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Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

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Factors Influencing the Development of Domestic Tourism in the Erongo Region, Namibia

Ebson NGONDO

Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences
Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

ORCID: [0000-0001-9300-4235](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9300-4235)

engondo@outlook.com

Uwe P. HERMANN

Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences
Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

ORCID: [0000-0001-6650-1850](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6650-1850)

hermannup@tut.ac.za

Dewald H. VENTER

Department of Tourism and Events Management, Faculty of Management
Central University of Technology, South Africa

ORCID: [0000-0003-2908-2153](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2908-2153)

dvrenter@cut.ac.za

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Abstract: Domestic tourism is viewed as the main driving force of the tourism industry in major economies globally. It has received worldwide recognition as a dynamic part of the industry with enormous potential for growth and is considered a useful tool for socio-economic development. However, in Namibia, as is the case with many developing countries, the sector is academically less explored and economically misrepresented. On that background, the main aim of this study was to understand the key factors influencing the development of domestic tourism in developing economies. The Erongo region of Namibia served as a case study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect usable data from 400 respondents. From this study, it was found that major obstacles to the development of domestic tourism in the study area include affordability and awareness issues, limited infrastructure, and poor government policies. While collaboration amongst stakeholders, robust government policies, and coordinated marketing efforts were identified as key determinants of domestic tourism development, they were also identified as key enabling factors. Consequently, the study recommends differential pricing, augmenting the marketing and promotion of tourism products to domestic tourists, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.

Keywords: domestic tourism; development; hindering factors; enabling factors.

JEL Classification: O55; Z32; R11.

Introduction

Domestic tourism is the main driving force of the tourism industry in major economies globally, accounting for 72 percent of total travel and tourism spending in 2019 and 85% in 2021 (Jus, Tsering, and Mitcham, 2022). According to Nurov, Khamroyeva, and Kadirova (2021), the sector additionally plays a key role for governments around the world as the main source of financial income from tourism activities. Since it involves the movement of residents within their own country, it requires infrastructure related to transport and accommodation, and it may lead to interaction between the tourists and the host community. All these activities generate jobs and billions of dollars in revenues worldwide. The ease and convenience of travelling within one's own country encourage

domestic vacations and trips. As a result, the sector is imperative to the growth of the tourism industry and, thus, worldwide economic development (Rwigema, 2024).

In general, domestic tourism is perceived as a more sustainable and reliable form of tourism (Seyfi, Hall and Saarinen, 2022). Thus, various countries are presently capitalising on their domestic tourism to make it a feasible and competitive tourism item. This gave domestic tourism worldwide recognition as a dynamic part of the tourism industry with potential for sustainable growth and development. In fact, the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic, rapid growth and increased potential economic value of domestic tourism (Adinolfi and Skotoyi, 2023) and a well-established stream of research in developed countries have created an increased discourse on this topic. As it turns out, domestic tourism has also received considerable attention from academia and researchers in Africa (see Rwigema 2024, Murima and Shereni 2023, Kifworo and Dube 2023, Matiza and Kruger 2022; Mato and Masoma 2022, Mapingure, Du Plessis and Saayman 2019; Basera, 2018).

In Namibia, however, little attention is paid to domestic tourism and its development by both policymakers and academia alike (Murima and Shereni, 2023). This practice has ignored the potential benefits of the emergence of domestic tourism. It has also hindered the sustainable development of domestic tourism in the country, particularly in the study area. Evidently, a considerable number of studies in different countries across the globe have provided a discourse on the key hindering and enabling factors for domestic tourism development in developing countries. While this study acknowledges the significance of work already done in this field, there remains a profound discontent with current national tourism policies in developing countries that focus on international tourism and ignore the potential of domestic tourism.

Dealing with this issue will require not only embracing the paradigms asserted in other developing countries but also making progress in development approaches in the study area. To fulfil such ambitions, this study provides an attempt to understand the key factors influencing the development of domestic tourism in the study area. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is the inaugural analysis of factors influencing domestic tourism development in the study area. This investigation is significant in that it provides the necessary baseline information on domestic tourism as a pivotal tool in sustainable development in the study area. The findings also provide a basis for further expansion of research into the development of domestic tourism in other regions of Namibia and in other developing economies.

1. Literature Review

Although interest in domestic tourism has made a quantum leap in recent times, finding a commonly accepted definition of domestic travel activity has remained a challenge (Llorca-Rodríguez, García-Fernández, and Casas-Jurado, 2020). Thus, domestic tourism is a subjective concept that is defined, applied, and embraced differently depending on circumstances and investigators (Kabote, Mamimine, and Muranda, 2017). Inevitably, the lack of commonly accepted and/or used definitions has made domestic tourist movements harder to track, subsequently making domestic tourism an invisible portion of total tourism activity to some degree.

