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Domestic Tourism in Jordan: Patterns, Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract:

The present study sought to explore the characteristics of domestic tourists in Jordan in terms of patterns, motivations, challenges and opportunities. A sample of 556 residents was collected through online survey technique. The quantitative approach was employed to analyze the data. The results indicated that coastal tourism beside adventure tourism and curatives tourism are the major patterns of domestic tourism. The main challenges of domestic tourism are related to economic, services, and socio-cultural aspects respectively. The results from One-Way ANOVA and t-tests revealed that there are no significant differences in respondents' perceptions between demographic groups in terms of age, gender, income, car ownership, and level of education for challenges of domestic tourism. Moreover, possible opportunities could be generated through involving private sector in promotional campaigns for the least known destinations, encouraging investment at small and medium accommodation enterprises with reasonable prices, and increasing the level of awareness for local community toward domestic tourism.

Keywords: domestic tourism; tourism patterns; domestic tourism challenges; Jordan.

JEL Classification: Z32; C13.

Introduction

Historically, the concept of tourism has associated with international tourism. Despite the fact that domestic tourism represents the vast majority of world tourism flows (72%), less attention has been paid towards it by governments and scholars comparing to inbound tourism (Canavan 2013, Rodríguez 2018, Scheyvens 2002). From economic point of view, international tourism has a bigger multiplier effect on the economy than domestic tourism in terms of increasing tourism income, GDP, jobs, and support of inter-linked sectors such as transportation and hospitality industries for tourism destinations whereas domestic tourism role does not exceed recycling the money within the country (Kang *et al.* 2014). According to the literature, domestic tourism is more sustainable than international tourism regarding economic development and environmental aspects, On the other hand, domestic tourism is more sustainable than the international tourism in terms of economic and environmental dimensions due to low cost and short distance particularly for developing countries and underdeveloped regions (Jafari 1986, Scheyvens 2007). Domestic tourism has many advantages on at the tourism sector. In terms of seasonality, domestic tourism is not seasonal like the international one which contributes to compensate low numbers of international tourists in low seasons. Furthermore, the determinants of international travel demand such as income, travel distance, time consumed, and language barriers are not existed to a large extent in domestic tourism (Li, Zhang, and Goh 2015) In addition, some tourists' destinations are not known and don't attract international tourists but still an attractive place for families with low level of income.

Recently, the concept of domestic tourism began to appear in the tourism literature differentiating local from foreign travelers (Cohen and Cohen 2015, Rogerson 2015). The UNWTO defines domestic tourism as residents' travel undertaking tourism activities "within the country of residence" (UNWTO 2009). This definition is very wide since there are different dimensions should be included in the definition. These are the distance travelled away

from normal place of residence, length of stay (some include same-day visitors while others exclude them), the purpose of visit (some include leisure, recreation purposes and exclude cultural, religious, medical and business purposes), accommodation type (some include only those accommodated in lodging facilities neglecting Visiting Friends and Relative (VFR) (Eijgelaar *et al.* 2008). For example, due to situation of Botswana, Morupisi and Mokgalo (2017), defined domestic tourism as domestic visits or special movement of local residents inside the country for different purposes including business, leisure, medical, entertainment, recreation and VFR depending on the tourism industry facilities such as transportation, accommodation, restaurants, etc. Therefore, this study seeks to explore patterns, challenges and opportunities of domestic tourism in Jordan from local tourists' perspective according to this definition.

