Motivations And Expectations of Selected Young Professional Filipino Travelers: A Phenomenological Study Towards Marketing Strategy for Domestic Leisure Travel

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Abstract

This research aimed to comprehensively understand the motivations and expectations of young Filipino professionals regarding domestic leisure travel. The findings provided valuable insights and marketing strategy recommendations for stakeholders in the tourism industry, including policymakers and businesses. These recommendations are designed to promote sustainable growth in the domestic leisure travel sector and enhance the experiences of travelers.

Through thematic analysis of interviews with ten participants, the study was able to categorize codes from their narratives under predetermined key push (motivations) and pull factors (expectations). Various subthemes emerged, shedding light on different preferences and behaviors influencing travelers' decisions. These findings enhance the understanding of domestic tourism in the Philippines and inform strategic marketing strategies for stakeholders. Recommendations of the research include authenticity-focused branding, strategic partnerships with local experiences, wellness and mindfulness retreats, and sustainability initiatives.

Keywords: Expectation, Motivation, Push-Pull Theory, Domestic Leisure Travel, Young Filipino Professionals

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Structure and Rationale of the Study

Having been in the aviation industry for the past four years, I possess firsthand knowledge of the travel industry's dynamics and challenges. This study was motivated by the recognition that travelers were essential to the industry's sustainability and growth, and that understanding them was critical for achieving sustainable growth in the travel sector in the Philippines. This research aimed to comprehensively explore the evolving landscape of domestic tourism by examining the motivations and expectations that drove young Filipino professionals to engage in domestic leisure travel. The study sought to uncover the underlying factors influencing their travel decisions to provide actionable recommendations for local authorities of cities and relevant businesses to revitalize their tourism sectors in response to changing traveler behaviors.

The research focused on identifying the primary motivations that encouraged young professionals to travel domestically, including traveling as a means for escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experiences, enriching knowledge, and other personal motivations. It also delved into understanding the expectations young professionals had regarding their travel experiences, such as the destination's distinctive image, residents, infrastructure, accessibility of information, ease of reach, and other personal expectations that surfaced. Ultimately, by identifying and analyzing these results, the goal was to provide an informed proposal for strategic marketing efforts and initiatives that relevant stakeholders could consider.

In essence, this study investigated the complexities of domestic leisure travel in the Philippines, with the objective of equipping local destinations with the insights and strategies needed to promote and sustain domestic tourism. By addressing the evolving needs and preferences of travelers, this research aimed to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of the Philippine travel industry in an ever-changing global environment.

In the contemporary landscape of travel and tourism, understanding the motivations and expectations of travelers is paramount for industry stakeholders and policymakers alike. The Filipino travel market, in particular, presents a unique context characterized by diverse cultural influences, economic factors, and evolving consumer behaviors.

With an increasing emphasis on domestic tourism, there arises a need to delve deeper into the motivations driving Filipino travelers to explore leisure destinations within the country. By uncovering the underlying factors that influence travel decisions, stakeholders can better tailor their offerings to meet the evolving needs and preferences of this demographic.

This study addressed this need by examining the motivations and expectations of young professional Filipino travelers engaging in domestic leisure travel. Through qualitative research methodologies, specifically under the lens of a phenomenological approach, the study captured the lived experiences, aspirations, and perceptions of travelers in this demographic segment.

By showing the intricate interplay of factors shaping travel behavior, this research contributed to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of domestic tourism in the Philippines. Moreover, the insights garnered from this study informed the development of targeted marketing strategies, personalized services, and strategic interventions aimed at enhancing the overall travel experience for young professional Filipino travelers.

Research Questions and Objectives
Research Questions
This study investigated the evolving dynamics of domestic leisure travel among Filipino travelers through the lens of three central research questions. These questions are formulated to comprehensively explore the motivations and expectations in domestic leisure travel, ultimately enabling the formulation of a recommendation for the ideal marketing strategy for depending on the results of the study.

1. What motivates selected young professional Filipino travelers to explore domestic leisure travel destinations, specifically in terms of seeking escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experiences, knowledge, and personal motivations?
2. What expectations do selected young professional Filipino travelers have when engaging in domestic leisure travel, considering factors such as the destination's distinctive image, destination's residents, infrastructure, information accessibility, and ease of reach, and other personal expectations?

3. What marketing strategies tailored for young professional Filipino domestic travelers can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Research Objectives

Having said that, the following research objectives below serve as the study's guiding compass, offering a multifaceted approach to unpacking the complexities of domestic leisure travel. This uncovered the personal motivations that underpin destination choices, explore the lasting influence of past travels, and craft market strategies to not only promote domestic travel but also contribute to the broader recovery and sustainability of the Philippine tourism industry.

1. To examine what motivates young professional Filipino travelers to explore domestic leisure travel destinations, specifically in terms of seeking escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experiences, knowledge, and other personal motivations

2. To identify the expectations of young professional Filipino travelers have when engaging in domestic leisure travel, considering factors such as the destination's distinctive image, destination's residents, infrastructure, information accessibility, ease of reach and other personal expectations

3. To identify and make proposals on effective marketing strategies tailored for young professional Filipino domestic travelers based on the finding of the study

Significance of the Study

Theory

In terms of academic contribution, this study offered valuable insights into the role of personal motivations in influencing the decision-making process of selected Filipinos when choosing domestic leisure travel destinations. This research enriched the existing body of knowledge in the field of consumer behavior within the context of tourism. The theory used in this study is the push-pull theory. This theory benefited from the study by providing empirical evidence on how various push factors (such as personal motivations and internal desires) and pull factors (such as destination attributes and expectations) interact with influence travel decisions. It served as a reference point for researchers in tourism studies and related disciplines, facilitating further exploration of similar phenomena across different cultural and geographical contexts.

Practice

From a business and economic standpoint, this study provided critical insights on domestic tourism industry in the Philippines. By examining the impact of personal motivations and past travel experiences on Filipinos' travel choices, it aids businesses within the travel and hospitality sector in tailoring their products and services to align with customer preferences. These findings can help companies to refine marketing strategies, develop products that better meet customer expectations, and improve overall customer experiences. Ultimately, this can drive growth and profitability in the domestic tourism sector while optimizing resource allocation and investment decisions.

Policy

From a policy-making perspective, the research can equip policymakers with the necessary knowledge to promote and support local domestic tourism effectively. Understanding the motivations and past experiences that influence travel decisions enables the development of targeted and impactful initiatives. This includes the creation of marketing campaigns that resonate with travelers' motivations and expectations, investment in infrastructure, amenities in popular domestic destinations, and the formulation of supportive policies and incentives for businesses operating in the tourism sector. Informed policy

decisions have the potential to drive sustainable growth in domestic tourism, contribute to job creation, and foster economic development in the Philippines.

In summary, this study holds significance across multiple dimensions. Academically, it advances the understanding of consumer behavior in the realm of domestic tourism. From a business and economic standpoint, it provides actionable insights to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism industry. Lastly, from a policy-making perspective, it empowers policymakers to craft effective strategies for promoting local domestic tourism, which can yield positive economic and social impacts for the Philippines.

Scope and Limitations

This study aimed to explore the multifaceted dimensions of personal motivations and expectations influencing the selection of domestic leisure travel destinations among a carefully selected group of ten individuals in the Philippines. These participants have been meticulously chosen to ensure a strong and diverse profile that aligns with the specific parameters identified during the data gathering phase of the research. Since the researcher utilized thematic analysis as an approach, various themes were allowed to emerge on their own and were not limited by identifying several factors.

This research explored the qualitative dimensions of personal motivations, including cultural, social, economic, and psychological factors delineated within the predetermined push-pull factors identified in the study's conceptual framework. It has also considered cues derived from data gathering or interviews that has contributed to a nuanced understanding of how these factors influence destination preferences within the unique context of the Philippines. Through the deliberate selection of a diverse group of participants, the study covered a comprehensive spectrum of motivations and expectations that mirrored the diversity found in the broader population.

Furthermore, the study used a phenomenological lens to investigate how past travel experiences have left a lasting impact on the travel choices and expectations of these ten Filipino travelers. It explored various types of past travel experiences, including domestic and international trips, unraveling the essence of these experiences, and their significance in guiding future domestic leisure travel decisions.

In addition to this, the research proposed a comprehensive set of qualitative marketing strategies and recommendations rooted in the phenomenological insights gained from this carefully selected group of participants. These recommendations are tailored specifically to promote domestic travel among Filipinos, leveraging the rich qualitative data collected during the study.

However, it is also important to acknowledge certain inherent limitations in this qualitative phenomenological study. While the careful selection of ten participants enhances the study's depth and diversity, the focus on a specific, albeit well-chosen, group may still restrict the findings to the broader population. Variations in motivations and expectations among different regions, cultures, and demographic groups within the Philippines may not be fully explored, given the sample size. Thus, this study only reflects the views of said participants of the study.

Moreover, the interviews waere conducted in February 2024 considering the travel dates of the participants between 2022 to 2023. The extent to which the study can comprehensively capture the enduring effects of past travel experiences may be influenced by the availability and recollections of participants. Memory biases and limitations may also come into play.

Sampling bias remains a potential limitation, as the selectivity of participants, even when diverse, may not perfectly represent the entire Filipino population. Due to the inherently subjective nature of qualitative research, biases in selection and self-selection by participants could influence the insights gained.

However, this study employs a qualitative design precisely to delve deeply into personal motivations and nuanced decision-making processes that quantitative methods might overlook. The rich, detailed data gathered through this approach provide valuable context-specific insights, which, despite potential biases, contribute to a more profound understanding of the phenomena under analysis.Furthermore, economic factors, while considered within the qualitative framework, may not be explored in depth. This is because the primary focus remains to be on understanding the phenomenological aspects of motivations and expectations.

Lastly, while the study aims to propose qualitative marketing strategies and recommendations, it does not assess the practical feasibility of implementing these strategies or consider the potential challenges and costs associated with their execution. The recommendations are grounded in the qualitative data collected but may require further analysis and adaptation for practical implementation.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are conceptually and operationally defined for this study.

Cultural Experience. It refers to the motivation to travel to immerse oneself in the customs, traditions, and lifestyles of different communities. This includes exploring new cultures by visiting historical sites, participating in local festivals, trying regional cuisines, and interacting with local people.

Destination Information. It is the ease and efficiency with which travelers expect to obtain pertinent details regarding tourist destinations. This includes the seamless retrieval of travel-related information, ensuring it is comprehensive and regularly updated. Travelers also expect to easily discover location feedback, enabling them to access valuable insights and recommendations.

Destination's Residents. These are the community members whom travelers expect to encounter, characterized by their amicable nature, positive demeanor, and dedication to preserving diverse cultural heritages. Visitors also expect residents to provide exhaustive and thoughtful guide services, enhancing their local experience and making them feel welcome.

Destinations Distinctive Image. It is the location's unique essence through its indigenous culture, traditional customs, vibrant festivals, diverse natural elements, delightful local cuisine, a clean environment, and high levels of security, collectively forming a positive and memorable impression for residents and visitors alike.

Domestic Flights. They are flights that occur within the Philippines, connecting different cities or destinations within the country. These flights are limited to travel within the national borders and do not involve international destinations.

Domestic Leisure Travel. This refers to the recreational or vacation trips taken by individuals within their own country, in this case, within the Philippines. It involves travel activities pursued for leisure, relaxation, and enjoyment purposes.

Ease of Reach. It is the degree of convenience and accessibility that travelers expect when reaching a destination. This includes factors such as appropriate travel distance, accessibility of the destination, location convenience, and the abundance of means of transport.

Escape. It is the motivation to travel for the purpose of obtaining a temporary break from routine stresses and demands. It involves finding destinations and activities that provide mental and emotional relief from everyday pressures, such as serene beaches or remote mountain cabins.

Expectation. This refers to the anticipations, desires, and preconceived notions that individuals have when considering or planning a trip to a specific location within their own country. These expectations are

shaped by a variety of factors and influences, and they play a pivotal role that may pull or motivate travelers to choose and visit a particular domestic destination.

Infrastructure. Contextually, these are high-quality accommodations, dining options, and entertainment facilities that travelers expect at a destination. Key components include quality transportation systems and an effective information system, ensuring seamless connectivity and enhancing visitor satisfaction. These facilities are essential in shaping a destination's tourism landscape and contributing to an enjoyable overall experience.

Knowledge. It is the motivation to travel for the purpose of learning and expanding one's understanding of the world. This includes visiting museums, attending educational tours, exploring historical landmarks, and seeking insights that contribute to intellectual growth and a broader perspective.

Leisure Travel. This is the travel undertaken by individuals during their free time for relaxation, enjoyment, recreation, and other personal reasons.

Marketing Strategy. They are efforts done by both the national and local government to domestic locations in the Philippines involving various targeted promotional activities aimed at attracting visitors and showcasing the unique attractions, culture, and experiences of specific destinations within the country.

Motivation. This is the driving force or underlying reason that compel Filipino travelers to embark on domestic leisure travel. It encompasses the diverse set of factors and desires that inspire them to explore the destinations and participate in leisure activities. Motivations for tourism and domestic leisure travel may be a quest for relaxation and escape from daily routines, a pursuit of cultural enrichment, a desire for adventure and exploration, or a need for social interaction and bonding with friends and family.

Personal (Push Factors). They are the individual motivations that drive someone to travel, including the quest for self-fulfillment, achievement of personal goals, pursuing personal hobbies interests, and pleasing personal relationships. These factors shape unique and subjective decisions to explore and engage with the world in ways that are meaningful to the traveler.

Personal (Pull Factors). Contrarily, these are motivations to travel driven by attractions that align with individual preferences, shaped by prior experiences and personal attachment to the destination, the enjoyment of loved ones, and personal interests in specific locations.

Rest and Relaxation. It is the motivation to travel to destinations that promote physical and mental rejuvenation. This includes seeking environments where travelers can unwind and de-stress, such as luxury resorts, spa retreats, or quiet countryside locations, and engaging in leisurely activities.

Young Professionals. People born between 1980 and 2004 are individuals in the early stages of their careers (ages 20-40) who actively pursue both professional growth and meaningful travel experiences. They engage in travel for business events, conferences, and leisure to enhance their personal and career development.

Young Professional Filipino Travelers. They are individuals who are citizens or residents of the Philippines and engage in travel activities. The study focuses on analyzing their motivations and behaviors related to leisure travel and their decision-making process when choosing local airline operators.

CHAPTER II
RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES
The Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Travel
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sharp decline in travel demand worldwide, with widespread travel restrictions and lockdown measures (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD],

2020). Research done by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021) indicates that international tourist arrivals experienced a substantial decrease, resulting in significant revenue losses for destinations heavily dependent on tourism.

The pandemic has also posed severe challenges to travel businesses, including airlines, hotels, travel agencies, and tour operators (Deloitte, 2020). Many businesses have faced financial losses and struggled to sustain operations, leading to layoffs and job cuts (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). The closure of borders and travel restrictions have significantly impacted international travel, forcing airlines to reduce flights or suspend operations altogether (International Air Transport Association [IATA], 2022). Most importantly, the pandemic has drastically changed traveler behavior and preferences of travelers. Fear of contracting the virus and health concerns have prompted individuals to prioritize safety and hygiene standards when considering travel (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2020). Research by Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2020) suggests that travelers are increasingly seeking destinations with lower population density, outdoor spaces, and stringent health and safety protocols.

Past Travel Experiences Reshaping Modern Traveler Behavior

Reflecting on past travel experiences in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, it becomes evident that this global crisis has left an indelible mark on how travelers perceive and approach their journeys. The outbreak of the pandemic forced travelers, regardless of their vaccination status, to reevaluate their travel choices, profoundly altering their behavior and decision-making processes (Ullah et al., 2021).

In the wake of the pandemic, tourists developed a heightened awareness of hygiene and safety, extending their concerns to encompass all aspects of their travels. This newfound emphasis on safety and well-being led travelers to prioritize inclusive tourism packages, seek out destinations with lower population density, and favor open spaces conducive to physical distancing (Sigala, 2020). The fear of crowded places and potential risks prompted some travelers to even forgo certain destinations altogether (Parady et al., 2023). One critical factor that came to the forefront was the influence of government policies and guidelines. Travelers quickly realized that these regulations significantly shaped their leisure travel patterns and destination choices. Quarantine requirements, testing protocols, and entry restrictions became vital considerations when planning a trip (Hall et al., 2020).