Over the years, researchers have made several attempts to define domestic tourism, resulting in an array of mostly controverting definitions. However, in their own ways, these definitions form the basis for domestic tourism development globally. Some of the proposed definitions of domestic tourism consider the distance travelled away from the normal place of residence (Mokhefi, Hamoul, and Sawsan, 2017); some include same-day visitors (Quinn, 2010), while others exclude them (Williams, 1979). Others include only those travelling outside their usual environment (Aggarwal et al., 2024), neglecting visiting friends and relatives (VFRs) as a result, while some broadly include all travels in one's country of reference (Apriyanti, Sumaryoto and Meirinaldi, 2024). Based on Bakari (2021), it can be argued that the distinction between the two concepts of "usual environment" and "second home" can be blurred and often poses difficulty in considering VFR as a tourism activity.

Theoretically, however, it can be argued that domestic tourism cannot be confined to a general definition because various aspects of tourism generate disparate viewpoints. Albeit the conspicuous difference and contradiction in the definition of domestic tourism, fundamentally all definitions agree that the phenomenon encompasses the movement of a person within their own country. In this study's context, remaining consistent with established understanding, domestic tourism is defined as "the travel (and tourism activities) of residents within their own country for a day or overnight visit, for purposes of business, education, leisure, medical, entertainment, recreation, and VFR."

On the premises of this definition, one can claim that most of the positive effects of inbound tourism demand on national economies are also valid for domestic tourism (Çuhadar, Kervankiran and Ongun, 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 of significant importance for both the developed and developing economies.

Conventionally, India, the United States of America (USA), and the People's Republic of China account for the largest domestic tourism markets (UNWTO, 2020). The UNWTO (2020) also highlighted Japan, Brazil, France, and Spain as some of the largest domestic tourism markets. Based on the Baniya and Paudel (2016) study, it can be argued that in South Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, domestic tourism has a dominant role over international tourism in their aggregate tourism industry. As demonstrated by Chebli, Kadri, and Ben-Said (2021), domestic tourism in Algeria, like what is happening elsewhere, is witnessing the emergence of this mobility. Likewise, Nyikana and Bama (2023) and Rogerson (2015) expressed the opinion that, in the case of South Africa, domestic tourism represents a significant element of the country's tourism economy.

The low levels of passport ownership among the population in India (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2018), the rapid growth of a local economy in China (Zhao and Liu, 2020), and domestic tourism marketing activity in the UK (Lu, et al., 2021) fuel domestic tourism development. This indicates that domestic tourism development drivers (and hindrances) vary from one destination to another, hence the need for this study in Namibia. On that background, the section that follows provides an attempt to understand some of the challenges developing countries are faced with in their efforts to develop their domestic tourism sectors.

1.1 Hindrance to Domestic Tourism Development: A Developing Country Perspective

The existing research suggests that domestic tourism, while widely practiced in many countries, is relatively undeveloped, particularly in developing nations like Namibia. The literature points to various hindering factors. Several studies around the world have argued that the high cost of tourism products and/or services is one of the biggest obstacles to domestic tourism development (Murima and Shereni, 2023; Mato and Masoma 2022, Poghosyan and Tovmasyan, 2021; Makhaola and Gerwel-Proches, 2017). According to Bakari (2021), the high cost of tourism goods and/or services has led to a problem with affordability among domestic tourists, which in turn restricts the growth of domestic tourism.

Another point of view suggests unemployment, poverty, and inequality as the main factors affecting the development of domestic tourism in developing countries (Bakari, 2021; Oladele, Digun-Aweto, and Van Der Merwe, 2018; Henama and Sifolo, 2015). For this reason, a low unemployment rate is pivotal to domestic tourism development. Poghosyan and Tovmasyan (2021) argued that as the level of employment rises, so does disposable income, which will result in an increase in domestic tourism activities, supporting this viewpoint.

The literature on the domestic tourism development domain also shows conclusively that there have been several policies globally that have affected the development of domestic tourism. In Iran, for example, the 2007 gasoline rationing policy, a security-economic decision to reduce fuel consumption in Iran (120 litres of petrol per person per month), is one such example that had negative impacts on domestic tourism as it increased travel expenses dramatically (Ghaderi, 2011).

Mutsena and Kabote (2015) also claimed that the land reform and indigenisation policy and the economic policy have had a negative impact on Zimbabwe's economy, resulting in the poor performance of domestic tourism in the country. In addition, industry focuses such as the reorientation of the city's leisure offerings towards the market of long-haul international travellers in Cape Town, South Africa, have resulted in the displacement of domestic tourists as tourism products and/or services became inaccessible for locals (Henama and Sifolo, 2015). According to Mato and Masoma (2022) and Kifworo, Okello, and Mapelu (2020), in many developing countries, monotonously-perceived tourism offerings have led to more people travelling abroad in search of variety. This subsequently hinders developing countries' ability to tap into the full potential of domestic tourism.