1. Literature Review

Several studies have indicated the importance of domestic tourism for local economies even in developing and poor countries (Sindiga 1996, Rogerson 2015, Scheyvens 2002, Tsui 2017, Yip and Pratt 2018). Domestic tourism has significant contributions including economic and socio-cultural impacts to both national and local economic development (Haddad *et al.* 2013, Kang *et al.* 2014, Mutinda and Mayaka 2012); the geographical spread of tourism benefits (Rogerson 2015, Lisa and Rogerson 2017); and non-economic benefits such as support for nation-building and integration (Scheyvens 2007). Furthermore, domestic tourism plays a vital role in redistribution of national income through tourists' expenditure moving from richer typically metropolitan areas to poorer usually rural ones (Eugenio-Martin and Campos-Soria 2014, Canavan 2013, Morupisi and Mokgalo 2017). Moreover, domestic tourism could be a tool to reduce seasonality of tourism demand and dependence on foreign generating tourists' destinations (Alzboun 2018, Sindiga 1996). Therefore, some strategies have been taken by governments to encourage local residents to experience tourism inside their countries. For example, Iran issued travel cards with 50% discount for government employees to encourage them to travel locally (Ghaderi 2011). (Kaosa-ard *et al.* (2001) indicated that in Thailand, the government has created initiatives to encourage domestic tourism to decrease the numbers of Thais travelling outside the country.

The issue of domestic tourism challenges has been widely discussed in the literature (Altintas and Tuzunkan 2017, Kruger and Douglas 2015, Alipour *et al.* 2013, Aramberri 2004, Mbaiwa *et al.* 2007, Morupisi and Mokgalo 2017). Some challenges are related to socio-cultural and/or socio-economic aspects within destinations while others related to policy and marketing issues (Haddad *et al.* 2013). Prices, transportation cost, and income were considered as the main antecedents of domestic tourism demand (Lim 2006). For example, in Botswana, Mbaiwa *et al.* (2007) indicated that poor marketing initiatives was the main reason behind low participation in domestic tourism. Magableh and Kharabsheh (2013) identified that poor infrastructure, poor marketing initiatives, and lack of awareness of touristic sites are the major antecedents of domestic tourism in Jordan.

İçöz and Kozak (2005) divided determinants of tourism flows into four factors comprising economic (Prices, Level of expendable income level, Distance, Tourism sector's under and over structure price profile); social (Population structure, Occupation, Education, Family structure, Urban life, Free time); political (International political attitudes, Visa requirements) and psychological factors (Trends, Religious believe, Advertisements, Publicity, Prestige and bravado, Yearning for life in nature) (cited in Altintas and Tuzunkan 2017). Few studies concentrated on the impact of economic variables on domestic tourism (Garin-Munoz 2009, Taylor and Arigoni 2009, Athanasopoulos and Hyndman 2008). Income of individuals or households is one of the most mentioned determinants of domestic tourism in the literature (Altintas and Tuzunkan 2017, Hung *et al.* 2011, Lim 1997, Ryan 2003). Other socio-demographic factors such as educational level, occupation, and clubs' membership were responsible about the level of participation in domestic tourism (Abu Sabha and Barham 1988). For example, Hung *et al.* (2011) indicated that older and well educated household heads with higher income levels are willing to spend more on domestic travel. In a similar vein, in Iran, as Sadeghi *et al.* (2004) reported that highly educated middle age household heads with fairly well off and well employed, tend to spend more time in their domestic trips using their own cars.

The effect of socio-demographic statistics (age, gender, level of education and family size) on domestic tourism were examined in the literature (Agarwal and Yochum 1999, Au and Law 2000, Boakye *et al.* 2013, Reece 2001, Lee and Kim 1999). According to Reece (2001), age differences among tourists reflect the reality that young people may have not financial resources for tourism activities, while older people may have not enough leisure time. Furthermore, family size is a major determinant of domestic tourism that large family size affects negatively on the ability of the household to engage in tourism activities (Agarwal and Yochum 1999). With regard to gender, especially in developing countries, it was identified that males were less restricted to travel and travel decision is connected with men (Magableh and Kharabsheh 2013, Au and Law 2000). The influence of education level on

domestic travel took different types. First, higher level of education increases the net benefits of consuming tourism. Second, it is believed that people with a higher level of education boost the culture of travel and tourism in their children (Lee and Kim 1999).

