The marketing profile - leisure travel motivation nexus: A mediation taxonomy of the perceived safety of domestic tourism in the era of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: Considering the COVID-19 outbreak as the first post-digital era pandemic, the influence of tourism marketing on the travel motivation of the contemporary tourist may invariably be susceptible to the crisis-induced subjective safety perceptions of tourists. A discernible gap exists in empirical evidence of the paradigm shift in tourist behaviour due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study explores the influence of South Africa's marketing profile on the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists as mediated by the perceived safety of travel and tourism activities during the pandemic.

Design/methodology/approach: A cross-sectional deductive study was conducted. Data were generated via a novel self-administered online survey conducted by iFeedback. Data from the final valid sample of 427 domestic tourists were analysed primarily utilising exploratory and confirmatory factor, as well as mediation analyses.

Findings: The empirical evidence extends the behavioural economic theory within tourism marketing by establishing a positive partial mediating effect of safety perceptions in the domestic destination marketing-travel motives nexus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings also corroborate the value of information symmetry via various marketing and non-marketing media in mitigating risk perceptions and promoting the safety of travel and tourism activities in South Africa.

Recommendations/value: Key recommendations emanating from the study include maximising marketing spending on an integrated, multi-channel marketing strategy - prioritising mass crisis communications and recovery-oriented marketing while promoting a tourism value proposition that instils trust and confidence in the tourist that domestic travel and tourism activity is safe. To promote domestic tourism, it is also recommended

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DHET accredited
ISSN 1815-7440

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that tourism practitioners develop bespoke domestic tourism products that innovate contact services, such as booking and check-in procedures, to adhere to contemporary health and safety protocols beyond the era of COVID-19.

Managerial implications: The study's findings have significant managerial implications for tourism marketing. First, there is a need to repair or re-imagine the image of South Africa as a domestic tourism destination. Second, there is an urgent need to socially re-engineer tourist behaviour via social marketing-oriented crisis and post-crisis communications. These managerial interventions will mitigate the perceived risk associated with domestic travel and tourism and safeguard tourists from the actual health-related risk.

Keywords

COVID-19; Domestic tourism; Parallel mediation; Perceive safety; Travel motives

1. INTRODUCTION

Various health-related crises have preceded contemporary periods of significant tourism decline. The recent history suggests that health-related crises that have had the gravity to affect tourism have become more pronounced in terms of their frequency and severity, spanning from the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak in the United Kingdom to the SARS (in 2003), H1N1 (in 2009) to the Ebola outbreak of 2014 (Gobinda & Swati, 2021; Karabulut *et al*., 2021; Mayer *et al*., 2021). Crisis events such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic cause major interruptions throughout the global tourism value chain (Meyer *et al*., 2022). Consequently, such pervasive disruptions stimulate tourists' risk perceptions, anxiety, uncertainty, and fear, leading to decisional and behavioural deviations that may significantly decline tourism demand and 'tourism phobia' (Gajic *et al*., 2021; Nazneen *et al*., 2021). Domestic tourism is promoted to buoy leisure tourism demand as a stopgap to constrain international tourism demand (Matiza & Kruger, 2022). While some empirical evidence supports the pervasiveness of ethnocentrism as a predominant antecedent for domestic tourism, crisis events prompt an inevitable inward focus on the marketing and promotion of domestic leisure tourism (Kock *et al.,* 2019a; Mizrachi & Fuchs, 2016).

Even with strong travel motivations, crises may inhibit the desire and demand for tourism (Gobinda & Swati, 2021). Moratoriums and non-pharmaceutical interventions have compounded the multi-dimensional nature and pervasiveness of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the spectrum of the tourism value-chain; hence constraining tourism demand (Hall *et al*., 2020; Sigala, 2020). To this end, Sigala (2020:312) cautions that "[…] because of the interlinked socio-cultural, economic, psychological, and political impacts of COVID-19 of this magnitude, unforeseen trajectories instead of historical trends are expected, and the

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predictive power of 'old' explanatory models may not work." As the first post-digital era pandemic, academic inquiry into the role of destination marketing in tourist behaviour during a global crisis is still unfolding – to the extent that it is still relatively unclear whether the pervasive media exposure informs tourists or rather has a manipulative effect on tourist decision-making (Bhati *et al*., 2021; Liu-Lastres *et al*., 2019).

Health-related risk is a significant safety and security issue in tourism (Liu-Lastres *et al*., 2019). While the extent of the literature on the health-related safety of tourists in the African context has primarily revolved around HIV/AIDS (Hall *et al*., 2020) and Ebola (Novelli *et al*., 2018) infection risk, pre-pandemic academic inquiry is from a predominantly international tourist perspective. Furthermore, an established symbiotic relationship between tourism and safety buoys tourist safety as a critical antecedent to tourist behaviour and the recent tourism experience, respectively (Zou & Meng, 2020; Wang *et al*., 2019). What remains unclear is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on destination marketing, influencing the travel motives of domestic tourists within the context of potential safety concerns arising from the ongoing global crisis. Understandably, the intermittent nature of health-related crises has resulted in a limited and ad hoc academic inquiry into the impact of such crises on tourism and tourist behaviour (Novelli *et al*., 2018). This limitation extends to the effects of proactive crisis mitigating strategies and their influence on tourists' travel motivations. To the best of the author's knowledge, the present study is one of the first to model the intervening influence of the COVID-19 pandemic-induced safety perceptions associated with domestic leisure travel and tourism activities in the relationship between domestic destination marketing profile and travel motives; thus, contributing to the fledgling extant of the international literature related to crisis and post-crisis domestic destination marketing profiling, the intrinsic travel motives of locals in the face of crisis, as well as the effect of safety perception on domestic tourist behaviour during the global crisis, more so from an African tourist perspective.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section Two presents the theoretical foundations of the study and explores the contemporary literature, providing a basis for the hypotheses tested in the study. Section Three outlines the research methodology of the study. Section Four presents the findings of the hypotheses testing, while Section 5 discusses these findings, and Section 6 provides the conclusions of the study. Managerial implications (Section 7), as well as the limitations and future research avenues (Section 8), are also presented.

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2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section presents the literature review. The theoretical foundation of the study is presented, followed by a discussion of the key variables and the formulation of the individual hypotheses tested.

2.1   Theoretical foundation

Engaging in travel and tourism is a consumptive economic decision (Bailey & Richardson, 2010). Hence behavioural economic theory may be extended to tourism behavioural research as an explanatory framework for tourist decision-making and conative behaviour in times of crisis. Behavioural Economics (BE) is at the confluence of economic and psychological theory in decision-making (Braesemann, 2019), involving the adaptation of various cross-disciplinary constructs to model human conative behaviour – particularly when contextualising subjective biases in decision-making (Wattanacharoensila & La-ornual, 2019; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). The present study considers three BE-related constructs as relevant: (1) Prospect Theory (PT), which suggests that decision-making under situations of risk is subject to the *framing* of the choices available to the consumer (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), (2) The theory of Bounded Rationality (BR) advances the notion that human decision-making is not optimal and is susceptible to environmental factors and biases within the confines of the information (*heuristic cues*) available to consumers (Cyert & March, 1992; Gigerenzer & Goldstein, 1996), and (3) The Risk-as-feelings Model (RM) is a consequentialist perspective to decision-making and submits that under conditions of risk or uncertainty, *affective* factors such as anxiety and worry at the time of decision-making play a critical role in the choices of consumers (Loewenstein *et al*.,2001).

