Visitors' motivation for staying in Airbnb accommodation evidence from South Africa

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Abstract: The Airbnb industry contributes significantly to the broader accommodation sector. Thus Airbnb is an alternative and creative accommodation option. The study aimed to evaluate visitors' motivations for staying in Airbnb accommodations, focusing on; visitors' push and pull factor motivation and exploring the relationship between push and pull factors. A quantitative approach was used, with a developed online survey platform known as all counted, and 205 respondents participated in this study. Hypotheses were formulated, with exploratory factors analysis to show a significant relationship between push and pull factor motivation. The study found various push and pull motivation items, with pull motivation items further divided into two variables: personal and distinctive pull factors. The results further revealed that more focus is required on pull factors rather than push factors. There is statistical evidence that all tourists that visit Hartbeespoort or stay in Airbnb accommodations strongly show pull factors more than push factors. However, hypotheses reveal no distinct difference for females as push and pull factors are the same. Therefore, the study suggests that Airbnb hosts and relevant stakeholders should be able to understand visitors' decision-making processes better. This study reveals the push and pull factors that motivate visitors to stay at Airbnb and explores the relationship between push and pull factors as valuable tools in delivering a competitive advantage for Airbnb, deploying different marketing strategies, and motivating and delivering services to visitors.

Keywords: Airbnb, motivation, pull and push factors, sharing economy, visitors

Introduction

The accommodation sector plays a vital role in the tourism industry, as the Airbnb market has increased in South Africa in recent years. Airbnb is considered a disruptive innovation, known to be a low-cost alternative for low-value clients (Guttentag, 2015). According to (Razli et al., 2017), the Airbnb online market has been increasing rapidly. It has drawn greater attention from academics and consultants as a sharing platform network in the hospitality industry (Wakelin-Theron et al., 2018). Airbnb has attracted many participants on both sides of its two-sided platform, from visitors to other stakeholders within the accommodation industry.

A growing global trend is the increased number of tourists staying in Airbnb accommodation establishments. Recently, tourists have chosen to stay in ordinary residences with unique experiences. In the accommodation sector, Airbnb contributes significantly as thousands of guests prefer not to stay in traditional establishments daily. Hence, it is imperative to explore visitors' motivation for staying in Airbnb accommodations to understand better what pushes and pull a visitor to stay at an Airbnb establishment.

However, Airbnb has changed the distribution and delivery of the accommodation sector. The Airbnb accommodation sector is a new concept used as a sharing-economy platform globally accepted in the tourism industry. As Razli et al., (2017) note, this accommodation type has drawn much attention in the hospitality industry, academically, professionally, and individually. The internet has transformed this practice and escalated it to another level introduced for accommodation and rental purposes. Jiang (2019), validates that push-pull theory motivators

can both push or pull people to behave in a certain way, and at the same time, push-pull theory shows that the factor items are never enough without exploring consumer behavior.

Travel motivation is the most crucial part of travel behavior and has been extensively investigated in tourism marketing strategies (Krishnamoorthy & Venkatesh, 2015). Van Vuuren & Slabbert (2011), describe motivation as a need that pushes an individual towards a particular type/s of action meant to satisfy them. Latorre et al. (2021), add that motivations are the inner states of a person, which influence them to take action or act in a particular way, leading to satisfying human behavior. Motivations appear when a tourist desires to satisfy a need or want. Therefore, motivation is regarded as an essential variable relative to the tourist's travel decisions and the outcome of satisfaction. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is frequently used to describe the premise of motivation. Self-actualization is the fifth goal of the hierarchy, defined as a person's motivation to reach his or her full potential (Yang et al., 2022).

Therefore, tourists travel mainly the desire for self-actualization, love and belongingness, and physiological needs. While safety and security remain their primary concern, they also prevent disappointments related to the satisfaction of physiological, love and belongingness, and self-esteem needs. Aebli et al. (2022), emphasize that tourists do not necessarily travel to satisfy one motive. It has been established by most researchers that there are various tourist motivations, with several reasons motivating their decisions to travel. The author adds that tourists seek destinations and activities that satisfy their motivation and desire to travel. Therefore, it is significant for tourism products, such as the accommodation sector, to under-stand tourist behavior and motivations, as these may assist with attracting more tourists to Hartbeespoort.

