



**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE**

**AN EXPLORATION OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS' BEHAVIOUR AND  
RESPONSES TOWARDS LEISURE MARKET SERVICES AND DESTINATION  
CHOICE DURING COVID-19: A CASE OF KWAZULU-NATAL.**

Submitted in fulfilment to the academic requirements of the

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Sisanda Soyikwa, do hereby declare that this research dissertation is my own sole work carried out under the supervision of Dr Rekha Maniram. To the best of my knowledge, I formally declare that all citations and ideas taken from other scholars have been acknowledged accordingly. This work has not been submitted nor been published at any other university.

**Signature**

**Data**

29 November 2023

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to God and myself. I thank God for the strength, wisdom, and resilience that He continues to embed within me.

I thank myself for being strong and fighting anxiety and depression throughout my research study. I thank myself for living with a rare chronic disease so boldly, remaining optimistic even when there was no hope and knowing that giving up is not an option.

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***“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay” Habakkuk 2:03.***

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous studies confirm that the tourism industry is prone to unforeseen circumstances. Globally, the pandemic has developed a radical and inescapable change in the world and has had a severe impact on the tourism industry as it witnessed a significant shift in travel behaviour both locally and internationally. Internationally, governments imposed strict regulations to curb the spread of the pandemic such as closing their borders and restricting international travel. Equally, domestic travel was restricted as there were national lockdowns implemented which limited peoples' movements within their country of residence. Hence, the COVID-19 pandemic adjusted how domestic leisure tourists plan their travel and travel behaviour when preparing for their leisure trips. According to the literature, during a pandemic, tourists prefer going to places that are remote and not crowded while some seek destinations that include technological innovations to eliminate human contact. Furthermore, the literature shows that whilst there are several factors that influence the behaviour of tourists', this study focused on the social, situational, personal, and economic factors and these factors fall under external and internal factors. There are numerous scholars focusing on international tourist behaviour, however, limited literature is available regarding domestic tourist behaviour especially with the KwaZulu-Natal context. This study adopted a convergent mixed- method approach by using a purposive sample of 10 tourism role-players that represented the qualitative data as well as a snowball sample of 89 domestic leisure tourists representing the quantitative data. Primary data was obtained through the administration of online questionnaires as well as through conducting virtual interviews. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and the qualitative data was analysed using NVIVO. According to the findings, there were several changes in domestic tourist behaviour during the pandemic. The study highlights risk aversion behaviour and extreme safety precautions from domestic tourists as a primary priority when making holiday bookings during a pandemic. Furthermore, both qualitative and quantitative data reveal that many domestic tourists experienced financial difficulties that led to booking cancellations and lesser participation in tourism offerings amidst the pandemic. Moreover, the primary and the secondary data concur that there was a greater preference for domestic travel during and after the pandemic. Notably, there was a minority of young domestic tourists who still preferred crowded spaces amid the pandemic. This study provides opportunities for Destination

Marketing Organisations (DMOs) and tourism role-players to focus on economic and psychosocial sustainable strategies that will promote domestic tourism during a pandemic.

Key words: Domestic tourism, Domestic leisure tourist, Tourist destination, Tourist behaviour, COVID-19 pandemic, Tourism Industry.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<b>COVID-19</b>	- Coronavirus disease
<b>DMO</b>	- Destination Management Organisations
<b>FEDHASA</b>	- the Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa
<b>GDP</b>	- Gross Domestic Product
<b>KZN</b>	- KwaZulu-Natal
<b>SA</b>	- South Africa
<b>SPSS</b>	-Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>Stats SA</b>	- Statistics South Africa
<b>TKZN</b>	- Tourism KwaZulu-Natal
<b>UNWTO</b>	- United Nations World Tourism Organisation
<b>VFR</b>	-Visiting Friends and Relatives
<b>WHO</b>	- World Health Organisation
<b>WTTC</b>	- World Travel and Tourism Council

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

***Domestic tourist:*** People who travel within the boarder of their own countries.

***Hotel:*** A temporary ranted accommodation.

***International tourist:*** People travelling outside the borders of the countries in which they reside in.

***Pandemics, epidemics and endemic:*** It is important to first know what an epidemic is areas it explains a pandemic. An epidemic is when many people of a certain region or community have been affected by the same disease; while a pandemic is an epidemic that has managed to spread into multiple continents or countries and lastly, endemic is only related to a certain population or country.

***Service Providers, tourism principles:*** These terms are used interchangeably in the study, and they are referring to different service providers or companies that fall under tourism.

***Tourist behaviour:*** the way in which tourists react or conduct themselves from when they choose tourism service, or destination to when they abandon them.

***Tourists, guests, customers, consumers, and visitors:*** These terms are used interchangeably in this study. It is any paying customer that consumes the facilities of the hotel.



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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Globally, the tourism industry witnessed a significant shift in the travel behaviour of both local and international travellers amid the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Consequently, governments across the globe introduced measures such as lockdowns and international travel restrictions, in some instances, local travel restrictions, as means of curbing the spread of the virus. Hassan and Soliman (2021: 01); Arbulu, Razumova, Rey-Maqueira and Sastre (2021:02) affirm that the outbreak of COVID-19 cornered governments to make strenuous decisions such as policies which affected both domestic and international travel and tourism specific policies that mainly aimed at promoting domestic tourism while waiting for international travel to recover. Due to the decisions taken by governments across the world as response strategies try to stop the spread of the virus all industries have been negatively hit by COVID-19 and the tourism industry is not immune to this. Rayvisic and Melphon (2012:02,07) accede to Arbulu *et al.* (2021:02) by making it evident in their study that domestic tourism is likely to make respective economic and socio-cultural benefactions to the host country. Domestic tourism is said to account for 80% of the world's tourism and helps protect the country's tourism business from the unstable international tourism business. However, Arbulu, Razumova, Rey-Maqueira and Sastre (2021:02) declare that even though domestic tourism plays a vital role, destination managers and governments mostly prefer international tourism business since international tourists come with foreign currency to the economy and they spend more than domestic tourists. Consequently, whilst the benefits of international tourism are acknowledged, they do not benefit the whole economy while on the other hand domestic tourism contributes to local development thus resulting in minimizing the chances of external leakages.

Only a few studies were conducted, that mainly, examined factors affecting the behaviour of international tourists during a pandemic (Kim, Hall, and Bonn 2021:02). As presented from the previously mentioned studies, there appears to be a dearth of studies addressing the effects of a pandemic on the behaviour of domestic tourists, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN); this study addresses such a gap. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to explore the effects of a pandemic on domestic tourist behaviour towards the purchase of tourism services and choice of destination. This study will assist the hospitality and tourism industry including other related

role players and will provide a deeper understanding of domestic tourists' behaviour and responses during unforeseen calamities in responding adequately to travellers' needs during such circumstances.

## **1.2 Research context**

Across the globe, Manzoor, Wei, Asif, Haq, and Rehman (2019:01), declare that the tourism industry has made a significant contribution to the economy as well as a significant influence on sustainable tourism. Moreover, Rogerson and Rogerson (2020:01) posit that the tourism industry is prone to unforeseen circumstances. These unforeseen circumstances may include internal or external factors. According to the scope of this study, the internal variables will be restricted to the personal factors and the external factors will include only the situational, socio-economic, technological, and economic. Globally, the pandemic has created a radical and inescapable change in the world and had a severe impact on the tourism industry (Chang, McAleer and Ramos 2020). According to UNWTO (2020), international tourist arrivals are said to have declined by 72% during the pandemic period from January to October 2020. Given the travel limitations imposed by several countries such as lockdowns and travel bans, many tourists had to cancel their bookings thus heavily impacting on international travel (Schuler 2020).

A study led by Bratic, Radivojevic, Stojiljkovic, Simovic, Juvan, Lesjak and Podovsovnik (2021:09) points out that due to COVID-19 most tourists became reluctant and hesitant to travel internationally, instead showed willingness and positive intentions to travel locally. UNWTO (2020) confirms that domestic tourists are mainly responsible for boosting the tourism industry since it cannot compensate for the losses incurred by international travel during a pandemic. A study conducted by Osti and Nawa (2020:01), state that when tourists make choices regarding purchasing a holiday, these choices are mainly based on their loyalty towards the destination and the actual image of the destination. There is not much literature available on domestic tourism during a pandemic, especially in KwaZulu-Natal. Hence, this study seeks to explore the impact COVID-19 has on the behaviour of domestic travellers utilizing tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal and their perceptions of KZN as a tourist destination during such occurrences. The geographical context of the study is KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. KZN is found on the Southeast region of South Africa along the warm Indian Ocean, this province shares borders with 3 other countries which include Lesotho, Mozambique, and Swaziland. Moreover, given



the limitation of time, the study focused specifically on some of the destinations situated in KwaZulu-Natal.

A study led by Makhaola and Gerwel Proches (2017:05), makes it evident that most domestic people chose to visit KwaZulu-Natal because of its' warm weather when compared to most provinces, its good geographical location, the warm beaches caused by the warm Mozambique current. The well-developed infrastructure, beautiful coastline and warm weather are predominantly what entices millions of international and domestic tourists to KwaZulu-Natal (Hastings and Sunkara 2019). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2018:02) states that many governments use domestic travel to reduce poverty within the country, improving local infrastructure, and creating employment.

### **1.3 Research problem**

The tourism industry plays a vital role in global economies, while it is very sensitive towards external factors such as adverse environments, and disease outbreaks (Donaire, Gali and Camprubi 2021:01; Yehia 2019). Kautoulas (2015:02) states that the tourism services or products offered by the tourism role players include both tangible and intangible offerings, these products are divided into two categories namely the 'total tourist products' which includes everything that travellers consume in the duration of their trip and 'specific products'. The aforementioned special products can be individually sold to tourists, these include transportation, attractions, accommodation, and other tourist offerings. According to Stats SA (2020), it is noted that more than 15.8 million foreign visitors came to SA in 2019, and just less than 5 million people came in 2020: signifying a 68% decline of visitors to South Africa. This 68% decline in inbound travel reflects significant changes in travel behaviour during unforeseen events, which forms the basis of this study. Li, Zhang, Liu, Kazak, and Wen (2020:04), claim that tourism is highly reliant on individuals moving from one place to another, and that movement is dependent upon tourist's behaviour towards situations such as disease outbreaks. For, example, a study by Bratic *et al.* (2021:09) confirms that peoples' travel habits and behaviour change in a time of a pandemic to remain safe and to protect their possessions and well-being. Therefore, exploring the behaviour of domestic tourists and their responses towards tourism offerings and destination choice during COVID-19 is the gap that the study intended to address. Nhamo, Dube and Chikodzi (2020) point out that COVID-19 led to enormous hotel

booking cancellations, resulting in many hospitality establishments experiencing financial losses, consequently forcing some hotels to shut down. Many tourism businesses suffered financial losses due to the limited tourism consumption and there is an inevitable change in the behaviour of tourists towards their travel behaviour, their perceptions about visiting tourist destinations and what they prefer doing due to the pandemic (Ivanova, Ivanov and Ivanov 2020:02). As a result, this study sought to explore the factors that influence destination tourists' choice amidst pandemics. Similarly, the findings of Gursoy and Chi (2020:02) reveals that tourists are unwilling or reluctant to travel or book in any hotels, during a period of a pandemic. However, Ivanova *et al.* (2020: 03) make it evident that there is a change in how people travel because after the lockdown many people were willing to travel but only felt safe travelling within the borders of their own country and preferred road travel over flights when travelling. Taking the aforementioned into consideration, the enabling and inhibiting factors that influenced the procurement of tourism offerings during COVID-19 were analysed, as they are crucial to understanding changes in behaviour. Moreover, the activities that are foreseen to gain more popularity during the pandemic and during the ease of the lockdowns are the ones that are viewed as safe such as camping and other outdoor activities that allow for natural physical distancing. Like many places in the world, KZN, too, was severely affected by the outbreak of the Coronavirus (Somduth 2021). Bassil (2014), Adeloje (2018) make it evident in their study that people will not be willing to visit destinations that will compromise their safety and security. Furthermore, Bratic *et al* (2021:09) state that due to COVID-19 safety precautions, travellers plan to change their destinations, travel activities, and accommodation, and travel for a shorter period or cancel their travel plans. In addition, Makhaye and Mkhize (2020) reported on Business Day that due to COVID-19, about 10, 000 regional and domestic visitors had to cancel their bookings due to the cancellation of the annual African Tourism Indaba held in the city of Durban. Hence, safety and security are some of the main reasons that influence tourists' decisions. COVID-19 also had a negative financial impact as some people lost their jobs while others experienced pay cuts, raising the question of affordability that deters people from acquiring tourism services due to the lack of disposable income (Horowitz, Brown and Minkin 2021). Various scholars such as Bratic *et al.* (2021), Ivanova *et al.* (2020), Gursoy and Chi (2020) have researched behavioural changes of international tourists during catastrophes. Although some studies have been conducted on domestic tourism within South Africa (Matiza and Slabbert 2022; Rogerson and Rogerson 2021; Nyikana and Bama 2023) there are limited studies that examines domestic tourists' behaviour during a pandemic in the context of

KwaZulu-Natal. Hence the researcher intends to investigate and address how the prevalence of a pandemic at a given destination may have a possible influence on domestic tourists' behaviour. The fact that domestic tourism is equally considered as an essential economic driver; this study is driven to understand how tourists respond to unforeseen calamities and how it can contribute new knowledge that will aid the formulation of future tourism policies. It may also provide insight into how tourism role players can better plan for risk and disasters to avoid and minimize having a drastic impact on the industry similar to what the COVID-19 had.

#### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The study aims to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Study Objectives**

- To examine personal factors, economic, situational, and technological factors that influence domestic travel behaviour to KZN before and during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- To assess the extent of changes in domestic tourists' behaviour towards KZN and destination choice during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- To determine the enabling and inhibiting factors that influence the procurement of tourism services by domestic tourists during the COVID-19,
- To explore the extent to which economic, personal, situational, and technological factors influence the destination choice of domestic tourists visiting KZN before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **1.5 South African Tourism during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Tourism in South Africa is regarded as the 'new gold' and because of the pandemic, the industry continued to struggle. The biggest reason for this is that unlike other industries, tourism revenues are permanently lost as unsold capacity cannot be resold like how other industries with tangible goods may market their products at a discount and get some income (Bama and Nyikana 2021:02).

The tourism and hospitality industry has been a major employment hub in South Africa with about 700 000 people employed in the year 2019 alone (Mbandlwa 2020:03). The author further states that the need for social distancing and safety measures was necessary to prevent the

spread of COVID-19. This affected the entertainment industry as it mainly involved the gathering of many people thus leaving people exposed to being infected by the virus. This led to many entertainment areas and tourism events losing business and closing which in turn meant that people lost jobs and livelihoods. To sustain business activities, some entertainment companies introduced online entertainment at a very low economic return; since many customers did not pay like they would when physically attending tourism activities. Mbandlwa (2020: 09), mentions that the pandemic has compelled the world towards a motion to technological advancements including the 4th industrial to minimise human contact. These innovations were evident in promoting online communication, virtually monitoring people, and being able to virtually track infected individuals without physical contact. However, this does not serve as a fool-proof solution to the pandemic but rather assists in limiting the spread as people can use the available technology to carry out some of their duties and communicate with the outside world, however, it leaves those who cannot afford, the senior citizens and those without the infrastructure at a disadvantage. South Africa already had a greater number of people living in poverty and the stay home policy worsened the situation because it meant no income for many people this thus led to no disposable income to participate in tourism activities (Mbandlwa 2020:10). According to the research conducted by Stats SA (2018:58,59), expresses that most people could not take overnight trips due to insufficient finances. It further states that in South Africa most domestic travellers (88.7%) book their trips independently while a notion of them (8.2%) use travel agents and only (1.2%) were found to be using tour operators for the year 2018. The majority of leisure trips are booked independently using the Internet followed by telephone bookings. Dimaza (2014:40,41), states that the economic status of a country should be considered as a starting point to assess the threats and opportunities within the marketplace as this determines the spending patterns of consumers. For example, when inflation increases tourism commodities or services without a raise on the salaries of consumers this may well result in a reduction in buying power (Dimaza 2014:40,41; Statista Research Department 2023). Hence, a drop in disposable income may caution consumers' buying habits.

According to Hassan and Soliman (2021: 01), Arbulu, Razumova, Rey-Maqueira and Sastre (2021: 02) affirm that the outbreak of COVID-19 cornered governments to make strenuous decisions such as policies which affected both domestic and international travel and tourism specific policies that mainly aimed at promoting domestic tourism while waiting for international travel to recover. Due to the decisions taken by governments across the globe as response strategies to try to stop the spread of the virus all industries have been negatively hit by COVID-

19 and the tourism industry is not immune to this. One of the solutions that might be adopted to make sure the industry survives is to promote domestic tourism as it takes a while for the international tourism business to recover due to it being more restricted. Rayviscic and Melphon (2012:02,07) accedes to the above authors by making it evident in their study that domestic tourism is likely to make respective economic and socio-cultural benefactions to the host country. Domestic tourism is said to account for 80% of the world's tourism and helps protect the country's tourism business from the unstable international tourism business. However, Arbulu, Razumova, Rey-Maqueira and Sastre (2021: 02) declare that even though domestic tourism plays a vital role, destination managers and governments mostly prefer international tourism business since international tourists come with foreign currency to the economy and they spend more than domestic tourists. Even though the above-mentioned benefits of international tourism, it does not benefit the whole economy while on the other hand, domestic tourism contributes to local development thus resulting in minimizing the chances of external leakages.

Governments have made the promotion of domestic tourism a survival strategy during crises that prevent international travel, and this thus makes it paramount for Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to understand destination social responsibility as it plays a crucial role in tourists' attitudes and behaviour (Hassan and Soliman 2020:01,03). Tourism policymaker's ought to solutions that will sustain the tourism industry during catastrophes. One of these solutions has been the promotion of domestic tourism and at the same time deploying all the safety measures prescribed. The authors Loureiro and Kastenzholz (2011:03) further goes to mention that it is important that DMOs monitor the reputation of a destination as it can be used to estimate tourists' behaviour and their loyalty. The link between destination reputation and catastrophes is that crises may pose a negative impact towards the destination, however, this is not always the case as a strong destination reputation has the power to suppress the negativity imposed by certain crises (Helm and Tolsdorf 2013:02). As per Moukaddam (2019) due to different unforeseen catastrophes, disease outbreaks and pandemics that have occurred over the years, people have developed fear and inconsistent behaviour. With each outbreak having its magnitude, the fear of people is aroused by swift pandemics, and this may lead travellers to adopt protective behaviours as a means of escaping the risk and fear. Hassan and Soliman (2020:02) further state that trust can be divided into two categories; firstly attitude, belief and/or expectation followed by uncertainty and vulnerability. It is human nature to consider trust as a feeling of security and willingness to rely on other things or humans this then

means that we can simply say that trust is a psychological attitude and multi-dimensional belief consisting of two sides namely cognitive and affective.

The report issued by TKZN (2021:06), the main source of domestic tourism visitors in South Africa were Gauteng followed by KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and lastly Western Cape. Furthermore, in the year 2020 majority (48%) of domestic tourists travelled mainly to visit friends and family widely known as VFR. TKZN Strategy (2010-2014: 05-06), stated that TKZN was the first to be recognised as one of the United Nations World Tourism Organisations also known as UNWTO's best Destination Marketing Organisation and this was a step towards their vision which is to position the province as Africa's leading destination for both domestic and international tourists. The results of the study carried by TKZN (2010-2014: 05,6), show that the majority of 41.9% took at least two to three trips a year domestically. However, according to TKZN (2021:07), in the year 2020, there was a significant drop throughout the year of people who arrived in KZN using air transportation, especially in March. Moreover, the stats show that domestic travel to KZN fell by 38.5% in 2020 and the majority of those who continued traveling were from within the province.

Most respondents illustrated that they mostly relied on and trusted television as their main source of information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic followed by those who trusted online news channels and the minority relied on the information shared by their loved ones and the announcements by the president of the country (Bana and Nyikana 2020:07).

In a study led by Bana and Nyikana (2020: 08), it was revealed that about 76% of the respondents who were domestic tourists in South Africa said that they were waiting for the lockdown to be eased so that they could travel to other provinces or that they were making arrangements of travelling domestically shortly, however, this cannot be guaranteed as it depends on how they feel as they may have fear closer to their traveling date while others may even become more eager to travel because of the mundane restrictions. Moreover, some may wait even after the pandemic to see what happens first before they travel.

The study led by Dzikiti and Leonard (2016:02) reveals that there are socio-economic problems in South Africa that hindered many individuals especially youth from participating in domestic tourism even before the pandemic. The pandemic has exacerbated the financial limitations imposed by the tourism industry especially since many people lost their businesses, jobs, and some with cut salaries. Moreover, a lot of families are dependent on social grants provided by the government, and this means no disposable income, and many are battling to just meet their

daily basic needs. Bana and Nyikana (2020:10) support the aforementioned authors by saying that a minimum wage of R3 500 in South Africa also does not help the industry much because it means people have no spare money for leisure.

It is important for the tourism stakeholders to re-assess and re-evaluate domestic tourism especially because it is the one being used to try and keep the industry alive in the absence of international tourism. It would be prudent for the policies and new strategies to focus on the travellers' needs for safety and evoke the desire to travel again (Bana and Nyikana 2020:12).

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the demand and supply of products globally, the demand for essential things such as food and medical supplies may rise in turn non-essential goods demand may drop drastically. The pandemic has also led to delays in imports and exports or withdrawing orders and on the other side travellers are cancelling their trips and the low levels of stock markets reducing peoples' income making them careful about where and how they spend their money (Bakar and Rosbi 2020:03).

## **1.6 KwaZulu-Natal as a tourist destination**

As per the Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Annual Report (2019/20:32), the number of domestic tourists to the province has shown an increase since the year 2017 and there has been consistency in the growth of holiday purpose trips taken to the province and in 2019 there were about 1 600 000 holiday trips taken around the province. Not forgetting that the international number of visitors to the province of KwaZulu-Natal has shown an increase of 4% when compared to 2014.

According to Rasool, Maqbool and Tarique (2021:02) states that international tourism has been growing at a very fast pace, however, the global economy is not showing the same growing rate, and it is very seasonal as international tourists do not travel all year around. Moreover, the TKZN report (2021:12) reveals that KwaZulu-Natal aims to focus its domestic target market on high-life enthusiasts, spontaneous budget explorers, seasoned leisure seekers, new horizon families and well-to-do families. The report further states that internationally the province uses its marketing strategy to attract families that want to explore, NSSA (Next Stop South Africa) wanderlusts and beaches. As per Dube (2013:32,54), the KwaZulu-Natal province has an advantage due to its natural attractions which include good weather conditions, beaches, wildlife, mountains, its rich culture, and heritage which makes it different and unique from other

provinces and more especially because of its well-known brand "Zulu" and its ability to host major events. Senoamadi (2021:33,34) and the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal (2008: 25,26,28,108), further reveals that some of the weaknesses that the province has include crime rates and the roles and responsibilities of government authorities are not clear thus leading to inefficacy. The South African and KwaZulu-Natal tourism industry specifically ought to adopt innovative developments that will make the destination more sustainable, amplify the travel and accommodation orderliness and give growth to its ecotourism components. Senoamadi (2021:12), Balkaran and Maharaj (2013:03), further mention that South Africa was rated 66th out of 139 countries and the main concerning issues that were discovered included safety and security and health. For example, Phoofole (2019:114), voices out that the recent floods also impacted the tourism industry of KwaZulu-Natal negatively and the industry is already vulnerable, and the impact of these floods exacerbates the situation. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to explore the effects of a pandemic on domestic tourist behaviour towards the purchase of tourism services and choice of destination.

## 1.7 Contents of the Research Report

**Table 1.1 Structure of the dissertation**

CHAPTERS	CONTENT
<b>Chapter One</b>	This is the introductory chapter that provides the contextual background, problem statement, aim, and objectives. The chapter also outlines the contextual framework and dissertation outline.
<b>Chapter Two</b>	A literature review is what will be discussed on this chapter. This will be done by looking at the existing secondary data that is related to the study.
<b>Chapter Three</b>	This chapter highlights the research methodology used in the study.
<b>Chapter Four</b>	Presentation, analysis and discussion of primary data will be the main focus of this chapter.
<b>Chapter Five</b>	Conclusion and recommendations for future research

Source: Self-generated.



## **1.8 Conclusion**

The chapter served as an introduction to whole study by outlining the background of the study, the aim and objectives that will be addressed in the study. The conceptual framework of the study was also presented in this chapter. The next chapter undertakes both national and international literature related to the study topic and explains different themes that apply to the research study.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the background, the problem statement, the context, and the key objectives under study. This chapter seeks to explore the conceptual fundamentals of the study and presents other relevant studies that talk about a similar subject that the researcher aims to address in the study. Given this, Chapter 2 integrates previous and similar studies that discuss the impacts of COVID-19 and other unforeseen events on the tourism industry.

COVID-19 has changed the way in which people plan their travel and how they behave during their trips (Ku, Um, Byon, Kim and Lee 2021:01; Calderon, Esquivel, Garcia, and Lozano 2021:01). Internationally, travel was significantly impacted by the pandemic since countries closed their borders, restricting inbound or outbound travel. According to the report issued by the National Department of Tourism (2021:10), domestic tourism experienced the same as the aforementioned; as there were national lockdowns implemented which restricted peoples' movements within their own country of residence (Matiza and Kruger 2021:02). On the onset, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about new ways in how tourist respond to travel and travel change (Calderon *et al.*, 2021:02). For such reasons, numerous attempts have been dedicated to probing the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the respective changes in travel behaviour (Sigala, 2020; Zheng *et al.*, 2021). Studies show that disease outbreaks instil fear in tourists of being infected by the disease or encountering jeopardy while travelling and this thus causes them to change their travel behaviour and travel plans; eventually resulting in a decline in tourism (Shi and Li 2016:06).

The researcher saw it necessary to explore and understand the behaviour of tourists and what motivates them to travel, especially when faced with catastrophic occurrences such as pandemics that may threaten their lives and well-being. There is not enough literature written by scholars regarding the impact of pandemics in South Africa (Matiza and Kruger 2022:03), therefore, this creates a gap which the researcher is trying to address as there is very little that is known about domestic tourism yet research on international tourism continues to grow such as they study by (Karabult, Bilgin, Demir and Doker 2020; Ghosh 2021). The researcher will further address the changes in tourist behaviour due to unforeseen events.

## 2.2. Conceptual Framework

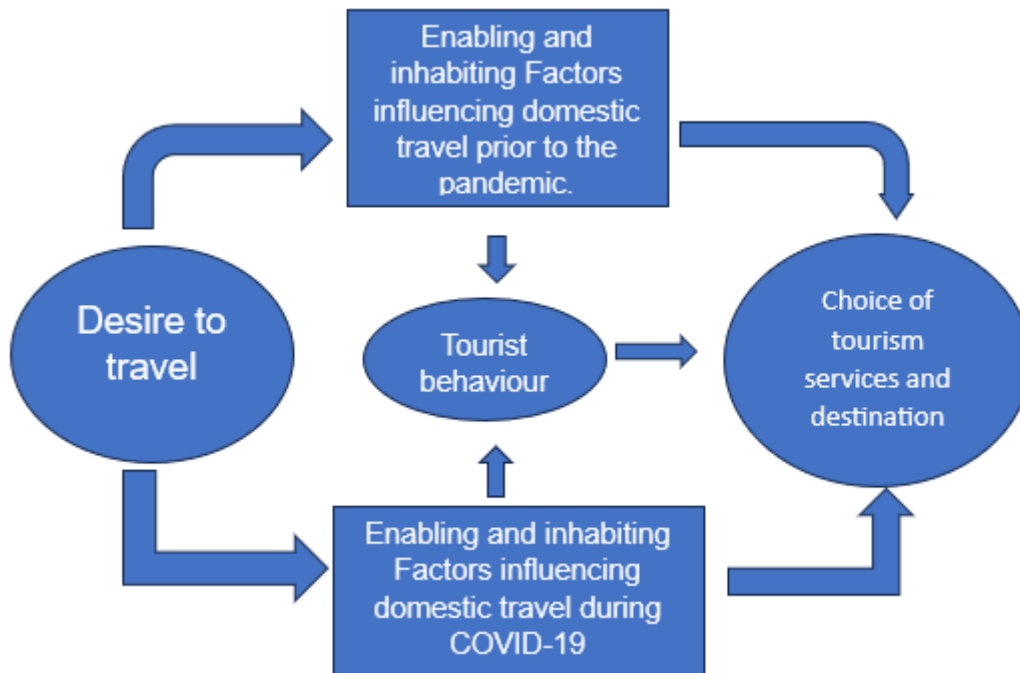


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: (Authors own compilation).

Conceptual framework is a network of concepts that have been linked together to draw a bigger map of possible relationships (Tamene 2016:51). The researcher used this framework provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study. Moreover, this theory served as a guide to the search study, attain research goals, and also help the researcher develop research questions appropriate to answer the study objectives (Imanda 2014:189; Tamene 2016:51). As illustrated in the above conceptual framework, travel begins not only when tourists arrive at their destination but with the initial desire and motivation to travel. This desire prompts travellers to assess various enabling and inhibiting factors, such as economic conditions, personal preferences and safety concerns. These enabling and inhibiting factors have an influence on the travel decisions, and these will reflect on their behaviour towards tourism services and destinations. This conceptual framework was used as a blueprint that guided the literature review of this study below.

### 2.2 Understanding Tourist Behaviour

Juvan, Omerzel and Maravic (2017:02), Bansal (2019:02) state that tourist behaviour is the consumption of daily use and unusual products and services not within the usual environment.

Tourist behaviour involves the way travellers purchase, consume, and abandon tourism offerings. Lastly, it is made evident that the behaviour of tourists is very important as it can be used to make future predictions of tourist behaviour and the behaviour of one tourist can influence others thus setting certain behavioural norms within the tourism industry. Juvan, Omerzel and Maravic (2017:01,03), contends that the purchasing of tourism products and services is to be considered different as it is made up of various factors and it is an investment whereby travellers are purchasing something they cannot preview and may not be able to get any returns as they are purchasing an experience and often this is purchased using savings money. Cohen, Prayag and Moital (2014:05), identifies some of the most fundamental aspects to consider when studying how tourists behave is understanding the attitudes, loyalty, trust, perceptions, decision-making, motivations, values, and personality of the travellers. Moreover, Bansal (2019:04) postulates that attitudes are related to the way tourists view the world and influence how tourists behave, while perceptions are mainly mental impressions regarding the tourism services or destination. Additionally, travel motivators are the reason why tourists have the desire to travel (Bansal2019:04), and lastly, images are impressions, beliefs and ideas that are related to either the tourism services or the destination. The study conducted by Chebli and Said (2020: 03) found that poor safety and security, health issues safety is most likely to deter tourists from visiting such destinations, (Kusumaningrum and Wachyuni 2020:02-04) and would rather opt for destinations that are more equipped with facilities and infrastructure that is aligned with the requisite and expected health protocols. The aforesaid authors also state that it is paramount for tourism role players to know what motivates tourists to travel as motivation is the main reason why people decide to travel in the first place, the need for travel and tourism may be driven by security needs, self-esteem, physiological needs, desire to rest or to seek adventure. Furthermore, before the pandemic, people looked for destinations that offered better services and affordability. However, in recent times, tourists have been willing to pay more for much safer accommodation, and they now favour destinations with less human contact (Atadil and Lu 2021:04,14; Musa, Thirumoorthy and Doshi 2011:02).

As tourists are more knowledgeable, experienced, and flexible about travel, their travel decisions and choices become more demanding on improved offerings that meet their desires Juvan *et al.* (2017:03). Juvan *et al.* (2017:04), further advise that decision-making made by tourists may vary, from planned to impulsive types of decision-making. The perception that tourists have about the destination will affect how they behave (Chebli and Said 2020: 03). For example, perception is usually associated with negative factors such as crime, terrorism,

disease outbreaks and safety and security. Lu, Dean, Suhartanto, Hussein, Suwatno, Kusdibyo, Chen and Gunawan (2021:06), affirms that due to the mostly intangible nature of tourism, often the expectations tourists have regarding the tourism destination, or the offerings may either be fulfilled, unfulfilled or their perceptions can be exceeded. These expectations are based on past experiences, word of mouth, sources of marketing and motivations (Lu, Dean, Suhartanto, Hussein, Suwatno, Kusdibyo, Chen and Gunawan 2021:07; Juvan *et al.*, 2017:04). Importantly, the consideration of tourists' expectations is necessary as it should account for the co-existence of loyalty and trust that tourists hold towards a destination. However, when it comes to tourist behaviour; loyalty may not be extended if there is no trust involved (Juvan *et al.*, 2017:04). Other studies (Lu *et al.*, 2021:03), claim that the demographics of tourists such as education, age, gender have an impact on how they enjoy the tourism offerings which may lead to loyalty which is a form of behavioural outcome. Lu *et al.* (2021:02), suggest tourist attractions ought to offer good value for money, and develop and sustain a great performance of their attractions since it is necessary when developing tourist loyalty towards a particular destination. Furthermore, the perceived value, good quality experience and the whole contentment of tourists regarding their trip ascertain the loyalty of tourists towards that specific offering (Lu *et al.*, 2021:02). Lu *et al.* (2021:02) further argue, that tourists are mostly considered to be loyal if they purchase or render travel products within a certain time and therefore some people will choose certain travel offerings regardless of the negative circumstance since they are loyal to it. However, Juvan *et al.* (2017:04) state that tourists can be loyal to the providers of tourism offerings from different destinations at the same it, they may also be loyal to various service providers who offer the same tourism products and services and lastly, they may be only loyal to one holiday form. Lehto, O'Leary and Morrison (2004:03), state that tourists prefer places they are familiar with as they reduce the risk perception thus increasing their willingness to purchase the offering as they are comfortable with it.

Juvan *et al.* (2017:04) also believe that motivation does have an impact on tourist loyalty. According to Utama and Susanto (2016:03), motivation originally comes from the word motive which leads to someone deciding to act towards something. Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2012:03) state that motivation is essential in gauging the behaviour of tourists as it presents reasons as to why they go on holiday and will also impact the way they behave while on their trip. Kusumaningrum and Wachyuni (2020:03), further state that often tourists may not pay attention to their motivators for taking trips. tourist motivation is part of the psychological factors which influence how tourists behave (Bayih and Singh 2020:02). Motivation is also related to past

experiences, the preferences of an individual and the information they have gathered from their family and friends and via the internet which impacts their behaviour (Kusumaningrum *et al.*, 2020:03). The previously mentioned authors further state that travel and tourism motivations are categorised into four groups; namely, the physical and physiological motivation which is mostly related to a person's body and mind, to relax or take a break from their busy daily lives such as work or study hard. Secondly, the cultural motivation is whereby people travel with the aim of learning more about the cultures of other places, their customs, art, and traditions of that destination. Thirdly, social motivation also referred to as interpersonal motivation is when people travel to seek to meet and socialize with new people, lastly, the fantasy motivation which we can also call prestige or status motivation is when people want to get away from their daily norm of life and may also be related to an individual wanting to be appreciated and wanting to attain their aspirations.

