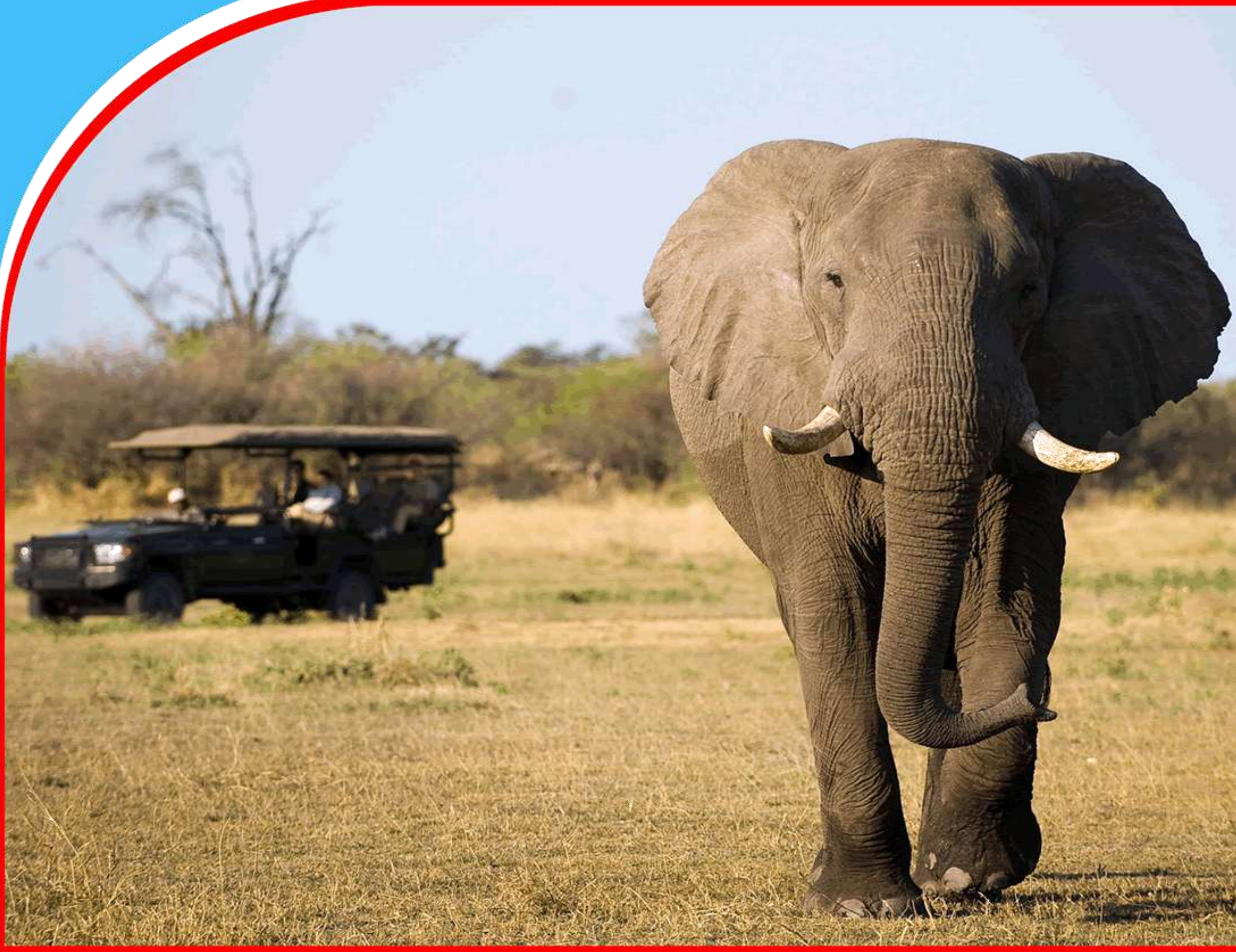
Journal of
Hospitality and Tourism
(JHT)



Analysis of Demographic and Travel Characteristics of Domestic Tourists Visiting Coast Region, Kenya

Lawrence Wang'ombe, Dr. Joseph Njoroge, and Dr. Peace Agufana

AJPO

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
ISSN 2789-7052 (online)
Vol.2, Issue 1, pp 69 - 85, 2022
www.ajpojournals.org

Analysis of Demographic and Travel Characteristics of Domestic Tourists Visiting Coast Region, Kenya

[1*]Lawrence Wang'ombe, [2]Dr. Joseph Njoroge, [3]Dr. Peace Agufana

[1]Post Graduate Student, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Murang'a University of Technology, Kenya

[2]Senior Lecturer, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Murang'a University of Technology, Kenya

[3]Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Murang'a University of Technology, Kenya

Corresponding Authors Email: kabuitulw@yahoo.com

Abstract

Purpose: With the increased tourism demand among domestic tourists in Kenya their travel needs for tourism products and services varies considerably due to their unique characteristics. The purpose of this study was to identify demographic and travel characteristics exhibited by domestic tourists in the Coast region of Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted explanatory research approach while cross-sectional survey design was used to collect quantitative data from domestic tourists' visiting Coast region, Kenya. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents while data was collected using self-administered structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and Chi-square techniques. Notably, 400 questionnaires were distributed of which 371 were successfully analyzed representing 73.3% return rate.

Findings: It was found out that both demographic and travel characteristics significantly influence the final travel choice and purchase decisions among domestic tourist in Kenya. Subsequently, form the analysis demographic and travel characteristics are pivotal in forming basis for market segmentation, positioning and branding initiatives in a destination. The findings indicated that duration of current visit is dependent on annual income (χ^2=23.055, p=0.027), number of times visited is dependent on age (χ^2=30.579, p=0.015), while travel arrangement is dependent on age (χ^2=9.986, p=0.041). The mode of transport depended on age (χ^2=52.645, p=0.012) and mode of transport is dependent on education (χ^2=44.734, p=0.006).

