PUSH AND PULL FACTORS AFFECTING DOMESTIC TOURISM IN THE ERONGO REGION, NAMIBIA

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Abstract: Despite being a well-established economic activity in numerous countries in the world, domestic tourism has received relatively little academic exploration, particularly in Namibia. While this study acknowledges the significance of work already done in this field, there remains a general lack of understanding of the factors motivating domestic tourists' decisions to travel in the study area. As a result, this study aims to understand the key push and pull factors for domestic tourists, using the Erongo region of Namibia as a case study. The study adopts a quantitative research approach through a survey of 400 domestic tourists in the study area. Relaxation and escapism, seeking participatory experiences, and seeking enriching experiences emerged as the three main push factors, while destination attributes, events and activities, safety and familiarity, and variety of experiences were identified as dominant pull factors. The study recommends that tourism planners and marketers tailor tourism offerings to the asserted domestic tourists' motivations to induce more domestic tourism demand and consumption among domestic tourists.

Keywords: domestic tourists, push factors, pull factors, domestic tourism, sustainable development, Erongo region, Namibia

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic tourism is a pivotal and high-growth sector of the global tourism industry (Oyunchimeg and Gantuya, 2021). The sector is imperative for tourism industry growth and, thus, worldwide economic development (Nurov et al., 2021). Furthermore, domestic tourism plays an important role in a country's economic development because it supports formal, small-scale enterprises and informal sectors (Rwigema, 2024). It tends to lead to an increase in employment, improve the host community's standard of living, and develop attractions (Murima and Shereni, 2023). However, in some cases, domestic tourism has been neglected both as an area of development and as a subject of research (Rwigema, 2024), particularly in developing countries. Regardless of this, domestic tourism has developed rapidly to become one of the leading global economic phenomena (Oyunchimeg and Gantuya, 2021).

Indeed, some African countries, such as South Africa, have already recognised the potentially positive economic benefit of domestic tourism and have taken the necessary steps to understand domestic tourists and their travel needs (Nyikana and Bama, 2023). This has resulted in several campaigns aimed at promoting domestic tourism in the country through a government-led domestic tourism growth strategy (National Tourism Sector Strategy [NTSS], 2012). Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for other developing countries, such as Namibia.

Namibia has one of the world's fastest-growing tourism industries, and its rich tourism resources offer an excellent opportunity for sustainable domestic tourism development (Bohlmann, 2020). However, the sustainable development of domestic tourism is being stymied by a lack of academic research and policies that spur the sector's development and create a culture of tourism among Namibians (Remmert, 2022). Consequently, domestic tourism in the country is academically less explored and relatively ignored by policymakers and tourism promoters compared to international tourism. This also means that domestic tourists' needs are poorly understood and are rarely met as a result.

In order to capitalise on the untapped value and growth potential of the domestic tourism market, a thriving domestic tourism sector necessitates a sector response that is cogent and informed by knowledge of what drives domestic tourists to travel. The Erongo region (Figure 1) and the Namibian domestic tourism context provide the empirical setting for this study.

The Erongo region is Namibia's main domestic tourism hub, and its rich tourism resources provide an excellent opportunity for the region to tap into domestic tourism's potential. Based on an extensive Google Scholar search, there are no published studies that have focused specifically on the key push and pull factors of domestic tourists in the Erongo region and many other regions in Namibia. This is despite the fact that this understanding is critical to the sustainable