According to WHO (2020), when travelling some personal health risks may occur, and these risks ought to be understood by travellers before they even embark on the actual trip especially when travelling to unfamiliar destinations and appropriate precautions must be taken to reduce the level of the risk. Studies confirm that when tourists are aware of the certain level of risk that they may encounter, they tend to change the way how they behave by being more logical with their decision making as they come up with strategies to avoid the risk exposure (Kusumaningrum and Wachyuni 2020:07; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty 2009:02).

Furthermore, Vuuren and Slabbert (2011:296) mention that tourists' behaviour is influenced by a range of variables which are likely to fluctuate before, during and after they travel. Essentially, tourist participation and acquisition of tourism activities contribute significantly to the economy at large, since income is generated by the hosting country; there is an increase in employment, a high contribution towards the GDP, improved infrastructure of the hosting country, and foreign currency may be earned, representing tourism as one of the main drivers of the economy (Yehia, 2019). For example, according to (Wen, Kozak, Yang and Liu, 2020:05), before the pandemic, the lifestyle of Chinese people usually travelled in large groups especially during public holidays and dining in busy restaurants what they also enjoyed doing. However, the novel coronavirus has introduced lots of changes, forcing Chinese people to stay at home, and gatherings were postponed or cancelled (Wen *et al.* 2020:05).

However, SteelFisher, McMurtry, Caporello, McGowan, Schafer, Lubell, Friedman, Allen, Shockey, Grady and Ben-Porath (2021:10) posit that since there has been a relaxation of the

lockdown regulations there is an increased demand for domestic travel since many people in need of leisure breaks prefer to travel locally. Consequently, for many hospitality entities, this creates a potential opportunity to build on communication strategies and advance the knowledge of the public about COVID-19 and the precautions to follow for safe traveling. Moreover, Saito and Strehlau (2018:19), state that there are four categories which tourists' make their destination choices upon, these mainly include external variables such as the tourists' culture, friends, family, and the enticing factors of the destination that may make it differ from other tourist destinations. Additionally, internal variables such as lifestyle, motivation, risk reduction, values and attitudes may play a role when travellers choose a destination to visit. Furthermore, the authors state that the reason for the tourists' travelling and their experiences will determine their destination choice. The travel behaviour of tourists changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Irawan, Belgiawan, Joewono, Bastariato, Rizki and Ilahi 2021:03). Whilst international destinations are unable to recuperate from the financial losses incurred during a pandemic, it can, however, rely on domestic tourism for financial sustainability during this pandemic (Panashe 2020). For instance, in South Africa, Stats SA (2021:09) found that although a total of 3 930 440 inhabitants travelled within the country in January 2020 there was a significant drop of 86.75% in domestic travel during January 2021.

However, SteelFisher *et al.* (2021), make it evident that most tourists are more than willing to travel to domestic destinations regardless of the pandemic. Moreover, the study conducted by Seyidov and Adomaitiene (2016:113,115), states that for tourism companies to facilitate their decision-making process they first need to understand the behaviour of tourists and what motivates them to travel. Osti and Nawa (2020:04) assures that there is some notable change when it comes to destination choice during a pandemic and tourists now prefer to visit natural surroundings as they are more open thus enabling distancing and they are clean with fresh air. Chebli and Said (2020:06), further state that during the pandemic tourists prefer less popular destinations and that they will in future choose less crowded destinations is the outcome of their internal motivation behaviour which is inclusive of fear and anxiety. For instance, during a pandemic, tourists may express fear towards being too physically close to strangers who have an undisclosed health status. The outcome of the aforesaid may create economic opportunities for less popular destinations and their managers must maximise this opportunity as they will grow their visitor numbers and economy. Equally, Nuttah, Roma, Nigro and Perrone (2023:12) say during a pandemic, tourists would rather prefer those natural open-spaced environments since natural ventilation and social distancing are more suited for better health. Organisations

and economies responsible for developing and promoting domestic tourism are required to understand and identify all elements influencing the destination choices of domestic tourists (Chebli and Said 2020:06). Subsequently, acquiring information on travellers' choices and behaviours serves as beneficial to the tourism role players as it would help them adapt and produce services that may align with the current needs of tourists. Moreover, Bratic *et al.* (2021:09) state that risk associated with endangering health and safety in the context of vacation is the core reason as to why people behave and react in a certain manner in their everyday lives. Consequently, in times of unpredicted events, potential tourists react differently to avoid risks and to protect their health and families, since health and safety become their priority when planning a trip. However, a study conducted by Neumayer (2004:02) shows that there are some tourists, who seek adventure tourism, and demonstrate a willingness to travel despite the danger that the destination may expose them to. Given the varying responses when travelling to domestic destinations; it becomes necessary to explore and understand the behaviour of tourists and what motivates them to travel, especially when faced with catastrophic occurrences such as pandemics that may threaten their lives and well-being. It is therefore important to understand domestic tourism and the KZN context.

### **2.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was developed by Icek Ajzen, and it is a psychological framework that helps better understand and predict the behaviour of humans. According to Ajzen (1991), Abd Hamid and Mohd Isa (2015:84), Pahrudin, Chen and Liu (2021:03), the theory of planned behaviour states that the behaviour of individuals is influenced by their intentions which are determined by three factors, namely: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behaviour. Attitude towards behaviour pertains to the extent to which an individual holds a negative or positive judgement of a specific behaviour (Ajzen 1991:188). For instance, tourists' perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic induced fear, which subsequently led to alterations in their behaviour, such as increased caution in their spending habits. Moreover, health and attitude are said to be the one component that has the most effective and key in determining a person's behaviour (Ajzen 1991:188; Rahmafritria, Suryadi, Oktadiana, Putro, and Rosyidie 2021:812). This study adopted TPB theory to better study the behaviours of domestic tourists during and unforeseen event and in this case the COVID-19 pandemic. The perceived behaviour is based on the outcome that individuals think will occur from them carrying out the



behaviour. On the other hand, subjective norms include social forces from friends and family that makes people feel inclined to not perform or perform a certain behaviour (Ajzen and Kruglanski 2019:10; Rahmafritria *et al.* 2021:812). Lastly, perceived behaviour control refers to how individuals perceive the ease or strenuousness that will come with carrying out a behaviour. This is also largely influenced by past experiences and forecasted constrains and can thus affected the possibility of a behaviour being or not being carried out and can impact the actual behaviour itself (Abd Hamid and Mohd Isa 2015:84). TPB posits that behavioural intentions are strong predictors of actual tourists' behaviours and best captures how attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural controls which may shift the manner in which tourists behave thus changing their travel intentions. The study drew from TPB to examine and better understand how domestic tourists are likely to behave during the pandemic. Subsequently, tourists are most likely to change their travel intentions as they would be shaped by their perceptions of safety, health risks, and restrictions that were introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, by applying, TPB, the researcher aimed to gain deeper insight into the factors driving decisions to travel or remain at home during such crises.

#### **2.4 Factors Influencing Destination Choice During a Pandemic**

The study conducted by Mutinda and Mayaka (2012:02) shows that both environmental factors (referring to external factors such as destination features, and culture) and individual trait factors (personal characteristics, individual personality and past experiences) have an impact on the destination choice made by tourists. Some of the push factors that were discovered to have an impact on destination choice include: seeing unique features, exploring different lifestyles, visiting places never been to before and finding excitement. Zau and Yu (2022:07), Duffy (2015:04), Mutinda *et al.* (2012:02), further state that tourists did not consider choosing destinations based on places that their friends have not visited before as important. Moreover, the pull factors discovered when choosing a destination to visit include destinations with good weather, places that provide value for their money, destinations that can accommodate the whole family, are within the budget and have phenomenal scenery. Under normal circumstances when choosing destinations to visit tourists were influenced by factors such as costs, luxury, travel time or season (Seyidov and Adomaitienė 2016:02; Mutinda *et al.* 2012:02). However, during a pandemic the above factors are subject to change as people tend to focus more on hand sanitisers, mode of transportation to use and ways to try and avoid contracting

the virus. Abdullah *et al.* (2020:02), De Vos (2020:02) say that in times of catastrophes, tourists consider safety and security, cleanliness, infection concern, and social distancing and would rather pay more for more empty vehicles. The use of private cars is said to be mostly used during pandemics as people feel less safe in public cars due to lack of personal space (Vega-Gonzalo, Gomez and Christidis 2023:02).

## **2.5 Domestic tourism**

Domestic tourism is when residents of a country travel within their economic territory or the borders of their own country. This then makes domestic tourists' people who travel within the border of their country, outside their usual environment, stay in places for more than one night but less than one year. Domestic tourism is important as it covers up the erratic global market thus bringing stability to the tourism industry and reducing seasonality.

### **2.5.1 KwaZulu-Natal as a tourist destination**

As per the Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Annual Report (2019/20:32), the number of domestic tourists to the province has shown an increase since the year 2017 and there has been consistency in the growth of holiday purpose trips taken to the province and in 2019 there were about 1 600 000 holiday trips taken around the province. Not forgetting that the international number of visitors to the province of KwaZulu-Natal has shown an increase of 4% when compared to 2014.

The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal (2008:25,26,28,108), states that international tourism has been growing at a very fast pace, as a result, in 2004, growth was recorded at 10%, whereas in 2005, the growth was 5.5%. However, the global economy is not showing the same growth rate due to the high seasonality in international travel. In the year 2004, the KwaZulu-Natal province managed to increase its market share from 10% to 20%. More recently, the Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Statistics Report (2021:11) revealed that their bed nights remained low, and the province entices a large number of domestic tourists although the number of days they spend is shorter as two nights was the highest number. Moreover, the Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Statistics Report (2021:13) states that KwaZulu-Natal's international marketing strategy is focused on attracting family explores, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions), beach lovers, wanderlusts and NSSAs

(Next Stop South Africa) segment. On the other hand, it is concentrating its domestic marketing strategies on attracting the young and upcoming market, well-off families, and independent couples whose core activities were said to be shopping, nightlife, natural beauty, leisure, and the beach. The KwaZulu-Natal province has an advantage due to its natural attractions which include good weather conditions, beaches, wildlife, mountains, its rich culture, and heritage which makes it different and unique from other provinces and more especially because of its well-known brand "Zulu" and its ability to host major events. However, the Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Annual Report (2019/20:32) further reveal that some of the weaknesses that the province has include crime rates and the roles and responsibilities of government authorities are not clear thus leading to inefficacy. The South African and KwaZulu-Natal tourism industry specifically ought to adopt innovative developments that will make the destination more sustainable, amplify the travel and accommodation orderliness and give growth to its ecotourism components. Balkaran and Maharaj (2013:03), further mention that South Africa was appraised 66th out of 139 countries with health, safety and security considered as main concerns for tourism. More lately, in KZN, Phoofolo (2019:114), laments that the spate of floods presented the tourism industry with an additional threat since the industry is already vulnerable to other mentioned negative factors. The impact of these floods exacerbates the situation due to the lack of disaster management, infrastructure maintenance, early disaster alert systems and maintenance of the drainage system.

Further studies such as Hassan and Soliman (2021: 01), Arbulu, Razumova, Rey-Maqueira and Sastre (2021: 02) affirm that the outbreak of COVID-19 urged the government to make strenuous decisions on policies that affect both domestic and international travel. Subsequently, these revised policies were meant for the promotion of domestic tourism, giving time for international travel to recover. Due to the decisions taken by various governments, across the globe, to introducing mitigation strategies that respond the prevention and spread of the virus, every industry has been negatively hit by COVID-19 (Arbulu *et al* 2021:02). Equally, the tourism industry is not immune to any of these mitigation plans this, however, to ensure its survival and sustainability, an identified solution is to promote domestic tourism. Consequently, it may take a while for the international tourism business to recover due to the imposed restrictions. Mutinda and Mayaka (2012:02,07) accede to the above authors by making it evident in their study that domestic tourism is likely to make respective economic and socio-cultural benefactions to the host country. Domestic tourism is said to account for 80% of the world's tourism and helps protect the country's tourism business from the unstable international tourism business. On the

other hand, Arbulu, Razumova, Rey-Maqueira and Sastre (2021: 02) declare that even though domestic tourism plays a vital role, destination managers and governments mostly prefer international tourism business since international tourists come with foreign currency to the economy and spend more than domestic tourists. As much as international tourism and its benefits are what is mostly given priority, it does not benefit the whole economy on the other hand, domestic tourism contributes to local development thus resulting in minimizing the chances of external leakages. It is stated that domestic leisure tourists are most likely to explore natural places during and after the pandemic (Department of Tourism of the Republic of South Africa 2021:09). It is thus important to know the link between tourists and unforeseen events.

## 2.6 Relationship between tourists' behaviour and unforeseen circumstances

Rossello, Becken and Santana-Gellego (2020:01), Shi and Li (2016:04,05) point out that the tourism industry is shaped by various forces and factors such as diseases; some of these unexpected events are not directly linked but still impact the industry, unforeseen events and natural disasters are said to be the determining factors as they affect people and their destination choices and in turn, slow down tourism. This can be the travel restrictions that were imposed by governments across the globe as demonstrated in figure 2.2 below which had a direct impact on the behaviour of tourists.

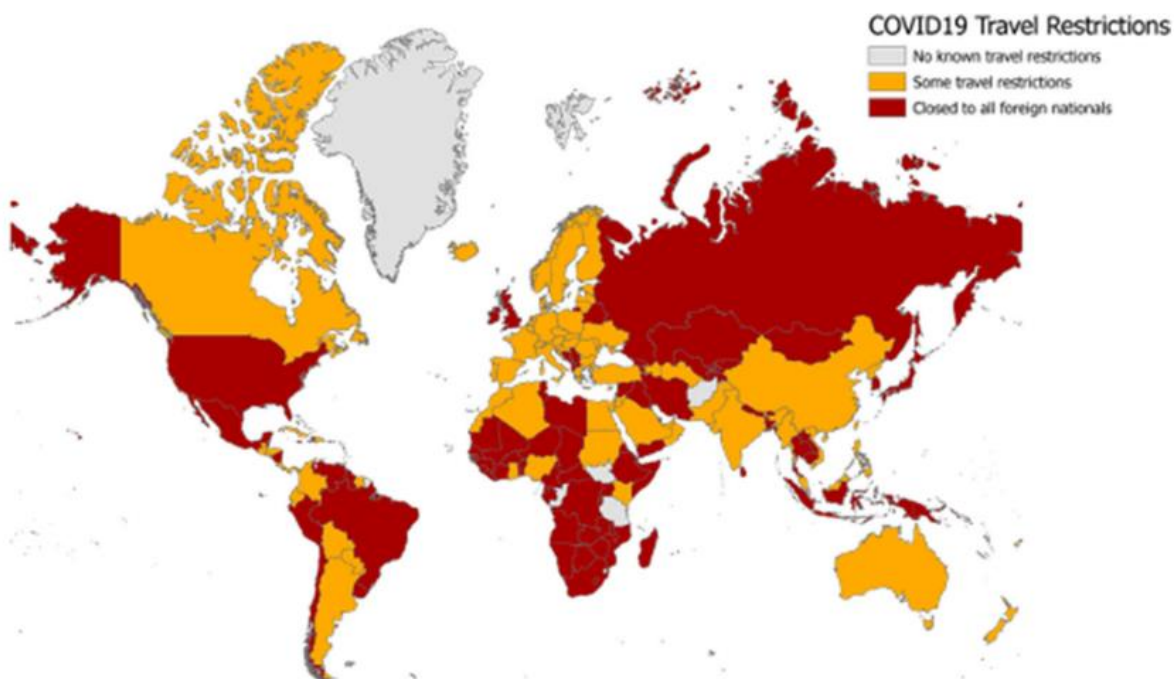


Figure 2.2 COVID-19 related global travel restrictions (as of 31 March)

Source: Gössling, Scott and Hall (2020)

For the industry to achieve sustainable tourism management, they should be able to understand, manage and respond to disasters or unforeseen events. Han, Yoon, Kim, and Yoon (2022:03) theorise that in cases of pandemics such as COVID-19, there is an inevitable link between risk and the coping strategies of people as their discernment is replaced by the perceived risk of the pandemic. One can deduce that inbound tourism is not only felt by the destination in which the event occurred, neighbouring places may also be affected as tourists will not want to visit any destinations closer to where the unforeseen event occurred (Beirman 2003:19; Maphanga and Henema 2019:05). Rossello *et al.* (2020:02), there are many reasons that restrict tourists to travel in the aftermath of a disaster, pandemic, or epidemic. Accordingly, tourists hesitate to travel due to risk perceptions and reasons for having feelings of discomfort and rather opt for seeking safer destinations (Rossello *et al.* 2020:02). The most direct restraint is the amount of damage caused by the unforeseen event that averts the affected destination from engaging in tourism activities. Numerous studies (Yang, Cao, Chang, Zhai, Zhao and De Vos 2021:01; Neuburger and Egger 2020:03; Deyshappriya 2020:02), declare that many diseases in the existing history such as HIV, Ebola, SARS and many more have affected how tourists behave and travel some are evident further below in the Chapter in Figure 2.4. These disease outbreaks have been known to cause huge changes in the daily lives of people and some of these changes are financial losses which means people will not partake in tourism activities. Rosselló *et al.* (2020:02) identified various types of natural and man-made disasters that influence the tourism industry, and some include droughts, heat waves, floods, pandemics and many more. The study will focus on pandemics.

### **2.6.1 Crime And Terrorism**

According to a study by Altindag (2012:1,2), violent crimes have a negative impact on the destination as it results in inbound international tourists not coming to visit the destination thus also affecting the tourist revenue as people will look for alternative destinations that are much safer. Homicides and more violent crimes are said to have a significant impact on the behaviour of tourists than theft and burglary. There is existing evidence that crime and tourism are related. This literature is mostly borrowed from the study of Phoofole (2019:66,67,118,122,124) who states that the increase in incoming tourists to destinations leads to an increase in crime. The more tourists come to a destination means that there is also an increase in the number of victims of crime and at the same time high crime rate impacts the tourism industry as tourists change their behaviour by avoiding places that are not safe for them and their loved ones.

Matakovic and Matakovic (2019:12), make it evident that tourists avoid travelling to unsafe places and the media makes things worse which may result in tourists changing their travel destinations.

The study conducted by Phoofolo (2019:56), emits that terrorism is an act of political violence that is aimed or committed against unarmed military people and just ordinary citizens of the country to motivate and instil fear towards political authorities. Terrorism started making front page headlines across the globe in the early 1970s and in the mid-1980s it had already reached its peak (Sonmes and Graefe 1998:01). Sonmes and Graefe (1998:01), Zeman and Urban (2019:03) states that the increase in terrorism has painted a clear picture of the significant impact it has on tourists and their behaviour. Consequently, the US-Libya military confrontation and the terrorist attacks that occurred in the year 1985 resulted in a decline of 30% of people visiting Europe in the year 1986 as people did not want to visit places that will threaten their safety. Moreover, Arana and Leon (2008:300), Phoofolo (2019:56) explains that the occurrence of these events has increased the level of tourists' risk perceptions that are involved when travelling leading to a changed travel behaviour. As per the study of Seabra, Reis and Abrantes (2020:04), political issues and terrorism does have a negative impact on the destination and its image as it affects the safety and security of the destination, the media coverage also makes matters worse. Reviving the destination image again may take years and needs aggressive marketing to do so. In South Africa, terrorist attacks that have been experienced are more related to crime, however, the country is rather lucky to not have experienced any major attacks that may leave its image tainted in the minds of tourists (Croucamp and Hind 2014).

## **2.7 Pandemics and Tourism: Understanding the Interplay Between Disease Outbreaks and the Travel Industry**

### **2.7.1 Disease Outbreaks**

Karabulut, Bilgin, Demir, and Doker (2020:02) explains that the decline in tourism demand in low-income economies may be primarily driven by a lack of transparency and inadequate health infrastructure. The previous disease outbreaks in recent history such as Ebola, SARS, Zika and H1N1 were mostly regional and lead to fewer infections and deaths compared to coronavirus (Feehan and Apostolopoulos 2021:56; Khan, Adil, Alkhatlan, Tahir, Saif, Khan, and Khan 2020:06). Therefore, the health systems of advanced and emerging economies were able to cope with the pandemics. Furthermore, there were no significant, widespread travel restrictions or the imposition of curfews, as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the world

has become more global, so viruses spread rapidly to the entire world (Karabulut *et al.*, 2020:02). According to Zhang, Hou and Li (2020:02,03), the outbreaks of diseases influence a huge part of the tourism industry as people tend to avoid traveling to places that may endanger their lives thus declining the tourism demand at the destination impacted by the outbreak.

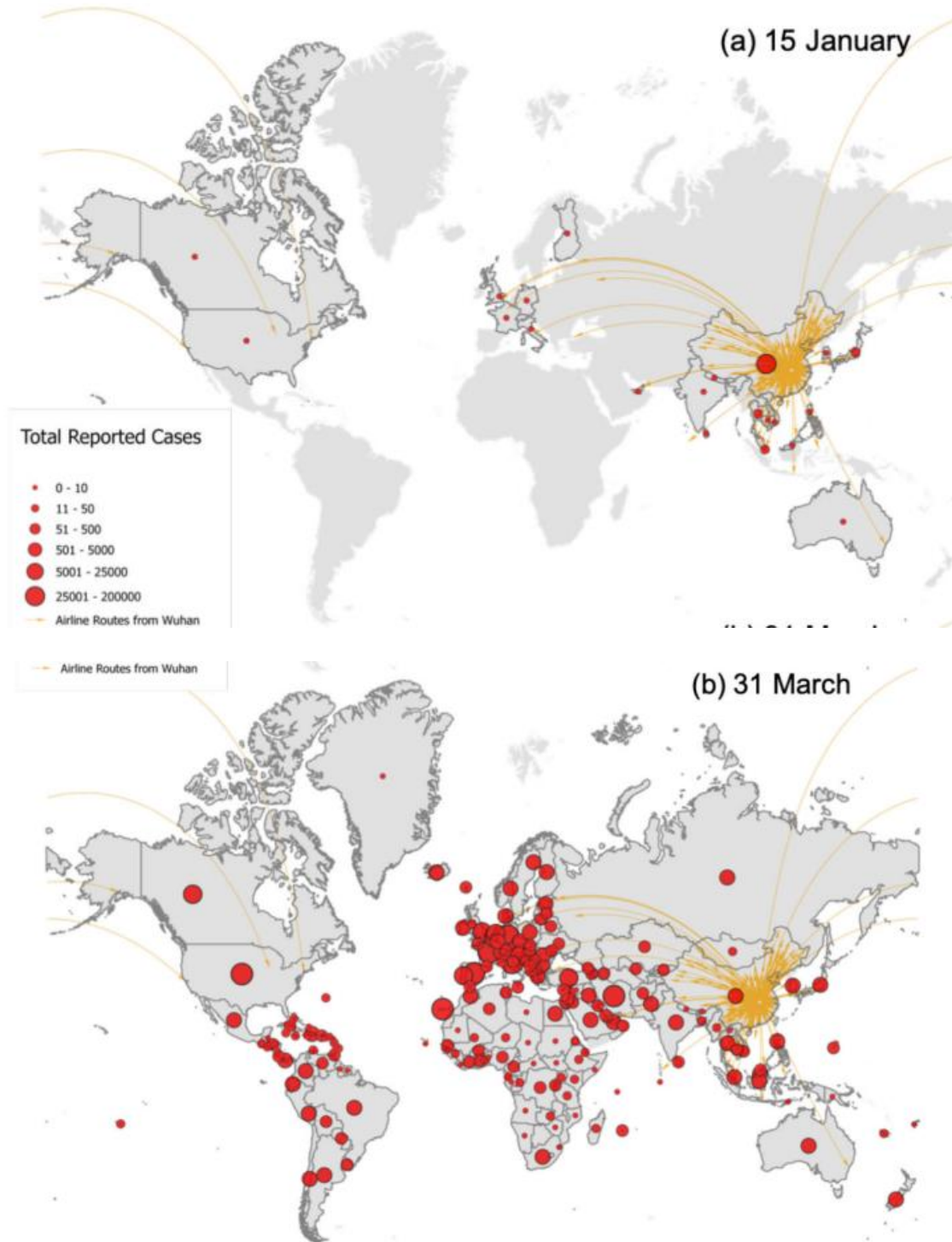
### **2.7.2 Tourists as vectors of disease outbreaks**

Despite the improvements in the medical and public health sectors, pandemics continue to erode the tourism industry with a major threat to sustainability (Burkle 2006; Hall, Scott and Gossling 2021:05). Moreover, international tourism is easily affected and has been affected by events such as the Foot and Mouth outbreak, the 09/11 and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARSA) Avian flu, H5N1, Swine flu in the past and these had a direct effect on how tourists behaved (Mao, Ding and Lee 2010:01,02; Karabulut, Bilgin, Demir and Doker 2020:02,03). Maphanga and Henema (2019:02,05), declare that the enormous Ebola outbreak in Africa affected its competitive advantage as a tourism destination as international tourists saw it as a risk. The above-mentioned study reported that tourists cancelled their bookings and trips which resulted in many accommodation establishments and relative tourism-dependent entities forcefully shutting down. Surprisingly, international bookings to destinations, such as South Africa that were not affected by the Ebola outbreak, were also withdrawn by potential tourists (Maphanga and Henema 2019). Hall *et al.* (2020:05), state that tourism plays a crucial role in moving infectious organisms through tourists from one place to another and this can be the case even for domestic tourism. This is confirmed in studies by Bakar and Rosbi (2020:03) that revealed how the SARS-CoV-2 began with bats then moved into pangolins then to human beings. The interest of tourists to visit more outdoor isolated destinations makes it easier for the disease to move into humans and spread as they travel to different places with different modes of transport. Mao *et al.* (2009:02), concurs with the aforementioned author that the discovery of new destinations, travel distances and the increasing number of travellers may exacerbate the increase of disease transmission. The change in the travel behaviour of tourists since they now are growing a need for nature-based activities and tranquillity which are mainly situated in remote areas means that people are being more exposed to pathogens and species thus leading to re-emergence of old diseases and the emergence of new diseases. Tourism is also said to give birth to genetic exchange in microorganisms which increases the spread of

resistant strains, and the development of new viruses in untainted environments which in turn makes it problematic to medical solutions (Gossling 2002:12). Further studies conducted by Hall *et al.* (2020:05) state that more than half of the population in the world now dwell in urban settings; creating overcrowding and congestion in the cities. Subsequently, this increases the chances of viral infections and diseases when people are living near each other. As much as tourists are at risk of getting new diseases by travelling, they are also regarded as vectors in distributing microbes, especially with the advancement of air transportation (Hall *et al.* 2020:05). The advancement of transportation, particularly aviation, facilitated the global spread of the disease from Wuhan, where the first case was recorded as depicted below in Figure 2.3. Ebola, Foot and mouth, SARS, Chikungunya (CHIKV), Zika are some of the few diseases that have impacted the tourism industry in many parts of the world throughout the years (Maphanga and Henama 2019; Ritchie, Dorrell, Miller, and Miller 2004; Ala, Abukhalifeh, Martinez, Albattat and Salam 2018). According to WHO (2018), Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that was first discovered in Uganda during the year of 1947 in monkeys and later in Uganda and Tanzania. This virus was recently found in Brazil in 2015.

International tourists have been growing very fast over the past decades and the number is expected to grow up to 1.8 trillion in the year 2030. This growth leads to the significance played by the tourism industry in the economy of several countries across the globe (Saito and Strehlau 2018:18,19). Nevertheless, the paper by Hung, Mark, Yeung, Chan, and Graham (2018:01), state that the growth of the industry results in various epidemic global preparedness and control challenges as it enables domestic outbreaks of infectious diseases to spread globally as illustrated below in Figure 2.3.





**Figure 2.3 Global distribution of COVID-19 Cases (Jan-March 2020)**

Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), (2020)

Travellers may carry these microbes with their food, clothes and/or even their bodies (Gossling 2002:12). Zhang and Lee (2021:02), state that the vast advancement in transportation enabling

one to travel across the world in less than a day allows the pathogens to move even faster than before. Consequently, in China, the number of confirmed cases was aligned with the number of inbound flights and population density.

### **2.7.3 The well-being of tourists during disease outbreaks**

As stated by Phoofolo (2019:63), as much as tourism is susceptible to disease outbreaks it still does contribute to the well-being of tourists. According to Walters and McKercher (2021:02), the travel restrictions that have been imposed in the past when dealing with pandemics and epidemics have proven to have an influence on travel motivations and these can be interpersonal or internal travel motivations. According to the study conducted by Kusumaningrum and Wachyuni (2020:02-04), negative security, health issues and safety are most likely to deter tourists from visiting such destinations and would rather opt for destinations that are more equipped with facilities and infrastructure that are aligned with the requisite and expected health protocols. Moreover, Sibi, Das, and Ashraf, (2020:04), say that prior to the pandemic outbreak, factors that influenced people to travel mainly the economy, families, interests and experiences, however, all that changed during the COVID-19 pandemic as was observed that isolation, fear and the anxiety have taken over the past travel motivations (Winter, Riordan, Pakpour, Griffiths, Mason, Poulgrain and Scarf 2020:02) together with psychosocial and psychological have changed how people behave. As a result, Walters and McKercher (2021:02), emit that the fear of the pandemic has led to many people displaying huge levels of stress, anxiety, and depression which eventually altered their normal social life patterns. For example, many potential tourists would now avoid physical contact such as simple handshakes. Furthermore, government-imposed restrictions and introduced quarantine measures across the globe; thereby reducing the desire for people to travel. Moghanibashi-Mansourieh (2020:03), states that people who have lost a loved one or had their friends or family suffer from the COVID-19 pandemic have noted they experienced greater levels of anxiety than others. while on the other end, Yazici, Kose, Turan, and Yazici (2021:02) say that the pandemic introduced a high level of vagueness which also led to many people being stressed a lot and caused lots of mental sicknesses such as hypochondriasis and depression towards individuals while those that were isolated as referred to as quarantined suffered most from solitude and fear of death.

#### **2.7.4 The influence of sanitation and hygiene on disease outbreak**

However, tourists are vulnerable to destinations that will put their health at risk as these areas may represent poor hygiene standards (Karl, Muskat, and Ritchie 2020:04). As much as travellers like to visit isolated places nowadays, most of them do not want to visit places that may limit their safety, and they tend to change their behaviour as they become more cautious when visiting places that they are not comfortable with due to the past occurrences at that destination. Phoofolo (2019:63), Baker (2015:02) found that poor or lack of hygiene standards at tourist destinations are the epicentre of some of the disease outbreaks Phoofolo (2019:63), further states that water-borne and vector diseases are increasing due to more tourist destinations being discovered in remote areas, lack of health care facilities, the increasing number in international tourism, globalisation process and the attitudes of travellers. Other studies confirm an alarming number of gastrointestinal outbreaks are being recorded due to the growing cruise ship tourism industry (Phoofolo 2019:63; Pavli, Maltezou, Papadakis, Katerelos, Saroglou, Tsakris and Tsiodras 2016:02). According to the aforesaid author, it is rather a difficult task to try and mitigate the spread of gastrointestinal illness (GI) on cruise liners as many spaces are shared and the fast turnover of passengers. Weather is another component that is said to relate to diseases.

#### **2.7.5 Weather patterns and global warming on disease outbreaks**

Diseases are also said to be sensitive to climate change for example, wet weather, rivers, seaside, and major roads are said to spread human plague very fast and shape the pattern of disease transmission. Moreover, Sabir (2011:17), says that tourists are also sensitive to global warming as they are mostly looking for destinations that are sunny yet mild. According to Kurane (2010:1-2), global warming is one of the elements caused by climate change and this is resulting in many health issues for humans and these issues are both direct and indirect manner. Direct effects such as heat waves increase cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. It affects human health indirectly by the growing number of mosquito-borne diseases and floods which lead to water contamination giving birth to water and food-borne infectious diseases. Nevertheless, according to Phoofolo (2019:107), global warming is a major threat to South Africa's economy, and this thus calls for advanced creative initiatives since the hospitality and tourism sector will be mostly affected by this as they may have to deal with exorbitant prices of exported goods, raw material, and shipping. Moreover, Kurane (2010:02), says that global

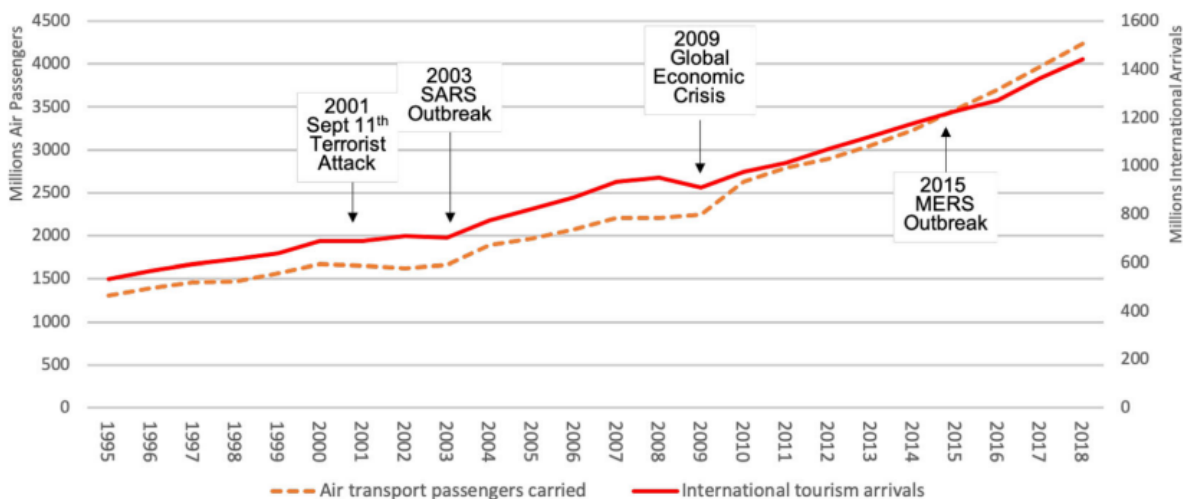
warming and natural disasters such as floods and storms are correlated, and the following section will unpack a bit about natural disasters.

### **2.7.6 Disease and Natural Disaster**

Kurane (2010:02) declares that it is a well-known factor that KwaZulu-Natal is prone to natural disasters, for example, the recent floods and droughts, however, these occur from time to time. According to Bhoola (2022:03), Happer (2022), early in the year 2022 the province was further hit by natural disaster (floods) which left many with no homes, loved ones lost and accessibility was limited, and had power and water shortages as many infrastructure facilities were destroyed. According to FEDHASA (2017), the Cape Town drought was a wake-up call for South Africa resulting in Cape Town hotels establishing some restrictions that are somehow confusing. The Cape Town City has an average of about 80 million litres of water consumption daily (FEDHASA 2017). With the level 6B restrictions, swimming pools may not be available for usage during the peak season (Rox 2018). The study by Khan (2017), Drummond (2019:07,13), mentions that the 'Save Like a Local' campaign which was made to encourage tourists to conserve may have been a menace and disruptive for other tourists' and this affected the behaviour of tourists as some made their hotel stays very short, some cancelling their bookings and some even shared negative pictures of the city of Cape Town which may have made others to also not visit the city. The other further states that this had some economic factors as water had to be imported for tourists to have water.