In this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 crisis, the relationship between a destination's domestic tourism-oriented marketing profile and the intrinsic travel motives of tourists may be premised on all the above-mentioned aspects. Hereby tourism marketers employ a myriad of marketing techniques to position and present a value proposition of the domestic destination as an attractive option for tourism (framing); hence providing the information touchpoints (heuristic cues) aimed at subjectively influencing domestic tourists' consumptive decision-making. However, does the perceived safety associated with domestic travel and tourism activities affect the cognition of domestic tourists to the extent that it mediates the relationship between South Africa's domestic tourism-oriented marketing profile and the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists?

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2.2 The destination marketing profile and risk associated with travel and tourism activity

Marketing communication is critical to tourist decision-making during and post-crisis, since it manages the reputation of tourism organisations, destinations or activities associated with the crisis, while mitigating the negative impact of the crisis on consumer decision-making (Liu-Lastres *et al*., 2019; Volgger *et al*., 2021). Crisis-related information symmetry via a multi-dimensional marketing and non-marketing communications profile may promote the safety of a destination by mitigating tourists' perceived risk and protect the destination from the effects of negative subjective references (Choo *et al*., 2011; Coombs, 2014; Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016; Liu-Lastres *et al*.,2019). However, the effect of the framing of crisis-related information via destination marketing tends to be underestimated despite the palpable impact it has on the shaping of public discourses and delimiting (*framing*) the scope, severity, and geographical location of crisis events (Bhati *et al*., 2021; Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016; Mayer *et al*., 2021; Mizrachi & Fuchs, 2016).

Destination marketing communications (websites, promotions, advertising) managed by tourist-oriented government and quasi-government agencies are vital. They provide the *heuristic cues* that inform tourists and influence their decision-making (Del Vasto-Terrientes *et al*., 2015; Novelli *et al*., 2018). To this end, Zou and Meng (2020) observe that media significantly influence tourists' travel-risk perceptions associated with a specific destination and its surroundings. Furthermore, empirical evidence from China suggests that non-governmental marketing communication platforms such as personal social media affect tourist choices across the tourism value-chain, including destination choice, mode of transportation, and selecting attractions to visit (Liu *et al*., 2020). Perceived safety (risk within tolerable levels) impacts decisions associated with travel and tourism activity across the spectrum of the tourism value chain (Wattanacharoensila & La-ornual, 2019). These decisions include the choice between engaging in domestic (Cahyanto *et al*., 2016) and international (Page *et al*., 2012) tourism; destination choice (Li et al., 2017); choice of tourism activities (Wen, Huimin & Kavanaugh, 2005); choice of mode of transport for tourism (Cahyanto *et al*., 2016; Fenichel *et al*., 2013); as well as the extent of interaction with other tourists as part of the tourism experience (Kock *et al*., 2019b). Hence, in line with BR theory, formal and informal destination-oriented marketing profile communication is key to tourist choice and safety perceptions in crisis-induced perceived risk (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis was formulated:

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H[1]:   The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences how safe domestic tourists perceive travel and tourism activities in the country to be.

2.3   The destination marketing profile and the intrinsic travel motives of tourists

Interactive online marketing strategies via platforms such as general travel and tourism, destination-specific websites, and social media are vital in developing a destination's marketing profile (Chung & Koo, 2015; Lepp *et al*., 2011). In line with PT, an increasingly competitive tourism market, the role of destination marketing as a diversified information dissemination approach, suggests that destination marketers may frame their destinations in a manner that influences and ultimately attracts tourists (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Katsikari *et al*., 2020; Smallman & Moore, 2008). Moreover, as BR theory suggests, destination marketing is critical in stimulating the desire of the tourist to travel by providing the heuristic cues that positively influence tourist perceptions towards engaging in tourism (Gigerenzer & Goldstein,1996; Lin & Huang, 2006; Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2015). To this end, in what appears to be one of the few studies on destination marketing and domestic tourism in South Africa, Sibisi and Abrahams (2018) opine that *ethnically-framed* destination-marketing activity positively influences the willingness of domestic tourists to engage in local leisure tourism activity At the same time, Liu *et al*. (2020) established that tourists' intrinsic desire to engage in leisure tourism might be attributed to their exposure to social media. In the case of domestic tourism in Hawaii, Choo *et al*. (2011) positively correlate localised destination brand marketing efforts with residents' increased engagement in tourism and leisure activity. More pertinently, in a study of domestic and international tourists, Pawaskar and Goel (2016) established that various destination marketing profile platforms, including promotional incentives, movies and advertising were positive predictors of Indian tourists' intrinsic domestic travel motives. Seminal (Crompton, 1979; Oh *et al*., 1995) and contemporary tourism studies (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Božić *et al*., 2017) have generally decomposed intrinsic (push) travel motives into eight typologies to include seeking escape, self-exploration, relaxation-seeking, looking for prestige, regression, family relationship enhancement, and social interaction. Concerning the notions submitted, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H[2]:   The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

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2.4 The risk associated with travel and tourism activity and the intrinsic travel motives of tourists

Crisis events invariably influence the perceived risk (diminished safety perceptions) of tourists. The literature establishes that shifts in the conative behaviour of individuals occur in the face of risk based on the perceived *severity* of the risk and the individual's *vulnerability* to the risk (Meyer *et al*., 2022; Tseng & Wang, 2016; Wang et al., 2019). For instance, the health risk associated with air travel during health crises invariably limits the mobility of tourists within their acceptable risk tolerance (Matiza & Slabbert, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that the perceived safety associated with group-oriented tourism, such as cruises, influences the travel motives of tourists (Liu-Lastres *et al*., 2019). While in the case of China, crowding at tourist locations and the subsequent perceived infection risk during the SARS outbreak influenced the desire of tourists to engage in domestic tourism, including the activities to engage in accommodation and entertainment consumption choice (Wen *et al*., 2005).

Furthermore, there is an established link between disease outbreaks and the onset of xenophobic behaviour towards specific populations (Li *et al*., 2017; Meyer *et al*., 2022), such as attitudes towards Africans as a result of the Ebola outbreak (Kock *et al*., 2020). This suggests that tourists' desire to engage in tourism may be hindered by the potential of interacting with residents and tourists from 'affected' nations. The risk associated with any aspect(s) of the tourism value-chain may thus prompt protective behaviour in tourists - adversely influencing their intrinsic-push travel motives and their desire to engage in tourism (Nazneen *et al*., 2021). It follows then that based on the RM hypothesis, the severe anxiety, worry, or risk associated with travel and tourism activity due to the pandemic may subjectively influence the convenience and reliability of specific aspects in the tourism value-chain and ultimately diminish the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists (Lepp *et al*., 2011; Loewenstein *et al*., 2001; Matiza & Slabbert, 2021; Quintal *et al*., 2010). Considering the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis was formulated,

H₃: How safe domestic tourists perceive travel and tourism activities in South Africa positively influences the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

2.5 The mediating effect of subjective safety

PT hypothesises the role and importance of information *framing* in consumptive decision-making, mainly when it involves disseminating information on the choices available to the consumer when decision-making consists of an element of risk. The intrinsic travel motives of tourists are a critical antecedent to tourists' consumptive behaviour. However, in line with BR theory, tourist motives are susceptible to the environmental influences and biases informed

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by the *heuristic cues* available to them via the domestic destination marketing profile; hence tourist behaviour may occur within the confines of the information available to them. From a consequentialist perspective, RM theory supports the potential interceding effect of crisis-induced affective aspects such as anxiety, worry and uncertainty about safety in domestic tourists' decision-making and ultimate choices. From a structural perspective, the hypothesised structural model is reflective in nature, whereby the model structure has indicators that reflect changes in the underlying latent construct (Freeze & Raschke, 2007). Thus, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the notion that the perceived safety or riskiness of domestic travel and tourism activity during the pandemic may have a mediating effect (Figure 1) on the influence that South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile has on the intrinsic travel motives of South African tourists is viable as follows:

H_4:   The perceived safety associated with travel and tourism activity in South Africa mediates the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' intrinsic travel motives.