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development of domestic tourism. In view of the above, the general problem for the Erongo region is the lack of a clear understanding of domestic tourists' travel motivation. This study is the first contribution to filling this gap. Such knowledge, based on scientific data, could empower the study area and other developing economies to explore this market potential sustainably and competitively. Consequently, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors pushing and pulling domestic tourists to visit the study area. This investigation also provides a basis for further expansion of research into the development of domestic tourism in other regions of Namibia and in other developing economies.
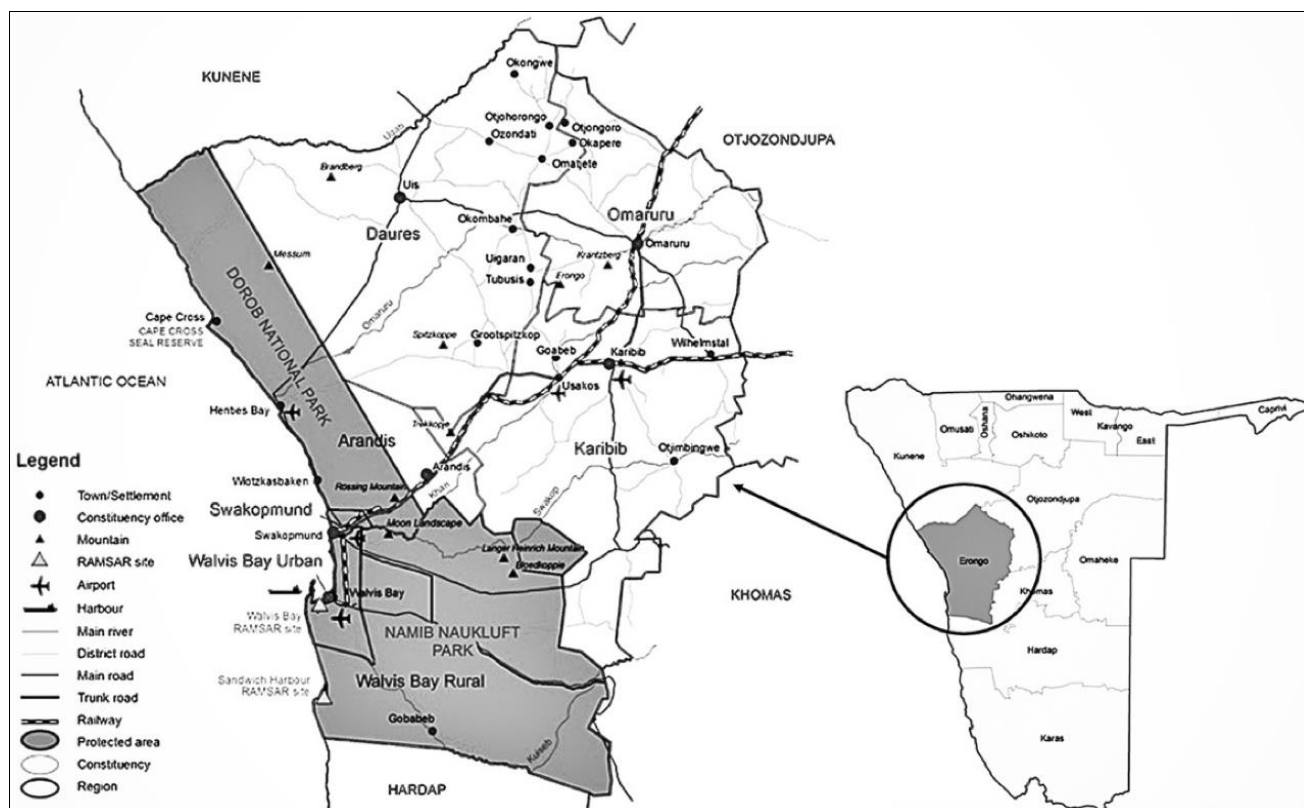

Figure 1. Map of the study area (Source: Adapted from Erongo Regional Council (2023) - authors added the country's map illustration)

LITERATURE REVIEW
Travel motivations of domestic tourists

From the literature, it is clear that the magnitude and economic contribution of domestic tourism cannot be overstated and that it is often considered to be the key driver of the global tourism industry (Kifworo et al., 2020). One can claim that most of the positive effects of inbound tourism demand on national economies are also valid for domestic tourism (Çuhadar et al., 2020). Equally important, a significant demand for domestic tourism can create circumstances and a conducive atmosphere for the growth and advancement of international tourism (Mohammed-Benahmed and Seffih, 2019).

Thus, the development of domestic tourism is important for both developed and developing economies. Consequently, finding viable approaches to achieve this development has become increasingly problematic. The challenge for tourism policymakers and researchers is to determine the processes that can assist them in achieving sustainable domestic tourism development. Some believe that understanding what motivates domestic tourists to travel is the best place to start such an undertaking (Rehman and Alnuzhah, 2023; Bayih and Singh, 2020; Mapingure et al., 2019). To fully understand the points made above, it is necessary to evaluate the current literature on domestic tourists' travel motivations.