Therefore, this research study evaluated visitors' motivations for staying in Airbnb accommodations.

Motivation theory

Assessing tourists' motivation is a critical task as decisions to travel depend on it. Maslow's theory in tourism is very important and remains one of the most broadly accepted theories applied to understand human behavior. Maslow's vast scope help clarify travelers' behaviors and varied motivations. The theory divides human behavior into five distinct levels of need. These basic needs can be regarded as fundamental motivations for all travelers. Understanding travelers' motivations is critical to predicting future travel patterns.

Motivation in Accommodation

Numerous tourists opt to stay at an unfamiliar residence rather than at traditional accommodation establishments such as B&Bs, guesthouses, lodges, youth hostels, motels, and backpackers (Guttentag, 2019). Airbnbs have multiplied over the past decade, and tourists are accustomed to this trendy service. However, few researchers have investigated tourists' motivations for choosing Airbnb. Guttentag et al. (2018), for instance, has explored "Why Tourists Choose Airbnb: A Motivation-Based Segmentation Study." The study confirms that Airbnb guests are not only interested in the service, but the price and the location also constitute a pull factor for most tourists. Visser et al. (2017), adds that, based on the study "Airbnb: The Emergence of a New Accommodation Type in Cape Town, South Africa", most Airbnb guests who were surveyed chose their Airbnb accommodation based on price, location, and facilities.

Travel motivation is the most crucial part of travel behavior and has been extensively investigated in tourism marketing strategies (Krishnamoorthy & Venkatesh, 2015). However, Van Vuuren & Slabbert (2011), describe motivation as a need that pushes an individual towards a particular type/s of action meant to satisfy them. Latorre et al. (2021), add that motivations are the inner states of a person, which influence them to take action or act in a particular way, which leads to satisfying human behavior. Motivations appear when a tourist desires to satisfy a need or want. Therefore, motivation is regarded as an essential variable relative to the tourist's travel decisions and the outcome of satisfaction. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is frequently used

to describe the premise of motivation. Self-actualization is the fifth goal of the hierarchy, defined as a person's motivation to reach his or her full potential (Yang et al., 2022).

Yet, Aebli et al. (2022) emphasize that tourists do not necessarily travel to satisfy one motive. On the contrary, it has been established by most researchers that there are various tourist motivations, with several reasons that motivate decisions to travel. Furthermore, the authors add that tourists seek destinations and activities that satisfy their motivation and desire to travel. Therefore, it is significant for tourism products, such as the accommodation sector, to understand tourist behavior and motivations, as these may assist with attracting more tourists to Hartbeespoort.

Relationship between push and pull factors motivation

Motivation has been described in diverse ways. However, the simplest explanation can be the motives for tourists' engagement in a particular behavior (Lantos, 2015). Guttentag (2016), states that most tourism literature applied Dann's (1977, 1981), push-pull motivational framework, which identifies inner drives that encourage tourists to travel (making it a "push factor"), where tourists' activities are described as the result of push and pull factors. Said & Maryono (2018), add that motivation is generally linked to the push-pull factor, which is also related to the travelers' behavior. Therefore, a framework explains why tourists choose a specific destination over others (Said & Maryono, 2018). Furthermore, it outlines the particular experience travelers want and the activities they prefer to partake in at a destination. Therefore, two classifications must be drafted to comprehend the motivational factors: the push and pull factors.

Dahiya (2020), identifies two best ways to describe the push factors in the context of tourism: firstly, to get away from everything else by escaping the daily life stresses (referred to as an escape from "anomie"); and secondly, the search of status and a feeling of superiority (known as ego-enhancement). Furthermore, the author adds that pull factors attract tourists to a particular destination to satisfy the push factors. Examples of pull factors are climate, festivals, and scuba-diving, to name a few, and push factors are inner desire, such as the desire for social interaction, the desire to escape, adventure, relaxation, self-exploration, and feeling a new experience (Said & Maryono, 2018). While Sun et al. (2019), outlined location, cleanliness, personal service, accuracy, and authenticity as tourists' motivations for choosing Airbnb.