Figure 1:   Hypothesised model
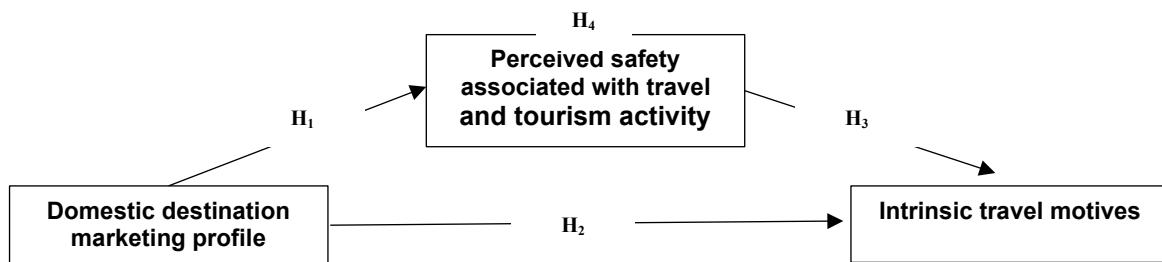
Source: Own compilation

3.   METHODOLOGY

A novel structured questionnaire was developed to generate data for a broader study on the implications of COVID-19 on the travel behaviour of South African domestic tourists. The study, measuring instrument, and survey were reviewed and granted ethical clearance [NWU-00883-20-A4] by a university's Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC). Section A of the survey solicited socio-demographic data to profile the respondents, including information on gender, age, income, educational level, marital status, travel companionship, and region of residence in South Africa. Subsequent sections solicited the following information related to the scope of this paper:

- A section measured the influence of South Africa's media and marketing profile on domestic tourists' perceptions of the country as a domestic tourism destination. A total of

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12 survey statements were adapted from the literature (Adeola & Evans, 2019; Gong & Tung, 2017; Huong & Lee, 2017; Hyun, 2006; Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016; McCabe, 2014; No & Kim, 2015; Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2017; Soliman, 2011), and responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale of influence where 1 = Not at all influential and 5 = Extremely influential.

- A section measured the perceived risk associated with domestic travel and tourism activity in South Africa. Respondents were presented with nine travel and tourism activities drawn from the literature (Adam, 2015; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009) and asked how safe they perceived each activity to be. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale of perceived risk where 1 = Very risky and 5 = Very Safe.

- A section measured the intrinsic (push) travel motives of South Africans by asking respondents to rate their agreement with reasons for visiting South African tourist destinations within the next year. A total of 12 survey statements were adapted from the literature (Duman *et al*., 2020; Ezeuduji & Dlomo, 2020; Kamau *et al.,* 2015), and responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale of agreement where 1 = Strongly disagree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

The questionnaire was designed, published, and distributed online. A reputable South African research firm, iFeedback, launched a social media marketing campaign between the 18th of December 2020 and the 6th of January 2021 – South Africa's peak summer holiday period, coinciding with the augmented lockdown period that permitted conditional domestic travel and tourism. The mentioned questionnaire was distributed to South African consumers (as potential domestic tourists) to participate in the study. Respondents were invited to complete the online survey hosted on the iFeedback website. N=843 responses were generated. However, only 50.65 percent of the questionnaires were complete and viable for the study, representing a practically significant (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) response total of n=427.

Online responses were collated on an Excel© sheet and exported for analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 (IBM, 2020), Analysis of a Moment Structures (AMOS) Version 27 and PROCESS Macro for SPSS were the statistical data analysis programs used to examine the data. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) at >.50 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity at p<.000 were calculated to determine the factorability of the data (Hair *et al*., 2014). The data were then subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) at factor loading [PCA method, Oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalisation at cut-off>.50]. Direct Oblimin as an oblique rotation method was most suitable since mediation analyses assume an underlying correlation between the variables (Gorsuch, 1983). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

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reduces the data into discernible factors and then establishes the validity and reliability of the measurement constructs (Hair *et al*., 2014). In the CFA, model fit was determined by index cut-offs recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999) as follows: CMIN/DF = between 1 and 3; Comparative Fit Index (CFI = <0.95); Standardised Root Mean Residual (SRMR = <0.08); the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = >0.06). Scale reliability and validity were established based on the average variance extracted (AVE>.50) and the composite reliability (CR>.70), respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Direct effect testing via linear regressions confirmed the viability of mediation analysis by testing the respective paths while confirming the statistical assumptions of the data (Kane & Ashbaugh, 2017). Lastly, parallel mediation analysis was employed to establish the effect and strength of the perceived safety of tourism activities as the intervening variable in the relationship between destination marketing profile and tourists' intrinsic travel motives (Hadi *et al*., 2016; Kane & Ashbaugh, 2017).

4.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Respondent profile

The gender profile of respondents was evenly distributed at 47 percent, with 6 percent of the respondents choosing not to disclose their gender. At least 50 percent (cumulatively) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 years old and 34 years old and had at least a high school diploma (25%). Most of the respondents were single (50%), with 36 percent being married. Most of the respondents (30%) travelled with family (adults and children) and originated from the economic hub of South Africa – Gauteng province (38%). Respondents earned below USD1500 per month and indicated (56% cumulatively) that they viewed the internet and social media as the most influential media channels in their decision-making. At the time of the survey, 37 percent and 28 percent of the respondents had travelled for tourism purposes more than once and at least once, respectively, in the preceding two-year period. At least 75 percent of the respondents planned to travel domestically within the following year (2021).