2. Domestic Tourism in Jordan

In the context of Jordan, the tourism sector is a main pillar of Jordanian economy contributing to approximately 11.4% of GDP and tourism receipt was 3293.4 million JD in 2017 (MoTA 2017). Jordan is blessed with a wide array of tourism attractions ranging from unique destinations such as Dead Sea (Therapeutic), and Baptism site (Religious); to cultural and historical sites such as Petra, Jerash, and Umm Qais; to Natural Resources including Aqaba, Wadi Rum and natural reserves.

Global tourism statistics indicate that domestic tourism represents about 72% of tourists' movement around the world. The situation in Jordan is completely different that the number of local visitors to tourism sites was 1.98 million out of total visitors 4.89 million or around 40%. Despite this fact, the contribution of domestic tourism in the share of the tourism sector contribution in the GDP was very modest (8.2%) while international tourism constitutes the vast majority (91.8%) (MoTA 2017). On the other hand, more than 1.7 million Jordanian tourists traveled outside Jordan for recreational purposes spending around 893 million JD in 2016 (MoTA 2017). This outbound tourism contributes to decrease net revenues gained by the tourism industry and prohibits Jordan from hard currency due to financial leakage outside the country (Alzboun *et al.* 2016). According to a survey conducted by The Department of statistics (DoS) in 2012, only 17.6% of a total of 1.179 million households made a domestic tour. Therefore, the current study aims at exploring the real challenges that decrease domestic tourists inside Jordan. Hence, the importance of this study springs from the fact that this study shed the light on the reality of domestic tourism sector in Jordan focusing on the obstacles facing it.

Several studies focused on domestic tourism in Jordan (Abu Sabha and Barham 1988, Maqableh 2005, Mustafa 2012, Magableh and Kharabsheh 2013. Abu Sabha and Barham (1988) indicated that the main influencing factors on internal tourism and recreation are educational level, occupation, clubs' membership and income. In her analysis of domestic tourism survey conducted by DoS in 2008, Mustafa indicated that Jordan is losing a great market due to many factors or obstacles including the high cost of domestic tourism activities and services comparing with neighboring countries as Egypt, Syria and Lebanon; concentration of tourism development in some attractions; and most important the low levels of income for a big segment in the Jordanian society (Mustafa 2012). Using a two-stage demand model, Magableh and Kharabsheh (2013) examined factors that predict and explain local demand for domestic tourism in Jordan. They found that respondents who are more likely to participate in domestic tourism are older respondents with a higher level of education and employed, particularly in the private sector or are self-employed, and those owning their place of residency and car, and finally those who are working overseas.

A survey conducted by The Department of statistics in 2012 aiming at measuring domestic tourism size in Jordan identified that only 17.6% of a total of 1.179 million surveyed households made a tour. The vast majority of domestic tours (72%) during the study period was one day trips. Total tourism expenditure was about JD. 77.1 million, the expenditure of overnight tours was about 48.9 million JD representing 55.7% of total tourism expenditure. While the expenditure of same day tours was about JD. 34.2 million or 44.3% of total tourism expenditure. The source of domestic tourists was large cities including Amman (34.1%), Irbid (19.4%), and Zarqa (10.2%). The most visited governorates were Amman, Aqaba, and Jerash.

Table 1. Domestic tourism indicators 2008 and 2012

Indicators	2008	2012
Number of households	1.045 million	1.179 million
Number of tourism tours	991 million	1.138 million
% Same day trips	78.6%	72%
% Overnight trips	21.4%	28%
Total tourism expenditure	61.4 million JD	JD. 77.1 million
Expenditure of overnight trips	32.7 million JD (55.3%)	JD. 48.9 million (55.7%)
Expenditure of same day trips	28.7 million JD (46.7%)	JD. 34.2 million (44.3%)