Given, that tourists are prone to diseases or contagions, this thus makes it important for the tourism industry to put in place rehabilitation strategies to manage such occurrences. Some of these identified strategies include advanced health-care infrastructure, vaccine campaigns, following WHO guidance, quick responses, and pandemic preparedness (Phoofolo 2019:65). Hung *et al.* (2018:02-03), highlight that China can be regarded as the main hotspot for the SARS outbreak since a certain hotel in China exposed guests and staff as the medical professor who checked-in this hotel managed to infect at least seven other guests during his tenure from various countries, namely Singapore, Canada Vietnam, and a domestic guest. The aforesaid author further states that tourists avoided visiting this Hotel for some time as the media coverage instilled further fear that they may also contract the disease.

Earlier studies conducted by Lee, Song, Bendle, Kim and Han (2012:03), found that the SARS virus easily spread across the globe using air travelling thus appearing in the Guangdong province in China in 2002, followed by Canada and Toronto, the consecutive year leaving 44 people dead, thousands of people in quarantine and hundreds of people infected. Hence, the fear of being affected by SARS and the mitigation measures that were put in place to stop the spread such as quarantine made tourists either cancel or change their travel plans to look for safer destinations. As a result, this fear and change in tourists' travel plans led to a decline of 70% in tourism flow across Asian (McKercher and Chon 2004:01; Lee *et al.* 2012:02). When tourists are faced with any pandemic or there is an epidemic at a certain destination, they will avoid travelling to that destination and destinations closer to it due to the protective behaviour that they develop when faced with danger. In concord with Gossling, Scott and Hal (2020:04), none of the epidemics and pandemics in the past has led to any long-term decrease in the development of tourism globally as a result most were not even that much felt.



**Figure 2.4 Impact of major crisis events on global tourism**

Source: World Bank (2020)

According to Figure 2.4, above, some of the outbreaks were not significantly felt by the tourism industry and they were not even recorded, only SARS managed to cause a significant decline the international arrivals at -0.4% and the global economic crisis at -4.0%. Moreover, Lee *et al* (2012:02) states that in March 2009 in Mexico an unknown sickness with symptoms including cough, sore throat, high fever, and runny nose was discovered. This illness was then recognised as a new strain of Influenza H1N1 but known as 2009 H1N1 and in six months more people were affected. Rassy and Smith (2013:01), the tourism industry of Mexico was severely halted

as waves of booking cancellations were made due to changed tourist behaviour and tourists did not want to travel to a risky destination and some airlines grounded their flights to Mexico. This had scientists worried that it would be as deadly as the Spanish flu which occurred between 1918 and 1920 and killed 100 million people.

### **2.7.7 Legislations imposed by the government**

According to the study conducted by Adinolfi, Harilal and Giddy (2021:05), the imposed government legislations such as lockdowns as means of curbing the spread of the pandemic had a direct influence on the tourism industry as it had to close for operation since it is not part of the essential services (Adinolfi, Harilal and Giddy 2021:05). At the onset of the pandemic the World Health Organisation also known as WHO (2020) introduced various health procedures to the public as a way of curbing the spread of the virus. Further health protection measures introduced by various National health bodies also included maintaining a minimum of at least a 1-meter distance between one person from another when standing in public, covering of the mouth when coughing and the nose when sneezing. Other introduced measures also included staying at home when feeling unwell, wearing a face mask when in public, avoiding touching the face especially without a mask and the regular use of washing hands with soap or using hand sanitizer. Due to the lockdown implementations in place, only the essential services such as medical facilities, banking services, supply and production of food and telecommunications were exempted from the lockdown (South African Government News Agency 2020). However, since the tourism industry is not essential, most popular attractions in South Africa closed after the lockdown was announced and the ones that stayed open operated under strict hygiene standards. There was also a message that was put in front by the South African Tourism which stated that "Don't Travel Now So you can Travel Later" (Rogerson and Rogerson 2020:03). The aforesaid author also states that one of South Africa's leading Hotel groups had to temporarily close, followed by another 36 hotels, including casino-resorts across the country. The South African Government (2020), Potgieter, Fabris-Rotelli, Kimmie, Dudeni-Tlhone, Holloway, Janse van Rensburg, Thiede, Debba, Manjoo-Docrat, Abdelatif and Makhanya (2021:08), mention that five lockdown levels were put in place to try and curb the spread of the disease in South Africa. The most restrictive level began with Lockdown level 5. During this level, only services regarded as essential were allowed to operate, and people were not allowed to travel, however, exceptions were made when travelling for funerals and public transport was only permitted to

operate at certain times a day with half capacity. According to Adinolfi, Harilal and Giddy (2021:05), the tourism industry had to remain closed as it is deemed as non-essential and only essential services had to operate. Furthermore, STAs SA (2020), mentions that South African tourism was hugely affected by this level as there were no inbound or outbound tourists to the country.

Lockdown level 4- There was a bit of ease on the regulations when compared with level 5 as some of the industries such as landscaping, exports, agriculture, forestry, international export markets and services began to operate again, nevertheless, it is to be noted that even the tourism industry operated yet under strict precautions and food retails was permitted to sell all good, but alcohol was excluded. The South African Government (2021b) states that the accommodation sector was operating, yet under strict observation and at a 50% capacity rate and the restaurants were permitted to open, however, they open for takeouts only. According to Dube-Xaba (2021:03), Zhen, Chan, Schoonees, Apatu, Thabane and Young (2020:01), all international and domestic flights, long-distance buses and tourist trains had to close down their operations, and many VFR tourists depend on it to move from one point to the other.

Lockdown level 3- As per Potgieter *et al.* (2021:08), other government services such as deeds offices, licensing and others also started to operate again. Some of the tourism sectors were still not operating; however, restaurants were allowed to operate only for online delivery and take-away, and no sit-ins were allowed, on the other hand, international flights were still not operating but domestic air transportation was still limited with high levels of hygiene standards and not many people were willing to travel by air during the time. According to Adinolfi, Harilal and Giddy (2021:05) and the National Department of Tourism (2020), the accommodation sector and domestic air travelling, it is to be noted that these were open for essential business travel and not for leisure purposes.

Lockdown level 2- During this level, more restrictions were eased for example interprovincial travel was permitted, and some social gatherings, recreational activities, and domestic flight together with car rentals were allowed, yet masks, sanitizing of hands and maintaining social distance was still mandatory to try and limit the spread of the pandemic (Potgieter *et al* 2021:08). The long-distance travel buses were allowed to operate yet follow the restricts and maximum of 70% capacity was to be maintained (South African Government 2021c).

Lockdown level 1- Almost all industries were open for work as much as they had to follow very strict health guidelines that were in place and international travel was still limited. As previously stated by SteelFisher *et al* (2021:10) many people showed willingness to travel at this stage, however, still preferred to keep things on a domestic level. However, some restrictions were still in place regardless of all industries being fully opened. Everyone had to wear a mask whenever they were in a public area, sanitizing remains an important part of disinfecting, and all business places had to mark their floors for people to maintain distance from one another (South African government 2021d). All that has been aforesaid has impacted how travellers behave, and the following section will unpack more on factors influencing tourist behaviour.

## **2.8 The State of Tourism During The COVID-19 Pandemic**

Due to the several closures of borders, cancellations of events, travel bans and the fear of contracting the virus has caused some serious issues for the tourism industry all over the world (Gossling *et al.*, 2020:05). Kaushal and Srivastava (2021:03), further state that people did not want to travel due to personal safety and their survival became a top priority which then led to a reduction for the need of leisure traveling. The tourism industry is affected by both the internal and external factors, internal being more controllable and the tourism industry has no control over the external factors (Shpak, Muzychenko-Kozlovska, Gvozd and Sroka 2021:06). External factors are said to be categorised into two, the direct external factors (quality environment, labour resources and marketing policy) and indirect external factors which include the global events, pandemics, and the economy of the country. In a study conducted by Gossling (2002:02), it is clearly stated that the impact of tourism can be felt both directly and indirectly and these changes may lead to a global perspective. Tourism is said to play a part in the changes of land cover, land use and the transmission and dispersion of diseases. One of the recent indirect external factors that have halted the tourism industry is the COVID-19 pandemic (Shpak *et al.*, 2021:04). Through all these events, the tourism industry has remained resilient, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has remained the one that crippled the economy more. Zhang and Lee (2021:02), state that in China the number of confirmed cases was aligned with the number of inbound flights and population density. Furthermore, Yang *et al.* (2021:02) also state that transport serves as a direct link for disease transmissions across the globe and congested public transport may lead to many people getting infected. Subsequently, whilst commuting with public transport; tourists that are seated in proximity to each other; and the



absence of proper ventilation systems, render higher risks of transmission. Significantly, prior to the pandemic, travellers around the world mainly relied on public transport due to the high tariffs associated with private transport (Yang *et al* 2021:02; Kim, Lee, Jang and Yeo 2021:02). Nonetheless, the pandemic has introduced numerous changes; for example, the Ministry of Transport of People's Republic of China (MTPRC), had to dismiss its highway toll due to the increased use of private cars as people feared to get infected by the pandemic when using public transport (Yang *et al.* 2021: 02). Moreover, whilst human movement is widely viewed as the main conduit to transport diseases, the transportation of cargo, does, in fact, contribute to the spread of diseases (Kim *et al.*, 2021:01; Yang *et al.*, 2021: 02). For, example, it was discovered in June 2020 that the COVID-19 virus was further spread on the cutting board that was used for the cutting of salmon which was to be imported to restaurants of various countries.

## **2.9 Personal, Situational, Technological, And Economic Factors Influencing the Buying Behaviour of Tourists During Unforeseen Events**

According to Fratu (2011:02), Saito and Strehlau (2018:19), several factors can influence the behaviour of tourists, and these can be grouped into four, namely the social, situational, personal, and economic factors and these factors fall under external and internal factors. Moreover, Rosdiana (2019) also states that social factors are external, and they include demographics, education, and behavioural norms. These are important as they influence how tourists behave and they have an influence on the type of tourism activities they partake in Rahmafitria, Suryadi, Oktadiana, Putro and Rosyidie (2021:06).

### **2.9.1 Personal Factors**

Saito and Strehlau (2018:019) mention that personal factors include psychological factors, lifestyle, beliefs, self-image, characteristics, and perception. These all play a vital role in the decision-making process when purchasing tourism offers and they can either lead to tourists consuming or not consuming the tourism products and services. Likewise, Lopez-Bonilla, Reyes-Rodriguez, and Lopez-Bonilla (2019: 02,03), affirm that personal factors are linked to an individual's routines, personal capabilities, or attitudes. Further studies by Celik and Dedeoglu (2019:02,03), Fratu (2011:02,04) state that personal variables may also be referred to as psychological factors which directly affect how people make their tourism consumption choices.

The above author also positions that subsequently, the attitude of a tourist determines how they respond either negatively or positively towards tourism products or services on offer. According to Morar, Tiba, Basarin, Vujicic, Valjarevic, Niemets, Gessert, Jovanovic, Drugas, Grama, Stupariu, Stoica and Lukic (2021:04), state that during the COVID-19 pandemic it was noted that personality plays a vital role in travel preferences and how people perceive risk, this is because people with negative affectivity, detachment and psychoticism suffered high emotional problems especially when the pandemic had just been discovered. According to Jonsson and Devonish (2008:3-4), Fratu (2011:04), age is another personal factor to be looked at as it is said that mostly young people spend more money and have different views regarding tourism services and products compared to older people. Given the aforesaid, younger people are more likely to visit different destinations using different modes of transportation. Furthermore, the decisions taken by travellers when purchasing tourism products are mainly persuaded by their personalities (Fratu 2011:03). As per Marin-Pantelescu (2021:3-4), young people like exploring new places, making friends with the locals and they are important for the industry as they are resilient and continue travelling even during difficult times. It is stated that the actual and ideal self-image of tourists is another important key element influencing destination choice, (Li, Wei, Qu, and Qiu 2020:03). The self-image provides different individuals with different pictures of how they see themselves and that will drive them to behave in a certain manner. According to Hao, Bai, and Sun (2021:05), the COVID-19 pandemic increased the traveling costs and energy that tourists need to invest during decision-making process as they now have to be critical and make sure they visit more isolated destinations to try and prevent being infected by the pandemic. The following section will look into the economic factors that influence tourism.

### **2.9.2 Situational Factors**

Situational factors are some of the external variables that influence the decision of tourists as these include temporal perspectives and physical surroundings (Chen and McCain 2009:02). According to Chen and McCain (2009:02,05) emits that the behaviour of consumers can better be explained by understanding and well predicting situational factors. Situational factors mainly involve physical surroundings, temporal perspective, antecedent state, social surroundings and lastly task definition. Moreover, Zhang, Woo Park, and Cole (2012:05) state that situational factors have an impact on how dependent tourists are on tourism services which in turn leads

to the overall satisfaction of tourists. For example, tourists with mobility disabilities mainly rely on the amenities and services offered at the destination.

#### *2.9.2.1 Physical Surroundings*

Physical surroundings are inclusive of several factors such as the geographical location of the destination, the business of the destination, and institutional location and may also refer to sound, light and décor which are important for creating a great ambience (Chen and McCain 2009:02,05). According to Blazeska, Milenkovski, and Gramatnikovski (2015:341, 342), when considering a destination to visit, tourist firstly look for indications about the quality of the destination they wish to visit. Should the cues regarding the destination be attractive and impressive; these positive indicators may serve as beneficial to that destination. Due to the intangible nature of the tourism industry, tourist destination image is developed through tourist perception rather than the actual reality of the destination.

#### *2.9.2.2 Temporal Perspective*

Blazeska *et al.* (2015:341) reveal that these include time in terms of seasonality and the availability of spare time to travel as well as the intended time to travel. Tourists may react differently in different seasons and according to the different circumstances they are faced with at that time which means a change in their behaviour. Moreover, it is stated that most domestic tourists globally spend more money in summer as they are found to be mostly travelling during the summertime.

#### *2.9.2.3 Social Surroundings*

Chen and McCain (2009:02,05) propose that this refers to the influence that other people have on the behaviour of other travel consumers. This plays a major role as most people seek their friends and relatives' opinion and past experiences before making their final decisions about the destination to be visited (Gilelson and Kerstetter 2010:04). Most people trust their relatives' word of mouth and social media posts than the information provided on the organisation's website (Berhanu and Raj 2020:03).

#### *2.9.2.4 Antecedent States*

These are momentary moods or situations that may motivate people to do things based on how they feel at that moment. These may be having disposable income, being sick or feeling fatigued thus requiring some holiday to relax one's body and mind. Chen and McCain (2009:02, 05) articulate that all these feelings may lead to different tourism destinations, activities and even length of stay according to what is most suitable for what they feel at that moment. As per Hosany, Hunter-Jones, and McCabe (2020:03), different moods may lead to different decision-making.

#### *2.9.2.5 Task Definition*

Kassean and Gassita (2013:03) imply that this is mainly the reason why people travel or what pushed or rather motivated them to purchase a holiday for themselves. Each reason leads to a certain destination being most suitable for that particular reason.

### **2.9.3 Technological Factors**

Technology is also an important component in the tourism industry that needs to be looked at as it includes new technological developments, availability, and level of technology. With the advancements in technology and its increasing user friendliness, prior to the pandemic, tourists have become more reliant on it for searching information regarding their travel, sharing their travel experience and use it for entertainment purposes (Cohen, Girish and Moital 2014:889). Technology-based companies saw an increase in demand as the pandemic accelerated forcing more companies to adopt online usages such as virtual tours, and virtual conferences and forcing the industry to make use of robotics (Wolfe 2020; Yang, Nelson, Murphy, Choset, Christensen, Collins, Dario, Goldberg, Ikuta, Jacobstein, Kragic, Taylor, McNutt 2020:02). Lekgau, Harilal and Feni (2021:02), Merckx and Nawijn (2021:02) affirm this by theorizing that during the pandemic, the use of virtual tourism was adopted as an alternative since there were restrictions on travelling and to keep tourists interested on the destinations. Moreover, these virtual tours included township tours, game drives, deep sea diving and museum tours. Thompson (2020) makes it evident that some private game reserves in South Africa that provided free virtual tours. Woyo and Nyamandi (2022:02) state that upon the cancellation of the Comrades Marathon due to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa asked the participants to engage in a virtual run, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June year 2020. However, there are some foreseen

challenges with the development of virtual tourism in South Africa such as lack of knowledge, power supply, infrastructure, and financial constraints (Lekgau *et al.*, 2021: 06; Rogerson 2015:08). According to Babii and Nadeem (2021), technology plays a vital role in keeping some protocols in place such as touchless service delivery, social distancing and health and hygiene; technology presents an opportunity to help bridge to recovery. Technology is evolving rapidly resulting in improvements in services and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many affording hoteliers to adapt to new technological ways for survival. As per the study done by Gupta and Sharma (2021:2,3), Iqbal and Campbell (2021:3), Jaffer (2021), online bookings which is said to help personalize the booking and convenient, self-check-in technology that eliminates human contact in hotels also serve as a competitive advantage during the pandemic as tourists are very conscious about the health and safety. For example, some apps that enable guests to interact with the staff and order their room services on the app. These are used to try and stop the spread of the pandemic as they eliminate the human contact and human congestion at the destination. Moreover, there are apps that help track down the areas utilized by guests to ensure that they are properly sanitized prior to the next check-in (Jaffer, 2021). In the South African context, Pillay (2021) states that Hotel Sky was the first hotel in Africa to adopt robotic staff members and these 3 robots helped out especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as they do not contaminate the virus and could be useful should there be guests with COVID-19 symptoms as they could be deployed to attend to those guests instead of humans thus limiting the spread of the pandemic.

Internationally, given the experience of employing hardware and 5G networks that hotels have, many businesses are said to have opted for hotels for their live-streaming conferences rather than face-to-face ones (Lau 2020:02,06). Other countries around the world are adapting to the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution by employing Artificial Intelligence also known as AI and Robotics as means of allowing social distancing and mitigating human contact. IA is used for scanning body temperatures and used for face recognition. Robots are used to perform duties such as room dining services, handing out housekeeping items, dispensing sanitisers, and facemasks etc. They are said to not only curb the spread of the pandemic but also enhance customer satisfaction through quality service.

As per the study by Schiopu, Padurean, Tala and Nica (2016:04), almost the whole global tourism market for youth as the number of young travellers continues to grow over the years. Due to their consumer preferences, this leads to new advances in technology which then leads

to increased competition among the industry role payers forcing them to make their offerings diverse and unique to stand above the rest. Schiopu *et al.* (2016:04) depict that many young travellers make use of the internet to gather all the information they need regarding the destination, to make bookings related to the travel and to communicate with other travellers using social networks. Naudé (2020:1-2) implies that the onset of Covid-19 at the start of 2020 compelled most countries, including South Africa, to adopt a variety of technologies to track the public's compliance and to promote measures of social distancing. Moreover, Sharma, Shin, Santa-María, and Nicolau (2021:03), Lau (2020:02,06) state that the hotel industry recognised these technologies as a means to ensure guest safety and sustainable operations. Hoteliers identified these revisions as new possibilities to enhance guest service and well-being as well as to ensure that business operations stay afloat. However, it is also paramount that the hoteliers and other tourism role players know that this will require staff training and these new technologies are expensive. Conversely, Dotsey and Dzidzienyo (2022:31) state that social media, recognised as a more cost-effective and highly popular way of marketing, has rewarded the hospitality and tourism industry with multiple benefits. Consequently, social media enables low-cost and efficient management of the information exchanged online, creating product-related content and with all the features more readily available (Dotsey and Dzidzienyo 2022:32). Lau (2020:02,06) says that this has given hoteliers a fighting chance for them to continue doing business even during the pandemic times.

#### **2.9.4 Economic Factors**

There are economic factors that also influence the way tourists behave, these may include how much an individual earns, the inflation rates and how much the tourism products or services cost (Fratu 2011:04). For example, Quang, Tran, Tran, Nguyen, and Nguyen (2020:06) state that the decrease in international travel has impacted the industry's economic state and because the tourism industry has many other sectors that it works with. The decrease in tourist arrivals and tourism revenue has also impacted those sectors as evident from Figure 2.5. The decline in tourism consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic had a detrimental effect on the unemployment rate, with approximately 66% of tourism businesses in Vietnam having to reduce their staff numbers (Quang *et al.* 2020:06). As per Maturaa (2021:08), people expressed sorrow regarding the prices of tourism products in Zimbabwe resulting in an obstacle to domestic

tourism participation for the locals especially during the pandemic and economic constraints. This means that people lost their sources of income due to the pandemic lockdowns thus making it paramount for tourism strategists to reduce domestic tourism products to make them more appealing and affordable as price is a well-known demand driver. According to Bama and Nyikana (2021:04), South Africa is dependent on tourism and as per the Department of Tourism, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) stated that during the year 2018, tourism injected a sum of R425 billion towards the countries' economy and at the same time, domestic tourism made a direct foreign spend of R139 billion which makes up 2.8% towards GDP. On the contrary, further studies by Yang *et al.* (2021:02), Josephson, Kilic, and Michler (2021:02), claimed that low-income earners were significantly affected by the pandemic regarding work, health, transport, and entertainment and in many other ways. This is because many people had to work from home with reduced salaries while some were unemployed leaving them with insufficient income to even take care of their basic needs which meant no money for non-essential activities such as tourism.



**Figure 2.5 Revenue reduction of the Hotel & Restaurant and Travel sectors in the first quarter from 2018 to 2020**

Source: Jalagat and Aquino (2022).

According to Johnson (2020), the pandemic has negatively impacted the accommodation sector as evident from Figure 2.5 above since they were affected by travel restrictions imposed by the government, so they incurred a considerable amount of financial losses as a result they

were forced to seek some financial aid assistance. Sucheran (2021:05) reports that each day that the South African tourism industry persists under lockdown means that R748 million is being lost in the tourism outflow which in turn will result in additional job losses and about 75% of revenue was expected to be lost within the industry. The author further says that about 50,000 SA businesses had to temporarily shut their doors (Sucheran 2021:09,10) whereas some well-known leading hospitality establishment brands experienced permanent closure due to the financial reduction shown in Figure 2.5. Dube (2020:08,10) also noted that South African people were reluctant to travel domestically during the pandemic as a result, the accommodation sector establishments made only about 10% of the total income that was made in the year 2019 and the lockdown also crippled three major airlines in South Africa namely the flag carrier of the country South African Airways (SAA), British Airways and Kulula operated by Comair Limited.

As per the study by Colakoglu *et al* (2021:03), about 65 international airlines in Hong Kong reported that they had to decrease their flights by 95% due to the pandemic and that led to a reduction in tourism as it is dependent on human mobility. As per Orindaru, Popescu, Alexoaei, Caescu, Florescu and Orzan (2021:14), even though tourists were still willing to travel when the regulations were eased, they still made their safety a top priority.

## **2.10 Tourist Behaviour Towards Destinations Affected by Catastrophes**

Vuuren and Slabbert (2011:296) mention that tourist behaviour is influenced by a range of variables which are likely to fluctuate before, during and after they travel. The study conducted by Gupta, Shukla and Pandiya (2022:02), implies that tourist motivation towards visiting a destination is defined as internal psychological needs that evoke certain tourist behaviours in their travel and tourism activity participation. Individuals and demographics have an impact on the risk perceptions tourists have towards a destination (Lepp and Gibson 2003:03). According to Brown (2019:09), a tourist is a person who travels away from home for longer than 24 hours but less than a year, and they travel for different purposes such as leisure, pilgrimage, study visiting, visiting friend and relatives (mostly known as VFR) and for business purposes. Essentially, tourist participation and acquisition of tourism activities contribute significantly to the economy at large, since income is generated by the hosting country; there is an increase in employment, a high contribution towards the GDP, improved infrastructure of the hosting country, and foreign currency may be earned, thus representing tourism as one of the main drivers of the economy (Yehia 2019). Even though the tourism industry plays such a significant



role towards the economy of the world, it remains vulnerable to unanticipated events such as natural disasters, health outbreaks and terrorism (Rogerson and Rogerson: 2020:01). As per the study done by Kusumaningrum and Wachyuni (2020:02-04), it is paramount for tourism role players to know what motivates tourists to travel as motivation is the main reason why people decide to travel in the first place. The need for travel and tourism activities may be driven by security needs, self-esteem, physiological needs, and desire to rest or to seek adventure (Gupta, Shukla and Pandiya 2022:04,05). Chang and Hung (2021:05), Gupta *et al.* (2022:03), propose that some of the factors that motivate tourist to choose a destination under normal circumstances are food, facilities, learning, service, and souvenirs, however, these changes when faced with pandemics and other unforeseen events. Moreover, before the pandemic, people looked for destinations that offered better services and affordability. The outbreak of the pandemic has influenced the destinations tourists visit as they now (Gupta, Shukla and Pandiya 2022:03). However, in recent times, tourists are willing to pay more for much safer accommodation establishments and they now favour destinations with less human contact (Kusumaningrum *et al.* 2020:02-04). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2021), global tourism endured the worst year on record in the year 2020 as international arrivals dropped by 74% due to the travel limitations imposed by governments and the lack of interest to travel abroad. Before the pandemic, the lifestyle of the Chinese people was usually to travel in large groups especially during public holidays and dining in busy restaurants which they also enjoyed doing. However, the novel coronavirus has introduced lots of change, forcing the Chinese people to stay at home, and gatherings were postponed or cancelled (Wen, Kozak, Yang and Liu,2020:05). However, SteelFisher, McMurtry, Caporello, McGowan, Schafer, Lubell, Friedman, Allen, Shockey, Grady and Ben-Porath (2021:10) posit that once a relaxation on the lockdown regulations was introduced, a sudden demand for domestic travel arose since many people were depressed it evoked a desire for leisure breaks and they prefer to travel locally. Consequently, for many hospitality entities, this creates a potential opportunity to build on communication strategies and advance the knowledge of the public about COVID-19 and the precautions to follow for safe travelling. Moreover, a study led by Saito and Strehlau (2018:19), states that there are four categories that tourists make their destination choices these mainly include external variables such as the tourists' culture, friends, family, and the enticing factors of the destination that may make it differ from other tourist destinations. Furthermore, the aforementioned authors mention that internal variables such as lifestyle, motivation, risk reduction, values and attitudes may play a role when travellers choose

a destination to visit. The reason for the tourists' travelling and their experiences will determine their destination choice (Saito and Strehlau (2018:19). Whilst international destinations are unable to recuperate from the financial losses incurred during a pandemic, it can, however, rely on domestic tourism for financial sustainability during this pandemic (Panashe 2020). On the other hand, in South Africa, Stats SA (2021:09) shows that a total of 3 930 440 inhabitants travelled within the country in January 2020 but a significant drop of 86.75% in domestic travel during January 2021.

The study led by SteelFisher *et al.* (2021), makes it evident that most tourists are more than willing to travel to domestic destinations regardless of the pandemic. Moreover, the study conducted by Seyidov and Adomaitiene (2016:113,115), state that in order for tourism companies to facilitate their decision-making process they first need to understand the behaviour of tourists and what motivates them to travel. Osti and Nava (2020:04) state that there is some notable change when it comes to destination choice during a pandemic and tourists now prefer to visit natural areas as they are more open thus enabling distancing and they are clean with fresh air. Organisations and economies responsible for developing and promoting domestic tourism are required to understand and identify all elements influencing the destination choices of domestic tourists. Subsequently, acquiring information on travellers' choices and behaviours serves as beneficial to the tourism role players as it would help them adapt and produce services that may align with the current needs of tourists. Moreover, Bratic *et al.* (2021:09) state that risk associated with endangering health and safety in the context of vacation, is the core reason as to why people behave and react in a certain manner in their everyday lives. Consequently, in times of unpredicted events, potential tourists react differently to avoid risks and to protect their health and families, since health and safety become their priority when planning a trip. However, a study conducted by Neumayer (2004:02) shows that there are some tourists, who seek adventure tourism, and demonstrate willingness to travel despite the danger that the destination may expose them to.

A study conducted by Li, Gong, Gao and Yuan (2021:02) make it evident that the behaviour and attitudes of people towards tourist destinations is largely influenced by external variables such as pandemics. This is because tourists consider personal safety and their health as a priority, therefore, will not consider going to places that may hinder their safety and destinations that are hit by pandemics may not entice travellers and this is the same considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it is stated that a leading travel agency in China made it evident that

the pandemic has reshaped the behaviour of travellers as they now avoid travelling to destinations with more confirmed cases making people prefer travelling locally and closer to home than before. The tourism literature provided by scholars shows that signals are important for influencing the behaviour of tourists. Travellers do not have first-hand information about the destination they are willing to visit, hence they tend to be over-reliant on secondary information. The signals that are displayed on the websites of tourism organisations' websites increase the informativeness, making them look forward to the destination enjoyment and reputation-based quality may also explain the levels of tariffs charged by the establishments thus highly influencing their buying intentions. In reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, signals showing confirmed reported cases, risk expectations and measures to take may be what people use to make decisions. Moreover, Li *et al.* (2021:02,03), state that the prospect theory which is mainly in the context of gambling has been found to have a better way of explaining travel behaviour. Travellers view long-distance destinations as having a greater chance of being infected by the pandemic than short distances since they are most likely to utilise public transportation such as aircraft whereas, in short distances, they can use their cars and return home and avoid the use of hotels. Long distances are usually associated with financial restrictions because travelling far means one will need accommodation, and food and make use of public transport thus leading to high travel expenses (Saito and Strehlau 2018:19). Li *et al.* (2021:03), state that the prospect theory applies to travellers who have been exposed to the shock of COVID-19. A tour usually consists of a loss and gain. A gain refers to the enjoyment and satisfaction of the tourists and a loss usually refers to poor services and anything that may go wrong during the trip in the context of COVID-19 the loss is expected to increase because now it also includes the physical risks and being infected.

## **2.11 Conclusion.**

Tourism plays a significant role in the economy of many countries as it provides employment opportunities, yet pandemic outbreaks impact the behaviour of tourists which affects the industry. The novel COVID-19 pandemic has led to inevitable destruction and stand- still within the industry as various government rules were imposed thus restricting tourists' movement. The outbreak further led to economic losses and instilled fear in tourists that some were reluctant to travel whereas some were eager to travel and spend time with their loved ones. Moreover, it was evident in the literature that many destinations do not focus on the domestic market as

they do not spend much money compared to international tourists. The COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for rural destinations and encourage domestic tourism as a means of survival. This chapter investigated various discussions and arguments made by various scholars based on the subject matter of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist behaviours. Throughout the chapter, it is indicated as to what tourists are looking for and how are they likely to behave when faced with catastrophes. This chapter also investigated factors that influence tourist behaviour including economic, personal, situational and technological factors. Most of the literature focused on international and there is limited data on domestic tourist behaviour, especially in South Africa which is the gap the study wishes to bridge. The following chapter will discuss a detailed research design used for this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

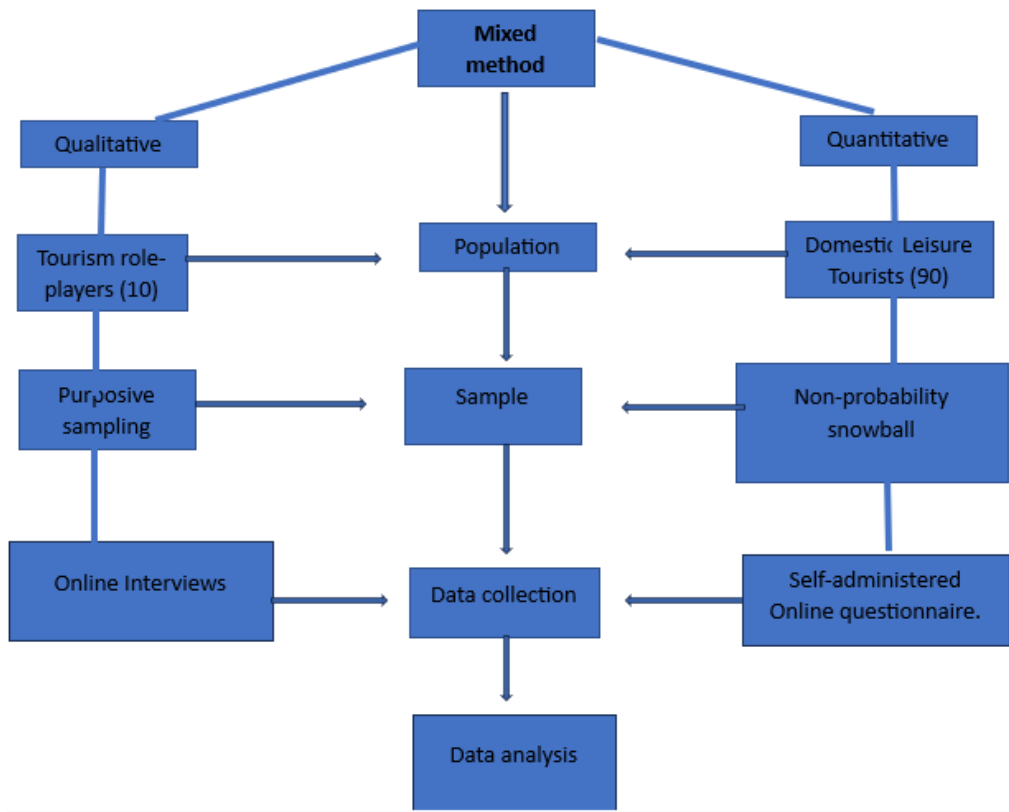
### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented an outline of the literature review from different sources to underpin and support the study. This chapter will discuss the methodological choice and research design that represents this study to meet the study's key aim which is to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the objectives which were outlined in chapter one.

According to Malhotra (2010:102), research methodology is the process that is used to gather information and data with the main aim being to be able to make decisions or establish facts and come to new conclusions. Research methodology is the collection of procedures that a researcher will use in their study including all the principles to be considered to support their study approach (Bouchrika 2023:02; Brown 2006:26). In this study a mixed methods research approach was considered as the most suitable choice and the motivation for this approach and the research design will be explained later in this chapter.

The research design tells the researcher how to approach the investigation of the study undertaken (Swean, 2016). The key aim of this chapter was to examine the research design, data procedure of how the data was to be collected and lastly the data analysis technique that was used in the study. Moreover, this chapter covers the study context, sampling used for the study, questionnaire design and administration, reliability, validity, ethics followed by the researcher, delimitations, and limitations of the study. This is an important chapter as it serves as a blueprint for all methods applied in this study.

