

Mothers' Needs and Expectations During a Family Holiday: Has Their Quality of Life Improved Due to the Holiday?

Abstract

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Travelling families contribute significantly to the domestic tourism market in South Africa. This study aimed to determine why families go on holiday and what their needs are during a holiday from the perspective of a mother. A quantitative study was undertaken, and 115 responses were obtained. A typical mother travelling with her family was depicted, paired with the required amenities such as Wi-Fi, kids' entertainment and washing machines. It was further determined that mothers go on holiday, mainly to spend time with their families. The results further indicated that mothers' quality of life was positively impacted by single families going on holiday, every six months and they reported being less stressed after the holiday. Concluding, the more family members join in on a holiday, the more challenging it may be to maintain a positive quality of life. Recommendations include providing the required amenities and accommodating families to ensure a good quality of life. The optimal family holidays would be with the least amount of extended family members and limiting holidays to once every six months. The results of this study will guide family accommodation establishments on what to focus on in their service offering should they want to attract more families.

Keywords amenities, families, needs, quality of life, travelling

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Introduction

Summer is in the air, with warmer and longer days around the corner to give everyone a well-deserved break. Many people have a long-standing tradition of arranging family holidays, where family members can come together in a relaxed environment and spend quality time together – or do they? Family holidays are not just part of people's daily lives but are special events preceded by months of preparation and planning (Hall & Holdsworth, 2016). A family holiday is typically associated with non-economic activity and is filled with light-hearted, playful and less rational activities (Hall & Holdsworth, 2016; Gao et al., 2021). Gram et al. (2018) describe a family holiday as part of family practices and vital for bonding and interacting with family members. Siwek et al. (2022) explain that the dynamism and constantly changing conditions and needs of consumers are some of the most distinct features of the tourism industry. Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) and Kelly (2022) contend that families play a significant role in the tourism industry, notwithstanding the current deterioration of traditional family models. The traditional family holiday is usually depicted as two heterosexual parents with an unstipulated number of dependent children who seek a combination of relaxing, leisure, entertainment and outdoor activities (Hall & Holdsworth, 2016). This picture is changing rapidly, with relationships and family structures now also consisting of single-parent families, multigenerational families and same-gender parents. Wu (2016) noticed that in China, families experience a growth in disposable income combined with a greater focus on family life. The result of these changes is a growth in family tourism (Wu, 2016). Hall & Holdsworth (2016) describe family holidays as being central to the rhythm of families' everyday practices. Family travel is also vital to the South African tourism market, so much so that the South African Tourism Board (SATB) launched a campaign, "Sho't Left", to create and promote affordable travel offerings to boost the South African domestic tourism market (Ilona, 2013). Hattingh (2022) added that driving tourism had become a significant part of South Africa's effort to boost the tourism industry post-COVID-19. The "Sho't Left" campaign motivates travellers to explore their own country while experiencing diverse cultures and the natural beauty of South Africa (Ilona, 2023), which is the perfect opportunity for families to spend time together and experience new places in South Africa. The main research question addressed by this article is: What are mothers' needs and expectations during a family holiday, and has her quality of life improved due to the holiday?

Literature review

Kelly (2022) depicts an everyday family trying to multitask while working parents have to commute, take care of their children and juggle all the school activities, homework and caring arrangements. Due to this jam-packed programme, the notion of a family holiday portrays the picture of a family away from the daily stressors, with time to relax and bond, recover physically and mentally while resting and enjoying each other's company (Gram, 2005). Gram (2005) and Small (2005) describe family holidays as a breakaway from everyday life, but add that the anticipated plan of a holiday often differs from what happens when on holiday. Wu (2014) notes that family holidays are essential in Chinese culture instead of being seen as a luxury. Hall & Holdsworth (2016) indicate that family holidays are often marketed as an opportunity for people to spend quality time with family members and recharge their batteries. The reality is that challenges frequently mire holidays due to mothers trying to meet the needs of all the divergent family members, clashing personality traits, and resolving the holiday roles of each family member, which could lead to mixed emotions during and after a family holiday (Backer & Schänzel, 2013; Larsen, 2013; Gram et al., 2018; Kelly, 2022; Heimtun, 2019). The emotional toll might be worsened if some family members, like the grandparents, are not well (Heimtun, 2019), or if a family member has a disability or special need of some kind. This adds to the pressure on the rest of the family, who now also need to take on the role of caregivers (Heimtun, 2019). This is especially relevant to