Other notable hindrances to domestic tourism development include the absence of a domestic tourism development strategy (Mehiret, 2019), inadequate tourist infrastructure (Leonidova, 2017), inadequate promotion of domestic tourism (Ronoh, 2022), local interpretations of tourism (Melubo, 2020) and a lack of travel culture (Morupisi and Makgalo, 2017). Consequently, this study argues that there is a need for developing countries to develop domestic tourism policies and strategies that are centred around domestic tourism planning and sustainable development. Therefore, the section below looks at some of the key policies and strategies that have aided the development of domestic tourism globally.

1.2 Domestic Tourism Development Strategies: Key Factors for Sustainability

Tourism policy and planning have played a crucial role in the advancement of tourism for many years and have been recognised as a significant priority on the global political agenda. However, derived from evidence provided in the section above, it can be argued that there is a lack of policies and strategies targeted at domestic tourism development in some developing countries. Using practical examples and research recommendations from schoolers, this section explores the many policies and strategies that are being adopted globally in an effort to drive domestic tourism growth.

A number of studies in different countries across the globe have provided a dialogue on key strategies for domestic tourism development. Some studies highlighted infrastructure development as key to domestic tourism growth in developing countries (Archer, 1978; Makhaola and Gerwel-Proches, 2017). This view is supported by Chebli, Kadri, and Ben-Said (2021), who's study asserted that the enhancement of transport infrastructure is critical to the development of domestic tourism.

China conceivably provides the best model for the aforementioned strategy as its investment in the development of a rail network and air infrastructure improved transportation connectivity, reinforced visitation in remote areas, and augmented the development of domestic tourism (WTTC, 2018). As duly observed by Arteeva, et al., (2022), there is a correlation between infrastructure development and the development of domestic tourism.

Another seminal contribution on this topic has been made by Sindiga (1996) and Kifworo, Okello and Mapelu (2020) highlighting tourism product diversification as a key strategy for domestic tourism development. By offering a wider array of experiences, destinations can better meet the evolving tourists' demands and remain competitive in the long run. Just as important, other authors have raised an essential point of formulating a national domestic tourism growth strategy to give a clear direction and framework for enhancing the level of domestic tourism (Descarten, 2023; Efimova, Levochkina and Khabibullina, 2021; Muliawaty, Alamsyah and Loupias, 2019; Isiaka and Isiaka, 2019). Certainly, a national domestic tourism growth strategy may maximise the potential of domestic tourism and contribute towards national tourism policy development (Rogerson, 2015).

Scholars such as Mato and Masoma (2022), Nurov, Khamroyeva, and Kadirova (2021); Aina and Ezeuduji (2021) and Chan (2021) emphasise that domestic tourists in developing countries have difficulties affording travel costs; therefore, competitive prices, discounts and price bundling may be key to stimulating domestic tourists' demand for tourism products. Fundamentally, reducing the price of products will increase tourism consumption among domestic tourists and subsequently promote sustainable development of the tourism industry (Shen, 2020).

It is also suggested that marketing and promotion of destinations to domestic tourists can provide the momentum for the development of domestic tourism (Kinuthia, 2019; Ogbonna, Ibe, and Ikegwu, 2018; Osiako and Szente, 2021). This denotes creating targeted strategies to attract and engage with the local population. Now that a set of policies and strategies that can enhance the development of domestic tourism has been established, it becomes necessary to take a brief look into domestic tourism in the study area.

2. Materials and Methods

This study utilised quantitative research methodology. Data was collected using a recently created questionnaire that drew on prior research including Basera (2018), Leonidova (2017); Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism [MEFT] (2016); Rogerson (2015); Ndlovu, Nyakunu, and Heath (2011) and Aina and Ezeuduji (2021). The sample size for this study consisted of 400 respondents in total. The study employed a non-random sampling method that involved a combination of convenience sampling techniques, which targeted domestic tourists at popular tourism destinations in the region, and snowball sampling techniques, which targeted domestic tourists through an online survey using Google Forms, to gather quantitative data. During a two-week period between September and October 2023, face-to-face surveys and web-based surveys were done as part of this study.

The data were recorded using Microsoft Excel™ and data analysis was conducted using Stata 17.0 SE. The interpretation relied on the mathematical metric of the spread of the gathered data. Each two-factor analysis utilised a 5-point Likert scale to mathematically measure the data and achieve consensus. The metric yields a singular value that spans from one (1) to five (5).

To simplify the data, a dimensionality reduction approach called exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on both hindering and enabling variables. Both analyses utilised the principal component analysis (PCA) approach of factor analysis, employing the varimax orthogonal rotation methodology. Factors that have eigenvalues larger than 0.50 were kept based on the Kaiser criterion, as recommended by Osborne (2014). Prior to doing factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test were employed. Only factors with eigenvalues over 1 were preserved, as suggested by Cliff (1988). According to Hair

et al. (2014), only items with factor loadings higher than 0.5 were included for the final factor structure in this investigation.