### 3.2 Research design



**Figure 3.1 Methodological Design**

Source: (Authors own compilation)

As per the study conducted by Akhtar (2016:68,71,73), different scholars describe research design in many different yet common ways. Accordingly, a research design is a structure and strategy in which a researcher aims to answer the research questions, handle variability, undertake data collection, and how will it be processed and analysed once collected (Sekaran and Bougie 2016:355; Akhtar 2016:68,71,73). It forms the blueprint for the whole study which makes the whole procedure much easier as it gives more information with minimum time, costs, and effort (Akhtar 2016:73). Furthermore, an exploratory study is also known as formulator research; descriptive or statistical research; explanatory research; experimental or analytical research. Nevertheless, Williams (2007:01) states that there are three main research design methods which are available for researchers to use, and these methods are the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The researcher used the mixed method research design for this study and will begin with the quantitative approach followed by the qualitative approach making use of the convergent parallel method subsequently explained in this chapter.

### **3.3. The Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods**

#### **3.2.1 Quantitative**

The quantitative method enabled the researcher to systematically quantify the study, facilitating a deeper comprehension of numerical data and graphical representations pertinent to the research topic (Streefkekrek 2019; Schindler 2019:203). Additionally, it was instrumental in distinguishing between judgments and facts (Schindler 2019:128). Quantitative research is said to be rooted in positivism with the belief that there is one reality of any hypothesis, it is either something truly exists, or it does not, and this can be tested through the collection of quantitative data (Claydon 2015:01). Quantitative research was employed to examine the correlations between variables that can be statistically evaluated, with the aim of elucidating the relationships between the behaviours of domestic tourists and unforeseen events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For this research, the quantitative research data was collected through the online self-administered questionnaires that were sent out to domestic tourists of KwaZulu-Natal across the country. Nevertheless, Rahman (2016:05), declares that quantitative data cannot acquire much deeper explanations and understanding of the matter at hand. From the above literature, one can deduce that quantitative method tends to overlook participants' perspectives and experiences due to the lack of direct connection between the researcher and respondent during the data collection phase (Rahman 2016:06). Therefore, the research saw it important to also make use of qualitative method in order to better understand this study.

#### **3.2.2 Qualitative**

As previously stated, this study included the qualitative research approach. According to Bhandari (2020), qualitative research deals with data that is not numerical to understand behaviours and opinions. The qualitative approach is when a researcher uses words to express the research and the researcher used this method was used to gain opinions, facts and deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Streefkekrek 2019; Sanders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2007:472). Additionally, Sekaran and Bougie (2016:02) and Creswell and Creswell (2018:03), affirm the aforementioned scholars by asserting that qualitative research data is data that is expressed using words which can be generated from broad conversations such as when using

open-ended questions for your survey instrument. This method was able to elicit rich thick descriptions from the interviews, representing the qualitative data. Moreover, qualitative data mainly deals with decryption, and explaining which can be most suitable to use when dealing with motivations, people's behaviour, and perceptions. Subsequently, this was an essential aspect of this study since it looked into tourists' behaviour and perceptions during the pandemic. However, studies indicate that this approach may sometimes leave out the contextual sensitivities as it tends to put more focus on the perceptions and experiences of the respondents (Silverman 2011; Rahman 2016:04). Hence in this study, the researcher did not use qualitative research in isolation. Furthermore, the qualitative data for this study was obtained through the interviews that were conducted with ten industry role players from different sectors of the tourism industry in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Additionally, qualitative research may be executed using observations, focus groups, secondary data (e.g., videos), surveys and lastly interviews to (Bhandari 2020).

### *3.2.2.1 Mixed Methods*

Given the merits and drawbacks of each approach; an appropriate approach for this study was a mixed-method approach. Various scholars of the mixed-methods approach point out that a mixed-method study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data within one study (Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri 2021:29; Schoonenboom and Johnson 2017:02). Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2013:02) also attest to the above authors by stating that mixed-method studies have the advantage of drawing strength from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Additionally, the mixed-methods approach was advantageous as it explored the study problem using various ways (Brunt, Horner and Semley 2017:30; Creswell 2003:370). Creswell and Creswell (2018:222), state that when using the mixed-method approach, the researcher first gathers the quantitative data, analyse the results from the data and then constructs findings to collect the qualitative data. However, this may not always be the case since there are numerous ways to be used when collecting data for both qualitative and quantitative. For a researcher to decode and implement a mixed-method approach for the study, it should solely be due to the significance of using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods rather than using just one method to answer the research questions (Halcomb and Hickman 2015: 06; Crewell and Plano Clark 2011). It is also important to consider the feasibility of carrying out a mixed-method study as it means more resources and skills will be required. The researcher used a mixed-method approach to attain a more in-depth understanding of the study topic by conducting contextual understanding using interviews, facts, statistics, and questionnaires. The



integration of both the qualitative and quantitative approach enhanced the value of the study (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Bryman 2006:02). According to Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2013:03) there are three basic designs to integrate mixed methods which are exploratory sequential, explanatory sequential and lastly the convergent design. The researcher applied the convergent design for this study which is also known as concurrent design. In the convergent design, both the qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed around the same time and the data may be interacting to address the objectives of the study.

### **3.2.3 Exploratory study**

Sekaran and Bougie (2016:43) describe an exploratory study as a study that is developed when there is not sufficient knowledge about the problem at hand, where the findings of previous studies of a similar nature are very vague and when the topic discussed is very broad. This was suitable as there was not much research done at the time of inception. The authors further state that exploratory research is dependent on qualitative research data collection methods such as interviews which were used in the study. As much as exploratory research is hugely associated with qualitative data, it is stated that should the sample be huge, exploratory study may also be conducted in quantitatively (George 2021). Since the study involved two samples namely purposive for tourism role players and non-probability snowball sampling for domestic leisure tourists, an exploratory study was suitable in this mixed-method research. As suggested by Sarantakos (2005), exploratory studies are usually carried out with the aim of developing a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon being studied. According to Singh (2007:64), an exploratory research design's objective is not to provide a conclusive answer to the research questions; however, it explores the research topic with different levels of depth. Moreover, the aforesaid author reveals that this type of research is the initial research which paves the way for more conclusive research studies. This was an exploratory study because there was paucity of information known about the matter of the study especially in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal. Although some studies have addressed similar issues there are still some limitations and information that is not fully understood especially in the South African context, such as how domestic tourists in South Africa behave when faced with catastrophes. The exploratory study assisted the researcher to understand the behaviour of leisure domestic tourism in KwaZulu-Natal.

### **3.3 Context And Location of Study**

The study was conducted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The province of KZN is located in the Southeast of South Africa with a long shoreline along the warm Indian Ocean bordering three provinces and three countries namely Mozambique, Swaziland, and Lesotho (see Figure 3.2).

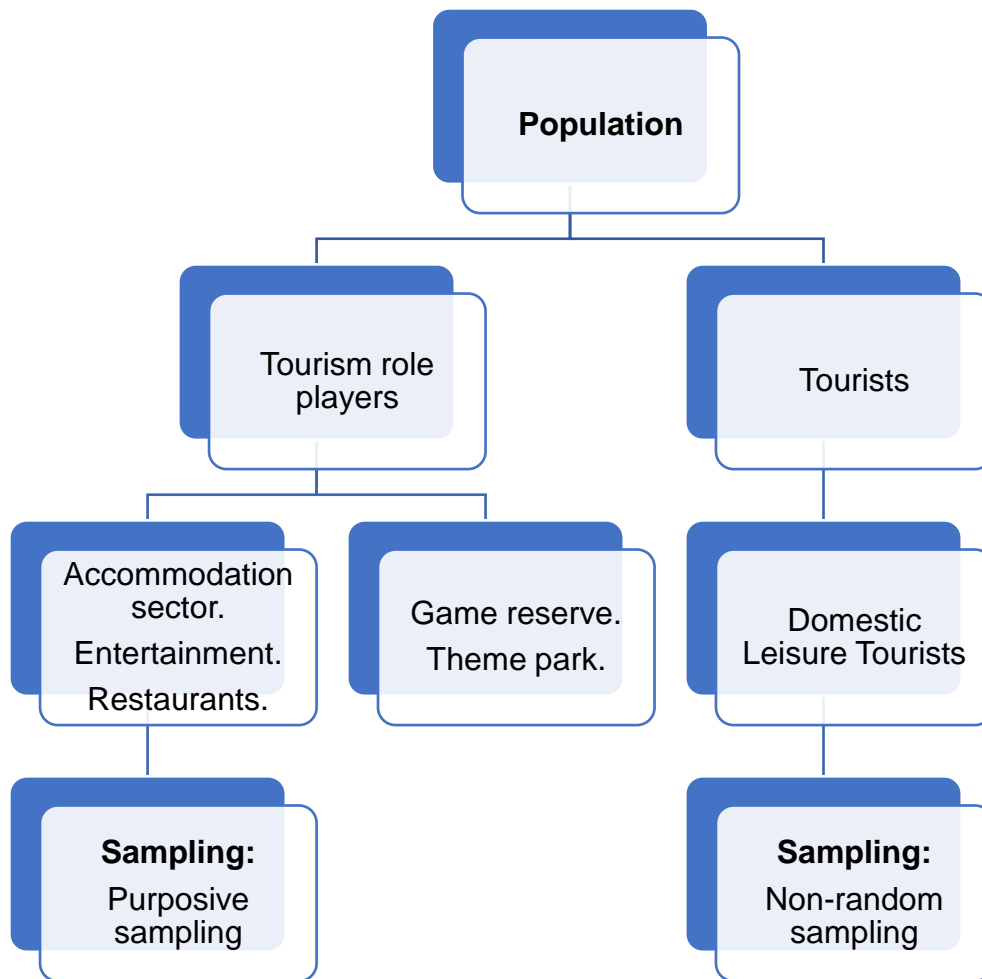
Sucheran (2015:04) reveals that the KwaZulu-Natal province has its warm beautiful beaches towards the east, the majestic uKhahlamba Drakensberg mountain on the west side and lastly the Mthavuna River on the south of the province which serves as a border between Eastern Cape and the KZN province. Moreover, the province is made up of eight different regions and unique regions thus enabling the province to offer a variety of tourism activities. These regions are namely Zululand, Isandlwana Battlefield, Elephant Coast, South Coast, North Coast, and Pietermaritzburg. Durban and lastly uKhahlamba Drakensberg. Aina and Alabi (2022:02) declare that KwaZulu-Natal is one of the most frequently visited domestic destinations in South Africa. Similarly, the Tourism Annual Report (2017:15) confirms that KwaZulu-Natal was the third most domestic visited province after Limpopo and Gauteng. According to Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (2019/20:08) also known as TKZN, KwaZulu-Natal owns the biggest waterfront promenade in Africa which is in the city of Durban. This study focuses on domestic tourism within the province of KwaZulu-Natal which was highlighted in Chapter One and the tourist chose this province due to its diverse tourist attractions and it also being highly known for domestic tourism. The researcher chose this province because KZN is the most visited province by local tourists (Makhaola and Proches 2017:01; Tourism KwaZulu-Natal Annual Report 2020:04). Moreover, in recent years, KwaZulu-Natal as a province was most vulnerable to a myriad of disasters including floods, riots, lightning, water shortages that had impacted on the domestic. For instance, between 2018 and 2022, KwaZulu-Natal experienced a remarkable 5,428 reported disaster incidents (Reddy, Mbandlwa, Pillay, Murwirapachena; Ngema, 2024:24). Moreover, these events had severe economic impacts, with damages estimated to have exceeded R12.21 billion. This raises security concerns and may negatively affect the destination's image, as people are generally reluctant to associate themselves with danger. Therefore, the study intended on studying tourist behaviour towards the province during catastrophes such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 3.2 The map of the KwaZulu-Natal province

Source: [https://www.thesafaricompany.co.za/map\\_kwazulu\\_natal.htm](https://www.thesafaricompany.co.za/map_kwazulu_natal.htm)

### 3.5. Population and Sampling



**Figure 3.3 Population and Sampling**

Source: Researchers own adaptation

The above diagram is a synopsis of how the population of this study was structured, looking at both domestic leisure tourists and tourism role-players, and how data was gathered from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. This is explained in detail below.

#### 3.3.1 Population

Sekaran and Bougie (2016:230) explain that in research, population refers to the whole group or objects which is linked to the topic of the study. When doing research and aiming at collecting primary data, researchers need information from participants and these participants belong to a certain population according to their characteristics (Asiamah, Mensal and Oteng-Abayie

2017:03). It is rather impossible to reach out to the whole population hence only a part of it is sampled out to present the population (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 237). This study comprises two populations, namely, domestic leisure tourists across South Africa and various tourism role players within the KwaZulu-Natal province. The tourists that were included in the study were leisure tourists. The researcher chose these participants due to the significant information that they have which helped answer the study questions. The population selection of the study consisted of both interprovincial and intra-provincial domestic tourists from South Africa who have in the past (from 2017 to 2019) visited KwaZulu-Natal. This timeline was chosen because these are the most recent tourist visitors to KZN and may still have fresh and more recent memories of the destination and tourism services offered by the province before the pandemic; they may have been planning to visit again.

#### *3.3.1.1 Leisure tourists*

According to McGuigan (2018) a leisure tourist is someone who takes a break from their everyday lives to seek relaxation. Spacey (2020) agrees by saying that leisure can be filled with recreation, entertainment and relaxing, the author further states that some of the activities that may be enjoyed by leisure tourists may include the following: dining out, going to entertainment events, movies, shopping, zoo, theme parks, beach, sightseeing, and hiking. These tourists were valuable to the study due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 regulations and as some tourists' fear going to places that may risk their safety. Augustine and Balachandran (2021:07) state that tourists are still willing to travel, however, the pandemic is preventing them from travelling as it has installed travel fear and health anxiety in their minds. The Council of the European Union (2022) articulates that the new recommendations made state that member states should not enforce any travel restrictions with reference to public health. Moreover, the above-mentioned author mentions that even though no restrictions were imposed, however, there are some recommendations given to ensure safety in cases of epidemiological outbreaks. The recommendations include that should a third country perhaps be faced with an epidemic, certain restrictions may be reintroduced for safety measures before any form of travel is made such as vaccination, quarantine and travellers providing proof of recovery and testing. Additionally, many African nations have opened their countries with no strict policies against non-vaccinated travellers, while other countries will at the minimum require a pre-arrival test (Whitmore 2022). The aforementioned author also mentions that Egypt, Morocco, and South

Africa are restriction-free. Equally, leisure tourists including those who travel for relaxation and recreation formed part of the study, as well as participated in the online questionnaire. As presented in the consent letter (refer to appendix 4) only people who are leisure tourists in KwaZulu-Natal were able to participate in the study, once they read and signed the consent letter and met the criteria of being leisure tourists to KZN.

### *3.3.1.2 Tourism Role Players*

The literature in Chapter two made it evident that the tourism industry has suffered considerably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were the ones to notice the changes in tourist behaviour from the start of booking tourism services to experiencing the product and lastly when tourists abandon the tourism services. Hence the researcher saw it necessary to include people working and affiliated within the tourism industry to be part of the study as they would best respond to the study objectives. Since it was difficult to acquire gatekeepers' letters from every tourism provider in KZN; the researcher sent several requests to the role players. From the positive responses, the researcher selected the most active role players from different sectors to make the study more valuable. As mentioned previously by Sekaran and Bougie (2016:296), Delice (2010:08) a reasonable sample size is more than 30 and less than 500 hence the overall sample size intended for this study was 100 respondents. This was divided into two groups: one representing the tourists (90) and the other, tourism role players (10).

### **3.3.2 Sampling Methods**

Sampling is a subset of the population (McCombes 2019). It is impossible to reach out to the whole population so it is convenient to take a sample that will represent the whole population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:237). There are two main types of sampling techniques which includes probability and non-probability sampling. A non-probability sampling also known as a non-random sampling is a method where it is not really known which individuals or population will be selected for sampling purposes (Etikan and Bala 2017:01; Howard 2019; Panchal 2017). With regard to the current study, a non-probability sampling approach was adopted. Specifically, snowball sampling was used in the selection of respondents to the questionnaire, and purposive sampling was used in the selection of participants in the interviews.

The researcher used snowball sampling as it is one of the well-known sampling methods that are inexpensive and that enabled the researcher to make use of participants that were more easily accessible (Taherdoost 2017:06). Parker *et al.* (2019: 03) state that snowball sampling may be best applied where the researcher has a limited number of initial contacts who are suitable to be part of the study. Etikan, Alkassim and Abubakar (2015:01), proclaim that snowball sampling is not as uncontrollable as the name implies as the researcher is involved in the development and managing of the original sample and how the participants share the link to ensure that all referrals are relevant of the study. The snowball sampling method was employed due to the researcher's limited direct contact with respondents. The researcher used this method as means to leverage existing social networks, this approach was beneficial as it facilitated the sharing of the survey link among acquaintances in an attempt to increase respondent participation (Etikan and Bala, 2017:02). Moreover, this approach supported the researcher towards saving time and costs as limited funding was available.

The researcher adopted judgmental sampling also known as purposive sampling for this study based on what the researcher's judgement is as to who will best be suitable to provide information that will answer the study objective (Etikan and Bala 2017:01). Purposive sampling was used to carry out the study because this method allows the researcher to select participants who are relevant to the study (Chittaranjan 2020). The researcher used purposive sampling for the tourism role players as she personally selected which ones she would request to partake on the study. Sekaran and Bougie (2016:248) state that purposive sampling is a sample that is used to obtain information from a specific group or type of people who will be able to provide information that is needed for the study. Furthermore, Sekaran and Bougie (2016:247) also mention that convenience sampling is the collection of data from people who belong to the population under study and who are available at that time to provide the required information.

According to Shorten and Moorley (2014), selecting the correct sample size is all about predicting well in advance that the sample size chosen will be sufficient to give credibility to the study. The sample size of this study consisted of 10 tourism industry participants and 89 domestic tourist participants. The researcher aimed at attaining a total of 90 domestic tourists. Apart from time constraints, some individuals were reluctant in participating due to the sensitive nature of some questions as some people had lost their jobs while some even their loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people did not want to participate as the researcher is purely a student some people saw no significance in their participation towards the study and

how it would even help them in future. The researcher depended on initial contacts to refer other people who would have been significant to the study. Some of those initial contacts were not well-connected therefore had small referrals more especially because the study was only limited to one geographical location which was KwaZulu-Natal, as a result this also contributed to the total number being 89. The researcher aimed to conduct virtual interviews with 10 industry professionals using online platforms like Microsoft Teams and Zoom, ensuring that each participant was engaged through only one method of data collection. The researcher reached out to different industry role players from hotels, restaurants, theme parks, night life entertainment, cruise and travel agents until a total of 10 respondents was reached, achieving data saturation. Moreover, the researcher chose this total number of participants because it was a safer option to go with as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2016:296), Delice (2010:08), Budiu and Moran (2021) that a good sample size must be greater than 30 and less than 500. When the researcher has a larger sample size, the uncertainty decreases and provides the researcher with greater precision (Littler 2015). Singh and Masuku (2014:02), state that even if the study may be well put together, if a sample size is too small it may fail to give the precise information needed and should it be too large it may also lead to inaccuracy and may be too expensive. Furthermore, Singh and Masuku (2014:06) reveal that the sample size normally depends on the cost required for the data collection and whether the statistical power will be sufficient or not. Therefore, the researcher saw it sufficient to use this sample size as it provided statistical power to answer the study objectives and aim.

Sampling biases occur when members of the population which are being studied stand a chance of being selected than others (Bhandari 2020). The researcher tried to avoid this by using purposive and snowball sampling for domestic tourists, that way the researcher does not choose which domestic tourist stands a chance than the other. Moreover, the researcher reduced the sampling bias by adopting purposive sampling for tourism role players who were sent emails requesting the interviews. The researcher selected those who responded first and those who were granted permission.

### **3.4 Data collection**

Kabir (2016:03) explains data collection as a process of gathering information on the variables of the research in a systematic manner that enables the researcher to answer the research questions of their study, test the study hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes. Moreover, the



authors state that the main goal for data collection is to ensure the great quality of information which leads to rich data analysis for the study which allows credible answers to the study questions. Researchers need to be aware of the theoretical arguments that the study is trying to address and then explore the various data collection methods available to use to answer the research question of the study (Creswell 2003:08). The researcher distributed online questionnaires and managed to obtain 89 responses all of whom were domestic leisure tourists receiving tourism services. A letter of consent was included, specifying that only domestic leisure tourists to KZN were eligible to participate, ensuring the questionnaires were directed to the appropriate audience. To gather qualitative data, the researcher contacted various industry stakeholders primarily through email or telephonically. After agreeing to participate, these stakeholders were asked to send a gatekeeper's letter, granting permission to partake in the interview. According to Ajayi (2017:02), Brunt, Horner and Semley (2017:26), the collection of data is paramount especially when it comes to analysing the statistics and there are two main methods to be considered when gathering data which are the primary and secondary data. For this study, primary and secondary data collection methods were used to attain the desired information. Ajayi (2017:02), further states that primary data means that the data is new and does not pre-exist as the researcher collects it from the study participants while secondary data means that the data does exist and has been collected or produced by previous scholars.

### **3.4.1 Primary data**

Schindler (2019:33) defines primary data as data that is raw and has not yet been processed. Ajayi (2017:02) states that primary data is collected for mainly solving the study problem. Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis and Horahill (2007:356) says that it can be advantageous to use primary data as it specifically designed to answer the research questions of one's study according to the way they see fit and gives the researcher more control over the data collection process. However, Sekaran and Bougie (2013:75), argue that primary data can be financially expensive and demands lots of time. It is expensive and requires lots of time as the researcher will have to conduct interviews with each participant, perhaps travel to them and go administer the questionnaires and do observations. The study used primary data collected from the questionnaires and interviews to help respond to the study questions or the study problem. The primary data was collected using online self-administered questionnaires and interviews.

The researcher used online questionnaires and interviews to limit the financial expenses and time consumption that primary data is mostly associated with.

### **3.4.2 Secondary data**

According to Ajayi (2017:04), Semley *et al.* (2017:26), secondary data is the data that has been collected in the past by other researchers that may not be related to the current study who collected the data for a different purpose, and it is easily available as one can access it via books, websites, journal articles and many more data storages. Secondary data is easy and quick to find thus making it inexpensive and can also be available to support a study where primary data may be difficult to obtain (Cameron and Price 2009:210). In this study, secondary data includes the literature review presented in Chapter two and that this data was obtained through books, journal articles, reports, newspapers, government gazettes and other dissertations found helpful towards the study. The secondary data was very helpful as it provided the researcher with information on previous studies that were conducted and helped in establishing the constructs of the study. This provided the study with a sound foundation which informed the rest of the study.

## **3.5 Effective Strategies for Questionnaire and Interview Question Design**

### **3.5.1 Questionnaire Design**

A questionnaire is a set of questions that are written down with several predefined answers that can gather information about peoples' thoughts, opinions, and experiences to answer the questions posed by the study (Marshall 2004:02). According to Roopa and Rani (2012:01), a questionnaire was first invented in the late 1800s by a British statistician and explorer Sir Francis Galton. The authors explain that a questionnaire is a list of questions to be completed by respondents. The researcher used this data collection tool as a backbone of the survey and is mainly used to collect quantitative data (Roopa *et al.*, 2012:01). The researcher also made use of a pilot study to improve and refine the questionnaire. For the quantitative data, the researcher utilized 20 acquaintances from individuals who had previously travelled within South Africa and these people were not used for the main study. Some of the reasons to bear in mind

and consider when choosing to use a questionnaire as a data collection tool are as follows (Rathi and Ronald 2022:02).

### 3.6 Evaluating the Use of Questionnaires in Research

Table 3.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of a Questionnaire

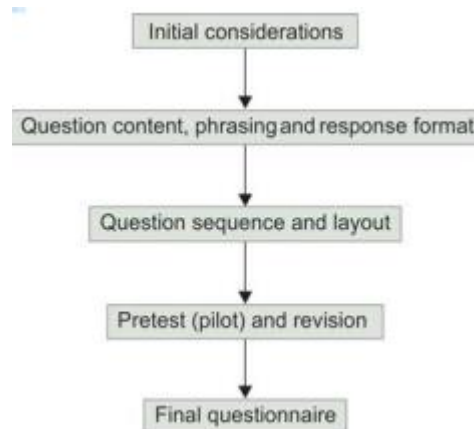
Advantages of using a questionnaire	Disadvantages of using a questionnaire
Using a questionnaire as a tool of data collection means that there are fewer administrative struggles compared to other methods of data collection.	There may be a low response rate as some people may not send back the questionnaires.
A questionnaire is a much cheaper tool to make use of and it also saves time and energy.	The researcher needs to have the contacts of the people who will partake in the study.
The opinions and views of the researcher may not be reflected on the answers of the participants as they answer on their own time without the researcher.	It may be difficult for the researcher to get clarity from the respondents in case of ambiguity.
Questionnaires grants the respondents with sufficient time to carefully think about their responses, therefore, making them more accurate.	It is also stated that in most cases people prefer talking than writing.

Source: Modified from Rathi and Ronald (2022:02)

To avoid some of the above-mentioned disadvantages of using a questionnaire to collect data, for this study the researcher made use of snowball sampling. Follow ups were made to ensure the questionnaire was shared with the relevant respondents. These respondents were encouraged to share the questionnaire link with others who had similar experiences, thus growing the sample to a desired sample size.

There are two types of questions, namely open-ended and closed-ended questions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:146). The study comprised of 2 sample population which were the domestic tourists and tourism role players. The domestic tourists were given the questionnaires whilst interviews were used to collect data from the tourism role players. The study used Likert scale, multiple choice and closed-ended questions; this is because the closed questions are easy to

answer as they give options for the respondents to choose from. The questionnaire also catered to a few open-ended questions to provide respondents an opportunity to share their views, opinions, and experiences on relevant aspects. Sekaran and Bougie (2016:145,146) explains that when designing a questionnaire there are three guidelines to follow which are: principles of wording; principles of measurements and the general appearance of the questionnaire must be neat and user friendly to the participants. Roopa *et al.* (2012:01) affirm that there are some steps that needs to be followed when designing a questionnaire to make sure that you get the relevant information, and these steps are as follows (see Figure 3.4).



**Figure 3.4 Stages of Planning a Questionnaire**

Source: Roopa and Rani (2012)

The guidance provided in Figure 3.4 was used by the researcher when designing the study questionnaire. The KZN domestic tourists' questionnaire (appendix 2) had 23 questions which were inclusive of both negative and positive wording and two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire.

### **3.6.1 Developing Impactful Interview for qualitative research**

The primary data used in this study was also collected through the use of in-depth interviews with 10 industry role players in KwaZulu-Natal. As previously mentioned, online interviews were used to facilitate the qualitative data. These participants were chosen for their valuable insights into the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector. Interviews offer the advantage of providing the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of various themes of interest Sekaran and Bougie (2013:127). In the current study, qualitative data was constituted through the use of in-depth interviews (Schindler 2019:128). The interview questions were formulated around key themes, including observed changes in tourist behaviour due to the

pandemic, the pandemic's effects on the tourism industry, and any adjustments made to the services provided. Creswell and Creswell (2018:188) assert that interviews enable the researcher to determine the course of their questions. Additionally, participants can provide valuable historical information that may be significant for the searcher. Nevertheless, there are drawbacks such as the fact that information may be filtered through the perspective of the participant. Furthermore, not all individuals are articulate and perceptive (Creswell and Creswell 2018:188). The second population, the tourism role players, were provided with a schedule of structured interview questions (see Appendix 1) which gave the researcher more information to answer the study questions. To ensure that the main study was focused and relevant towards the research goals, the researcher employed a pilot study. The pilot study for qualitative data included 5 DUT alumni, former students, who are strongly affiliated with the tourism and hospitality industry. The participants in the pilot study were selected because they represented similar views and characteristics of the industry role players which the researcher aimed to interview for the main study (Davies 2007: 47). All the questions that were asked to both groups were purposively selected to align and respond to each one of the four objectives of the study which helps to clarify and refine the research questions and objectives.

All the questions used for both populations were short and easy to read to keep the respondents interested. The researcher started by asking simple questions to allow the respondents to be comfortable and then progressed to more engaging questions. (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016:148-150).

### **3.7 Questionnaire Administration and Data Collection**

#### **3.7.1 Administration of questionnaire**

One of the well-known methods of collecting primary data is by using a questionnaire (Bowling, 2005:1). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 144), using online questionnaires can be beneficial as it has a global reach, inexpensive and makes it easy to administer the questions. Chetty (2016) suggests that there are methods that one can choose from when administering questionnaires which can be through postal, electronic, face-to-face, and lastly using a telephone. The researcher administered the questionnaires electronically, to collect the quantitative data using email and WhatsApp. This also allowed respondents to share the questionnaire with others that had similar experiences. On average the online questionnaire

took no longer than thirty minutes to complete. Follow up messages were sent to possible respondents to encourage responding to the questionnaire. Once the respondents completed the online questionnaires, they were automatically submitted on the online link provided which was received by the researcher.

### **3.8 Data Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data**

#### *Quantitative*

Sarantokas (2015:60), suggests that data analysis is the statistical examination of the data that has been gathered to establish if the general hypothesis is supported. Whereas De Vos, Beatrice and Heijden (2015:333) postulate that data analysis is a process of bringing meaning, structure and order to the data generated in research. Data collected from different sources is gathered, reviewed, and then analysed to form a conclusion of the study. Anon (2018), refers to data analysis as how researchers go from a broad data collection to a data that is meaningful and relevant to the study. Data analysis needs to be done carefully as it is a method applied to answer the study questions.

This study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data. Specifically, descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize and characterize the data, while inferential statistics, leveraging probabilistic laws, were used to draw conclusions and make inferences about the broader population based on the sample constructs. One sample t-test was applied to assess the mean differences in agreement and or disagreement in each of the items. Factor analysis using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to validate the identified latent constructs. EFA is a test for finding patterns among variables (or factors) to establish if there is a fundamental combination of original factors outlining the original structure, by determining what contributes to the variance in a measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:657). Everitt and Skrondal (2011:161) define CFA as “a procedure that postulates that the correlations or covariances between a set of observed variables, arise from the relationship of these variables to a small number of underlying, unknown, and unobservable latent variables. In addition, the association between the constructs were assessed using Pearson Correlation while the relationship between the demographic variables and the constructs were assessed using One Way ANOVA. Moreover, the data was presented by means of graphs and tables.

## *Qualitative*

In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis aided by NVIVO 12 software was applied to generate codes and themes. The verbatim responses from the participants were used to generate themes to support the narratives. Since the study adopted a mixed-methods approach, after the data was collected from domestic leisure tourists and tourism role players this was then integrated whereby the researcher had to combine both the qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann and Hanson 2003:15). This integration may be done within the questions, during data collection, data analysis or when the data is being interpreted. Based on this study, the researcher converged both the qualitative and quantitative data during data analysis.

### **3.9 Validity**

#### **3.9.1 Quantitative Validity**

Sekaran and Bougie (2016:137), define validity as a test that determines how accurate an instrument measures what it is meant to test. Goundar (2012:04) agrees by stating that validity is when the correct methods have been used to attain the answers to the research questions. To ensure validity in the study, the collected primary data was thoroughly analysed the questions included in both the questionnaires and interviews derived from the literature review. Validity can be measured in two ways, internal and external validity (Sekaraan and Bougie 2016:349). In this study, internal validity, was achieved as the qualitative data results were not changed and they accurately represent what was collected. Moreover, the results of the qualitative and quantitative data can also be generalised to other provinces (external validity). Furthermore, to avoid any bias, in the quantitative data, the researcher avoided leading types of questions in the questionnaire by ensuring that most questions were simple pre-selected closed-ended questions and two open ended questions to achieve deeper understanding. Furthermore, during the interview stage, open-ended questions were used on the structured interviews. These did not lead the industry role-players to give the answers that might be expected by the researcher. Participants had the opportunity to freely respond with no interference from the researcher.

### 3.9.2 Qualitative Validity

Oyinloye (2018:101) explains that in qualitative data, validity refers to the credibility of interpretations, the plausibility of findings, and the internal consistency between study objectives, data, and results. There are five principles in which a researcher must follow to maintain validity in qualitative research, and these are credibility, dependability and conformability, transferability, reflexivity and reliability (Othman, Steen and Fleet 2021: 78). To achieve qualitative data credibility for this study, the researcher adapted credibility, dependability and conformability, transferability, reflexivity and reliability for content analysis as indicated below in table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Establishing Qualitative Validity**

<b>Rigour principles</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Current study measures</b>
<b>Credibility</b>	Prolonged engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each interview was conducted for a duration of less than one hour, during which the researcher established a rapport with the participants to ensure their comfort and ease.</li> <li>• The researcher exhausted all the questions and participants were also given an opportunity to give any other information that they felt would be valuable.</li> </ul>
<b>Dependability and Conformability</b>	Pilot study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot test of all data collection tools was done.</li> <li>• The researcher conducted a pilot study with tourism students who are working within the industry to test if the questions were clear and concise.</li> <li>• People that were used for pilot study were not used for the main study.</li> </ul>
<b>Transferability</b>	In-depth description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive explanation of the procedures for data collection and data analysis.</li> <li>• A description of the participant's views, and experiences.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of findings and interpretations was completed.</li> <li>• Researcher provided recommendations for future study.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflexivity</b>	Critical reflection and appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The researcher re-listened to audio recordings while writing them down to reflect on and evaluate the quality of responses received from the online interviews.</li> </ul>
<b>Reliability for content analysis</b>	Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings from the interviews were checked for coding categories to confirm accuracy.</li> <li>• The researcher grouped together similar findings from participants in order to develop themes.</li> </ul>

Source: Othman, Steen and Fleet (2021:78)

### 3.10 Reliability

Reliability refers to how congruous the instrument measures something and when the same results can be acquired by using the same instrument then the instrument can be referred to as reliable (Sekaran and Bougie 2016:137). Glen (2016) defines reliability as a measure of stability and the ability for the research findings to be repeatable. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to measure the internal consistency of a questionnaire (Tavakoli and Dennick 2011). The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of the study. In this study the researcher further ensured reliability by reducing measurement error through standardizing the way the study is carried out and making sure that all participants understand the purpose of the study. For qualitative data, the researcher chose tourism role players that were going to add value towards the study. To ensure both validity and reliability was maintained in the study, a pilot study was conducted using populations of similar characteristics with those who were going to be part of the study. A pilot study is a small study that is done to test data collection research instruments to see if the techniques used will give sufficient information towards the study (Hassan, Schattner and Mazza 2006). A pilot study may be used in two different ways, which are the small-scale study that is conducted in preparation of the actual study and can also be used to pre-test the instruments that will be used to collect the primary data of the study. A pilot study is said to play a vital role in designing a good study and it increases the chances of these

instruments being successful in the actual study (Van Teijlingen and Hundley 2002: 02). The researcher used the pilot study to pre-test the research instruments that was used to collect primary data. The researcher conducted mock interviews with some of the Durban University of Technology alumni within Hospitality and tourism department affiliated with tourism industry and represented similar characteristics of the tourism service providers. Furthermore, the researcher invited friends who in the past have travelled within South Africa as leisure tourists to complete the questionnaires as part of the pilot study. Moreover, the data was collected with extra caution as the researcher wanted to make sure that the level of errors is reduced. The tools used to collect and analyse data prove to be reliable as they have been used numerous times within research. The researcher also saw it very important to make use of a pilot study to increase the chances of the study being a success. Furthermore, the pilot study served as an indicator to correct issues with the research instruments and give the researcher a chance to rectify those prior to the actual study. Moreover, various sources of data and convergence methods were used to improve credibility to the study. The descriptive data gathered through the interviews ensure that the researcher achieves transferability as the findings can be applicable even to other provinces. Additionally, the confirmability was attained by ensuring that the collected primary data was thoroughly checked so that the findings were neutral and can be applicable to other provinces.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

This study prioritized the safety and protection of participants. Before the primary data of the study was conducted, the researcher acquired an ethical clearance from DUT (see Appendix 12). No domestic leisure tourists nor tourism role players were forced to be part of the study without their informed consent. Participants were given a consent letter to ask for their permission to be part of the study before the questionnaires were emailed. Furthermore, no personal information was required from the participants, and where it became necessary, that information was treated with confidence. No identifying information such as name, surname and address were required from the participants. Moreover, the identities of all participants (the domestic tourists and KwaZulu-Natal tourist role players) remained anonymous, and the information collected from them also remained confidential. Participants were permitted to withdraw from being part of the study at any time should they not want to participate in the study. The researcher also followed the research ethics of Durban University of Technology.

