavioral intentions (Bae & Chang, 2021; Wen et al., 2020). Moreover, as tourism destination countries focus on domestic tourism as a stop-gap measure to mitigate the significant decline in international tourism demand (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD, 2020; Toyama, 2021), the profiling

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of domestic tourists considering the pandemic has also become critical. Like most African countries, pre-COVID, South Africa heavily relied on international tourism arrivals. The empirical evidence confirms the deleterious impact international non-pharmaceutical interventions such as travel bans and more localized lockdowns had on the South African tourism industry (South African Tourism [SAT, 2021a). According to a recent Statistics South Africa report, total foreign arrivals to South Africa declined by 71% to an estimated 5 million arrivals in 2020 (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA, 2021). While domestic and international tourism was adversely affected by moratoriums on non-essential travel, the easing of local travel restrictions stimulated domestic tourism, while international travel remained severely restricted (SAT, 2020).

Emerging research shows a growing trend in slow travel and 'staycations' as a form of localized tourism. Staycations, in particular, have been buoyed by travel restrictions and moratoriums associated with tourism activity and the pandemic and domestic tourism as a stop-gap measure or product substitution for restricted and more expensive international travel and tourism (Sadhale & Sathe, 2021). To this end, Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2021) suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to transform primarily consumptive tourism into a more sustainable *social* form of tourism that involves reversing the effects of over-tourism and the promotion of localized, sustainable community-driven tourism. Thus, the renewed interest in the profile and behavior of domestic tourists in emerging tourism destinations such as South Africa. Despite the importance of profiling domestic tourists, an evident deficit in empirical studies related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the behavior of domestic tourists exists. The COVID-19 induced tourism crisis has also highlighted an even more significant gap in the tourism discourse regarding the behavior of domestic tourists during crisis. The general academic inquiry into various tourism themes and, more pertinently, the behavioral aspects of tourists are disproportionally skewed toward international tourism (Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019). Apart from domestic tourism reports by SAT and StatSA, little empirical research has profiled the domestic tourism market in South Africa before or during the pandemic. Maziriri et al. (2016) and Rogerson (2015) confirmed that domestic tourists are given far less attention within South African tourism scholarship than their international counterparts, even though domestic tourism represents a significant element of the country's tourism economy. In strategic planning undertaken by the Department of Tourism, it is emphasized consistently that domestic tourism "is high on the agenda" (Department of Tourism, 2021, p. 9), but fails to provide clear strategies to address this. This pertinent gap is still evident at the time of conducting this research.

Furthermore, while the extant tourism literature has established socio-demographic and psychographic variables as critical antecedents to tourist decision-making and conative behavior (Baniya & Paudel, 2016; Carlos et al., 2019), there is limited insight into the role of these variables in tourist decision-making in the context of crises. More so, the significance of variables such as age, travel companionship and income and auxiliary psychographic aspects such as travel motivation, travel constraints and willingness-to-pay (WTP) as potential domestic tourist segmentation bases in the era of COVID-19 (Jones & Yamamoto, 2016; Li et al., 2015; Matiza & Kruger, 2021). The "uncertainty about the relationship between COVID-19 and domestic tourism and emerging

avoidance behavior" (Moya Calderón et al., 2021, p. 1) is palpable. Sigala (2020) and Singh et al. (2022) further caution that the multi-dimensional nature and pervasiveness of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic may render seminal models less predictive in explaining tourist behavior. Hence, the dual purpose of the present study was first to attempt to segment and profile domestic tourists in South Africa based on psychographic and socio-demographic bases, respectively. The second was to reexamine the potential predictive power of seminal models related to tourist behavior in the context of domestic tourism during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis. A critical outcome is a better understanding of domestic tourist behavior during a 'glocal' crisis, i.e., a global crisis with idiosyncratic destination implications. Therefore, this research fills the gap in the current literature regarding the under-representation in contemporary tourism scholarship on domestic tourists. From a practical perspective, the results shed light on how domestic tourism can be reinforced considering the distinct characteristics of the different markets and how the industry can better cater to their needs.

Literature review

The domestic tourist market in South Africa: Pre and post COVID-19

Pre-COVID, South African domestic tourism was dominated by visiting friends and relatives (VFR), overnight trips and leisure tourism (SAT, 2019; StatsSA, 2020). According to SAT (2021a), South African domestic tourism re-opened in July 2020 — albeit under conditions of subdued demand (50% lower than 2019 levels). However, South Africa suffered a setback when a second COVID-19 wave constrained peak holiday travel to 60% of 2019 levels (SAT, 2021a). The year 2021 saw the demand for domestic travel increase with a strong preference for uncrowded nature-based and self-drive experiences and peer-to-peer accommodation such as AirBnB (SAT, 2021a). To this end, SAT (2021b) proposes a concerted focus on South Africa's emerging domestic travel market, emphasizing the assessment of the travel needs and changing travel behavior of domestic tourists to stimulate domestic tourism.

Theoretical underpinnings

Three seminal theories support the profiling of domestic tourists within the context of the present study, Market Segmentation Theory (MST) in marketing (Dickson & Ginter, 1987); the Push-Pull Framework (PPF) of travel motivation (Crompton, 1979); and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) of consumer behavioral intention (Azjen, 1991). The MST acknowledges the heterogeneity of consumers and the value in separating markets into homogenous segments that group individuals based on their demand profile (Dickson & Ginter, 1987). While the PPF is an explanatory framework for the motivations of consumers for engaging in specific activity (Crompton, 1979), rationalizing how tourists are 'pushed' to engage in tourism by their idiosyncratic and intrinsic needs and are attracted to a specific tourism destination that possesses the tourism (pull) attributes that best satisfy their needs (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019).