Haque et al. (2014) defined motivation as a mechanism that ultimately directs people to act or behave in a particular way. Fodness (1994) simply refers to motivation as the driving force behind all human actions. From a tourism perspective, Horner and Swarbrooke (2020) view motivation as the inner state of mind that drives tourists to travel to a specific destination or purchase a specific tourism product or service. In other words, it is the underlying reasons and factors that influence individuals to travel and engage in tourism-related activities (Harahap et al., 2024). Accordingly, the concept of travel motivation is pivotal for destination planners and developers as it assists in understanding the variables that influence tourists' destination choice (Grobbelaar et al., 2019). This is also noted by Chan's (2021) study, which indicates that domestic travel motivations need to be properly understood for the sector to be developed sustainably.

This greater understanding may assist tourism planners and managers in developing policies, strategies, and programs that meet domestic tourist expectations (Baniya and Paudel, 2016). However, for this to become a reality, policymakers and tourism suppliers must consider the influence of travel motivation in their efforts to develop domestic tourism (Bayih and Singh, 2020). Therefore, to stimulate domestic tourism, it is important to understand what motivates them to travel. Analysing internal and external motivational forces can achieve this. Consequently, understanding domestic tourist travel motives has become an essential aspect of sustainable domestic tourism development (Mapingure et al., 2019).

Tourism literature often conceptualises tourist motives in terms of push factors and pull factors (Baniya and Paudel, 2016; Ayoub and Mohamed, 2024). According to these studies, push factors can be classified as the socio-psychological construct of tourists pushing them to travel, whereas pull factors refer to the cognitive and external factors of destination-pulling tourists. The idea behind this concept, which was first promulgated by Dann (1981), is that people travel because they are pushed by their own internal forces and pulled by the external forces of the destination attributes. This description suggests that push factors shape the desire for travel, while pull factors clarify the actual destination choice.

There are several push-pull motivational factors that ultimately influence tourists' desire to consume domestic tourism products. A series of recent studies have made a genuine attempt to contextualise the travel motivations of domestic tourists around the world. The two sections that follow discuss these studies and the proposed push and pull factors.

Push motivations

Matiza and Kruger's (2022) study revealed that the primary motivators for domestic recreational tourists to travel are their relaxation and self-fulfillment needs, with a primary focus on nature and adventure activities. According to Baniya and Paudel (2016), escaping daily life, seeking relaxation, and sightseeing variety were the top three push motive constructs in Nepal. Bayih and Singh (2020:1) discovered that knowledge, family, and togetherness are strong motivational factors for domestic tourists in Ethiopia. An earlier study on Vietnamese domestic tourists' travel motivations found that disposable income, a sense of family togetherness, the prospect of relaxation, and employer sponsorship were the main push motivational factors (Bui and Jolliffe, 2011). In Mongolia, Oyunchimeg and Gantuya (2021) claim that excitement, self-exploratory relaxation and escapism, social achievement and togetherness are the most important push factors for domestic tourists. Furthermore, Duong et al. (2023) identified personal factors, escapism, knowledge, and cultural experiences as key push factors for domestic tourists in Vietnam. According to Ayoub and Mohamed (2024), domestic tourists in Egypt are pushed to travel by their need for rest and relaxation, the need to enhance their ego, and novelty and knowledge-seeking. Now that a set of push motivations for domestic tourists has been established, it becomes necessary to take a brief look at what pulls domestic tourists to visit certain destinations.

Pull motivations

A study conducted on domestic tourists visiting the Changbai Mountain Biosphere Reserve in northeastern China revealed that appreciating natural landscapes and protecting the environment were the main motives of domestic tourists (Gu et al., 2015). Bayih and Singh (2020:1) discovered that natural and cultural heritage, events and festivals serve as pull motivational factors. The literature also reports that the beauty of natural resources, diverse history and culture, and excellent recreational facilities are the main driving forces for domestic tourists (Ezeuduji and Dlomo, 2020).