### **3.12 Delimitations**

This study did not focus on the whole country because of the limited time. However, the study was only able to focus on tourists of the researchers' choice that are located within South Africa. Moreover, the study only included tourists that have visited KZN in the past from 2017-2019 and asking them about their views regarding COVID-19. Since the study only focused on KwaZulu-Natal, the findings will only be based on the information provided by the sample therefore it is not possible to generalize the results to the entire population. The questionnaires and interview questions were only in English, therefore people who do not understand English were not part of the study.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

The main mandate for this chapter was to communicate all the research components that were used to design the methodology of the study to try and solve the research problem and questions of the study while also addressing its main aim. The design of the study was chosen in a manner that was going to be able to address the objectives of the study and the goal which was to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services during unforeseen circumstances. To ensure that the study problem was addressed accordingly, a mixed-method approach was adopted to design the whole study. The researcher made use of tools such as structured interviews and online questionnaires to obtain the data from the respondents. This chapter also viewed the sampling techniques that was used in the study and reasons why the researcher chose to follow the chosen methods. The next chapter will present the results of the primary data collected by the researcher.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter elaborated on the methodology that was designed for this study and how it will be implemented. This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the collected data, aimed at exploring a web of factors that influence travel decisions during the pandemic. As stated in preceding chapters, this study adopted a mixed-method approach where both structured interviews and online questionnaires were used to gather data from participants. Qualitative data uses words and is often used when studying behaviour or opinions (Bougie 2016:02), whereas quantitative data uses numbers and graphs to better understand the study topic (Schindler 2019:203). Interviews were used to collect data from 10 tourism role players and questionnaires were used to collect data from domestic tourists in South Africa. Of the 90-intended participants, 89 questionnaires were fully answered and used as part of the data. The questionnaire was the primary instrument of data collection and was distributed to 90 respondents, with a response rate was 98.88%. The collected data were captured in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analysed using different statistical analysis tools with significance level given at  $\alpha$  0.05.

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, hence the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The results, as presented in Table 4.1 of data compiled from the online questionnaires will be presented first, followed by the structured interviews.

**Table 4.1 Representation of the mixed method approach**

	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>
<b>Method</b>	Structured interviews	Online questionnaire
<b>Respondents</b>	Tourism role players (10)	Domestic tourism (89)

Source: Researchers own adaptation

The data presented will reflect the Quantitative results followed by the Qualitative response in response to the objectives of this study.

## 4.2 Quantitative Data

### 4.2.1 Demographic characteristics

#### 4.2.1.1 Gender

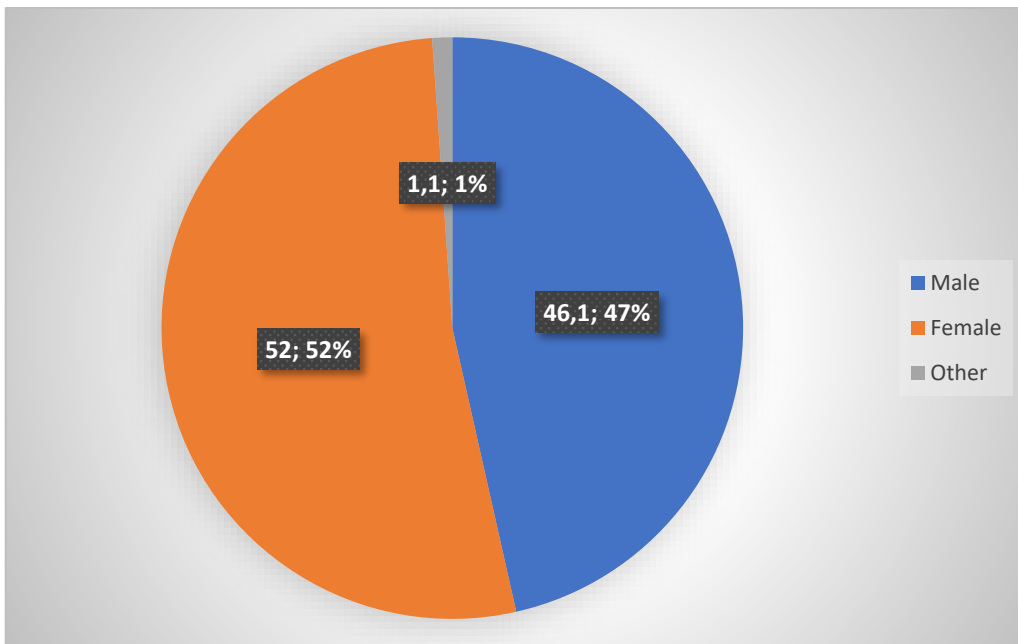
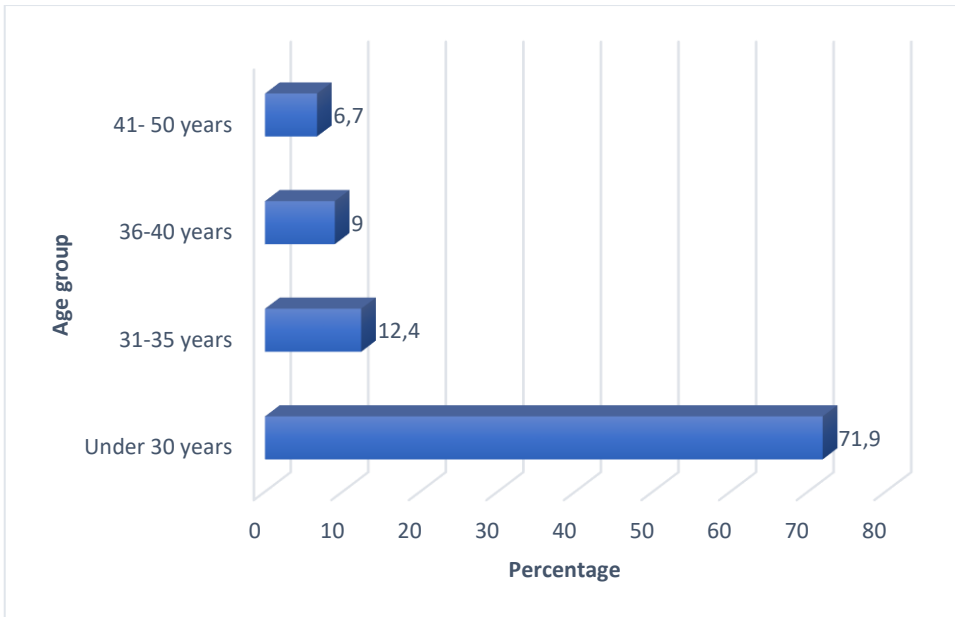


Figure 4.1 Gender

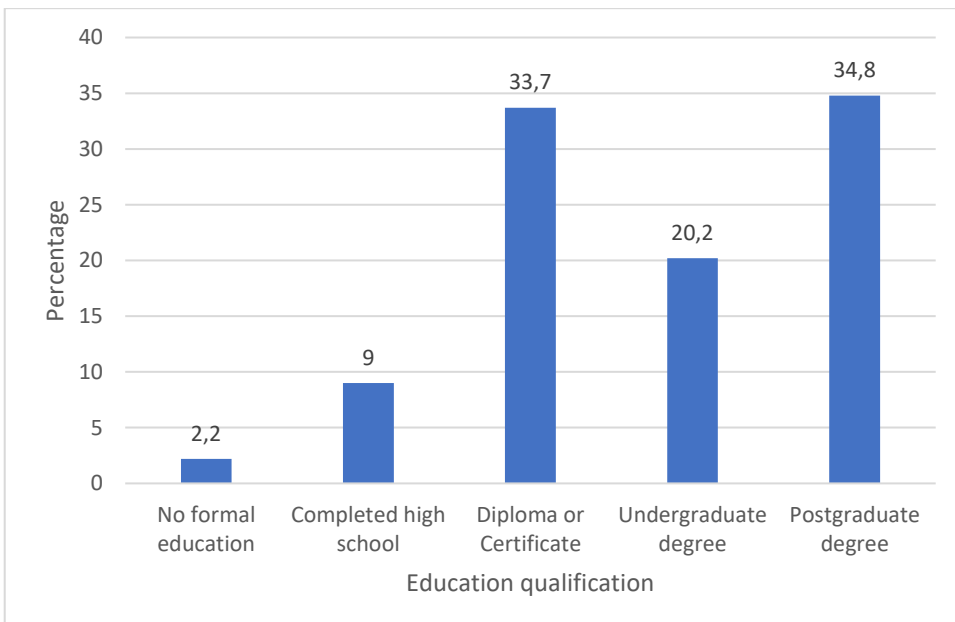
The data in Figure 4.1 presents information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the survey. The data shows that 46.1% of the respondents identified as males, 52.8% as females, and a small percentage of 1.1% identified as 'Other'. The gender distribution shows a relatively balanced representation of males and females.



**Figure 4.2 Respondents Age**

**4.2.1.2 Age groups**

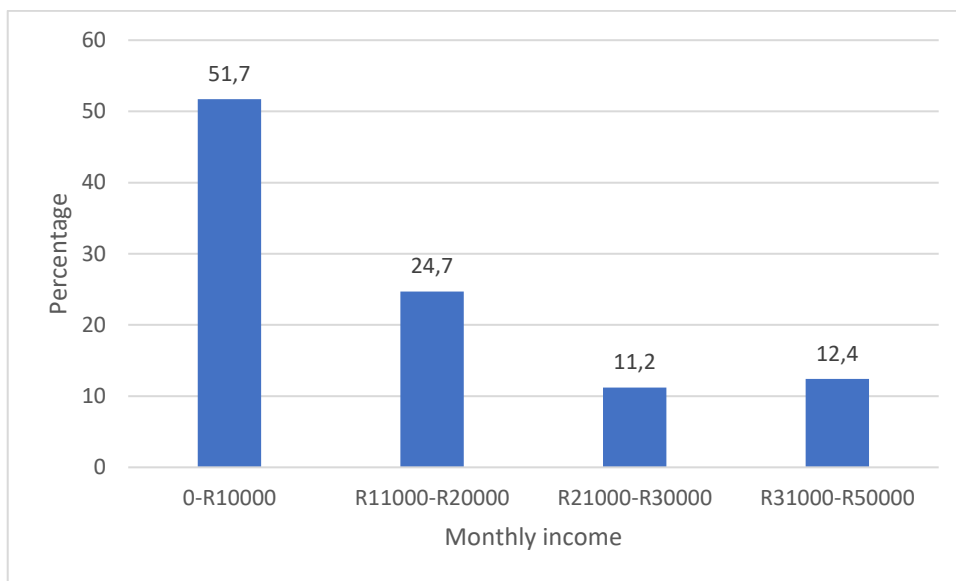
In terms of their age group, the data in Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of the respondents (71.9%) fall under the age group of under 30 years, indicating a relatively young population. The other age groups are relatively smaller in comparison, with 12.4% in the 31-35 years range, 9.0% in the 36-40 years range, and 6.7% in the 41-50 years range.



**Figure 4.3 Highest level of education acquired**

#### 4.2.1.3 Level Of Education

The educational attainment of the respondents is varied as depicted in the above Figure 4.3. A very small percentage (2.2%) of respondents have no formal education, while 9.0% have completed high school. On the other hand, a considerable number of the respondents hold Diplomas or Certificates, making up 33.7% of the respondents, 20.2% have completed undergraduate degrees, and 34.8% of the respondents have achieved postgraduate degrees, indicating a commitment to higher education and skill development.



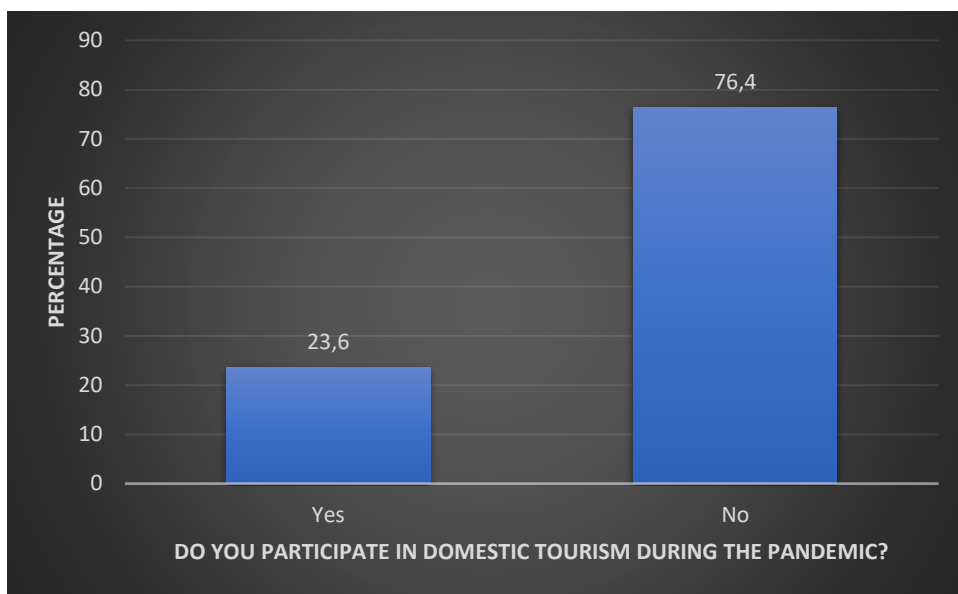
**Figure 4.4 Income**

#### 4.2.1.4 Monthly income of the participants

In terms of the respondent's monthly income, the majority (51.7%) fall within the income range of 0 to R10000 per month. A smaller portion (24.7%) earns between R11000 and R20000 monthly. The income brackets of R21000-R30000 and R31000-R50000 are smaller, comprising 11.2% and 12.4% of the respondents, respectively as illustrated in Figure 4.4.

### 4.3 Participation in domestic tourism during the pandemic

The results in Figure 4.5 show that among the respondents, 23.6% reported participating in domestic tourism during the pandemic. In contrast, the majority of the respondents (76.4%) indicated that they did not participate in domestic tourism during the pandemic.



**Figure 4.5 Participating in Domestic Tourism by Respondents During the Pandemic**

**Table 4.2 Respondents Visitation Patterns to Kwazulu-Natal Before, During and After COVID-19**

Statement	Response (n=89)	
	Yes	No
Did you visit destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as a domestic tourist before the pandemic?	89 (98.88%)	0(0%)
Do you visit KZN as a domestic tourist during the pandemic?	21 (23.6%)	68 (76.4%)
Are you willing to visit KZN after the pandemic?	89 (98.88%)	0(0%)

The data in Table 4.2 presents information about respondents' visitation patterns to destinations in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) as domestic tourists before, during, and after the pandemic, based on a sample of 89 individuals. When asked if the respondents visited destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as a domestic tourist before the pandemic, all respondents indicated that they visited destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists before the pandemic. This suggests that the entire sample had prior experiences of domestic tourism in the region before the pandemic. A smaller percentage of respondents (23.6%) reported visiting KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists during the pandemic. The majority of respondents (76.4%) did not visit KwaZulu-Natal



as domestic tourists during the pandemic. All respondents (98.88%) expressed their willingness to visit KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists after the pandemic.

#### 4.4 Main Reasons for Visiting Destination.

The data in Table 4.3 depicts the main reasons for visiting destinations in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) before, during, and after the pandemic. The data suggests that before the pandemic, leisure was the primary reason for visiting destinations in KZN, with many respondents (64%) visiting for leisure purposes. Business and other reasons were less common, though some individuals had dual purposes for their visits. By contrast, the data indicates a notable shift in travel motivations during the pandemic. Leisure travel decreased significantly (30.3%), while travel for reasons other than leisure or business saw a substantial increase (62.9%). The proportion of respondents visiting for business purposes remained relatively stable during the pandemic. Nevertheless, the data indicates a recovery in leisure travel after the pandemic, with a majority of respondents (74.2%) visiting destinations in KZN for leisure purposes. Business travel remained minimal (2.2%), and travel for reasons other than leisure or business continued at a similar proportion (19.1%). Dual purposes for visits, such as leisure and other reasons, saw a minor increase after the pandemic.

**Table 4.3 The main reasons for visiting destinations in KwaZulu-Natal**

Reasons:	Main reason for visiting destinations in KwaZulu-Natal (n=89)		
	Before pandemic	During pandemic	Post pandemic
Leisure	57 (64%)	27(30.3%)	66 (74.2%)
Business	6 (6.7%)	6(6.7%)	2(2.2%)
Other	17(19.1%)	56(62.9%)	17(19.1%)
Both Leisure and Business	6(6.7%)	0	0
Both Leisure and other	3(3.4%)	0	4(4.5%)

#### 4.5 Preferred Destinations.

The data in Table 4.4 indicates that before the pandemic, most respondents (76.4%) preferred seaside destinations in KZN. Natural destinations (13.5%) were the second most preferred choice, while cultural (6.7%) and historical (1.1%) destinations had fewer preferences. However, the data suggests that during the pandemic, there was a notable shift in preferences,

with more respondents (46.1%) expressing a preference for natural destinations, such as national parks or scenic landscapes. The preference for seaside destinations decreased significantly to 34.8% during the pandemic.

Furthermore, the data indicates that after the pandemic, preferences for types of destinations in KZN experienced some changes. While seaside destinations remained a popular choice for 36% of the respondents, the preference percentage was still lower than before the pandemic. Natural destinations continued to be preferred by a significant proportion (44.9%) of respondents. Notably, there was an increase in the preference for cultural destinations (12.4%), which became the third most preferred type after the pandemic.

**Table 4.4 Most Preferred Type of Destinations in Kwazulu-Natal Before, During and Post Pandemic**

Destinations:	Most preferred type of destinations in KwaZulu-Natal (n=89)		
	Before pandemic	During pandemic	Post pandemic
Seaside	68 (76.4%)	31(34.8%)	32 (36.0%)
Natural	12 (13.5%)	41(46.1%)	40 (44.9%)
Historical	1(1.1%)	8(9.0%)	2(2.2%)
Cultural	6(6.7%)	2(2.2%)	11(12.4%)
Other	2(2.2%)	7(7.9%)	4(4.5%)

#### **4.6 Priorities When Visiting Tourist Destinations During the Pandemic.**

The data in Table 4.5 below shows the responses to statements measuring the respondents' priorities when visiting a tourist destination during the COVID-19 pandemic. One-sample t-test was done to determine if there is significant agreement/disagreement with each item. The average agreement score is tested against the central score of '3' to determine if it differs significantly from '3'. The results indicate that a significant proportion (75.3%) of the respondents agreed (43.8%) or strongly agreed (31.5%) that they book everything by themselves when planning a vacation. The mean score of 3.85 and the low p-value (< 0.001) suggest a shared inclination toward self-arranged travel arrangements.

When asked if they use travel agencies for their booking, a majority (65.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed (5.6%) or disagreed (59.6%) that they book through a travel agency when going on holiday. The mean score of 2.53 and the low p-value (< 0.001) reflect a prevailing preference for non-agency bookings. There was disagreement by the majority of the respondents (79.7%) that they always ensured travel insurance before the pandemic (strongly

disagreed=64.0%; disagreed=15.7%). The mean score of 1.78 and the low p-value ( $< 0.001$ ) indicate a lack of pre-pandemic emphasis on travel insurance. By contrast, there was a significant agreement by the majority (75.2%) who agreed (25.8%) or strongly agree (49.4%) that they consider travel insurance paramount during the COVID-19 pandemic. The mean score of 4.20 and the low p-value ( $< 0.001$ ) highlight the increased importance of travel insurance in the current context. Also, a notable proportion (87.6%) agreed (39.3%) or strongly agreed (48.3%) that they would only consider travel insurance for international destinations. The mean score of 4.31 and the low p-value ( $< 0.001$ ) suggest a strong association between travel insurance and international trips.

In terms of the respondents' experiences with guest services, the result suggests varied experiences with guest services, with (34.8%) neutrally positioned and (46%) disagreeing (16.9%) or strongly disagreeing (28.1%). The mean score of 2.65 indicates a moderate level of neutrality or dissatisfaction with guest service. A substantial proportion (59.5%) disagreed (16.9%) or strongly disagreed (42.7%) that they lost their job during the pandemic and cannot afford to travel anymore while 25.8% agreed (agree=19.1%; strongly agree=6.7%) lost their job during the pandemic. The mean score of 2.56 and the low p-value ( $< 0.001$ ) underscore the economic challenges faced by some respondents. The respondents also indicated varying financial impacts, with 52.8% strongly disagreeing (13.5%) or disagreeing (39.3%) that their salary has been cut and they focus on household essentials while 36% agreeing (31.5%) or strongly agreeing (4.5%). The mean score of 2.74 reflects diverse financial situations and priorities with most in disagreement that their salary has been cut.

Furthermore, many of the respondents (37.1%) strongly disagreed (4.5%) or disagreed (32.6%) that they can afford to travel within their province while 34.8% others agreed (29.2%) or strongly agreed (5.6%). The mean score of 2.99 suggests varying affordability perceptions among respondents with the results tilting towards neutral. Expectedly, a notable proportion (59.6%) strongly disagreed (31.5%) or disagreed (28.1%) that they can manage to travel to other provinces during the pandemic. The mean score of 2.38 and the low p-value ( $< 0.001$ ) highlight the challenges for interprovincial travel during the pandemic. Respondents indicated a preference for tourism services that maintain distancing, with 59.6% agreeing (22.5%) or strongly agreeing (37.1%). The mean score of 3.70 suggests a shared desire for safe and socially distant travel experiences.

**Table 4.5 Affordability When Visiting a Tourist Destination**

Questions:	what you consider a priority when visiting a tourist destination 2 a pandemic (n=89)					Mean (SD)	T	df	P value
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree				
I have always made sure I have travel insurance when going on holiday before the pandemic.	64.0%	15.7%	5.6%	7.9%	6.7%	1.78 (1.259)	13.302	88	<,001
I book through a travel agency when going on holiday.	5.6%	59.6%	15.7%	14.6%	4.5%	2.53 (.966)	24.680	88	<,001
I deem travel insurance as paramount now during the COVID-19 pandemic.	1.1%	2.2%	21.3%	25.8%	49.4%	4.20 (.932)	42.558	88	<,001
I will only consider travel insurance when travelling to international destinations.	1.1%	2.2%	9.0%	39.3%	48.3%	4.31 (.820)	49.631	88	<,001
I get the same guest service as I did before the pandemic.	16.9%	28.1%	34.8%	13.5%	6.7%	2.65 (1.119)	22.354	88	<,001
I have lost my job during the pandemic, and I cannot afford to travel anymore.	16.9%	42.7%	14.6%	19.1%	6.7%	2.56 (1.177)	20.533	88	<,001
My salary has been cut due to COVID-19 and I only focus on household essentials.	13.5%	39.3%	11.2%	31.5%	4.5%	2.74 (1.173)	22.052	88	<,001
I can afford to travel but only within my province.	4.5%	32.6%	28.1%	29.2%	5.6%	2.99 (1.017)	27.729	88	<,001
I can manage to travel to other provinces even now during the pandemic.	31.5%	28.1%	14.6%	22.5%	3.4%	2.38 (1.239)	18.143	88	<,001
When travelling, I prefer rendering tourism services that will maintain distancing.	7.9%	11.2%	21.3%	22.5%	37.1%	3.70 (1.292)	27.000	88	<,001

## 4.7 Factors Primarily Considered When Selecting a Destination to Visit

### 4.7.1 Factors considered before the pandemic

Table 4.6 reflects the factors participants primarily considered when selecting a destination to visit before the pandemic. The results indicate that most considered price (24.7%), 10.1% considered the location, and 7.9% expressed a concern for destinations with less human contact. Other consideration includes star rating (10.1%), and hygiene (3.4%). Very few considered luxury (1.1%), accessibility (1.1%), beauty (1.1%), reputation (1.1%), security (1.1%), sanitizing stations (1.1%), and amenities (2.2%). At a glance, some respondents selected combinations of these factors, reflecting their multifaceted considerations.

**Table 4.6 Factors primarily considered for destination to visit before the pandemic**

		What did you mostly look at when selecting a destination to visit before the pandemic?	
		Frequency	Percent
Selection	1	22	24.7
	1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13	3	3.4
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13	3	3.4
	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8	3	3.4
	1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13	1	1.1
	1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12	2	2.2
	1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13	2	2.2
	1, 3	3	3.4
	1, 4, 9, 11, 12, 13	3	3.4
	1, 5	3	3.4
	1, 8	2	2.2
	1, 8, 11, 12	1	1.1
	13	3	3.4
	2	9	10.1
	2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13	1	1.1
2, 6, 7, 13	2	2.2	

	3	7	7.9
	4	1	1.1
	5, 8, 13	3	3.4
	6	1	1.1
	8	3	3.4
	9	1	1.1
	Total	89	100.0
Note: 1= Price; 2= Location; 3=Less human contact; 4=Sanitizing stations; 5= Star rating; 6=Accessibility; 7= Amenities; 8= Hygiene; 9= Luxury; 10=Beauty; 11= Reputation; 12=Security			

#### 4.7.2 Factors Considered During the Pandemic

The factors that the respondents primarily considered when choosing a destination to visit in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) during the COVID-19 pandemic are given in Table 4.7. A notable portion of respondents (15.7%) emphasised the location of the destination within KZN. Some respondents (11.2%) expressed a preference for destinations with less human contact. Other considerations include amenities (7.9%), accessibility (7.9%), reputation (6.7%), luxury (6.7%), price (5.6%), star rating (3.4%), security (3.4%), hygiene (3.4%), sanitizing stations (2.2%), and beauty (2.2%). In addition, some of the respondents chose a combination of factors, indicating their multifaceted considerations when selecting a destination within KZN during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 4.7 Factors Primarily Considered for A Destination to Visit During the Pandemic**

		What makes you choose a destination to visit in KZN during the COVID-19 pandemic	
		Frequency	Percent
Select	1	5	5.6
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3	3.4
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13	3	3.4
	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 4	3	3.4
	1, 3, 6, 7, 9	1	1.1

	1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13	1	1.1
	1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 13	2	2.2
	1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13	1	1.1
	11	3	3.4
	11, 12, 13	3	3.4
	2	14	15.7
	2, 4, 5, 7	2	2.2
	2, 6, 7, 9	2	2.2
	3	10	11.2
	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13	2	2.2
	3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13	2	2.2
	3, 6, 9, 12, 13	3	3.4
	4	2	2.2
	4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13	2	2.2
	4, 8	2	2.2
	5	3	3.4
	7	7	7.9
	8	3	3.4
	9	6	6.7
	Total	89	100.0
Note: 1= Price; 2= Location; 3=Less human contact; 4=Sanitizing stations; 5= Star rating; 6=Accessibility; 7= Amenities; 8= Hygiene; 9= Luxury; 10=Beauty; 11= Reputation; 12=Security			

### 4.7.3 Factors considered in choosing a destination in the future

The data in Table 4.8 provide insights into the factors the respondents anticipate will influence their destination choices in the future. A significant portion (19.1%) of respondents indicated that price would continue to be an influencing factor in their future destination choices. A notable percentage (13.5%) of respondents emphasized the importance of the geographic location of the destination. Some (11.2%) of respondents highlighted the importance of the presence of sanitizing stations while 6.7 indicated that they will continue to prioritize luxurious offerings. Other future considerations include less human contact (4.5%), star rating (3.4%), accessibility (3.4%), and reputation (1.1%). It was also observed that some of the respondents chose a combination of factors, reflecting their multifaceted considerations when anticipating their future destination choices.

**Table 4.8 Factors That Will Influence Respondents' Choice in Future Travel Destination**

		What is it that you think will influence your choice when choosing a destination in future?	
		Frequency	Percent
Select	1	17	19.1
	1, 2	2	2.2
	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13	3	3.4
	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13	1	1.1
	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11	2	2.2
	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13	2	2.2
	1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13	4	4.5
	1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 13	1	1.1
	1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13	2	2.2
	1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10	2	2.2
	1, 5, 11	3	3.4
	1, 6, 13	3	3.4
	1, 8, 9	1	1.1
	11	1	1.1
	2	12	13.5
	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	2	2.2
	2, 3, 9, 11, 13	2	2.2
	3	4	4.5
	4	10	11.2
	5	3	3.4
	6	3	3.4
	9	6	6.7
	9, 10, 11	3	3.4
Total	89	100.0	

Note: 1= Price; 2= Location; 3=Less human contact; 4=Sanitizing stations; 5= Star rating; 6=Accessibility; 7= Amenities; 8= Hygiene; 9= Luxury; 10=Beauty; 11= Reputation; 12=Security



## **4.8 To Examine Personal Factors, Economic, Situational and Technological Factors That Influence Domestic Travel Behaviour to KZN Before and During COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **4.8.1 Preferences and behaviours to tourism and travel during pandemic**

Table 4.9 depicts information about respondents' preferences and behaviours related to tourism and travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results show that most of the respondents (65.2%) prefer using the same tourism providers they used before the pandemic, indicating a level of trust and familiarity with these providers. It was also found that 24.7% of respondents are uncertain about their preference for using the same tourism providers while 10.1% of respondents do not prefer using the same tourism providers they used before the pandemic, suggesting a willingness to explore other options.

When asked if the respondents like crowded areas even now during the pandemic, it was found that the majority (78.7%) of them do not like crowded areas during the pandemic, suggesting a desire to avoid crowded spaces due to COVID-19 risks. However, 16.9% of respondents like crowded areas even during the pandemic, indicating a preference for places with high footfall while 4.5% of respondents are unsure about their preference for crowded areas.

Equally, more than half (52.8%) of respondents avoid traveling by airplane during the pandemic, while 25.8% of respondents are unsure, and 21.3% of respondents do not avoid traveling by airplane during the pandemic, indicating a willingness to use air travel despite the risks.

Nevertheless, only 12.4% of respondents avoid traveling by road during the pandemic, indicating a preference for avoiding any form of travel during this time while 21.3% of respondents are unsure about their preference for traveling by road. In contrast, 66.3% of respondents do not avoid traveling by road during the pandemic, suggesting a willingness to use road travel despite the risks.

**Table 4.9 Respondents' preferences and behaviours related to tourism and travel during the COVID-19 pandemic**

	Yes	No	Not sure
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I prefer using the same tourism providers that I have used before the pandemic	65.2%	10.1%	24.7%
I like crowded areas even now during the pandemic	16.9%	78.7%	4.5%
I avoid travelling by airplane during the pandemic	52.8%	21.3%	25.8%
I avoid traveling by road during the pandemic	12.4%	66.3%	21.3%

#### 4.8.2 Reaction And Behaviour During Lockdown

The data in Table 4.10 shows the responses regarding the statements measuring the respondents' reactions and behaviours during different stages of the lockdown, as well as their attitudes towards travel and adherence to COVID-19 protocols. The results indicate that during the lockdown, a significant majority of respondents (81.4%) indicated that their reactions varied across different stages of the lockdown. This diversity in responses reflects the evolving circumstances and changing emotions that individuals experienced as the lockdown measures and restrictions progressed.

For a substantial portion of respondents (57%), the lockdown's impact on finances was pronounced. The data reveals that a significant majority (84.9%) of respondents had their travel plans disrupted by the lockdown.

Interestingly, a notable percentage of respondents (33.7%) admitted to not adhering to COVID-19 protocols as strictly during lockdown level 1 compared to the stricter measures of lockdown level 5. The data indicates a strong inclination (83.7%) among respondents to avoid traveling to destinations with high COVID-19 infection rates.

The data suggests that the respondents' loyalty to KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) as a preferred tourist destination showed a diverse response. While 38.4% of respondents remained unaffected in their loyalty, a notable portion (32.6%) indicated a shift, suggesting that the pandemic did impact their preferences. Additionally, 29.1% expressed uncertainty about the effect on their loyalty, indicating a mix of sentiments.

**Table 4.10 The Respondents' Reactions and Behaviour During Lockdown**

STATEMENTS	Number	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The lockdown affected my finances, I had no income to travel during lockdown.	86	57%	26.7%	16.3%
The lockdown affected my travel plans.	86	84.9%	14.0%	1.2%
I avoid travelling to destinations with high COVID-19 infections.	86	83.7%	4.7%	11.6%
The pandemic did not affect my loyalty towards KZN as a tourist destination of my choice.	86	38.4%	32.6%	29.1%

### 4.8.3 Health-Related Factors Influencing Travel Decision

The data in Table 4.11 presents the responses regarding the respondents' health-related factors and their preferences and behaviours related to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data shows that among the respondents, 22.7% acknowledged having health issues. This indicates a segment of the population with pre-existing health conditions that could potentially influence their travel decisions and experiences. Around 16.9% of respondents indicated that their health concerns currently deter them from traveling during the pandemic. This suggests that a portion of participants may be choosing to avoid travel due to health-related reasons.

Regarding travel preferences, 44.7% of respondents expressed a preference for domestic travel over international travel in consideration of their health. This indicates that health factors play a role in determining the type of travel individuals are more comfortable with. A substantial majority (69.3%) of respondents indicated a preference for booking their travel a week before their intended travel date. This suggests that many individuals adapt their booking habits to the evolving lockdown levels and associated uncertainties.

Around 62.8% of participants indicated that they are waiting for the COVID-19 virus to vanish before booking their holiday. This reflects a cautious approach where individuals are inclined to

delay their travel plans until the pandemic situation improves. A smaller proportion (21.6%) of respondents expressed a willingness to purchase tourism products exclusively from businesses that accept vaccinated individuals. This finding suggests that vaccination-related policies are a factor for some travellers in their choice of tourism providers. Similar to this, 23.9% of respondents indicated support for tourism businesses that only allow vaccinated individuals on their premises. This indicates a subset of individuals who align their support with businesses implementing such measures.