At the same time, the TPB assumes that human behavior in consumptive decision-making is predicated on a triad of dimensions: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Azjen, 1991). Within the tourism context, positive perceptions (attitude toward the perceived constraints to engaging in domestic tourism), the influence of social reference groups (subjective norms), and perceived behavioral control (willingness and ability to pay for domestic tourism) to engage in tourism most likely predict tourists' conative behavior (Hasan et al., 2020).

Health-related crises and domestic tourism

Travel and tourism are synonymous with the perceived risk of exposure to and the spread of disease (Li et al., 2017). As a result, during health-related crisis events, the tourism industry is targeted with moratoriums and restrictions associated with constraining non-essential activity, which has a discernably negative effect on international and domestic tourism demand (Yu et al., 2020). In addition, the extant literature indicates that disease outbreaks, whether localized as epidemics (Ebola, H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic) or global as pandemics (SARS, COVID-19), also adversely impact domestic tourism (Cahyanto et al., 2016; Wen et al., 2005). However, in acknowledging the dearth in the literature related to profiling domestic tourists based on psychographic factors during crises events (Adam et al., 2021; Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019), there appears to be consensus in the literature that domestic tourism is susceptible to the initial extrinsic shocks of health crises – albeit tending to recover faster than international tourism (Altuntas & Gok, 2021; Bama & Nyikana, 2021; OECD, 2020). While domestic tourism-oriented studies to date focus on the nonparticipation of domestic tourists (Kifworo et al., 2020); travel constraints (Angguni & Lenggogeni, 2021); and the travel behavior of tourists in light of the perceived risk associated with COVID-19 (Adam et al., 2021; Bae & Chang, 2021), the psychographic profiling (segmentation) of the domestic tourist appears to be still deficient in the literature with only two studies (Matiza & Kruger, 2021; Neuburger & Egger, 2021) identified thus far.

Socio-demographic and psychographic taxonomy in tourism

Market segmentation is a catalyst for more effective strategy formulation, targeting and implementation (Stepchenkova et al., 2015). From the four traditional market segmentation approaches (socio-demographic, psychographic, geographical and behavioral), socio-demographic and psychographic-based segmentation appears to be the most pervasive in tourism literature variables (Carlos et al., 2019; Shi et al., 2018). To this end, Li et al. (2015) discern that socio-demographic and psychographic factors are significant antecedents to *nonparticipation* in domestic tourism.

Socio-demographic taxonomy

Socio-demographic segmentation is descriptive and involves the discernment of market segments based on descriptive characteristics, including age, gender, occupation, income and marital status (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Kara & Mkwizu, 2020). However, there is heterogeneity in the effect of socio-demographic variables on tourist decision-making

from the extant literature. For instance, in the case of tourist segmentation in coastal marine tourism in Ecuador, Carvache-Franco et al. (2020) found significant differences within the three established clusters based on tourists' age, economic activity, and marital status. Whereas, in the case of China, socio-demographic variables such as gender, employment status and income toward domestic tourism were significant antecedents to *nonparticipation* in domestic tourism (Li et al., 2015).

Previous tourism studies have established the significance of age (Ma et al., 2018); gender (Collins & Tisdell, 2002); marital status (Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2008); and income (Rajat et al., 2015) as significant predictive antecedents to tourism decision-making and conative behavior. For instance, Kifworo et al. (2020) explored the differences between participants and non-participants in domestic recreational tourism as market segments in Kenya and identified gender and educational level as statistically significant auxiliary segmentation variables. Likewise, Rajat et al. (2015) applied income as a domestic leisure tourist segmentation basis and identified India's high-income, medium-income, and low-income domestic tourist segments.

Psychographic taxonomy

Psychographic segmentation establishes homogenous groups based on cognitive and affective variables, including consumer's motives, attitude, beliefs and inherent values (Dolnicar, 2004). The present study explores travel motivation and constraints/willingness to pay as psychographic segmentation bases. The inextricable link between travel motivation and tourism demand suggests that both the intrinsic needs (push motives) and extrinsic forces (pull destination attributes) that influence tourist's decision-making are critical antecedents to the conative behavior of tourists (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020). Travel motivation has been investigated within the domestic leisure or recreational tourism context, albeit to a limited extent (Kara & Mkwizu, 2020). Travel motivation can be dichotomized into the two conventional distinct typologies, push and pull motives (Božić et al., 2017; Crompton, 1979), and a significant proportion of tourism studies investigate both constructs within their subjective contexts. Notwithstanding the extant literature (Baniya & Paudel, 2016; Ezeuduji & Dlomo, 2020; Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019) on the travel motivations of domestic tourists, few studies have gone as far as to segment domestic tourists based on their travel motivations. For example, based on a hybrid of motivation and benefit-oriented segmentation basis, Pesonen (2012) identified social travelers, wellbeing travelers, home region travelers and family travelers as domestic rural tourist segments in Finland.

Willingness-to-pay/constraints (WTP/C) within the study context are associated with the value and impetus tourists place on tourism products, *inter alia,* their price sensitivity concerning their perceived constraints and motivation to consume (Božić et al., 2017; Rajat et al., 2015; Stangl et al., 2020). However, compared to research into travel motivation, a significantly less academic inquiry has explored the utility of WTP and constraints as segmentation bases in domestic tourism.