Baniya and Paudel (2016) highlighted events and activities, adventure, and variety seeking as some of the top pull-motive constructs for domestic tourists. While a recent study by Duong et al. (2023) noted destination information and accessibility, destination unique image, and personal factors as pull factors for domestic tourists. Along the same lines, Ayoub and Mohamed (2024) identified tourism facilities, environment and safety, and cultural and historical attractions as important pull factors for domestic tourists. Based on their very nature, some of the previous studies on domestic tourists travel motivation have several limitations. For example, some of the reviewed studies (Matiza and Slabbert, 2023; Matiza and Kruger, 2022) analysed domestic tourists travel motivation from a COVID-19 perspective, making them inefficient in informing sustainable domestic tourism development. While others focused on single attractions (Moliner-Tena et al., 2023), tiny locations (Duong et al., 2023) and a single type of traveler (Yang et al., 2023). The present study attempts to fill these gaps. Notwithstanding the limitations of some of the previous studies, the literature above fundamentally revealed that domestic tourists' travel motives vary from one destination to another. It also demonstrates the presence of certain motivational similarities in studies conducted in different countries, indicating the existence of universal traits in relation to domestic tourists' travel motivations. The review also revealed that domestic tourists' travel motives vary from one destination to another. As destinations have different characteristics, they should have unique marketing strategies, hence the need for this study in Namibia. Subsequently, this study argues that, by examining domestic tourists' travel motives in the Erongo region, this study will enable destination managers and tourism planners to create and develop effective marketing policies and strategies. These policies and strategies can enhance domestic tourism's contribution to the sustainable tourism development in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a positivist philosophical lense by adopting a quantitative research approach. A questionnaire was developed on the basis of previous studies (Baniya and Paudel, 2016; Bui and Jolliffe, 2011; Oyunchimeg and Gantuya, 2021; Mapingure et al., 2019; Matiza and Kruger, 2022). This study used a sample size of 400 respondents. To collect data, the study used non-random sampling, which combines convenience sampling techniques (targeting domestic tourists at tourism hotspots in the region) and snowball sampling techniques (targeting domestic tourists via an online survey using Google Forms). The personal surveys and web-based surveys were conducted over a two-week period between September and October 2023. Data were captured using Microsoft Excel^{TM}, while Stata 17.0 SE was used for data analysis. The interpretation was based on a mathematical measure of the dispersion of the collected information. For each of the two-factor analyses, the mathematical measure involved using a 5-point Likert scale from the data to reach conclusions. The measure produces a single value that ranges from one (1) to five (5).

To reduce the complexity of the data, dimensionality reduction analysis in the form of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was computed (for both push and pull variables). Both analyses employed the principal component analysis

(PCA) method of factor analysis, along with the varimax orthogonal rotation technique. Based on Osborne's (2014) recommendation, this study only retained variables with Eigen values greater than 0.50 using the Kaiser criterion. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test were used before factor analysis. Only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained, as proposed by Cliff (1988). Composite reliability (CR), a measure of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Bacon et al., 1995), was computed to test the factor's internal consistency. Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), a measure of convergence among assets of items representing a latent construct (Hair et al., 2014), was also computed. Using Stata 17.0 SE, Kruskal-Wallis tests, Chi-Square tests, and Spearman's rank-order correlation tests were carried out as the final stage of data analysis. The Kruskal-Wallis H-test was used to compare demographics elements and trip characteristics to the identified factors.

The interpretation was performed at a 95% confidence limit, and therefore, it is unlikely that the results occurred by chance. The sample revealed differences that were undoubtedly present in the population it came from. According to Gelman (2012), the cut-off point for significant differences in social sciences research is a P-value <0.05. Therefore, this study only reports on significant relationships encountered (P-values <0.05) between the tested variables. The study gave due importance to ethical issues. The researcher obtained ethical clearance, requested permission to collect data from the respondents, and granted them the freedom to respond to the questionnaires. Figure 2 provides the methodology flowchart.
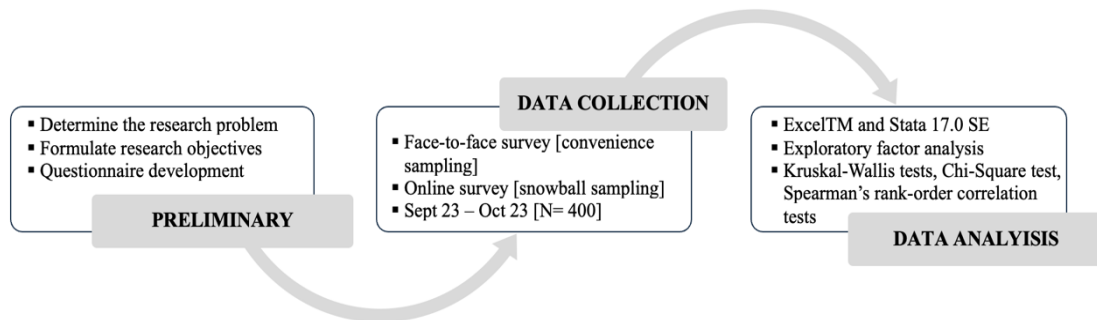