Source: DoS 2013

As shown in Table 1, the number of surveyed households by the Department of Statistics increased by 11% and the total number of tourism tours also increased by 13% within four years. This may return to what is called Arab Spring taking place in nearby countries such as Syria and Egypt which were the main tourism destinations for Jordanians. Overnights trips increased slightly in 2012. The considerable change happened in total tourism

expenditure indicator since it increased by 20% for four years attributed to the same reason mentioned above. Regarding domestic tourism motivations, there were differences between same day trips motivation and overnight trips motivation (see Table 2). Recreation and leisure motivation were the dominant purpose for same day trips followed by visiting friends and relatives while visiting friends and relatives was the main motivation for overnight trips followed travelling for recreation and leisure purposes.

Table 2. Motivation of domestic tourism in Jordan between 2008-2012

Purpose of trip	Same day trips		Overnight trips	
	2008	2012	2008	2012
Recreation and leisure	57%	45%	39%	35%
Visiting friends & relatives	32%	13%	55%	61%
School and university tours	8%	6.9	-	-
Other	3%	2%	6%	4%

Source: DoS 2013

3. Methodology

Secondary data was obtained from the Department of Statistics (DoS), Ministry of Tourism and antiquities (MoTA), and WTTC. Primary data was collected during June - August 2018 using an online self-administered web-based survey method. In order to increase the response rate, a request for participation was made on the Facebook pages of the author and the most followed pages at the country. Online surveys have many advantages such as offering a high-level of anonymity that respondents are more likely to admit socially undesirable behavior than with an interviewer present (Aaker *et al.* 2007) which is suitable to the Jordanian culture. Furthermore, online surveys have much better response rates and faster response times compared to mail surveys. They also provide wide geographical dispersal and minimize data entry error as respondent's answers are directly transferred into analysis record (Kumar *et al.* 2002).

The questionnaire consisted of four parts including socio-economic characteristics of respondents; patterns and characteristics of domestic tourism in Jordan; challenges of domestic tourism in Jordan; and suggestions to improve domestic tourism in Jordan. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 being 'strongly disagree' to 5 being 'strongly agree'. It was used to measure perceptions of domestic tourists toward challenges facing them. After data collection, data was screened using SPSS version 25.0 to see if there is any violation of assumptions. A series of bivariate statistics were conducted including One-way ANOVA, and t-test in order to identify significant differences at ($p < 0.05$) in the challenges of domestic tourism, between demographic groups in terms of age, gender, income, and educational level. Frequency analysis was employed to determine socio-economic characteristics; patterns and characteristics of domestic tourism in Jordan. Cronbach's alpha tests were used to measure the internal consistency (reliability) of items within each factor.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Statistics

A total of 556 completed questionnaires were used for data analysis. As table (3) shows, 67.4% of the respondents were females. This result could not be happened if the questionnaire was facing to face due to Jordanian culture. This leads us to postulate that online surveys ensure the representativeness of under-represented categories such as females that would not be able to take part in traditional surveys. The majority of respondents belong to the group less than 24 years (37), followed by people between 25-39 years (23.4) while people in their forties and fifties constituted (21.7% and 15.8%) respectively. The participation of respondents in their sixties and above were very low which may attribute to the way that the survey was conducted since youngers tend to use social media more than seniors. The vast majority of the sample has a bachelor's degree (79.9%) while graduates represented 11.5% which means that more than 91% of respondents have a university degree, followed by people who have secondary education and below (8.6%). With regard to family size, more than two thirds of respondents have families range between 4-7 people followed by large families that have more than eight persons (27.5%) consistent with the last national census (DOS 2015). The monthly income of 60% of the respondents was less than 800 JD followed by people who receive a monthly salary ranged between 800 and 1199 JD (23.4%) while the categories of highly income families have low proportions. The majority of Jordanian families (study sample) own at least one car (83.5%) which facilitates families' movement inside the country and provides them relatively with required specialty reflecting Jordanian culture. With respect to residence place, around 55% of respondents were from Amman (Capital of Jordan) followed by Zarqa and Irbid governorates (15.6% and 10.6 respectively)

which represents 81.2% of the respondents proportionate with the last census results (DoS 2015). However, the respondents profile showed an underrepresentation of some categories such as lower education population, elderly participants, and remote governorates of respondents. This result may be related to the online survey used in data collection.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are described in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents profile (N= 556)