Although not a variable included in the present research, most of the research conducted during the pandemic focused on segmenting travelers based on perceived risk as a psychographic variable. For example, Neuburger and Egger (2021) examined the relationship between perception of COVID-19, travel risk perception and travel behavior

among travelers in the DACH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland). Three segments were identified: 'The Nervous' (perceives the severity of COVID-19 and travel risk perception as high and is willing to avoid traveling by changing or canceling travel plans), 'The Reserved' (feels neutral toward the risk associated with traveling) and 'The Relaxed' (seems unfazed by the risk associated with traveling). The results revealed a significant increase in risk perception of COVID-19, travel risk perception and travel behavior over a short period of time.

Similarly, Matiza and Kruger (2021) segmented post-COVID-19 pandemic tourists based on three psychographic factors of perceived risk (physical health-related-, social- and psychological risk). The survey was conducted during May and June 2020 when most European countries could ease certain restrictions, but developing countries such as South Africa experienced their highest infection rates. Three segments were identified, 'Dogmatic tourists' (who seems optimistic about traveling in the future), 'Sceptical tourists' (who appeared to perceive a medium level of risk and be cautiously optimistic when thinking of traveling in the future) and 'Apprehensive tourists' (highly cautious when it comes to traveling in the future). Compared to Neuburger and Egger (2021), similar segments emerged apart from the 'Dogmatic tourists' who are more optimistic about future travel. Both studies also included domestic and international tourists, with no studies, to date focusing solely on segmenting the domestic travel market.

Methods

Data were generated from a quantitative-deductive cross-sectional study. The study was conducted in South Africa between December 18 2020, and January 6 2021, during the country's traditional summer holiday peak period — coinciding with the augmented lockdown period that permitted conditional domestic travel. The sample for the study was drawn from South African consumers, whereby participants were invited to complete an online self-administered questionnaire by a reputable South African research firm, iFeedback. iFeedback ran a social media *marketing* campaign prompting targeted recipients on their database to participate in the survey as part of a total population sampling. All South African consumers on the targeted databases were invited to participate in the online survey – hosted on the iFeedback website. Of the $N = 843$ responses received, 50.65% ($n = 427$) usable surveys were retained for data analysis, meeting the sampling heuristic parameters for at least $N = 1\ 000\ 000$ (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Survey instrument

A novel measuring instrument was developed for the study and administered under the ethical clearance obtained from the EMS-REC at the North-West University [NWU-00883-20-A4]. The first section solicited respondents' gender, age, income, educational level, marital status, travel companionship, and region of residence. While additional aspects such as income and the budget amount domestic tourists were willing to pay for domestic tourist activity were solicited based on Statistics South Africa (2020).

Subsequent sections solicited the following information related to the scope of this paper:

- A section measured the push travel motives of domestic tourists based on ten items adapted from previous tourism studies (see Duman et al., 2020; Ezeuduji & Dlomo, 2020; Kamau et al., 2015). Respondents were asked the reasons they would decide to engage in domestic tourism in South Africa, with responses recorded on a 5-point Likert scale of agreement where 1 = 'Strongly disagree' and 5 = 'Strongly agree'.
- A section measured the push travel motivation of domestic tourists based on ten destination attribute-related statements adapted from the literature (see Filistanova, 2017; Gautam, 2018; Mapingure et al., 2019; Pesonen et al., 2011; Saiprasert, 2011; Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016). Respondents were asked how likely they were to engage in specific domestic tourism activities in South Africa – with responses recorded on a 5-point Likert scale of likelihood where 1 = 'Extremely unlikely' and 5 = 'Extremely likely'.
- The last relevant section was a combined scale measuring the travel constraints associated with domestic tourism and the willingness of tourists to pay for domestic tourism. Five statements were adapted from the literature to measure each construct, constraints (see Božić et al., 2017; Fourie, 2015; Li et al., 2015), and willingness to pay (see Adamu et al., 2015; Doran et al., 2015; Mgxekwa, 2016). Responses were recorded 5-point Likert scale of agreement where 1 = 'Strongly disagree' and 5 = 'Strongly agree'.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed primarily using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 (IBM, 2020). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to reduce the data and establish travel motivations, constraints, and willingness to pay constructs. A two-step cluster analysis approach followed this in line with previous segmentation-oriented tourism studies that analyze categorical and continuous demographic, psychographic, geographic and (self-reported) behavioral variables (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2015; Tkaczynski et al., 2010).

Step one grouped the original cases into *preclusters* via a cluster features tree (Okazaki, 2007). In step two, a standard hierarchical clustering algorithm was applied to the preclusters to explore various solutions (Norušis, 2008). Schwarz's Bayesian information criterion (BIC) was used to produce the optimal number of clusters while maintaining objectivity in the selection criteria and avoiding the arbitrariness of traditional clustering techniques (Chiu et al., 2001; Norušis, 2008). Chi-square tests were conducted for categorical variables and analysis of variance for continuous variables to examine individual variables' importance in the cluster (Norušis, 2008). Each significant absolute cluster value that was more significant than the critical value was considered important and was used to distinguish that cluster from the others (Norušis, 2008).

Results

Descriptive statistics profiled the respondents. Notable results indicate an even distribution between male and female respondents (47% each), with 6% preferring not to indicate their gender. In terms of age, 30% were between 18-24 years, followed by 20% in the 25-34 and 55+ age categories. The usual travel companions include traveling with family (adults and children) (30%), partners (24%) or traveling alone (22%). Gauteng (38%) was the most represented province, followed by the Western Cape (19%) and KwaZulu-Natal (10%). Regarding travel frequency for tourism purposes in the last two years, 37% indicated that they traveled more than once while 35% indicated they must travel as a tourist (business or leisure) and 28% traveled once. The most influential media that will influence decision-making include the internet (32%), social media (24%), television (17%) and word-of-mouth referrals (12%). Most respondents indicated that they are not planning to travel internationally over the next year (54%), while 75% indicated they plan to travel domestically. If traveling domestically (within South Africa) with family for seven days, most respondents are willing to spend less than R10 000[1] followed by 28% willing to spend R11 000 – R20 000 for the whole trip.

