

What brings you to our humble abode? Tourist motivation for visiting rural destinations: The case of Nqileni village, South Africa

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Abstract: Rural areas, especially in developing countries, have considered using rural tourism to advance economic and social development. Many authors have conducted academic research focusing on tourism to develop rural areas. However, more clarity is needed on what constitutes rural tourism. While several studies have investigated the reasons for rural tourism development, more is needed to understand what attracts visitors to rural areas. This research paper aims to enhance understanding of rural tourism by examining rural tourists' motivations for places such as Nqileni village, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The authors identified the motivational factors that push tourists to rural areas and the activities that tourists prefer at the destination. Finally, the research determined the tourists' overall satisfaction during their stay at the destination. Numerous research studies have been conducted to investigate the factors influencing the growth of rural tourism, but more is needed to determine what attracts tourists to rural destinations. The study adopted a quantitative research approach, using questionnaires to collect data. The results conclusively show that tourists were motivated to visit the area for relaxation, visit family and relatives, and enjoy a feeling of freedom in the countryside.

Keywords: Rural tourism, motivation, preferred activities, tourist satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Due to its advantages for the host community, the environment, and tourists, rural tourism is rapidly growing in most developing countries (San Martín & Herrero, 2012; Zielinski, Jeong, Kim & Milanés, 2020). Several authors (Blezentis et al., 2012; Ćurčić, Mirković Svitlica, Brankov, Bjeljic, Pavlović & Jandžiković, 2021; Crăciun, Dezsi, Pop & Cecilia, 2022) have recognised the value of rural tourism for cultural preservation, economic development, and sustainability. Chikuta and Makacha (2016) state that alternative tourism, agri-tourism, farm tourism, and even ecotourism are terms frequently used to describe tourism in rural regions. According to Hall (2008), there are many technical phrases used to describe rural and urban tourism. Because different criteria are used to define the term, the concept of rural tourism tends to vary among nations. For the purposes of this study, rural tourism encompasses activities undertaken by tourists in rural areas with the intention of satisfying a need for peace, recreation, and an active outdoor vacation (Sihombing & Antonio, 2022).

Lane and Kastenholz (2018) argue that conceptualising rural tourism as the opposite of urban tourism could offer more value. Ezeuduji (2017) suggests that thinking of rural tourism as a form of travel in a rural environment could lead to confusion, as rural tourism has many facets (Lane & Kastenholz, 2018). Rural tourism includes a range of activities, from those rooted in nature to those that are adventurous. Like urban tourism, rural tourist activities can be offered on a large scale or in locations that are not primarily rural. Therefore, there is a need to define rural tourism clearly. Investigating the motivations of visitors can help us better understand what rural tourism entails.

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According to Roberts et al. (2017), a driving force for visitors to travel to rural areas is the desire to experience what is still considered the rural idyll. Hernantes et al. (2007) similarly claim that contact with rural life and nature motivates people to travel to rural areas. Given the variety of tourism-related activities and forms found in rural areas, studying tourist motivations regarding rural tourism can contribute to our understanding of this understudied and misunderstood tourism industry. Farmaki (2012) cites Page and Getz (1997:17) in stating that "identifying and segmenting the rural tourism market is probably the least researched and understood process in the rural tourism system." Therefore, it is important to conduct more studies aimed at addressing conceptual problems within this phenomenon. Additionally, studying the travel motivations of tourists in relation to rural areas will enhance our understanding of tourism as a social phenomenon and provide valuable managerial insights (Yousaf et al., 2018).

To comprehend the characteristics of rural tourism, it is essential to identify and research the motivations of rural tourists. This will have significant implications for tourism scholars, planners, and managers as it will improve our understanding of rural tourism demand. The following sections present research questions and objectives, discuss the theoretical framework, the concept of rural tourism as defined and understood in existing literature, tourist motivations in understanding the reasons tourists travel to rural areas and tourist satisfaction. Finally, the findings of this research attempt to conceptualise rural tourism by exploring the motivations of rural tourists.

