



Travel motivations of domestic tourists: The case of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The quantity of research material on domestic tourism for destinations in Africa is significantly lower than that on international tourism. The paper sought to investigate the motivations of domestic tourists in Zimbabwe with a view to gain greater insights on the needs of the domestic market. Five motivation dimensions were identified using a survey method. Data was analysed by means of descriptive statistics and Exploratory Factor Analysis. *Novelty*, *nature seeking* and *escape and relaxation* emerged as the major motivation factors which stimulate domestic tourists to engage in tourism, while *prestige* and *socialisation* were the least motivation factors. Identification of the motivations is useful in the design and production of tailor-made tourism products and services which can effectively meet the needs of tourists thereby creating optimal satisfaction levels. The priority given to the *novelty* motivation by domestic tourists partially implies that most Zimbabweans are alienated from their own tourist attractions. There is a need to develop strategies to encourage more local people to participate in tourism. Product development and marketing messages should place more emphasis on *novelty*, *nature seeking* needs including opportunities for *escape and relaxation* to induce more domestic demand for tourism goods and services among Zimbabweans.

Keywords: Travel motivations, domestic tourism, tourist needs, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Domestic tourism is significantly more extensive than international tourism (Eijeglaar, Peters, & Piket, 2008), accounting for at least 80 per cent of all tourism activity worldwide (Neto, 2002). According to UNWTO (2011) about 83% of the tourist arrivals at global level correspond to domestic tourism. However, Rogerson (2015) noted that domestic tourism receives less attention than international tourism, despite that the former drives the structure and nature of a nation's tourism industry (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). More so, it is the proving ground for the industry (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000) and it determines the level of international tourism in a country (Manwa & Mmereki, 2008). Despite the dominance of domestic tourism and its importance in shaping a nation's tourism industry, (Kanokanga *et al.*, 2014:54) also argued that international tourism is regarded as 'the tourism' and domestic tourism as the 'the other tourism,' thus suggesting that the latter is 'second-class' tourism.

In terms of research too, the tourism community focuses more on international tourism, neglecting domestic tourism (Mazimhaka, 2007). Manwa and Mmereki, (2008) noted that domestic tourism is an undeveloped theme in African tourism scholarship. Thus, consistent data on domestic tourism is not as readily available as that of international tourism (Eijeglaar *et al.*, 2008). In this regard, Zimbabwe is no exception. Actually, ZTA (2000) and Abel *et al.* (2013) noted that the country's tourism industry is biased towards the international market. The implication is that, the needs of the domestic market have been neglected for quite a long time. Therefore, this study sought to gain insight into the needs of the domestic market by



focusing on domestic tourists' travel motivations. Information unearthed may be useful to destination managers and service providers in terms of product development and marketing. The provision and marketing of tourism products and services which take into cognisance the needs of the market could eventually boost the participation of local people in tourism.

Literature Review

The section below focuses on the meaning of domestic tourism and travel motivations as well as on previous studies relating to the same.

Domestic tourism

Domestic tourism refers to "journeys and visits within a person's home country" (Singh, 2009:1) and the domestic tourist is understood to be "any person residing in a country who travels to a place within the country, outside his/her usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months" (UNWTO, 1995:4). However, the term 'domestic tourism' has different meanings in national accounts, mostly, it refers to the activities of resident visitors within and outside the country of reference, either as part of domestic or outbound tourism trips (UNWTO 2008). However, in this study, domestic tourism refers to the activities of resident visitors within the country of reference.

Travel motivations

Backman *et al.* (1995:15) defined motivation as a 'state of need, or a condition that serves as a driving force to display different kinds of behaviour toward certain types of activities, developing preferences, arriving at some expected satisfactory outcome'. Knowledge of tourist motivation provides insights as to why tourists undertake a trip, including the type of experiences and activities likely to satisfy them. An appreciation of tourist motivation is essential for destination marketers as this enables them to plan and execute effective, tailor made marketing strategies (Yousefi & Marzu, 2015). In line with this view, Fodness (1994) had earlier argued that tourist motivation studies are useful in developing products, promotions and marketing strategies (Fodness, 1994; Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011).