The researchers calculated the composite reliability (CR) to assess the internal consistency of the factor, which measures the consistency between numerous measurements of a variable (Bacon, et al., 1995). In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which measures the convergence among the assets of items representing a latent construct (Hair et al., 2014), was also calculated. Stata 17.0 SE was utilised to conduct Kruskal-Wallis tests, Chi-Square testing, and Spearman's rank-order correlation tests as the concluding phase of data analysis. The Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to compare demographic variables and trip characteristics with the identified determinants.

The analysis was conducted with a confidence level of 95%, indicating that the likelihood of the results happening by chance is low. The observed disparities in the sample were indeed present in the larger population from which it was selected. Gelman (2012) states that in social sciences research, a P-value of less than 0.05 is considered the threshold for significant differences. Hence, this study solely presents findings on statistically significant connections (P-values <0.05) observed among the variables under investigation. The research placed significant emphasis on ethical considerations. After obtaining ethical approval, the researcher sought permission to gather data from the participants. The respondents were granted autonomy to complete the questionnaires.

2.1 Study Area

The Erongo region is one of the 14 administrative regions of Namibia; it covers an area of 63,586 km² (Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA), 2014) and has a population of 240,206 inhabitants (NSA, 2024). The region hosts several tourist attractions, such as the city of Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, Henties Bay, the Namib desert, the Brandberg with its famous rock paintings, and the Spitzkoppe Mountains. The map of the study area is depicted in Figure 1 below.



Source: Erongo Regional Council (2023)

According to the Namibian domestic tourism expenditure survey, in 2015, the study area accounted for 21 percent of the recorded domestic tourists in the country, which translates to 1.21 million tourists (MEFT, 2016). This cements the study area's status as the main hub of domestic tourism in Namibia and makes it an appropriate study area for this research.

As is the case with many other themes and issues surrounding Namibia, there exists a lack of dependable, current, and quantitative data on the tourism industry in the country (Remmert, 2022) and the study area in particular. Furthermore, domestic tourism development in the region has not been without its own challenges. One of the major risks facing tourism in the study area is the overdependence on international tourist arrivals (Lendelvo et al., 2022).

This has resulted in most of the tourism marketing being focused on international tourists, jeopardising the region's ability to fully develop its domestic tourism sector. Moreover, although domestic tourism has evolved in recent years, there has been little to no research done in the region to investigate factors influencing the development of domestic tourism. This study provides an attempt to fill this gap.

3. Research Results

3.1 Respondents Profile

According to Wangombe, Njoroge, and Agufana (2022), demographics play a crucial role in shaping how a destination is segmented, positioned, and branded in marketing strategies. These characteristics provide the motivation for both physical and immaterial variations in the way visitors think, feel and act (Lötter, Geldenhuys, and Potgieter, 2012). A short demographic profile of the respondents is illustrated in Table 1 and a short elaboration is provided thereafter.

Table 1. Demographic 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
	Millennial (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 visits	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

Variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
	Camping	32	8.00
	Second/holiday home	26	6.50
	Friends/Family house	86	21.50
	Other	12	3.00
Length 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

Source: Own Research

In summary, the surveyed domestic tourists visiting the Erongo region were mostly female. They were primarily from the millennial generation and had at least attained a diploma or degree. The results show that most of the surveyed tourists had visited the region five (5) times or more and had never been married. The results further indicate that the respondents in this study typically visited the region for leisure, vacation, or holiday purposes, stayed between two (2) and four (4) nights and used their own car to travel to the study area.

3.2 Factor Hindering Domestic Tourism Development

In this section, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the hindering factors statements. The descriptive results are grouped under the theme "hindering factors" and presented in Table 2. The factor analysis process produced a relatively refined and moderately correlated three-component model with eigenvalues greater than 1 and coefficients above 0.5. The model explained 53.753% of the total variance. The KMO of the modified four-component models was 0.813, while Bartlett's test of sphericity p-value < 0.0001 indicated that there were adequate correlations among variables to proceed. The three retained components are depicted in Table 2 and discussed in detail thereafter.

Table 2. Factor analysis: hindering factors

	FL	VE	Eigen	CR	AVE	WM
F1: Affordability and awareness issues	0.691	30.603%	4.284	0.82	0.479	4.200
Unemployment, poverty, and inequality	0.677					4.230
Limited awareness of domestic tourism	0.707					4.107
Poor marketing and promotion	0.736					4.190
Historical legacies	0.655					3.973
Namibia's current economic state	0.683					4.407
F2: Limited infrastructure	0.821	13.942%	1.951	0.86	0.676	3.047
Poor quality tourism services	0.812					2.803
Inadequate tourist infrastructure	0.870					3.007
Poor transport infrastructure	0.775					2.712
F3: Poor government policies	0.752	9.289%	1.289	0.80	0.578	3.580
Poorly developed policies	0.778					3.737
Lack of capacity at government level	0.875					3.513
Lack of cooperation between stakeholders	0.603					3.490

FL= Factor loading, VE= Variances explained, Eigen.= Eigenvalues, CR= Composite reliability, WM= Weighted Mean

Source: Own Research

Factor 1: Affordability and awareness issues

As this factor reflects on the effect of themes such as unemployment, poor marketing, historical legacies, and economic state on domestic tourism development, it was labelled “affordability and awareness issues.” The factor received the highest weighted mean value of 4.284 and is therefore the main hindering factor for domestic tourism development in the study area.