mothers who are expected to see to the whole family's needs regarding meals, entertainment, accommodation, cleanliness and travel arrangements. Gram et al. (2018) often ascribe disappointing holidays to the media, creating unrealistic expectations. The media might present an unrealistic picture of a lovely day at the beach, with the minor children calmly building sandcastles, the mother quietly reading a book while sunbathing, and the father playing ball with the older siblings. There are no squabbles, complaints and conflicts. Gram et al. (2018) suggest that the media should start depicting a broader and more realistic range of family experiences, including the less harmonious ones, for instance, a rainy day at the coast, or experiencing loadshedding while on holiday. Hall & Holdsworth (2016) describe an interesting scenario: Families have to save up for a holiday, meaning family members have to work harder, resulting in less family time. Larsen (2013) suggests that a family holiday should be an experiential reversal focused on balancing individual experiences, giving each family member what they need, and a continuous shift between exciting outings and relaxing moments at the holiday home. Rogerson (2017) strongly argued for a much greater focus on studies on travel visiting friends and relatives (VFR) due to its positive impact on South African tourism.

The key to an enjoyable holiday is to balance family holidays and ensure that everybody's needs are met. Gram (2005) also reasons that a family's success means having happy holidays, which requires a good atmosphere during the holiday. Furthermore, all family members should be rested after the holiday and have good memories of their holiday experiences (Gram, 2005). Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) and (Wu, 2014) add that family tourism constantly changes in terms of a family's demography and social structures, which further adds to the complexity of this issue. Some of the changes noticed by Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) and Wu (2014) include a higher number of females who are active in the labour market, increasing divorce rates, urbanisation, a growing middle class, better global accessibility, changes in mobility, people staying enrolled in tertiary education for longer, people ageing better, which results in an increasing number of elderly people, and the growth of immigration and emigration. Families can now consist of single parents, blended families, more involved fathers, same-sex marriages, and a carer who is regarded as a family member (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) note the term 'verticalisation', which refers to grandparents becoming more involved in the upbringing of their grandchildren. Multigenerational travel is becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon, fueled by migration, the longevity of people and lower birth rates (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015).

Wu (2014) reminds us of the axiom, 'A family that plays together, stays together', highlighting the importance of family holidays and that all should enjoy them. Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) agree that families go away for holidays to relax, for the novelty of the experience, to participate in outdoor activities, and to visit art galleries and heritage sites. Larsen (2013) describes a family holiday as the optimal holiday experience for all parties involved, where they participate in numerous interrelated pleasurable activities, which results in a social balance, or a 'family flow'. Kelly (2022) highlights that quality time has evolved as an essential motivator for family tourism and concludes that families are motivated to create memorable tourism experiences and try to escape from the daily stresses by going on holiday. Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2015) suggest that children's programmes should be redesigned to be more flexible, including the educational aspect, and encourage parent participation to facilitate more quality family time. During the study by Kelly (2022), a question asked how a coastal holiday trip affected a family, and the responses were that mental health had improved, stress had decreased, and the family had experienced relaxation, togetherness, bonding and quality time.