4.2   Factor analyses

The EFA conducted in SPSS (Version 27, IBM, 2020) reduced the data into discernible factors. The KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity statistics (Table 1) were statically significant and indicated the factorability of the data (Hair *et al*., 2014). The EFA (Table 1) extracted three destination marketing profile-related factors; *Destination Marketing (DMKT)*, *Media Profile (MEDPRO)*, and *Value Proposition* (*VALPRO),* which accounted for 73 percent of the variance in the data. Travel and tourism activity extracted two factors labelled based on the mean; *Risky Activities (RSKACT)* and *Somewhat Safe Activities (SOMWS),* which accounted for 68% of

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the variance in the data. Lastly, intrinsic travel motives extracted two factors: *Experiential/Transformational (EXPTRN)* and *Social/Escape (SOCIESC)*, accounting for 66% of the variance in the data. All scale dimensions were reliable based on Cronbach Alphas (α) above the recommended cut-off of >.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Table 1: **Measurement model and correlation**

		EFA				CFA										
	Factor	Items	Loading Coeff. (>.50)	Mean (x̄)	Cronbach (α)	Items	Est.	CR	AVE	MSV	DMPR	RSKACT	SOMWS	EXPTRN	SOCIESC
			Min Max				Min Max								
	DMKT	5	.610 .826	2.98	.897	5	.739 .838								
[1]DMPR	MEDPRO	4	.643 .823	3.17	.860	4	.732 .885	.955	.876	.099	**.936**				
	VALPRO	3	.515 .800	3.28	.760	3	.580 .813								
[2]RSKACT	-	4	.663 .875	2.01	.857	4	.638 .894	.865	.619	.508	.127*	**.787**			
[2]SOMWS	-	5	.589 .744	2.81	.829	5	.383 .842	.844	.534	.508	.193**	.713***	**.731**		
[3]EXPTRN	-	7	.662 .840	3.68	.915	7	.658 .851	.916	.610	.434	.274***	.268***	.466***	**.781**	
[3]SOCIESC	-	5	.649 .820	3.13	.846	5	.633 .846	.864	.561	.434	.315***	.320***	.388***	.659***	**.749**

Key: DMPR = Destination Marketing Profile; DMKT = Destination Marketing; MEDPRO = Media Profile; VALPRO = Value Proposition; RSKACT = Risky Activities; SOMWS = Somewhat Safe Activities; EXPTRN = Experiential-Transformation; SOCIESC = Social-Escape

Statistical Significance: * p < .050; ** p < .010; *** p < .001
Notes: [1] Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation: KMO = .937 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity of (χ² (66) = 3222.588, p < .000)
[2] Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation: KMO = .877 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity of (χ² (36) = 2086.782, p < .000)
[3] Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation: KMO = .916 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity of (χ² (66) = 3042.167, p < .000)

Source: Own compilation

The CFA conducted in AMOS (Version 27) established the validity and reliability of the scales established by the EFA. All items were retained. However, a second-order factor emerged, 'Destination Marketing Profile', to account for the correlation between the first-order factors *DMKT, MEDPRO* and *VALPRO.* By using the maximum likelihood method, the goodness of fit of the measurement model reported the following statistics: χ^2 = 1658.711, df = 471, p < .001; CMIN/DF = 3.522; CFI = <.871; SRMR = <.075; RMSEA = >.077 indicating that the model was acceptable. Despite the CFI statistic being slightly below the recommended .90, the acceptable RMSEA supports the CFI statistic (Bentler, 1990; Chinda *et al.*, 2012). As depicted in Table 1, the standardised regression weights were above the recommended minimum of .50, indicating the reliability of all the measurement items (Yu *et al.*, 2021). The AVE statistics ranged between .534 and .876, while the CR statistics ranged between .844 and .955; thus confirming the constructs' convergent validity and internal consistency, respectively (Fornell & Larcker,1981). Discriminant validity was verified by the diagonal varians extracted (Table 1) being less than the squared AVE values of each pair of constructs

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(in bold); thus, providing good discriminant validity support for all the constructs (Chang, 2004; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Wang *et al.*, 2020).

4.3 Hypothesis testing

A two-stage hypothesis testing process was followed. First, direct effect testing examined the predictive relationships between all measurement variables. Second was the mediation analysis to test the respective hypotheses.

4.3.1 Direct effect testing

Direct effect testing via linear regressions tested the viability of the respective paths in the mediation analyses and confirmed the statistical assumptions of the data: normality, independence of observation, linearity, homoscedasticity, and the absence of multicollinearity (Kane & Ashbaugh, 2017). Linear regressions determined the predictions: X of Y_{1-2} (path c); X of M (path a); M of Y (path b), where X is *DMPR*; M_1 is *RSKACT;* M_2 is *SOMWS*; Y_1 is *EXPTRN;* Y_2 is *SOCIESC*.

Table 2: Direct effect verification

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	t-value	Sig.
Model 1					
X (*DMPR*) – Y_1 (*EXPTRN*): path c					
$R^2 =$ .01, F(1,425)4.29, p = .04	.10	.05	.10	2.07	.04*
X (*DMPR*) – M_1 (*RSKACT*): path a_1					
R^2 = .07, F(1,425)29.98, p = .00	.28	.05	.06	5.48	.00**
X (*DMPR*) – M_2 (*SOMWS*): path a_2					
$R^2 =$ .05, F(1,425)23.50, p = .00	.22	.05	.23	4.85	.00**
M_1 (*RSKACT*) – Y_1 (*EXPTRN*): path b_1					
$R^2 =$ .07, F(1,425)33.54, p = .00	.29	.05	.27	5.79	.00**
M_2 (*SOMWS*) – Y_1 (*EXPTRN*): path b_2					
$R^2 =$ .23, F(1,425)126.86, p = .00	.54	.05	.48	11.26	.00**
Model 2					
X (*DMPR*) – Y_2 (*SOCIESC*): path c					
R^2 = .09, F(1,425)39.38, p = .00	.32	.05	.29	6.28	.00**
M_1 (*RSKACT*) – Y_2 (*SOCIESC*): path b_1					
R^2 = .09, F(1,425)42.86, p = .00	.33	.05	.30	6.55	.00**
M_2 (*SOMWS*) – Y_2 (*SOCIESC*): path b_2					
R^2 = .14, F(1,425)67.89, p = .00	.43	.05	.37	8.24	.00**

Statistically significant at *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Source: Own compilation

The statistical models and residuals suggested no violations in linear regression relationships (Field, 2020; Kane & Ashbaugh, 2017). All the respective paths were statistically significant. Thus, all variables were suitable for inclusion in the mediation analysis. Hence the initial hypotheses were reformulated as follows:

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H$_1$:   The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences how domestic tourists perceive [H$_{1a}$] risky and [H$_{1b}$] somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in the country to be.

H$_2$:   The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences the [H$_{2a}$] experiential transformation and [H$_{2b}$] social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

H$_{3a.1}$:   Domestic tourists' perception of risky travel and tourism activities in South Africa negatively influences the experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

H$_{3a.2}$:   Domestic tourists' perception of somewhat-safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa positively influences the experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

H$_{3b.1}$:   Domestic tourists' perception of risky travel and tourism activities in South Africa negatively influences the social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

H$_{3b.2}$:   Domestic tourists' perception of somewhat-safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa positively influences the social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.

H$_{4a}$:   The perceived [H$_{4a.1}$] risky and [H$_{4a.2}$] somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa mediate the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives.

H$_{4b}$:   The perceived [H$_{4b.1}$] risky and [H$_{4b.2}$] somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa mediate the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' social-escape oriented intrinsic travel motives.

4.3.2   Mediation analysis

The emergence of two mediators with no discernible causal relationship (Kane & Ashbaugh, 2017) supported the utilisation of parallel mediation analysis and proposed the following:

*   Model 1 – *RSKACT* and *SOMWS* mediate the relationship between South Africa's *DMPR* and domestic tourists' *EXPTRN* intrinsic travel motives.

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- Model 2 – *RSKACT* and *SOMWS* mediate the relationship between South Africa's *DMPR*
  and domestic tourists' *SOCIESC* intrinsic travel motives.