Dimension reduction

EFAs were conducted to establish the underlying travel motivation and willingness-to-pay/constraints factors. The EFA [PCA method, Oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalization at >.04] using Kaiser's criterion (EV > 1) for travel motivation (Table 1), extracted two intrinsic (push) and two destination attributes (pull) factors for potential domestic tourists. The EFA for constraints and willingness to pay (Table 2) extracted two constraints and one willingness-to-pay factor (Field, 2020, Kaiser, 1960). All factors were reliable with at $\alpha > 0.6$ (Cronbach, 1951) and were within the recommended parameters for the average inter-item correlations, 0.15 and 0.55 (Cohen, 1988). The KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant statistics for both EFA's were within the recommended parameters (Kaiser, 1960) and confirmed the sample adequacy and factorability of the data.

As shown in Table 1 (*near here*), *relaxation seeking* ($\bar{x} = 3.68$) and *self-fulfillment seeking* ($\bar{x} = 3.13$) were identified as intrinsic (push) travel motives for domestic tourists. *Nature and adventure activity seeking* ($\bar{x} = 3.43$) and *entertainment and cultural activity seeking* ($\bar{x} = 2.92$) were identified as destination attributes (pull) travel motives. Interpreting the mean values, potential domestic tourists were personally motivated by relaxation seeking motives and were attracted by the nature and adventure attributes of South Africa as a domestic tourism destination.

Concerning respondents' views of certain constraints and their willingness to pay, Table 3 (*near here*) shows one *domestic travel willingness to pay* ($\bar{x} = 3.16$) extracted factor. Two constraints factors emerged (Table 2), *extrinsic* ($\bar{x} = 2.81$) and *intrinsic* ($\bar{x} = 2.29$). Interpreting the mean values, there is a higher likelihood of the willingness to pay for domestic tourism in South Africa compared to the influence of any constraining factors.

[1]R1 = approximately USD15

Table 1. EFA results on domestic tourist travel motivation.

	[1]Intrinsic push motives		[2]Destination attributes (pull factors)	
Statements	Relaxation seeking	Self-fulfillment seeking	Nature & adventure activity seeking	Entertainment & cultural activity seeking
Intrinsic push motives				
Seek Relaxation (fun and enjoyment)	0.84			
Escape from every day's routine to refresh my mind	0.82			
Have an adventure	0.81			
Get to visit and know new places I have not been to	0.81			
Have time away with my family	0.78			
Relieve stress	0.74			
Visit friends and relatives	0.66			
Travel for religious activities (pilgrimage)		0.80		
Boost my self-esteem/confidence		0.79		
Learn and expand my knowledge		0.76		
Seek social interaction		0.72		
Explore and experience different activities and cultures		0.65		
Destination attributes (pull factors)				
Enjoy various natural attractions (mountains, lakes, rivers)			0.88	
Visit national parks, conservancies and nature reserves			0.86	
Travel to places that offer a variety of unique flora and fauna			0.86	
Experience great weather in the region			0.71	
Engage in outdoor activities (Quad-biking, hiking, bungee jumping, rafting)			0.69	
Engage in entertainment activities (sports, theme parks, water parks, casinos, resorts)				0.86
Attend festivals, arts events, music concerts				0.85
Experience unique food/cuisine experiences (wine, traditional, western, Asian)				0.71
Visit museums, monuments, and historical locations and artifacts				0.69
Visit locations with beaches (Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth)				0.63
Eigenvalues (EV)	6.20	1.66	6.00	1.21
Var. (%)	51.68	13.85	60.08	12.09
Cum. Var. (%)	51.68	65.53	60.08	72.17
Cronbach alpha (α)	0.92	0.85	0.91	0.89
Avg, inter-item correlation	0.61	0.53	0.66	0.61
Mean value ($\bar{x}$)	3.68	3.13	3.43	2.92

1A 5-point Likert scale of agreement, where 1 = 'Strongly disagree' and 5 = 'Strongly agree': KMO = 0.92; Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant [x^2 (66) = 3042.17, $p < 0.05$].
2A 5-point Likert scale of likelihood, where 1 = 'Extremely unlikely' and 5 = 'Extremely likely': KMO = 0.93; Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant [x^2 (45) = 2888.73, $p < 0.05$].

Cluster analysis results

Two-step cluster analysis produced a sample (n = 400) with a silhouette measure of cohesion and separation of 0.1 above the required level of 0.0 and suggested that the within-cluster distance and the between-cluster distance is valid (Norušis, 2011). The size ratio was 2.43 below the recommended value of 3, while 27 observations were excluded because they did not have sufficient data for the chosen variables to be

Table 2. EFA results on constraints and willingness to pay.