Visitors' motivation to choose Airbnb

Few research studies have focused on understanding "why tourists choose Airbnb" (Guttentag, 2016). Lamb (2011), cited by (Guttentag, 2016:20), adopted and used phenomenological life-world interviews to determine "the motivations behind Couch Surfing and Airbnb hosts and guests," concentrating on what tourists want for their authentic interpersonal experiences. The researcher also discovered that Airbnb guests are fascinated mainly by servicing their desire for such experiences. Lower financial packages constitute another reason for utilizing Airbnb establishments.

Annually, Airbnb publishes its economic impact reports mainly aimed at major destinations globally. These reports offer frequent intuitions for guests showing interest in Airbnb accommodation. Several insights globally signify that over the past years, about 80% of Airbnb guests wanted to live like locals, and 70% looked at exploring a particular neighborhood (Airbnb, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017, 2018a). However, South Africa recorded a slightly lower percentage than the rest of the world since 66% of guests were looking to live like residents, and 81% desired to explore a certain neighborhood (Airbnb, 2018a). Location is a significant factor that most guests consider when choosing an Airbnb establishment.

Approximately 86% of Airbnb guests use Airbnb establishments mainly for location convenience, compared to other establishments (Airbnb, 2019a, 2019b). Also, Airbnb (2018b) reported that approximately 85% of guests choose establishments based on amenities. Godovykh et al. (2022), substantiate that cleanliness significantly influences visitors' attitudes and behavior. Shen & Wilkoff (2022), also note that cleanliness generates more income and a high occupancy rate as more visitors have become cautious post-Covid-19.

According to Varma et al. (2016), findings, value for money goes a long way, making travel more affordable and accessible. Airbnb is thus appropriate for low-income earners, as it is less expensive than other establishments, including hotels. Thus, customer reviews contain detailed information about users' experiences (Sthapit & Björk, 2019). Friend's and relatives' recommendations will always play a vital role and should be significantly encouraged, as these individuals give word-of-mouth guidance based on experience. Visser et al. (2017), emphasize that access to public transport is another critical factor in enjoying Metrorail links, roads, air transport, and the taxi industry (Wakelin-Theron et al., 2022). Therefore, similarities exist between Airbnb users' and non-Airbnb users' views on the form of services on which they choose to spend their money and time.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between push and pull motivation, and

H2: There is a difference between push and pull factors.

Methodology

A quantitative study used a non-probability sampling of 205 tourists staying at Airbnb accommodations in Hartbeespoort. The data were collected via all counted, an electronic survey. Convenience sampling was used because of the research tool in the study. This type of research instrument is rigid in terms of responses. However, this type of probability sampling provides suitable evidence about the characteristics of the population and produces exceptional outcomes within the paradigm.

A questionnaire is a self-report data-gathering tool that participants individually complete for a research study. According to Johnson & Christensen (2019), "researchers use questionnaires to measure different characteristics such as attitudes, behavioral intentions, beliefs, perceptions, and values of the research participants". These researchers add that a questionnaire involves various questions and statements. These may be in verbal or non-verbal forms. Therefore, the questions in the survey were open-ended and close-ended. Open-ended questions are classified as unrestricted, and they have no comprehensive answer. It gives the respondents an opportunity to express their views, which gives variation in the collected data. Conversely, closed questions were pre-designed for the respondents in the form of multiple-choice.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections (A and B). Section A outlined the visitors' overall sample profile such as age, gender, education level, and monthly income. In contrast, section B summarised the accommodation usage of visitors staying at an Airbnb, the push-and-pull-factors motives, and inferential statistics. Respondents had to be 18 years and above and must have stayed at an Airbnb in Hartbeespoort. The participants were to invest approximately 5-15 minutes in completing the questionnaire. The following Likert scales were used to measure the pull and push factor motivation:

A four-point Likert scale of importance was used for the pull-factor motivation, where 1= "Not at all important", 2= "Somewhat important", 3= "Moderately important", and 4= "Extremely important". And A five-point Likert scale of likelihood was used for the push-factor motivation, varying from 1= "Never", 2= "Rarely", 3= "Sometimes", 4= "Often, to 5= "Always".