As travelers adapted to the new normal, the digital transformation of the travel industry accelerated, reshaping the way they interacted with travel-related services. Virtual platforms, contactless technologies, and digital health passports gained prominence as essential tools to ensure safer and more seamless travel experiences (Luet al, 2018). Online booking platforms and virtual experiences became the norm, as travel companies sought to provide safer and more flexible options for customers (Amadeus, 2021). Digital technologies played a central role in facilitating travel planning, information dissemination, and contactless transactions during the pandemic, simplifying the travel process (McKercher, 2021).

Throughout this period, risk perception emerged as a decisive factor in travel-related decision-making. Studies revealed a strong link between risk perception and protective actions, with individuals who perceived higher health risks being more inclined to avoid travel and take measures to mitigate those risks (Chien et al., 2017). Consequently, travelers' willingness to embark on journeys decreased in direct proportion to their perception of risk, potentially leading to the postponement or cancellation of travel plans to destinations deemed unsafe (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006).

Transportation, a fundamental aspect of travel, also witnessed significant changes. Social distancing and avoiding crowded areas became paramount concerns. Having diverse transportation options within a country became crucial for travelers, allowing them to make informed decisions about visiting their

desired destinations (Rahman et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it was essential to acknowledge that the transportation network remained vulnerable to disruptions caused by movement restrictions (Hobbs, 2020).

Role of Personal Motivations in Travel Decision-Making

Understanding the role of personal motivations in travel decision-making is paramount for effective tourism management and marketing strategies (Sreen et al., 2023). Personality, it is defined as the collection of traits and attributes shaped by an individual's experiences, culture, and education (Feist & Feist, 2009), plays a pivotal role in influencing behavior. An individual's behavior tends to be distinct and consistent when characterized by specific personality traits (Feist & Feist, 2009). This implies that personality may significantly impact the consistency of individual travel behavior.

Furthermore, in line with previous research (Sheldon & Prentice, 2019), it is essential to explore the psychological mechanisms that elucidate how personality traits translate into specific travel-related perceptions and behaviors. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced heightened health and security concerns related to leisure travel (Humagain & Singleton, 2021). While many studies have focused on understanding demotivating factors and inhibitors, such as safety and health risks, during travel in the context of COVID-19 (Aebli, Volgger, & Taplin, 2022), it is crucial to acknowledge that removing these inhibitors may not necessarily increase travel if individuals lack the motivation to do so. In fact, individuals may develop learned helplessness and choose not to travel during the pandemic (Williams, Armitage, Tampe, & Dienes, 2021).

Therefore, it becomes imperative to investigate the interplay between personality traits and motivational states, along with their subsequent impact on behavioral outcomes such as travel intentions. This approach can offer a more nuanced understanding of how the pandemic has influenced long-term travel behavior (Sreen et al., 2023).

Filipino's Motivation for Domestic Leisure Travel

Soon, domestic travel is expected to be the primary focus for Filipinos, driven by reduced incomes and travel budgets resulting from the pandemic's impact on the economy (Department of Tourism [DOT], 2021). Understanding the factors that influence Filipinos' preference for domestic leisure travel in the new normal is crucial for the recovery and growth of the tourism industry. To attract and retain passengers during and after pandemic, tourism marketers need comprehensive understanding of key factors that promote and restrict travel (Ullah et al., 2021). It is therefore significant to comprehend the preferences and motivations of Filipino travelers (Dalera & Abundo, 2021).

The imposition of mobility restrictions and concerns about COVID-19 have significantly impacted domestic tourism in the Philippines, according to the Caynila et al. (2022). Travelers' confidence has declined, necessitating the adaptation of reduced-contact channels in the New Normal.

The Philippine Travel Survey conducted by the Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism (2020) indicates a growing interest among Filipino tourists in nature-based and wellness tourism, as well as off-the-beaten-path destinations. This reflects an increasing demand for sustainable and experiential travel experiences. Looking ahead, domestic travel will be prioritized, with a focus on rural and natural areas. Travelers are increasingly open to digital experiences and prefer customized trips over packaged group tours. Travel decisions will be influenced by health and safety protocols, with effective communication playing a crucial role. Domestic travel is expected to resume within four to twelve months after the easing of restrictions, with a focus on cost-effective options due to the pandemic's impact on personal finances (ALTCFT, 2020).

Filipino's Expectations for Domestic Leisure Travel

Existing literatures have also highlighted the expectations of Filipino travelers in settings of domestic leisure travel. Rocamora (2021) has written about the growing trend among Filipinos towards ″thoughtful and deliberate″ travel, with over 80% expressing a desire to visit places in ways that benefit local communities economically and socially. This shift signals the rise of the ″conscious traveler,″ influenced by the pandemic's impact, prompting travelers to consider how their tourism spending can positively impact struggling towns and rural areas. In the same line, a report by Airbnb (2002) across nine markets, including the Philippines, reveals that Filipinos prioritize meaningful connections with communities and culture, and are expected to contribute to local economies. Additionally, they are expecting sustainable tourism practices to be integrated into their travel plans and avoid destinations facing sustainability challenges. This conscious approach to travel is seen as an opportunity for communities to boost their economies post-pandemic. Key aspects of sustainable travel identified include creating equitable outcomes for locals and engaging in new social experiences. Looking ahead, Filipinos express intentions and expectations to travel more frequently to rural destinations and engage in workcations or remote work opportunities. Moreover, in the same study, a significant portion plans to increase domestic travel, allocating more of their travel budget within the country.

Consumer Behavior of Travelers

Consumer behavior theories offer valuable insights into the decision-making process of individuals as consumers. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that leisure travel fulfills various needs, ranging from physiological to psychological (Maslow, 1943). The Theory of Planned Behavior emphasizes the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping travel intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Self-Determination Theory highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation and the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs in driving travel behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Finally, the Expectancy-Value Theory proposes that individuals' choices and behaviors are influenced by their expectations and subjective value of outcomes, influencing travel decision-making (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

In Paredes et al.'s (2022) study, it was found that escapism serves as a significant motive for tourism activities, allowing individuals to break away from their daily routines and immerse themselves in new experiences (Ponsignon, 2021). The desire to seek a "self-center" away from everyday life is a fundamental motivation for tourism (Cohen, 1979), and vacationing provides a psychological escape from daily routines (Uriely, 2005). Escapism has also emerged as a coping mechanism during the COVID-19 pandemic (Posignon, 2021). Notably, experiencing anxiety related to COVID-19 has a negative moderating effect on travel and social interactions (Paredes et al, 2022).

Several factors can heighten tourists' fear of traveling during a pandemic, especially during the initial stages and outbreak, where limited information is available (Zheng et al., 2021; Xieu et al., 2022). Resilience has been shown to enhance tourists' decision-making process and reduce perceived health risks, such as the threat of diseases, thus increasing the intention to resume hotel usage during the pandemic (Xieu et al., 2022; Peco-Torres et al., 2021). In response to pandemic travel fear, tourists may employ coping strategies as protective travel behaviors (Xieu et al., 2022). Coping strategies are commonly employed by individuals in stressful situations, as indicated by consumer psychology literature (Duhachek & Iacobucci, 2005).

Marketing Strategies Promoting Local Tourism

The Philippines' tourism industry has faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting various sectors such as hotels, restaurants, and local businesses. In 2019, the country saw a promising influx of tourists, with 8.26 million foreign visitors and 109.8 million domestic tourists, contributing substantially to its GDP and job creation (Department of Tourism [DOT], 2021). However, in 2020, foreign arrivals dropped sharply to 1,482,535, representing an 82.05% decrease from the previous year, while overseas Filipinos returning to the country increased by 16.07% (DOT, 2021).

To revitalize the tourism sector, particularly in the digital age, the Philippines can employ various marketing strategies and approaches, such as the one proposed by Pallugna (2022). This approach is based on a Tourism Destination Marketing Model that emphasizes the importance of storytelling, strategic partnerships with storytellers, destination brand management, and effective communication through various distribution channels.

Additionally, the growing role of social media in tourism cannot be overlooked. Social media platforms have become essential tools for information search, decision-making, tourism promotion, and consumer interaction within the industry. A review by Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) highlighted the significance of leveraging social media in marketing tourism products. However, they also note that research on social media's impact on tourism is still in its early stages. Encouraging comprehensive research into the influence and economic contribution of social media in tourism, including its effects on local communities, is crucial.

Push and Pull Motivation in Domestic Tourism

The existing body of literature on tourist behavior and motivation is extensive, encompassing various theoretical models, empirical studies, and case analyses. Research findings, such as those presented by Duong et al. (2023), indicate that both internal and external factors play a role in shaping tourist motivation, with their relative significance contingent upon the contextual backdrop.

A prevalent theoretical framework employed to explore tourist motivations posits that individuals are driven by a combination of internal and external factors. This framework differentiates between push motivation elements, intrinsic psychological forces compelling travel, and pull motivation elements, extrinsic influences attracting visitors to specific locations and influencing their destination choices (John & Larke, 2016; Gavurova et al., 2023).

In a study conducted by Duong et al., the motivations steering domestic tourists' travel decisions to Vietnam's Central Highlands were examined. The study identified motivations categorized as emanating from the tourists themselves (push) and those shaped by the allure and external attributes of the Central Highlands as a tourist destination (pull). Furthermore, the study sought to investigate how demographic factors, such as gender and age, influenced these motives.

To guide their exploration, the researchers developed hypotheses based on the existing literature. These hypotheses comprise five independent variables positively influencing push motivation for tourism in the Central Highlands—escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experience, knowledge, and personal factors. Additionally, six independent variables were identified as positively impacting pull motivation for tourism in the Central Highlands, encompassing the destination's distinctive image, destination residents, infrastructure, destination information, ease of reach, and personal factors ultimately aligning with the Push-Pull theory as proposed by Ravenstein (1885) and further refined by Heberle (1938) stating that human migration is affected by the repulsive force of the origin and the attractive force of the destination.

Related Studies

In the study conducted by Szarycz (2008), the use of phenomenology was focused on examining the philosophical and methodological foundations of phenomenology in tourism research. This study underscores the importance of aligning phenomenological tourism research with its philosophical underpinnings and emphasizes the need to avoid misconceptions and erroneous claims related to objectivity and generalizability.

Similarly, the work of Pernecky and Jamal (2010) explores the theoretical and philosophical influences on researchers' approaches and interpretations in tourism studies using phenomenological methods. This study introduces hermeneutical phenomenology to investigate existential aspects of tourism experiences and highlights the significance of considering philosophical assumptions within the research context.

Marschall's (2014) study investigates "memory trips" or "personal memory tourism" using phenomenological research. Here, phenomenology is pivotal in understanding the constructed nature of these touristic experiences and how they relate to issues of identity and self-consolidation. The study also demonstrates how phenomenology can contribute to tourism marketing and product development.

In Gnoth and Matteucci's (2014) study, phenomenology is used to categorize and discuss the behavioral tourism and leisure literature. This approach helps better understand the processes of experiencing throughout the tourist journey and emphasizes the need for further research into different experiential stages and modes of feeling.

Finally, Fortuna and Alejandro's (2021) study employed phenomenology to discern backpackers' preferences, motivations, and impacts on local communities. The research utilizes phenomenological mapping of themes to provide insights into backpackers' motivations and inner thoughts, offering valuable information for tourism strategies and policies.

In summary, phenomenology has played a pivotal role in advancing our understanding of tourist experiences within the realm of travel and tourism research. It has provided a valuable lens through which to explore the subjective aspects, motivations, and meanings associated with travel, while also emphasizing the importance of aligning research with its philosophical foundations.

Synthesis

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and lasting impact on the world of travel and tourism. Travel behavior has undergone a remarkable transformation, with travelers now placing paramount importance on their safety and health during trips. This shift in preferences has given rise to a new set of considerations when choosing travel destinations, such as favoring places with fewer crowds and rigorous health protocols in place. Moreover, the pandemic has ushered in what's referred to as the "new normal" in leisure travel, where the conventional expectations about how people plan and experience their trips have been canceled.

Within this evolving landscape, several factors have come to the forefront in influencing travel decisions. One of the most significant is risk perception. Travelers' assessments of the health risks associated with their journeys now play a pivotal role in determining whether they decide to travel or not. As perceptions of risk increase, individuals may postpone or cancel their plans to visit destinations they perceive as unsafe.

Additionally, the digital transformation of the travel industry has accelerated, with travelers increasingly relying on virtual platforms, contactless technologies, and digital health passports to ensure safer and more

seamless travel experiences. This shift has significant implications for how travelers plan their trips, access information, and complete transactions.

In the context of the Philippines, domestic leisure travel is expected to be the primary focus for several reasons. Economic hardships resulting from the pandemic have reduced travel budgets, leading more Filipinos to explore their own country. There's also a growing interest in nature-based and wellness tourism, reflecting a broader trend toward sustainable and experiential travel experiences. Travelers now prefer customized trips over packaged group tours and are highly sensitive to health and safety protocols, making effective communication of these measures crucial.

Understanding these intricate changes in travel behavior and preferences among Filipino travelers is essential for the recovery and growth of the tourism industry. Research in this area is instrumental in guiding tourism marketers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders as they adapt to the evolving dynamics of leisure travel today and beyond. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of establishing a strong connection between tourism and crisis management.

Research Gap

The research gap concerning the motivations and expectations of Filipino young professionals in domestic leisure travel is evident despite existing studies shedding light on related aspects of tourism behavior. For instance, Bali et al. (2016) explored the changes in travel motivations following major crises, emphasizing the need to understand shifting patterns in tourist behavior. This study provides valuable insights into the general dynamics of travel motivations but falls short of examining the nuances specific to Filipino young professionals.

Similarly, Xieu et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of establishing a connection between tourism and crisis management to alleviate fear in pandemic travel. While their research emphasizes the broader context of crisis management in tourism, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies focusing specifically on the demographic of Filipino young professionals and their decision-making processes regarding domestic leisure travel during crises.

Moreover, Zheng et al. (2021) underscored the significance of understanding tourists' psychology during pandemic travel, recognizing the evolving nature of tourist behavior in response to global crises. However, their study does not delve into the specific motivations and expectations of Filipino young professionals in the context of domestic leisure travel.

Despite these existing studies, the literature still lacks a comprehensive examination of the motivations and expectations driving domestic leisure travel among Filipino young professionals. This research gap underscores the need for further empirical investigations that specifically target this demographic, considering their unique socio-cultural context, economic circumstances, and technological preferences. By addressing this gap, researchers can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Filipino young professionals' travel behavior and inform the development of tailored tourism strategies to meet their evolving needs and preferences.

Theoretical Framework

Push-Pull Theory

The push-pull theoretical framework, initially formulated by Heberle in 1938 to understand the causes of rural-urban migration, has found relevance beyond its original context. This theory has been adapted to explain not only human migration but also tourists' decisions when choosing destinations and the

experiences they seek to have. In this broader application, the push-pull framework sheds light on why tourists opt for specific destinations over others and the types of activities and experiences they desire during their visits.

Heberle's groundbreaking work highlighted that human migration involves a complex interplay of factors, encompassing both push and pull elements. Push factors, as Heberle identified, are conditions in the place of origin that compel individuals to seek new destinations. Similarly, pull factors represent the attractive qualities of the destination that draw individuals towards it.

In the context of tourism, these principles apply as tourists make their travel decisions. Push factors for tourists may include a desire to escape mundane routines, harsh weather conditions, or stressful environments in their home countries. They may be seeking relief from overcrowded cities, pollution, or other negative aspects of their daily lives. On the flip side, pull factors for tourists could encompass the allure of picturesque landscapes, cultural attractions, historical sites, unique cuisines, and recreational activities that a destination has to offer. The promise of relaxation, adventure, exploration, or spiritual fulfillment can act as powerful pull factors.

In essence, the push-pull framework offers a comprehensive lens through which to analyze tourists' personal motivations. Tourists are pushed to explore new destinations due to dissatisfaction or restlessness in their current environments while they are pulled towards specific locations by the promise of enriching experiences, adventures, and memorable encounters. This framework underscores the dynamic interplay of motivations and attractions that shape the tourism industry and guides destination marketing strategies to cater to tourists' desires and aspirations.