Kelly (2022) maintains that the mother of a family is generally the one who decides where the holiday will be. She is also responsible for all the menial tasks, such as laundry, packing, cleaning the house, buying groceries, cooking and washing up. Heimtun (2019) describes the filial duty of adult children who have to show love and respect for their parents, but still have an innate need for 'me time'. Heimtun (2019) thus reminds the reader that holidays also have serious aspects, such as duties and responsibilities, that can be seen as sacrifices and a way to display care, respect, and love. Heimtun (2019) concludes that although all these tasks might seem like hard work, most women find them enjoyable, meaningful, and part of their filial duty. Kazembe et al. (2015) noted how hospitality establishments need more family-friendly services and facilities. Siwek et al. (2022) conducted a study in Krakow, Poland, to examine the amenities parents expect at their holiday destinations. The findings were that the most essential amenities are child-friendly hotel services such as discount vouchers for children's attractions, wide lifts for baby carriages, access ramps for prams, play areas and outdoor playgrounds for the kids. The basic requirements for restaurant amenities would be a specific children's menu and high stools for small children (Siwek et al., 2022). Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2015) claim that baby toilet seats and bottle warmers contribute to a satisfactory holiday. During the study conducted by Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2015), five critical themes emerged as vital considerations when deciding where to go on holiday, namely the distance to be travelled to the destination, the availability of family-orientated programmes, the quality of family interactions, a selection of child-friendly amenities, and safety.

Quality of life is a concept that aims to capture the well-being of a population or individual regarding both positive and negative elements in the entirety of their existence at a specific point in time. McCabe et al. (2010) and Dolnicar et al. (2011) maintain that people's quality of life, happiness and overall well-being increase when they go on holidays. In a study by Kelly (2022), it was found that the respondents indicated improvement in their overall well-being after a holiday, including the emotional, physical and psycho-social aspects. Gao et al. (2021) confirm in their study that a vacation impacts people's overall life satisfaction and improves their satisfaction with their educational life, self-image and leisure life. Dolnicar et al. (2011) mention that the impact of vacations on people's satisfaction with life and quality of life does enjoy attention from researchers but note that most quality of life scales do not include vacations/leisure as a domain. During this study, the quality of life domains focused on health and safety, economic and family issues, social issues, esteem issues, actualisation issues, knowledge issues, creativity and aesthetic issues and leisure life, as suggested by Uysal et al. (2016). Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2015) indicate



that a family's overall quality of life can be improved when quality parent-child interactions occur, facilitated by family-orientated activities.

Gram's (2005) study determined that parents and children have very similar wishes for their holidays, namely the perfect mix of relaxing and play activities that meet both parties' needs. Children typically prefer sensory experiences in which they can actively participate and immerse themselves, while parents strive for togetherness and the opportunity to relax and rest. Parents usually want a reversal of their daily life, for example, avoiding anxiety, experiencing pleasure, relaxing, spending time with the family and just doing nothing (Larsen, 2013). Conversely, children want excitement and high-arousal situations while having fun and playing – they want to do things during a holiday rather than merely being with their families (Larsen, 2013). Gram (2005) also explored the different experiences families prefer, such as entertainment, educational, aesthetic and escapist experiences; some are preferred more by the children, and some are preferred more by the parents. Kelly (2022) maintains that quality time spent together during a holiday is part of a cultural discourse. Many people view it as "what it means to be a good parent or happy family" (Kelly, 2022).

This article will explore the specific amenities required at a family holiday destination. Furthermore, the mothers' motivations to go on a family holiday will be identified, and the extent to which their needs were fulfilled during their latest holiday will be investigated. Finally, the quality of life of mothers after their holiday will be identified. The direction of this article is supported by Shänzel & Yeoman (2014), who proclaimed that researchers actively gauge family members' voices about their changing needs and the influence of their backgrounds so that future family holidays and tourism businesses may be sustained. Gram (2005) and Schänzel & Yeoman (2014) contend that family holidays are an issue that is relatively under-researched and, therefore, needs to be addressed, while Kelly (2022) maintains that many tourism studies take the notion of a family as consisting of a mother, a father and their children for granted. However, family tourism is constantly changing due to developing family combinations, and the tourism industry is continuously challenged to update its offerings to cater to increasingly diverse families (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). Schänzel & Yeoman (2014) uphold that tourism businesses need to understand the complex purchasing process that usually takes place when arranging family holidays. Obrador (2012), Kazembe et al. (2015) and Kelly (2022) further explain that there is an apparent invisibility of the family in tourism research at the moment and ascribe it to tourism research mainly being focused on single travellers and not on groups of people.