Before analysis commenced, data were cleaned and coded by a statistician using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 28.0). The SPSS version 28.0 was adapted for analyzing data. After ensuring that the data were normally distributed a paired samples t-test was administered to check for significant differences between push and pull factors. Cohen (1988), was used to examine the effect size of the t-test. A t-test compares the means of the push and pull factors (two groups). It is also used to test the hypothesis.

Due to Covid-the 19 pandemic data collection timeline had to be extended. The data for the study were collected for six months, between June 2021 and January 2022.

Results and Discussions

Results

The statistical analysis aimed to find statistical significance between the variables and determine any statistically significant differences between push and pull factors (Table 1), describing the participant's profile (descriptive analysis).

Table 1. Respondents demographic profile

	Data	Frequency	%
Age	18-25	43	21.1
	26-35	81	39.7
	36-45	56	27.5
	46 and above	24	11.8
Gender	Male	82	40.2
	Female	104	51.0
	Of non-discriminatory gender	18	8.8
Education Level	Matric or less	37	19.2
	National Diploma and BTech	69	35.8
	Bachelor's Degree and Honours	65	33.7
	Masters and above	22	11.4
Income Profile	below R10 000	48	23.6
	R10000 - R20000	41	20.2
	R21000 - R30000	45	22.2
	R31000 - R40000	33	16.3
	R41 000 and above	36	17.7

Source: Author

The overall demographic profile of respondents can be observed in Table 1, showing that 39.7% of the respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35. In comparison, 51% were females, with a great 80.9% with a tertiary qualification, and 42.4% of the respondents earned between R10000 and R30000 per month. Suggesting that Airbnb is affordable and that income does not influence visitors' reasons for staying at an Airbnb. It also needs to be noted that Airbnb is differently priced to accommodate various types of visitors within their numerous establishments. It is evident in the global literature indicating that Airbnb users are predominantly between 21 and 40 years of age (Guttentag, 2017). And the South African Tourism annual report (2021) shows travelers primarily undertake constant travel patterns up to the age of 44 (70.3%). The next section analyses the difference between push and pull factors.

Difference between push and pull factors

A t-test paired sample was adapted, as seen in Table 2, to examine the difference on average between push and pull factors. Paired-samples are repeated measures techniques used for testing the same people on more than one occasion, or you have matched pairs (Pallant, 2016).

The paired sample test shows that on average, pull factors seem to be higher than push factors, revealing a paired sample test mean of 2.40, making push factors smaller than pull factors. However, the two-sided test has not anticipated that push or pull factors would be higher than the other vis-à-vis. Therefore, the stronger push or pull factor was not anticipated (p0.008) and is still less than 0.5.

Thus, paired sample t-test of 2.44 is still statistically significant. There is statistical evidence that, generally, all people visiting Hartbeespoort or staying in Airbnb accommodations strongly show pull factors rather than push factors. While the effect size in Table 2 shows a point estimate of 0.171 on Cohen's d, suggesting a large effect size. According to Cohen

(1988), effect size using criteria of .1 = small effect, .3 = medium effect, .5 = large effect. It must be noted that it is not just a sample not to take effect on. More focus for Airbnb needs to be on pull factors rather than push factors. Therefore, emphasis Airbnb needs to focus more on pull factors of motivation.

Table 2. T-test paired sample test for push and pull factor

Paired Samples Correlations							Paired Samples Test				Paired Samples Effect Sizes
				Paired Differences			T	df	Significance		Point Estimate
Perc Pull &	N	Correlation	Significance	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	
			One-Sided p / Two-Sided p								
Perc Push	203	0.625	0.000 / 0.000	2.40265	14.00972	0.98329	2.443	202	0.008	0.015	0.171

The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes. Cohen's the uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference. Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Source: Author

The presented results in Table 3 show Pearson correlation analyses, showing whether personal pull factors significantly correlate with distinctive pull factors. According to (Pallant, 2016), the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. (2-tailed). Therefore, a positive correlation is seen, revealing that as one variable increases, so does the other. Thus, the Pearson correlation coefficient (.620) shows a positive correlation between distinctive and personal pull factors at a p-value of 0.000. The more robust the personal and distinctive pull factors, the more motivation the tourist had to visit, thus may likely result in a more satisfied tourist and may revisit the destination. Therefore, we only reject or not reject a null hypothesis.