1.1 Research questions

This study aimed to assess the motivations behind tourists' visits to Nqileni village, a rural area in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. To guide its investigation, the following research questions were formulated:

- What is the perceived importance of motivations to travel to a rural destination?
- What is the perceived importance of activities at a rural destination?
- How satisfied are tourists who visit rural areas for their holidays?

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Horner and Swarbrooke (2016), motivation in the tourism industry refers to a group of characteristics that explain why individuals want to travel to a specific location, purchase a particular good or service, or engage in a particular activity. Crompton (1979) and Heitmann (2011) have identified two main motivations frequently used in the literature: pull and push factors. Pull factors are the characteristics of a destination that attract tourists. In addition to these factors, leisure, family togetherness, and self-development are often considered significant in driving tourists to undertake temporary movement, which defines tourism (Hsu et al., 2017). While some motivational elements were found to be more prevalent in studies, Yousaf et al. (2018) noted that no set of factors is universally acknowledged due to individual differences, making motivation a complicated psychological concept. Although there is not much research on why people visit rural places, these researchers have shown that the topic is well-liked among tourism experts and that their findings are helpful.

According to Park and Yoon (2009), the top reasons people travel to rural areas are recreation, fresh air, peace, health, and greenery. These motivations are evident in studies conducted in the twenty-first century (Molera & Albaladejo, 2007; Park & Yoon, 2009), and some new ones have been added, such as the desire for tradition and authenticity, learning, making social connections, particularly with locals, spending time with family, novelty, and lower holiday costs. Some academics have attempted to classify the rural tourism sector based on why travellers visit rural areas. Kim (2005) identifies three types of tourists: those who are active and engage in rural activities, those who are passive and focus more on relaxing and seeing cultural sites, and those who primarily visit family and friends. Devesa et al. (2010) identified four different categories of rural visitors. The first group seeks peace in nature, the second group's primary goal is to tour cultural attractions, the third group

enjoys eating and drinking in the local area and spending time in parks, while the last group prefers to visit friends and family or spend the holiday at home.

Despite the diversity of reasons, some authors (Cai, 2002; Frochot, 2005; Pesonen & Komppula, 2010; Royo-Vela, 2009) agree that rural tourists share several characteristics. They are drawn to picturesque and serene landscapes, the abundance of outdoor activities, the friendliness of the locals, the opportunities to actively participate in their lives, and the chance to taste delicious food and (re)connect with their families. The reasons rural visitors travel may play a significant role in their decision-making, behaviour while there, and level of satisfaction with the services offered. Marketing professionals could benefit from a better understanding of visitors' motivations and behaviours when developing an offer that meets their needs and assists them in making decisions (Holloway, 2004; March & Woodside, 2005; Papatheodorou, 2006). An effective tourism strategy and policy can increase the demand for a destination.

3. Literature Review – Rural Tourism in Context

According to López-Sanz (2021), rural tourism is a field with conflicting interests, where guests and hosts have different perspectives. McComb et al. (2017) argue that several characteristics in rural communities prevent them from maximising the benefits of tourism. On the other hand, Munien et al. (2018) believe that rural tourism is increasingly seen as a solution for improving the economic viability of marginalised areas, promoting social regeneration, and enhancing the quality of life for rural people. Tourism is a powerful tool for small businesses, job creation, and improving the living standards in local communities, particularly in developing nations like South Africa (Ezeuduji, 2015a; Ezeuduji, 2015b; Ezeuduji, 2017; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020; Strydom et al., 2018). Strydom et al. (2018) argue that rural tourism has the potential to provide exceptional opportunities for communities by not only offering better benefits but also involving them in the planning and management of tourism (Ezeuduji, 2017).