**Table 4.11 Health-Related Considerations Impacting Travel Behaviour and Choice**

Statements	Number	True	False	N/A
Do you have health issues?	88	22.7%	70.5%	6.8%
Does your health deter you from travelling now during the pandemic?	83	16.9%	67.5%	15.7%
Concerning your health, do you prefer travelling domestically or internationally?	85	44.7%	37.6%	17.6%
Due to the ever-changing lockdown levels, do you prefer booking a week before your travel?	88	69.3%	18.2%	12.5%
Are you waiting on the COVID-19 virus to vanish, until you book your holiday?	86	62.8%	32.6%	4.7%
Are you only willing to purchase tourism products from tourism businesses that only accept vaccinated people?	88	21.6%	78.4%	0%
Do you support tourism businesses that only allow vaccinated people in their premises?	88	23.9%	73.9%	2.3%

#### **4.8.4 Actions And Reasons for Cancelling Travel Bookings During the Pandemic**

The data in Table 4.12 indicates that 80.9% of respondents have cancelled their travel bookings during the pandemic, indicating a significant impact on travel plans due to the pandemic. Of note, 15.7% of respondents did not cancel their travel bookings, suggesting a minority who have been able to maintain their travel plans while 3.4% of respondents are unsure about whether they have cancelled their travel bookings.

In terms of the reasons provided for cancelling travel booking, it was found that most (61.8%) of respondents have cancelled their bookings due to uncertain lockdown levels, indicating that government restrictions have played a significant role in travel cancellations. Despite this, 24.7% of respondents did not cancel their bookings due to uncertain lockdown levels, suggesting a portion who were either unaffected or less concerned about lockdowns while 13.5% of respondents are unsure about whether they have cancelled their bookings due to uncertain lockdown levels.

Another reason for cancelling the booking was due to lack of disposable income for travelling. The results indicate that 61.8% of respondents have cancelled their bookings due to a lack of disposable income, reflecting the financial strain caused by the pandemic. Nevertheless, 32.6% of respondents have not cancelled their bookings due to lack of disposable income, indicating some have managed to maintain their financial stability while 5.6% of respondents are unsure about whether they have cancelled their bookings due to lack of disposable income.

Equally, it was found that 66.3% of respondents have cancelled their bookings to save money for unforeseen circumstances and health purposes, suggesting a focus on financial and health security. On the other hand, 28.1% of respondents did not cancel their bookings for this reason, indicating a minority who prioritize other considerations over financial savings while 5.6% of respondents are unsure about whether they have cancelled their bookings for this reason.

**Table 4.12 Respondents Actions and Reasons for Cancelling of Travel Booking for Tourism**

	Yes	No	Not sure
During the pandemic, I have cancelled my bookings for travelling	80.9%	15.7%	3.4%
I have cancelled my bookings because of the uncertain lockdown levels.	61.8%	24.7%	13.5%
I have cancelled my bookings because due to the pandemic I no longer had disposable income for traveling	61.8%	32.6%	5.6%
I have cancelled because I would rather save money for unforeseen circumstances and health purposes.	66.3%	28.1%	5.6%

#### **4.8.5 Risk And Safety**

The data in Table 4.13 shows the respondent's perceptions of risk and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was uncovered that the respondents' perceptions revolve around the understanding of actions and situations that could jeopardize the health, the importance of protective measures and compliance with regulations, the role of vaccination, the impact of crowded places, and the significance of staying informed and practising good hygiene. For instance, respondent emphasizes that any action or situation that jeopardizes their health and well-being is perceived as a risk, while protective measures and behaviours are seen as contributing to safety.

Respondents associate exposure to potential sources of infection as a risk, highlighting the importance of safety measures such as wearing masks and maintaining distance. Crowded places are seen as risky due to potential virus transmission, while safety is linked to environments with fewer people and adherence to protocols. Respondents mention specific health-related practices as risk mitigation strategies, such as avoiding certain foods and prioritizing hygiene. Compliance with official guidelines and regulations is associated with safety, while non-compliance is seen as contributing to risk.

Furthermore, vaccination is mentioned as a safety measure, while improper assumptions about immunity pose a risk. Staying at home and minimizing interactions is considered safer, particularly in crowded settings. Traveling, especially internationally, is often associated with increased risk, and staying within familiar environments is considered safer. Adhering to precautions and reliable information is emphasized as a means of minimizing risk and ensuring safety.

The above views shared by the respondents highlight the complex interplay between personal behaviours and external factors in maintaining safety during the pandemic.

**Table 4.13 Perception of Risk and Safety During the Pandemic**

Perception of Risk and Safety								
Understanding Risk and Safety (8.99%)	Exposure and Safety Measures (8.99%)	Crowded Places and Safety (6.74%)	Health and Hygiene Practices (3.37%)	Compliance with Regulations (4.49%)	Vaccination and Safety (2.25%)	Staying at Home and Safety (2.25%)	Travel and Safety (4.49%)	Importance of Precautions and Information (2.25%)
<p>"Any act that will put my life at risk is a risk and anything that protects my life is regarded as safe."</p> <p>"Anything that exposes me to getting Covid is a risk and trying by all means to protect myself when not at home is safe."</p>	<p>"Any form of exposure to things that may lead me to being affected by the virus is a risk and protecting myself by boosting my immune and wearing masks is safe."</p> <p>"Any place where there are many people, and they are not wearing mask or keeping social distance is risk and a place with few people following rules is safe."</p>	<p>"Being in a place with people who are not wearing masks is risk and being at a place with few people with masks and follow social distance is safer."</p> <p>"Going to gatherings with strangers and many people is a risk."</p>	<p>"Eating food that you don't know who prepared it is a risk for me and cooking myself at home is much better."</p> <p>"Not wearing masks or washing hands is a risk as you may contract the virus easily."</p>	<p>"Following the regulations given by the government was safe because they know better and not following them was a risk."</p> <p>"Following the regulations given by the WHO was safe and not following them was risk."</p>	<p>"I prefer to be around people who are vaccinated as that is safe."</p> <p>"Not wearing your mask just because you have vaccinated is a risk because that does not give you immunity to the virus."</p>	<p>"Staying away from overcrowded places."</p> <p>"Staying at my place and going out when I really have to and drinking immune boosters and risk is not having anything for your immune."</p>	<p>"Travelling during the pandemic was very risky and unsafe because when traveling you get in contact with many people from different countries."</p> <p>"Travelling to international destinations is a risk at this time, it's much better to be in your home country."</p>	<p>"It is of vital importance to avoid crowded areas. That will minimize the risk of contracting the virus."</p> <p>"To keep safe from the virus one should make sure that they adhere to the security measures as proposed to avoid the risk."</p>

## **4.9 To Determine the Enabling and Inhibiting Factors That Influence the Procurement of Tourism Services by Domestic Tourists During COVID-19**

### **4.9.1 Safety, Hygiene, and Reduced Contact Preferences During COVID-19**

This section highlights the respondents' preferences and expectations for tourism services, products, and facilities that prioritize safety and hygiene measures, emphasize reduced human contact, and adhere to COVID-19 regulations and guidelines. Respondents prioritize tourism services that demonstrate a commitment to strict COVID-19 rules and regulations, including hygiene and safety measures. Respondents emphasize the importance of readily available sanitization stations and a clean environment in their preferred tourism services. Respondents seek services that reduce the need for direct human contact, including online check-in and self-service options. Respondents are drawn to establishments that prioritize safety by reducing capacity and enforcing social distancing measures.

Many respondents express a preference for natural and outdoor environments that offer fresh air and fewer crowds. Respondents value tourism services that provide access to natural and open spaces, allowing for relaxation and reduced exposure to crowds. Beach destinations are valued for their fresh air and outdoor atmosphere.

Some respondents value establishments that use technology to minimize human contact and enhance safety. Respondents appreciate the integration of technology to reduce human contact and enhance safety measures. Online services and booking options are valued for convenience and reduced physical interaction. Many respondents prioritize establishments that strictly follow government-issued rules and regulations. Respondents value places that prioritize health and safety over profit and business operations.

Respondents mention specific preferences for activities they enjoy, such as safaris, historical sites, and museums. Some respondents value accommodations that offer self-catering options and remote services. Accommodations that prioritize cleanliness, sanitization, and health screening are valued. Clean and sanitized accommodations with health screening measures are preferred by respondents.

Respondents emphasize a strong preference for tourism services and facilities that prioritize safety, hygiene, and reduced human contact. They value establishments that strictly adhere to COVID-19 rules and regulations, provide sanitization stations, reduce capacity to maintain



social distancing, and use technology to enhance safety measures. Natural environments, outdoor settings, and accommodations with self-catering options are particularly appealing. Additionally, respondents appreciate services that prioritize safety over profit and follow government regulations. The overarching theme is a desire for a safe and enjoyable tourism experience that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

**Table 4.14 Respondents Preferences and Expectations for Tourism Services, Products, And Facilities That Prioritize Safety and Hygiene Measures**

Preferences for Safety Measures and Hygiene (34.9%)	Natural and Outdoor Environments (6.7%)	Technological Advancements and Online Services (7.8%)	Government Regulations and Safety (11.2%)	Cultural and Recreational Preferences (1.1%)	Accommodation and Lodging (6.8%)
<p>"I expect tourism services that have measures in place to reduce human contact and adhere to all COVID-19 rules."</p> <p>"I value places with sanitizer stations, less human contact and technological devices."</p> <p>"I prefer places that allowed for self-check-in and out online and also allowed for majority of the things to be completed online."</p> <p>"I prefer places with low capacity and strict COVID-19 regulations."</p>	<p>"Going to places that are not busy and places around natural environment is what I would mostly prefer."</p> <p>"Places by the beach are better because of the breeze and fresh air."</p>	<p>"Places that have enough of clean air and places that have very few people."</p> <p>"Online purchase and booking."</p>	<p>"I don't mind as long as the place is following all the regulations issued out by the government."</p> <p>"I want places that will follow the proposed measurements by the government and put health and safety before profit."</p>	<p>"I preferred going for safaris because it was not overcrowded and there was less risk."</p>	<p>"I prefer lodges as they are quiet and COVID-19 protocols are taken into consideration."</p> <p>"During the pandemic, I preferred accommodations with sanitizing stations and screening for tourists, with clean bedding and a clean environment."</p>

## To Assess the Extent of Changes in Domestic Tourists' Behaviour Towards KZN And Destination Choice During The COVID-19 Pandemic

### 4.10 Tourism visitation patterns

#### 4.10.1 Visitation patterns to KwaZulu-Natal

Table 4.15 Respondents Visitation Patterns to Kwazulu-Natal Before, During and After COVID-19

Statement	Response (n=89)	
	Yes	No
Did you visit destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as a domestic tourist before the pandemic?	89 (98.88%)	0(0%)
Do you visit KZN as a domestic tourist during the pandemic?	21 (23.6%)	68 (76.4%)
Are you willing to visit KZN after the pandemic?	89(98.88%)	0(0%)

The data in Table 4.15 presents information about respondents' visitation patterns to destinations in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) as domestic tourists before, during, and after the pandemic, based on a sample of 89 individuals. When asked if the respondents visited destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists before the pandemic, all respondents indicated that they visited destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists before the pandemic. This suggests that the entire sample had prior experiences of domestic tourism in the region before the pandemic. A smaller percentage of respondents (23.6%) reported visiting KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists during the pandemic. Many respondents (76.4%) did not visit KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists during the pandemic. All respondents (98.88%) expressed their willingness to visit KwaZulu-Natal as domestic tourists after the pandemic.

#### 4.10.2 Frequency Of Visitation to Kwazulu-Natal

The frequency of visitation patterns to KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) before and during the pandemic by the respondents is given in Table 4.16. The data indicates that before the pandemic, a significant proportion of respondents visited KwaZulu-Natal multiple times in a year, with 44.9% visiting 2-3 times and 23.6% visiting more than 5 times. The majority (60.7%) of respondents stated that they stopped visiting the region, likely due to the impacts of the pandemic, such as travel restrictions, health concerns, or changes in personal preferences.

**Table 4.16 The Respondent's Visitation Frequency to Kwazulu-Natal Before and During the Pandemic**

Frequency	Visits to KwaZulu-Natal (n=89)	
	Before pandemic	During pandemic
Once a year	18 (20.2%)	16(18%)
2-3 times in the year	40 (44.9%)	13(14.6%)
3-5 times in the year	10(11.2%)	3(3.4%)
More than 5 times in the year	21(23.6%)	3(3.4%)
Stopped visiting KZN	0(0%)	54(60.7%)

#### 4.10.3 Length of Stay at Destination

The results indicated in Table 4.17 demonstrate that before the pandemic, the majority of respondents had shorter stays at destinations in KZN, with 60.7% staying for 0-5 days. However, a significant proportion also had relatively longer stays, with 19.1% staying for 6-15 days, 11.2% staying for 16-30 days, and 7.9% staying for over a month. However, the data indicates a significant shift in visitation patterns during the pandemic, with the vast majority (89.9%) of respondents having short stays of 0-5 days at destinations in KZN.

**Table 4.17 Length of Stay at Destinations in Kwazulu-Natal Before, During and Post-Pandemic**

Length of stay:	Length of stay at destinations in KwaZulu-Natal (n=89)		
	Before pandemic	During pandemic	Post pandemic
0-5 days	54 (60.7%)	80(89.9%)	37 (41.6%)
6-15 days	18 (20.2%)	3(3.4%)	34(38.2%)
16-30 days	10(11.2%)	4(4.5%)	3(3.4%)
Over a month	7(7.9%)	2(2.2%)	15(16.9)

## 4.11 Perception on Travelling During the Pandemic

### 4.11.1 Perception Of Safety

The data in Figure 4.6 presents information about respondents' perceptions regarding the A slight majority (59.6%) of respondents believe that travelling to interprovincial destinations is not as dangerous as travelling internationally, while a significant proportion (40.4%) believe that the risk level is comparable.

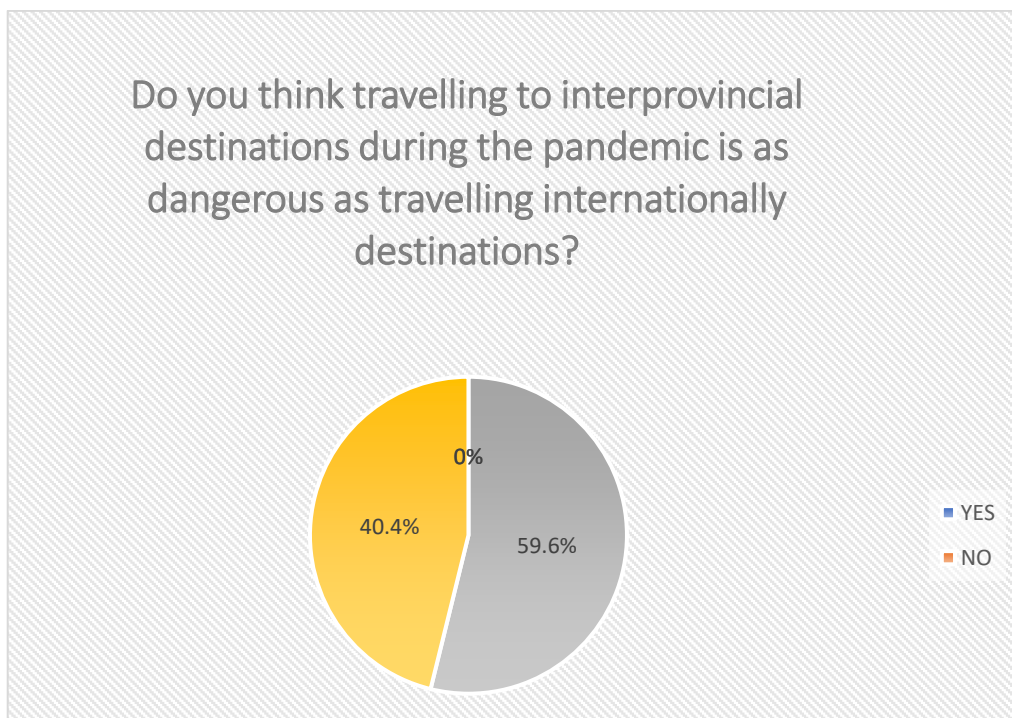


Figure 4.6 Length of Stay at Destinations in Kwazulu-Natal Before, During and Post-Pandemic

## 4.12 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical method used to group similar items based on their shared variance. Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed to test and validate the constructs.

### 4.12.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Factor Coefficient.

According to Shrestha (2021:04), for EFA to be carried out, the Kaiser-Meyer value should exceed the value of 0.5 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be statistically significant i.e., the p-value is less than 0.05). As shown in Table 4.18, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling

Adequacy (KMO) of .663 and a significant Bartlett's test indicate that the data was adequate for successful and reliable extraction.

**Table 4.18 KMO and Bartlett's test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.663
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2117.173
	Df	325
	Sig.	<.001

Factor analysis with Varimax rotation method was applied to the Principal Component Analysis was applied to these 26 items. Items PV9 and PV10 were dropped because they cross-loaded onto multiple factors. Six factors were extracted which account for 73.26% of the variance in the data. Rotation converged in 8 iterations. The factor structure and factor loadings of these items are summarised in Table 4.20.

**Table 4.19 Extracted Factors and Coefficients**

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I avoid travelling since the outbreak of COVID-19 (Q1).	.833					
People around me do not travel often due to COVID-19 (Q2).	.749					
I only travel out when necessary (Q3).	.799					
I prefer travelling within my local town than going to another province. (Q4)	.697					
Using private transport is much safer now during the pandemic (Q5).	.705					
I do not mind even if I use public transport for travelling (Q6).						.684
I know that there is a greater chance of contracting COVID-19 if I use public transport (Q7).	.689					

There are lesser chances of me contracting the virus if I travel using private transportation (Q8).	.576					
When travelling to other provinces, I follow each and every rule of COVID-19 in order to protect myself (Q9).	.827					
I believe that when travelling to other provinces the pandemic is dangerous and can kill me if I contract it (Q10).	.710					
There are high chances that I will get COVID-19 if I travel to other provinces (Q11).	.708					
I am strong so I will not die even if I contract the virus (Q12).						.826
I have good knowledge about how I may contract COVID-19 (Q13).	.654					
I am aware of the Coronavirus symptoms (Q14).	.807					
I do have access to testing facilities should I feel some of the symptoms (Q15).	.877					
I book everything by myself when planning a vacation (PV1).			.863			
I do not book through a travel agency when going on holiday (PV2).			.815			
I have always made sure I have travel insurance when going on holiday before the pandemic (PV3).					.874	
I deem travel insurance as paramount now during the COVID-19 pandemic (PV4).		.843				

I will only consider travel insurance when travelling to international destinations (PV5).		.859				
I get the same guest service as I did before the pandemic (PV6).					.743	
I have lost my job during the pandemic, and I cannot afford to travel anymore (PV7).				.785		
My salary has been cut due to COVID-19 and I only focus on household essentials (PV8).				.860		
I can afford to travel but only within my province (PV9).						
I can manage to travel to other provinces even now during the pandemic (PV10).				-.544		
When travelling, I prefer rendering tourism services that will maintain distancing (PV11).		.538				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization						
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis						

#### 4.12.2 Reliability of The Extracted Factors

The extracted factors from the factor analysis are tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. An alpha value  $>.7$  indicates reliability. The factors and their assigned labels are summarised in Table 4.20. In this case, six distinct factors were extracted, each representing a specific construct related to the multifaceted attitudes, behaviours, and considerations related to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Factor 1 represents respondents' responses related to their travel behaviour and their level of awareness and concern about safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The included items (Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q7-Q11, Q13-Q15) reflect a range of attitudes and behaviours, such as avoiding

travel since the pandemic outbreak, observing reduced travel frequency in others, preferring local travel, acknowledging the safety of private transport, following COVID-19 guidelines while traveling, and having knowledge about the virus and access to testing facilities. The high variance extracted (35.111) suggests that this factor accounts for a significant portion of the variability in respondents' responses. The high Cronbach's alpha (.945) indicates strong internal consistency among the items, implying that they reliably measure a coherent construct.

Factor 2 encompasses respondents' attitudes towards the importance of travel insurance and their consideration of safety measures while planning and undertaking travel. The items included (PV4, PV5, PV11) indicate that participants view travel insurance as crucial during the pandemic, especially for international travel, and prioritize tourism services that implement safety measures such as maintaining distancing. The moderate variance extracted (10.409) suggests that this factor captures a substantial yet distinct aspect of participants' viewpoints. The moderate Cronbach's alpha (.723) indicates acceptable internal consistency among the items.

Factor 3 is centred on respondents' preferences regarding how they book their travel arrangements. The items (PV1 and PV2) differentiate between those who prefer to independently book everything for their vacations and those who do not use travel agencies for holiday arrangements. The relatively lower variance extracted (8.868) suggests that this factor captures a moderate portion of the variability in participants' responses. The high Cronbach's alpha (0.802) indicates strong internal consistency among the items.

Factor 4 reflects respondents' attitudes towards their travel experiences and preparedness prior to the pandemic. The items (PV3 and PV6) encompass the habit of securing travel insurance before the pandemic and the perception of receiving consistent guest service as before. The moderate variance extracted (8.172) suggests that this factor captures a significant but distinct dimension of participants' perspectives. The acceptable Cronbach's alpha (0.685) indicates reasonable internal consistency among the items.

Factor 5 pertains to the financial impact of the pandemic on respondents' travel decisions. The items (PV7 and PV8) indicate responses related to job loss, affordability constraints, and the reprioritization of spending on household essentials due to salary cuts. The lower variance



extracted (6.068) suggests that this factor captures a more specific aspect of participants' viewpoints. The acceptable Cronbach's alpha (0.690) indicates satisfactory internal consistency among the items.

Factor 6 measures the respondents' attitudes towards using public transport for travel and their belief in personal strength to withstand the virus. The items (Q6 and Q12) represent a mix of risk perception and personal resilience. The lower variance extracted (4.628) suggests that this factor captures a relatively narrower aspect of participants' attitudes. The moderate Cronbach's alpha (0.475) indicates acceptable internal consistency among the items.

**Table 4.20 Reliability of the Extracted Factors**

Factor	Construct	Items included	Variance extracted	Cronbach's alpha
1	Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness	Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q7-Q11, Q13-Q15	35.111	.945
2	Travel insurance and safety measures	PV4, PV5, PV11	10.409	.723
3	Booking preference	PV1 and PV2	8.868	0.802
4	Pre-Pandemic Travel Experience and Preparedness	PV3 and PV6	8.172	0.685
5	Financial constraints and priorities	PV7 and PV8	6.068	0.690
6	Attitude towards public transport and personal strength	Q6 and Q12	4.628	.475

#### **4.13 Convergent And Discriminant Validity of The Extracted Constructs**

The validity of the extracted factors was tested by measuring the composite reliability (CR), convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The results in Table 4.21 show the composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and maximum shared square variance (MSV) that were tested. Essmui *et al.* (2014) state that both CR and AVE are used to assess the convergent validity of the MM. It is generally recommended that the factor coefficients should be greater than 0.50 to indicate acceptable convergence of variables, with a generated coefficient greater

than 0.50 indicating satisfactory convergence (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The discriminant validity of the MM was evaluated using MSV, and it is recommended that the MSV values for each construct should be lower than the AVE value to show adequate discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The study found that all latent variables had AVE values in the range of 0.581-1.131, which are above the threshold of 0.5, suggesting acceptable convergent validity (Table 4.21). Additionally, since the AVE values for each construct were greater than the MSV values, it can be concluded that the latent variables had adequate discriminant validity. It is worth noting that only factors with reliability above 0.7 were validated.

**Table 4.21 Convergent, Discriminant, And Composite Reliability of The Extracted Constructs**

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness	Travel insurance and safety measures	Booking preference
Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness	0.946	0.581	0.125	0.958	<b>0.762</b>		
Travel insurance and safety measures	0.828	0.636	0.125	1.096	,353	<b>0.798</b>	
Booking preference	1.420	1.131	0.118	2.498	-,344	-,196	<b>1.064</b>

#### 4.14 Relationship Between Demographic and Extracted Factors

To test for sig differences in these factors across demographics (or relationships with demographics), One-Way ANOVA was computed. Results from ANOVA show that travel insurance and safety measures differ by age group,  $F(3, 85) = 4.579, p = .005$ . Games-Howell's post hoc analysis reveals that respondents 41-50 years agree significantly more than those under 30 years that they travel with insurance and applied safety measures,  $p < .001$ . No significant differences were measured for other demographic groups and the extracted factors.

**Table 4.22 Relationship Between Demographic and Extracted Factors**

Demographics	Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness		Travel insurance and safety measures		Booking preference	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	3.57	1.02	4.0569	.86571	3.6463	1.05620
Female	4.04	.81	4.0780	.81416	3.6702	.94568
Other	4.38	.	4.3333	.	4.0000	.
<i>F</i> ratio	3.011		.056		.064	
Sig.	.054		.945		.938	
<b>Age</b>						
Under 30 years	3.7308	.97840	3.8906	.85667	3.5938	.98349
31-35 years	3.8531	.98477	4.4242	.65134	3.7273	1.05744
36-40 years	4.0385	.61676	4.4167	.46291	3.6250	1.09381
41-50 years	4.5385	.06880	4.8889	.17213	4.3333	.68313
<i>F</i> ratio	1.557		4.579		1.047	
Sig.	.206		0.005		.376	
<b>Educational qualification</b>						
No formal education	3.7692	.00000	4.6667	.00000	3.0000	.00000
Completed high school	4.5385	.14243	3.8333	.47140	4.1875	.25877
Diploma or Certificate	3.6154	1.01770	4.1000	.95552	3.7500	.90735
Undergraduate degree	3.6581	1.04418	3.7963	1.05495	3.7500	1.16632
Postgraduate degree	3.9529	.84794	4.2258	.58618	3.4355	1.05469
<i>F</i> ratio	1.913		1.206		1.311	
Sig.	.116		.314		.272	
<b>Household income</b>						
0-R10 000	3.7458	.97340	3.9928	.76494	3.5435	1.04789
R11 000-R20 000	3.7972	1.00871	4.1212	.88817	3.7727	1.04343
R21 000- R30 000	3.7923	1.00495	4.1333	1.04468	4.3000	.53748
R31 000- R50 000	4.2657	.33770	4.2424	.84447	3.3636	.71031
<i>F</i> ratio	.936		.331		2.115	
Sig.	.427		.803		.104	

### 4.15 Pearson Correlations

The correlations are measured using Pearson's correlation coefficient, which measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. The correlation matrix

shows the correlations between the four factors: customer loyalty, factors influencing purchases, strategic planning, and customer perceptions (Table 4. 23).

The Pearson correlation coefficient between the "Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness" construct and the "Travel Insurance and Safety Measures" construct is .488\*\*, indicating a moderate positive correlation between these two factors. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), meaning that there is strong evidence to suggest that these two constructs are related. This implies that the respondents who demonstrate higher levels of safety awareness in their travel behaviour are also more likely to consider the importance of travel insurance and safety measures while planning their trips.

The results also showed that the correlation coefficient between the "Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness" construct and the "Booking Preference" construct is .375\*\*, indicating a moderate positive correlation between these two factors. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), suggesting that individuals who exhibit certain travel behaviour patterns and safety awareness are also more likely to have specific preferences regarding how they book their travel arrangements.

Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between the "Travel Insurance and Safety Measures" construct and the "Booking Preference" construct is .189, indicating a weak positive correlation between these two factors. The correlation, however, is not statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), with a p-value of .076. This suggests that there is not enough evidence to conclude a strong relationship between respondents' considerations of travel insurance and safety measures and their preferences for booking methods.

Overall, the correlations provide insights into the relationships between different constructs within the study. The respondents who display higher levels of safety awareness in their travel behaviour are more likely to consider travel insurance and safety measures while planning their trips. Additionally, there appears to be a moderate correlation between travel behaviour safety awareness and booking preferences, suggesting a potential link between these aspects of travel decision-making. However, the correlation between travel insurance and safety measures and booking preference is not as strong and does not reach statistical significance.

**Table 4.23 Correlation Among the Extracted Factors**

Correlations				
		Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness	Travel insurance and safety measures	Booking preference
Travel Behaviour and Safety Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.488**	.375**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	89	89	89
Travel insurance and safety measures	Pearson Correlation	.488**	1	.189
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		.076
	N	89	89	89
Booking preference	Pearson Correlation	.375**	.189	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.076	
	N	89	89	89
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

#### 4.16 Qualitative Data

For more in-depth data, the researcher conducted short, structured interviews with some industry role players. In total, 10 different industry principles were interviewed about some changes they experienced due to the pandemic. Thematic analysis using NVIVO 12 software was adopted to generate codes and themes for the qualitative data. The themes that were identified include the performance of tourism businesses before the pandemic, health and safety regulations, the application of technology, destination choice, financial affordability, booking behaviour, guest perspectives on vaccination policies, and guest loyalty towards tourism businesses during the pandemic. Verbatim transcripts of participants' views were used to support the narratives.

#### 4.17 Theme 1: Business Performance Before and During the Pandemic

All tourism role players who were participants in the study unanimously agreed that their businesses were thriving before the pandemic, catering to both domestic and international tourists. No direct quotes are provided for this subtheme as it is a consensus among participants.

However, with the pandemic, businesses were challenged as there were new regulations which they had to operate under. Participants mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly

affected their businesses. Lockdown regulations forced them to halt or operate at reduced capacity.

*"The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our business as the lockdown regulations meant that people were no longer able to travel, and they had to stay at home." (Participant 2)*

#### **4.17.1 Subtheme 1.2: Service Quality**

With the COVID-19 pandemic and the regulations implemented to try and curb the spread of the virus while operating, it means that tourism role players had to revise their services in order to ensure safety.

Participant 1 noted that the necessary safety measures, such as using disposable cutlery and maintaining social distancing, affected the luxury and quality standards of their services.

*"We had to make some changes on our cruise, using disposable cutlery to reduce possible virus transmission, but that affected the luxury and quality standards." (Participant 2).*

Some of the respondents revealed that the business had to make changes regarding the dining services. The changes in dining services included modified buffet practices and reduced menu options.

*"Restaurant buffet serving utensils were changed or cleaned every 15 minutes, which some guests found agitating." (Participant 4)*

*"There was a cutdown on the menu." (Participant 5)*

Changes in dining services, such as split breakfast serving times and cleaned utensils also implemented to reduce overcrowding and improve safety.

*"Breakfast serving times at the hotel were split into three to reduce overcrowding and adhere to capacity standards." (Participant 7).*

*"We cleaned or changed serving utensils every 15 minutes to ensure safety." (Participant 4)*

- Staffing Changes and Queues

The pandemic also had an impact on the daily tourism business operations and because of this, tourism role players had to reduce the number of people working per day/ shift and this led to longer waiting times for guests.

*"The establishment's staff was reduced drastically, leading to longer queues, although guests understood the reason behind it." (Participant 8).*

Some businesses had to limit the activities available to the public, affecting the overall customer experience.

*"Not all of our activities were open to the public, which was a disappointment to some people." (Participant 9)*

*"We did not allow seat-ins, forcing people to buy and enjoy their meals at home, reducing our customer service experience." (Participant 10).*

#### **4.17.2 Theme 2: Health and Safety regulations**

This theme explores the diverse guest expectations in the hospitality and tourism industry regarding health and safety, compliance with regulations, and social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Guests valued places that prioritized their health and safety.

Two of the Participants outlined various health and safety protocols they implemented, including mask-wearing, temperature checks, and sanitiser usage.

*"People wanted to see that their health is being prioritized, therefore, having sanitizing stations and temperature scanners was part of what they wanted to see when they arrive." (Participant 4).*

*"Everyone had to give their details, wear a mask, have their temperature checked, and sanitize. Those with high temperatures could not enter." (Participant 2).*

*"Regular anonymous health inspectors passed by to inspect if customers wore their masks, had their temperatures taken, and used sanitisers." (Participant 3).*

Furthermore, Participants 5 and 6 described the extent to which they enforced public health standards set by authorities. Participant 5 notes that the business followed the public health rules of health and safety during the pandemic. These rules include the use of masks and social distancing.

*"We ensured that everyone follows the rules, including mask-wearing and social distancing." (Participant 5)*

In addition, Participant 6 revealed that the business introduced automated temperature readers as a way of ensuring public safety.

*"Automated temperature readers were introduced to limit contact between staff and clients." (Participant 6).*

- Capacity Limitations and Pre-screening

The interviewed tourism principals discussed how they limited the number of customers and pre-screened tourists to ensure safety.

*"We scanned tourists before they arrived and only allowed a limited number of people per day." (Participant 9).*

*"To avoid issues, we did not allow seat-ins, forcing people to buy meals to enjoy at home." (Participant 10).*

The above narratives provide insights into the various ways tourism service providers were affected by the pandemic and how they adapted their services to ensure safety and compliance with health regulations.

- Ventilation and Open Spaces

Guests preferred establishments with good ventilation and proximity to windows to ensure better air circulation.

*"Besides the fact that people expected to see us following the rules of COVID-19, they wanted ventilation and preferred being close to windows." (Participant 7).*

- Following Government Regulations

Guests expected businesses to adhere to government regulations and guidelines related to COVID-19. Moreover, some tourists expected both staff and other customers to adhere to the rules and regulations consistently.

*"Guests wanted to see that the company is following the regulations given out by the government." (Participant 2).*

*"Many guests, if not all, expected to see some form of social distancing between the staff and them during their interactions, so having shields separating frontline employees and guests helped a lot." (Participant 3).*

*"What we noticed besides the fact that people expected to see us following the rules of COVID-19, they wanted ventilation and preferred being close to windows." (Participant 7).*

*"They wanted to see that we are following the social distance rule, we have visible stations to sanitize around the establishments, and are checking temperatures." (Participant 6).*

*"I would say they mostly wanted to see that people are wearing masks and staff was not being excluded from the rules." (Participant 8).*



However, it was pointed out that some guests were aware of the rules but chose not to abide by them.

*"A larger number of guests came to travel destinations knowing what's expected of them, and current affairs made it possible. Some tourists were aware, but they willingly chose not to abide by the set rules." (Participant 1).*

#### **4.17.3 Theme 3: Application Of Technology**

In response to the pandemic, some businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry introduced new technologies such as automated temperature scanners, mobile apps for ordering, QR codes for menu access, and self-service machines. These technologies aim to enhance safety and convenience for guests. Others, however, primarily relied on existing technologies, particularly delivery apps like Uber Eats and Mr. D, and temperature scanners as part of their pandemic-related measures. The reactions of both staff members and guests toward these technologies varied, but the primary goal was to ensure safety and adhere to health guidelines.

- Automated Temperature Scanner

Some companies introduced automated temperature scanners at the entrances of buildings as a new technology in response to the pandemic. For example, Participant 1 mentioned the introduction of automated temperature scanners during the pandemic. Several participants mentioned that their companies did not introduce any significant new technologies.

*"Yes. There wasn't much though except for the automated temperature scanner that was placed at the entrance of buildings." (Participant 1).*

*"No technologies were introduced; we only had temperature scanners for when people arrive at our premises." (Participant 5).*

*"Our company did not introduce any technologies; we just had the scanners as they were part of the measures to reduce the spread of the virus." (Participant 8).*

*"No, we did not have any technologies that were introduced." (Participant 9).*

- Mobile App for Ordering

Some companies made use of existing delivery apps like Uber Eats and Mr. D for restaurant orders and delivery services.