Variable	Respondents characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	182	32.6
	Female	374	67.4
Age	Less than 24	206	37
	25-39	130	23.4
	40-49	121	21.7
	50-59	88	15.8
	60 and above	11	2
Family size	Less than 4	33	5.9
	4-7	370	66.5
	8 and above	153	27.5
Educational level	Secondary and below	48	8.6
	Bachelor	444	79.9
	Graduate	64	11.5
Family income (monthly)	Less than 400 JD	111	20.0
	400-799 JD	221	39.7
	800-1199 JD	130	23.4
	1200-1599 JD	37	6.7
	1600- 1999 JD	19	3.4
	2000 JD and more	38	6.8
Car ownership	Yes	464	83.5
	No	92	16.5
Place of Living	Amman	303	55
	Alzarqa	87	15.6
	Irbid	59	10.6
	Albalqa'	38	6.8
	Jarash	33	5.9
	Almafraq	10	1.8
	Madaba	10	1.8
	Others	16	2.9

4.2. Patterns and Characteristics of Domestic Tourism in Jordan

Table 4 demonstrates that the most preferable type of tourism for Jordanians is coastal tourism (33.5%) in Aqaba Gulf. Adventure tourism came later, as the second most preferable type of tourism (20.5%) as an emerging and promising type of tourism. Curative tourism (19.6%) at the Dead Sea and other hot springs such as Ma'in was the third most preferable type of tourism. Dead sea is the lowest point on earth (approximately 430 m below sea level) with unique characteristics including salty water full of minerals. Taking into consideration the fact that Jordan has Aqaba as the only coast in the country, the choices of Jordanians for recreational tourism are very constrained and limited. Aqaba is the inclusive place for recreation with aquatic activities especially at winter and spring seasons. With regard to cultural tourism and environmental tourism (12.6 % and 10.3 % respectively) were less important for the study sample. Accordingly, these results indicate that there are new patterns of tourism emerged recently among Jordanian tourists such as adventure and curative tourism while traditional types such as cultural and environmental tourism were declined.

A total of 72.8 % of respondents traveled by their own cars and without travel agencies (81.7%) with their families (69.1%). The table also indicates that 68% of trips were one day trips which is close to the DOS statistics (72) emphasizing the validity of the study. Because of previous characteristics including two thirds of study's sample trips were one day trips, without travel agency, using their own cars, the average expenditure per trip was relatively low (less than 100 JD for 61.3% of respondents). Consequently, Aqaba was the most visited destination by Jordanians receiving (43.5%) of respondents, followed by Dead Sea (15.5%), public parks and protected areas (9.2%), Petra (8.4%), and Jerash (7.4%).

Table 4. Descriptive analysis of characteristics of domestic tourism in Jordan (N= 556)

Domestic tourism characteristics		Frequency	(%)
Tourism type	Coastal tourism	189	33.5
	Adventure tourism	114	20.5
	Curative tourism	109	19.6
	Cultural tourism	70	12.6
	Environmental tourism	57	10.3
	Religious tourism	12	2.2
	Desert tourism	8	1.4
Preferable destination	Aqaba	242	43.5
	Dead Sea	86	15.5
	Public Parks & protected areas	51	9.2
	Wadi Rum	42	7.6
	Petra	37	6.7
	Ma'in hot springs	36	6.6
	Jerash	24	4.3
	Ajloun Castle	17	3.0
	Umm Qais	11	2.0
Trip organizer	Roman Theater	10	1.8
	With Travel agency	102	18.3
Transportation mean	Without travel agency	454	81.7
	My car	405	72.8
	Travel company	92	16.5
	Rental car	34	6.1
Travel nature	Public transportation	25	4.5
	Alone	7	1.3
	With family	384	69.1
	With friends	151	27.2
Length of stay	With group	14	2.5
	One day	376	67.6
Expenditure average per trip	Overnight	180	32.4
	Less than 50 JD	152	27.3
	50-99JD	189	34.0
	100-149JD	97	17.4
	150-199JD	50	9.0
	200 and more	68	12.2