Factor 2: Limited infrastructure

The three items on the second identified factor are primarily statements dealing with the poor and/or inadequate state of infrastructure and tourism services. Therefore, it was labelled “limited infrastructure.” The three items in this factor have high loadings, ranging from .870 to .775, with a weighted loading score of .821. This indeed indicates a very high interrelationship between the items. This factor received a weighted mean value of 3.047, which is the lowest of the three identified factors.

Factor 3: Poor government policies

The three items in this factor also have high loadings, ranging from .875 to .603, which translates to a weighted loading score of 0.752. As this factor reflects themes related to poorly developed policies, lack of capacity at the government level, and lack of cooperation between stakeholders, it was labelled “poor government policies.” The factor received a weighted mean score of 3.580.

As shown in Table 2, the CR values indicated that all three factors have superior composite reliability, which is greater than the advanced phase value of 0.7 as established in Section 5.3.4 of this chapter. Furthermore, the AVE column ranges from 0.502 to 0.788. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items adequately converged to their respective latent constructs.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to compare the discovered hindering factors and demographic and trip characteristics. The significant relationships encountered between the hindering factors and demographic and trip characteristics are set out in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison between hindering factors and demographic, and trip characteristics

	Chi-Square (2)	Df.	P-value
F1: Affordability and awareness issues			
Age group	19.582	3	0.000
Marital Status	11.200	4	0.024
Number of visits	13.818	2	0.001
Purpose of visit	9.830	6	0.003
Length of stay	10.844	3	0.012
F2: Limited infrastructure			
Mode of transport	25.937	6	0.000
Sources of information	16.329	7	0.022

Source: Own Research

The results above indicate that there is a significant relationship between two of the three identified hindering factors and demographic and trip characteristics. This is substantiated by statistically significant differences in scores between these affordability and awareness issues and age, marital status, number of visits, purpose of visit, and length of stay. The encountered relationships are represented by P-values of 0.000, 0.024, 0.001, 0.003, and 0.012, respectively. While a comparison between limited infrastructure and mode of transport was represented by a P-value of 0.000, the difference in score between sources of information in relation to limited infrastructure was represented by a P-value of 0.022. The post hoc test results indicate that this factor was rated highly by married respondents, those who visited the study area 2–4 times, and those who spent 2–4 nights. These are statistically validated by a rank mean of 220.726, 211.581, and 211.00, respectively.

This section established the factors hindering the development of domestic tourism in the study area and the significant differences between these factors and the demographic and travel characteristics. With these understandings in mind, the segment below explores the factors that could enable the development of domestic tourism in the study area.

3.3 Enabling Factors Domestic Tourism Development

In order to generate a clearer description of these enabling factors, an EFA was performed on the 14 mentioned enabling constructs. The EFA produced a relatively refined and moderately correlated five-component model with

eigenvalues greater than 1 and coefficients above 0.5. The model explained 66.514% of the total variance. The KMO of the modified four-component models was 0.764, while Bartlett's test of sphericity p-value < 0.0001 indicated that there were adequate correlations among variables to proceed. The five retained components are depicted in Table 4 and discussed thereafter.

Table 4. Factor analysis: enabling factors.

	FL	VE	Eigen	CR	AVE	WM
F1: Affordable prices	0.761	30.773%	4.308	0.81	0.592	4.135
Attractive pricing	0.610					4.468
Discounted packages	0.797					4.165
Price bundling	0.878					3.772
F2: Collaboration amongst stakeholders	0.917	10.618%	1.486	0.91	0.840	3.999
Community involvement, benefit	0.922					3.998
Co-ordination between stakeholders	0.912					4.000
F3: Robust government polices	0.909	9.430%	1.320	0.90	0.909	3.999
Well-developed government policies	0.919					3.980
Government support	0.899					4.013
F4: Coordinated marketing efforts	0.673	8.175%	1.144	0.71	0.454	3.887
Promoting unique tourist attractions	0.696					4.053
Enhanced Self-regulation	0.656					3.703
Promotion, awareness, and marketing	0.676					3.905
F5: Enhanced tourism offerings	0.768	7.518%	1.052	0.81	0.593	4.261
Development of new tourism products	0.696					4.372
Better management of infrastructure	0.838					4.202
Improved safety and security	0.770					4.210

FL= Factor loading, VE= Variances explained, Eige.= Eigenvalues, CR= Composite reliability WM= Weighted Mean
Source: Own Research

Factor 1: Affordable prices

The five items in this factor have high loadings, ranging from.878 to.610 (.761 weighted loading score), which indicates a high interconnection of the items. As this factor reflects attractive pricing, discounted packages, and price bundling, it was labelled "affordable prices." The factor received a weighted mean value of 4.135.