According to López-Sanz (2021), it is important to identify the resources of the rural community that attract tourists and encourage them to spend money on activities or experiencing the rural lifestyle. Zhou (2018) and others suggest that rural tourism can include a variety of activities, often cultural and natural, that revolve around different resources. Rural tourism relies on the unique natural and cultural resources of a region, with people being the main drivers (Sanagustin-Fons et al., 2018). Bakhru et al. (2013) define capabilities as the ability to combine and coordinate resources. Ezeuduji (2015b) emphasises that promoting the abilities and knowledge of rural communities is a crucial step in the process of developing rural tourism. The ability of community members to participate in conservation programs and tourist activities depends on enabling factors, such as knowledge, competence, awareness, accessibility to information, and financial support (Sanagustin-Fons et al., 2018).

Rural tourism can stimulate various new commercial ventures, partnerships, and networks that complement existing activities like agriculture (Zhou, 2018). However, rural tourism encompasses more than just visits to the local hamlet. As shown in a study by Ezeuduji and Rid (2011) in rural Gambia, cultural offerings in rural tourism can include traditional dances, regional cuisine, music, rural lifestyles, local crafts, regional languages, festivals, and rituals. The operations and amenities of rural tourism vary between different countries, as each country tailors its development strategy to its specific needs (Temelkov & Gulev, 2019). Therefore, local communities can provide a wide range of activities that contribute to rural tourism. The literature highlights that for rural communities to engage in tourism development, they need to possess the necessary skills and knowledge (Ezeuduji, 2015a; Temelkov & Gulev, 2019; Nsukwini & Bob, 2016).

3.1 Tourist motivations

For many years, tourism research has focused on the motives of travellers (Huang, 2010). The theory of motivation is rooted in the literature on consumer behaviour, which suggests that motives are the internal forces that drive people to act (Ye et al., 2021). In relation to travel, motives are connected to the demands that lead individuals to engage in tourism-related activities (Park & Yoon, 2009). Motivation explains why individuals travel, how they engage in activities during their vacations, and why they choose specific destinations. It influences travel decisions and shapes tourist behaviour (Zeng & Yi Man Li, 2021). Iso-Ahola's (1982) theory of motivation is one of the most significant and frequently cited theories. It suggests that tourists are motivated by psychological factors (escape) and social factors (seeking). Likewise, Ye et al. (2021) differentiate between cultural incentives (pull), such as novelty and education, and psychological motives (push), such as escape, relaxation, and exploration. Pull factors are destination-specific characteristics or external motivations, while push factors are internal motivations that affect individuals specifically, also known as person-specific motivations (Heitmann, 2011), such as the desire to leave one's surroundings. In addition, Goeldner and Ritchie (2003) categorise motivation sets from earlier studies (Crompton, 1979; Lundberg, 1971) into four categories: a) physical, such as relaxation; b) cultural; c) interpersonal, such as socialising; and d) prestige, such as self-esteem and self-actualisation. Pearce (1993) makes a similar distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic incentives. Cha, McCleary, and Uysal (1995) identify family, sports, knowledge, adventure, relaxation, and travel bragging as elements that motivate people to travel. Family unity, self-improvement, and relaxation are some of the frequently studied motivational elements (Jang & Wu, 2006; Pearce & Lee, 2005).

Although many scholars have investigated motivation in the context of tourism (Ye et al., 2021), little research has been done on how tourists are motivated when travelling in rural areas. Previous studies focused on identifying specific incentives for rural tourists. Kastenholz et al. (1999) identified four types of rural tourists: the want-all rural tourist, the independent rural tourist, the traditional rural tourist, and the environmental rural tourist. Similarly, Kim (2005) found three distinct market segments for rural tourism: a) the rural-centric traveller who engages in rural-oriented activities; b) the passive rural traveller who participates in traditional tourism activities like relaxation and visiting cultural sites; and c) the visiting friends and family rural traveller who visits the countryside for family events or to see family members. Similarly, Zeng and Yi Man Li (2021) distinguished between 'active' rural tourists who participate in sports and adventure-oriented activities, 'gazers' who enjoy relaxing while engaging in outdoor activities, 'relaxers' who are mainly interested in relaxation, and 'rural' tourists who want to experience the rural settings they are visiting. In addition, Devesa et al. (2010) identified four clusters of rural visitors. The first category includes travellers seeking peace and nature, the second category includes travellers interested in cultural experiences, the third category includes travellers from rural areas interested in gastronomy and visiting natural parks, and the fourth category includes travellers who return to rural areas to visit friends and family or take a break at home.