These results were consistent previous part that the most preferable types of tourism for Jordanians were the most visited destinations. This result provides decision makers and planners with a clear clue to focus on improving services and facilities at Aqaba, Dead Sea, and public parks seeking to increase the level of satisfaction of local tourists. Furthermore, the vast majority of trips (81.7%) were organized without travel agencies since most of tourists used their own cars with their families (69.1%) or their friends (27%). In addition, one day trips constituted more than two-third (67.4%) of trips, along with (61.3%) of respondents spend less than 100 JD per trip.

Table 5. Trips motivations of domestic tourism in Jordan

Travel motivation	M	S.D
Natural sightseeing	4.11	0.89
Escaping from daily routine	4.06	0.87
Recreation & relaxation	4.05	0.82
Spending leisure time	3.87	0.91
Visiting new places	3.83	0.81
Practicing sport	3.76	0.93
Meeting friends and relatives	3.71	0.99
Shopping	3.29	1.04
Enhancing cultural knowledge	3.22	0.96

As shown in Table 5, the main motivation for domestic tourists to travel inside Jordan is natural sightseeing (4.11), followed by escaping from daily routine, relaxation, and spending leisure time (4.6, 4.5 respectively). This

result is consistent with Alrohaimy study in 2006 who identified that recreational motivation is the dominant motivation for Jordanians to domestic tourism. The logical interpretation of this result is that the main cities in Jordan such as Amman, Irbid and Zarqa became overcrowded in the last 10 years with very limited open spaces which pushes residents to spend their holidays in public parks and natural places outside their usual environments. Spending leisure time and Visiting new places came later (3.87 and 3.83 respectively). Previous literature indicated that the notion of travel gradually moved from upper class to middle and low classes simultaneously with school and religious holidays (Ghaderi, 2011) in addition to having five business days during the week give an opportunity for workers and employees to make short trips inside the country.

4.3 Challenges of Domestic Tourism in Jordan

The summated means for all factors were above 3.0, which indicates that the respondents generally agree on domestic tourism challenges. As noticed from Table (6), economic problems were the major challenges according to respondents' perspective (3.74), followed by services challenges and socio-cultural challenges (3.50 and 3.41) respectively. Prices of accommodation services were the major barrier (4.10) that limits the ability of local tourists to make overnight trips inside Jordan contributing directly to decrease overnight trips to be about 32% of the study sample. Beside low level of income, high prices of goods and services in general, tickets of tourist places and the high cost of transportation have mentioned as the main economic challenges of domestic tourism. This result is supported by Athanasopoulos and Hyndman (2008) who found that GDP affected negatively on domestic tourism.

Table 6. Challenges of domestic tourism in Jordan (Alpha= .927)

Items	M	S.D	Alpha
Economic challenges	3.74	0.87	0.871
- High cost of hospitality & accommodation services	4.10	1.05	
- Low level of income	3.98	1.08	
- Prices of goods & services don't consistent with residents' income	3.90	1.07	
- High cost of tickets to tourist places	3.83	1.15	
- High cost of transport	3.66	1.07	
- Families do not own private cars	2.99	1.29	
Services' challenges	3.50	0.82	0.907
- Low level of cleanness in tourism sites	3.80	1.09	
- Shortage of amenities and services in tourism sites	3.70	1.05	
- Low level of infrastructure (roads) in tourists' sites	3.66	1.07	
- Crowdedness in some tourist destinations	3.55	1.03	
- Facilities and services don't cater the desire of deferent tourists' categories.	3.54	1.03	
- Lack of tourism signs	3.33	1.05	
- Lack of cars parking in tourism sites	3.31	1.04	
- Low existence of security stations in some tourists destinations.	3.10	1.26	
Socio-cultural challenges	3.41	0.80	0.803
- Weak promotion programs focused on local community	3.57	1.08	
- Some behaviors that hurt Jordanian households in some tourists' sites	3.49	1.18	
- Low level of residents' awareness toward tourism sites in Jordan	3.45	1.12	
- Jordanian society has low level of leisure and recreation culture	3.37	1.13	
- Large family size	3.30	1.13	