Research methods

The study undertook an exploratory study design, which used an online quantitative survey compiled on Survey Monkey. The link to the survey was shared across various Facebook groups for mothers, as well as WhatsApp contacts of the researcher who are known to be mothers of families. Participants were requested to share the survey link with any other mothers interested in participating in the study. Additional responses were therefore obtained using a snowball sampling method. The Facebook groups where the survey link was shared were South African groups and included groups such as PhD Mamas, #MomLife, Blairgowrie Moms, #MomLife, Mamas Vragies 24/7, South African Multiple Birthing Association, Multiple moms, Die mamma groep, and Tweeling mamas. Initially, a pilot study was conducted in April 2023, with 21 mothers completing the survey. The statistical department analysed the pilot study results and confirmed that the results were reliable and of a satisfactory standard. The green light was given to continue with the study in May and June 2023. The study population comprised South African mothers with children who had gone on a family holiday in the past two years. The mothers were contacted through Facebook mother groups or WhatsApp and are active social media participants. Determining the total study population was impossible, so it was challenging to determine the desired sample size. Israel (1992) remarks that a good sample size is at least 200 responses. Thus, the aim was to get as close as possible to 200 responses. Eventually, a total of 115 mothers participated in the study. The respondents captured their responses on the Survey Monkey link shared. The data was, therefore, automatically captured, subsequently exported to Excel, and imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. The researcher and the Statistical Support Services at the Tshwane University of Technology processed the statistical results. Basic descriptive and frequency statistics and a logistic regression model based on quality of life measures were utilised.

Results and discussion

The primary demographics of the respondents can be summarised as follows: The typical family going on holiday consisted of a two-parent family (74.78%), with the mother being between the ages of 31 and 40 years (55%), with a bachelor's degree (35.65%), and predominantly from the Gauteng Province (81.58%). Focusing on the working arrangements in the family, 66.09% of the families had both parents working on a full-time basis. The two most popular provinces for holidays were the Western Cape (43.48%) and Kwazulu-Natal (38.26%), both popular coastal destinations in South Africa. Siwek et al. (2022) agree with this finding in that the leading destinations for family holidays are holiday resorts, spas and coastal resorts. Kelly (2022) describes coast and beach destinations as "key loci" where tourism experiences are made up of a mixture of sensory engagements on the beach: sight, smell, touching, and one's emotions. The family's car (77.39%) was the most popular transport mode, despite the distance between Gauteng and the two previously mentioned destinations – between 550 kilometres and 1 400 kilometres. These travelers, therefore, form part of the definition of drive tourism, which is seen as an enabler to support domestic tourism in South Africa (Hattingh, 2022). The families typically went on holiday every six months (35.52%) or once a year (40.87%).

Figure 1 highlights the missing amenities as reported by the respondents, which included children's programmes and kiddies' play areas (8), Wi-Fi (5), certain kitchen utensils (6), electricity during loadshedding (4) and a washing machine (3). The reader must be reminded that South Africa is currently challenged with almost continuous electricity loadshedding, which



will limit the type of activities families can engage in during a loadshedding slot. Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2018) and Schänzel & Yeoman (2014) found that children’s programmes are probably one of the most essential features at a holiday destination. A study by Song et al. (2020) found that parents are willing to pay for special features for children such as rest areas, restrooms and rides; anything to keep the young ones happy.