Figure 2. Methodology flowchart (source: Authors' illustration)

RESULTS
Demographic profile

Respondents' demographics and trip characteristics are illustrated in Table 1 and elaborated on thereafter. In summary, the surveyed domestic tourists visiting the Erongo region were mostly female, accounting for 60.50% of the respondents. They were mostly from the millennial generation (59.25%) and had at least attained a diploma or degree (51%). The results reveal that the surveyed tourists were never married (45%) and, for the most part, were repeat visitors, with 74.75% indicating that they had visited the region five (5) times or more. The results further indicate that the respondents in this study typically visited the region for leisure, vacation, or holiday purposes (56%), stayed between two (2) and four (4) nights (67.25%), and used their own car to travel to their destinations (65.75%). Hotels (22.75%), friends/family houses (21.50%), guesthouses (20.75%), and Airbnb (11%) were the most frequently used forms of accommodation.

Table 1. Demographics and trip characteristics

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Gender	Male	158	39.50
	Female	**242**	**60.50**
Age	Baby Boomers (1946-1965)	9	2.25
	Generation X (1965−1979)	81	20.25
	Millennials (1980-1994)	**237**	**59.25**
	Generation Z (1995-2005)	73	18.25
Education	No Schooling	1	0.25
	School Leaving Certificate	74	18.50
	Diploma / Degree	**204**	**51.00**
	Postgraduate	120	30.00
	Others	1	0.25
Marital status	Married	141	35.25
	Divorced/Separated	5	1.25
	Widowed	4	1.00
	Never married	**180**	**45.00**
	Living with partner	70	17.50
Number of Visit	1 time	21	5.25
	2-4 times	80	20.00
	5 or more times	**299**	**74.75**
Purpose of visit	Leisure / vacation / holiday	**224**	**56.00**
	Visiting friends and family	91	22.75
	Business/conference	19	4.75
	Attending a wedding / funeral	34	8.50

	Religious activities	5	1.25
	Medical	2	0.50
	Others	25	6.25
Accommodation Used	Lodge	26	6.50
	Hotel	**91**	**22.75**
	Airbnb	44	11.00
	Guesthouse	83	20.75
	Camping	32	8.00
	Second/holiday home	26	6.50
	Friends/Family house	86	21.50
	Other	12	3.00
Duration of Visit	Day trip	17	4.25
	1-night	15	3.75
	2-4 nights	**269**	**67.25**
	5 or more nights	99	24.75
	Others	25	6.25
Mode of Transport	Airplane	9	2.25
	Bus	51	12.75
	Own car	**259**	**65.75**
	Motorcycle	1	0.25
	Taxi / Public transport	77	19.25
	Train	1	0.25
	Other	2	0.50

Factor analysis of push factor variables

The factor analysis process, as described in the methodology section, produced a relatively refined and moderately correlated three-component model with eigenvalues greater than 1 and coefficients above 0.5. The model explained 54.025% of the total variance, which is above the general rule level of at least 50%, as suggested by Streiner (1994). The KMO of the modified three-component model (0.776) was in the 'middling' range, according to Shrestha (2021). Moreover, the significant Bartlett's test of sphericity P-value < 0.0001 indicated that there are adequate correlations among variables to proceed (Shrestha, 2021). The three retained components, which were labeled after an extensive literature review, are depicted in Table 3 and discussed thereafter.

Table 2. Factor Analysis: Push Factors

	Factor Loading	SD	VE	Eige.	CR	AVE	Mean Value
Relaxation and escapism	**0.749**		**25.223%**	**3.531**	**0.83**	**0.499**	**4.289**
For relaxation	0.771	0.861					4.428
To escape from daily life	0.790	1.010					4.390
To spend time with family and friends	0.662	1.034					4.367
To do sightseeing	0.673	1.072					3.973
Availability of disposable income	0.622	1.256					3.828
Seeking participatory experiences	**0.749**		**16.232%**	**2.272**	**0.80**	**0.582**	**3.276**
To participation in adventure activities	0.831	1.206					3.502
To participation in cultural activities	0.541	1.410					2.973
To participation in ecotourism activities	0.875	1.186					3.353
Seeking enriching experience	**0.771**		**12.570%**	**1.759**	**0.81**	**0.592**	**3.651**
For Self-fulfilment	0.723	1.016					3.953
To boost my self-confidence	0.769	1.236					3.420
The need for self-exploration	0.820	1.161					3.580