Recommendations: Based on the findings, it is imperative for destination managers to focus on: identification and prioritization of preferred local appeal; avail market information based on travel needs of domestic tourists, and; constantly carry out periodical market surveys in order to address market dynamics for increased travel propensity for sustainability of the industry.

Keywords: *Demographic characteristics, travel characteristics, domestic tourists*

Introduction

Globally, domestic tourism is the main driving force of travel and tourism sector in major economies, accounting for 73% in 2017 and 71.2% in 2018 (United Nations World Tourism Organization-UNWTO, 2020). An estimated 9 billion domestic tourist trips (overnight visitors) were recorded around the World in 2018, which is well over 50% in Asia and the Pacific. Worldwide, domestic tourism is over six times bigger than international tourism (1.4 billion international arrivals in 2018) measured in number of tourist trips (UNWTO, 2020).

Just as in the global scene, the tourism sector in Kenya has experienced impressive and sustained growth since 2015 reaching an all-time high of 2.05 million international tourist arrivals in 2019 (Government of Kenya-GOK, 2020). However, with the outbreak of Covid-19 occasioning travel restrictions and cancellation of flights worldwide, Kenya's travel and tourism industry has experienced challenges unknown in the recent history. As a result of travel restrictions and cancelation of flights there was a sharp decline of international tourists' arrival at 870,465 in 2021, as compared to 567,848 in 2020, and 2.05million in 2019 (GOK, 2020). The dismal performance is unpredictable and might continue in the long-run due to current unprecedented issues facing the international market.

As the country seeks ways of stabilizing the industry, there has been consensus that the recovery of Kenya's tourism during and post Covid 19 would be supported by the domestic market. The market segment has been pivotal to Kenya's tourism for some time now. For instance, between 2015 and 2018, domestic tourism accounted for more than 50% of the total bed occupancy (MoTW, 2021). Further, between the period of 2014 to 2018, the number of domestic tourists' bed-nights increased from 2,948,000 to 4,559,000 (MoTW, 2021). Similarly, the domestic market in 2021 recorded 1,089,554, 747,374 in 2020 and 1,675,063 visitors in 2019. Domestic bed nights grew by 101.3% between 2020 and 2021 while international bed nights grew by 0.05% (MoTW, 2021). These bed nights' recovery trends are an indication that the hospitality sector in Kenya has been supported by domestic travel in 2021 and this ought to continue if appropriate strategies are deployed. This is in line with the forecast given by UNWTO in September 2020 that recovery of destinations will be driven by domestic market and various testimonials from sector players attest to this (MoTW, 2021). Invariably, with the diverse attractions spread across the country, Kenya now has an opportunity to build on domestic tourism as the next frontier.

With all these evidences, it is clear that domestic tourism in Kenya has potential to grow exponentially. However, it is imperatively hard to develop the industry when the travel needs and experiences of this specific market are scantly understood in comparison with the international market. This implies that for the prerequisite tourist product and services to be developed, a thorough market survey ought to be carried out periodically due to its dynamics. This would become the basis of tailor making suitable products and services for this specific market thereby spurring demand. This is only possible when the intricate details of the market as expressed by demographic and travel characteristics is known. Further, it would also be the basis of segmenting the market and helping unlock the debate on how best to capture the needs of the domestic tourism market from an informed position.

An Overview of the Demographic and Travel Characteristics of Domestic Tourists

In order to understand the travel needs and experiences of domestic tourists visiting the kenyan coast demographic and travel characteristics were used as the basis for such. To operationalize demographic characteristics the study singled out the following items; Gender, marital status, personal income, age and level of education. Additionary, travel characteristics were represented by; travel frequency, purpose of visit, duration of visit, preferred mode of travel arrangement, mode(s) of transport, most recent visit, and source of travel information. Both demographic and travel characteristsics are pivotal in understanding the tourism market and also predicting travel behaviour patterns (Kara & Mkwizu, 2020). Demographic factors as described are applicable when providing a description of tourism market and in forecasting patterns of travel behaviour (Kara & Mkwizu, 2020). The travel behaviour of tourists is mainly influenced by socio-demographic attributes which comprises; age, gender, education, income, and occupation which significantly influences choice and behaviour of tourists (Otoo *et al*., 2016; Wei *et al.*, 2017).

Gender is one of the factors influencing demand for travel. Since travel, patterns vary between men and women based on their motivations and at the same time men engages more in tourism than women (Aziz *et al.*, 2018). The aspects of costs, commitments to family chores and time limit women's active participation in travel (Aziz *et al.*, 2018). As a result, women participate more in dining, shopping and cultural activities than outdoor activities. On the other hand, men are highly likely to engage in activities of outdoor adventure. Men engage in travel activities for business while women engage in travel activities to visit their friends, relatives and prefer short distance travel as compared to men. Ma *et al.*, (2018) discussed the importance of age in tourism decisions by noting that age positively influences desire for individuals to relax and explore the nature. Ma *et al.*, (2018), the likelihood that an individual will engage in wildlife tourism varies with age probability being higher among younger people and decreasing, as the individual gets older. Further, age determines the time available for leisure, travel freedom, disposable income, health, fitness and mobility of the tourist. As an individual gets older, preferences and needs changes (Kifworo, Okello & Mapelu, 2020).

Kifworo *et al.*, (2020) view education as a way that an individual's perspectives broadens, with experiences of different cultures and curiosity established. Education is a primary pointer of status and tastes in the society with individuals possessing the same education levels having the same tastes, preferences, values and perceptions. Therefore, tourists of the same education level share same destination and products attraction. Education widens horizons, increases awareness level and arouses travel desire thus increasing probability of tourism participation.