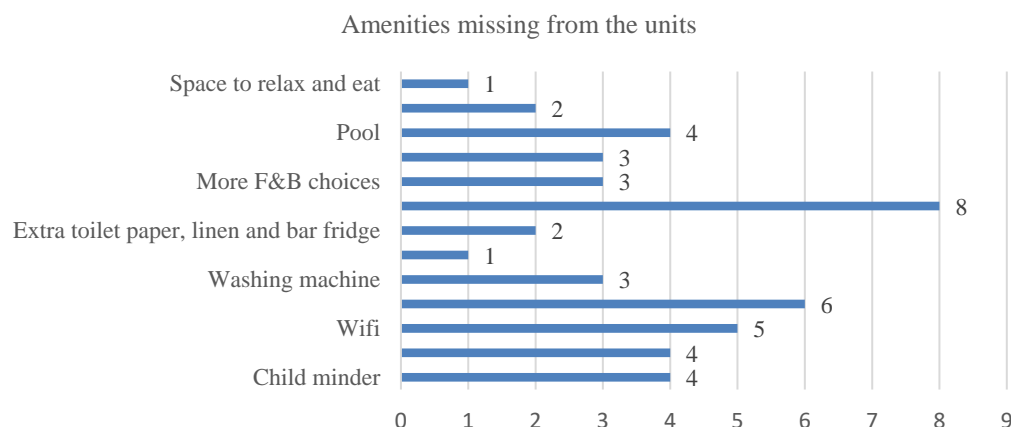


Figure 1: Amenities missing from the units

In response to the question about amenities, many respondents indicated no real need for additional amenities, which was seen as a positive sign, as it meant that most family needs were met during holiday periods. The study by Kazembe et al. (2015) came to the same conclusion with nothing seriously lacking. However the relatively new phenomenon of loadshedding has contributed to additional demands of holiday destinations, which would not be the case in other countries with an uninterrupted power supply. Schänzel & Yeoman (2014) indicate that family holidays are often a source of stress when accommodation establishments at the destination do not have the facilities that families need. In the study by Backer & Schänzel (2013), respondents indicated the need for sun-blocking blinds, enough and proper cooking utensils, a washing machine, and units without stairs. Regarding Wi-Fi, it was interesting to note the finding by Gram et al. (2018), who suggested Wi-Fi-free zones that would foster intimate and focused interactions between family members.

Table 1: Reason for going on holiday

	Frequency	Percentage
To get rid of stress	71	61.74%
To spend time with family	107	94.04%
To see and do new things	64	55.65%
To gain a new perspective on my life	16	13.91%
To visit friends or relatives	36	31.30%
To learn about history or culture	14	12.17%
It’s an important part of life	41	35.65%
To enjoy some romantic time	16	13.91%
For some solitude or isolation	15	13.04%
To enjoy the outdoors	78	67.83%
To relax	86	74.83%
To participate in some physical activities	31	26.96%

Table 1 highlights the reasons why families go on holiday from the viewpoints of the mothers. A basic frequency analysis showed that the top five reasons why families go on holiday are to spend time with the family members (94.04%), to relax (74.83%), to enjoy the outdoors (67.83%), to get rid of stress (61.74%), and, finally, to see and do new things (55.65%). Spending time with family was indicated as the top-rated reason. This is in line with the finding by Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) that because family members are spread out geographically, there is currently a trend of increased mobility leading to intergenerational reconnection holidays. Small (2005) found that the notion of relaxation is specifically relevant to women, and Backer & Schänzel (2013) found it to be women's most important reason to go on holiday, while men predominantly indicated that they were looking for physical activity. Similarly, men preferred accommodation destinations where they weren't expected to dress up, while the women typically selected accommodation that was not self-catering, as this would add to their workload (Small, 2005). Small (2005) commented that mothers in their study confirmed that they had almost forgotten how wonderful life could be merely by enjoying an uninterrupted breakfast or watching a story on the television that was actually interesting



to them. Obrador (2012) and Kelly (2022) concluded that families who went on holiday wanted to bond with each other and be near one another.

Table 2 indicates the percentages of mothers who achieved the goals of their holidays. Of the 107 respondents who stated that they went on holidays to spend time with their family, 93.46% confirmed that they had done so. Sixty-four respondents indicated that they went on holiday to see and do new things, with 71.88% confirming that they had been able to see and do new things. Fourteen respondents specified that they wanted to learn more about the area's history and culture, but 64.29% still needed to get the opportunity to do so during their holiday.

Table 2: If this was your goal with the holiday, did you achieve it?