Figure 2 illustrates the parallel mediation analyses.

Figure 2:   Parallel mediation analyses conceptual frameworks
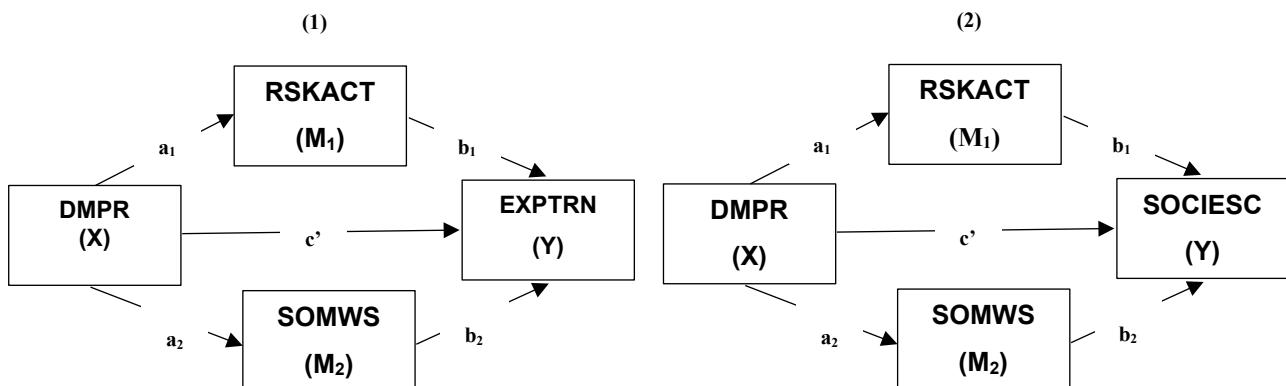
Source: Own compilation

Table 3 summarises the results of the parallel mediation analysis utilising Model 4 of the
PROCESS Macro for SPSS in the relationship between *DMPR* and *EXPTRN*.

**Table 3:   Results of the parallel mediation analysis: Model 1**

Testing Path	B	SE	95% BootCI		β	t-value	Sig.
			Lower Limit CI (LL)	Upper Limit CI (UL)			
Path c: DMPR - EXPTRN							
R^2=.07, $F(1,425)$29.98, *p*=.00	.28	.05	.18	.37	.26	5.48	.00**
Path a_1: DMPR - RSKACT							
R^2=.01, $F(1,425)$4.29, *p*=.04	.10	.05	.01	.19	.10	2.07	.04*
Path b_1 & c: DMPR – RSKACT - EXPTRN							
R^2=.25, $F(3,423)$47.92, *p*=.00							
DMPR – EXPTRN (c')	.16	.05	.07	.26	.15	3.53	.00**
RSKACT – EXPTRN (b_1)	-.04	.06	-.16	.07	-.04	-.74	.46
Path a_2: DMPR - SOMWS							
R^2=.05, $F(1,425)$23.50, *p*=.00	.22	.05	.13	.31	.23	4.85	.00**
Path b_2 & c: DMPR – SOMWS - EXPTRN							
R^2=.25, $F(1,423)$47.92, *p*=.00							
DMPR – EXPTRN (c')	.16	.05	.07	.26	.15	3.55	.00**
SOMWS – EXPTRN (b_2)	.53	.06	.41	.65	.47	8.49	.00**
Effect: a_1b_1 + a_2b_2	.11	.03	.06	.17			

Statistically significant at *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Source: Own compilation

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Unstandardised coefficients are utilised in reporting the mediation path coefficients. One statistically significant indirect effect was established in Model 1, *SOMWS* (b_2 = .53, *t* = 8.49, *p* = .00) was statistically significant as a positive intervening variable in explaining the relationship between South Africa's *DMPR* and domestic tourist's *EXPTRN* intrinsic travel motives, whereas *RSKACT* (b_1 = -.04, *t* = -.74, *p* = .46) was insignificant. Figure 3 illustrates the parallel mediation model for *DMPR – EXPTRN*.

Figure 3:   Parallel Mediation Model 1: DMPR/EXPTRN
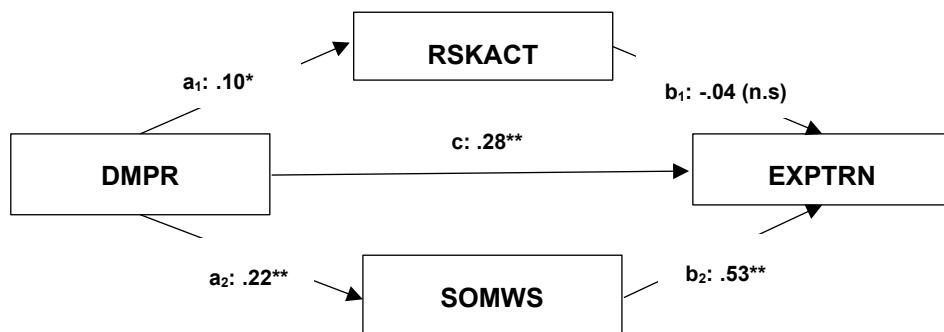
Statistically significant at *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Note: The mediating effect of perceived risky activities (*RSKACT*) and perceived somewhat safe activities (*SOMWS*) in the relationship between South Africa's destination marketing profile (*DMPR*) and domestic tourists' experiential/transformation intrinsic travel motives (*EXPTRN*). All presented effects are unstandardised: a_1 is the effect of destination marketing profile on perceived risky activities; b_1 is the effect of perceived risky activities on experiential/transformation travel motives; a_2 is the effect of destination marketing profile on somewhat safe activities; b_2 is the effect of somewhat safe activities on experiential/transformation travel motives; c is the total effect of destination marketing profile on experiential/transformation travel motives; c' is the direct effect of destination marketing profile on experiential/transformation travel motives, adjusting for perceived safety.

Source: Own compilation

Despite the parallel mediation analysis (Figure 3) indicating the insignificance of the *DMPR-RSKACT- EXPTRN* relationship, the model for the indirect effect (IE) of *DMPR on EXPTRN* via *RSKACT* and *SOMWS* was significant at 95% bootstrap CI (IE = .11, s.e. = .03 [LL = .06, UL = .17]). Due to the CI not including zero, the null hypothesis could be rejected; there is a statistically significant positive mediation in the influence of South Africa's destination marketing profile on domestic tourists' intrinsic *EXPTRN* travel motives via *SOMWS* tourism activities. The variance accounted for[1] (VAF) to determine the strength of the mediation (Hadi *et al*., 2016) suggests that the perceived safety of tourism-related activities accounts for 39 percent of the partial mediation effect that South Africa's destination marketing profile has on the intrinsic *EXPTRN* travel motives of domestic tourists in the time of COVID-19. Table 4 summarises the results of the second model for *SOCIESC*.