Statements	*Constraints		*Willingness to pay
	Intrinsic constraints	Extrinsic constraints	
Intrinsic Constraints			
I am not interested in traveling in South Africa in general	0.88		
It is not accessible to travel within South Africa	0.76		
I am not interested in the type of tourism products offered, I'd rather visit family and friends than going on holiday	0.62		
There is too little information available about tourism attractions in South Africa	0.56		
Extrinsic Constraints			
The cost of living in South Africa is too high, therefore I cannot afford it		0.80	
I have more important things to spend my money on		0.71	
I'm worried about travel safety in South Africa		0.65	
If I have the choice, I rather travel locally, although this option might be more expensive than traveling internationally to destinations like Thailand		0.44	
Willingness to pay			
Is not expensive, I can afford it.			0.84
As a tourist, I am willing to pay for a local holiday			0.82
Eigenvalues (EV)	3.74	1.46	1.06
Var. (%)	37.40	14.58	10.58
Cum. Var. (%)	37.40	51.97	62.55
Cronbach alpha (α)	0.74	0.73	0.64
Avg, inter-item correlation	0.42	0.47	0.37
Mean value ($\bar{x}$)	2.29	2.81	3.16

*A 5-point Likert scale of agreement, where 1 = 'Strongly disagree' and 5 = 'Strongly agree': KMO = 0.80; Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant [x^2 (45) = 1233.70, $p < 0.05$].

grouped in one of the clusters. Three clusters were revealed with a smaller BIC value and a lower BIC change and distance measure. Between-cluster differences were examined using cross-tabulations and chi-square tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Tukey post hoc tests and confirmed that each of the 20 variables varied between the clusters. When the file was split in two for validation purposes, it was also confirmed that the same number of clusters could be identified in both the split solutions and the respondent characteristics and the predictive importance of the variables for the three clusters were similar to the final solution. Consequently, the cluster solution with 20 segmentation variables was accepted as the final solution.

The predictive importance of all variables in the two-step cluster analysis is listed in brackets next to each variable. For example, if an item has a rating of between 0.8 and 1.0, it is vital in predicting cluster formation. Conversely, items with a score of 0.0–0.2, while significant, are less critical in forming the three clusters (Tkaczynski, 2017; Tkaczynski et al., 2015). As indicated in Table 3, age and marital status have the highest predictive importance amongst all variables and are the most relevant in defining differences amongst the three clusters. Furthermore, employment status, gross monthly income, travel frequency, education level, influential media, usual travel companions, planning to travel domestically in the next year, and the push and pull motives also have relatively high predictive importance. Variables of less importance to cluster formation include planning to travel internationally in the next year, willingness to spend on a 7-day trip, province of residence, gender and the constraints and willingness to pay factors.

Table 3. Final cluster solution.

		Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
Segment size (n)		N = 160		N = 70		N = 170	
Segment (%)		40%		18%		42%	
Categorical variables		N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender (0.06)	Male	69	43%	20	29%	100	59%
	Female	83	52%	44	63%	64	38%
	Prefer not to indicate	8	5%	6	9%	6	4%
Age (1)	18-24	108	68%	7	10%	1	1%
	25-34	32	20%	29	41%	17	10%
	35-44	10	6%	17	24%	33	19%
	45-54	10	6%	6	9%	40	24%
	55+	0	0%	9	13%	75	44%
	Rather not say	0	0%	2	3%	4	2%
Marital status (0.94)	Single (never married)	150	94%	33	47%	10	6%
	Married	5	3%	23	33%	120	71%
	Domestic partnership	2	1%	2	3%	14	8%
	Widowed	0	0%	1	1%	5	3%
	Divorced	3	2%	8	11%	18	11%
	Separated	0	0%	3	4%	3	2%
Level of education (0.73)	Non-formal education	20	13%	16	23%	0	0%
	High School Diploma	71	44%	17	24%	10	6%
	Certificate	48	30%	20	29%	17	10%
	Tertiary Diploma	10	6%	10	14%	33	19%
	Bachelor's Degree	8	5%	1	1%	36	21%
	Post graduate Degree	3	2%	6	9%	74	44%
Gross monthly income (0.77)	Much below average income	74	46%	32	46%	13	8%
	Below average income	14	9%	15	21%	11	6%
	Same as average income	7	4%	8	11%	30	18%
	Above average income	3	2%	2	3%	52	31%
	Much above average income	2	1%	0	0%	50	29%
	Rather not say	60	38%	13	19%	14	8%
Employment status (0.79)	Student	58	36%	2	3%	3	2%
	Unemployed	72	45%	20	29%	11	6%
	Employed in the private sector	10	6%	19	27%	91	54%
	Employed in the public sector	4	3%	15	21%	23	14%
	Retired	1	1%	5	7%	29	17%
	Rather not say	15	9%	9	13%	13	8%
Province of residence (0.12)	Limpopo	18	11%	7	10%	1	1%
	Free State	10	6%	4	6%	4	2%
	North West	11	7%	2	3%	9	5%
	Northern Cape	7	4%	0	0%	3	2%
	Western Cape	17	11%	22	31%	38	22%
	Eastern Cape	17	11%	8	11%	8	5%
	Gauteng	47	29%	17	24%	88	52%
	Mpumalanga	11	7%	3	4%	6	4%
	Kwazulu-Natal	22	14%	7	10%	13	8%
Usual travel companions (0.54)	Alone	50	31%	23	33%	10	6%
	With my partner	9	6%	10	14%	83	49%
	Family (Adults & children)	55	34%	10	14%	57	34%
	With my children	5	3%	15	21%	4	2%
	With my friends	15	9%	0	0%	6	4%
	Friends and family	25	16%	7	10%	5	3%
	Work colleagues	1	1%	5	7%	5	3%
Travel frequency in the past two years (0.62)	None. I am yet to travel as a tourist (business or leisure)	79	49%	42	60%	12	7%
	Once	57	36%	23	33%	35	21%
	More than once	24	15%	5	7%	123	72%
Most influential media channels (0.40)	Television	36	23%	24	34%	5	3%
	Print media (newspaper/magazine)	5	3%	1	1%	0	0%
	The internet	33	21%	19	27%	74	44%

(*continued*)

Table 3. Continued.

		Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
Segment size (n)		N = 160		N = 70		N = 170	
Segment (%)		40%		18%		42%	
Categorical variables		N	%	N	%	N	%
	Social media (Facebook. Twitter. Instagram)	52	33%	13	19%	29	17%
	Previous visits (Websites)	3	2%	0	0%	25	15%
	Word-of-mouth (friends. family. work colleagues)	7	4%	12	17%	34	20%
	Travel/trade shows	24	15%	1	1%	3	2%
Planning to travel internationally in the next year (0.21)	Yes	94	59%	6	9%	85	50%
	No	66	41%	64	91%	85	50%
Planning to travel domestically in the next year (0.37)	Yes	125	78%	22	31%	153	90%
	No	35	22%	48	69%	17	10%
Willing to spend on a trip for 7 days (0.10)	Less than R10 000	91	57%	47	67%	49	29%
	R11 000 – R20 000	31	19%	14	20%	68	40%
	R21 000 – R30 000	19	12%	3	4%	23	14%
	R31 000 – R40 000	10	6%	4	6%	19	11%
	R41 000 – R50 000	2	1%	1	1%	4	2%
	More than R51 000	7	4%	1	1%	7	4%
Continuous variables		**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**
Push motives	*Relaxation seeking* (0.52)	1.13	3.75	1.21	2.49	0.57	4.13
	Self-fulfillment seeking (0.43)	1.05	3.77	1.15	2.41	0.90	2.76
Pull motives	*Nature and adventure activity seeking* (0.41)	1.21	3.60	1.15	2.21	0.90	3.80
	Entertainment and cultural activity seeking (0.41)	1.26	3.48	1.06	1.97	0.97	2.75
Constraints and willingness	*Intrinsic constraints* (0.06)	1.10	2.47	1.05	2.35	0.75	2.06
	Extrinsic constraints (0.03)	1.17	2.99	1.39	2.68	0.94	2.67
	Domestic travel willingness (0.13)	1.10	3.23	1.32	2.50	0.73	3.28

A typology of the South African domestic tourist

Independent budget-conscious gen Z

This cluster is the second largest (40%), with an even distribution between male (43%) and female (52%) respondents. They are the youngest (18-24 years old, 68%), single (94%) with a high school diploma (44%) or a certificate (30%). Most are unemployed (45%) or students (36%) and earn much below the average income (46%). They reside in Gauteng (29%), KwaZulu-Natal (14%) and Limpopo (11%). They usually travel with their family (34%) or alone (31%). Social media (33%), television (23%) and the internet (21%) are the most influential media channels. Most have not traveled as tourists in the last two years (49%) while 36% have traveled once. More than half (56%) plan to travel internationally and 78% domestically in the next year. Due to their lower discretionary income, they are willing to spend less than R10 000 (USD 760) on a 7-day trip (57%). Based on their high ratings of both the push and pull motives, this cluster is eager to travel and fulfill intrinsic needs and seek various tourist activities. They are willing to travel domestically ($\bar{x} = 3.23$), but *extrinsic constraints* ($\bar{x} = 2.99$) may deter them. Therefore, they are easy to convince, but their lower discretionary income needs to be considered. Based on their characteristics, they were labeled *Independent budget-conscious Gen Zs*.

Lingerlusting gen Y

This was the smallest cluster (18%), with mostly female respondents. Gen Y-ers are between 25-34 years (41%) and 35-44 years (24%) old. Most are single (47%), while 33% are married. They mainly reside in the Western Cape (31%) or Gauteng (24%). While most have a certificate (29%) or a high school diploma (24%), many have no formal education (23%). Most are unemployed (29%), while 27% are employed in the private sector and 21% in the public sector (21%). Due to their unemployment status, they earn much below (46%) and below (21%) the average income. Usually, they travel alone (33%) or with their children (21%). Most have not traveled as tourists in the past two years (60%). They are also not planning to travel internationally (91%) or domestically (69%) in the next year. Influential media channels are television (34%) and the internet (27%). Like cluster 1, they are willing to spend less than R10 000 (USD760) on a 7-day trip due to their lower income. Based on the low ratings, it appears that none of the push or pull motives persuade them to travel, and *extrinsic constraint*s deter them from traveling. This cluster, therefore, appeared unable to travel and were labeled *Lingerlusting Gen Ys.*

Wealthy wander-lusting baby boomers

This was the largest segment (42%), the oldest (55+ years old, 44%), married (71%) and earning above the (31%) or much above (29%) average income. Most have a post-graduate degree (44%) and are employed in the private sector (54%), residing in Gauteng (52%) or the Western Cape (22%). Their usual travel companions are their partners (49%) and family (34%). They are frequent travelers, with 72% indicating that they traveled more than once in the past two years. The most influential media that shape their decision-making is the internet (44%) and word-of-mouth referrals (20%). This segment is optimistic about traveling in the future with 50%, indicating that they plan to travel internationally and 90% planning to travel domestically over the next year. Due to their higher discretionary income, they (40%) are willing to spend R11 000 (USD786) to R20 000 (USD1428) on a 7-day trip with family. Regarding the push and pull motives, this segment will be motivated by *relaxation seeking* ($\bar{x} = 4.13$) and will most likely engage in *nature and adventure activity seeking* ($\bar{x} = 3.80$). They are willing to travel domestically ($\bar{x} = 3.28$) and are not influenced by *intrinsic* or *extrinsic constraints*. Based on these characteristics, this segment is defined as *Wealthy wanderlusting Baby boomers*.