Also, there are other challenges related to services sector that affect domestic tourism. The issue of cleanness at tourist sites is gained a considerable interest for local and international tourists alike. Therefore, local tourists complained of lack of cleanness, shortage of amenities and services, lack of tourism signs, cars parking at tourist destinations. Furthermore, accessibility to some tourist destinations was showed because of low level of infrastructure particularly roads at remote and unknown destinations. Crowdedness at famous and most attractive tourist destinations raised as a challenge to some domestic tourists. Additionally, respondents reported that provided services are not equivalent with different categories of visitors. With respect to socio-cultural challenges, the participants indicated that weak promotion initiatives oriented to local community the most salient point (3.57). Moreover, respondents mentioned that they noticed non-ethical behaviors that hurt families during their existence at tourist destinations which is a strange behavior in the conservative Jordanian community. Residents awareness toward tourism sites in Jordan was low which is a real challenge that needs cooperation on the national scale. For

all constructs, the reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha values ranged between 0.803 and 0.927 (see Table 6). Results show that all the Cronbach's alphas were greater than 0.7, which exceeded the accepted level.

The results from One-Way ANOVA and t-tests revealed that there are no significant differences in respondents' perceptions between demographic groups in terms of age, gender, income, car ownership, and level of education for challenges of domestic tourism. Table 7 provides an example of the results of independent sample test for gender effect on domestic tourism challenges. This result confirms that all domestic tourists agreed on the obstacles facing them during their recreational trips. Therefore, the contribution of this study is comprising the vast majority of challenges of domestic tourism in Jordan according their perspective.

Table 7. Independent Samples Test for gender effect on domestic tourism challenges

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Economic challenges	Equal variances assumed	8.993	.003	-1.060	554	.290	-.08415	.07938
	Equal variances not assumed			-.990	300.391	.323	-.08415	.08504
Social challenges	Equal variances assumed	6.657	.010	-.325	554	.745	-.02358	.07249
	Equal variances not assumed			-.304	302.194	.761	-.02358	.07746
Services challenges	Equal variances assumed	4.802	.029	.227	554	.820	.01703	.07495
	Equal variances not assumed			.216	313.097	.829	.01703	.07890

4.4. Opportunities of Domestic Tourism in Jordan

Domestic tourism has a significant role in the development of any country through redistribution of the national income, increasing tourism investments and tourist expenditures. Also, domestic tourists are usual clients for local vendors and owners of small establishments which contributes to alleviate poverty levels and to decrease unemployment rates (Shah *et al.* 2002 cited in Mustafa 2012). Therefore, solving domestic tourism challenges that local tourists mentioned in this study became a priority for planners and decision makers in Jordan. These results are consistent with the study of Shen *et al.* (2018) who recommended a comprehensive planning of scenic tourism products to diversify tourism and leisure activities.