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[1] VAF = indirect effect / total effect * 100

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Table 4: **Results of the parallel mediation analysis: Model 2**

Testing Path	B	SE	95% BootCI		β	t-value	Sig.
			Lower Limit CI (LL)	Upper Limit CI (UL)			
Path c: DMPR - SOCIESC							
R^2=.08, $F_{(1,425)}$39.38, p=.00	.32	.05	.22	.42	.29	6.28	.00**
Path a$_1$: DMPR - RSKACT							
R^2=.01, $F_{(1,425)}$4.29, p=.04	.10	.05	.01	.19	.10	2.07	.04*
Path b$_1$ & c: DMPR – RSKACT- SOCIESC							
R^2=.19, $F_{(3,423)}$33.71, p=.00							
DMPR – SOCIESC (c')	.25	.05	.15	.34	.22	4.98	.00**
RSKACT – SOCIESC (b$_1$)	.14	.06	.02	.27	.13	2.33	.02*
Path a$_2$: DMPR - SOMWS							
R^2=.05, $F_{(1,425)}$23.50, p=.00	.22	.05	.13	.31	.23	4.85	.00**
Path b$_2$ & c: DMPR – SOMWS - SOCIESC							
R^2=.19, $F_{(3,423)}$33.71, p=.00							
DMPR – SOCIESC (c')	.25	.05	.15	.34	.22	4.98	.00**
SOMWS – SOCIESC (b$_2$)	.27	.07	.14	.40	.24	4.13	.00**
Effect: $a_1b_1 + a_2b_2$	.07	.01	.00	.04			

Statistically significant at *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Source: Own compilation

Statistically significant effects were established in Model 2, whereby both *RSKACT* (b_1 = .14, t = 2.33, p = .02) and *SOMWS* (b_2 = .27, t = 4.13, p = .00) were statistically significant as intervening variables in explaining the relationship between South Africa's *DMPR* and domestic tourist's *SOCIESC* intrinsic travel motives. Figure 4 illustrates the parallel mediation model for *DMPR–SOCIESC*.

Figure 4: **Parallel Mediation Model 2 – DMPR/SOCIESC**
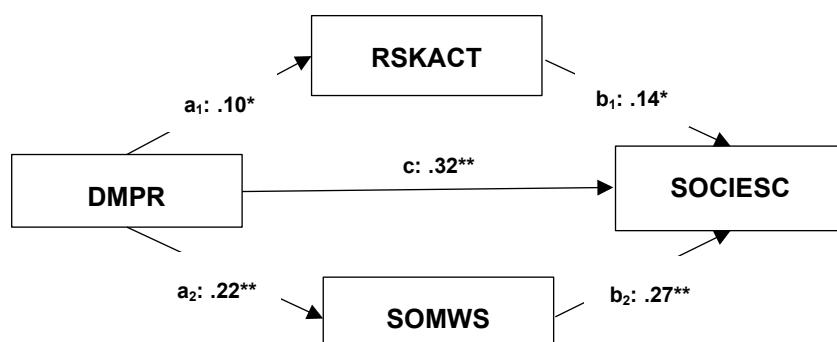
Statistically significant at *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Note: The mediating effect of perceived risky activities (*RSKACT*) and perceived somewhat safe activities (*SOMWS*) in the relationship between South Africa's destination marketing profile (*DMPR*) and domestic tourists' social/escape intrinsic travel motives (*SOCIESC*). All presented effects are unstandardised: a_1 is the effect of destination marketing profile on perceived risky activities; b_1 is the effect of perceived risky activities on social/escape travel motives; a_2 is the effect of destination marketing profile on somewhat safe activities; b_2 is the effect of somewhat safe activities on social/escape travel motives; c is the total effect of destination marketing profile on social/escape travel motives; c' is the direct effect of destination marketing profile on social/escape travel motives, adjusting for perceived safety.

Source: Own compilation

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The model for the indirect effects (IE) of *DMPR on EXPTRN* via *RSKACT* (IE = .01, s.e. = .01 [LL = .00, UL = .04]) and *SOMWS* (IE = .05, s.e. = .02 [LL = .02, UL = .11]) were significant at 95% bootstrap CI (IE = .07, s.e. = .01 [LL = .00, UL = .04]). Due to the CI not including zero, the respective null hypotheses could be rejected; there is statistically significant positive mediation in the influence of South Africa's destination marketing profile on domestic tourists' intrinsic *SOCIESC* travel motives via perceived *RSKACT* and *SOMWS* tourism activities. The VAF statistic (Hadi *et al.*, 2016) suggests that the perceived safety of tourism-related activities accounts for 22 percent of the partial mediation effect that South Africa's destination marketing profile has on the intrinsic *SOCIESC* travel motives of domestic tourists in the time of COVID-19. Table 5 summarises the hypotheses of the study based on the respective (Table 3 and Table 4) mediation analyses.

Table 5:   Summary of hypotheses

Hyp.	Statement	Decision
H_{1a}	The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences how domestic tourists perceive risky travel and tourism activities in the country to be.	Accepted
H_{1b}	The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences how domestic tourists perceive somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in the country to be.	Accepted
H_{2a}	The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences the experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.	Accepted
H_{2b}	The domestic tourism-oriented destination marketing profile of South Africa positively influences the social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.	Accepted
$H_{3a.1}$	Domestic tourists' perception of risky travel and tourism activities in South Africa negatively influences the experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.	Rejected
$H_{3a.2}$	Domestic tourists' perception of somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa positively influences the experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.	Accepted
$H_{3b.1}$	Domestic tourists' perception of risky travel and tourism activities in South Africa negatively influences the social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.	Rejected
$H_{3b.2}$	Domestic tourists' perception of somewhat-safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa positively influences the social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists.	Accepted
$H_{4a.1}$	The perceived risky travel and tourism activities in South Africa mediate the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives.	Rejected
$H_{4a.2}$	The perceived somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa mediate the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' experiential-transformation-oriented intrinsic travel motives.	Accepted
$H_{4b.1}$	The perceived risky travel and tourism activities in South Africa mediate the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives.	Accepted

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Hyp.	Statement	Decision
H_{4b.2}	The perceived somewhat safe travel and tourism activities in South Africa mediate the relationship between South Africa's domestic destination marketing profile and domestic tourists' social-escape-oriented intrinsic travel motives.	Accepted

Source: Own compilation

As summarised in Table 5, all the reformulated hypotheses proposed by the study were accepted except for three. Domestic tourists' perceived *RSKACT* in South Africa had no significant influence on the *EXPTRN-oriented* intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists, suggesting that perceived *RSKACT* was also not significant as a mediator in the relationship between South Africa's *DMPR* and domestic tourist's *EXPTRN* oriented intrinsic travel motives. Hence hypotheses H_{3a.1} and H_{4a.1} were rejected. Additionally, domestic tourists' perception of *RSKACT* in South Africa positively influences the domestic tourists' SOCIESC-oriented intrinsic travel motives. Hence H_{3b.1} was rejected.