Income also determines tourism demand (Kihima, 2015). For instance, people of African origin view tourism as a costly activity that require discretionary income that remains after routine expenses are met. Notably, different levels of income tend to have different lifestyles, behaviors and values that affect their tourism participation (Melo, 2018). For example, participation in tourism is higher in income groups that are high and for professionals, a trend that signifies increase in disposable income, which increases tourism participation. Manono and Rotich (2013) demonstrated that park tourism highly depended on income. In contrast, it is acknowledged that income does not always influence travel (Gardiner, Grace, & King, 2014). The study demonstrated that despite a decrease in cost of domestic tourism in Australia, this did not translate into an increase in domestic tourism. This is an implication that other significant factors determine domestic tourism demand apart from income.

Kifworo *et al.,* (2020) discussed the influence of marital status on travel behaviour and choices of a destination. Individual's priorities, decision-making, disposable income and preferences differ on marital status. A young couple with young children has different preferences as compared to a childless and retired couple. Lin *et al.,* (2020) noted that, family obligations due to marriage are a limitation to tourism participation; single persons are more likely to spend any income that is disposable on themselves through tourism participation.

In conclusion, domestic tourism is considered a vital market in cushioning the tourism industry against unprecedented issues affecting the international market (MoTW, 2021). There is a dire need to develop domestic tourism market in Kenya to become an enduring foundation of demand for facilities and services (GOK, 2020; UNWTO, 2021). It is hard to sustainably develop domestic tourism market when it is scantly understood since little has been documented concerning such, thus the need to have a clear understanding of domestic tourists characteristics, which encompass demographic and trip attributes.

Overall, it is important to underscore the aspects of demographic and travel characteristics is imperative since it helps in understanding tourists' behaviour, and answering the questions, "why do domestic tourists travel and what are their travel experiences." In order to answer such questions, it calls for a deeper understanding of such a segment from a strategic point by incorporating a holistic approach in examining intricate details about the market as defined by the study constructs, hence the rationale of this study. The study adopted theory of travel decision-making (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981), who advocated that travel decisions are a function of social and psychological factors. The theory acknowledges that both internal and external factors influence decision of a potential traveler (Karl, 2018). Further, prospection and emotions are two crucial factors influencing travel decisions and the resultant future experiences (Karl et al., 2021). Essentially, the current study considered both demographic aspects and travel characteristics to operationalize the concept of travel decisions among domestic tourists.

In Kenya, the tourism industry has both product and market based issues with the latter being more pronounced (GOK, 2018). Marketer gathers information regarding the expectations of the target market and then destination uses such information to develop appropriate products (Matura, 2018). This implies that many domestic tourists have little information about the country's tourism resources, which does not coincide with Kenya's tourism potential. Lack of essential market information concerning tourists is largely associated with demographic and travel characteristics of specific travelers. When such essential information is inadequate it leads to reactive and erratic measures during tourism product development, marketing and promotional efforts, resulting into a marginal performance of the target market (Rahmawati, 2017). This study sought to examine demographic and travel characteristics of domestic tourists in Kenya since without appropriate information on the market it would be hard to sustainably develop and market Kenyan Coast. Conversely, the destination managers would be provided with essential information of domestic tourists based on their travel needs, behaviour and experiences. This would go a long way in forecasting domestic tourists travel and consumption patterns and at the same time offer basis for market segmentations, and branding initiatives. Thus, in order to understand the intricate details of demographic and travel characteristics various items were constituted as depicted in table 2 and 3. This formed the basis for formulation of the study's research hypothesis.

The study's hypothesis was:

H_0: There exist no relationship between demographic and travel characteristics of domestic tourists.

Methodology

Research design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design since it involves an in-depth explanation of a situation (Siedlecki, 2020). Further, on-site destination survey was adopted in attractions along Kenyan Coast, comprising North and South Coast since 42.1 % of tourists visit those sites (GOK, 2019). Simple random sampling technique was adopted while structured self-administered questionnaires were deployed to collect data from 400 respondents. The data was collected from October 2019 to March 2020. The questionnaires featured demographic characteristics such as; gender, age, marital status, income and level of education while travel characteristics featured; most recent visit, frequency of visit, purpose of visit, tourism activities, duration of visit, mode of travel arrangement, modes of transport, and source of information. Both descriptive (means and frequencies) and inferential analysis (chi-square tests) were used to analyze data.

Population of the Study

In order to enhance operationalization of the study variables the target population was domestic tourists' visiting the Kenyan Coast. The total number of tourists visiting diverse attractions in Kenyan Coast on average for the last five years is 502,980 as at 2018 (GOK, 2019). Thus, yearly the average number of domestic tourists is 211, 252. The total number of the frequented attractions and facilities in the Kenyan Coast are 12 (GOK, 2019).

Sample Size

In order to determine the number of domestic tourists the following formula was used:

Yamane (1967) formula $\ldots n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Thus, $n = \frac{211{,}252}{1+211{,}252(0.05)^2} = 399.24 \approx 400\ domestic\ tourists$

The distribution of the respondents was as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Determining the Specific Sample Size of Domestic Tourists

Key touristic attractions in South & North Coast, Kenya	Total number of tourists (thousands)						
	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**Total (2014-2018)**	**Actual sample size**
Haller's Park	116.2	115.4	121.1	117.9	165.8	636.4	**101**
Malindi Marine Park	28.9	28.8	31.5	31.6	29.1	149.9	**26**
Kisite Mpunguti Marine Park	29.7	25	34.4	38.4	50.3	177.8	**28**

Mombasa Marine Park	27.4	26.2	29.2	32.2	39.8	154.8	**24**
Watamu Marine Park	31.3	24.3	33.9	43.5	67.5	200.5	**32**
Fort Jesus	113.4	121.3	150.5	130.5	213.9	729.6	**116**
Gede Ruins	47.5	39.9	55.6	62.6	89.0	294.6	**46**
Jumba la Mtwana	5.7	4.3	7.3	7.3	9.8	34.4	**5**
Malindi Museums	21.0	14.7	31.8	22.1	37.5	127.1	**20**
Kilifi Mnarani	2.5	1.2	0.8	1.9	3.3	9.7	**2**
Total						**2,514.8**	**400**

Source: (Researcher, 2019).