Several authors have contributed greatly towards the understanding of travel motivations (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce, 1989) with Dann's (1977), Push-Pull framework being the most notable contribution. Push factors emanate from within the individual, including his/her social context (Dwyer & Kim, 2003) and they reflect psychological needs (Wu & Pearce, 2014). The common push factors identified in the literature are: *escape from everyday environment, novelty, social interaction and prestige* (Kim *et al.*, 2003:170), as well as: learning/discovery, regression, novelty/thrill, and distancing from crowds (Botha, Crompton & Kim, 1999:345). Pull factors, on the other hand, are extrinsic and are linked to the tangible destination resources (Kim, Oh, & Jogaratnam, 2007), examples of these are: *shopping, nature and kinship* (Nishio, Larke, Van Heerde, & Melnk 2016:490). Diverse motivations influence tourists' decision making (George, 2004), thereby providing clues about the types of destinations people are likely to select. (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). Similarly, Kim *et al.* (2003:171) opined that "push factors focus on whether to go, and pull factors focus on where to go".

Other notable frameworks on tourist motivation were proposed by Iso-Ahola (1982) and Pearce (1988). Iso-Ahola's (1982) optimal arousal theory, identified two dimensions of tourist motivations, which were: *seeking*, which relates to intrinsic rewards; and *escaping*, which is triggered by the need to move away from monotonous environments. The motivations in Iso-Ahola's framework operate at the personal and the interpersonal levels, resulting in four motivation categories: *personal escape, interpersonal escape, personal seeking and interpersonal seeking*.



Pearce's (1988) travel career ladder model, was crafted along Maslow's (1970) Hierarchy of Needs theory. The travel motivations in Pearce (1988) framework were classified in five hierarchical categories with *relaxation* needs at the bottom, followed by *safety/security* needs, *relationship* needs, *self-esteem/development* needs and *self-actualisation/fulfilment* needs at the top of the 'ladder'. These motivations do not occur concurrently but are fulfilled at separate times in the life cycle of a tourist.

Tourists are heterogeneous in terms of motivations (Kim *et al.*, 2003; Dolnicar, 2006) and these differences are a product of many factors, such as: the type of destination (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011); nationality (Kozak, 2001) and differences in their socio demographics (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). Therefore, is necessary to investigate the travel motivations of different types of travellers as defined by various parameters. For example, in this case the study is focussed on motivations of native tourists in country Zimbabwe. The section below focuses on some of the studies that were undertaken on the motivation factors of domestic tourists by different authors.

Motivations of domestic tourists

A number of studies have examined the motivations of domestic tourists, with most of them being undertaken outside Africa (Bogari 2002; Bui & Jolliffe, 2011; Jang & Cai, 2002; Meng, 2006. Baniya and Paudel (2016) named factors such as *easy access and affordability*, *variety seeking* and *history and /or culture* as the top pull motivations for domestic travellers to visit within a destination; whereas, *escape*, *seeking relaxation* and *sightseeing* emerged as the top push motivation factors for Nepalese domestic tourists. Bogari (2002), in his study on the motivations of domestic tourists in Saudi Arabia, established *cultural* and *religious values* were the leading pull and push motivations, respectively. Bindu and Kanagaraj (2013:177) in their investigation of tourists in Kerala (in south-western India), discovered that '*...experiences and learning, achievement and prestige, relaxation, adventure and variety seeking* were the top motivations for domestic tourists.

As mentioned, very few studies have been carried out on the motivations of domestic tourists in the African context. Amongst these few, in a study undertaken by Awaritefe (2004) in which he compared the motivations of international and domestic tourists in Nigeria, he discovered that domestic tourists were largely motivated to participate in tourism by their desire for *nature, ecotourism, and attraction to beach resorts*, while *cultural heritage* and *historic sites* were more valued by international tourists. Likewise, Manwa and Mmereki (2008), using a sample of college students from Botswana as potential tourists, also identified these factors (mentioned above) as the leading motivations of domestic tourists. The scarcity of studies on domestic tourism in the African context makes this current study valuable as it adds to the existing literature on travel motivations, especially with regards to the domestic market. In addition, knowledge of tourist motivation can be used to create demand in destinations (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). Accordingly, information obtained from this study can be used to develop strategies to increase demand for tourism products and services among domestic tourists. An analysis of some of the studies concerning the motivations of domestic tourists revealed that these vary from one destination to another though studies done in other countries reveal the presence of certain motivational similarities, showing the existence of universal traits in relation to travel motivations (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). Therefore, the extent to which domestic tourist motivations of Zimbabweans are similar or different to those of other domestic tourists elsewhere is an issue which this study illustrates among others.