Discussion

As one of the first African studies to profile domestic recreational tourists by applying a hybrid multi-dimensional approach to market segmentation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, age and marital status reported the highest predictive importance for domestic tourism segmentation. In line with prior studies (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Jones & Yamamoto, 2016; Pesonen, 2012; Rajat et al., 2015; Stangl et al., 2020), the auxiliary variables (travel motivation, constraints and WTP) provided more in-depth insights into the inherent heterogeneity of the domestic recreational tourist segments in South Africa. Consequently, three domestic recreational tourist segments are delineated

in South Africa's domestic tourism market: *Independent Budget-conscious Gen Z*; *Linger-lusting Gen Y*; and *Wealthy Wander-lusting Baby Boomer* tourists. Prior tourism studies have identified heterogeneity in domestic tourist segments based on intrinsic (push) travel motivations (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020), desired destination (pull) attributes (Pesonen, 2012), WTP (Rajat et al., 2015), perceived travel constraints (Božić et al., 2017) and socio-demographic factors (Kifworo et al., 2020). Thus, supporting our findings.

Moreover, the profiles of the domestic tourists are generally consistent with the literature, thus providing some validation for the tourist segmentation in the South African context. For instance, tourism studies (Cai & Li, 2009; Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019) on senior citizen (50+) tourists (*Wealthy wander-lusting Baby boomers*) suggest that this segment has a high proclivity for rural nature and adventure activity to satisfy their relaxation seeking motives. Furthermore, our profile is consistent with this segment high financial power, ability, and willingness to spend on domestic tourism compared to international tourism (Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019). Comparatively, within the context of COVID-19, *Wealthy wander-lusting Baby boomers* are like *Dogmatic tourists* identified by Matiza and Kruger (2021) based on their optimism about future travel.

Consistent with the profile of *Independent budget-conscious Gen Z* domestic tourists, prior tourism studies (Fraiz et al., 2020; Priporas et al., 2020) have profiled Gen Z tourists as young; educated individuals; who are currently employed or are still students; that is pragmatic and economically conservative. Additionally, the segment has a propensity to engage in adventure tourism and seek nature-based tourism experiences, as much as they are inclined to seek entertainment and cultural immersion, driven by their need for relaxation and self-fulfillment (Fraiz et al., 2020). The *Independent budget-conscious Gen Z* is also consistent with the spontaneous budget explorer identified by the SAT (2021b), confirming their status as an emerging domestic travel market in South Africa.

Intriguingly, our findings contradict SAT's (2019) and StatsSA's (2020) pre-COVID-19 tourist profiling and travel characteristics of South Africa's former main domestic tourist market, millennials (Gen Y). Our findings suggest that *Linger-lusting Gen Y* are now unable to travel due to financial constraints associated with unemployment and low-income levels. These critical antecedent barriers to domestic tourism indicate a significant shift in South Africa's tourism market segment characteristics, which tourism practitioners must be cognizant of.

Overall, the study's novelty is in the unique segments established in South Africa's domestic recreational tourism market in the era of a global pandemic. It generally appears that South African domestic recreational tourists with the financial means are willing to pay to travel locally and are generally motivated to engage in nature and adventure-seeking recreational tourism to satisfy their relaxation needs while not being remarkably inhibited by intrinsic or extrinsic constraints, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The pervasive nature of domestic tourism in South Africa, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, may be attributed to the *home-is-safer-than-abroad bias,* which clarifies the notion of tourists favoring to travel domestically versus international travel in cases of uncertainty or amplified perceived risk (Cahyanto et al., 2016; Wolff & Larsen, 2016). Thus, illustrating domestic tourism's resilience and recovery potential compared to international tourism (Altuntas & Gok, 2021; Bama & Nyikana, 2021).

Implications

The study provides an evidence-based insight into the heterogeneity of domestic tourist segments in South Africa's domestic tourism market and predicts domestic tourists' innate behavioral and demand responses considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

Theoretical implications

Zenker and Kock (2020) acknowledge the potential susceptibility of established tourism theory and conventional understanding to the COVID-19 induced paradigm shifts in the psyche of tourists. The present study extends MST, PPF and TPB theory to profiling domestic tourists in South Africa during a crisis. The study's findings provide empirical evidence of the relevance of heterogeneity in the demand profile of domestic tourists, but more significantly, the viability of consolidating the broader domestic market into homogenous segments during a crisis to aid in tourism recovery strategy formulation. Our study is one of the first to attempt to support and extend the MST theory based on multiple dimensions (socio-demographic, psychographic, geographical, and behavioral variables) thus, improving the conceptualization of MST within the context of domestic tourism considering the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also re-affirms the value of reconciling push and pull travel motives to better understand domestic tourists' travel motives. This is unlike previous studies that explore the PPF from a unidimensional perspective by exploring only domestic tourists' intrinsic or extrinsic travel motives - implying that it will be critical to reconcile the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists with extrinsic destination attributes in the COVID-19 era. Moreover, the reexamination of the TPB within a domestic tourism context improves our theoretical understanding of the TPB in the under-researched domestic tourism segment and aids in predicting domestic tourist's future travel behavior in the COVID-19 era. A psychographic basis that constitutes the attitudinal [perceived constraints] and perceived behavioral control (willingness and ability to pay) aspects of the TPB are reasonable and viable bases for segmenting the domestic tourist market and predicting their behavior.