Table 8. Suggestions to improve domestic tourism in Jordan

Suggestion	M	S.D
- Increase the level of cleanliness	4.25	1.022
- Make prices of provided services parallel with Jordanians income	4.24	1.01
- Decrease the value of entrance tickets to tourist destinations	4.20	1.03
- Provide services and activities to meet different age categories especially youngers.	4.19	1.00
- Enhance quality of provided services	4.18	1.00
- Creating tourist programs and packages for local community	4.15	.895
- Increase promotion campaigns for Jordanian community	4.12	.995
- Improve transport network and tourist information signs	4.11	1.00
- Providing enough parking lots	4.06	1.01
- Increase the existence of police men at major tourist destinations	4.02	1.03

As noticed from Table 8, respondents reported that the major issue and the fundamental step to address domestic tourism obstacles is enhancing the quality of provided services including cleanliness, tourist information signs, and providing enough parking lots at the most visited destinations. The second issue is related the economic dimension. The respondents indicated that high prices of accommodation and tickets of activities are not equal with Jordanian level of income and also do not meet the desire of different categories of age especially youngers. The third suggestion that may improve domestic tourism is creating special packages or programs with suitable prices oriented for local tourists alongside with the culture of the country. As well as, launching promoting campaigns at universities, schools, and public institutions to increase the awareness of local community toward domestic tourism.

Conclusion

The current study sought to explore the characteristics of domestic tourists in terms of their socio-economic characteristics, motivation, preferable types of tourism, and basically challenges that encounter domestic tourism in Jordan. The results revealed that the patterns of domestic tourism in Jordan are completely deferent about international tourism ones. It could conclude that traditional types of tourism that focus on historical, heritage and cultural sites are not preferred for local tourists. Domestic tourism patterns could be summarized as follows:

- First, domestic tourism in Jordan is family tourism that 69.1% of respondents participated in trips with their families consisting with what Mustafa concluded 2012. This provides planners with a very important data and inspire them to prepare needed facilities and services at most visited places such as public parks;
- Second, the most dominant pattern of domestic tourism is coastal tourism at the beaches of Aqaba and Dead Sea. The interpretation of this result springs from the nature of these destinations. For example, for Jordanians, Aqaba the unique coastal beach at the country, a cheap shopping center, and relaxation destination while the Dead Sea is a recreational and a curative tourism destination being the lowest point on earth blessed with countable features;
- Third, adventure tourism is an emerging and promising type of tourism for both domestic and international tourists alike. Therefore, decision makers have to support and enhance the level of services and safety at these sites;
- Fourth, Curative tourism has gained a considerable interest among domestic tourists. This result sheds the light on remote curative tourism sites with poor infrastructure and services at southern Jordan such as Afra and Barbeta (a mineral water springs) and hot springs at the north such as Alhammeh.

As many developing countries, the economic situation is topping the list of challenges of domestic tourism. In the last few years, more taxes were imposed on goods and services contributing to increase the cost of living which influenced negatively on domestic tourism sector particularly the last tax on individuals' income. Moreover, unemployment rate has reached 18.4% during the first quarter of 2018 (DoS, 2018). Furthermore, the low level of services at tourism sites is also a real obstacle against domestic tourism. In spite of the government marketing campaigns, but it still limited. Hence, poor promotion of tourism attractions and facilities still clear in the eyes of local tourists.

According to respondents' perspective, there are different potential opportunities still available for developing domestic tourism sector at both demand and supply dimensions. These opportunities would be achieved through the following procedures: governmental support and providing incentives for small and medium enterprises' investments at the accommodation sector, enhancing the quality of provided services with reasonable prices, increasing the level of awareness for local community toward domestic tourism, creating oriented promotional campaigns targeting local community ability and culture, and involving private sector in promotional campaigns for the least known destinations.

The present study provides decision makers with a better understanding of domestic tourists' characteristics, preferences and challenges encounter domestic tourism market in Jordan. Identifying challenges of domestic tourism has meaningful implications for the tourism industry that it helps Jordanian government (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Jordan Tourism Board) to formulate suitable future strategies, especially for those destinations targeting the domestic market. Additionally, understanding individuals' demographic characteristics and behavior will guide marketers and decision makers alike to target possible customers in their promotion campaigns and to create suitable tourism products that meet their needs.

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