Zimbabwe's domestic market

The domestic market in Zimbabwe is still small compared to those of other countries, such as South Africa (ZTA, 2007). For a long time, the country has concentrated more on international tourists rather than on the domestic tourists (ZTA, 2007). International tourism is highly vulnerable to international trends, such as global financial crises, terrorism, sustainability



issues and politics (Kabote *et al.*, 2014). Nations with a viable domestic tourism sector are generally better equipped to withstand fluctuations in international demand (Tourism2025, 2012). Accordingly, it is necessary to consolidate the economic sustainability of a country's tourism industry through the active promotion of domestic tourism. There is huge potential for tourism demand from within Zimbabwe, but the absence of a tourism culture among black Zimbabweans has been impeding the growth of domestic tourism and participation in recreational activities (Zhou, 2016). In addition, Zimbabwe's ongoing economic crisis is impacting negatively on domestic tourism development. However, Zimbabwe's population consists of a growing black middle class with potential for engaging in leisure travel as well as investment. Moreover, Ghimire (2013) noted that in Zimbabwe, the participation, especially of privileged circles of politicians and business people is growing. Therefore, there is a need to develop a domestic tourism strategy to tap into this market (Abel *et al.*, 2013). For such a strategy to be effective, the needs and preferences of domestic tourists should inform it. The identification of the key travel motivations, sheds light on the needs of the domestic market, including the psychological reasons, which drive domestic tourists to participate in tourism. Identifying these needs will go a long way towards enhancing satisfaction among domestic tourists.

Methodology

A quantitative approach was used to attain the goal of the study, namely, to investigate the motivations of domestic tourists in Zimbabwe. Data were collected from Nyanga hotels, Kariba accommodation establishments and the Kariba airport, Masvingo hotels, Victoria Falls Airport and accommodation establishments and Sanganai/Hlanganani Expo in Bulawayo during the period 25-31 March and 17 June 2016. A self-administered questionnaire was used. This was pre-tested in Nyanga. A few technical errors were corrected, for example, the question on the purpose of visit was revised to accommodate 'religion and pilgrimage'. Convenience sampling was used to recruit the tourists. As way of reducing some of the biases associated with convenience sampling, the tourists were randomly approached, and those who were willing to participate were given the questionnaires. Glen's (2009) suggestion of using at least 400 respondents for populations exceeding 100 000 was adopted for this study. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 314 of those returned were found to be usable.

It was rather difficult to recruit domestic tourists for this study. The lack of cooperation from domestic tourists (with the field workers) is a cause for concern, making it difficult for researchers to produce up-to-date representative information on Zimbabwe's tourism issues. Most potential respondents pointed out that they did not want to be disturbed as they were relaxing at tourist resorts.

While the questionnaire comprised four sections, only two of its sections were used for the purposes of this paper. Section A dealt with questions of socio-demographic data (age, sex, level of education, income, characteristics purpose of visit and type of accommodation). Section B had 18 motivation-based questions to be answered using a five-point Likert scale. Likert scale, with the strongly disagree to strongly agree labels. Most of the tourist motivation attributes were based on factors identified in the literature. The researchers used the recurring themes on motivations as illustrated by authors such as Dann's (1977) push-pull model, Crompton (1979) and Pearce (2005). However, the researcher also included specific pull factors based on the unique attributes (wildlife, scenery and culture) of Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

Results

The results are presented at two levels; the socio demographics are first reported on, after which the factor analysis of the motivation items is provided.