Conceptual Framework

In this research, the Push-Pull Theory serves as a valuable tool to look at the decision-making process of Filipino travelers regarding their choices for domestic leisure travel. This includes the type of experiences they seek and the activities they wish to engage in during their journeys, all of which collectively unveil their rationale and considerations for selecting specific destinations. The primary goal is to uncover the underlying personal motivations guiding these choices and to comprehend how past travel experiences shape their expectations for domestic leisure travel. Furthermore, the study aims to formulate a comprehensive set of marketing strategies and recommendations designed to promote domestic travel among Filipinos.

The Push-Pull Theory offers crucial insights into both push factors, driven the current motivations of a Filipino traveler, and pull factors, which represent the allure of destinations and the promised experiences. This theoretical framework enables an in-depth examination of why Filipinos might opt for certain domestic destinations over others and the specific activities and experiences they seek during their travels.

In essence, the application of the Push-Pull Theory provides a holistic perspective on the personal motivations of Filipino travelers and how these motivations intersect with expectations to influence their travel choices. This multifaceted understanding, combined with the subsequent development of tailored marketing strategies, aims to contribute to the promotion of domestic leisure travel in the Philippines, ultimately enhancing the travel experiences of Filipinos and bolstering the local tourism sector.
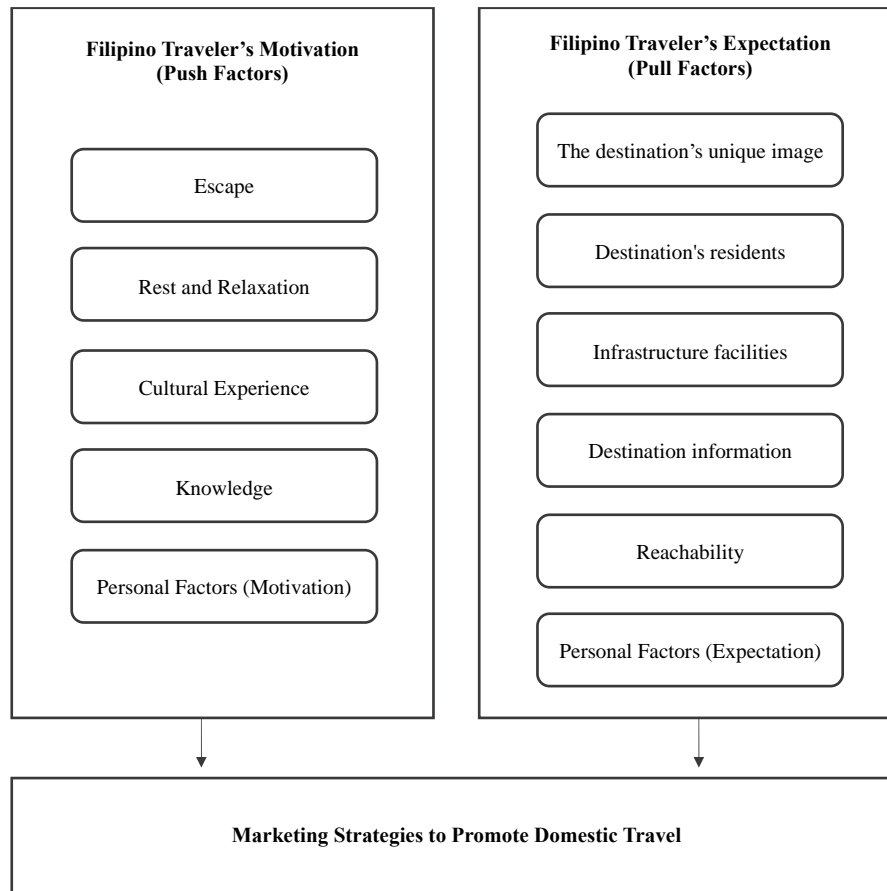
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Philosophical Underpinnings

Philosophy acts as a model or worldview for researchers, guiding them in the appropriate way and dictating the course of their study. It influences the research questions they ask, the analysis they conduct, and even the premise of the study itself Arbale & Mutisya (2024).

This study adopts an epistemological standpoint grounded in constructivism as the foundational philosophy. Epistemology, a fundamental branch of philosophy, explores how researchers perceive and collect information, seeking to establish the criteria for what constitutes valid knowledge (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2019). Constructivism offers a philosophical lens through which the complex issues of subjective interpretations and social phenomena under investigation are addressed. Rooted to the constructivist epistemological perspective, this study acknowledges that individuals construct knowledge through their own lived experiences, giving rise to subjective meanings associated with their actions and choices.

The constructivist philosophy is particularly relevant in understanding the motivations and expectations of Filipino young professionals in domestic leisure travel. This demographic's travel decisions are likely influenced by personal experiences, cultural factors, and individual perceptions of leisure and recreation. By using a constructivist approach, this study aimed to delve deeply into these personal and contextual factors, recognizing that each participant's narrative provides unique insights into their travel motivations and expectations. This philosophy guides the research design, data collection, and analysis, ensuring that the rich, nuanced understandings essential for comprehending the complexities of travel behavior in this data set are captured.

Assumption

An underlying assumption of this study is that individuals' subjective interpretations and experiences play a crucial role in shaping their decisions and behaviors, particularly in the context of domestic leisure travel preferences as Filipino young professionals. By embracing a constructivist epistemology, the research assumes that people's unique perspectives and the meanings they attach to their travel experiences are integral to understanding the decision-making process in this specific context. This assumption informs the research approach, emphasizing the significance of exploring these subjective realities to gain a comprehensive understanding of the evolving travel preferences among selected participants. Part of the assumption is that all factors identified in the framework are present in the narrative of the participants, ensuring that their experiences and perspectives are thoroughly captured and analyzed.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodologies and procedures utilized in this study. The following topics are discussed: research design, ethical considerations, research locale, sampling, instrumentation, data collection method, and data analysis strategy.

Research Design

This research employed a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing phenomenology, to investigate the factors influencing the purchase decision-making process of selected Filipinos when it came to domestic leisure travel in the new normal. By adopting a phenomenological perspective, this study aimed to delve deep into the subjective experiences, motivations, and preferences of the participants regarding domestic leisure travel.

Ethical Considerations

Despite the subject being predetermined, I ensured that participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Before conducting interviews or requesting relevant documentation, informed consent was obtained from all participants. This consent process involved providing detailed information about the study, including the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and risks involved. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any concerns before deciding to participate. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants' responses were strictly maintained throughout the study. Any personal information or data collected was treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for research purposes. Ethical considerations were of utmost importance, and ethical approval for this study was sought from the relevant research ethics board or committee. Adherence to ethical guidelines ensured the protection of participants' rights and well-being throughout the research process.

Research Locale

Ten (10) participants were individuals who resided in Metro Manila and the Southern Metro Manila area, including cities in Cavite and Laguna, Philippines during the period between March 2020 and January 2023. This criterion ensured that the participants have experienced domestic leisure travel within the specified time frame, considering both the broader Metro Manila region and the specific context of the southern area.

Research Participants

The researcher's first-hand exposure to the industry and well-traveled network were considered abundant data sources that the study utilized. Following Saldana's (2011) statement, a minimum of ten to twenty participants was crucial for credible findings. The selection of the ten (10) participants was deliberate, guided by the researcher's assumptions about their capacity as valuable data repositories aligned with the study's objectives.

The selection criteria for these participants were not arbitrary; rather, they were informed by the researcher's considered judgments regarding their potential contribution to the richness of the data. This involved a careful evaluation of each participant's qualifications, expertise, and attributes that aligned with the established parameters and criteria set forth in the research design.

In essence, the researcher proactively chose individuals who not only possessed relevant qualifications but also exhibited the potential to offer insights that aligned closely with the research's objectives. The selection process aimed to ensure that the chosen participants not only met the criteria but also enhanced the depth and quality of the data collected, thereby strengthening the overall validity and reliability of the research findings. Having said that, the following characteristics below were the necessary requirements that the participants had to possess.

1. Frequency of Domestic Leisure Travel. This criterion served as the primary filtering mechanism for identifying and selecting participants in the study. To ensure a robust selection, individuals had to have engaged in a minimum of five instances of domestic leisure travel within the last two years. This requirement ensured that participants had accumulated a sufficient range of experiences, enabling them to articulate their motivations and expectations as travelers effectively.

2. Age. This criterion functioned as the primary screening tool for participant identification in the study. A young professional was generally defined as an individual between the ages of 20 and 49 who was employed in a professional or white-collar occupation. Consequently, the age parameter for participant selection categorized individuals as young professionals, specifically those born between 1980 and 1997. This demographic served as the focal point for the study, embodying the sample characteristics the research aimed to investigate and analyze.

3. Employment. The participant selection process adhered to the employment criterion, allowing inclusion only for individuals continuously employed over the last two years up to the present day. This specific timeframe was deliberately chosen to guarantee that participants possessed a stable financial foundation, essential for engaging in activities like domestic leisure travel.

4. Class Status and Income. The class status and income criterion for participant selection specified that individuals should belong to the lower middle class or above socioeconomic category, with an average monthly income of Php 18,000 or higher. This selection criterion was chosen to focus on participants whose income, occupation, and lifestyle collectively reflected a socioeconomic status that could exert a significant influence on their choices concerning domestic leisure travel. By targeting this demographic, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how socioeconomic factors played a pivotal role in shaping motivations and preferences in domestic leisure travel.

5. Diversity of Characteristics. Consideration was given to a diverse set of characteristics, including gender, geographic location (specifically within Metro Manila and the Southern Metro Manila area, such as Cavite and Laguna), and a range of domestic travel preferences. This approach aimed to capture a wide spectrum of perspectives and experiences within the middle-class working population. By

ensuring diversity in these dimensions, the study enhanced both the depth and breadth of the data collected, providing a more comprehensive understanding.

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Location	Employement	Industry	Years of Working	Salary Range
E - Accountant	Female	28	Laguna	Full Time	Finance	5 - 7 Years	PHP 50,001 and above
J - Customer Service Officer	Female	26	Pasay	Full Time	Aviation	5 - 7 Years	PHP 25,001 - PHP 35,000
J - Multimedia Artist	Male	27	Laguna	Part-Time	Technology	5 - 7 Years	PHP 50,001 and above
J - Procurement Officer	Male	32	Mandaluyong	Full Time	Sustainability	7 - 10 Years	PHP 50,001 and above
K - Government Employee	Male	35	Quezon City	Full Time	Government	7 - 10 Years	PHP 50,001 and above
L - Founder, Non-Profit Organization	Male	30	Pasig	Part-Time	NGO	7 - 10 Years	PHP 50,001 and above
M - Assistant Professor	Male	33	Paranaque	Part-Time	Education	7 - 10 Years	PHP 25,001 - PHP 35,000
P - Writer	Male	29	Cavite	Part-Time	Creatives	5 - 7 Years	PHP 18,000 - PHP 25,000
S - Key Account Manager	Female	34	Pasay	Full Time	Aviation	7 - 10 Years	PHP 50,001 and above
Z - Marketing Head	Male	30	Alabang	Full Time	Food and Beverage	7 - 10 Years	PHP 50,001 and above

Table 1. Profile of Participants

Research Instrument

The interview format designed for this research study adopts a phenomenological approach, aimed at gaining a deep and insightful understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of ten (10) selected young Filipino professionals in the context of domestic leisure travel.

The interview process emphasizes open-ended questions and a meticulous follow-up protocol designed to elicit genuine and expansive responses from participants. Open-ended questions are essential in qualitative research as they allow participants to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words, leading to richer and more nuanced data. This methodology seeks to unveil a spectrum of perspectives and nuanced insights, capturing the diversity of participants' experiences and the complexity of their travel behaviors. The follow-up protocol involves actively listening to participants' responses and asking probing questions that encourage further elaboration, ensuring that the data collected is comprehensive and detailed. Maintaining a commitment to non-leading questions is crucial to fostering an unbiased platform for authentic discourse.

Non-leading questions are carefully worded to avoid suggesting specific answers, minimizing the risk of bias and allowing participants to share their genuine perspectives. This commitment to neutrality and openness is fundamental to the phenomenological approach, as it ensures that the participants' narratives are shared, and their experiences are accurately represented. Through this rigorous and thoughtful approach, the study aims to generate meaningful and impactful findings that contribute to the understanding of domestic leisure travel among the selected young Filipino professionals. This format has several key elements or components.

1. Profile of the Respondent. The presentation of response results includes a detailed respondent profile meeting the following criteria as well as presenting diverse characteristics outlining key attributes to effectively convey the following answers.
2. Opening Questions. The interview began with open-ended questions designed to create a comfortable and open dialogue between the researcher and the participant. An initial query invited participants to recount a memorable domestic leisure travel experience setting the stage for a personalized and participant-driven conversation.
3. Exploring Decision-Making. A significant portion of the interview focused on probing the factors that shaped participants' decision-making regarding domestic leisure travel.
4. Narrative and Description. Participants are encouraged to provide detailed narratives and descriptions of their travel experiences. This allowed for a comprehensive exploration of their journeys, including

destinations, motivations, challenges, and adaptations made in response to the evolving travel landscape.

5. <u>Reflective Insights</u>. Participants are invited to reflect on their past domestic travel experiences during and provide insights into how these experiences may have altered their future travel behavior and preferences. This segment allows for a forward-looking perspective.

6. <u>Closing Reflection</u>. The interviews concluded with an open-ended question, giving participants the opportunity to share any additional thoughts, reflections, or insights they deem relevant to their leisure travel experiences.

The interview format is designed to be flexible and participant-centered, allowing for natural and in-depth conversations. The goal is to uncover the rich experiences and perceptions held by selected data set, ultimately contributing to a phenomenological analysis that delves into the essence of their domestic leisure travel.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering is outlined in this section for my study. It consisted of three phases, each with specific objectives and activities.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

- Identified and contacted participants who were rich data sources and met the established criteria, including age, employment status, socioeconomic status, frequency of domestic leisure travel, and willingness to discuss safety risk perception

- Provided participants with an informed consent form detailing the purpose, objectives, and ethical considerations of the study, helping ensure that participants had the option to ask questions and provided written consent to participate.

Scheduling and Preparation

- Scheduled individual interviews at a mutually convenient time and location, ensuring privacy and a comfortable environment conducive to open discussion.

- Prepared interview questions based on the research objectives and the interview format designed for the study.

Conducting Phenomenological Interviews

- Conducted one-on-one, in-depth phenomenological interviews with each participant, guided by the prepared interview questions

- Encouraged participants to share their experiences, emotions, perceptions, and decision-making processes related to domestic leisure travel

- Allowed participants to express their thoughts freely and encouraged elaboration on their responses

- Recorded the interviews, with the participants' consent, to ensure accuracy in capturing their narratives and insights

Data Management

- Transcribed the interview recordings into written transcripts, ensuring anonymity by using pseudonyms or participant codes

- Organized and securely stored the interview transcripts and any related materials in compliance with data protection regulations

Data Analysis

- Utilized qualitative data analysis manual coding techniques to analyze the interview transcripts and analyzed deductivel
- Applied a phenomenological analysis approach to identify themes, patterns, and meaningful insights within the data
- Maintained rigor in the analysis process by involving multiple researchers or employing techniques such as member checking to enhance the credibility of findings
- Validated the credibility of the analysis

Ethical Considerations

- Maintained ethical standards throughout the data gathering procedure, ensuring participant confidentiality, informed consent, and respectful treatment
- Addressed any ethical concerns or questions raised by participants during or after the interviews

Reporting and Findings

- Summarized the findings of the phenomenological analysis in a comprehensive research report
- Presented the results in a manner that aligned with the research objectives and showcased the rich, nuanced insights gained from participants' narratives
- Maintained participant confidentiality by using pseudonyms and avoiding any identifiable information This data gathering procedure adhered to the phenomenological approach, aiming to collect rich, experiential data from selected graduate student participants to achieve a comprehensive analysis of the domestic leisure travel motivations and expectations.