5.   DISCUSSION

The study is one of the first to explore the influence of pandemic-induced perceived safety of travel and tourism activities on the *DMPR* – intrinsic travel motives nexus within the African domestic tourism context in the post-digital era. The empirical evidence from both parallel mediation models [Figure 3 and Figure 4] suggests that South Africa's *DMPR* positively influences how domestic tourists perceive RSKACT and SOMWS travel and tourism activities in the country. The findings corroborate the notion that information symmetry via various marketing and non-marketing media influences tourist's risk and safety perceptions to the extent that it mitigates risk perceptions and promotes the safety of travel and tourism activities (Bhati *et al*., 2021; Kapuscinski & Richards, 2016; Mayer *et al*., 2021; Mizrachi & Fuchs, 2016; Novelli *et al*., 2018; Zou & Meng, 2020). Furthermore, in line with the literature (Choo *et al*., 2011; Katsikari *et al*., 2020; Lepp *et al*., 2011; Pawaskar & Goel, 2016; Sibisi & Abrahams, 2018), our novel findings demonstrate that South Africa's *DMPR* influences the intrinsic travel motives of domestic leisure tourists, be it *EXPTRN*- or *SOCIESC*-oriented domestic tourists. More pertinently, the findings support and extend the notion by Katsikari *et al*. (2020) that tourism destination marketing in times of crisis or periods immediately preceded by crisis events provides information symmetry that may be key to the decision-making process of tourists. Our findings include intrinsic *EXPTRN*- and *SOCIESC*-oriented travel motives of South African domestic tourists.

The evidence from Mediation Model 1 [Table 3 and Figure 2] shows the insignificant indirect mediation of *RSKACT* in the *DMPR - EXPTRN* travel motives nexus, whereas *SOMWS* travel

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and tourism activities positively, albeit partially, mediate the relationship. Intriguingly, empirical evidence from Mediation Model 2 [Table 4 and Figure 3] indicates that travel and tourism activities perceived to be either *RSKACT* or *SOMWS* positively intercede the *DMPR – SOCIESC-oriented* travel motives nexus of South African domestic tourists. Anecdotal evidence supports the indirect effect in both models, confirming that risk/safety perception is a viable predictor of tourists' travel motivations during a crisis (Chew & Jahari, 2014). However, while much of the extent of the literature (Lepp *et al*., 2011; Loewenstein et al., 2001; Matiza & Slabbert, 2021; Nazneen *et al*., 2021; Quintal *et al*., 2010) submits that risk-induced anxiety, worry, and negative perceptions associated with travel and tourism activities have a negative correlation with tourists' initial desire to engage in tourism, intriguingly, our findings mostly contradict this notion.

Perceived *RSKACT* [international travel, public transport, group travel and interacting with tourists of other nationalities] in South Africa had no indirect influence on the *EXPTRN*-oriented intrinsic travel motives. Contrary to the expected sign, the same perceptions positively influenced *SOCIESC*-oriented travel motives of South African domestic tourists. This outcome may be attributed to increased risk perceptions compelling tourists to opt for visiting friends and relatives, engaging in domestic tourism to seek adventure and visit new places in South Africa, while specifically having time away within the family 'bubbles' to avoid interaction with foreign tourists (Kock *et al*., 2019b; Kock *et al*. 2020), group travel with strangers, as well as substitute international travel (Matiza & Slabbert, 2021). Furthermore, both models affirm domestic tourists' perception of *SOMWS* travel and tourism activities in South Africa positively mediates the relationship between South Africa's *DMPR* and the *EXPTRN* and *SOCIESC*-oriented intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists, respectively. This is consistent with the emerging COVID-19-related literature that positively correlates the subjective safety of travel and tourism activities such as domestic travel, visiting popular local attractions, air travel and self-drive or private transport with the positive conative behaviour [travel motives] of domestic tourists. This may be attributed to crisis-induced ethnocentrism, as well as an emerging '*home is safer than abroad bias*' (Kock *et al*., 2019a; Matiza & Slabbert, 2021), whereby the positive effect of information symmetry provided by the *DMPR* buoys the subjective preferences and biases of domestic tourists towards local travel and tourism.

6.   CONCLUSIONS

The study extends a triad of seminal BE theory [Prospect Theory, Bounded Reality, Risk-as-feelings Model] to tourism marketing theory and tourist decision-making and behaviour within a global crisis context, affirming the relevance of BE theory as an explanatory framework in

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tourist behaviour. During a crisis, how destinations profile themselves or are profiled frames information associated with the destination (PT), providing information symmetry to tourists via heuristic cues (BR), which consequently affect (RM) how safe tourists perceive certain travel and tourism activities to be, as well as influencing their travel motives. The study also re-affirms the value of reconciling the influence of destination marketing on tourists' intrinsic travel motives during crises, albeit as mediated by crisis-induced perceptions of travel and tourism activities. Significantly, the re-examination of the BE theory within a domestic tourism context improves and extends our theoretical understanding of BE both during health-related crises and, more intriguingly, within the context of domestic tourist behaviour. Our findings assuage the concerns raised by Sigala (2020), confirming the efficacy and predictive power of seminal [old] explanatory models in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic while contributing to the discernible limitation in empirical tourism studies related to the influence of marketing messaging and their potential outcomes during crisis events (Bhati *et al*., 2021; Liu-Lastres *et al*., 2019; Volgger *et al*., 2021); thus, addressing both the limited academic inquiry into the role and effectiveness of various destination marketing media in disseminating information to multiple publics, as well as the evident skew in the literature towards the impact of crisis events on international travel intentions as conative behaviour, compared to our research into the impact of a crisis event on the idiosyncratic push (intrinsic) travel motivation of tourists.

7.   MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings have important implications for tourism marketing management. In the context of crises related to public health, dual-purpose destination marketing is required to (1) repair or re-imagine the image of the destination and (2) socially re-engineer tourist behaviour via social marketing-oriented crisis and post-crisis communications to mitigate perceived risk, as well as safeguard tourists from the actual health-related risk (Liu-Lastres *et al*., 2019). The primer to tourism decision-making is the intrinsic travel motives of tourists; hence multi-dimensional destination marketing efforts must stimulate the desire of the tourist to travel and create the need for a tourist to engage in travel and tourism activities during and post-crisis (Katsikari *et al*., 2020; Smallman & Moore, 2008). Hence, a multi-dimensional domestic destination marketing strategy is critical to promote domestic tourism amid financial uncertainty, fear of disease infection and spread, and other competing priorities. Key will be:

- The reallocation and prioritisation of marketing spend and focus, respectively, to marketing media channels that maximise both spending [destination product placement in adverts; government subsidies and initiatives to promote domestic tourism; marketing promotions

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related to domestic tourism] and exposure [tourism offerings on travel and tourism websites and the destination's official tourism website; social media campaigns; positive news media coverage of the destination in the media] to reach as many South Africans as possible with destination information concerning attractive local destinations, safe travel options, as well as safe tourist activities.

- Product innovation initiated by destination marketers to lead the *deployment* of new value-for-money domestic tourism products [such as discounted or bespoke holiday packages and staycations] and services [such as online check-in and check-out procedures] that incorporate health and safety protocols while promoting South Africa as an attractive unique destination for locals.