	Yes	Yes	No	No
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
To get rid of stress	46	64.79%	25	35.21%
To spend time with family	100	93.46%	7	6.54%
To see and do new things	46	71.88%	18	28.13%
To gain perspective of my life	10	62.50%	6	37.50%
To visit friends or relatives	22	61.11%	14	38.89%
To learn about history or culture	5	35.71%	9	64.29%
It's an important part of life	25	60.98%	16	39.02%
To enjoy some romantic time	9	56.25%	7	43.75%
For some solitude or isolation	6	40.00%	9	60.00%
To enjoy the outdoors	66	84.62%	12	15.38%
To relax	61	70.93%	25	29.07%
To participate in some physical activities	21	67.74%	10	32.26%

This indicates that families were more occupied with the essential aspects of the holiday than with going on educational excursions. Fifteen respondents specified that they go on family holidays for solitude and isolation, but 60% did not attain this goal during the past holiday due to the presence of children, and other family members had to be entertained and given attention. As mentioned previously, the challenge of mothers going on holiday is that the chances of them resting and enjoying some alone time are slim due to the rest of the family who need to be cared for, entertained, and catered for. Seventy-eight respondents indicated that they go on holiday to enjoy the outdoors, and 84.62% of the respondents did get to participate in outdoor activities during their holiday. While 86 respondents indicated that they go on a holiday to relax, 70.93% of the respondents confirmed that they could relax during past holidays. Small (2005) concurs that women have indicated the need to be relieved of domestic work and have an opportunity to recover and relax and that mothers seek freedom from caring for children and hope to get time to relax when they go on holiday.

Table 3: Levels of stress after the holidays

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
More stressed	2	2.82%	2.82%
Less stressed	49	69.01%	69.01%
Same stress levels	20	28.17%	100.00%
	71	100.00%	

Table 3 portrays mothers' stress levels after returning from their family holiday. Seventy-one mothers indicated they wanted to get rid of stress during the holiday. After the holiday, two mothers felt more stressed, 49 were less stressed, and 20 mothers (28.17%) indicated that they had the same stress levels as before going on holiday. This can typically be ascribed to all the effort and arrangements that go into a family holiday, which is usually the responsibility of the family's mother.

Table 4: Reliability results of quality of life measures

Quality of life item	Observations	Significance	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Interitem covariance	Alpha
Job life satisfaction	114	+	0.65	0.53	0.33	0.87
Family life satisfaction	114	+	0.68	0.59	0.34	0.86
Financial life satisfaction	115	+	0.61	0.50	0.35	0.87
Health life satisfaction	115	+	0.74	0.67	0.33	0.85
Education life satisfaction	115	+	0.63	0.54	0.35	0.86
Social life satisfaction	115	+	0.71	0.62	0.32	0.86
Cultural life satisfaction	115	+	0.60	0.501	0.35	0.87
Spiritual life satisfaction	114	+	0.63	0.534	0.35	0.86
Leisure life satisfaction	115	+	0.77	0.70	0.32	0.85
Quality of life satisfaction	115	+	0.82	0.76	0.31	0.85
					0.34	0.87



Table 4 looked at the various quality of life dimensions and whether the constructs are reliable. All quality of life dimensions positively impacted the total quality of life experienced. The item-test correlation determined the correlation between two quality of life dimensions. It also looked at the correlation between the various quality of life domains and the overall quality of life experienced by the mothers. All results obtained were satisfactory. Ferketich (1991) recommends an item-total correlation between 0.30 and 0.70, indicating a good scale. Bland & Altman (1997) suggest a Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 – 0.9, which was attained during the reliability testing of Table IV. Due to the measures' reliability, inferential analysis could be conducted on quality of life as a construct.