Data Collection Process

Interview Administration

The interviews for this study were conducted either online using video conferencing platforms or in real life via sit-down meetings, ensuring accessibility, safety, and convenience for participants, depending on the data sample preference. After scheduling sessions with eligible participants, the interview process commenced with an explanation of the study's purpose, followed by guided consent. Utilizing a structured interview format with open-ended questions encouraged participants to share their experiences centered on motivation and expectations related to domestic leisure travel. The interviews were recorded with participants' consent for accurate data capture, and post-interview debriefing provided an opportunity for questions or additional input. Transcripts of the interviews were generated and analyzed using qualitative techniques to derive insights into participants' travel decision-making and perceptions. Ultimately, the research findings were reported and disseminated to contribute to academic discourse on the subject.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the probing questions in the survey responses. This approach involved identifying and categorizing recurring themes, patterns, and meanings within the participants' narratives and utilized the Colaizzi method of data analysis.

The Colaizzi method, developed by Colaizzi (Morrow, Rodriguez, & King, 2015), is considered rigorous and robust, ensuring the credibility and reliability of qualitative research results. This method, specifically designed for the phenomenological approach, involves multiple levels of analysis, aligning with Creswell's (2013) perspective. Researchers employing a descriptive phenomenological approach benefited

from using this method as it provided a clear and logical process for exploring the fundamental structure of an experience.

The first phase of the Colaizzi method involved organizing and preparing the data for analysis. This included capturing data in various recorded forms such as scanned materials, interview transcriptions, field notes, and cataloguing visual materials. Next, the researcher examined and scrutinized the general ideas expressed by the participants, considering the overall implications of the collected data. The coding stage followed, where the researcher generated descriptions and emerging themes from the data. It is important to note that the interpretation and presentation of the study were not conducted during this part of the analysis.

By following the Colaizzi method, the researcher systematically analyzed data, uncovered emergent themes, and represented them accurately in the study. This approach enhanced the rigor and coherence of the qualitative research process, ultimately contributing to the validity and reliability of the research findings. contributing to the depth and reliability of the study's findings as stated in the table below.

Table 2. Steps in Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method
(Morrow, Rodriquez and King, 2015)

Steps	Description
1. Familiarization	The researcher familiarizes him or herself with the data, by reading through all the participant accounts several times
Identifying significant statements	The researcher identifies all statements in the accounts that are of direct relevance to the phenomenon under investigation
3. Formulating meanings	The researcher identifies meanings relevant to the phenomenon that arise from a careful consideration of the significant statements. The researcher must reflexively "bracket" his or her pre-suppositions to stick closely to the phenomenon as experienced.
4. Clustering themes	The researcher clusters the identified meanings into themes that are common across all accounts. Again, bracketing of pre-suppositions is crucial, especially to avoid any potential influence of existing theory.
Developing an exhaustive description	The researcher writes a full and inclusive description of the phenomenon, incorporating all the themes produced at step 4.

Steps	Description
Producing the fundamental structure	The researcher condenses the exhaustive description down to a short, dense statement that captures just those aspects deemed to be essential to the structure of the phenomenon.
7. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure	The researcher returns the fundamental structure statement to all participants (or sometimes a subsample in larger studies) to ask whether it captures their experience. He or she may go back and modify earlier steps in the analysis in the light of this feedback,

Thematic Analysis and Coding Approaches

Coding was a heuristic. It was a method of discovery to the meanings of individual sections of data. These codes functioned as a way of patterning, classifying, and later reorganizing each datum into emergent categories for further analysis (Saldana, 2011). Different types of codes existed for different types of genres and analytic approaches, but this research utilized descriptive coding.

Descriptive coding was primarily nouns that simply summarized the topic of a datum (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, they stated that this coding approach was particularly useful when different types of data were gathered for one study, such as interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and documents. Descriptive codes not only helped categorize but also indexed the data corpus' basic contents for further analytic work. This study generated codes derived from motivation and expectation factors outlined in the research's theoretical framework. To meticulously articulate these factors, dedicated tables were used for each factor or code related to said factors based on the exact verbatim, or in some cases translated transcription of the narratives of the data source. In instances where statements and narratives extended beyond the predetermined factors, a sub-category was discerned and categorized to ensure the inclusion of all pertinent data narratives.

The presentation was structured into two distinct segments, each delving into the intricate aspects of a young professional's motivations and expectations. The first segment unraveled the motivations (push factors), encapsulating elements such as seeking escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experience, knowledge, and additional personal factors that extended beyond the predefined criteria. Similarly, the second segment shed light on expectations (pull factors), showing components such as the destination's distinctive image, destination's residents, infrastructure, destination information, ease of reach, and other personal factors transcending the predefined criteria.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter comprehensively explored and analyzed the findings derived from the in-depth interview conducted by the researcher. This data collection method effectively solicited and documented, in their own words, a participant's perspectives, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their

personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives (Saldana, 2011). The data collected was presented in a table format, quantified by the number of occurrences, and strategically designed to encapsulate the essence of the coded excerpts obtained from the complete transcribed interview recordings (Appendix C). These coded segments were intricately linked to the factors identified in the theoretical framework, providing a structured framework that distinctly showed their correlation with the overarching research questions and objectives.

This approach enhanced the transparency of the research process and served as a robust means of illustrating the interconnectedness between the empirical data gathered and the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The utilization of a table as a visual aid added clarity, facilitating a more accessible comprehension of the intricate relationships observed within the in-depth interview results.

Moreover, this tabular presentation acted as a conduit for conveying the raw data and served as a foundation for subsequent discussions and interpretations in the result discussion. By organizing the codes based on the factors identified in the theoretical framework of the study, it sets the stage for a nuanced exploration of the implications of these findings on the broader research objectives.

RQ1: What motivates selected young professional Filipino travelers to explore domestic leisure travel destinations, specifically in terms of seeking escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experiences, knowledge, and personal motivations?

The motivation to travel is a nuanced phenomenon shaped by a diverse array of internal factors. Individuals are propelled by their psychological needs, wants, and desires, which act as distinct driver guiding their tourism choices. These internal motivators are intricately intertwined with individual attitudes and personalities (Heitmann, 2011). Additionally, Duong et al. (2023) affirm these factors in tourists' motivations, a widely acknowledged perspective in tourism research, acting as the cornerstone of this study.

Built upon the theoretical framework presented in this study, the narratives about the experiences in domestic leisure travel of the selected ten young Filipino professionals are analyzed and explored under the lens of the predetermined factors in this study, namely seeking escape, rest and relaxation, cultural experiences, knowledge, and personal motivations. In discussing the following findings of the study, the results not only validated the presence of said factors but also unveiled additional subthemes that will be further discussed comprehensively below. These emergent themes provide further information, enriching our understanding and contextualizing the motivations behind travel decisions among the selected participants.

Participant Code	Escape	Rest and Relaxation	Cultural Experience	Knowledge	Motivation
E - Accountant	x	x			x
J - Customer Service Officer	x	x		x	x
J - Multimedia Artist		x		x	x
J - Procurement Officer		x		x	x
K - Government Employee		x			x
L - Founder, Non-Profit Organization	x	x	x	x	x
M - Assistant Professor				x	x
P - Writer	x		x	x	x
S - Key Account Manager		x	x		x
Z - Marketing Head			x	x	x
No. of Participants Answered	40%	70%	40%	70%	100%

Table 3. Summary of Response for Push Factors (Personal Motivation)

Escape

The concept of *"Escape,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), involves seeking relief from daily routines and pressures while remaining within one's current location. This pursuit encompasses various activities such as engaging in recreational activities, immersing oneself in local entertainment, or exploring new environments within the country. Four (4) participants provided insights into their experiences of escape through domestic travel generating a total of six (6) statements illustrating the diverse ways individuals find mental and emotional relief from their everyday lives.

Participant E - Accountant highlighted the practicality of short, frequent escapes, stating, *"I took it upon myself to visit places when I was free on weekends."* This approach underscored the importance of regular, brief getaways to quickly alleviate the mental and emotional burdens of daily responsibilities, offering a way to recharge and break the monotony of everyday life without extensive planning or long absences from work. Similarly, Participant J - Customer Service Officer found escape in experiencing different environments and lifestyles, enjoying the contrast between the fast-paced life in Metro Manila and slower, more relaxed locales. Participant J appreciated the opportunity to enjoy different food and a laid-back life, noting that domestic travel provided a refreshing change from the high-pressure environment of their home city, helping to reduce stress and enhance overall well-being.

Interestingly, beyond escaping the monotony and routine of daily life at work and in the city, Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder found value in the opportunity to escape by having anonymity and authenticity that travel offers. Participant L expressed a desire to *"breathe and have the sense that nobody knows me,"* highlighting the freedom to be oneself without societal expectations. This anonymity allowed for genuine interactions and personal growth, fostering a deeper sense of escape. Participant L enjoyed *"getting to know the locals and learning more about the place without pressuring myself or pretending to be someone I'm not,"* finding joy in authentic travel experiences that did not require conforming to certain roles or appearances. Similarly, Participant P, a writer, emphasized the need for extended breaks, expressing a desire to prolong the feeling of respite by not going home immediately.

Synthesizing the following statements, it can be concluded that travel emerged as a powerful means to achieve a sense of personal freedom for the participants as they described how venturing into new territories allowed them to temporarily escape the routines and responsibilities of daily life, providing moments of spontaneity and self-discovery. This is aligned with the existing literature where Duong et al. (2023) identified escaping from routine life and its demands as the main scale for identifying motivations for why people travel.

The act of exploration, as described here, resonates with existing literature studies on the psychological benefits of travel and leisure activities. Research by Huang and Chen (2017) highlights how engaging in exploratory behaviors can serve as a means of psychological escape from daily stressors and routine, fostering a sense of freedom and rejuvenation. Furthermore, studies by Pearce & Lee. (2019) underscore the role of travel in facilitating cultural immersion and broadening one's perspective, which aligns with the participants' sentiments regarding the value of experiencing unfamiliar cultures and environments. This contrast between urban life and leisure travel echoes findings from urban sociology literature, such as the work of Giddens (1991), who explores the dichotomy between the fast-paced, highly structured nature of urban environments and the desire for more spontaneous, liberating experiences often sought in leisure pursuits.

Central to these narratives is also the yearning for anonymity and liberation from societal expectations and roles. Participants expressed a deep-seated desire to escape the confines of societal norms, seeking

solace in the anonymity of unfamiliar places where they could shed their figurative *"masks"* and embrace their true selves without fear of judgment or constraints. The yearning for anonymity aligns with existing research on the psychological benefits of travel, which emphasizes the opportunity for individuals to explore different facets of their identity and engage in self-reflection away from the scrutiny of familiar social circles (Huang & Hsu, 2009).

This also underscores the transformative potential of travel as a means of breaking free from ingrained patterns of behavior and embracing a sense of liberation from external pressures. Such aspirations for personal autonomy and self-expression through travel echo findings from studies on the motivations of tourists, which highlight the intrinsic desire for self-actualization and personal growth as driving forces behind travel behavior (Fisher, 2014).

In conclusion, personal freedom underscore the profound impact of travel as a motivation for self-discovery and liberation. Through the act of exploration, participants found refuge from the demands of daily life, embraced their true selves without fear of judgment, and discovered a newfound sense of emotional and psychological freedom. These findings highlight the transformative power of travel in providing individuals with the opportunity to break free from societal constraints and cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Rest and Relaxation

The concept of *"Rest and Relaxation,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), encompasses a wide range of experiences—from the freedom to pursue personal interests to engaging in exhilarating activities and enjoying periods of physical rejuvenation, relaxation, and mental repose. Seven (7) participants provided insights into their experiences of rest and relaxation through domestic travel, generating a total of 17 statements illustrating the diverse ways by which individuals find perceived rest and relaxation in travel.

Participants described a variety of approaches to relaxation, highlighting both passive and active forms of leisure. Participant S - Key Account Manager enjoyed fewer active forms of relaxation like lying on the sand or getting massages, emphasizing the need for physical comfort and tranquility. They noted, *"There were times that I preferred to go to luxury places... It wasn't really more of an adventure but sometimes, with age, we needed to rest."* Participant E - Accountant viewed travel as essential for mental respite, stating, *"I took it as a time off from work. I didn't want to spend my weekends in the condo just sitting around or just hanging out, but not away from the bustling city."* Similarly, Participant J - Customer Service Officer and Participant J - Procurement Officer found rejuvenation in returning to their province, enjoying simple pleasures like beach bumming, watching sunsets, and relaxing with cocktails, aiming to *"really vacation as much as possible."*

Additionally, some participants emphasized the calming effects of specific activities and environments. Participant K - Government Employee valued both active and passive relaxation, finding scuba diving appealing for its calmness and tranquility underwater, and enjoying chill time on the beach afterward. They stated, *"It was the feeling of relaxation that was important."* Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder and Participant J - Multimedia Artist both appreciated laid-back environments like Mati and Boracay, where there was *"no pressure"* and one could simply *"chill on the beach."* These insights collectively highlighted how domestic travel provided essential opportunities for achieving mental peace and physical rejuvenation through a variety of activities and settings.

These varied experiences of rest and relaxation through domestic travel underscore the multifaceted nature of leisure. Whether through passive activities like lounging on the beach, engaging in luxurious treatments

like massages, or finding tranquility in active pursuits like scuba diving, the participants highlight the importance of achieving peace of mind and bodily tranquility. This holistic approach to rest and relaxation illustrates how domestic travel can provide essential opportunities for mental and physical rejuvenation, enhancing overall well-being.

Synthesizing the aforementioned statements shows that inclination towards relaxation over adventure emerges as a prominent theme among individuals seeking leisurely travel experiences. The key findings make it evident that their preference for relaxation extends beyond mere avoidance of high-energy activities like surfing. Rather, participants express a deliberate choice for tranquility and rejuvenation, often opting for luxury accommodations and spa treatments to enhance their relaxation experience. Laid-back destinations with leisurely activities are favored, providing the perfect backdrop for unwinding and escaping the stresses of everyday life.

This inclination toward relaxation aligns with previous research findings. For example, a study by Pearce and Lee (2019) found that travelers increasingly prioritize relaxation and rejuvenation over adventure-seeking behaviors. This can be seen in the incorporation of spa visits and massages as an integral part of one's travel itinerary. Regardless of group size or destination, participants emphasize the importance of indulging in spa treatments to enhance their overall travel experience. Massages, in particular, are sought after as a means of relaxation and rejuvenation, with participants actively seeking out massage services in various locations to unwind and de-stress. The significance of spa experiences in leisure travel is well-documented in scholarly literature. For instance, Smith and Diekmann (2017) noted the increasing popularity of spa tourism as a form of leisure activity, highlighting its therapeutic benefits for both physical and mental well-being.

Participants also described travel as a means of escaping the rigors of daily life, returning to work feeling refreshed and revitalized. Many chose to extend their business trips to spend additional time relaxing at their destinations, further emphasizing the therapeutic value of leisurely travel experiences. The notion of travel as a means of escape and rejuvenation is a recurrent theme in leisure travel literature. For example, Crompton and McKay (2017) highlighted the role of travel in providing temporary relief from stress and routine obligations, contributing to overall well-being and life satisfaction. Similarly, chill beach experiences also emerged as particularly appealing to travelers seeking relaxation. The participants expressed a deep appreciation for the tranquility of beach environments, engaging in low-key activities such as sunbathing, sunset watching, and leisurely dining. Destinations that offer a laid-back atmosphere without pressure to participate in organized activities are highly valued, allowing travelers to unwind at their own pace and embrace the serenity of coastal surroundings.

The allure of beach destinations for relaxation is well-documented in academic literature. Buckley (2022) notes that research evidence indicates that both nature and adventure tourism contribute to positive mental health given that enjoyment promotes wellbeing. Additionally, Severin, et al. (2022) indicated that coast brings various positive emotional states accompanied with adaptive emotion regulating strategies that may facilitate coping with difficult thoughts and feelings. This is also supported by Gesler (2003), stating the relationship between the coast and well-being can be set within the concept of therapeutic landscapes, defined by a landscape where physical and built environments, social conditions, and human perceptions combine to produce an atmosphere which is conducive to healing.

Cultural Experience

The concept of *"Cultural Experience,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), encompasses opportunities for immersive encounters with diverse customs, traditions, and ways of life distinct from

one's own. This includes observing and engaging with the lifestyles of others, interacting with diverse groups, and gaining firsthand experiences with new cultures and societies. Cultural experience motivates individuals to explore places rich in traditions, regional cuisines, festivals, and various cultural elements. Four (4) participants provided twelve (12) statements that illustrate their experiences of cultural immersion through domestic travel.