SD= Standard Deviation, **VE**= Variances explained, **Eige.**= Eigenvalues

Factor 1: Relaxation and escapism

This factor, which was labeled *relaxation and escapism*, received the highest weighted mean score of 4.289 and is, therefore, the main push factor for domestic tourists to visit the Erongo region. This factor includes themes such as relaxation, escaping from daily life, spending time with family and friends, sightseeing and disposable income. A remarkable number of past research studies have identified relaxation and escapism as a push factor for domestic tourists (Bui and Jolliffe, 2011; Mapingure et al. (2019); Oyunchimeg and Gantuya (2021); Duong et al. (2023); Ayoub and Mohamed, 2024).

Factor 2: Seeking Participatory Experiences

The second identified push factor was *seeking participatory experiences*, which received a weighted mean score of 3.276. It refers to participation in ecotourism, adventure, and cultural activities. Matiza and Kruger (2022) identified this factor as a push factor for domestic tourists.

Factor 3: Seeking enriching experiences

Seeking enriching experiences was identified as the third and final push factor for domestic tourists to visit the study area. The factor received the second-highest weighted mean score of 3.651. Within this factor, the main themes identified

included self-fulfillment, boosting self-confidence and self-exploration. Ayoub and Mohamed (2024) have also identified this factor as a crucial aspect of domestic tourists visiting a specific destination.

The analysis reveals that the relaxation and escapism factor, with an eigenvalue of 3.531, accounted for the highest amount of variance, explaining 25.223% of the total variance. Participatory experiences, with an eigenvalue of 2.227, accounted for the second-highest variance, explaining 16.232% of the total variance. While enriching experiences explained 12.570% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 1.759.

As shown in Table 2, the CR values of the factors in this model ranged from 0.83 for relaxation and escapism, 0.81 for enriching experiences, and 0.80 for participatory experiences. This demonstrates that all three factors have superior composite reliability, which is higher than Shrestha's (2021) recommended advanced phase value of 0.7. Furthermore, the AVE column ranges from 0.499 to 0.593. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), even if AVE falls below 0.5 but CR surpasses 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still adequate. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items adequately converged to their respective latent constructs.

Comparison between push factors and demographics and travel characteristics

To establish whether there were any significant differences between the identified factors and demographics and trip characteristics, a comparison between the findings was conducted. The results show significant relationships between all three push factors and some aspects of demographics and trip characteristics.

A Kruskal-Wallis H-test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in respondents' scores for *relaxation and escapism* in relation to level of education (P-value of 0.043), number of visits (0.040), purpose of visit (0.000) and source of information (0.013). The post-hoc test results show that respondents with a diploma or degree level of education (rank mean of 208.056), those who have visited the study area five or more times (208.903), those who travel for leisure (208.903), those who visit friends and family (180.780), and those who use social media (220.149) and the internet/website (194.402) as information sources are more likely to visit the study area due to their need for *relaxation and escapism*.

The test also showed that there was a statistically significant difference in scores for *seeking participatory experiences* in relation to age (0.026), number of visits (0.000), purpose of visits (0.000), mode of transport (0.014), type of accommodation (0.007) and source of information (0.000). The post-hoc test results indicate that respondents from Generation Z (293.785), those who visited the study area once (293.785), those who visited for leisure (216.895) and those who used advertisements (390.000) and travel magazines (340.500) as information sources are statistically more inclined to *seek participatory experiences*.

A Kruskal-Wallis H-test further showed that there was a statistically significant difference in respondents' scores for *seeking enriching experiences* in relation to age (0.000), duration of visit (0.022), mode of transport (0.014), and source of information (0.013). The post-hoc test results indicate that statistically, female respondents (217.316) and those who used advertisements as a source of information (208.903) were more likely to *seek enriching experiences*. This suggests that respondents' needs for enriching experiences differ significantly by gender and source of information.

Factor analysis of pull factor variables

The process produced a relatively refined and moderately correlated four-component model with eigenvalues greater than 1 and coefficients higher than 0.5. The model explained 61.604% of the total variance. The KMO of the modified four-component models was 0.727, while Bartlett's test of sphericity p-value < 0.0001 indicated that there were adequate correlations among variables to proceed. Table 3 depicts the four retained components.