Thus, 400 domestic tourists visiting various attractions along the Kenyan Coast were chosen proportionately for the study.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Information

In order to understand the intricate details of the respondents, demographic information was as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Information

Demographic information		**Count**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender of the respondents	Male	223	60.1%
	Female	148	39.9%
Respondents' marital status	Single	136	36.7%
	Married	211	56.9%
	Others (separated/divorced)	24	6.5%
Indicate your monthly personal income (Kshs.)	100, 000 and below	153	41.2%
	100, 001-200, 000	57	15.4%
	200, 001-300, 000	90	24.3%
	300, 001-400, 000	39	10.5%
	Above 400, 000	32	8.6%
Respondents' age	18-30 years	129	34.8%
	31 to 40 years	161	43.4%
	41 to 50 years	60	16.2%
	Above 50years	21	5.7%
Respondents' level of education	Primary school	5	1.3%
	Secondary school	26	7.0%
	College/technical institute	115	31.0%
	University	225	60.6%

Source: Research Data (2020)

Majority of the respondents were male at 60.1% (223) while female respondents were 39.9% (148), implying that more men engaged in tourism activities as compared to women among domestic tourists visiting Kenyan coast. The findings of the study agree with Tourism Research Institute domestic surveys, which noted that majority (approximately 60%) of the domestic tourists in Kenya are male (TRI, 2021). Further studies indicates that gender influences demand for tourism with men engaging more in tourism than women due to family commitments and time limits (Aziz *et al.,* 2018). Thus, the study implies that men were participating more in domestic tourism than women within the Kenyan Coast.

Out of the total respondents, 56.9% (211) were married, 36.7% (136) were single while 6.5% (24) were in other categories of marital status (separated/divorced). The findings implies that Kenyan coast is a popular family-oriented destination for domestic tourists. Recent studies, noted that 42.1% of domestic tourists prefer Kenyan coast due to the divergent touristic resources (KNBS, 2019). However, in contrast a previous noted that single persons are likely to engage in tourism activities since they have no strenuous family obligations in comparison with married couples (Lin *et al.*, 2020). In spite of such observations Kenyan coast continuous as a progressive and competitive destination due to the uniqueness of its touristic attractions.

Approximately 41.2% (153) of the respondents had a monthly income of Ksh. 100, 000 and below, 24.3% (90) had a monthly income of Ksh. 200, 001-300, 000, 15.4% (57) had a monthly income of between Ksh. 100, 001-200, 000, 10.5% (39) had a monthly income of between Ksh. 300, 001-400, 000 and 8.6% (32) had a monthly income exceeding Ksh. 400, 000. The findings that majority of the respondents had a monthly income level not surpassing Ksh. 100, 000 also agreed with a previous domestic surveys which indicated that most domestic tourists have a monthly income not exceeding Ksh. 80, 000 (TRI, 2021).

Strong domestic tourism is driven by a growing sizeable middle-class population, and increase in spending power among domestic consumers (WTTC, 2019). With over 50% of the global population now categorized as “middle class”, more and more people can afford to travel. People earning between Ksh.50, 000 and Ksh.99, 999 have been increasing from 2014 to 2017. Notably, the middle class in Kenya consists of people earning more than Ksh.50, 000 per month represented by 1,020,681 equivalent to 36.9% of the total employed population in the country (KNBS, 2020). This segment of the population forms a significant segment of potential domestic tourists in the country (MoTW, 2018).

The fact that majority of domestic tourists were those at the lower income bracket of a monthly income of Ksh. 100, 000 and below as per the study’s definition contrast previous study by Gardner *et al.,* (2014) who noted that income is not always a significant factor in tourism and that other factors were more significant in determining travel decisions. However, the need to promote domestic tourism even in times of economic downturn and during the aftermath of a crisis or pandemic such as Covid 19 is paramount since it “fills the void,” left by international tourists. This is because domestic tourists are more likely to be fully aware of the real situation than those outside the country (Beirman, 2016). Subsequently, massive campaigns creates awareness and educates the locals about importance of tourism and new features added to the tourism industry within their vicinity. This eventually creates a desire among the local to visit places with the most fascinating features (Beirman, 2016). Therefore, income level is crucial in the final purchase of tourism product and services since it is a major determinant of tourism demand and the subsequent consumption patterns in a given destination.

In regard to age, 43.4% (161) of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years, 34.8% (129) were between 18 to 30 years, 16.2% (60) were aged between 41 to 50 years, and 5.7% (21) were aged 50 years and above. In summary, the findings denotes that respondents aged between 18-40 years, (78.2%) are the ideal group visiting Kenyan coast. Such a group consist of youthful travellers' majority of them being in the category of Dual income No kids (DiNk). Similarly, findings of the study also agree with TRI (2021) that majority of the domestic tourists in Kenya are those aged between 26-35 years, followed by 36-50 years forming a significant proportion of the domestic tourism market. The results, indicates a potential of a vibrant youth market which is more adventurous forming a lucrative niche market in Kenya.