Socio demographic characteristics

The sample had more males (52.7%) males than females (47.3%). Regarding their purpose of visit, 46% had travelled for leisure, followed by 31.7% who had visited for business purposes. Most respondents, 51.5%, earned less than US\$1000 (13000 Rands). A variety of types of accommodation were used, with self-catering accommodation (30%) being used more than other types, followed by Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) at 26% and then 4-5-star hotels at 21% and other forms of accommodation were used by 23%. More use of self-catering accommodation by tourists who participated in this, which tends to be cheaper, is to some extent in keeping with their income status.

Factor analysis of motivation variables

The 18 motivation factors were analysed using an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Oblimin rotation. To ensure the suitability of this approach, the variables were subjected to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity. The KMO statistic was established as 0.985, implying that the variables were suitable for factor analysis. Five factors were extracted using the Oblimin rotation, explaining 59% of the variance. Table 1 below, shows the EFA of the motivation variables.

Table 1: Exploratory factor analysis of motivation variables

Motivation variables and Factors	Factor loadings	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha	Mean Values
Factor 1: Nature Seeking		30.556	.731	3.95
The need for adventure	.764			3.88
To get closer to nature	.638			3.90
To view wildlife and scenery	.479			4.09
To indulge in pleasurable activities	.348			3.75
Factor 2: Socialisation		9.662	.641	3.29
To meet the local people	.752			3.07
To meet people with similar interests	.580			3.37
Need for spiritual and emotional fulfilment	.470			3.25
Factor 3: Escape and Relaxation		8.225	.649	3.83
To rest and relax	.754			3.95
Getting away from routine	.719			3.72
Opportunity to travel with friends and relatives	.717			3.83
To enjoy the local cuisine	.426			3.43
Factor 4: Novelty		5.894	.708	3.99
To learn new things and increase knowledge	.869			3.87
To see cultural attractions	.766			3.92
To explore new places and new experiences	.480			4.21
Factor 4: Prestige		5.623	.700	3.42
To develop my skills and abilities	.883			3.36
To promote and enhance health and wellbeing	.656			3.31
To talk about the trip back home	.646			3.46
To get a sense of achievement	.430			3.52
Total variance explained		59.96		

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation.

Factor 1: Nature seeking

Nature seeking emerged as the second most important factor in terms of (Mean= 3.95) but had the highest variance of 30.566 and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.731. It consisted of the



following variables: *the need for adventure, to get closer to nature, view wildlife and scenery and the need to indulge in pleasurable activities*. Most of these variables are linked to the natural destination environment. These results are consistent with Awaritefe's (2004) study which established nature as a key motivation for domestic tourists in Nigeria. Similarly, Pearce (2005) and Oppermann and Chon (1997) identified nature seeking as one of the key motivation attributes. Van der Merwe and Du Plessis (2014) affirmed that natural resources influence tourists in their selection of destinations.

Factor 2: Socialisation

Socialisation was the least important factor in terms of mean scores ($M=3.29$) and it consisted of the motivation variables, '*to meet people with similar interests, to meet local people, need for spiritual and emotional fulfilment*'. The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was slightly below 0.70, the minimal threshold for internal consistency. The literature revealed the desire for *social interaction* as a common motivation, alluded to by various authors, such as (Swanson & Horridge, 2006; Chang, 2007; Saayman, Slabbert & Van Der Merwe, 2009; Crompton, 1979; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004). However, in this study, this factor was less important, which was consistent with Van Der Merwe's and Slabbert's (2011) study where social experiences was rated low in comparison to other factors. The low scores on *socialisation* in this study could be due to the fact the domestic tourists would be travelling in a familiar social space, thus tending to display subdued socialisation needs. Crompton (1979) indicated that *socialisation* partially relates to the need to meet new people; seemingly, this is not a pressing need among tourists travelling within their own country, as evidenced by this finding.