Participants highlighted diverse aspects of cultural experiences that emphasized both food and religious traditions. Participant S - Key Account Manager, mentioned, *"We ate with locals, we went where the locals went,"* underscoring the importance of engaging directly with the culture through local food. They avoided fast food chains, stating, *"If we weren't eating local food when we went to a place, it wasn't for me."* Similarly, Participant Z - Marketing Head, integrated culinary exploration with religious pilgrimages, visiting places where the patron saint is Mama Mary and noting, *"The main motivations for these trips were food and pilgrimage."* Participant Z recalled trips to Simala, Cebu and Garin Farm, Iloilo for their religious significance and cultural immersion through food and local traditions, such as the pandan-packaged delicacies in Majayjay, Laguna.

Other participants focused on the broader cultural landscape and heritage. Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder was motivated by a desire to understand the cultural fabric of Mindanao, appreciating the thriving local arts in Bukidnon and the visible tribal patterns in the municipality. They expressed admiration for efforts to preserve and showcase local culture, highlighting practices unique to regions like Bukidnon and Marawi, where the Moro culture is prominent. Participant P - Writer emphasized exploring cultural heritage sites, noting that their trips often included visits to churches, cultural sites, and tourist destinations, providing a deeper understanding of the region's cultural heritage.

These varied experiences of cultural immersion through domestic travel underscore the multifaceted nature of cultural experiences. Participants described how engaging with local food, religious traditions, and regional practices provides a profound connection to the places they visit. This aligns with Duong et al. (2023) in identifying cultural experience as a primary motivation for travel, emphasizing the value of firsthand encounters with diverse ways of life. The act of exploring cultural heritage sites and participating in local traditions enriches the travelers' understanding of different societies, contributing to a broader perspective and deeper appreciation of cultural diversity.

From these statements, it is evident that cultural preservation plays a pivotal role in destination attractiveness and participant satisfaction, underscoring the appeal of authentic cultural experiences and the desire to engage with diverse societies and lifestyles. Studies have consistently demonstrated this. Yoon and Uysal (2005) stated that destinations boasting rich cultural heritage and authenticity are perceived as more desirable by tourists, thereby enhancing their overall satisfaction and likelihood of return visits. This perspective resonates with Urry's (2007) research that underscores the significance of cultural immersion in travel endeavors. Urry highlights the deep value of engaging with diverse cultural landscapes, accentuating the significance of experiencing and understanding different cultural narratives. In parallel, Smith's (2009) scholarly endeavor states the importance of cultural appreciation in tourism. Smith emphasizes the enriching potential of engaging with various cultural traditions, underscoring the role of such encounters in fostering understanding, empathy, and appreciation among tourists. Together, these insights form a compelling argument highlighting the centrality of cultural preservation in enhancing destination attractiveness and participant satisfaction. They collectively advocate for the promotion and safeguarding of diverse cultural heritages as pivotal components of the tourism experience.

Moreover, the inclination of the participants to avoid mainstream tourist attractions in favor of genuine cultural immersion resonates with the principles of alternative tourism. Research conducted by Richards & Hall (2000) indicates that advocating for sustainable travel experiences, which prioritize cultural, environmental, and social considerations, often leads to alternative tourism. This form of tourism encourages travelers to seek more authentic, off-the-beaten-path experiences rather than traditional mass tourism destinations. This preference closely aligns with experiential tourism, emphasizing the pursuit of authentic, immersive experiences that foster meaningful connections with local cultures (Kim & Jamal, 2007).

These insights offer a profound understanding of contemporary travel preferences, highlighting the booming significance of cultural immersion and authenticity as primary drivers. In an era dominated by mass tourism and commodified experiences, travelers increasingly yearn for genuine encounters that resonate on a personal level. Authentic cultural experiences provide a departure from the standardized offerings of mainstream tourism, affording travelers the opportunity to create lasting memories rooted in genuine human connections and authentic cultural exchanges.

Knowledge

The concept of *"Knowledge,"* as Duong et al. (2023) defined, signifies experiencing cultures that differ from an individual's own. This involves immersing oneself in the customs, traditions, and practices of diverse societies, providing a firsthand understanding of their unique way of life. This factor focuses on how participants seek enrichment and personal growth. As individuals travel to various destinations, they engage in a process of continuous learning, absorbing insights from each place's cultures, histories, and landscapes. The need to accumulate understanding serves to broaden travelers' perspectives, fostering intellectual stimulation, and contributing to overall well-being. Whether delving into the intricacies of local traditions, exploring historical sites, or immersing themselves in natural wonders, travelers find fulfillment in expanding their knowledge and deepening their appreciation for the world around them. Seven (7) participants generated a statement that falls under this category, resulting in a total of eleven (11) statements.

Participants described various ways in which they gained knowledge and personal growth through travel. Participant J - Customer Service Officer highlighted the importance of local insights, stating, *"When you talked to the people who are living there, they said it's very safe here. It's their place, they know the place better than what the media is trying to portray."* This sentiment was echoed by Participant J - Procurement Officer, who valued the life lessons learned from interacting with locals.*" The experiences you gained from those travels, especially when you got to talk to other people, that's what you really got. Life lessons, you always learned something,"* Participant J said. These interactions provided travelers with a deeper understanding of local cultures and realities, challenging preconceived notions, and broadening their perspectives. Participant M - Assistant Professor mentioned learning about the history of Davao through the Balay Davaoeño, enhancing their understanding of the region's heritage. Participant Z - Marketing Head noted the striking difference in how pandan plants were perceived in different locales, providing a memorable and educational experience: *"The little things that you noticed around that you're not familiar with or something new to you, gave an awesome experience because I didn't see them every day."*

Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder reflected on the self-discovery and understanding gained through travel, expressing a desire to *"discover myself more through the places and what are the things that I would discover just in case I would go to these places."* They added, *"Traveling, for me personally, was really about trying to understand and accept that the world is both bigger and small at the same*

time," highlighting the dual nature of travel as both an external and internal journey. Additionally, Participant P - Writer enjoyed discovering small, recommended restaurants and unique dining experiences, noting that these hidden gems provided a richer understanding of local cultures. Participant J - Multimedia Artist described the excitement of experiencing new environments and the unique knowledge gained from such experiences. These insights collectively underscored the importance of travel in providing opportunities for intellectual stimulation, personal growth, and a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultures and landscapes that make up the world.

The synthesis of various responses highlights a consistent trend recognizing travel as a catalyst for personal development and broadening perspectives. This sentiment is echoed in existing research by Buckley and Witt (2010), who stated that travel experiences facilitate cognitive growth and enhance intercultural understanding. This study suggests, in the context of travel, cognitive growth and that experiences gained during journeys stimulate mental faculties. This could include problem-solving skills developed while navigating unfamiliar environments, adaptability cultivated through encountering different cultures, and enhanced creativity sparked by exposure to new perspectives.

Furthermore, subthemes that emerged, such as the importance of cultural immersion and experiential learning, resonate with findings from Kim and Jamal (2007), underscoring the pivotal role of cultural experiences in shaping travelers' perceptions. Additionally, research by Cohen (2014) emphasizes the transformative potential of travel experiences in fostering self-awareness and personal growth. Richards and Wilson (2004) also state interactions with diverse people and exposure to different ways of life lead to valuable life lessons and foster self-awareness.

Moreover, participants emphasized the profound impact of interactions with locals during travel experiences, highlighting the unique learning opportunities that arise from engaging with individuals from different backgrounds. This direct engagement fosters connections across cultural divides, promoting empathy and understanding. Cohen (2014) similarly underscores the transformative potential of such encounters, arguing that they enable individuals to navigate cultural differences, leading to personal growth and enhanced cultural sensitivity. Pearce and Packer (2013) further also support this notion by highlighting the reciprocal nature of interactions between tourists and hosts, suggesting that these exchanges contribute to cross-cultural learning and the preservation of local cultures.

Additionally, the results also highlight the transformative power of firsthand experiences in shaping perceptions of local communities, particularly in contrast to media portrayals. Participants emphasized that interacting directly with locals provided a more nuanced understanding and challenged assumptions propagated by the media. This aligns with research indicating that direct interactions lead to more positive attitudes and reduced reliance on media stereotypes (Johnson et al., 2018). Furthermore, Smith and Jones (2019) suggest that individuals tend to overestimate media accuracy, particularly in contexts involving unfamiliar cultures, emphasizing the importance of personal engagement in fostering empathy and challenging biases.

Personal Factors (Motivation)

The concept of *"Personal Factors,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), signifies experiencing cultures that differ from an individual's own. These factors encompass a range of individual inclinations and preferences that serve as compelling motivations for travelers. Rooted in innate human desires, such factors drive individuals to embark on journeys characterized by exploration, continuous learning, and meaningful connections with loved ones. Whether seeking to uncover new destinations, immerse oneself in diverse cultures, or strengthen familial bonds, these intrinsic motivations shape the subjective nature of

travel experiences, guiding individuals towards fulfilling and personally enriching leisure pursuits. Note that all participants gave personal factors as motivations for their travel, generating 51 statements. This makes it the highest push factor and second highest factor overall.

Participants frequently mentioned relationships as a primary motivation for travel. Participant S - Key Account Manager shared that their travel plans often involve friends, stating, *"Every weekend of the month we usually set one once a month to go to some place, just to meet everyone there."* Similarly, Participant E - Accountant mentioned traveling with friends to various destinations. Family ties were also a significant factor, with Participant J - Customer Service Officer traveling to reconnect with family and maintain cultural roots. This sentiment was echoed by Participant Z - Marketing Head, who emphasized bonding with their mother during trips to new and familiar places. Participant K - Government Employee mentioned traveling with family for traditional annual trips and combining travel with attending weddings. Participant J - Multimedia Artist and Participant P - Writer also highlighted family gatherings and special occasions as key travel motivations.

Many participants cited self-fulfillment and personal goals as driving forces behind their travels. Participant S - Key Account Manager mentioned a goal to visit all provinces in the Philippines and a preference for non-touristy experiences. Participant E - Accountant expressed a desire to visit new places as a personal goal, planning trips independently. Participant J - Multimedia Artist highlighted the importance of alone time and exploring different beaches nationwide. Similarly, Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder mentioned traveling with the intention of self-discovery. Participants often described travel as a means to escape a stagnant lifestyle, with Participant J - Customer Service Officer stating, *"I don't want to have a stagnant lifestyle. Like it's just me and work and I don't have anything to share with."*

Hobbies and interests also played a crucial role in motivating travel. Participant S - Key Account Manager enjoyed car camping, often choosing destinations based on this activity. Participant J - Customer Service Officer mentioned hiking, camping, and farming as regular weekend activities. Participant K - Government Employee cited freediving and scuba diving as major travel motivations. These hobbies provided a source of adventure and enjoyment, driving participants to explore various locations. Additionally, participants like Participant M - Assistant Professor combined work with leisure, extending business trips to include personal exploration and enjoyment. Participant M shared, *"One travel I went to recently was in Iloilo for a conference. Of course, that conference was only for two days. I was there for five days. So the rest was for leisure,"* highlighting how they strategically extend work trips to maximize their travel experiences.

Synthesizing the participants' statements, personal motivations for travel encompass a diverse array of interests and preferences, reflecting individuals' unique passions and pursuits. Through interviews with the participants, driven by various subjective personal factors, several key themes emerge. Central to these narratives is a desire for activities that align with their existing hobbies and interests, fostering social connections and shared experiences among friends. Larsen (2006) explained that daily habits and norms greatly influence tourism activities wherein conventional tourism often involves enjoyable interaction with fellow travelers, who are usually family and friends. However, increasingly, tourism is about visiting friends and family who live in different locations. This suggests that long-distance relationships are common and it's more practical to travel to meet loved ones, given that many destinations are now easily and affordably accessible.

Additionally, adventure and outdoor exploration, particularly involving bodies of water and natural resources, also emerged as prominent themes, reflecting a deep-seated appreciation for nature and the thrill of exploration. Researchers suggest that adventure tourism activities fulfill tourists' desires by offering exceptional and exhilarating experiences (Sato et al., 2018. Similarly, a local study in Ilijan, Batangas City, revealed that the inhabitants believe the environmental impact of the ecotourism industry in their area could aid in preserving marine biodiversity. The locals are more conscious of its economic effects and understand that this ecotourism industry can assist the local inhabitants or the business owners in generating more revenue. The socio-cultural effects can benefit both the local inhabitants and the tourists by enhancing their quality-of-life experiences (Aguila & Ragot, 2014).

Moreover, cultural and religious immersion through pilgrimage sites is another significant motivator for the participants, who seek to deepen their understanding of diverse cultural traditions and spiritual practices. According to Gupta et al. (2023), there has been a recent shift in the perspective on pilgrimage, viewing it through the scope of tourism. This new approach examines its political, cultural, behavioral, economic, and geographical effects. Similarly, Vijayanand (2012) demonstrates that the spectrum of visitors is broad, ranging from devout religious pilgrims to *"traditional"* pilgrim-tourists and even secular tourists. The research underscores the growing overlap between traditional pilgrimage and modern tourism, which share many similarities. In essence, it highlights the widening interconnection between sacred places, society, politics, ideology, and culture.

Moreover, results show that word-of-mouth recommendations play a crucial role in shaping travel itineraries, reflecting a preference for trusted sources and personal endorsements. There are studies in travel research that consistently highlight the significance of word-of-mouth information sources in the decision-making process of travelers wherein friends and relatives have been recognized as natural influencers in shaping perceptions, and it has been emphasized that this form of word-of-mouth information is among the most trusted sources when it comes to selecting a destination. According to the study of Mendez et al., (2013) a greater number of respondents obtained information from friends and family about trips rather than other tourists via the internet. Furthermore, respondents who use word-of-mouth as a source of information have higher levels of income and tend to visit friends and family showing that recommendations of friends, family, and acquaintances affects tourist behavior to a larger degree than communication with other users.

RQ2: What expectations do select young professional Filipino travelers have when engaging in domestic leisure travel, considering factors such as the destination's distinctive image, destination's residents, infrastructure, information accessibility, and ease of reach, and other personal expectations?

Pull expectations, as identified in the literature, serve as external stimuli that exert influence on travelers' destination choices, guiding their decisions regarding "where to go" (John, 2016). These are external factors or stimuli that attract individuals to specific destinations, influencing their decision-making process regarding where to travel. These motivations are typically related to the characteristics or features of a destination that appeal to travelers and encourage them to select one location over another.

Drawing from the theoretical framework outlined in this study, the narratives detailing the domestic leisure travel experiences of 10 chosen young Filipino professionals are meticulously scrutinized and elucidated through the lens of predefined pull factors, namely the destination's distinctive image, destination's residents, infrastructure, information accessibility, and ease of reach, and other personal expectations.

Upon examination of the study's findings, it becomes evident that not only do these factors hold significance as anticipated, but they also reveal additional nuanced subthemes that warrant thorough exploration. These emergent themes contribute valuable insights, augmenting our comprehension and contextualizing the underlying motivations steering travel choices among the participants under scrutiny.

Table 4. Summary of Response for Pull Factors (Personal Expectations)

Participant Code	Destination's Unique Image	Destination's Residents	Infrastructure Facilities	Destination Information	Reachability	Expectation
E - Accountant	x	x	x	x	x	
J - Customer Service Officer	x	x	x	x	x	x
J - Multimedia Artist	x				x	
J - Procurement Officer	x		x	x	x	x
K - Government Employee			x		x	x
L - Founder, Non-Profit Organization	x	x	x	x		x
M - Assistant Professor	x		x	x	x	
P - Writer	x				x	x
S - Key Account Manager	x	x	x	x		
Z - Marketing Head	x		x		x	
No. of Participants Answered	90%	40%	80%	60%	80%	50%

Destination's Distinctive Image

The concept of *"Destination's Distinctive Image,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), refers to an individual's drive to embark on journeys drawn by the allure of experiencing the essence of a location characterized by its indigenous culture, traditional customs, vibrant festivals, diverse natural elements, delightful local cuisine, pristine environment, robust security measures, or any specific experiences that are exclusive to a place. Such distinctive attributes not only shape the identity of a destination but also contribute to the formation of positive and lasting impressions, enticing both residents and visitors to explore and immerse themselves in the enriching tapestry of experiences offered. It is worth noting that all participants gave statements under this category, generating the highest number of responses for both push and pull factors with a total of 60 statements.