These studies demonstrate the challenge of segmenting rural tourism due to the varied motivations of different visitor segments, which adds to the confusion surrounding the definition of rural tourism. Román et al. (2000) emphasise the increasing need for segmentation due to the range of visitor motives. Therefore, it is essential to conduct research on tourist motivation in rural areas to enhance our understanding and develop effective segmentation policies.

3.2 Tourist satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is the response or choice that tourists make after experiencing an emotion or making a decision (Vassiliadis et al., 2021). In other words, it refers to the response at a specific concentration. According to Khoo (2020), satisfaction generally refers to the emotional state and thoughts that follow the experience of an opportunity. Conversely, gap variables, such as the social

and psychological aspects of individual tourists' expression, behaviour, desires, and external factors like weather and social group interactions, determine satisfaction (Vassiliadis et al., 2021). After using a good or service, a buyer's evaluation can be summed up as satisfaction (Ranjanthran & Mohammed, 2010).

Similarly, Chen and Tsai (2007) defined total satisfaction as the level of overall pleasure experienced by tourists due to the tour's ability to meet their needs, wants, and desires. According to Vassiliadis et al. (2021), tourist satisfaction is a positive perception that travellers form as a result of participating in leisure activities, and different levels of enjoyment can measure it. Tourists will have a positive experience when a destination offers what they need and want (Bayih & Singh, 2020).

The level of visitor experience at the destination is positively correlated with overall visitor satisfaction (Lee, 2007). As tourist satisfaction affects current and future visitor behaviour, it is a critical concern for tourism site administrators (Bayih & Singh, 2020). According to conducted research (Ranjanthran & Mohammed, 2010; Ngoc & Trinh, 2015), contentment is a result of the image and service quality. Additionally, there is a consensus that positive satisfaction positively influences future behaviour by increasing the intention to return and the willingness to recommend the destination to friends and relatives (Ranjanthran & Mohammed, 2010; Bayih & Singh, 2020). However, the findings of the empirical study conducted by Bigne et al. (2001) reveal that visitor satisfaction affects their propensity to promote the place they have visited to friends and family rather than their intention to return. On the other hand, the characteristics of the destination, including the quality of accommodations, accessibility of the location, scenic beauty, weather or climate, and cleanliness, are considered the most significant factors contributing to tourists' overall enjoyment (Vinh, 2013).

4. Methodology

The research instrument (questionnaire) was designed based on the motivation factors and activities identified in the existing travel and tourism literature for rural destinations (Chen & Hsu, 2000; Hyde, 2004; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Kozak, 2002; Littrell et al., 2004). Four motivation factors were used to assess the perceived importance of push items for tourists who visited rural destinations. The responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with one (1) indicating unimportance and five (5) indicating high importance. The final research instrument consisted of two parts: the first part mainly focused on the demographic variables of the respondents, while the second part explored the factors that drive tourists to visit rural areas. The questionnaire was distributed to all guests staying at the Bulungula Lodge during the research period. The lodge manager was responsible for distributing the questionnaires to the guests. Respondents were randomly selected based on their willingness to participate in the study. A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed, and 40 were returned, yielding a return rate of 58%. These 40 questionnaires were used for further analysis. The reason for distributing 70 questionnaires was that the lodge only has ten theme-painted traditionally built Xhosa rondavel huts and three cabins under the trees, which can accommodate a maximum of fifteen people at a time. The research was conducted from July until the end of August 2022. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were employed to present sample characteristics and information pertaining to the motivation to travel variables.