Factor 2: Collaboration amongst stakeholders

The two components within this factor display substantial loadings of.922 and.912, resulting in a weighted loading score of.917. This suggests a strong correlation between the items. Since this factor relates to community involvement and coordination between stakeholders, it was labelled "collaboration amongst stakeholders." The factor received a weighted mean value of 3.999.

Factor 3: Robust government policies

The third identified enabling factor for domestic tourism development in the study area was labelled "robust government policies" because it relates to well-developed government policies and government support. The factor received a weighted mean score of 3.999. It is apparent from the results that there exists a pronounced positive correlation among all variables.

Factor 4: Coordinated marketing efforts

The fourth factor was labelled "coordinated marketing efforts" as it relates to promoting unique tourist attractions; enhanced self-regulation; and promotion, awareness, and marketing. The items loading in this factor range from.656 to.696 and received a weighted mean score of 3.887.

Factor 5: Enhanced tourism offerings

The three components in this factor display relatively elevated loadings, ranging from.770 to.696, which resulted in a weighted loading score of.768. As this factor reflects the development of new tourism products, better management of infrastructure, and improved safety and security, it was labelled "enhanced tourism offerings."

CR scores in Table 4 indicated that all five factors have superior composite reliability, which is greater than the advanced phase value of 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE column ranges from 0.454 to 0.909, which indicates an adequate convergence of all items to their respective latent constructs.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to compare the discovered enabling factors to demographic and trip characteristics. The significant relationships observed between the enabling factors and demographic and trip characteristics are set out in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison between enabling factors and demographic, and trip characteristics

	Chi-Square (2)	Df.	P-value
F1: Affordable prices			
Gender	6.476	1	0.010
Age	15.227	3	0.001
Level of education	11.980	3	0.017
Purpose of visit	20.129	6	0.002
F2: Collaboration amongst stakeholders			
Purpose of visit	34.594	6	0.000
Type of accommodation	16.277	7	0.022
F3: Robust government policies			
Gender	4.829	1	0.028
Purpose of visit	17.655	6	0.007
F4: Coordinated marketing efforts			
Marital Status	9.611	4	0.047
Purpose of visit	29.610	6	0.000
Type of accommodation	18.368	7	0.010
Sources of information	22.727	7	0.001
F5: Enhanced tourism offerings			
Purpose of visit	8.250	3	0.041

Source: Own Research

The results in Table 5 indicate that there is a significant relationship between affordable prices and demographic and trip characteristics, as both demographic and trip characteristic variables are significantly related to this factor. These are statistically supported by P-values of 0.010 for gender, 0.001 for age, 0.017 for level of education, and 0.002 for purpose of visit. A comparison between the purpose of the visit and collaboration amongst stakeholders was represented by a P-value of 0.000, while a comparison between the latter and the type of accommodation was represented by a P-value of 0.022. A Kruskal-Wallis H test further showed that there was a statistically significant difference in score between robust government policies in relation to gender and purpose of visit. The encountered relationships are represented by P-values of 0.020 and 0.007, respectively. A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in score between coordinated marketing efforts and marital status (P-values of 0.047), purpose of visit (0.000), type of accommodation (0.010), and source of information (0.001). The results also showed that there was a statistically significant difference in score between enhanced tourism offerings and age, represented by a P-value of 0.041.

The post hoc test results indicate that affordable prices are rated highly by females, those from the millennial age group, those with other levels of education, and those who travel for business purposes in comparison to other categories of the same variables. These are statistically substantiated by a rank mean of 212.386, 217.592, 2.79.500 and 238.868, respectively. The post hoc test results also indicate that statistically, male respondents (216.221) rated robust government policies higher than female respondents (190.235). The post hoc test results also indicate that coordinated marketing efforts were rated highly by widowed respondents, those who travel for business purposes, those who stay at lodges and those who use advertisements as a source of information in comparison to other categories of the same variables. The post hoc test results indicate that statistically, respondents from the Baby Boomers age group rated enhanced tourism offerings higher than those from the Generation Z age group.

6. Discussions

Affordability and awareness issues emerged as the main challenges to domestic tourism development in the study area. A closer look at the literature indicates that this finding should have been expected. Indeed, the unaffordability of tourism products for domestic tourists is regarded as the greatest challenge to domestic tourism

development in Namibia (Murima and Shereni, 2023). Another element in this factor, unemployment, was also noted to have affected Namibians level of participation in domestic tourism for many years (Ndlovu, Nyakunu, and Heath, 2011). Lendelvo et al. (2022) also noted that insufficient domestic tourism marketing and promotion was a hindrance to domestic tourism development in the study area.