*"No, however, we have used the existing technologies that were not much in use, such as using Uber Eats to make sure that we deliver at the door." (Participant 3).*

*"I cannot say that we have introduced any new technologies but made use of what already existed, such as having the option of ordering from our restaurant via apps such as Mr. D and Uber Eats." (Participant 7).*

One participant mentioned the introduction of a mobile app that allowed customers to place orders and enjoy their food upon arrival. However, this app was still under development.

*"Yes, we have introduced an app that will help our customers to place their orders, and when they arrive, they can enjoy their food right away. As much as this app is still under development, the idea came through the pandemic." (Participant 4).*

- QR Code for Menu Access

One participant mentioned the use of QR codes, allowing guests to scan a code at their table to access the menu.

*"Yes, our guests can now scan the QR code at their table, and the menu will pop up." (Participant 6).*

- Self-Service Machines

Another participant noted that the business introduced self-service machines to allow guests to assist themselves without staff intervention.

*"Yes, we now have self-service machines where one can assist themselves without having to be assisted by our staff, unless requested." (Participant 10).*

#### **4.17.4 Theme 4: Destination Choice**

One could draw out that before the pandemic, tourists primarily considered the importance of having fun, making memories, and enjoying themselves. They sought value for money, popular and beautiful destinations, opportunities for social interaction, and beach experiences. Additionally, safety, accessibility, affordability, and trusted places for special occasions were also significant factors in their decision-making process when purchasing tourism services.

Overall, the key drivers for tourists were the pursuit of enjoyable experiences and good value for their money.

Tourists primarily sought a sense of safety during the pandemic, which included measures like sanitization, scanning, and adherence to social distancing.

*"I can say that the most thing they wanted was to feel safe, so many would be fine as long as they were sanitized, scanned, and the distancing was followed." (Participant 1).*

*"Feeling safe and cared for by the company is what they wanted." (Participant 2).*

*"Our tourists just wanted to feel safe as much as they wanted to feel that they are away from home, therefore, the availability of sanitizing stations and scanners gave them some sense of safety." (Participant 3).*

Furthermore, it was revealed that tourists wanted certainty of safety, especially after the lockdown, while enjoying their experiences.

*"As much as tourists wanted some fun, especially after the lockdown, we had to bear in mind that they wanted some certainty of safety." (Participant 6).*

*"I can conclude by stating that they just wanted to feel safe while they are out enjoying themselves, so as the company, we had to ensure that everyone is wearing masks, low occupancy, and that they are scanned and sanitized." (Participant 7).*

- Health and Hygiene Measures

The majority of tourists wanted to see health and hygiene measures in place, including sanitization, scanning, mask-wearing, and social distancing.

*"Majority of our guests wanted to see social distancing, wearing of masks, scanning, and sanitizing." (Participant 5).*

*"They demanded safety, we as the company ensured safety by having scanners at the entrance, sanitizing, taking their details, and making sure that they have masks." (Participant 10).*

Some guests preferred outdoor and natural settings, leading to mixed loyalty for businesses located away from city centres.

*"I cannot really say that many were loyal as we had people who wanted to go to more natural areas away from the city." (Participant 6).*

*"Some were loyal, and some were not because they wanted more outdoor areas with enough ventilation, and we only saw them after the pandemic." (Participant 7).*

The above narratives suggests that during the pandemic, tourists primarily looked for safety and security in their travel experiences. They wanted to feel safe, cared for, and assured of their well-being. This included measures such as sanitization, scanning, and adherence to social distancing guidelines. Additionally, tourists emphasized the importance of companies adhering to government regulations and expected staff members to enforce these rules diligently. Overall, the paramount concern for tourists was their safety and health while enjoying their travels.

- Beach and Seaside Attractions

Some tourists were attracted to seaside destinations, particularly in places like Durban, for the beach experience.

*"Most of the people who came to visit KZN specifically Durban, they came for the seaside, and they were very price sensitive." (Participant 6).*

*"People just looked for a place to enjoy by the beach and that is affordable, especially when with family." (Participant 9).*

- Safety and Accessibility

Tourists sought destinations that were easily accessible and considered safe for their travels.

*"Before we had the pandemic, tourists were looking for easy accessibility, safety, and a great experience." (Participant 7).*

- Prioritizing Fun and Enjoyment

Tourists primarily sought fun and the opportunity to make memories with loved ones before the pandemic.

*"Prior to the pandemic, tourists just wanted to have fun and make memories with their loved ones." (Participant 1).*

*"They wanted value for money and cared more about having fun." (Participant 2).*

In the future, some tourists might prefer traveling locally within their own countries, exercising caution about international travel.

*"In the near future, I think many tourists will prefer traveling locally within their own countries as they are still scared to travel internationally." (Participant 8).*

#### **4.17.5 Theme 5: Financial Affordability**

Many tourists considered getting value for their money as an important factor when purchasing tourism services.

*"They wanted value for money and cared more about having fun." (Participant 2)*

*"Before we had the pandemic, tourists were easy going; they were looking for value for money, easy accessibility, safety, and a great experience." (Participant 7).*

Guests exhibited financial caution, with reduced spending and fewer advance bookings.

*"We cannot ignore the changes in the way people behaved; they wanted some assurance that they will be safe, before the COVID we just had to make sure that the cameras are working and that we have security to ensure safety but this time it was difficult cause we were fighting something we cannot see." (Participant 9).*

*"The changes we saw were that not many people booked well in advance also they did not want to spend too much money compared to when we did not have the pandemic." (Participant 10).*

Affordability was a crucial factor for some tourists, especially when traveling with family.

*"People just looked for a place to enjoy by the beach and that is affordable, especially when with family." (Participant 9).*

Tourists become more sensitive to their finances and prioritize affordable travel options.

*"Many people are likely to be very sensitive, especially with their finances because they don't know what the future holds, and they would most probably want affordable places until they gain their financial stability." (Participant 7).*

Participant 6 highlighted that employees experienced financial changes, including salary adjustments, because of the pandemic. From the response, it was gathered that the staff developed resilience as they understood the business decision to stay afloat during the difficult time.

*"The changes we faced meant that we don't work our normal shifts and hours, which resulted in salary changes. Our staff understood that we had to do that in order to survive." (Participant 6).*

Booking cancellations had a significant financial impact on the businesses, as they had to refund the money to the guests.

*"This affected the businesses as they had to refund the money to the people..." (Participant 1).*

Guests cancelled bookings due to financial difficulties, potentially related to job loss or economic uncertainty during the pandemic.

*"People losing their jobs" (All Participants).*

#### Subtheme 9.4: Refund Policies and Customer Responses

- Refunding Customers

Businesses had to refund the money to guests who cancelled their bookings.

*"This affected the businesses as they had to refund the money to the people..." (All Participants).*

#### 4.17.6 Theme 6: Booking Behaviour

This theme allows for a comprehensive examination of how the timing of booking holidays and purchasing tourism products changed from before the pandemic to the pandemic era. In this theme, the analysis of the factors influencing booking lead times, including safety concerns, travel restrictions, and shifting consumer preferences was also explored.

Tourists significantly altered their booking behaviour from before the pandemic to during the pandemic.

*"Before we saw people booking even a month in advance but during the pandemic, people booked a few days before." (Participant 1).*

*"Some people would book even 5 months before their actual travel which changed as we saw people making bookings even couple of weeks before their arrival." (Participant 2).*

Many businesses experienced an increase in walk-in customers during the pandemic.

*"We experienced a lot of walk-ins during the pandemic whereas before we would get bookings weeks in advance." (Participant 3).*

*"The company saw an increase in the number of walk-ins without reservations, and because the business had still not recovered, we were able to accommodate them." (Participant 5).*

*"During the pandemic we mostly relied on walk-ins and people who ordered food online. No bookings were made as compared to before the pandemic." (Participant 6).*

- Private Family Bookings

Some guests requested private experiences, such as having only their family on a cruise without any strangers.

*"Some guests would ask if it could just be their family on the cruise and not have any strangers." (Participant 2).*

- Preference for Specific Table Locations

Many guests preferred specific table locations, such as tables by the windows.

*"Many people wanted to have tables by the windows." (Participant 3).*

- Reduced Booking Lead Time

Tourists generally reduced the lead time for booking their holidays or purchasing tourism products during the pandemic.

*"Maximum now during the pandemic would be a week in advance as people are sceptical." (Participant 4).*

*"Before we were faced with COVID, people would start making inquiries even 3 months in advance and secure the spot a month and a half prior to the arrival, but during COVID, we had people even paying a day in advance just the deposit." (Participant 7).*

*"Many people wanted to pay upon their arrival due to uncertainty, at most we saw people making their purchases maybe 4 days earlier." (Participant 8).*

- Limited Advance Bookings

Bookings decreased significantly during the pandemic.

*"Some people made booking 5 days prior during the pandemic, before we used to have many people booking well in advance." (Participant 9).*

*"We did not have any bookings during the pandemic." (Participant 10).*

This theme allows for an in-depth analysis of how the pandemic influenced booking cancellations, the repercussions for tourism businesses, and the various reasons travellers and guests had for cancelling their reservations.

Subtheme 9.1: Impact of Lockdown Regulations and Job Loss

All businesses experienced booking cancellations primarily due to lockdown regulations and guests losing their jobs during the pandemic.

*"All businesses had booking cancellations due to lockdown regulations and people losing their jobs." (All Participants)*

- Financial Impact

Booking cancellations had a significant financial impact on the businesses, as they had to refund the money to the guests.

*"This affected the businesses as they had to refund the money to the people..." (Participant 1).*

- Offering Alternatives

One company advised customers to keep their money for future use, and only a few loyal customers agreed to this option.

*"...one company advised to keep the money, and tourists could make use of their bookings later when things were back to normal, and only their few and loyal customers agreed." (Participants 1).*

- Lockdown Regulations

Cancellations were driven by lockdown regulations, which restricted travel and tourism activities.

*"All businesses had booking cancellations due to lockdown regulations..." (All Participants).*

One company tried to mitigate the impact of cancellations by offering customers the option to use their bookings at a later date when conditions improved.

*"...only their few and loyal customers agreed." (All Participants).*

From the above narratives, it can be gathered that all tourism principles that were interviewed experienced booking cancellations during the pandemic, primarily due to lockdown regulations and guests losing their jobs. These cancellations had a significant financial impact on the businesses, as they had to refund the money to the guests. One company attempted to offer an alternative solution by advising customers to keep their money for future bookings, but this option was only accepted by a few loyal customers. The reasons for cancellations included



lockdown regulations and financial hardship faced by travellers/guests. The refund policies and customer responses varied among businesses, but the overall effect on the industry was a decrease in revenue and financial strain on the businesses.

Overall, it was uncovered that the behaviour of tourists regarding booking holidays and purchasing tourism products changed significantly during the pandemic. Tourists reduced their booking lead times, with many bookings only a few days or a week in advance. This shift was accompanied by an increase in walk-in customers, as some tourists opted for last-minute decisions. Before the pandemic, tourists often booked weeks or even months in advance, but during the pandemic, the uncertainty and scepticism led to shorter booking windows and a preference for paying upon arrival in some cases. Overall, the pandemic had a notable impact on booking behaviour in the tourism industry, with shorter lead times and an increase in walk-in customers becoming more common during this period.

#### **4.17.7 Theme 7: Guest Vaccination Policies: Navigating Impacts on Guest Experience**

This theme explored how the business establishment's policies and reactions regarding guest vaccination status influenced the overall guest experience. It reviewed the interplay between health protocols and the quality of the guest experience.

All interviewed tourism establishments emphasized that they did not discriminate against guests based on their vaccination status. They allowed all guests to use their services without requiring proof of vaccination. While vaccination status was not a requirement for service, establishments ensured that all guests followed safety protocols, including maintaining physical distance, wearing masks, and practising proper hand hygiene.

*"All the interviewed tourism role players stated that they did not discriminate, instead they allowed everyone to use their services as long they followed the rules such as maintaining distance, wearing their masks, and sanitizing their hands, other than that, they were not asked to produce any proof of vaccination." (All Participants).*

#### **4.17.8 Theme 8: Loyalty of Guests During the Pandemic**

This theme examined the responses of the participants regarding guest loyalty, and the extent to which loyal customers continued to support tourism businesses during the challenges of a pandemic.

Many guests were deemed loyal and continued to support the business during the pandemic.

*"I can say that they were loyal as they have been doing business with us for years and they still continued to trust us because of the relationship the company has built with them over the years." (Participant 1).*

*"Our guests are loyal to us, and we also saw that during the time when we were faced with many booking cancellations, we had some of our guests who opted to use their bookings at a later stage when all has settled." (Participant 2).*

*"Majority of our clients can be deemed as loyal because those who could continue to use our services." (Participant 4).*

*"Our consumers are very loyal, during the pandemic people chose to stick to our services because they know how we do business and mostly because I think it was a bit safer to go to a place that you know than a whole new place." (Participant 5).*

*"As much as we only started to have many bookings after the pandemic, I can say that they are loyal because they still came back to our business." (Participant 8).*

*"We can say that they are loyal especially because we can regard ourselves as a family place and we have loyalty reward programs, and that way we have our old clients coming back to our business." (Participant 9).*

Some businesses reported mixed loyalty among their guests, with both loyal and new customers using their services.

*"Both yes and no because we did have some people who used our services even prior to the pandemic but also saw new people coming, which was positive for the company." (Participant 3).*

*"I cannot really say that many were loyal as we had people who wanted to go to more natural areas away from the city." (Participant 6).*

*"Some were loyal, and some were not because they wanted more outdoor areas with enough ventilation, and we only saw them after the pandemic." (Participant 7).*

*"Not all of them were loyal, I can say a few were loyal as we got a few calls from customers asking if our business was still operating after the pandemic." (Participant 10).*

- Relationship and Trust

Guests demonstrated loyalty due to the strong relationship and trust built with the business over the years.

*"They were loyal as they have been doing business with us for years and they still continued to trust us because of the relationship the company has built with them over the years." (Participant 1).*

*"Our guests are loyal to us, and we also saw that during the time when we were faced with many booking cancellations, we had some of our guests who opted to use their bookings at a later stage when all has settled." (Participant).*

- Safety and Familiarity

Safety concerns and familiarity with the business influenced guest loyalty during the pandemic.

*"Our consumers are very loyal, during the pandemic people chose to stick to our services because they know how we do business and mostly because I think it was a bit safer to go to a place that you know than a whole new place." (Participant 5).*

#### **4.18 Convergence Of Qualitative and Quantitative Data**

When comparing the results from qualitative and quantitative data, it is notable that there are similarities and differences in the findings. Data indicates that some individuals ceased travelling due to financial constraints caused by the pandemic. Job losses led to increased caution in spending habits, as uncertainty about the pandemic's duration prompted people to save and prioritize essential expenses.

The quantitative data shows that 46% of the respondents stated that they no longer receive the same customer services they used to get prior to the pandemic. The qualitative data affirms the domestic tourists by making it evident that they had to make revised changes towards their services such as using disposable cutlery and menus to adhere to the regulations imposed by the government. Furthermore, quantitative data highlights that respondents had varying priorities when choosing a destination during the pandemic where a minority of 15.7% considered the location of the destination to be of utmost importance because people wanted to go to isolated places. Both the collected data show the same results when looking into safety measures that tourists looked for during the pandemic which included some of the safety regulations by WHO (2020) and the South African government such as wearing of masks and social distancing (South African Government News Agency 2020). It is also highlighted that tourists wanted destinations and tourism services that ensured their safety and places that were not crowded. However, it is interesting to note that quantitative data shows that there was a

minority of individuals who did not strictly follow the COVID-19 regulations in lockdown level 1 compared to level 5. This might be due to the fact that majority of the respondents were young.

The quantitative data reveals that some of the domestic tourists expressed the need for vaccination as a precaution and safety measure. However, the qualitative data shows that tourism role-players did not discriminate against those who were not vaccinated.

A portion of 32.6% of domestic tourists voiced out that the pandemic did not affect their loyalty towards KwaZulu- Natal as a tourist destination. Qualitative data by tourism service providers was approved as they mentioned that most of them depended on their returning customers during the pandemic and some of their loyal customers did not want refunds on their bookings as they were going to use them once the COVID-19 situation was better.

#### **4.19 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the results of data collected from interviews with industry role players and online questionnaires from domestic tourists from South Africa. The aim of the study which is to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was answered through presentation, interpretation, and discussion of results in diverse manners. The chapter focused on establishing linkages between primary data as well as the objectives and variables of the study. The next chapter provides recommendations and conclusions based on the study's findings. Moreover, managerial implications and suggestions for future researchers will also be discussed.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter four presented a detailed analysis and interpretation of data that was collected through the qualitative and quantitative methods. The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions from the data represented in the preceding chapter. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter five seeks to answer the research objectives through the data collected from the respondents and make recommendations that may be helpful for future research work of a similar nature. As previously mentioned, the study utilised a mixed method to best answer the study objectives which entailed both qualitative which was answered by industry role players through the use of structured interviews and quantitative data which was collected from domestic tourists using online questionnaires. The main objectives of the study that were addressed are as follows:

- To explore the extent to which economic, personal, situational, and technological factors influence the destination choice of domestic tourists visiting KZN before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To examine personal factors, economic, situational, and technological factors that influence domestic travel behaviour to KZN before and during COVID-19 pandemic,
- To determine the enabling and inhibiting factors that influence the procurement of tourism services by domestic tourists during COVID-19,
- To assess the extent of changes in domestic tourists' behaviour towards KZN and destination choice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address the four main objectives of this study; this final chapter will present a synopsis, discussion and conclusion on the key findings derived from the data presented in chapter 4.

## **5.2 OBJECTIVE 1: To Explore the Extent to Which Economic, Personal, Situational, And Technological Factors Influence the Destination Choice of Domestic Tourists Visiting KZN Before and During The COVID-19 Pandemic**

The purpose of this objective was to explore the factors that influence destination choice by domestic tourists during the global pandemic and before. These factors will establish whether the pandemic influenced destination choice. Hence, the study found it essential to examine some of the factors which influenced domestic tourists' behaviour before the pandemic and their buying behaviour and choosing tourism services were influenced by several factors. Prior to the global pandemic, at least 98.88% of the participants claimed that they had visited KwaZulu-Natal as leisure tourists (64%) with the intention of enjoying while creating lasting memories with their loved ones and making new friends while at it. Many are said to have visited their families and friends while some came for events and others had dual purposes for their visitation, KZN is a well-known domestic destination for VFR.

The discussion below will represent how each factor affected destination choice before and during the pandemic.

### **5.2.1 Economic factors**

**Before-** Domestic tourists would seek destinations that provided them with leisure and entertainment to create memories with their friends and families, their priority was dependent on a destination choice of recreation that gave them value for their money.

**During-** The results in this study revealed that the pandemic significantly altered the destination choice of domestic tourists. Concomitantly, as the data indicates, a greater number (30.3%) of domestic tourists stopped travelling to KZN for leisure purposes due to financial constraints that were imposed by the pandemic. In addition, many of the participants revealed a drop in their sources of income and could no longer afford to visit their favourite local destinations. Similarly, many participants lamented that, due to a salary reduction they had to prioritise essential needs and did not consider visiting their local holiday destination. More so in other instances, some participants (31.5%) confessed that visiting a destination for leisure and fun was no longer affordable and considered rather as an expense of luxury as they had to reconsider to save their money since they did not know how long the pandemic would last. *“My salary has been cut due to COVID-19 and I only focus on household essentials”.*

According to Wu, Ho, Le, and Nguyen (2022:05), price is an influencer on the destination choice made by tourists as the total cost that is to be paid for the travel package determines the destination choice. Hence, affordability and price remained significant factors affecting travel behaviour as tourists became even more price-sensitive due to the pandemic. On the other hand, the few participants expressed their interest in traveling they preferred destinations closer to their homes to avoid incurring additional travel costs. Equally, a study by Saito and Strehlau (2018:19) supports the aforementioned, by stating that tourist destinations that are far away are often closely linked with financial unaffordability as tourists would have to consider further costs such as accommodation and transportation.

Unequivocally, this study established that the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly changed tourists' behaviour which was driven by various economic reasons such as job losses and salary reductions. These financial constraints led to reduced disposable income, thereby displaying reluctance in the consumption of tourism services offered. The financial challenges confronted by most tourists during the pandemic led to prudent spending behaviour, prioritising mainly spending towards health and safety essentials.

### **5.2.2 Personal Factors**

**Before-** Prior to the world being interjected by COVID-19, people did not mind travelling to congested destinations. Some participants claimed that they travelled solely for that when attending certain destinations that hosted crowded events. Literature by Wen, Kozak, Yang and Liu (2020:05) concurs that many people loved travelling in groups before the pandemic and looked for destinations that offered social fulfilment and enjoyment. In other instances, some participants would prefer a destination based on its popularity, luxury, star rating (10.1%), and location (7.9%).

**During-** There was an inevitable change in the way tourists reacted due to the pandemic, they prioritized their health over everything and opted for tourism service providers that took care of them by following the guidelines recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020). As much as tourists wanted to go out, especially after the lockdown regulations were eased, they still were very sceptical about the places they were visiting, and safety remained their top priority. Moreover, the study revealed that most domestic tourists valued their safety and would opt for less crowded or remote destinations that were environment-friendly, while some did not

want to go at all. Lekgau (2021:04), Jones and Comfort (2020:08), support the above by saying that many people avoided crowded spaces, and some did not want to leave their homes altogether.

The study, in concurrence with the literature, revealed that personal factors such as the mental and physical well-being of domestic tourists significantly shaped tourist behaviour during the pandemic. For example, the perceived risk of infection led many tourists to refrain from travel unless it was essential and did not compromise their health. Health concerns prompted the majority of domestic tourists to favour private transportation over public options, as it was deemed safer during this time.

### 5.2.3 Situational Factors

**Before-** Some tourists mostly considered amenities and the location of the destination with a majority of 76.4% wanting to be located on the seaside and about 13.5% wanted destinations that were in natural destinations.

**During-** Safety and security are considered as primary factors that influence visitor decisions, and they contribute towards the competitiveness of the destination. Disease outbreaks, sanitation quality and health care are considered as part is safety and security factors (Dwyer and Kim 2003:05, Wu *et al.* 2022:06). The findings of this study validate that most domestic tourists would refrain from travelling to destinations that represent crowded spaces. For example, some of the service providers voiced out that some tourists would prefer to be with their families in isolation and not want to be mixed with strangers.

Overall. This study makes it evident that people prefer places in isolation that will make them feel safe and protected from contracting the virus. In other instances, domestic travellers highlighted geographical location as a significant predictor towards destination choice. Before the pandemic, many of the tourists signposted their destination preference of urban and city versus the countryside. Their previous preference for city and crowded spaces was now replaced with destinations that were sparsely and open spaced and offered more fresh air. It is without doubt that tourism is not a necessity but a want, and many have to save money for them to be able to partake in it.



#### 5.2.4 Technological factors

**Before-** According to the data it was evident that only a minority of 7.9% of tourists expressed their willingness for places with less human contact. This could be because people are becoming more aware of the technological advancements that they see on social media while some are well travelled hence becoming even more demanding. According to Schuckert *et al.* (2016), prior to the pandemic many people obtained travel information using social media and the increased use of smartphones and access to the internet has an inevitable influence towards tourists' information search, their decision-making process, and the whole travel experience (Amora *et al.*, 2016; Liu, Mehraliyev and Schuckert, 2019:03). Before the pandemic most destinations did not offer the innovative technologies that was intended to reduce or eliminate human contact. As presented in the literature in Chapter 2, Juvan *et al.* (2017:03), affirm this by stating that tourists' traveling choices and decisions are increasingly becoming demanding because they are now more experienced and knowledgeable in technological advancements and travel.

**During-** During the pandemic people favoured destinations that will offer less human contact. This meant that their preferred destinations ought to offer some technological applications that will guarantee their safety and well-being during the outbreak. As a result, tourism service providers came up with ways of prioritizing safety while also managing to operate, however, it is to be noted that many made use of already existing technological applications which were not fully utilised previously.

The data suggests that the pandemic influenced respondents' preferences for types of destinations in KwaZulu-Natal. During the pandemic, there was a shift towards natural destinations, while the preference for seaside destinations decreased. Moreover, isolated natural destinations were popular whereas the urban and city destinations were not so popular. After the pandemic, while natural destinations remained popular, seaside destinations saw a partial recovery in preference.

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically transformed the global tourism industry, with technological advancements playing a crucial role in this transformation. Health and safety concerns, coupled with the need for adaptability, have driven the adoption of various digital tools and platforms, significantly influencing tourist behaviour. To safeguard their health and well-being, this study showed that domestic tourists transacted on a range of digital platforms,

including, contactless payments, electronic menus, online shopping, and self-service check-ins. Subsequently, these virtual applications became necessary in minimising physical contact and curbing the spread of the virus, thereby ensuring safer travel experiences. Notably, whilst most of these technological applications were not novel, the pandemic has considerably increased their utilization and importance. Overall, the advent of technological innovations has been significantly, influential during the pandemic and will contribute to a more sustainable, resilient and technologically advanced tourism industry in the future.

### **5.3 OBJECTIVE 2: To Examine Personal Factors, Economic, Situational, And Technological Factors That Influence Domestic Travel Behaviour to KZN Before and During COVID-19 Pandemic**

The purpose of this objective was to look at domestic tourist behaviour through the contributing factors. These factors will help determine how domestic tourists react towards tourism activities during normal circumstances and when faced with the pandemic.

#### **5.3.1 Economic factors**

**Before:** The study by Bana and Nyikana (2020:10), claim that many South Africans are facing socio-economic challenges even before the pandemic. Subsequently, domestic tourism in SA was regarded as a luxury commodity given that most people are representative of a minimum wage, and some are dependent on government grants which hinders their participation towards tourism activities. Hence the results of this study signify that the participants did value tourism service providers that provided them with bargaining behaviour.

**During:** The results signify an impact of the pandemic on travel plans, with a high percentage (80.9%) of respondents cancelling bookings due to factors such as financial constraints, safety, and health. This is because many people were financially disadvantaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they had to save their money for future unforeseen events while others had to change their spending patterns and focus on essentials. Bakar and Rosbi (2020:03), the pandemic resulted in tourists cancelling their travel arrangements and having their salaries reduced made them cautious of how they spend money. Accordingly, tourists exhibited thrifty habits and budgeting behaviour in prioritising what was most essential during the pandemic.

### 5.3.2 Personal Factors

**Before-** The majority of the respondents (65.2%) showed that before the pandemic they did all the bookings themselves online without consulting the traditional intermediaries within the tourism distribution channel. Furthermore, they did not consider travel insurance as an advantage when travelling especially when traveling internationally. Moreover, some local tourists booked well in advance prior to the pandemic. Equally, Stats SA (2018:58,59), supports this by expressing 88.7% of South African domestic tourists book themselves online when travelling.

**During-** According to Abdullah, Dias, Muley, and Shahin (2020:01), perceived risk, considerably, presents a negative impact on the travel behaviour and intention of tourists. The data gathered from this study further supports the aforesaid by suggesting that the pandemic significantly impacted travel motivations to destinations in KwaZulu-Natal. Although leisure travel rebounded after the pandemic, there was a drastic reduction in intention to travel to domestic destinations during the pandemic. However, the study results show that business travel remained relatively stable throughout the three periods. In addition, during the pandemic at least 65.2% of tourists preferred reserving destinations that they previously visited. At the same time complying with all the new safety and health regulations that were imposed by COVID-19. This further indicates the level of trust and loyalty consumers have in the service providers they have utilized before.

On the contrary, a minority of 10.1% travellers expressed their interest to explore new places and service providers during the pandemic. According to the data, these respondents were representative of the age group of 30 (71.9%) and below. The data signifies that age does influence travel decisions and behaviour during a pandemic. Hence, tourists over the age of 30 are more conservative and cautious in procuring tourism services and destinations during a pandemic.

### 5.3.3 Situational Factors

**Before-** Tourists were habitual in making earlier bookings well in advance for their travels because they had no obstacles that would hinder or alter their decisions. Consequently, tourists did not have the risk of fear or anticipating any dangerous calamities whilst making their

bookings. This study indicates that, prior to the pandemic, individuals typically secured their bookings up to three months in advance and paid their deposits with confidence in their travel plans.

**During-** Tourists attitudes towards holiday and leisure bookings negatively during the pandemic as 78.7% of respondents indicated that their safety was highly ranked and that they would avoid travelling to crowded spaces (Ajzen and Kruglanski 2019:10). Furthermore, due to factors such as uncertain lockdown levels, and further health concerns that escalated during the pandemic; domestic visitors continued to readjust their travel plans and existing bookings as a result of their panic buying behaviour. Similarly, UNWTO (2020) reports that there was an increase in last-minute bookings due to pandemic related restrictions. For this reason, many tourism service providers witnessed an increase of walk-ins and last-minute bookings amidst the pandemic. Likewise, the data from Statista (2020), reveals that about 70% of the respondents showed a willingness to pay more to travel should they be given the flexibility to alter their travel arrangement or cancel.

In other instances, many travellers refrained from using public transportation during the pandemic, mainly due to concerns about the risk of transmission in enclosed spaces with limited ventilation. This included both rail, road, and air transportation. Private transportation was the most preferred method of travelling as people would not be in proximity to people whom they do not know. A minor proportion (21.6%) of participants expressed an inclination to utilise tourism services that are exclusively from businesses that accept vaccinated individuals. Moreover, about 36% did not want to be at the airport until there was a vaccine for the pandemic (Statista 2020). The study carried out by Abdullah *et al.* (2020:02) support the results of this study by making it evident that tourists planned to cancel their flight travels and about 22% of the participants stated that they would use less public transportation.

#### **5.4 OBJECTIVE 3: To Determine the Enabling and Inhibiting Factors That Influence the Procurement of Tourism Services by Domestic Tourists During COVID-19**

The aim of this objective is to determine what are some of the factors that hinders or support tourism services to be rendered by tourists during the pandemic.

#### **5.4.1 Enabling Factors**

According to the literature (Phoofolo 2019:63) states that hygiene standards are the ones resulting in diseases at some tourism destinations. This study presents some of the highlights that enabled and motivated domestic tourists to book during the pandemic. For instance, the study results were able to demonstrate that during the pandemic, tourists considered tourism services that mainly offered safety protocols that were visible including sanitizing stations, technology applications and enforcing restrictions on overcrowding areas at a given time. Any place that was rigidly controlled and prioritized tourists' safety more than profitability was what seemed to be favoured and appreciated more by tourists. As a result, this compelled tourism providers to protect the well-being of their guests by ensuring that health and hygiene standards are improved and maintained through the use of technological applications. For example, such applications included e-menus and digital scanners, as well as the intense demand for online delivery services. Customer service satisfaction declined compared to pre-pandemic levels due to the adjustments made to comply with new health regulations. Many customers accepted these changes, recognizing that the company prioritized their health and safety above all else. Moreover, due to the risk perceptions and fear of contracting the virus during the pandemic, respondents gravitated towards natural environments and well-ventilated spaces.

#### **5.4.2 Inhibiting factors**

During the pandemic, many people were faced with financial difficulties and their perceived behavioural control from TPB was influenced by factors such as the lockdown regulations imposed by the government in an attempt to stop the COVID-19 pandemic (Rahmafitria *et al.*, 2021:812). Notably, the restrictions led to individuals being constrained with spending and buying habits. In other instances, the study showed that due to job losses and salary cuts, domestic tourists were financially fraught and less willing to participate in tourism-related activities.

In summary the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reshaped the tourism industry, influencing both enabling and inhibiting factors that affect domestic tourism. As the need for heightened hygiene standards and visible safety protocols became paramount, compelling tourism operators to prioritize customer health and safety over profitability. The integration of

technological applications and services such as e-menus and QR code scanners became essential in maintaining these standards, leading to a shift in customer service expectations. Tourists gravitated towards destinations that exhibited strict safety measures, including sanitizing stations and measures to prevent overcrowding, valuing their health and safety above all.

On the other hand, the pandemic's economic effects imposed financial constraints on potential tourists thus influencing their travel decisions. Moreover, lockdown regulations and financial difficulties made affordability a critical factor when choosing tourism services. Safety perceptions played a crucial role in this context; if tourists felt that safety measures were inadequate, they were likely to avoid those destinations. The balance between maintaining high hygiene standards and offering affordable tourism options became essential in attracting and retaining tourists during this challenging period.

#### **5.5 OBJECTIVE 4: To Assess the Extent of Changes in Domestic Tourists' Behaviour Towards KZN And Destination Choice During The COVID-19 Pandemic**

The main purpose of this objective was to measure the extent of how much tourists changed in terms of their behaviour towards KwaZulu-Natal as a tourism destination. It is important to measure its resilience as a destination.

As stated in the study by SteelFisher *et al.* (2021) it was evident that most people preferred travelling within their own countries during the pandemic, the findings of this study shows that indeed tourists preferred domestic tourism over international tourism, however, intra-provincial was even more favoured within domestic tourism. The Theory of Planned Behaviour states that attitude can either be negative or positive and this study shows that domestic tourists had a negative attitude towards travelling as many are said to have cancelled or delay their travel plans during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ajzen 1991:188; Pahrudin *et al.*, 2021:03). This behaviour was carried out as means of self-protective behaviour (Abdullah *et al* 2020:02). The study data suggests that not only did people cancel international trips during the pandemic, but domestic tourism was not excluded from the effects of the pandemic as there was a notable reduction in visitation to KwaZulu-Natal tourist attractions among the respondents. Many individuals stopped visiting the region, likely due to the financial challenges, health and safety and government restrictions posed by the pandemic. According to this research, people preferred travelling within their own provinces as they believed that when travelling to other

provinces they might get affected especially if the province was regarded as a high-risk area. Furthermore, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, people were opting for shorter trips, likely for quick getaways or essential travel, while longer stays were less common. The data suggests that only after the pandemic, there was a shift towards longer stays at destinations in KZN. Moreover, the data shows that vaccination was viewed as a safety measure as (23.9%) of the respondents showed willingness to support businesses that only permitted vaccinated people within their premises, however, tourism service providers did not impose rules regarding vaccination.

While short stays of less than 5 days were still common, however, this could change as there was willingness to stay longer which can indicate a growing desire for more extended vacations and the gradual return of travel confidence as the pandemic situation improved. This is because people were depressed by the lockdown regulations. Furthermore, tourists visited the destination more than two times a year, but during the pandemic; visitation resulted in a 60.7% decline which negatively affected tourism within the destination.

In other instances, tourists who participated in tourism-related activities exemplified brand loyalty by continuing to support the same service providers they used before the pandemic. Notably, such tourists would rather favour and support destinations and services that they were more familiar with or that they have used in the past. Equally this notion of loyalty further gave them a sense of security and improved their wellbeing, during the time of the pandemic. Hence, when choosing domestic destinations; domestic visitors will relatively rank destination choice and services based on safety, loyalty, affordability, trust, confidence, and familiarity.