Table 5 displays the binary model (logistic regression) completed on the quality of life measures. A total of 100 observations were considered with a p-value of <0.05 required to confirm the regression's significance (White et al., 2022). A comparison was made between the various measures that impact people's general quality of life. Compared with an extended family, which usually includes grandparents or uncles and aunts, cousins or nephews and nieces, single-parent families have 14 times higher odds of experiencing a good quality of life than other families (Odds ratio:14.74; p-value (0.05)). This indicates that the more family members join in on a family holiday, the more people there are to keep happy during a holiday, and the lower the quality of life would be, due to potential conflict, tension, and efforts to keep all parties happy. According to Hall & Holdsworth (2016), family holidays can be associated with stress, conflict, frustration and even disappointment experienced by various family members, should their expectations not be met. Hall & Holdsworth (2016) ascribed these results to all the time and effort put into planning such a family holiday, but also because family members might be too familiar with each other due to the close physical proximity and the extended time spent together. Hall & Holdsworth (2016) provide an alternative perspective in that family holidays are the perfect setting to cement the relationship between family members and create opportunities to resolve possible conflicts and tensions.

Table 5: Logistic regression of quality of life measures

Quality of life bin	Odds ratio	P> z conf. interval]	[95% interval]	[95% conf. interval]	[95% conf. interval]
Extended family	1.00				
Single-parent family	14.74	0.05	1.04		208.86
Two-parent family	3.90	0.11	0.72		21.03
18-30 years	1.00				
31-40 years	0.71	0.86	0.01		34.34
41-50 years	0.78	0.91	0.01		42.30
>51 years	0.22	0.48	0.00		13.87
High school diploma	1.00				
Bachelor's degree	0.72	0.64	0.19		2.78
Master's degree	1.96	0.40	0.41		9.25
PhD or higher	0.35	0.25	0.60		2.09
One full-time parent and one part-time parent	1.00				
Both full-time parents	0.40	0.26	0.08		1.96
One partner employed full time, one partner unemployed	1.39	0.74	0.20		9.87
Single parent working full time	0.50	0.11	0.00		2.05
Every six months	1.00				
Every second year	0.39	0.37	0.49		3.10
Every three months	0.14	0.02	0.27		0.75
Once a year	0.58	0.36	0.18		1.86
Less stressed	1.00				
More stressed	0.15	0.20	0.16		1.39
Same stress levels	0.11	0.01	0.32		0.41
Gauteng Province	0.45	0.26	0.11		1.78
Other provinces	3.26	0.61	0.04		299.84

With regard to the frequency of family holidays, the odds were higher that families who went on holiday every six months would experience a good quality of life, compared to families who went on holiday every three months (Odds ratio: 0.14; p-value (0.02)). Regular holidays should therefore take place (every six months), but not too often (every three months), because too much of a good thing might no longer be a good thing. If family members are brought together too often, the possibility of conflict arising from their interactions increases. Further, the pressure on the family's mother to get a family organised every three months will undoubtedly add to her stress levels. When comparing mothers who indicated that they were less stressed after their holiday to mothers who indicated that they still had the same stress levels after their holiday, the odds were lower that the mothers with the same stress levels would experience a good quality of life, compared to the mothers with lower stress levels (Odds ratio: 0.11; p-value (0.02)). This again highlights the impact stress has on the overall quality of life experience, confirming that less stress improves the quality of life.



Conclusion

The conclusions below were drawn from the study, based on the empirical data gathered. First, a basic description of the demographic characteristics of the typical family and mother of a travelling family will be provided. Such a family generally goes to a coastal area for a holiday once or twice a year. Lists of amenities that need to be added to the accommodation include children's programmes and play area, Wi-Fi, certain kitchen utensils, electricity supply during loadshedding, and a washing machine. These findings reveal the massive reliance on technology and electrical appliances to make life easier. Children's programmes are also intended to create opportunities for quality family time during which activities can be engaged with both the children and other family members. Looking at the reasons why mothers go on holiday, the top five reasons were listed as spending time with the family, seeing and doing new things, experiencing history and culture, solitude, being in the outdoors, and relaxing. The most prominent reason was spending time with the family, which reminds us of the modern-day issue of never having enough time. Time is valuable, and people work long hours, which makes time spent with family so much more special and to be treasured. The respondents were asked whether the mothers' needs were met during the holiday, with the responses mostly being affirmative, except for the goals to learn about history and culture and to experience solitude. A holiday is not ideal for a mother to experience solitude, peace and quiet. On the contrary, she might even have more duties to carry out than usual, due to all the family members being together and their expectations of entertainment. It is also evident that the family might be so busy engaging in quality family time, including family-orientated activities, that there is barely time for educational pursuits like driving around to learn about history and other cultures. In order to realise this, such activities would have to be prioritised and well-planned because someone in the group regards them as necessary.