5. Research Results and Discussion

Tables 1 - 4 summarise the details related to the respondents' demographic variables and their characteristics. Among the 40 respondents, there was an equal split between males and females, with 50% each. This equal split between males and females could be interpreted as a result of the destination offering motives that attract both genders. The highest number of tourists fell into the age range of 21 - 30 years, representing 47.5%, followed by those between the ages of 31 - 40, representing 27.5%. The highest number of tourists were employed at 45%, slightly followed by those

who were self-employed at 32.5%. There was an equal split between students and retirees, both at 10%. The study results show that the majority of tourists (62.5%) arrived at the destination using their cars, while 35% used the Lodge shuttle services. The study's results regarding the influence of age on travel to rural areas showed no significant differences in percentages across age groups, which confirms the findings of Vujičić et al. (2020), who found that a tourist's age had no significant influence on travel motivations to any type of destination. The authors claimed that, overall, females had stronger motivations to travel than males. The study's findings of an equal split between genders seem to confirm the findings of Vujičić et al. (2020), who found significant gender differences in travel motivations, with male tourists preferring more recreation and activity in the destination, while female tourists had stronger relaxation and escape-based motives. Rural destinations generally offer both recreational and activity-based motives as well as relaxation and the desire to escape from daily routines. Therefore, the equal split between males and females could be interpreted as a result of the destination offering motives that attract both genders.

Table 1: *Age of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	>20	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	21-30	19	47.5	47.5	52.5
	31-40	11	27.5	27.5	80.0
	41-50	3	7.5	7.5	87.5
	<50	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: *Gender of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	20	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: *Nature of employment of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Self-employed	13	32.5	32.5	77.5
	Retired	4	10.0	10.0	87.5
	Student	4	10.0	10.0	97.5
	Other	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: *Mode of transport to the destination*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	By own car	25	62.5	62.5	62.5
	By Lodge shuttle	14	35.0	35.0	97.5
	Other	1	2.5	2.5	100.0

Total	40	100.0	100.0
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Table 5 provides details of the average stay at the destination. The study's results suggest that, on average, most tourists (40%) planned to stay at the destination between three and five nights. This was followed closely by those who planned to stay between five and seven nights (27.5%). This observation is particularly encouraging for the growth of the economy of Nqileni village since the more nights tourists spend in the area, the more they contribute to the local economy through their spending. Such tourist spending leads to the growth of the local economy and ultimately creates employment opportunities for the locals in the village. The results above are in line with the views of Contini et al. (2009) and Kachniewska (2015). Kumar et al. (2018) argued that rural tourism brings benefits to rural areas such as employment generation, infrastructure development, providing an alternative source of income, and promoting financial and social inclusion.

Table 5: Nights to be spent at the destination

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2 nights	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
	3-5 nights	16	40.0	40.0	55.0
	5-7 nights	11	27.5	27.5	82.5
	Over 7 nights	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 presents the respondents' motivations to travel to a rural destination. The respondents were highly motivated by rest and relaxation, visiting relatives and friends, and enjoying freedom while in the countryside. A brief review of the descriptive statistics was conducted based on the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) scores provided in Table 6. As seen from this table, 'the need for rest and relaxation was the leading motive (M = 4.3309, SD = 0.75085), followed by 'visiting relatives and friends' (M = 4.2721, SD = 0.68277). Enjoying freedom in the countryside was the third highest ranked motive (M = 3.9853, SD = 0.76966), and the least significant motive was business reasons (M = 3.7059, SD = 0.93585). Overall, respondents were least motivated by business reasons. The results show that most tourists (77.5%) visited the destination for rest and relaxation, while 12% visited to visit relatives and friends. Those who visited to enjoy the feeling of freedom while being in the countryside accounted for 8%. These results are in line with the views of (Ye et al., 2021), who contended that most tourists are motivated to travel to rural areas to escape from a perceived mundane environment, explore and evaluate self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relations, and facilitation of social interaction. These findings are further supported by the arguments of Zhou (2018), Zeng and Yi Man Li (2021), who agreed that rural tourists have several similarities, beautiful and peaceful landscapes attract them, vast possibilities for outdoor activities, the hospitality of the local community and the opportunities to be actively involved in their lives, and taste good food and (re)connect with their family (Cai, 2002). The results are further supported by the views of López-Sanz (2021), who contended that a driving force for visitors to travel to rural areas is to experience what is still regarded as the rural idyll. Similarly, Zeng and Yi Man Li (2021) claimed that contact with rural life and nature drives people to travel to rural areas.