Practical implications

The study provides tourism practitioners and policymakers with contemporary empirical data related to tourist behavior. Due to the heterogeneity in tourist's profiles and behavior, a one-size-fits-all policy and strategy approach will not be viable for domestic tourism recovery-oriented marketing and promotion in South Africa. Hence, proactively managing domestic tourist perceptions through differentiated tourism marketing as part of a *multi-stakeholder* approach to marketing the country as a domestic tourism destination to locals will be particularly viable for South African tourism (Fraiz et al., 2020). The following are implications for each segment.

Notwithstanding their propensity to travel domestically, our findings imply that tourists in the *Independent Budget-conscious Gen Z* segment may respond to a concerted youth tourism strategy that emphasizes budget-friendly or subsidized domestic travel options for the younger tourist segment. Increasing demand for domestic tourism is

correlated with developing tourism-related infrastructure that facilitates more affordable access to tourism locations such as efficient and more affordable air, road and rail transport and accommodation (see Ghaderi, 2011). Drawing comparisons with the Japanese experience, women, and the younger and single consumers (akin to South Africa's *Independent Budget-conscious Gen Z* segment) were more likely to engage in subsidized domestic tourism domestic as a tourism marketing promotion initiative (see Toyama, 2021).

The *Wealthy Wander-lusting Baby Boomer* segment comprises empty nesters who predominantly travel with their partners compared to their family. This implies that marketers need to be cognizant of their need for exclusivity and intimate experiences when they travel locally (see Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019). Due to this cohort's susceptibility to COVID-19, there is a need to harness the positive *home is safer than abroad bias* through public diplomacy and social marketing-oriented domestic tourism promotion to form the critical basis for evidence-based marketing that focuses on tourist wellbeing. A concerted multi-channel approach (websites, social media, virtual reality, mobile applications, created content platforms) to maximize information dissemination that incorporates crisis recovery communications (Rather, 2021) would be a viable reflexive approach to marketing to this critical segment. This will entail the facilitation of the dissemination of tailor-made tourism marketing information about the non-pharmaceutical interventions (sanitizing of accommodations, social distancing protocols, digitalization of specific services such as check-in) in place to protect virus susceptible senior tourists who engage in local travel; thus, promoting domestic tourism within the lucrative senior tourist segment.

There will always be a segment of consumers hesitant or unable to travel in any crisis, especially in an unequal society like South Africa, where the pandemic has had a disproportionately more detrimental impact on the middle class (*Linger-lusting Gen Y* segment) (StatsSA, 2020). A correct product-pricing mix is a key to circumventing the barriers to domestic tourism for this segment. Public and private sector owners must consider how products are packaged and priced for domestic consumers by considering initiatives where domestic tourists can receive special packages and rates. For instance, South Africa's National Parks Week, initiated by South African National Parks (SANParks), is an annual week-long campaign providing all South African citizens with the opportunity to visit national parks for free. Thus incentivizing and promoting domestic outdoor-oriented leisure activity (see Hussain & Fusté-Forné, 2021), stimulating the domestic tourism value chain. Moreover, private-public partnerships (see Rogerson, 2013) to develop, redevelop or resuscitate South African tourism assets and infrastructure that are closer to urban areas will promote localized and more affordable domestic tourism for the *Linger-lusting Gen Y* segment, in line with emerging trends in the COVID-19 era (see Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2021; Sadhale & Sathe, 2021). Whereby, under-utilized or unused state and municipal properties that might be converted into low-cost tourism facilities will diversify and enhance tourism product offerings and improve and upgrade essential tourist experiences while adapting to the 'new normal'.

Conclusion

The hybrid approach applied by the study utilizes multiple psychographic segmentation bases and establishes three discernible South African domestic tourist market segments

– *Independent Budget-conscious Gen Z's, Wealthy Wander-lusting Baby Boomers* and *Linger-lusting Gen Y'ers*. The results confirm that tourists' behavioral adaptation to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is predicated on their socio-demographic, cultural and psychological profile (Baños-Pino et al., 2021). Furthermore, the findings corroborate the contemporary crisis-oriented segmentation literature (Adam et al., 2021; Hao et al., 2021; Matiza & Kruger, 2021; Toyama, 2021) and extend seminal MST, BR, TPB and PMT theory to domestic tourism during a crisis. Thus, advancing tourism practitioners' theoretical and practical understanding of the behavior of domestic tourists considering the COVID-19 pandemic (Adam et al., 2021; Volgger et al., 2021).

Limitations and future research

Notwithstanding the significant contributions made by the study, there are some limitations. The study is cross-sectional, suggesting that the empirical evidence provides a snapshot of tourist travel motivations, perceived constraints and WTP. However, this is an inherent limitation in behavioral studies, and study replication over the same period in 2021/2022 may further corroborate and validate the current findings or provide new insights into the South African domestic recreational tourist's profile. More research is also required to investigate the decline in domestic tourism activity among Gen Y-ers and the absence of a distinct domestic Gen X segment, especially from a developing country perspective, with a predominantly younger population as in the case of South Africa. Our sample includes potential domestic tourists who have not traveled 2 years before the study. The inclusion of this population is in line with previous studies (Kifworo et al., 2020; Li et al., 2016) that have identified non-tourist perspectives to be critical to better understanding domestic tourist behavior to establish a basis for their non-engagement in domestic tourism. As an untapped market, their perspectives may be critical to strategy formulation, particularly the promotion of domestic tourism in South Africa. Further comparative studies may establish critical empirical evidence and insights within the identified segments. Moreover, further research is warranted comparing developing and developed country perspectives as the implementation of strategies will largely depend on economic prosperity and population growth figures since developed countries may recover sooner and have lower population growth rates.

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