Table 2. Factor Analysis: Pull Factors

	Factor Loading	SD	VE	Eige.	CR	AVE	Mean Value
Destination attributes	**0.752**		**26.042%**	**3.385**	**0.84**	**0.575**	**4.118**
Excellent recreation facilities	0.667	1.054					3.908
Natural scenery	0.864	0.794					4.457
Wide open space	0.825	0.902					4.315
Famous attraction	0.656	1.144					3.792
Events and activities	**0.714**		**17.766%**	**2.309**	**0.84**	**0.574**	**3.651**
Sports events	0.817	1.256					3.828
Shopping opportunity	0.611	1.373					2.888
Safety and familiarity	**0.735**		**9.297%**	**1.208**	**0.70**	**0.540**	**4.175**
Safety of local environment	0.750	0.906					4.175
Familiarity of local environment	0.720	0.960					4.152
Variety of experiences	**0.766**		**8.499%**	**1.104**	**0.74**	**0.598**	**4.069**
Entertainment opportunity	0.658	1.122					3.868
Variety of experience	0.874	0.880					4.270

SD= Standard Deviation, **VE**= Variances explained, **Eige.**= Eigenvalues.

Factor 1: Destination attributes

The first factor received a weighted mean score of 4.118 and was labeled *destination attribute*. This factor encompasses themes such as natural scenery, wide open space, excellent recreation facilities and famous attractions. This factor was previously reported by Ayoub and Mohamed (2024) and Duong et al. (2023) as a key pull factor for domestic tourists.

Factor 2: Events and activities

The factor labeled *events and activities*, received a weighted mean score of 3.651 and is, therefore, one of the main pull factors for domestic tourists to visit the Erongo region. This factor's main themes include sports events and shopping opportunities. Baniya and Paudel (2016), Bayih and Singh (2020), and Oyunchimeg and Gantuya (2021) studies also identified this factor as influential in domestic tourists' decision-making processes.

Factor 3: Safety and familiarity

The factor labeled *safety and familiarity* was the third identified push factor, receiving the highest weighted mean score of 4.175. It concerns the safety and familiarity of the local environment. This factor was previously identified as a pull factor for domestic tourists by Ayoub and Mohamed (2024), albeit under the label of 'environment and safety'.

Factor 4: Variety of experiences

Variety of experiences was identified as the fourth and final pull factor for domestic tourists to visit the study area. The factor received a weighted mean score of 4.069 and included themes such as entertainment opportunities and the variety of experiences that the study area offers domestic tourists. Baniya and Paudel (2016) study also identified this factor as a crucial aspect of domestic tourists' pull motivation.

The analysis further reveals that the factor labeled *destination attribute*, with an eigenvalue of 3.385, accounted for the highest amount of variance, explaining 26.042% of the total variance. With an eigenvalue of 2.309, *events and activities* explained 17.766% of the total variance, *safety and familiarity* explained 9.297% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.208, while *variety of experiences* explained 8.499% of the total variance with an eigenvalue of 1.104.

In this model, the factor CR values ranged from 0.70 to 84. This indicates that all three factors have superior composite reliability, which is greater than the standard value of 0.7. Additionally, the AVE column in Table 3 is greater than the standard value of 0.5; thus, the measurement model is free from convergent.

Comparison between pull factors and demographics and travel characteristics

To ascertain whether there were any significant differences between the identified pull factors and demographics and trip characteristics, a comparison between the findings was conducted. The results show significant relationships between four of the five identified pull factors and some aspects of demographics and trip characteristics.

A one-way ANOVA on the rank test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in respondents' scores for *destination attributes* in relation to gender (P-value of 0.017), purpose of visit (0.000), type of accommodation (0.023) and source of information (0.011). The post-hoc test results indicate that statistically, female respondents (rank mean of 211.599), those who traveled for leisure (225.071), those who stayed at a second or holiday home (236.596) and those who used advertisement (244.000), social media (214.264) and their own knowledge (208.680) as sources of information are more likely to be pulled by destination attributes.