This is a robust market segment and 'experiential' in nature when it comes to consumption of tourism products and services since it is psychocentric hence more adventurous. The findings also agreed with Ma *et al.,* (2018) who noted that age influences individuals' tourism desires with a high likelihood of the young engaging in wildlife tourism than the older ones. Nature based and Wildlife tourism forms a major component of the sampled respondents appeal. Further, the youth market in Kenya is considered as one of the largest segments of tourism, having potential for future growth since it represents a significant market in terms of size and growth rate (Njagi, 2017). Young tourists are often trendsetters who establish and build the attractiveness of tourist destinations (Njagi, 2017). Thus, the youth market is significant in supporting growth and development of domestic tourism in Kenya.

Majority of the respondents, 60.6% (225) had University education, 31.0% (115) had College education and 7.0% (26) had secondary school education while 1.3% (5) had primary school education. This implies that education plays a pivotal role in enhancing tourism demand since it is a basis of creating awareness and increasing knowledge concerning existing tourism products and services on offer (Kihima, 2015). Previous study indicated that majority of domestic tourists (81%), visiting Nairobi national park had College or University level of education (Mutinda, 2012). This perhaps explains the notion that people who are educated are more liberal due to high level of exposure and awareness, hence a prime consumer of existing tourists' products and services.

In conclusion, age, income and education were important predictors of a person's desire to travel (Jensen, 2011). He continued to assert that, travellers with higher educational background and more disposable income were more likely to travel away from their native home in search for relaxation, seeking knowledge and novelty were more important push motives among travelers with a higher educational level. It is imperative to understand the demographic factors of tourists in describing the characteristics of the tourism market and forecasting tourism consumption patterns (Kara & Mkwizu, 2020). Thus, demographic factors are significant in forming basis for market segmentation, positioning and branding initiatives in a destination.

Travel Characteristics

In order to understand the intricate details of the respondents, travel characteristic was as stipulated in table 3.

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
ISSN 2789-7052 (online)
Vol.2, Issue 1, pp 69 - 85, 2022

Table 3: Travel Characteristics of the Respondents

Travel information		Count	Percentage (%)
Specify your most recent visit to Kenyan coast	Less than one year ago	234	63.1%
	Two years ago	63	17.0%
	Three years ago	21	5.7%
	More than three years ago	53	14.3%
Overall, how many times have you visited the Kenyan coast based on your most recent visit?	Once	51	13.7%
	Twice	56	15.1%
	Thrice	57	15.4%
	Four times	36	9.7%
	Five times and above	171	46.1%
Indicate by ticking appropriately the purpose of your current visit to the Kenyan Coast.	Holiday/leisure	282	76.0%
	Visiting friends and relatives	53	14.3%
	Business purposes	17	4.6%
	Job related assignments	19	5.1%
Specify whether you have previously visited Kenyan coast for tourism related activities.	Yes	307	82.7%
	No	64	17.3%
Specify the duration of the current visit to the Kenyan Coast	A day trip	25	6.7%
	Two days	33	8.9%
	Three days	88	23.7%
	Four and above days	225	60.6%
Specify the preferred mode of travel arrangement	Free-Independent Travel (FIT)	296	79.8%
	Package tours	75	20.2%
Indicate the mode(s) of transport used during this visit	Air	43	11.6%
	Private car	117	31.5%
	Train –SGR	64	17.3%
	Public bus	110	29.6%
	KWS bus	4	1.1%
	Motorcycle	8	2.2%
	Taxi	14	3.8%
	Bicycle	2	0.5%
	Others	9	2.4%
Specify how you obtain information for your travel/trip	Internet	146	39.4%
	TV/Radio	7	1.9%
	Social Media platforms	61	16.4%
	Friends or relatives	109	29.4%
	Travel/Tour agencies	28	7.5%
	Travel guide/operators	10	2.7%
	Brochure/Newspaper/Magazines	4	1.1%
	Others	6	1.6%

Source: Research Data (2020)

Findings from table 2 indicates, 63.1% (234) had visited the Kenyan coast less than one year ago based on the time of data collection. 46.1% (171) had visited for five times and above while only 13.7% (51) had just visited once. Overall, the findings shows that 82.7% (307) of the respondents had previously visited the Kenyan coast as domestic tourists while 17.3% (64) had not previously visited the Kenyan coast.

The main reason for the current visit was holiday or leisure as disclosed by 76.0% (282), followed by visiting friends and relatives 14.3% (53), business purposes 4.6% (17), and job related assignments 5.1% (19). This main reason for travel being leisure also concurs with reasons cited by international tourists at 73.9% (KNBS, 2019). From previous studies, domestic tourism has shifted from sightseeing destinations to natural landscapes, national parks and games reserve to newly developed leisure areas. Domestic tourists tend to be psychocentric as evidenced by their search for symbols of home like food and drinks rather than being adventurous (Nzioka, Kivuva, Kihima and 2014). From these findings, it is important to note that other forms of leisure are emerging such as; sports tourism, eco-tourism, recreation and educational tourism. All these emerging leisure forms could be harnessed to expand the domestic tourists' product range available in Kenya.

Most domestic tourists preferred Free-Independent Travel (FIT) mode at 79.8% (296) while group tour/package recorded 20.2% (75). From these findings, it is evident that majority of domestic tourists preferred free independent travel as compared to package tours. This is a common approach among domestic tourists who prefer to visit destinations as individuals or with immediate family members or friends unlike international travelers who often prefer group tours. The difference is explained by the nature of the market segment, for instance majority of the domestic tourists are familiar with the local attractions unlike the international tourists hence, the latter would prefer travelling in groups and cut down the holiday costs. However, in terms of associations, domestic tourists tend to be socially oriented rather than outdoor activity based, desiring experiences in a group.