Table 6: Results for ranking the perceived importance of motivations to travel to a rural destination

Motivation items	Rank	Mean	Standard deviation
Rest and relaxation	1	4.3309	0.75085
Visiting relatives and friends	2	4.2721	0.68277
Enjoying a feeling of freedom while being in the countryside.	3	3.9853	0.76966

Business reasons	4	3.7059	0.93585
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As shown in Table 7, during their stay in Nqileni village, the respondents were highly interested in experiencing local culture and lifestyle, as well as tasting local food and drinks. Other popular activities included viewing beautiful scenery and hiking or trekking in a natural area. Overall, respondents were least interested in experiencing adventure activities during their stay in Nqileni village. This could be attributed to the need for adventure activities, as this village is well-known for its rich culture and lifestyle rooted in Ubuntu and the care for each other. It is therefore not surprising that the most perceived important activity during a visit to Nqileni village is to experience local culture and lifestyle.

Table 7: Results for perceived importance of activities at a rural destination

Activities at a rural destination	Rank	M	SD
Experiencing local culture and lifestyles	1	4.3132	0.74444
Tasting local food and drinks	2	4.1662	0.79071
Viewing beautiful scenery	3	3.9118	0.88167
Hiking or trekking in a nature area	4	3.6103	0.87070
Experiencing adventure activities	5	3.4559	0.82433

Like the results shown in Table 6, the results in Table 8 indicate that with 78% of respondents, rest and relaxation were the highest motive for travelling to Nqileni village, followed by visiting relatives and enjoying the feeling of freedom in the countryside, both at 10% each. The least common motive for travel was business reasons, with only 3%. It is not surprising that travel for business reasons was the least motivating factor, given that Nqileni village is located in a rural area with limited business opportunities.

Table 8: Motivations to travel to rural areas

Motivations to travel to a rural destination		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rest and relaxation	31	77.5	77.5	77.5
	Visiting relatives and friends	5	12	10	87.5
	Enjoying a feeling of freedom while being in the countryside.	4	8	10	90.0
	Business reasons	1	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 9-12 summarises the respondents' agreement and disagreement with statements regarding their perceptions concerning tourism in rural areas. In Table 8, the tourists were asked to evaluate the diversity of cultural and heritage resources in the area. The results of the study indicate that 47.5% agreed that the destination has diverse cultural/historical attractions, which is less than the number of respondents who were neutral (50%) in this regard. Only a small number of tourists (2.5%) believed that the destination did not have diverse cultural/historical attractions.

Table 9: The culture and heritage of the area

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Neutral	20	50.0	50.0	52.5
	Agree	19	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Pop and Gheres (2013) argue that in rural settings, tourists choose to vacation in these areas in order to engage with the local residents. According to Kastenholz and Lima (2017), interactions between hosts and tourists can sometimes have negative effects, such as imposing limitations or restrictions on tourists. The results of the study, presented in Table 10 above, support the findings of Pop and Gheres (2013), as 77.5% of the tourists confirmed that they found the local community members to be friendly during their interactions. Therefore, the results suggest that the tourists had few negative experiences during their stay in the area, as indicated by the 22.5% of tourists who were neutral about the friendliness of the local community members.

Table 10: *Friendliness of the local people*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
	Agree	31	77.5	77.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The value of money for the tourist is essential since it signifies satisfaction with the holiday experience. Table 11 shows that an overwhelming majority of the tourists (90%) agreed that the holiday at the destination provided them with value for money. Only a tiny percentage (2.5%) believed they did not see value for money in their holiday destination choice. These results support the opinions of Radder et al. (2016), who mentioned that customer perceptions inform management decisions on brand positioning, product differentiation, and market segmentation in terms of value for money. The same authors stated that perceived value significantly influences customer satisfaction, which can lead to recommendations or intention to revisit that area. These results, therefore, suggest that these tourists are most likely to return to the destination in the future.