Participants described various unique aspects that drew them to different destinations. Participant S - Key Account Manager highlighted outdoor activities as a primary attraction, mentioning, *"We went to Cagayan de Oro just for the water rafting, and Davao Oriental for the falls."* They appreciated the hospitality in Davao, noting that despite some negative media portrayals, *"people are friendly"* and the local experience was positive. Participant E - Accountant shared a similar sentiment, discussing island hopping and exploring natural wonders like the underground river in Puerto Princesa and the serene environment of El Nido, describing it as a *"really serene"* experience. Participant J - Customer Service Officer emphasized the exceptional seafood in Negros Occidental, describing it as *"seafood heaven"* and a core part of the region's food identity, alongside exploring mountainous areas and less touristy provinces.

Other participants focused on cultural and historical experiences. Participant M - Assistant Professor mentioned the thrill of visiting places known for specific attractions, such as the mangoes in Guimaras, surfing in La Union, and the unique charm of Taal Volcano. They appreciated the blend of suburban and green environments in places like Antipolo, which offered a relaxing escape close to Metro Manila. Participant Z - Marketing Head described enjoying local goods and scenic views in places like Tagaytay and Cebu, highlighting the importance of trying regional specialties and visiting popular sites. Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder expressed a deep appreciation for the distinct material conditions and cultural uniqueness of regions like Camiguin, Bukidnon, and Sagada, enjoying the laid-back atmosphere, natural beauty, and local customs that make these places special. Participant P - Writer

highlighted visiting various locations near Antipolo and Tagaytay, appreciating the unique dining experiences and scenic beauty.

Participants expressed specific expectations when choosing a destination, seeking unique experiences that aligned with their interests. They anticipated engaging in local outdoor activities such as water rafting, kayaking, scuba diving, and canyoneering, highlighting the destination's natural attractions. Additionally, they looked forward to immersing themselves in traditional customs and activities that allowed for meaningful interactions with the local culture, providing them with an authentic glimpse into the destination's way of life. Authentic experiences and less touristy spots were seen as significant selling points, offering travelers a chance to explore the genuine essence of each location while avoiding crowded, commercialized areas.

The UNWTO (2014) suggests that one of the key drivers of increased demand of adventure tourism is increased urbanization and digitalization, resulting in consumers seeking active, authentic experiences that highlight natural and cultural values. The adventure tourism industry therefore provides much sought-after escapes as well as ecological, cultural, and economic benefits to destinations (Janowski et al, 2020). Moreover, participants expect diverse offerings tailored to cater to varied interests, encompassing beach activities, nature exploration, cultural immersion, and adventure sports. Such sentiments align with existing research indicating that cultural immersion is a key driver of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (Kim et al., 2018). Participants also seek destinations that showcase versatility and a range of experiences to appeal to a wide audience of travelers, ensuring there is something for everyone to enjoy. Local recommendations play a crucial role in shaping participants' expectations, as they value insights into lesser-known attractions and activities favored by locals, steering clear of overly touristy spots. According to Robinson et al. (2011), authenticity in tourism is widely discussed as one of the key drivers for most tourist experiences. It is often likened to the holy grail of tourists, as the essential element of any tourist experience lies in the juxtaposition of the normal day-to-day environment with the unusual and different experiences that tourists can encounter while on holiday. If different destinations are visited, a very simple argument can be made tourists seek a true insight into the local culture and heritage to experience, learn about, and understand local life.

The negative connotation amongst touristy places is also a main concern for the participants. In the study conducted by Lin et al. (2020), it was noted that several research works have highlighted a common sentiment among tourists: many of them express a dislike for crowded destinations and tend to avoid them whenever possible. Luque-Gil et al. (2018) emphasized that such crowding scenarios can diminish people's satisfaction, overall attitude, and loyalty towards a destination. Jacobsen (2000) reported on the adverse reactions experienced by travelers in densely crowded locales. Furthermore, Yin et al. (2020) elucidated that both physical and human crowding exert significantly negative impacts on the attractiveness of destinations. They underscored the importance of considering human crowding as a pivotal factor that detrimentally affects destination appeal.

This highlights the need of participants for authenticity of experience. As attractions based on perception also influence travel choices, with individuals drawn to lesser-known or off-the-beaten-path destinations. Motivated by the reputation or perceived quality of a destination, travelers seek out experiences that offer authenticity and genuine exploration. According to Heitmann (2011), authenticity and tourism are well discussed as it is argued to be one of the key drivers for most tourist experiences and can be likened to the holy grail for tourists. He further stated that the essential element of any tourist experience is the juxtaposition of the normal day-to-day environment and the unusual and different experiences that tourists

can encounter while on holiday. If different destinations are visited, a very simple argument can be made: tourists gain a true insight into the local culture and heritage. Additionally, Botezatu's (2014) study highlights the pursuit of genuine exploration, advocating for experiences that resonate on a personal level rather than simply following destinations popularized by virality or trends.

Several studies also support the narrative that participants are increasingly inclined to choose a destination solely for its culinary offerings. Liu and Xu (2024) underscore the significance of food as a key factor in attracting tourists to destinations. Similarly, Chang et al. (2010) argue that local cuisine not only expresses cultural identity but also serves as a primary motivator for travelers. This suggests a growing trend where individuals are drawn to destinations primarily for their gastronomic experiences, highlighting the importance of understanding the role of food in shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors. Such sentiments align with studies emphasizing the centrality of food experiences in destination marketing and tourist satisfaction (Hall et al., 2013).

Destination's Residents

The concept of *"Destination's Residents Image,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), encompasses the amicable nature and positive demeanor of community members, along with their dedicated efforts to preserve diverse cultural heritages. Travelers are drawn to such destinations because they offer a more immersive and enriching experience, facilitated by the exhaustive and thoughtful guide services provided by locals. This fosters a deeper connection with the destination and enhances the overall travel experience, making it a compelling reason for travelers to visit. Note that four participants gave statements under this category, generating a total of eight statements.

Participants emphasized the significance of engaging with locals and the positive impact it had on their travel experiences. Participant S - Key Account Manager highlighted the importance of local interactions, stating, *"It was actually more on engaging with the locals… We asked them what was the usual thing in that area and we did it."* Similarly, Participant E - Accountant relied on locals for dining recommendations, noting, *"I asked locals where to eat because locals really knew where the good food or good places to eat were."* These interactions with residents provided a richer and more authentic experience, allowing travelers to uncover hidden gems and enjoy the best that the destination had to offer. Participants also appreciated the warmth and personalized service they received from residents, especially in less touristy areas. As Participant J - Customer Service Officer observed, *"People were warmer in the province,"* adding that in non-touristic places, *"their service was a bit more like you were being treated like a VIP."* This welcoming attitude and personalized attention enhanced the overall travel experience, making travelers feel valued and connected to the local community. Participant L - Founder, Non-Profit Organization, shared a similar sentiment, describing the friendliness and helpfulness of locals in places like Camiguin and Mati. They recounted how locals in Mati were particularly welcoming, often inviting tourists to join them in activities and even lending bikes for free.

These findings align with existing literature on destination attractiveness and the role of resident interactions in shaping tourist experiences. Studies such as those by Pearce and Moscardo (1986) stated that tourists seek authentic interactions and experiences that provide a genuine insight into the local way of life. These authentic encounters often involve interactions with destination residents, as they possess firsthand knowledge and insights into their community's culture, traditions, and lifestyle. Another literature indicates that the creation of the destination image is directly influenced by the perceived authenticity and the level of engagement of tourists in local activities (Lu et al., 2015).

Locals play a crucial role in shaping travelers' perceptions and experiences at destinations, with visitors expecting authentic cultural engagement and warm hospitality during their stay. Participants express a desire for opportunities to interact with locals and immerse themselves in genuine cultural experiences, seeking destinations with a laid-back atmosphere devoid of tourist crowds and commercialization. The authenticity of these interactions is paramount, as travelers value spontaneous encounters that allow them to connect with locals without pressure or pretense, fostering meaningful connections and enriching their travel experience. Several studies reveal how visitors form their understanding and emotional connections with destinations through interactions with locals. When residents actively participate as sources of information, tourists are inclined to acquire deeper insights into the location and foster connections with locals. This interaction creates a positive feedback loop, enhancing visitors' appreciation of the destination (Stylidis et al., 2021). On the other hand, looking from a tourist's perspective, Richardson (1996) concluded that intercultural contact accelerated the "discovery of the self" for the tourist.

The hospitality and friendliness of local residents are highly valued by travelers, with many expressing appreciation for the welcoming nature of locals in certain regions. Positive experiences with locals who are friendly, accommodating, and generous contribute significantly to visitors' overall perception of a destination. Moreover, travelers are attracted to destinations where they feel welcomed and safe, often contrary to negative media stereotypes. The warmth and hospitality of local communities enhance the appeal of a destination, creating a sense of belonging and comfort for visitors, which in turn fosters a desire for return visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Given the local's hospitality, Nyaupane et al. (2008) proposed that social interactions between tourists and local residents of diverse cultural backgrounds promote favorable attitudes and mutual understanding. Conversely, Thyne et al. (2006) argued that such interactions may lead to adverse effects, including prejudice, stereotypes, and a lack of trust in the other culture.

Inclusive community engagement is also a key expectation for travelers, with destinations that foster genuine connections and invite tourists to participate in activities without financial motives garnering particular appeal. Participants value destinations where locals extend invitations for inclusive community engagement, providing opportunities for travelers to immerse themselves in local culture and forge genuine connections. In support of this, a study revealed that local community members are motivated to engage in social interactions with visitors for various reasons, spanning from purely economic considerations to a sincere intention to offer enriching experiences and meaningful exchanges (Moyle et al., 2010). Moreover, Pizam & Smith (2000) contend that establishing closer bonds between tourists and local residents results in tourists holding more favorable perceptions of the locals and developing more positive attitudes toward both the residents and the destination itself. Therefore, it can be claimed that a welcoming atmosphere and the chance for authentic interactions with locals contribute positively to the overall appeal of a destination, leaving visitors with lasting memories and a desire to return.

Infrastructure

The concept of *"Infrastructure,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), lies in the promise of high-quality accommodations, diverse dining options, safety, ease of access to the internet, and engaging entertainment facilities. Notably, the presence of robust transportation systems, the quality of roads, and efficient information dissemination mechanisms not only facilitate seamless connectivity but also bolster visitor satisfaction levels. These fundamental elements encapsulate the essence of a destination's tourism landscape, playing an instrumental role in shaping an enjoyable and memorable travel experience. Thus, travelers often prioritize destinations boasting well-developed Infrastructure, recognizing their pivotal role

in elevating the overall journey. Note that eight participants gave statements under this category, generating a total of 19 statements.

Participants emphasized the importance of infrastructure in their travel experiences. Participant S - Key Account Manager highlighted the need for local authorities to manage cleanliness and safety, stating, *"It should have been from them, not from the people around."* They avoided areas with safety concerns, noting, *"We didn't usually compromise ourselves with all the places that we knew."* Similarly, Participant J - Customer Service Officer valued safety and connectivity, mentioning, *"As long as it was safe and there was a signal, we were good."* They appreciated the excellent customer service in less crowded areas and the availability of signals for camping.

Participants also discussed the quality of accommodations and dining options. Participant E - Accountant expressed disappointment when reality did not match the online portrayal, noting that sometimes *"the place was not really that good or really clean."* They emphasized the importance of clean facilities and good service. Participant M - Assistant Professor reflected on the evolution of dining establishments, noting improvements in cleanliness and infrastructure in places like Binondo, which had become more appealing due to social media features. They mentioned feeling safe in areas like Davao, where they could walk around without fear.

Furthermore, the convenience of transportation and the quality of accommodations played a crucial role. Participant J - Procurement Officer appreciated the availability of *e-trikes* for easy transport along shores, enhancing the travel experience. Participant K - Government Employee stressed the importance of comfortable accommodations, stating, *"When choosing our resort to go to, at least there was a good room to stay in, good services, the ambiance was good."* They prioritized quality and comfort, ensuring a pleasant stay. Participant Z - Marketing Head considered safety a primary factor, while Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder highlighted the challenges of accessing certain beaches due to private ownership, underscoring the need for better infrastructure and accessibility.

Infrastructure plays a vital role in shaping the appeal of a destination, with travelers expecting cultural education and local initiatives to enhance their experiences. The participants' experiences really do highlight the critical role of well-developed infrastructure in shaping their travel decisions and overall satisfaction. High-quality accommodations, safety, good dining options, and efficient transportation systems are essential elements that enhance the travel experience. These findings underscore the importance of robust infrastructure in attracting travelers and ensuring a memorable and enjoyable journey.

Participants also expect destinations where local authorities and establishments take proactive steps to educate visitors and promote responsible tourism practices, fostering a deeper connection and understanding of the local culture. The charm of a location is heightened when there is a genuine effort to preserve cultural heritage and minimize exploitation of natural resources or labor within the community, positively impacting its overall attractiveness. This highlights the significance of proactive measures by authorities and businesses in maintaining attractive tourist environments, aligning with findings from previous studies emphasizing the role of destination management in enhancing visitor satisfaction (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). A review in tourism literature also revealed several factors influence the appeal of a destination, including the quality of lodging, available amenities, serene and hygienic surroundings, family-friendly facilities, safety measures, ease of access, entertainment options, and recreational activities (Kim, 1998). Likewise, Genest and Legg (2003) tried to understand the key factors influencing

the attractiveness of destinations by pinpointing three dimensions of attractiveness crucial for providing a high-quality tourist experience: product, performance, and futurity.

Safety emerges as a top priority for travelers, with the reputation for safety bolstering the allure of a destination. Visitors gravitate towards areas perceived to be secure and free from potential risks, emphasizing the importance of safety measures in shaping travelers' perceptions and choices. To support the findings, Beirman (2002) claimed that safety considerations heavily impact the decision-making processes of tourists. Travelers opt for destinations that align closely with their requirements, provide maximum advantages, and entail minimal costs or risks. George (2003) added that if a tourist experiences feelings of insecurity or threat in a particular destination, it is probable that they will form an overall negative impression.

The concept of expectations versus reality plays a significant role in determining the appeal of a destination, particularly in the age of social media. The authenticity of a destination can either meet or defy expectations set by social media portrayals, influencing its appeal to travelers seeking genuine experiences. The gap between perception and reality can impact the attractiveness of a location, particularly concerning factors like cleanliness, service quality, and the allure of attractions. Prior research has revealed that failure to meet expectations can result in damaging coping outcomes, including cancellations, reduced repeat visits, and negative word-of-mouth (Nazifi et al., 2021). While Mattila and Ro (2009) added that meeting customer expectations in the tourism industry at all times is improbable, given the inevitability of negative incidents.

Exclusive experiences and personalized service contribute to the appeal of remote and less touristy destinations, where travelers seek exceptional customer service and a sense of privilege. Personalized treatment adds to the allure of such locations, making visitors feel valued and attended to, enhancing their overall satisfaction. A tourism literature has concluded that providing personalized services is crucial for luxury hotels (Bohme, 2023). In addition, another finding indicates that over fifty percent of their participants expressed a preference for personalized travel services. Researchers inferred that the primary attractions of personalized travel services lie in the convenience and tailored itineraries and tour packages they offer. Indeed, modern travelers seek additional value-added services, fostering a demand for distinctive and unconventional tours that creates a niche market for travel agencies to capitalize on (Bhati et al., 2014).

Moreover, the availability of essential comforts and quality amenities significantly enhances the appeal of a destination. Travelers expect access to basic necessities such as safety, mobile connectivity, and comfortable accommodations. This aligns with existing research highlighting safety concerns and technological connectivity as significant determinants of destination attractiveness (Chon, 1990). The quality of amenities, including comfortable beds and flavorful cuisine, contributes to the overall enjoyment of a stay, with renovations and modernization efforts in local establishments positively impacting the dining experience as well. These statements reflect the widely acknowledged notion that infrastructure play a crucial role in shaping tourists' overall experiences and satisfaction levels (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). This is also highly supported by Shonk & Chelladurai, (2008) as its study confirmed that quality of accommodation emerged as the primary factor in boosting tourists' satisfaction. Similarly, as highlighted by past studies, physical elements do contribute to influencing the quality of accommodation, particularly aspects such as the condition of the facilities, the furnishings, and the quality of the food served (Seth, 2005). In addition, service quality has been identified as a critical factor that can influence revisit intentions, ultimately contributing to long-term profitability in the industry (Kumra, 2008).