The results also demonstrate a significant relationship between the factor of *events and activities* and demographics and trip characteristics, including age (0.000), level of education (0.000), number of visits (0.019), purpose of visit (0.000), mode of transport (0.006) and source of information (0.000). The post-hoc test results indicate that *events and activities* was highly rated by respondents from generation Z (251.486), those who had never married (222.141), those who visited the study area once (308.500) and those who used the internet as a source of information (280.500).

The comparison between duration of visit and factor 3 (*safety and familiarity*) yielded a score of 0.029, while the difference in scores between sources of information and the same factor was 0.002. The post-hoc test results indicate that day visitors (265.500), those who used advertisement (274.833) and radio (239.733) as sources of information were more concerned about safety and familiarity than others.

A Kruskal-Wallis H-test also showed that there was a statistically significant difference in respondents' scores for *variety of experiences* in relation to age (0.033), purpose of visit (0.006), type of accommodation (0.023) and source of information (0.002). While the post-hoc test results reveal that statistically, respondents from the millennial age group (209.854), those who were attending weddings or funerals (313.617), those who stayed at campsites (300.296) and those who used radios as sources of information (324.900) are more likely to seek a variety of experiences.

DISCUSSION

Understanding and responding to the diversity of domestic tourists' needs and expectations have become essential aspects of overall tourism development at many destinations globally. In the same vein, the investigation of domestic tourists' travel motivation has been credited with providing a good foundation for these understandings. Consequently, this study attempted to comprehend domestic tourists' travel motivation and supplement the theoretical and empirical evidence on push and pull motivation factors.

From a travel motivation standpoint, this study shows that both push and pull are important drivers of domestic tourism development in the Erongo region. This is in line with earlier findings showing that both internal and external factors influence domestic tourists. From this study, relaxation and escapism, seeking participatory experiences and seeking enriching experiences emerged as the three main push factors for domestic tourists to visit the Erongo region. In other words, domestic tourists decide to visit the study area because they want to fulfill their intrinsic desires.

Consequently, policymakers and tourism planners should tailor tourism offerings to domestic tourists' motivations (considering the asserted relationships) to induce more domestic tourism demand and the consumption of tourism products and services among Namibians. It is essential for them to ensure that local destinations offer opportunities for relaxation and escapism. These efforts should be targeted at frequent visitors, leisure travelers, and VFR travelers through social

media. Based on the result of this study, the tourism suppliers in the study area should strive to enhance participatory experiences. These efforts should include improved adventure, cultural and ecotourism activities centered on Generation Z, first-time visitors, and leisure travelers.

Additionally, the development of products and marketing messages should highlight the destination's unique features, natural scenery, and diversity to attract more domestic tourists. Closer attention in this regard must be particularly paid to leisure travelers and second-home tourism. Furthermore, this study recommends that tourism suppliers in the study area should also focus on providing a variety of experiences in order to attract more millennials, those attending weddings and funerals, and those seeking camping experiences. This study notes that safety and security are important motivators for domestic tourists, particularly day visitors and those who use advertisements and radio as sources of information.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the push and pull factors influencing domestic tourism in Namibia's Erongo region. This study's findings suggest that the push and pull factors of domestic tourists in the study area differ from those of domestic tourists in other destinations, as studies conducted in other destinations disclosed other push and pull factors that did not appear in this study. Therefore, given the unique characteristics of each destination, it is necessary for the Erongo region to adopt a marketing strategy that effectively promotes the aforementioned attributes.

Equally important, because domestic tourists in different destinations have different intrinsic desires, the region must develop specifically directed and focused promotion programs designed to tap these intrinsic desires to satisfy their underlying needs. By adopting the proposed strategies, the region can tap into the full potential of domestic tourism. The outcome of this study will help guide policymakers, tourism planners, and marketers in refining market segmentation and devising effective strategies for domestic tourism development.

This study significantly contributes to the understanding of travel motivations, specifically within Namibia's domestic tourist landscape. This study not only identified the drivers behind domestic tourists' choices but also advanced the existing body of literature on tourist motivations within the Namibian context.

The study focused solely on the Erongo region and surveyed 400 domestic tourists using a quantitative research approach that involved non-random sampling, including convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct similar studies in other regions of Namibia to determine whether motivational factors for domestic tourists are consistent or vary across different regions. Future research may also explore alternative research designs and techniques to gauge potential changes in motivational factors over time. Nevertheless, the findings of this study can serve as a guideline for sustainable domestic tourism development in the study area and other developing economies.

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