In summary, tourists' behaviour towards KwaZulu-Natal as a tourism destination changed, emphasizing the region's resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, domestic tourists exhibited a reluctance towards travel, resulting in numerous booking cancellations and delays due to health concerns and governmental restrictions. This led to a substantial reduction in visits to KwaZulu-Natal. Financial constraints, safety concerns, and travel restrictions contributed to this decline, with tourists preferring shorter, essential trips within their provinces. Furthermore, adherence to health and safety protocols sanctioned by the government became necessary and common practice for most domestic tourists and tourism providers. However, whilst the enforcement of vaccination policies was welcomed by some

tourists, many tourism providers were on obligation to ensure the safety perceptions and well-being of all stakeholders during the pandemic.

Despite the pandemic's challenges, tourists demonstrated brand loyalty, continuing to support familiar service providers and destinations. This loyalty, driven by a sense of security and improved well-being, highlighted the importance of safety, trust, affordability, and familiarity in destination choice. The data demonstrates that the KwaZulu-Natal province exhibits resilience as a tourism destination, with respondents expressing strong travel confidence towards the province post-pandemic. Lastly, the heightened risk perceptions and fear of contracting the virus during the pandemic led respondents to favour nature-based tourism destinations. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents expressed a preference for private transportation over public transportation, citing concerns about the lack of private space, inadequate ventilation, and hygiene issues associated with public transit.

## **5.6 Limitations to The Study**

Many potential limitations may apply to any given study. Some of the limitations that applied to this research study include:

This research study was exclusively focused on one industry, namely the tourism industry. Within the industry, the study specifically examined stakeholders involved with leisure tourists. Additionally, the study was limited to domestic leisure tourists to one geographical location which was the KwaZulu-Natal province. Moreover, the data collected was restricted to the respondents the researcher could access.

The researcher experienced some sampling issues as some people saw no value towards the study as the researcher was perceived as just a student. These issues encountered by the researcher in this study may lead to reduced generalisation of the study findings.

The limited budget also affected the scope of the study as the researcher had to focus on a limited area. The study only focused on KZN and not all industry role players were interviewed, other researchers may consider doing research of this nature in other provinces in South Africa

The time constraints affected the methodology as the researcher could not conduct a cross-sectional study to examine the behaviour of tourists in sequence different catastrophes.



## 5.7 Recommendations For Future Research

As examined in the literature domestic tourist behaviour during unforeseen circumstances remains very less explored areas in tourism research. This is because most researchers and some tourism service providers place greater emphasis on international tourism which is seasonal and more profitable.

The study focused on the behaviour of domestic tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic and future scholars interested in similar nature of research may consider looking and the spending patterns of domestic tourists, when are they willing to spend and some factors that may encourage them to engage more in tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic has proved how important domestic tourism is as there were severe restrictions on international tourism, business depended on domestic tourists to survive. It is evident that domestic tourists do not spend much money, however, they are not as seasonal as international tourists. This calls for industry role players to start considering domestic tourists as the end consumer of their products thus price them in way that will also encourages them to engage in domestic tourism.

It would be interesting for future research to also look at tourists who vaccinated and those who did not to get study their perceptions regarding domestic travel during pandemics.

It is evident that South African tourism service providers need to invest more on their application of technology as that may help them in future not heavily depend on human labour but start having self-service enabling apps. Technology is growing and tourism role players need to keep up with the trends to stay relevant. For example, exploring the role of online platforms including travel websites, social media technologies, travel blogs, and tourism review websites on domestic tourist behaviour during any forms of calamities apart from a pandemic.

It is paramount for the industry to understand, manage and respond to the disasters or unforeseen circumstances in order to develop sustainable tourism management.

Furthermore, it is important to note that tourists will always favour places that care and consider their safety more than anything and for organisations to have more direct marketing and treat each tourist as an individual as that will boost their loyalty towards the service providers. The fact that many local tourists showed greater preference to destinations that was less populated and airy; consideration to tourist preferences in research also makes it evident that there is growing opportunity for rural tourism and that gap needs to be addressed as many people as possible to want to experience tranquillity away from big cities. Another recommendation may

include to explore the effects of government legislations and travel restrictions during on domestic tourist behaviour and their intentions to travel during a pandemic.

The information provided by the study could be valuable for the tourism industry in understanding the impact of the pandemic on travel behaviour and planning for the recovery and revival of tourism in KwaZulu-Natal in the post-pandemic period. These findings can be valuable for the tourism industry and policymakers in understanding consumer behaviour and preferences during challenging times and in designing strategies to ensure safe and responsible travel practices.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to determine the behaviour of domestic tourists towards destinations and tourism services in KwaZulu-Natal in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study discovered that tourists do change the way they react towards destinations when faced with unforeseen circumstances and motivates their choices to render tourism services can be affected by several factors. However, more immense research of this nature is yet to be done and a longitudinal study focusing on behaviour after various events might contribute new knowledge that might be more significant for the industry. This proves that the relations organisations form with their customers does payout as it builds loyalty. There is a clear need for policies and tourism products that cater and motivates domestic tourism as an all year-around tourism. There is also a great potential of new rural destinations to be discovered as some people are moving away from the city.

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## 5.10 Appendix 1

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. How was the business before the pandemic?
2. Did the business suffer due to the pandemic? If yes, how so?
3. Did you offer revised changes in services to the guests; if so, describe the extent of changes in services offered to guests.
4. In the hospitality and tourism industry, describe the changes, if any, guest expected in relation to the physical environment and social interactions that overall affect guest experience.
5. Were there any new technologies that were introduced by the company due to the pandemic? If yes, what were those and how did both the staff members and guests react towards those.
6. What are some of the paramount things that tourists are looking for now during the pandemic?
7. What did tourists mostly consider important before the pandemic when purchasing or rendering tourism services?
8. How do you foresee the behaviour of tourists in future to be like when it comes to tourism products?
9. How have the tourism business staff reacted to the changes uncounted due to the pandemic?
10. By doing a comparison of the behaviour of guests before the pandemic and during the pandemic, how long in advance were tourists likely to book their holiday or purchase tourism products offered by the company?
11. Are booking cancellations likely to occur during the pandemic? If yes, how does this affect business? Can you describe reasons for cancellations by traveller/guests?
12. How do guests behave during a pandemic as compared to before a pandemic; describe the changes in behaviour, if any.
13. At what stages of lockdown, bookings were most frequent and least frequent and are you able to explain why?
14. Did you find guests deemed as loyal, to continue extending support to your business during a pandemic? Please elaborate.
15. What are some of the special requests or expectations made by guests either when making a booking or when visiting your tourist attraction.

16. How does your establishment react towards whether guests are vaccinated or not and how does this affect the overall guest experience?

**5.11 Appendix 2**

**ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DOMESTIC LEISURE TOURIST QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Please indicate the gender category you fall under.

Male		Female		Other	
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2. Which age demographic do you fall under?

Under 30 years		31-35 years		36-40 years	
41-50 years		51-60 years		60 years and more	

3. What is your highest educational qualification attained?

No formal education		Completed high school	
Diploma or Certificate		Undergraduate degree	
Postgraduate degree		Other	

4. Please indicate your monthly income.

0-R10 000		R11 000- R20 000	
R21 000- R30 000		R31 000- R50 000	
More than R51 000			

5. How would you rate your general health, please choose the most suitable answer?

Excellent	
Very good	
Good	
Fair	
Poor	

6. Please answer the following questions by selecting the correct answer.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Did you visit destinations in KwaZulu-Natal as a domestic tourist before the pandemic?		
Do you visit KZN as a domestic tourist during the pandemic?		
Are you willing to visit KZN after the pandemic?		

7. How often did you visit KwaZulu-Natal BEFORE the pandemic?

Once a year	2-3 times in the year	3-5 times in the year	More than 5 times in the year

8. How often did you visit KwaZulu-Natal during the pandemic?

Once a year	2-3 times in the year	3-5 times in the year	More than 5 times in the year	Stopped visiting KZN

9. Please indicate your length of stay at destinations in KwaZulu-Natal.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>0-5 days</b>	<b>6-15 days</b>	<b>16-30 days</b>	<b>Over a month</b>

How long did you usually stay at destinations around KwaZulu-Natal before the COVID-19 pandemic?				
How long do you spend at destinations during the COVID-19 pandemic?				
How long are you willing to stay at destinations post the pandemic?				

10. Please state your main reason for visiting destinations in KwaZulu-Natal.

Statement	Leisure	Business	Other
What was your main reason for visiting destinations in KZN before the pandemic?			
What is your main reason for visiting the province during the pandemic?			
What do you foresee your reasons for visiting KwaZulu-Natal post the pandemic?			

11. Please select your most preferred destinations in KwaZulu-Natal.

Statements	Seaside	Natural	Historical	Cultural	Other
What was your most preferred destination to visit before the pandemic?					
What is your preferred type of destination during the pandemic?					
What do you think will be your most preferred destination to visit in KwaZulu-Natal post the COVID-19 pandemic?					

12. Do you think travelling to interprovincial destinations during the pandemic is as dangerous as travelling internationally destinations?

Yes		No	
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13. Please answer the following statements with one of the most appropriate option available.

Statements	Yes	No	Not sure
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I prefer using the same tourism providers that I have used before the pandemic			
I still explore different tourism companies even now during the pandemic?			
I like crowded areas even now during the pandemic			
I avoid travelling by airplane during the pandemic			
I avoid traveling by train during the pandemic			
I avoid traveling by road during the pandemic			
During the pandemic, I have cancelled my bookings for travelling			
I have cancelled my bookings because of the uncertain lockdown levels.			
I have cancelled my bookings because due to the pandemic I no longer had disposable income for traveling			
I have cancelled because I would rather save money for unforeseen circumstances and health purposes.			

14. Rate your agreement in the following.

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I avoid travelling since the outbreak of COVID-19.					
People around me do not travel often due to COVID-19.					
I only travel out when necessary.					
I prefer travelling within my local town than going to another province.					
Using private transport is much safer now during the pandemic.					
I do not mind even if I use public transport for travelling.					



I know that there is a greater chance of contracting COVID-19 if I use public transport.					
There are lesser chances of me contracting the virus if I travel using private transportation.					
When travelling to other provinces, I follow each and every rule of COVID-19 in order to protect myself.					
I believe that when travelling to other provinces the pandemic is dangerous and can kill me if I contract it.					
There are high chances that I will get COVID-19 if I travel to other provinces.					
I am strong so I will not die even if I contract the virus.					
I have good knowledge about how I may contract COVID-19.					
I am aware of the Coronavirus symptoms.					
I do have access to testing facilities should I feel some of the symptoms.					

15. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement regarding what you consider a priority when visiting a tourist destination during a pandemic.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
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I book everything by myself when planning a vacation.					
I book through a travel agency when going on holiday.					
I have always made sure I have travel insurance when going on holiday before the pandemic.					
I deem travel insurance as paramount now during the COVID-19 pandemic.					
I will only consider travel insurance when travelling to international destinations.					
I get the same guest service as I did before the pandemic.					
I have lost my job during the pandemic, and I cannot afford to travel anymore.					
My salary has been cut due to COVID-19 and I only focus on household essentials.					
I can afford to travel but only within my province.					
I can manage to travel to other provinces even now during the pandemic.					
When travelling, I prefer rendering tourism services that will maintain distancing.					

16. Please select the most appropriate answer below, you may select more than one answer.

<b>Statements</b>	
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What did you mostly look at when selecting a destination to visit before the pandemic?	Price	Location (Natural, sea etc.)	Less human contact	Sanitizing stations	Star rating	Accessibility
	Amenities	Hygiene	Luxury	Beauty	Reputation	Security
What makes you choose a destination to visit in KZN during the COVID-19 pandemic	Price	Location (Natural, sea etc.)	Less human contact	Sanitizing stations	Star rating	Accessibility
	Amenities	Hygiene	Luxury	Beauty	Reputation	Security
What is it that you think will influence your choice when choosing a destination in future?	Price	Location (Natural, sea etc.)	Less human contact	Sanitizing stations	Star rating	Accessibility
	Amenities	Hygiene	Luxury	Beauty	Reputation	Security

17. What type of accommodation establishment do you prefer now during the COVID-19 pandemic and before the pandemic?

<b>During the COVID-19 pandemic and before the pandemic</b>		
	<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>
Hotel		
Guest house		
Bed and Breakfast (B&B)		
Self-catering accommodation		
Campsites		
Resort		
Lodge		

18. What are some of the activities that you mostly preferred to participate in before and during the pandemic?

<b>During the COVID-19 pandemic and before the pandemic</b>		
	<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>
Theme parks		
Physical shopping		
Online shopping		
Hiking		
Fine dining/restaurants		
Going to movies		
More other indoor activities		
More outdoor activities		

19. The following statements need to be answered by a **YES**, **NO** or **NOT SURE** answer, please give the most appropriate answer.

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NOT SURE</b>
I reacted differently to each stage of the lockdown.			
The lockdown affected my finances, I had no income to travel during lockdown.			
The lockdown affected my travel plans.			
I do not adhere to COVID-19 protocols during lockdown level-1 compared to lockdown level-5.			
I avoid travelling to destinations with high COVID-19 infections.			
The pandemic did not affect my loyalty towards KZN as a tourist destination of my choice.			

20. Please give your most suitable answer for the following statements

<b>Statements</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do you have health issues?			
Does your health deter you from travelling now during the pandemic?			
Did your health prevent you from travelling before the pandemic?			
Do you have any comorbidities?			
If the above answer is true, do your comorbidities prevent you from travelling?			
Concerning your health, do you prefer travelling domestically than internationally?			
Due to the ever-changing lockdown levels, do you prefer booking a week before your travel?			
Are you waiting on the COVID-19 virus to vanish, until you book your holiday?			
Are you only willing to purchase tourism products from tourism businesses that only accept vaccinated people?			
Do you support tourism businesses that only allow vaccinated people in their premises?			

21. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in your own words, how would you describe risk and safety.

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22. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in your own words, describe what type of tourism services, products and facilities you expect, prefer and value.

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## 5.12 Appendix 3



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study: An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.**

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Sisanda Soyikwa (post graduate student in Master of Management Sciences; specializing in Hospitality and Tourism)**

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr. R Maniram (Phd)**  
**Durban University of Technology**  
**E-Mail: rekham@dut.ac.za**

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:** Dear participant, warm greetings to you, I am a third-year student, studying towards the Master of Management Sciences; specializing in Hospitality and Tourism within the Management Science Faculty at the Durban University of Technology. I currently hold a B-Tech Degree in Tourism Management. I would like to invite you to participate in this study supervised by Dr R Maniram. This study will seek to better understand the behaviour of tourists and what influences their when buying tourism products and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**What is Research:** Research is the development of new knowledge or adding to the existing knowledge to develop new understandings (Anon, 2020).

**Outline of the Procedures:** You have been invited to be a part of the data collection process for this study by participating in a short, self-completed online questionnaire during a selected time frame in your own comfort zone. You have been identified as a possible participant because you meet the desired criteria required for this study and because your input will be of huge significance towards the study. You will first receive a consent form which you will have to complete in order to indicate your willingness towards participating in the study. Once the consent form is read, understood, and signed then that will serve as a confirmation of participation on the study and only then will you receive the questionnaire. You will need to have data to access the online questionnaire, no data will be provided by the researcher to the participants. Industry role players will participate in the interviews that will be held virtually. You will receive a gatekeepers' letter first and should you agree to it, you will then select a day in which you would for the interview to held. Follow up emails and telephonic correspondence will be sent to you requesting the completion of the questionnaires on a weekly basis. The online survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The whole survey must be completed with honesty and accuracy. You will be instructed on how to answer the questions in the survey in the context of this study by the researcher. Please note that only people that participate in domestic leisure tourism around KwaZulu-Natal may partake in this study.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** There are no risks involved by you being a participant towards the study.

**Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:** The participation in the study is completely voluntary and should you feel like you want to withdraw due to your personal reasons, you may be able to do so without any law-abiding consequences.

**Benefits:** No financial benefits or quick benefits will be received by being part of the participants. However, your participation will be valuable because it will enable the searcher to develop a deeper understanding about the behaviour and responses of tourists amidst COVID-19 and civil unrest. The results will in turn assist tourism role players to meet the needs of their consumers even during pandemics and civil unrest.

**Remuneration:** No monetary or any rewards will be given as a token of appreciation for being part of the study.

**Costs of the Study:** No costs will be incurred to you by partaking in the study.

**Confidentiality:** Your contribution to the study will be kept confidential, no specific personal information is required and your participation to the study will be kept anonymous. If the results of this study are published, the data will be presented in group form and no names will be mentioned as a form of protecting your identity and personal information. Numbers will be used when coding the data and in that way no names will be revealed.

**Results:** The final results of the study will be made available to you should you wish to view them. Furthermore, should the results be published, your identity will be kept anonymous.

**Research-related Injury:** No injuries are foreseen by being part of the study as you will complete it at your own comfort zone and no compensation will be given out.

**Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings:** The collected data such as questionnaires and voice records of the interviews will be stored on a hard drive that only the researcher will have access to and the supervisor upon request.

**Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** Please contact the researcher (063 278 0421), my supervisor (031 373 5515) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support acting director on 031 373 2577 or [researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:researchdirector@dut.ac.za).



## 5.13 Appendix 4



### CONSENT

**Full Title of the Study: An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.**

**Names of Researcher/s: Sisanda Soyikwa**

#### **Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:**

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Sisanda Soyikwa , about the nature, conduct, benefits, and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_\_\_\_\_,
- I have also received, read, and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.
- I have full knowledge that only people who are leisure tourists in KwaZulu-Natal may be part of this study.

_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Full Name of Participant Thumbprint</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Signature / Right</b>

I, Sisanda Soyikwa herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Sisanda Soyikwa \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Researcher**

05/09/2022 \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Witness (If applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

## 5.14 Appendix 5

### GATEKEEPER LETTER

To whom it may concern

Warm greetings, my name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no.21632687 a third-year master's student at Durban University of Technology in Tourism within the Management Science faculty.

I hereby request your consent to conduct my research on your organization and my study involves an exploration of domestic tourists' behaviour and responses towards leisure market services and destination choice during COVID-19: a case of KwaZulu-Natal.

You have been issued the letter of information which highlights what the study is about, and a copy of the study proposal may be given should you require more information. Approval letter for me to conduct this research has been attached from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC). The interviews to answer the questions will be held online on either Zoom meeting or Microsoft Teams and they will not be longer than 1 hour. Time will be arranged according to your availability and since its online you can partake at your own comfort zone.

All the information that will be recorded during the interview will be confidential and only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to it, and it will be stored safely on Cloud and Google Drive and will only be deleted after a period of five years.

Should you be keen in participating on the study, kindly email me back to soyikwasisanda@gmail.com or contact 063 278 0421.

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

S. Soyikwa

i.

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no .21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.** I am hereby seeking your consent to gather and collect data for the above research and conduct research on the above-mentioned topic. The aim of this study is to explore tourists' behaviour and responses towards tourism services and destination choices during Covid 19 in KwaZulu –Natal.

I have provided you with a copy of my approved proposal which includes copies of the data collection tool and consent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 063 278 0421 or email at [soyikwasisanda@gmail.com](mailto:soyikwasisanda@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no .21632667 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.**

I am hereby seeking your consent to gather and collect data for the above research and conduct research on the above-mentioned topic. The aim of this study is to explore tourists' behaviour and responses towards tourism services and destination choices during Covid 19 in KwaZulu –Natal.

I have provided you with a copy of my approved proposal which includes copies of the data collection tool and consent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 063 278 0421 or email at [soyikwasisanda@gmail.com](mailto:soyikwasisanda@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Using Microsoft Word 2010 (104874) 001  
48624541-000204874

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

3.

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no .21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.**

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If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 063 278 0421 or email at [soyikwasisanda@gmail.com](mailto:soyikwasisanda@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
Yes		

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

#### Gatekeepers' permission

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no ,21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.**

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If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 063 278 0421 or email at [soyikwasisanda@gmail.com](mailto:soyikwasisanda@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
✓		

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

G.

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no .21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department of the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.** I am hereby seeking your consent to gather and collect data for the above research and conduct research on the above-mentioned topic. The aim of this study is to explore tourists' behaviour and responses towards tourism services and destination choices during Covid 19 in KwaZulu –Natal.

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Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa



6.

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no ,21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Tourism Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.** I am hereby seeking your consent to gather and collect data for the above research and conduct research on the above-mentioned topic. The aim of this study is to explore tourists' behaviour and responses towards tourism services and destination choices during Covid 19 in KwaZulu -Natal.

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Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no .21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

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Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no .21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

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Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
✓		

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no. 21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

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If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 063 278 0421 or email at [soyikwasisanda@gmail.com](mailto:soyikwasisanda@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
✓		DISE MOKWENA

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

**Gatekeepers' permission**

My name is Sisanda Soyikwa student no 21632687 currently a master's student from the Faculty of Management Sciences- Hospitality and tourism Department at the Durban University of Technology and conducting research in the following research topic:

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If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 063 278 0421 or email at [soyikwasisanda@gmail.com](mailto:soyikwasisanda@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kindly tick the correct column below and sign at the bottom.

Permission granted	Permission not granted	Signature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

ABEL MOKHONA

Yours sincerely,

Sisanda Soyikwa

## 5.15 Appendix 6



\* 1 Sultan/Steve Biko/City Campus tel: 031 373 2000 \* 0 box 1334, urban, 4000  
 Pietermaritzburg Campus tel: 033 342 1000 \* 0 box 101112, Scottsville, 3209

### Post Graduate Checklist

No	Document	Student verification	Faculty Officer Verification	
1	Attach Proof of 2023 registration <i>NB: Registration for the current academic year is compulsory</i>	Yes- as per attachment to email		
2	Indicate the academic years registered for <i>NB: specify Full-time or Part-time</i>  Max Masters: 3 Max PhD: 4 <i>Note: A student cannot submit without meeting the minimum criteria of 1 year for a Masters study and 2 years for a DPhil</i>	2021 2022 2023		
3	Date of FRC Proposal Approval	8th JUNE 2022		
4	Did you apply for Interruption/Extension of Studies? If yes, please specify for which years	No		
5	Date of Submission of PG 5 – Please attach Intention to Submit document	Yes- as per attachment to email		
6	Date of PG 6 FRC approval - Nomination of Examiners (Supervisor to ensure this is complete- student is not privy to this)	Refer to supervisor		
7	Ensure PG 7 – Submission of Dissertation for Examination is attached and duly signed by the student, supervisor and HOD	Yes- as per attachment to email		
8	Ethics Clearance (include as annexure) i.e. did you receive full approval to conduct your study? If yes please confirm which clearance has been received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty Research Ethics Clearance (Level 1) <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Institutional Clearance (Level 2, Level 3)</li> </ul>	IREC  FREC	Level -2 Yes- as per attachment to email  n/a	IREC  FREC
9	Gatekeepers' letters (include as annexure on the dissertation/thesis)	Yes - Yes- as per attachment to email		
10	Turn it in summary report – under 20% (Please ensure the <b>summary</b> report is signed off by the supervisor and included as an annexure on the dissertation/ thesis)	Yes -6% - as per attachment to email		
11	Title – the student is to ensure the title of the dissertation/thesis has not changed from the initial title approved at FRC	Yes – no changes		
12	Please ensure an editor/statistician certificate is included as an annexure on the dissertation/thesis	Yes- as per attachment to email		
13	Please ensure the dissertation/thesis is signed off for final approval by the Supervisor/co-supervisor and the declaration page is signed by the student	Yes – both signatures		
14	Publication : DPHIL – Publication accepted MManSc – Publication submitted (include proof of acceptance/submission if completed at the submission phase)	n/a		

I, Sisanda Soyilwa (Student Name), 21632687 (Student Number) hereby confirm the above-mentioned documents have been submitted to the Faculty Research Officer accordingly along with the PDF Final signed Bound Thesis/ dissertation for Examination.

I acknowledge that in the event of a Pass, I will **only** be eligible for graduation upon satisfying the Minimum Duration Rule G25 (2)(a) or Rule G24 (2)(a)

**Rule G25(2)(a) – Applicable to a Doctoral Study**

*(2) Minimum and maximum duration*

*(a) The minimum duration for a Doctoral Degree shall be two consecutive academic years of registered study.*

**Rule G24(2)(a) – Applicable to a Masters Study**

*(2) Minimum and maximum duration*

*(a) The minimum duration for Master's Degree shall be one academic year of registered study.*

Student : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 29 November 2023 \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 29 November 2023

FRO : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FRO STAMP

## 5.16 Appendix 7



### PROOF OF REGISTRATION To Whom It May Concern

01-Feb-2023

It is hereby confirmed that the under mentioned person is a registered student at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

<b>Surname:</b>	SOYIKWA	<b>First Names:</b>	SISANDA
<b>Student Number:</b>	21632687	<b>Qualification:</b>	MMTRM1 M MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (HOSP - TOURISM)
<b>Registration Year:</b>	2023	<b>Offering Type:</b>	Durban Campus Full-time
<b>Block:</b>	POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS	<b>Period of Study:</b>	Study period 3
<b>Department:</b>	HOSPITALITY & TOURISM	<b>Faculty:</b>	FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Subject	Description	PreReq/Exp	Block	Class Group	Offering Type	Exam Year	Exam Month	Cancel	Amount
	Registration Fees/Levies								2970.00
RPTH531	P0 POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS RESEARCH PROJECT AND DISSERTATION (3RD REG)		P0	A	D1	2023	11	N	0.00
								Subtotal:	2970.00
								Total:	2970.00

\* Subjects with Requisites will be cancelled if the requisite rules are not met in mid-year exams. Refer to Department handbook.

Outstanding Balance: 22977.16

Please verify and rectify the above registration details with the Faculty Office to avoid academic and financial penalties before the dates published in the General handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Officer



### PROOF OF REGISTRATION To Whom It May Concern

09-Feb-2024

It is hereby confirmed that the under mentioned person is a registered student at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

<b>Surname:</b>	SOYIKWA	<b>First Names:</b>	SISANDA
<b>Student Number:</b>	21632687	<b>Qualification:</b>	MMTRM1 M MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (HOSP - TOURISM)
<b>Registration Year:</b>	2024	<b>Offering Type:</b>	Durban Campus Full-time
<b>Block:</b>	POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS	<b>Period of Study:</b>	Study period 4
<b>Department:</b>	HOSPITALITY & TOURISM	<b>Faculty:</b>	FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Subject	Description	PreReq/Exp	Block	Class Group	Offering Type	Exam Year	Exam Month	Cancel	Amount
	Registration Fees/Levies								3105.00
RPTH541	P0 POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS RESEARCH PROJECT AND DISSERTATION (4TH REG)		P0	A	D1	2024	11	N	0.00
								Subtotal:	3105.00
								Total:	3105.00

\* Subjects with Requisites will be cancelled if the requisite rules are not met in mid-year exams. Refer to Department handbook.

Outstanding Balance: 18410.16



## 5.17 Appendix 8



8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022

Student Number: 21632687

Dear: Ms. S Soyikwa

**MASTER OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT**

This serves to confirm the approval of your research proposal by the Faculty Research Committee, at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022, as follows:

1. Research proposal and provisional dissertation title:  
*An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Leisure Market Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal.*

Supervisor: **Dr Rekha Maniram**  
Co-Supervisor: **N/A**

Please note that any proposed changes in the thesis/dissertation title require the approval of your supervisor/s, the Faculty Research Committee, as well as ratification thereof by the Higher Degrees Committee.

2. Research budget to the amount of: **R10 000.00(Masters) / R15 000(DPHIL)**  
Please note that this funding is not a scholarship or bursary and is therefore not paid directly to you, but is controlled by the Faculty. Any proposed changes to the use of this funding allocation requires the approval of your supervisor and the Dean. Please note that funding will be reimbursed to you after the provision of receipts.

The Institutional Research Committee has stipulated that:

- (a) This University retains the ownership of any Intellectual Property (patent, design, etc.) registered in respect of the results of your Masters/Doctors Degree in Technology studies as a result of the award and the provisions of the above Act;
- (b) Should you find any of the terms above not acceptable then you are given the option to decline the Research budget award to your project in writing.

May we remind you that in terms of Rule G25(2)(b), if you fail to obtain the Masters/Doctors degree within the maximum time period allowed after first registering for the qualification,

Senate may refuse to renew your registration or may impose any conditions it deems fit. You may apply to the Faculty Research Committee for an extension.  
Please note that you are required re-register each year until your qualification is completed and graduation is confirmed.

Please note that the following must be adhered to:

**Registration:**

1. Ensure registration has taken place *(the onus is on the student and the supervisor to ensure registration takes place at the beginning of each year whilst the student is currently engaged with his/her Masters or PhD qualification)*
2. Ensure that application for Conferment of Status has been made in the event of your undergraduate qualification being different to this application. **Your attention is drawn to the fact that Conferment of Status is required for registration.**
3. Ensure that your proposal is submitted along with supporting documentation to the Departmental Research committee (DRC) for onward submission to FRC for approval and thereafter to IREC (Institutional research ethics committee) for ethical clearance. This is in the case of Ethics level 2 and level 3 IREC (in the case of a study dealing with vulnerable populations). See guideline attached. **It is the researcher's responsibility to check the Ethics requirements and submit to the relevant bodies irrespective of the reviewer's recommendation.**

**Dissertation submission for examination:**

1. Ensure that you submit the intention to submit form **(PG 5)**, signed by the HOD and Supervisor
2. Ensure that the signed checklist is submitted with the **PG 5**
3. Once your dissertation is submitted to the supervisor for examination purposes, communication from here on will only be with your supervisor and not with the faculty.
4. Your supervisor **MUST** nominate the examiners three months prior to submission of the dissertation/thesis for examination.
5. On submission for examination, please note that a PDF signed copy must be submitted to your supervisor along with the completed and signed **PG 7** form, **FMS Checklist** and signed **Turn It In report**.
6. Feedback will be provided to your supervisor regarding the examination result after the result is ratified by the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC).
7. In the event of a resubmission the reports will be submitted to the supervisor who will communicate with you for revision. Once revision has taken place your supervisor will submit to the FRD for resubmission to the examiners.
8. In the case where there is a discrepancy in examiners results, an Arbiter will be nominated via the HOD and supervisor and tabled at FRC and ratified at HDC.

On completion of this process, the Arbiters report will be tabled at FRC and ratified at HDC.

9. Results of the Arbitration process will be communicated to your supervisor

**Graduation requirements:**

1. Ensure that you submit a completed signed PG10 form
2. pdf version to be sent upon HDC ratification
3. response to post graduate examination form
4. completion of study form (IREC form)

Should you experience any problems relating to your research, your supervisor must be informed of the matter as soon as possible. If the difficulties persist, you should then approach your Head of Department and thereafter the Faculty Research Coordinator.

Please refer to the 2022 General Rule Book and the Postgraduate Students' Guide 2021 concerning the rules relating to postgraduate studies, which include *inter alia* acceptable minimum and maximum timeframes, submission of thesis/dissertations, etc. Please do not hesitate to contact this office for any assistance. We wish you success in your studies.

Kind regards,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Mesanie Lourens obo the FRC Chair/Executive Dean: Professor Netswera  
Faculty of Management Sciences

## 5.18 Appendix 9

PG 7



### Submission of Dissertation/Thesis for Examination

<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty of Management Sciences		
<b>Department</b>	Department of Hospitality and Tourism		
<b>Qualification for which registered</b>	MMan Sc: Hospitality and Tourism		
<b>Offering type</b>	Full time registration	F	Part time registration
<b>Prior qualification</b>	B tech Tourism Management		

<b>Student Surname</b>	Soyikwa		<b>Student No.</b>	21632687	
<b>First Names</b>	Sisanda		<b>Title (Mr, Ms)</b>	Ms	
<b>Postal Address</b>	04 Nagan place, Kokstad 4700				
<b>Tel (W)</b>	<b>Tel (H)</b>	<b>Cell</b>	<b>Fax</b>	<b>e-Mail</b>	
		0632780421	N/A	soyikwasisanda@gmail.com	
<b>Title of Dissertation/Thesis</b>	An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Leisure Market Services and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal			<b>Full</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				<b>Partial</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Supervisor</b>	DR R MANIRAM				
<b>Position</b>	SUPERVISOR		<b>Present Qualifications</b>	PhD- Business Higher Education	
<b>Tel (W)</b>	<b>Tel (H)</b>	<b>Cell</b>	<b>Fax</b>	<b>e-Mail</b>	
031 3735415				rekham@dut.ac.za	
<b>Co-Supervisor</b>	n/a				
<b>Position</b>			<b>Present Qualifications</b>		
<b>Tel (W)</b>	<b>Tel (H)</b>	<b>Cell</b>	<b>Fax</b>	<b>e-Mail</b>	

I hereby grant the abovementioned student permission to submit his/her dissertation/thesis for examination.

<b>Signed:</b> _____	<b>29 NOVEMBER 2023</b>	<b>Date:</b> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Supervisor)			<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>		
<b>Signed:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Co-Supervisor/N/A)			<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>		
<b>Signed:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> 30/11/2023					
(HoD)						

<b>Routing</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>HoD</b>	<b>Faculty Officer</b>

## 5.19 Appendix 10



**TRREE**

# Zertifikat Certificat

# Certificado Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale  
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants



**Clinical Trials Centre**  
The University of Hong Kong

## Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

# Sisanda Soyikwa

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

## Introduction to Research Ethics

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche  
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2021/07/08  
CID : HyDy4h4E

Professeur Dominique Sprumont  
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator



**FMH**  
Continuing Education Program (5 Credits)  
Programme de formation continue (5 crédits)

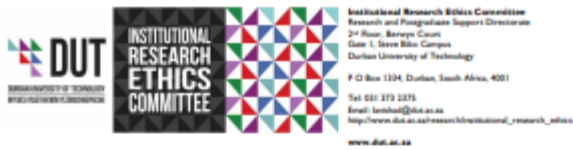


**FPH**  
Tendresse Pharmaceutica Helvetica  
Programmes de formation continue

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[REV : 20170110]

## 5.20 Appendix 11



4 May 2023

Ms S Soyikwa  
04 Hagan Place  
Kokstad  
4700

Dear Ms Soyikwa

**An Exploration of Domestic Tourists' Behaviour and Responses Towards Leisure Market Service and Destination Choice During COVID-19: A Case of KwaZulu-Natal**  
**Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 194/22**

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Professor J K Adam  
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

## 5.21 Appendix 12

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**Dr. SC Onwubu**

46 Thomson Avenue, Seaview, Durban, 4091  
0717930852  
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**STATISTICIAN CERTIFICATE**

**Date:** 26 November 2022

**Re: Sisanda Soyikwa**

Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology

**Master's Dissertation: An Exploration of Domestic Tourists Behaviour and Responses Towards Leisure Market Services and Destination Choice during COVID-19: A Case Study of KZN**

I confirm that Ms Sisanda Soyikwa consulted me regarding her data analysis. I did her statistical work using both descriptive and inferential statistics. I attest that the statistical analysis conducted meets the post-graduate guidelines and addresses her research objectives.

**Dr. SC Onwubu**

26 November 2023

*Per email*