Convenience and self-sufficiency are also essential factors influencing the appeal of a destination. Travelers seek destinations that offer comprehensive amenities and activities within their premises, catering to their needs for comfort, convenience, and peace of mind during their stay. A review of literature revealed that there were positive associations found between both accessibility quality and accommodation quality with tourists' satisfaction. Moreover, tourists' satisfaction was observed to be positively linked with their intention to revisit (Chin et al., 2018). Rakhastiwi (2019) added that the quality, uniqueness, and high value of tourist attraction services form the foundation for tourists to consider revisiting a destination. Therefore, destinations that meet these expectations effectively are more likely to attract and satisfy travelers, fostering positive experiences and encouraging return visits.

Information Accessibility

The concept of *"Information Accessibility"* defined by Duong et al. (2023) referred to the ease and efficiency with which one could obtain pertinent details regarding a tourist destination, significantly impacting the overall travel experience. When travelers could effortlessly retrieve comprehensive and updated information from various platforms, including location feedback and recommendations, they were more likely to perceive the destination as appealing and worth exploring. This accessibility empowered travelers to plan their trips with confidence, enhancing their anticipation and satisfaction with the overall travel experience. Note that six participants gave statements under this category, generating a total of 14 statements.

Participants emphasized the importance of using digital platforms to gather information. Participant S - Key Account Manager mentioned, *"Google first and then we check the top places to go to and then from there we search. I go to Instagram after. And then just search, use a hashtag."* This reflected the use of multiple sources to ensure comprehensive information. Similarly, Participant J - Customer Service Officer learned about destinations through TikTok, stating, *"So where did I learn this? TikTok, so I searched for places near this place."* They also suggested that businesses needed to improve their social media presence for better marketing.

Personal recommendations and word-of-mouth played a significant role for some participants. Participant E - Accountant mentioned relying on friends and social media for recommendations but preferred hearing from someone with firsthand experience. As said, *"Yes, it's word of mouth. And I think it's reliable, it's someone already experienced going there. They can really tell you what to expect."* This participant also highlighted the need to book trips in advance based on reliable information. Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder noted the exclusive nature of certain events, such as a music festival that was not announced on social media but known through personal connections.

Research and social media influences were crucial for making informed decisions. Participant J - Procurement Officer described doing thorough research, especially when traveling alone, and relying on friends for information in other instances. Participant M - Assistant Professor acknowledged the influence of Instagram influencers and internet algorithms on their travel choices, saying, *"Internet guerrilla marketing and blogging was a factor in domestic travels."* They also discussed how integrated social media platforms, like Instagram and TikTok, played a role in discovering new destinations.

Information accessibility plays a pivotal role in shaping travelers' perceptions and decisions, with participants heavily relying on online platforms such as Google, Instagram, TikTok, and blogs for research and inspiration. Pop et al. (2022) can support this finding as its study indicated that consumer trust in social media influencers positively impacts every stage of travel decision-making. Amaro et al. (2016) further noted that the widespread use of smartphones and readily available mobile internet significantly

affect tourists' information search and decision-making processes. This dynamic actively shapes travelers' preferences, steering them towards certain destinations and experiences. The wealth of information disseminated through social media channels greatly impacts not only the planning phase of a trip but also the final decisions in making travel plans (Fotis et al., 2011). There's a similar argument by Hudson and Thal (2013) which states how social media plays an influential and valuable role during all stages of the travel process.

The authenticity of information is crucial in building trust among travelers, with social media influencers and internet marketing playing a significant role in shaping perceptions. Participants acknowledge the potential for influencers and marketing tactics to either enhance or diminish their trust, emphasizing the importance of seeking out local knowledge and recommendations provided by friends, acquaintances, and residents of destinations. Exclusive or lesser-known experiences accessed through personal connections are highly valued, contributing significantly to the attractiveness of a destination. In relation to this, Xiang et al. (2015) shared that tourists are currently gathering and integrating information from a multitude of channels and sources to form a well-rounded evaluation of travel products. However, some academic literature contends that information sourced from social media may not be viewed as trustworthy and reliable as that from more conventional sources. Hence, this implies that social media serves as a complement to traditional travel information sources, rather than replacing them (Cox et al., 2009).

Local insights and thorough planning are considered essential for optimizing travel experiences and discovering unique attractions. Participants recognize the importance of advanced planning and thorough research in securing desired activities, accommodations, and exclusive experiences. Booking trips in advance is deemed crucial to ensure travelers can access their preferred options and make the most of their time at the destination. Because of these findings, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) explained that this is precisely the reason why companies are adopting a customer-centric operating model by integrating the co-creation of unique, personalized customer value into their processes. This co-creation, being facilitated by internet technology, has resulted in customers being more informed and consequently having a significant capacity to evaluate offers. In relation to that, the study of Wang et al. (2016) claimed that the impact of the internet on travel planning behavior is directly associated with the perceived benefits of internet use.

Ease of Reach

The concept of *"Ease of Reach,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), encapsulated the degree of convenience and accessibility associated with reaching a destination. Factors such as appropriate travel distance, accessibility of the destination, the location of the destination, and the abundance of means of transport in a location affected the overall experience and considerations of a traveler. Note that eight participants gave statements under this category, generating a total of 16 statements.

Participants frequently mentioned the importance of travel distance and ease of access. Participant E - Accountant highlighted the convenience of traveling to nearby destinations during the pandemic, stating, *"I only traveled in Laguna for March because it's kinda stricter, it's still kind of pandemic and there's some restriction. I just traveled through car or by land."* They also noted the significant travel time to further destinations like Nasugbu, Batangas. Similarly, Participant J - Customer Service Officer mentioned that their travel plans with friends often depended on whether the destination was accessible by car.

The logistics and permissions required for travel also played a role in participants' considerations. Participant J - Procurement Officer shared their experience of needing local government approval to enter Bohol, which made the logistics challenging but ultimately successful. They also mentioned the variety

of travel options to Abra, including vans and buses. Participant M - Assistant Professor chose destinations based on proximity to Manila and available travel options, stating, *"We went there because it's one of the places that is not only relatively close to Manila, there are travel options when going to La Union."*

Participants often prioritized destinations that were easy to reach and offered multiple transport options. Participant K - Government Employee preferred Anilao, Batangas, for diving because it was a nearby spot, only a two-hour drive from Manila. They also mentioned Puerto Galera, which required a ferry ride but was still relatively close. Participant Z - Marketing Head appreciated the accessibility of Tagaytay from Calamba, noting that it was just an hour away by car. They also highlighted the convenience of getting around Cebu, where one could easily explore mountains, beaches, and the city center within 30 minutes.

Proximity and ease of transport were recurring themes in participants' travel decisions. Participant J - Multimedia Artist chose Tagaytay for its closeness, referring to it as *"just our neighbor."* Participant P - Writer often revisited familiar places or chose easily accessible destinations. They recounted a trip to a remote location in Cavite, initially considering various public transport options before deciding on hiring a chauffeur due to the distance and complexity of travel.

Ease of reach plays a significant role in shaping travelers' decisions and preferences, with participants prioritizing convenient accessibility when selecting destinations. Locations with easy access via affordable flights or proximity to major cities like Manila or the participants' city are particularly attractive, offering convenience and affordability. To support these key findings, accessibility is widely considered as one of the main factors shaping competitiveness of tourism destinations (Dziedzic, 2008). On the other hand, a study emphasized the perceived importance and level of satisfaction among tourists regarding transportation. Findings revealed discontentment with both the road infrastructure and transportation amenities, presenting a significant hurdle that could influence tourists' inclination to revisit the destination and their likelihood to recommend it to others (Dzitse et al., 2023). The said literature supports the key findings of this study which states that destinations that provide multiple transportation options further enhance their appeal allowing travelers flexibility in their journey, especially those accessible by car.

Another finding is familiarity and convenience are key considerations for travelers, with locations close to home holding appeal due to their proximity and ease of access. Proximity to familiar places like Tagaytay or Antipolo is particularly attractive, as travelers seek destinations that offer a sense of comfort and familiarity. This is supported by Cho (2001) who highlights that an individual's understanding of a destination may be shaped by both their familiarity with it and their previous experiences. The study identified a correlation between familiarity and past experiences, employing these concepts collectively to gauge travelers' prior knowledge. In relation, past experience can be a determinant in revisiting the same destination or going to other destinations (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998). As mentioned by the research respondents, Tagaytay or Antipolo is somewhere they keep on going back to seek comfort and familiarity and since it is within their proximity; it is backed by a study which revealed that unique experience seeking and destination-specific attractions and socialistic nostalgia (pull factors) predicted revisit intention (Wen & Huang, 2019).

Despite transportation challenges, destinations offering various transportation solutions, including hiring chauffeurs or using public transport, still holds an appeal. As supported by Rodrigue et al. (2016), transport infrastructure makes a tourist destination accessible for tourists. As a result, participants recognize the importance of versatile attractions and transportation solutions, allowing them to navigate logistical

challenges effectively and enjoy a seamless travel experience. Perception of manageable distance, even if the location is technically far, can increase its appeal due to the reassurance of accessible routes and transportation options. For example, in a literature, Ouariti et al. (2020) concluded that enhancing transport infrastructure such as highways, airports, and railway stations can positively influence the number of overnight stays across various types of accommodations.

Logistical ease and straightforward entry processes are valued by travelers, with destinations that offer minimal administrative hurdles and simple entry procedures attracting greater interest. Accessibility through land transportation, with minimal administrative hurdles, increases popularity among travelers, providing reassurance and ease of travel. Prideaux (2000) supports these findings as he argues that a destination should be easily reachable and navigable. This is why Crouch and Ritchie (1999) also affirmed that achieving tourism development without essential infrastructure such as roads, airports, and harbors would not be feasible in the current competitive settings.

Personal Factors (Expectation)

The concept of *"Personal Pull Factor"* or *"Expectation,"* as defined in the study by Duong et al. (2023), included popular attractions, unique experiences, accommodations suitable for loved ones, and opportunities for relaxation and rejuvenation. For many, the allure lay in experiencing something new and exciting, indulging in activities that brought joy and fulfillment, or simply finding solace away from the stresses of everyday life. The appeal of these factors was subjective, varying from person to person based on their interests and desires, making them essential considerations when planning a trip. Note that five participants gave statements under this category, generating a total of nine statements.

Participants frequently highlighted the appeal of unique experiences and popular attractions as significant motivations for travel. Participant J - Customer Service Officer mentioned the potential of Mindanao as a great starting point for promoting local tourism. Participant J - Procurement Officer found his travels memorable due to the quality of the destinations, stating, *"It's kind of memorable because my motivation for traveling is, of course, knowing that the place is good."* He aimed to visit as many islands as possible in Mindoro and joined a trip to Abra out of curiosity about what it had to offer.

The search for specific activities and environments also played a crucial role in travel decisions. Participant K - Government Employee emphasized the importance of good dive spots for scuba diving, stating, *"It's largely dependent on the biodiversity or availability of good dive spots."* Similarly, Participant L - Non-Profit Organization Founder sought out less touristy destinations like Camiguin for a more relaxed experience and expressed disappointment in the commercialization of Siargao. He is also planning trips to Siquijor, Zamboanga, General Santos, and Cotabato, driven by a desire to explore less frequented areas. Urban trips and local outings were also mentioned as personal pull factors. Participant P - Writer noted that their travels mostly involved urban trips, with short outings from city to city to visit cafes, reflecting a preference for accessible and familiar environments that still offer a sense of exploration and enjoyment.

Travelers expect destinations to offer a plethora of outdoor activities amidst stunning natural landscapes, ranging from adventurous pursuits like water rafting, canyoneering, and mountain exploration to cultural and spiritual experiences such as visiting pilgrimage sites and exploring cultural landmarks. In support of this, a study has proved that spending time outdoors, participating in active recreational activities, and exploring natural attractions offer chances for individuals to gain insights into natural systems and foster attachments to locations, leading to positive ripple effects (Cartwright & Mitten, 2017). Likewise, Mehmetoglu (2007) discovered a significant correlation between the value nature-based tourists place on travel activities and their expenditure during their current trip. The attraction of discovering waterfalls,

unspoiled beaches, and rugged landscapes enhances the attractiveness of destinations, offering travelers chances for excitement and exploration. The key findings are also supported by the study of Ballew & Omoto (2018) indicating that contact with nature elevates positive emotions. Nature fosters awe and other positive emotions when people feel captivated and engrossed in their surroundings.

Access to unique local cuisines and tourist attractions further enhances the appeal of destinations, driving travelers' decisions and shaping their travel itineraries. Culinary exploration plays a significant role in travel choices, with travelers seeking authentic food experiences that highlight diverse regional cuisines. Beyond outdoor adventures, travelers value leisure activities that offer opportunities for culinary exploration and cultural immersion. An exploratory study of Stone et al. (2018) indicated that food activities likely impact trip satisfaction and influence intention to return and likelihood to recommend a destination. In the same line, few studies have investigated the commodification of regional food as a central aspect of regional tourism and the impact of local traditional foods, deeply rooted in destination culture, on various aspects of tourists' perception and behavior (Kim & Iwashita, 2016).

Authenticity is paramount for travelers, who prefer provinces that aren't overrun by tourists, appreciating the authenticity and serenity these destinations offer. This is supported by Fennell (2008) and Hall et al. (2010) on the growing trend of *"off-the-beaten-path"* tourism, wherein travelers seek out destinations that are less visited and offer more authentic experiences. Non-touristy places provide a sense of exclusivity and respite from crowded tourist attractions, allowing travelers to experience genuine encounters with local culture and traditions. Supporting local tourism, particularly in less explored regions like Mindanao, is important for travelers who see it as an opportunity to contribute positively to the local economy and community. Along with these, tourists pay more and more attention to travel safety and travel risks nowadays. This is supported by Cui et al. (2016) who emphasized that destination risk perception of tourists directly affects tourists purchase intention. In the same manner, Garg & Kumar (2021) also highlight how tourists' decision-making is shaped by their perception of risk. Consequently, the study delves into the risk perception of tourists concerning social and cultural factors, media impact, and demographic influences that drive tourists to select secure destinations.

Another key finding is that the disdain for overhyped destinations is evident among travelers, who may feel disillusioned by places marketed as *"must-visit"* solely based on branding rather than substance. A specific literature outlines the idea of carrying capacity which continues to be a popular concept to appreciate the negative consequences of tourism. The primary concern lies in its emphasis on tourism figures, leading to the equation of negative impacts with mass tourism or rising visitor numbers (McCool, 2012). Moreover, studies on the impact of tourist activity in a destination have revealed that an excessive influx of tourists results in overcrowding at popular sites, excessive advertising, and aggressive commercialization. These factors diminish the aesthetic quality of tourists' experiences and contribute to the degradation of natural and cultural resources (Szromek et al., 2019). As a result, participants prioritize destinations that offer genuine experiences over tourist traps or overly curated attractions, seeking authenticity and substance in their travel experiences.

RQ3: What marketing strategies tailored for young professional Filipino domestic travelers based on the finding of the study?

The findings generated from the conducted interviews with the selected Filipino Young professional travelers unveil a rich data that sheds light on their decision-making process to embark on domestic leisure

travel. The key findings not only underscored the factors outlined in the study's theoretical framework but provided additional insights and that will further guide said tailoring of marketing strategies.

Based on the results, the highest factor influencing people to visit various places is the distinctive image of those destinations. This finding underscores the importance of ensuring that marketing efforts and strategies highlight, market, and enhance the total experience of travelers. Destinations need to leverage their distinct characteristics and cultural uniqueness to create a compelling and attractive image. Marketing campaigns should focus on storytelling that vividly portrays the uniqueness of a place, including its cultural heritage, natural beauty, and local traditions. Additionally, enhancing on-ground experiences to match these marketed images can help in fulfilling travelers' expectations, thereby fostering positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits. By aligning marketing strategies with the distinctive attributes of each destination, tourism stakeholders can effectively capture the interest and imagination of young professional travelers, ensuring a memorable and enriching travel experience.