Mainly, mothers indicated a lower or at least the same level of stress during the holiday and said they were not worse off. This confirms the advantage of going on holiday, despite all the pressure on the mother and the arrangements she must make to plan a family holiday. Finally, the quality of life domains and the impact of demographic variables on those domains were investigated. It was determined that the smaller the group of family members that go on the holiday, the higher their quality of life will be. For that reason, single-parent families have the best chance to experience a good quality of life. The higher the number of family members, the more complex the holiday arrangements, interactions and relationships. Mothers who go on holiday every six months experience a higher quality of life and less stress. Therefore, a balanced number of holidays would result in a good quality of life for the mother.

Limitations of the study

The study had some limitations that might have impacted the results. The snowball sampling method on social media turned out to be much more complicated than anticipated. It was impossible to share the survey link as quickly as the researcher would have liked it to be, and the researcher had to send regular reminders and find additional social media groups where the mothers could be targeted. The end result was therefore a smaller population sample than hoped for. Because the snowball sampling method was used, the geographical and educational spread of the responses was centred around the researcher's contacts and less widespread than one would want. The researcher resides in the Gauteng Province, and most of the responses were received from that area. Other limitations such were that only mothers who are active on social media were surveyed and that specific holiday types of families were not targeted during this research, such as families who go camping or stay in campers or caravans. If such respondents had been included, it would have an impact on the findings of the studies and the results would be more balanced.

Managerial implications and recommendations for future research

The findings of this study give holiday destinations a clearer picture of the requirements of a travelling family. Based on these results, destinations could improve their offerings to be viewed as more family-friendly. Basic amenities that families need were listed, such as children's play areas and programmes that facilitate families spending more time together. Wi-Fi, basic kitchen utensils, electricity during loadshedding and a washing machine were mentioned as requirements. It has been noted that the owners of holiday accommodation units are trying to accommodate these requests of families, but that it will come at an additional cost, such as a generator levy, due to the recurring loadshedding. Khoo-Lattimore et al. (2015) concurs with this finding by contending that holiday resorts should reconsider their function, as they are not just there to provide accommodation, but also to improve their guests' quality of family life. The main reasons families go on holiday are to spend time with family, to get rid of stress – although this is not always achieved – to enjoy the outdoors, and to relax. If establishments can meet these needs, families will be satisfied and probably return for another visit. Families and extended families have many more members that must be accommodated during a holiday, but should this be achieved, a successful, relaxing family holiday will be the result. A fairly uneventful family holiday with the least possible conflict and issues, would decrease stress levels, resulting in a mother with a higher quality of life. Schänzel & Yeoman (2015) agree with this statement and indicate that the tourism industry should aim to minimise inconveniences and conflicts among families, which would result in the family market growing into an economically substantial market. This research has merely touched the tip of the iceberg by establishing mothers' views of a family holiday. The study should be expanded to get the viewpoints of all family members in order to obtain a holistic analysis of family holidays. Small (2005) and Kelly (2022) suggest that women's, men's and children's perceived experiences of family holidays should be compared, as each of these groups have different requirements for and expectations from a holiday. Gram et al. (2018) also mention that all family members experience holidays differently. Gao et al. (2021) even go as far as subdividing the children into different age groups, and suggest that a study be undertaken of the needs of the children in various age categories. A further suggestion is to go beyond the social media survey method and to attempt to survey as many family



holidaymakers as possible, including travelling groups such as campers, international travellers and others. In addition, qualitative interviews should be conducted with mothers who are willing to be interviewed. This would provide more in-depth results that would contribute to the quantitative data findings.

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