According to this study, there is a lack of infrastructure in the study area that affects domestic tourism. The study by Leonidova (2017) also identified inadequate tourist infrastructure as one of the main factors impeding the growth of domestic tourism in Russia. While the effect of poor tourism offerings on domestic tourism development was also highlighted by Henama and Sifolo (2015).

This study also underscored poor government policies as a hindering factor in domestic tourism development in the study area. This finding was not a surprise, as lack of capacity at the government level, in terms of both the administrative and technical skill base, is a serious problem in many developing nations (Clayton, 2002). In the Namibian context, Ngatjiheue (2019) noted that inadequate government's policies, regulations, and limited knowledge of the tourism industry hamper the industry's growth. Similarly, Jänis (2014) identified a significant obstacle to Namibia's tourism development as a lack of cooperation between stakeholders.

On the other hand, affordable prices emerged as the main enabling factor. The finding aligns with similar suggestions made by Aina and Ezeudui (2021) and Chan (2021), who highlighted attractive pricing, discounted packages, and price bundling as critical to the development of domestic tourism in South Africa and Malaysia, respectively. Collaboration amongst stakeholders was also discovered as a possible enabling factor. This finding confirmed Graci's (2013) and Kavita and Saarinen's (2016) arguments that community involvement and collaboration between stakeholders in tourism are critical for domestic tourism development.

This study also reveals the importance of robust government policies for the development of domestic tourism in the study area. This finding was not unexpected since Slocum and Backman (2011) emphasised that the attainment of sustainable development, particularly in developing nations' tourism sectors, hinges on the presence of good governance. While government support was credited for domestic tourism growth in Serbia by Teodorović, Popesku, and Pavlović (2019).

Coordinated marketing efforts also emerged as an enabling factor for domestic tourism development in this study. This supports the findings of Osiako and Szente (2021) in Kenya, which highlighted all three elements under this factor as critical to the development of domestic tourism. The study also indicated that the enhanced tourism offerings will have a positive effect on domestic tourism development. This discovery substantiates the recommendations made by Tonda and Iglesias (2021), who stipulated that in order to achieve sustainable domestic tourism development, a more extensive, diversified offering is required. Consequently, it is pivotal for domestic tourism suppliers to design and develop customised products and packages that appeal to domestic tourists.

Conclusions and Further Research

The literature indicates that little attention is paid to domestic tourism and the factors influencing its development by both policymakers and academia alike in Namibia. Evidently, the array of policies and strategies portrayed in the literature of this study have been proven to change the trajectory of domestic tourism development and have made domestic tourism one of the sectors with the highest expenditure globally. From this study, affordability and awareness issues, limited infrastructure, and poor government policies emerged as the main constraining factors for domestic tourism development in the Erongo region. The study has also revealed that the country's colonial past has had a hindering effect on the development of domestic tourism due to issues such as leakage and overdependence on international tourists. The results show that a lack of coherent plans for domestic tourism development and capacity at the government level has negatively impacted the development of the sector. It emerged from the study that there is a lack of marketing of tourism products to domestic tourists.

The problem here is not the lack of tourism marketing but rather the fact that most of the marketing is done for and in international markets. Thus, it is important to address the disparity in the attention paid to international and domestic tourism (with bias towards the former) in order for the country to fully develop its domestic tourism sector. The study also highlighted affordable prices, collaboration amongst stakeholders, robust government policies, and coordinated marketing efforts as key determinants of domestic tourism development. It is believed that by addressing constricting factors and enhancing enabling factors, the region can be well on its way to attaining sustainable domestic tourism development.

This study only examined the Erongo region and used quantitative research methodology to survey 400 domestic visitors. The sample strategy employed was non-random, utilizing convenience and snowball sampling methods. Hence, it is important to carry out comparable investigations in other parts of Namibia to ascertain if the

factors influencing domestic tourism development are uniform or varied across other regions. Future study may also investigate alternate research designs and approaches to measure possible changes in these parameters over time.

Based on the findings of this study, it is pivotal for tourism suppliers to introduce a differential pricing strategy. Unemployment and the study area's economic status mean domestic tourists cannot afford tourism products and services, which are priced based on the international market. Therefore, having two pricing models, one for the international market and another for the domestic market (with the one for the latter being on the lower scale), is necessary for the development of domestic tourism. Such a strategy should be targeted at millennials, business travellers, female tourists, repeat visitors, and those who stays for longer than two nights.

Limited awareness was highlighted as one of the major challenges facing domestic tourism development in the study area. To avert this, domestic tourists need to know about tourism and the impacts of tourism in their daily environment. This calls for robust marketing and promotion campaigns of tourism products to domestic tourists. Making domestic tourists aware of tourism could help them become both contributors and advocates for domestic tourism development in the region. This will increase tourism consumption among domestic tourists, especially those who use advertisements as a source of information, business travellers, and those who stay at lodges.