In terms of length of stay, 60.6% (225) of the respondents were in the category of four days and above, while 6.7% (25) had a one-day stay. Since on average the length of stay among domestic tourists in Kenyan coast was above two days, perhaps this is a pointer of a growing preference for short-holiday breaks mostly taken over the weekend or during off days or annual leave from ones occupation. Such propositions are ideal platform for tour operators and other holiday organizers to tailor make holiday packages suitable for such local clientele based their travel needs and expectations.

When compared with the international tourists whose average number of stay is usually 9-11 days this is an indication that domestic market is unique with diverse travel needs and expectations coupled with varying experiences (World Bank report, 2010). However, this may also be an indicator toward coming up with strategies to address such scenarios for instance, day visits accounts for 6.7% implying excursions are less exploited yet this segment is capable of visiting diverse attractions as excursionists.

In regard to mode of transport, 31.5% (117) of the respondents used private cars; 29.6% (110) used public bus to travel from their place of residence. 17.3% (64) used the newly constructed Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) train, which has played a significant role in enhancing accessibility since its inauguration in 2017. The SGR has continued to transform travel between Mombasa and

Nairobi city counties making it more accessible than before since it currently takes approximately 4.5 hours in comparison with public transport buses, which often takes about 10 hours. The findings also noted that Nairobi as the capital city of Kenya accounts for 28.3% of domestic tourists visiting Kenyan coast as per the study responses. Domestic tourism has been encouraged by convenient and cost friendly transport options such as the SGR and chartered travel services through road and air (MoTW, 2018). The aspect of infusing, SGR within the tourism system in Kenya cannot be ignored and it is expected to transform tourists flow due to ease in accessing specific destinations within these cities.

Overall, accessibility to a destination is an integral element of tourism product since tourism and transportation are inextricably linked. As global travel and tourism increases, additional demands on the transportation sectors will continue (Goeldner, 2012). The private automobile dominates for shorter trips and is the most popular means of travel for most domestic journeys. Therefore, it implies that accessibility to destination is a core element of tourism product, other alternate cheaper means of transport such as low-cost carriers. A destination may be popular but similarly its accessibility should equally be good. Therefore, the aspect of infusing more transport alternative options in the industry is imperative.

Internet was the main source of information for travel as disclosed by 39.4% (146) of the respondents followed by friends and relatives at 29.4% (109) while travel agencies, tour operators' and brochures/newspaper were relative sources at 7.5% (28), 2.7% (10), and 1.1% (4) respectively. Overall, internet search engines and social media ranked as the main sources of information at 55.8% (207). This phenomenon is well explained by the type of market domiciled by the youth (18-40 years at 78.2%). From these results, it is clear that internet continuously account for the main source of information among domestic tourists. Additionally, friends and relatives are integral source of information especially through referrals and social media integration. The findings are in agreement with KNBS (2019) that noted the significance role played by the emerging information and communication technology trends and the resultant increase in internet usage because of enhanced visibility and online activism.

Generation Y and Generation Z are in a homogeneous group. They are the creators and early adopters of new trends, used to new technologies, optimistic, non-linear thinkers, innovative in problem solving (Dwyer et al., 2009). They tend to share their holiday experience on social media in real time, while they write reviews with a time lag. They are addicted to the internet and mobile devices in all stages of traveling, i.e. in information browsing, booking, communicating and content sharing (photographs and videos) on social media during and after their journeys (Starčević & Konjikušić, 2018). They rely on diverse travel apps such as TripAdvisor™, Yelp™, Expedia™, Google Maps™, and Hotels.com.™ Millennials have caused the greatest shift in tourist marketing, because they grew up with digital technologies, which transformed the specificities of demand and supply on tourist market (Bu, et al., 2021).

With increased internet usage, marketing of tourist products has also changed due to digital marketing growth. There are also innovations due to internet usage such as tourist destinations aggressively marketing themselves as holiday sites during off-peak seasons (Oxford Business Group, 2017). Tourists have been posting online ratings and online reviews to narrate, praise, criticize or refer their travel experiences on the internet (Oxford Business Group, 2017). Overall, results cements the popularity of the region as a popular tourists' hub, which resonates with a

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
ISSN 2789-7052 (online)
Vol.2, Issue 1, pp 69 - 85, 2022

common phrase *"Mombasa raha"* (Mombasa, the place of enjoyment). This makes the Kenyan coast synonymous with tourism activities strongly appealing to the domestic market. Thus, the skewness of tourism activities in Kenya is mainly in the Kenyan coast. These results asserts findings by Mutinda (2012) who noted that the most popular coastal touristic circuit is almost exclusively centred on two geographical areas; the south coast beaches and a handful of game reserves or national parks. Further, he noted that coastal circuit records a repeat visit rate of 81.48%.

This implies that Kenyan Coast is a popular destination making it a preferred choice among domestic tourists, since it is idyllic and historically interesting. The region's popularity is due to its image as a haven of unspoilt white beaches and azure seas, where calm waters and well-preserved coral reefs invite underwater exploration (GOK, 2020). The coast is host to a wide range of resorts capitalizing on the rich coral reefs and beautiful scenery. Such uniqueness positions Kenyan Coast as an ideal destination for both first time visitors and repeat visitors.