Factor 3: Escape and relaxation

Escape and relaxation was the third most important factor, explaining 8,225 of the variance with Cronbach's alpha of 0.649. Consideration of the mean scores shows that this factor was one of the key motivations of domestic tourists in Zimbabwe ($M= 3.83$). This finding is consistent with Van Vuuren and Slabbert's (2011) research, which also identified *rest and relaxation* as one of the key factors influencing tourists visiting resorts in South Africa. With specific reference to domestic tourists, *relaxation* was found to be one of the key motivations in studies carried by a number of authors (Bui & Jolliffe, 2011; Bindu & Kanagaraj, 2013; Baniya & Paudel, 2016). According to Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2009), tourist resorts should offer tranquil and relaxing environments which provide the opportunity to ease the pressures of the tourists' everyday lives.

Factor 4: Novelty

Novelty seeking was the fourth factor accounting for 5.894 of the variance and was the most important in terms of mean scores ($M=3.99$). The factor consisted of the following variables: *to explore new places and experiences, the desire to learn new things and increase knowledge and the desire to see cultural attractions*. *Novelty* was identified in the literature as a common motivation (Crompton, 1979; Kim & Prideaux, 2005; Yousefi, & Marzuki, 2015). According to Kim and Prideaux (2005) *novelty seeking* and *cultural experience* are the most important motivational factors for traveling to foreign countries. However, it is interesting to note that *novelty* seeking scored the highest among Zimbabweans (domestic tourists). One would expect local tourist to know more about their country, however this seems not to be the case here. In fact, UNWTO AGORA (2011:1) stated that 'domestic tourists know the destination, its language, its customs, its laws, its climate, its cultural context'. Zhangazha (2016:5) in referring to the killing of Cecil the lion and Nthombi the black rhino, commented that '...ironically, most Zimbabweans were not aware of Ntombi and Cecil the lion's existence'. He further pointed out that the locals lacked information about the country's attractions, its' wildlife, natural wonders, heritage and monuments. This observation from anecdotal literature could explain why *novelty* is a key motivation among domestic tourists in Zimbabwe.



Factor 5: Prestige

Prestige was the fifth factor explaining 5.623 of the variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.700. While in terms of the mean scores ($M=3.42$), it was the fourth most important factor. To some extent, Zimbabweans take pride in participating in tourism and desire that others know about their trips. The need for prestige was also found to be a key motivational factor influencing domestic tourists in Kerala (Bindu & Kanagaraj, 2013). According to Pearce (1988), prestige (egoism) is a motivational attribute that largely appeals to people who have less travel experience. The implication is that management at various levels of the tourism chain should innovate packages which enable tourists to meet these needs, e.g. facilitation and provisions for taking themed photographs illustrating places and attractions visited.

Conclusions and Industry Implications

The foremost contribution of this study related to the identification of travel motivation for domestic tourists, which is a unique development in the Zimbabwean context. This provides tourism product producers and service providers with some insights on the nature of the needs of local tourists when they visit tourist attractions. In view of the findings, it was concluded that *nature, novelty, and escape/relaxation* themes should guide product development and marketing messages targeted at domestic tourists in Zimbabwe. Deliberate efforts to design products which match the motivations of tourists are likely to increase satisfaction among domestic tourists.

The dominance of *novelty* is a sign that most Zimbabweans are alienated from their own tourist attractions and this confirms evidence in anecdotal literature that most Zimbabweans lack first-hand exposure to their own tourism resources. There is a need to carry out more research that seeks to establish the major reasons why locals are not fully participating in tourism, in order to come up with corrective measures. Meanwhile, the socio demographic component of this study revealed that most of the people who participated were low-income earners. Therefore, destination managers and tourism product producers and service providers can improve access to tourist attractions through the provision of affordable products and services to create more demand. Incentive travel extended to all workers periodically, not necessarily on an (annual basis), could go a long way to enhance access to tourism goods and services among locals. By identifying the motivations of domestic tourists, especially for a destination in Africa, this study advances the literature on travel motivation in relation to domestic tourism. Therefore, another contribution of this study is the advancement of the body of literature on tourist motivation from the perspective of domestic tourists, in the context of a country in Africa.

Limitations of the Study

The use of convenience sampling and a small sample size affects the generalisability of this study though it still provides meaningful insights into the needs of the domestic market. Qualitative studies on the motivations of domestic tourists in Zimbabwe are recommendations for future research.

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