Table 11: *Value for money at the destination*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Neutral	3	7.5	7.5	10.0
	Agree	36	90.0	90.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The overall satisfaction of tourists with the destination resources and activities is crucial in determining the potential return by the tourists and for the tourists to recommend the destination to friends and relatives. The results in Table 12 of the study confirm that the majority (92.5%) were satisfied with their holiday experience at the destination overall. These findings align with the views of Khoo (2020), who noted that overall satisfaction is the extent of the overall pleasure felt by tourists resulting from the tour's ability to fulfil the desires, expectations, and needs of the tourists. The above view supports an earlier observation by Bayih and Singh (2020), who expressed that tourist satisfaction is a positive perception developed by tourists by engaging in recreational activities and can be measured by a different degree of pleasure. Finally, the results confirm the views of Vassiliadis et al. (2021), who argued that when the destination attributes satisfy visitor needs and wants, tourists will have a pleasant experience.

Table 12: *Overall satisfaction at the destination*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neutral	3	7.5	7.5	7.5

Satisfied	37	92.5	92.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The results in Table 13 show that an overwhelming majority (90%) of the tourists will recommend the destination to their friends and relatives. These results indicate the direct satisfaction of these tourists with their holiday at the destination. The results suggest a combination of other findings of this study, such as the satisfaction of the tourists with the friendliness of the locals, the value for money at the destination, and the availability of cultural and heritage resources. The high percentage (92.5%) of overall satisfaction by the tourists is also a clear indication of why these tourists will recommend the destination to friends and relatives. This suggests a positive word-of-mouth recommendation by the tourists to those they know, and it is an effective destination promotion. These results are supported by the views of Lee (2007), who suggested that overall tourist satisfaction positively correlates with the quality of the tourist experience on the site.

Furthermore, Zeng and Yi Man Li (2021) noted that tourist satisfaction is also an important issue for managers of tourism destinations as it influences the destination choice of tourists and future visitor behaviours. Several studies have revealed that satisfaction results from image and service quality (López-Sanz, 2021). Favourable satisfaction leads to positive future behaviour, such as an increased intention to revisit and a higher willingness to recommend (Zeng & Yi Man Li, 2021).

Table 13: *Recommending the destination to friends and relatives*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neutral	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
Agree	36	90.0	90.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study provide important insights into the characteristics of rural visitors and their reasons for visiting rural areas. According to the study's findings, the rural atmosphere is one of the main factors influencing people to vacation in rural areas. However, the likelihood of business-related activities was the least influential motivator. Travellers sought to escape the city, experience something new and different, unwind, and experience a sense of freedom. Visitors were looking forward to experiencing something different from their daily lives and wanted to interact with nature and their hosts to learn about their way of life. While the rural atmosphere attracts tourists, nearby activities may pique their interest in visiting rural areas. Overall, the respondents' motivation was most likely from experiencing and learning about various cultures, heritage, and ways of life.

Since most people travel during holidays (summer holidays), this study's survey period (July to the end of August) may impact the sample's demographics and, as a result, the findings. To determine whether there are variations in the motivations of rural tourists, it would be helpful to include data from other seasons in future studies. Creating a tourist offer that suits visitors' requirements and wishes can be highly beneficial if one has a better understanding of the primary factors that influence tourists to travel to rural areas. It may be possible to determine how satisfied visitors are with a destination's attributes (such as the natural and constructed environment and the calibre of the services provided, amongst others) by examining their attitudes about the place. The findings of this study provide advice for decision-makers- and policymakers that they might use to persuade visitors to return to the same place or to travel to different rural areas. The research on rural travellers' driving forces can help rural destinations improve their marketing and development plans, which will help them become more competitive in the tourism industry.

7. Declarations

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