Chi-Square statistical test of demographic versus travel characteristics

In order to test the relationship between demographic and travel characteristics chi square test was run as summarized in Table 4:

Table 4: Chi-Square statistical test of demographic versus travel characteristics

Variables	Chi-Square-X^2	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Gender*Most Recent Visit to the Kenyan Coast	5.110	3	.164
Gender*Number of times visited the Kenyan Coast	2.905	4	.574
Gender*Previously Visited Kenyan Coast	0.185	1	.667
Gender*Duration of the current visit	3.166	3	.367
Gender*Whether visiting alone	.521	1	.470
Gender*Preferred mode of travel arrangement	.081	1	.775
Gender*Mode of Transport	5.464	8	.707
Marital status*Most recent visit	1.305	6	.971
Marital status*Number of times visited	11.344	8	.183
Marital status*Previously visited Kenyan Coast	.523	2	.770
Marital status*Duration of current visit	3.388	6	.759
Marital status*whether visiting alone	2.968	2	.227
Marital status*preferred mode of travel	2.383	2	.304
Marital status*Mode of transport	25.013	16	.070
Annual income*Most recent visit	14.589	12	.265
Annual income*Number of times visited	23.845	16	.093
Annual income*Previously visited	3.795[a]	4	.434
Annual income*Duration of current visit	23.055	12	.027**
Annual income*Whether visiting alone	4.191[a]	4	.381
Annual income*Preferred mode of travel arrangement	6.005[a]	4	.199
Annual income*Mode of transport	30.985	32	.518
Age*Most recent visit	10.930	12	.535
Age*Number of times visited	30.579	16	.015**
Age*Whether previously visited	2.740	4	.602

Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
ISSN 2789-7052 (online)
Vol.2, Issue 1, pp 69 - 85, 2022

Age*Duration of the current visit	11.558	12	.482
Age*Whether visiting alone	9.986	4	.041**
Age*Preferred mode of travel arrangement	6.450	4	.168
Age*Mode of transport	52.645	32	.012**
Education*Most Recent visit	14.931	9	.093
Education*Number of times visited	11.793	12	.462
Education*Whether previously visited	3.734	3	.292
Education*Duration of the current visit	8.040	9	.530
Education*Whether visiting alone	7.119	3	.068
Education*Preferred mode of travel arrangement	2.753	3	.431
Education*Mode of transport	44.734	24	.006**
** Significant at p=0.05			

Source: Research Data (2020)

**Significant at 0.05

The domestic tourists travel characteristics were profiled against demographic characteristics. This was achieved through the use of Chi-Square (χ^2) statistics test of independence. The findings indicated that duration of current visit is dependent on annual income (χ^2=23.055, p=0.027), number of times visited is dependent on age (χ^2=30.579, p=0.015), while whether the domestic tourist visited alone is dependent on age (χ^2=9.986, p=0.041). The mode of transport depended on age (χ^2=52.645, p=0.012) and mode of transport is dependent on education (χ^2=44.734, p=0.006). It was evident that demographic and travel characteristics are key determinant influencing travel decisions among domestic tourists in Kenya. The Chi-Square tested whether the two categorical variables were independent and at the same time testing the null hypothesis:

H_0: There exist no relationship between travel and demographic characteristics of domestic tourists.

The Chi-Square (χ^2) statistics indicated a p-value=0.05 which is significant, hence rejecting the null hypothesis. It can be concluded that there were significant relationship between travel and demographic characteristics of domestic tourists in Kenya. From these findings, it is evident that the decision-making process and choices of destination by tourists is influenced by a number of factors. This means that tourists flow to a particular destination is pegged on a number of determinants since destination attractiveness alone cannot influence the travel decision process. Similarly, from the findings it was noted that travel and demographic characteristics are crucial determinants affecting travel choices, decision-making process, and eventually travel propensity of domestic tourists to the Kenyan coast. From these results, it is clear that demographic characteristics as expressed by gender, marital status, age, income, and level of education are all significant in determining travel decision of domestic tourists. These findings were supported by a previous studies such as (Jessen, 2011; Ndivo, 2012; USAID, 2013; Kihima, 2015; Beirmin, 2016; Njagi, 2017; Aziz, et al., 2018; KNBS, 2019; WTTC, 2019; KNBS, 2020; Lin et al., 2020; Mkwizu, 2020; MoTW, 2021).

On the other hand, travel characteristics, which largely comprises tourist profile, are also crucial in the travel decision and choice of destination of tourists. From these findings, it is clear that travel characteristics as expressed by travel frequency, purpose of visit, duration of visit, mode of travel arrangement, mode of transport, source of information are all significant in determining travel decisions of domestic tourists. These findings were supported by previous studies such as (Goeldner, 2012; Mutinda, 2012; Nzioka, et al., 2014; Oxford Business Group, 2017; Mellinas & Reino, 2018; Starčević & Konjikušić, 2018; KNBS, 2019; GOK, 2020).

Conclusions

From the study finding, it was concluded that Kenya coast is a popular destination among domestic tourists and quite appealing for all ages but more pronounced among the youth. It is a popular getaway among family members due to its unique exhibited exclusively in this destination. Moreover, a strong relationship between travel and demographic characteristics was exhibited. Thus, it was concluded that demographic and travel characteristics are key determinant influencing travel decisions among domestic tourists in Kenya since the null hypothesis results indicates significant relationship between the two variables.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings the researcher recommends:

i. Since both market and product information is crucial in the final decision process, tourism service providers should participate in the formulation and dissemination of crucial information pertaining tourism products and services on offer to potential tourists.
ii. Destination managers should integrate cultural tourism along other popular forms of tourism in the Kenyan Coast in order to continually offer innovative products for exceptional tourist experiences.
iii. A comparable research studies be carried out in other popular destination areas visited by domestic tourists like; Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu and Nanyuki to form a wide array of opinion and generalization of the domestic market segment.
iv. It is evident that the Kenyan youth are the majority segment consuming tourism products and service at the Kenyan Coast. Thus, due to the ever growing youth market there is need to engage more on digital marketing and also deploy technology during product development and marketing initiatives.
v. There is need to focus on the identification and prioritization of preferred local destination and attractions for the domestic market in order to increase travel propensity for sustainability of the tourism industry in Kenya even during unprecedented times.

References

Aziz, Y. A., Hussin, S. R., Nezakati, H., Yusof, R. N. R., & Hashim, H. (2018). The effect of socio-demographic variables and travel characteristics on motivation of Muslim family tourists in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*.