There is a need to encourage collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders in the study area. Indeed, dynamic collaboration among stakeholders may help to promote sustainable tourism practices and ensure that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably. By promoting responsible tourism practices, the study area and other developing economies can ensure the long-term viability of domestic tourism and protect the environment and local communities.

It is also clear that there is a need to pay specific attention to domestic tourism development at the policy level. This study, therefore, recommends the development of a domestic tourism growth strategy that is centred around domestic tourism planning and development. The availability of such a strategy may lead to improved public and private sector partnerships, improved geographic spread of tourism, harmonious objectives of line-function institutions, and reduced reliance on international tourist arrivals in the study area.

Last but not least, poor tourism products were highlighted as one of the factors hindering domestic tourism development in the study area. Therefore, it is pivotal for tourism suppliers to design and develop customised products and packages in such a way that they appeal to domestic tourists. This will increase domestic tourism consumption, especially among the older generation (the Baby Boomers), who have time and money to spend.

Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Ebson Ngondo: Conceptualisation, investigation and writing – original draft.

Uwe P. Hermann: Conceptualisation, investigation and writing – original draft.

Dewald H Venter: Conceptualisation, investigation and writing – original draft.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Declaration of Use of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies

The authors declare that they have not used generative AI and AI-assisted technologies during the preparation of this work.

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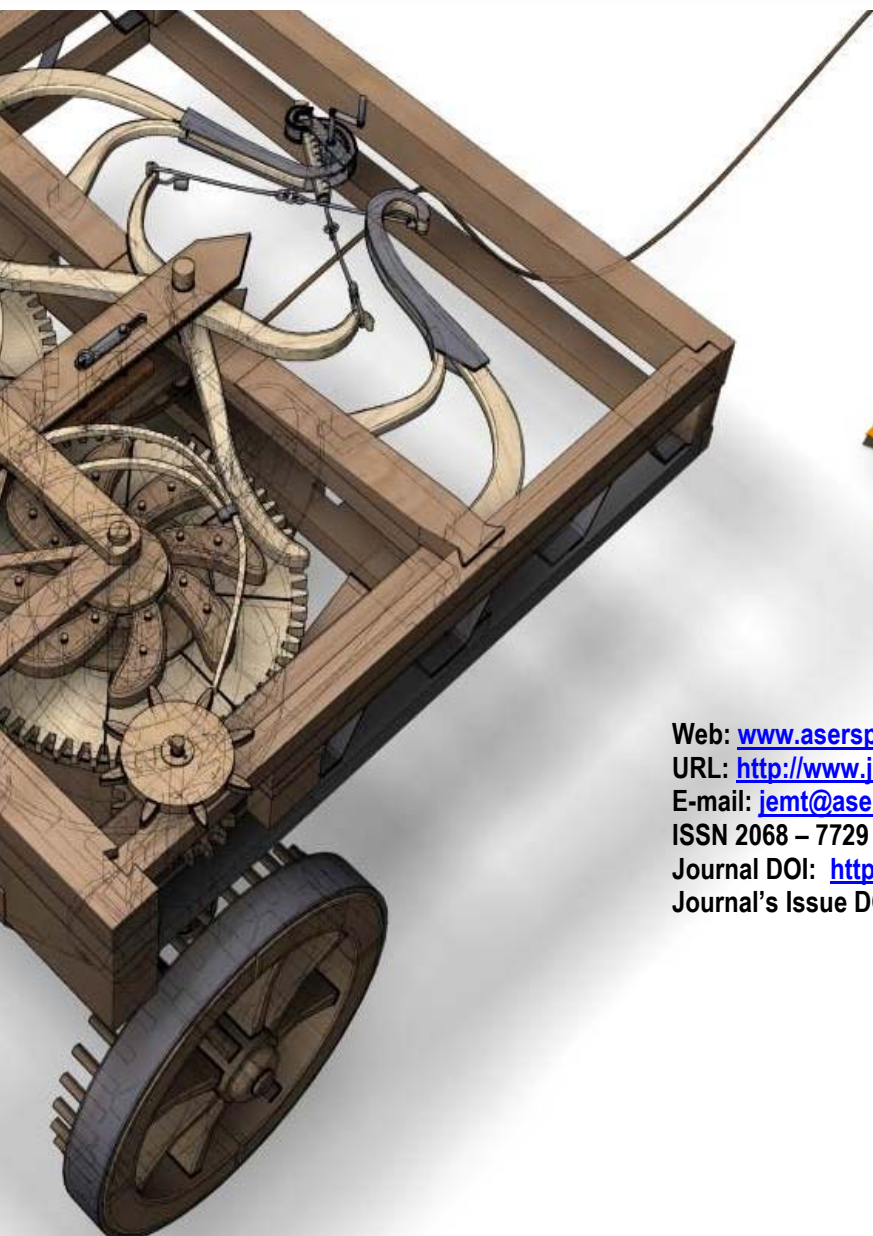
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