Table 3. Correlation analyses result for distinctive and personal pull factor motivation

Correlations		Distinctive Pull Factors	Personal Pull Factors
Distinctive pull factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	202	202
Personal pull factors	Pearson Correlation	.620**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	202	203

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author

The data analysis gave statistical indication to reject or not reject the created hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2

Hypotheses	Statement	P – value	Reject/ Not reject
Hypothesis 1	H0: There is no significant relationship between push and pull factor motivation.	0.000 p<0.05	Reject
	H1: There is a significant relationship between push and pull factor motivation.		Not Reject
Hypothesis 2	H0: There is no significant difference between push and pull factors.	0.000 p<0.05	Reject
	H1: There is a significant difference between push and pull factors.		Not Reject

Discussions

Research findings about the push and pull factor motivations reveal that as visitors score high for the push factor, the visitor will also score high for pull factor motivation. It is also seen for most tourists prefer the same motivation factors when traveling. Jiang (2019) validates that push-pull theory motivators can both push or pull people to behave in a certain way, and at the same time, push-pull theory shows that the factor items are never enough without exploring consumer behavior.

Furthermore, the findings also revealed that visitors who travel to Hartbeespoort or stay in Airbnb accommodations strongly show higher pull factors rather than push factors, and the pull factors that stood out the most were: (1) accessibility, (2) convenience to tourism products, and (3) affordability. Furthermore, the results showed that the total average of pull motives is greater than that for push motives. Similarities are seen in Ramazannejad et al. (2021), through a one-way t-test result revealed that the total average of pull motives scored greater than that for push motives. But what is vital in this regard is the existence of certain conditions at the origin of the travel that creates push motives for the travel. Thus, the researcher emphasizes that more focus for Airbnb needs to be on pull factors than push factors to understand visitors' decision-making process better.

Recommendation

It is recommended that more categories be assessed for push and pull factors to understand tourists' main reasons for staying in Airbnb accommodations. The study also revealed that domestic leisure travelers staying in Airbnb accommodations prefer an easier way of getting to a place, be it by public transport or self-drive, and obtaining convenience products without significant planning, such as food outlets, malls, etc. In addition, the growing popularity of the sharing economy is significantly increasing in convenience and affordability for tourists, and accessibility to a destination is of great value for visitors to choose a place to stay overnight (Sohn et al., 2021).

Since pull factors attract many tourists to Airbnb in Hartbeespoort, the researcher recommends that accessibility should not be expensive. Furthermore, the more accessible Airbnb is, the more likely the establishment will make more revenue, as inaccessible places tend to lose business. Therefore, this study highlights pull factors to Airbnb and establishments or builds on these pull factors.

Participants that visit Hartbeespoort or stay in Airbnb accommodations strongly show greater scores for pull factors than push factors. Although both pull and push factors affect travel motivation. Therefore, the researcher recommends that Airbnb focus more on pull than push factors.

Limitations of the study

Despite this study's invaluable input in Airbnb research, several limitations were considered. This study has various limitations. (1) location of the study only uses Hartbeespoort Airbnb as a geographic location; the study does not examine the overall Airbnb accommodation from various sites. (2) a quantitative approach and non-probability sample were adopted in the study. It means that only visitors with smartphones could participate in the survey. There was no means for fieldwork to reach non-smartphone users; there was a lack of response regarding the all-counted link. It is because the users may not have social media access. (3) Airbnb's collaboration on the study could have led to greater sample size, and lastly, (4) the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a delayed data collection process, with six months instead of the proposed three months, from June 2021 to January 2022. Therefore, this may lead to the omission of information.

Conclusion

Participants that go to Hartbeespoort or stay in Airbnb accommodations strongly show greater scores for pull factors than push factors. Although both pull and push factors affect

travel motivation. The researcher recommends that more focus for Airbnb should be more on pull than push factors. This study suggests that it is essential to understand the domestic leisure market segment and its behaviors. For this reason, investigating the actual decision process surrounding why visitors choose to stay at Airbnb accommodations is beneficial. It would also be crucial to find out whether Airbnb guests investigate other traditional accommodations before booking with Airbnb. Gathering of motivations demonstrated to be a valuable measure to segment markets. This study revealed that visitors' choices were correlated to pull factor motivations.

Authors have nothing to declare

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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