Beirman, D. (2016). Tourism risk, crisis and recovery management guide (for tour wholesalers).

Bu, Y., Parkinson, J., & Thaichon, P. (2021). Digital content marketing as a catalyst for e-WOM in food tourism. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, *29*(2), 142-154.

Dwyer, L., Edwards, D., Mistilis, N., Roman, C., & Scott, N. (2009). Destination and enterprise management for a tourism future. *Tourism management*, *30*(1), 63-74.

Gardiner, S., Grace, D., & King, C. (2014). The generation effect: The future of domestic tourism in Australia. *Journal of travel research*, *53*(6), 705-720.

Goeldner, C., & Ritchie, B. (2012). Tourism: Practices, principles, philosophies. *New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc*.

Government of Kenya (2018). Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. *Economic Survey*. Nairobi, Kenya.

Government of Kenya (2019). Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. *Economic Survey*. Nairobi, Kenya.

Government of Kenya (2020). Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. *Economic Survey*. Nairobi, Kenya.

Government of Kenya (2021). Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. *Economic Survey*. Nairobi, Kenya.

Guan, J. (2012). The attractiveness of local cuisine and its influence on Chinese domestic tourists' perceptions of destinations.

Jensen, J. M. (2011, November). The relationships between socio-demographic variables, travel motivations and subsequent choice of vacation. In *2nd International Conference on Economics, Business and Management* (Vol. 22, pp. 37-44).

Kara, N. S., & Mkwizu, K. H. (2020). Demographic factors and travel motivation among leisure tourists in Tanzania. *International Hospitality Review*.

Karl, M. (2018). Risk and uncertainty in travel decision-making: Tourist and destination perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, *57*(1), 129-146.

Karl, M., Kock, F., Ritchie, B. W., & Gauss, J. (2021). Affective forecasting and travel decision-making: An investigation in times of a pandemic. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *87*, 103139.

Kifworo, C., Okello, M., & Mapelu, I. (2020). Demographic Profiling and Domestic Tourism Participation Behavior in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Kihima, B. (2015). Domestic tourism in Kenya: Trends, Initiatives and practices. *Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est/The East African Review*, (50), 22-39.

Lin, V. S., Qin, Y., Li, G., & Wu, J. (2020). Determinants of Chinese households' tourism consumption: Evidence from China Family Panel Studies. *International Journal of Tourism Research*.

Ma, J., Zhang, J., Li, L., Zeng, Z., Sun, J., Zhou, Q. B., & Zhang, Y. (2018). Study on livelihood assets-based spatial differentiation of the income of natural tourism communities. *Sustainability*, *10*(2), 353.

Matura, P. (2018). Digital Marketing Mix Strategies in the Tourism Industry in Zimbabwe: A Masvingo Tourism Destination Perspective. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research (IJEMR)*, *8*(6), 211-219.

Manono, G., & Rotich, D. (2013). Seasonality effects on trends of domestic and international tourism: a case of Nairobi National Park, Kenya. *Journal of Natural Sciences Research*, *3*(1), 131-139.

Mayo, E. J., & Jarvis, L. P. (1981). *The psychology of leisure travel. Effective marketing and selling of travel services*. CBI Publishing Company, Inc.

Melo, F. V. S., & de Farias, S. A. (2018). Sustainability communication and its effect in consumer intention to visit a tourist destination. *Tourism & Management Studies*, *14*(2), 36-44.

Ministry of Tourism & Wildlife (MoTW). (2018). *Kenya Tourism Agenda 2018-2022.* Nairobi: Government of Kenya.

MoTW. (2018). *Tourism Sector Performance Report 2017.* Nairobi: Tourism Research Institute.

MoTW. (2021). *Domestic Tourism Recovery Strategies for Kenya.* Nairobi: Kenya.

MoTW. (2021). *Tourism Sector Performance Report 2020.* Nairobi: Tourism Research Institute.

Mutinda, R., & Mayaka, M. (2012). Application of destination choice model: Factors influencing domestic tourists' destination choice among residents of Nairobi, Kenya. *Tourism Management*, *33*(6), 1593-1597.

Njagi, C. W., Ndivo, R. M., & Manyara, G. (2017). Understanding the travel motivation among youth travelers in Kenya: the 'push' and 'pull' paradigm. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, Volume 6 (1).*

Nzioka, A. M., Kivuva, A. K., & Kihima, B. O. (2014). Selecting non-classified hotels in Kenya: what really matters for business guests?

Otoo, F. E., Agyeiwaah, E., Dayour, F., & Wireko-Gyebi, S. (2016). Volunteer tourists' length of stay in Ghana: Influence of socio-demographic and trip attributes. *Tourism Planning & Development*, *13*(4), 409-426.

Oxford Business Group. (2017). Kenya sees more domestic Tourism from a Growing Middle Class. Oxford Business Group: Retrieved from http://oxfordbusinessgroup.com.

Rahmawati, P. I. (2017). *Linking Corporate Social Responsibility, Tourism and Climate Change to Build Tourism Community Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in Bali* (Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University).

Siedlecki, S. L. (2020). Understanding descriptive research designs and methods. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, *34*(1), 8-12.

Starcevic, S., & Konjikušić, S. (2018). Why millennials as digital travelers transformed marketing strategy in tourism industry. University of Kragujevac, 221-24.

Tourism Research Institute. (2021). *The Kenya Domestic Tourism Survey 2021*. Nairobi, Kenya.

UNWTO. (2020). *Supporting Jobs and Economies through Travel & Tourism: A Call for Action to Mitigate the Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 AND Accelerate Recovery.* Madrid, Spain: UNWTO.

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2021): *Tourism reports.* Madrid. Spain.

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). (2019). *Domestic Tourism: Importance and Economic Impact.* London. WTTC.