The uptake of tourism activity during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic is supported by the "one-day tour phenomenon" observed by Gobinda and Swati (2021), whereby tourists engage in short excursions as a stopgap measure to mitigate the effects of government-mandated moratoriums or individually initiated isolation during the pandemic to satisfy their needs for escape, human interaction and the breaking of monotony. This trend gives some credence to the impetus for the need to understand better the relationship between domestic destination marketing efforts and the intrinsic travel motives of domestic tourists – invariably supporting domestic tourism activity as an alternative to traditional long-haul international tourism during a crisis. Hence a multi-stakeholder [including government, tourism product owners, travel agencies, airlines hotel industry] approach to social marketing-oriented destination marketing profiling is critical to promoting domestic tourism and influencing tourist travel motives in emerging markets such as South Africa. To minimise tourists' anxiety, worry and fear of travel and tourism activity due to COVID-19 and assure tourists of their health and safety, various stakeholders, including the government and tourism marketers, need to ensure reliable crisis communications. A unified destination-marketing profile incorporating amalgamated:

- Crisis communications that raise more awareness of the pandemic and reassure tourists of measures put in place to manage the health and safety issues associated with tourism, as well as the government protocols in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19,
- Social marketing messaging that promotes a tourism value proposition that incorporates pharmaceutical (vaccination requirements, sanitising) and non-pharmaceutical (mask-wearing, social distancing, travel bubbles) interventions. Social marketing must be reflexive enough to adapt to and accommodate tourists' evolving needs, as well as their subjective preferences.

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These measures will re-build tourists' trust and confidence in the health and safety of domestic travel and tourism activity and ultimately positively influence the travel motives of domestic tourists.

8.   LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While the study makes a significant contribution to the extent of the emerging literature on domestic tourist behaviour in the context of COVID-19, there are some limitations. First, the study's findings are only generalisable to the case of domestic tourism in South Africa. Therefore, there is a case for further replicating the study in other tourism destinations to validate the respective models. Second, the data generated and presented in this study is cross-sectional, suggesting the need for more longitudinal studies to map better and understand domestic tourist behaviour as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds. The spread of COVID-19 has also spawned new discourses in tourism research, with research expanding from tourism events to include more idiosyncratic experiences from specific *destinations* (Mayer *et al*., 2021). Hence, considering our findings, further domestic tourist destination-oriented crisis research will further benefit local tourism practitioners with location-specific data.

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Annexure 1

The estimation model and estimates

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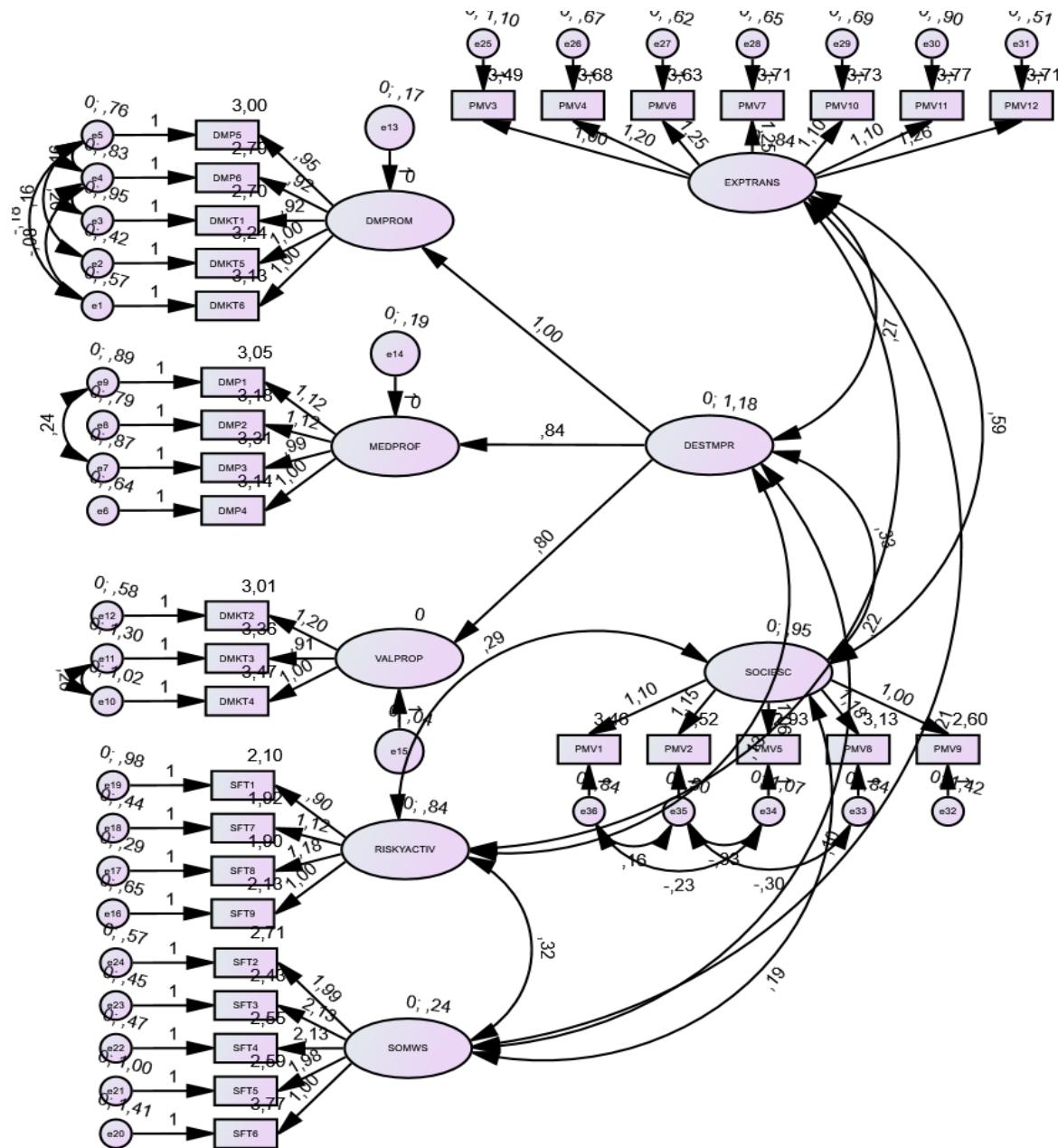
Standardised Regression Weights

			Estimate
DMPROM	<---	DESTMPR	,934
MEDPROF	<---	DESTMPR	,900
VALPROP	<---	DESTMPR	,972
DMKT6	<---	DMPROM	,838
DMKT5	<---	DMPROM	,875
DMKT1	<---	DMPROM	,739
DMP6	<---	DMPROM	,763
DMP5	<---	DMPROM	,786
DMP4	<---	MEDPROF	,783
DMP3	<---	MEDPROF	,732
DMP2	<---	MEDPROF	,785
DMP1	<---	MEDPROF	,765
DMKT4	<---	VALPROP	,661
DMKT3	<---	VALPROP	,580
DMKT2	<---	VALPROP	,813
SFT9	<---	RISKYACTIV	,750
SFT8	<---	RISKYACTIV	,894
SFT7	<---	RISKYACTIV	,840
SFT1	<---	RISKYACTIV	,638
SFT6	<---	SOMWS	,383
SFT5	<---	SOMWS	,698
SFT4	<---	SOMWS	,838
SFT3	<---	SOMWS	,842
SFT2	<---	SOMWS	,790
PMV3	<---	EXPTRANS	,658
PMV4	<---	EXPTRANS	,802
PMV6	<---	EXPTRANS	,825
PMV7	<---	EXPTRANS	,818
PMV10	<---	EXPTRANS	,771
PMV11	<---	EXPTRANS	,727
PMV12	<---	EXPTRANS	,851
PMV9	<---	SOCIESC	,633
PMV8	<---	SOCIESC	,783
PMV5	<---	SOCIESC	,707
PMV2	<---	SOCIESC	,846
PMV1	<---	SOCIESC	,760

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