Below are the following marketing strategies and suggestions that the researcher recommends to policymakers, local tourism offices, and other relevant players in the tourism industry and value chain. This is based on the findings generated from the narratives of the ten selected participants and may not entirely represent the whole traveling population but can provide some valuable insights and information for the betterment of tourism experience and efforts..

Custom Adventure Packages

The findings from the study highlight the varying preferences of travelers, influenced by a different internal and external factor. These factors include personal interests and hobbies, the attractions of the destination itself, and the dynamics of their relationships and companions on the trip. Adventure tourism, a burgeoning segment within the tourism industry, is gaining momentum as travelers seek unique and exhilarating experiences (Beedie & Hudson, 2003).

Céspedes et al. (2010) provide a comprehensive perspective on adventure tourism, encompassing a wide array of activities such as outdoor excursions, extreme sports, and eco-tourism ventures. While traditional approaches to adventure travel often involve mass-market packages, there is a growing realization that the adventure tourism market is highly diverse, demanding tailored experiences based on individual preferences and location-specific offerings (Chieh-Wen Sheng et al., 2008).

This shift in understanding necessitates a re-evaluation of marketing strategies within the adventure tourism sector. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, there is a call for innovative methods that prioritize customization and personalization. By acknowledging the distinct preferences of various traveler segments, businesses can better cater to their needs and create compelling offerings that resonate with their target audience.

One effective strategy in meeting this demand is the introduction of custom adventure packages tailored to the specific interests and desires of travelers. These packages go beyond the conventional itinerary, offering a curated selection of activities and experiences that align with the preferences of individual travelers or small groups. For instance, a traveler passionate about chill and laidback activities while other types of travelers are adrenaline junkie and may seek out extreme sports and thrill-seeking adventures.

By leveraging data on consumer preferences and market trends, travel companies can design bespoke packages that cater to niche interests and emerging trends within the adventure tourism landscape. This approach not only enhances the overall travel experience for customers but also fosters loyalty and satisfaction, as travelers feel valued and understood by the brands they choose to engage with.

Moreover, this strategy opens new avenues for collaboration and partnership within the industry. Travel companies can forge alliances with local businesses and tour operators to curate unique experiences that showcase the authentic culture and natural beauty of a destination. By highlighting the distinctiveness of each location and offering exclusive access to off-the-beaten-path attractions, custom adventure packages create a sense of exclusivity and excitement that resonates with adventurous travelers seeking authentic and immersive experiences.

In conclusion, the evolving nature of adventure tourism calls for a shift towards personalized marketing strategies and the development of custom adventure packages that cater to the diverse preferences of modern travelers. By embracing customization and innovation, businesses can tap into new market segments, foster deeper connections with customers, and unlock the full potential of the adventure tourism industry.

Sustainability and Responsibility Tourism

It is evident that a subset of participants holds a profound concern for the destinations they visit. From their response, it can be concluded that their interest extends beyond mere travel as they are deeply invested in the well-being and preservation of the places they explore. The emergence of a conscientious mindset towards environmental conservation and sustainable tourism practices has become increasingly prevalent among modern travelers. This shift is underscored by the burgeoning popularity of the concept of *"responsible tourism"* within the travel discourse. Scholars such as Goodwin (2011) have noted this trend, emphasizing the growing interest among travelers in minimizing their ecological footprint and preserving the natural integrity of destinations they visit.

Crucially, the perception of responsible tourism among locals emerges as a pivotal factor in shaping destination sustainability and, consequently, influencing the overall quality of life within those communities (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017). However, despite the recognition of these principles, the pace at which tourism stakeholders adopt sustainable practices remains sluggish, as highlighted by Poon (1990). This dissonance between aspiration and action can lead to destinations falsely advertising themselves as sustainable, potentially misleading prospective tourists.

In the face of these challenges, businesses within the tourism industry exhibit hesitancy towards investing resources into altering their management practices to align with responsible tourism standards. Factors such as perceived costs, fierce competition, and a perceived lack of governmental support compound this reluctance (Frey & George, 2010). This hesitation represents a significant barrier to the widespread adoption of sustainable tourism practices.

However, given the behavior and preference of a growing market, this needs to be challenged and changed. A marketing strategy tailored to appeal to environmentally conscious travelers should become imperative. Such a strategy could focus on highlighting destinations and businesses that genuinely prioritize sustainability and environmental stewardship. Authenticity and transparency would be key pillars of this approach, aiming to build trust with travelers who prioritize responsible tourism.

Narratives within marketing materials could emphasize not only the natural beauty of destinations but also the efforts undertaken to preserve and protect them. Stories of local conservation initiatives, community engagement, and sustainable practices implemented by businesses could serve to resonate with environmentally minded travelers.

Moreover, partnerships with reputable environmental organizations could lend credibility to marketing campaigns, signaling a commitment to tangible action rather than mere rhetoric. Promotional materials

could showcase certifications or accreditations obtained through rigorous sustainability standards, providing assurance to travelers seeking genuine eco-friendly experiences.

Engagement with local communities would also be integral to this marketing strategy, fostering mutual understanding and support for sustainable tourism initiatives. Collaborative efforts to mitigate the environmental impact of tourism, such as waste reduction programs or habitat restoration projects, could further demonstrate a commitment to responsible tourism principles.

Ultimately, by aligning marketing efforts with the values and priorities of environmentally conscious travelers, destinations and businesses can not only attract this lucrative market segment but also contribute positively to the preservation of natural ecosystems and the well-being of local communities.

Local Experience Partnership

The narrative underscores the pivotal role of genuine interactions between tourists and locals, which significantly enhance the overall travel experience. This sentiment aligns with a growing trend in the tourism sector, emphasizing partnerships between tourists and hosts to foster mutual trust and empowerment within local communities. Scholars like D'Amore (1988) have long advocated for the transformative potential of these daily interactions, positing that they contribute to a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, ultimately fostering global harmony.

A prime example of this approach is the collaborative effort proposed by Rahman & Baddam (2021), which champions community involvement in tourism initiatives. This model encourages locals to actively participate in the creation and management of projects such as community-based tourism initiatives, homestay programs, and cultural festivals. By integrating the expertise and insights of community members, these endeavors not only provide travelers with authentic experiences but also ensure that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed among locals.

Moreover, community engagement in tourism planning and management, as highlighted by Mahadasa (2017), holds the key to long-term sustainability. By involving communities in decision-making processes, tourism initiatives can better address local needs and concerns, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship over shared cultural and natural resources.

In practical terms, a marketing strategy that focuses on immersive, authentic, and culturally enriching experiences for travelers can leverage these insights effectively. Initiatives such as guided tours led by local experts, homestay programs where visitors live with host families, and participation in community-led cultural festivals can all contribute to a deeper connection between tourists and the destinations they visit. By highlighting these opportunities for genuine interaction and collaboration with locals, tourism marketers can attract socially conscious travelers seeking meaningful experiences while simultaneously supporting the sustainable development of host communities. This approach not only benefits travelers by offering unique and enriching experiences but also contributes to the economic empowerment and cultural preservation of locals.

Content Marketing Campaigns

The study reveals a strong reliance on online platforms for travel information. However, participants show a cautious attitude, noting discrepancies between online depictions and actual experiences, leading to disappointment. This emphasizes the need for authentic digital travel content. This phenomenon accentuates the importance of crafting a robust digital marketing strategy that not only caters to the burgeoning online audience but also ensures the dissemination of authentic and reliable information.

In recent years, the internet has emerged as a pivotal tool in facilitating the development and promotion of tourist destinations (Manente & Cerato, 2000). The advent of online marketing has exponentially

broadened the reach of destination marketing organizations, offering them the unprecedented opportunity to engage with a vast and diverse audience (Vella & Kester, 2008). This amplification of influence has engendered a profound transformation within the tourism value chain, fundamentally reshaping its dynamics and outlook (Chuang, 2018). Central to this evolution is the realization that the internet serves as a potent catalyst for consumerism within the sector.

For instance, local tourism service providers, leveraging their online presence, can now directly engage with prospective travelers, facilitating seamless bookings for travel arrangements, accommodations, and assorted activities. Through personalized packages and enticing offers, these providers have successfully attracted tourists from across the globe, capitalizing on the expansive reach afforded by online platforms (Nilashi et al., 2018). Moreover, as underscored by Doolin et al. (2002), the information-intensive nature of the tourism industry underscores the pivotal role of the internet and web technologies in destination promotion and marketing endeavors.

In essence, the evolving landscape of online engagement within the tourism industry necessitates a strategic approach that prioritizes authenticity and reliability in information dissemination. By embracing digital marketing initiatives tailored to cater to the discerning preferences of modern travelers, destination marketing organizations and service providers can forge deeper connections with their target audience while fostering a reputation for transparency and credibility in the online sphere.

Educational and Cultural Experiences

The study's findings highlight the fundamental significance of cultural experiences and activities in participants' lives, evident in their strong affinity for local cuisine and active engagement in diverse cultural events fueled by a desire for learning and immersive experiences. This emphasis on cultural enrichment aligns with broader urban development agendas, where cultural initiatives have emerged as integral components of economic growth strategies for cities. Scholars such as Richards (2001) have noted the increasing recognition of cultural activities as key drivers of urban tourism, prompting cities to incorporate cultural development strategies into their economic plans.

In this context, cities are actively diversifying their cultural offerings to stimulate private investment, boost tourist spending, cultivate a positive city image, and elevate local residents' quality of life (Strom, 2002). While previous research has predominantly focused on revitalization efforts centered around entertainment and business-oriented infrastructure like festival marketplaces, entertainment districts, and convention centers (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007), there is a growing acknowledgment of the centrality of cultural activities in urban renewal initiatives.

Scott (2010) further emphasizes the role of cultural endeavors in enhancing cities' competitiveness and attractiveness. This insight underscores the shift in urban development paradigms towards prioritizing cultural vibrancy to foster sustainable growth and global appeal. Consequently, there is a burgeoning emphasis on crafting marketing strategies that leverage the rich cultural tapestry of cities, with a particular focus on food, festivals, and immersive cultural experiences.

Marketing initiatives are increasingly tailored to resonate with diverse cultural sensibilities, tapping into the culinary heritage of a locale to entice both domestic and international visitors. Festival-centric campaigns showcase the unique cultural traditions and artistic expressions of a community, drawing attendees seeking authentic experiences and fostering a sense of belonging.

Moreover, brands and organizations are investing in immersive cultural activities that offer hands-on participation and meaningful engagement with local customs and practices. These initiatives not only attract tourists but also foster cultural exchange and understanding, enriching the fabric of urban life.

By aligning marketing strategies with the cultural ethos of a city, stakeholders can not only drive economic growth but also nurture a vibrant and inclusive urban landscape. This approach not only enhances the city's allure as a tourist destination but also fosters community pride and cohesion, ensuring sustainable development and prosperity in the long term.

Continuous Innovation and Adaptation

The findings from recent studies underscore the critical importance of access to quality infrastructure, encompassing elements such as reliable signal, well-maintained roads, and comfortable amenities, among others. Yan et al. (2022) emphasized how the construction of new infrastructure significantly drives the evolution of the digital tourism industry, which is pivotal for enhancing both regional and national tourism competitiveness. This highlights the pivotal role that infrastructure plays in shaping the entire travel experience.

Moreover, Nguyen (2021) corroborated the significance of infrastructure investments, demonstrating a clear positive correlation between various infrastructure components—spanning transportation, communication, hospitality, and recreational facilities—and inbound tourism. This underscores the necessity of prioritizing infrastructure development to bolster the tourism sector's growth in the long term. Furthermore, literature indicates that innovation within infrastructure is paramount, particularly in areas such as general infrastructure and ecological sustainability. Neglecting these innovations could not only impede potential increases in tourism spending but also hinder overall economic development. Gavurová et al. (2021) advocate for the integration of innovative approaches into tourism development strategies, emphasizing the need for continual improvement and adaptation within the infrastructure framework.

From a marketing perspective, emphasizing the availability of robust infrastructure, seamless connectivity, and comfortable amenities can significantly enhance the appeal of a destination. Highlighting these features in promotional campaigns underscores the commitment to providing a superior travel experience, ultimately attracting more visitors and boosting tourism revenue. By investing in and continually improving infrastructure, destinations can position themselves as desirable travel destinations, ensuring visitors memorable and enjoyable experiences from start to finish.

Authenticity-Centric Branding

One of the major subthemes and narratives that surfaced several times in the findings are the participants' inclination towards authenticity in their experiences. Key findings suggest a strong preference for experiences perceived as genuine is an important indicator for wanting to travel and visiting local destinations. This inclination is driven by various factors, including a desire for exclusivity, with participants seeking destinations that offer a sense of uniqueness and escape from overcrowded tourist spots. Additionally, there is a clear aversion to overhyped experiences, with participants valuing authenticity over exaggerated marketing, and reality-versus-expectations experiences. Furthermore, the avoidance of commodification suggests a desire for experiences untainted by commercial interests, reflecting a deeper appreciation for genuine encounters with culture and environment. Overall, these findings underscore the central role of authenticity in shaping the participants' preferences and highlight the significance of factors such as exclusivity, avoidance of overhype, and non-commodification in their pursuit of authentic experiences.

A literature study of Rickly-Boyd (2011) emphasized that authenticity aspect is a highly intricate concept that is fundamental in tourism research. Same study revealed how tourists note authenticity as a motivating factor in their decision to visit a village. For example, Southeast Asia has become a magnet for travelers seeking authentic encounters with its diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and warm hospitality

(Vadiyala, 2017). On the other hand, Beverland (2005) are researchers in psychology and marketing who have studied authenticity, but this concept is lacking for a general definition. This may be because the concept of authenticity in marketing is still limited but is developing.

To provide this satisfaction, the researcher suggests an Authenticity-Centric Branding approach. This marketing strategy transcends the traditional approach of promoting tourist destinations solely based on popular attractions. Instead, it strategically positions a destination as a hidden gem, emphasizing its genuine charm, cultural depth, and natural beauty. By showcasing these authentic qualities, the strategy appeals to a discerning segment of travelers who seek meaningful experiences off the beaten path (Ryan, 2002). This approach not only sets the destination apart from mainstream tourist destinations but also creates an allure of exclusivity and discovery, enticing travelers to explore and immerse themselves in its unique offerings.

Central to the Authenticity-Centric Branding strategy is the appeal to authenticity. Rather than presenting a sanitized version of a destination tailored to tourist preferences, marketers focus on showcasing the destination's true essence. This authenticity resonates with travelers who crave genuine encounters, cultural immersion, and opportunities to connect with local communities (Nicolaides & Grobler, 2017). By prioritizing authenticity, destinations can cultivate a deeper emotional connection with travelers, fostering loyalty and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Moreover, the rise of wellness tourism further underscores the significance of Authenticity-Centric Branding. Wellness tourists, seeking holistic experiences that nurture the mind, body, and spirit, are drawn to destinations that offer authentic and transformative experiences. By integrating elements of spirituality, cultural heritage, and personal growth into their offerings, destinations embracing this branding strategy can attract wellness-minded travelers seeking meaningful journeys that enhance their overall well-being (Rojas & Camarero, 2006). In essence, Authenticity-Centric Branding not only differentiates destinations in a competitive market but also aligns with evolving traveler preferences for authentic, enriching, and soulful experiences.

By implementing this comprehensive marketing strategy, local tourism agencies can effectively attract and engage Filipino young professionals, offering them compelling reasons to explore the diverse and authentic experiences available in domestic leisure destinations across the Philippines.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the corresponding recommendations.

Summary of Significant Findings

Based on the study results from ten participants, all push (motivation) and pull (expectation) factors identified in the theoretical framework surfaced from their narratives. The analysis revealed significant insights into what drives individuals to travel and what attracts them to specific destinations. Among the push factors, personal reasons such as relationships, hobbies, interests, work, and self-fulfillment emerged as the most prominent intrinsic motivations.

In the realm of pull factors, the destination's distinctive image stood out as the most prominent. This indicates that the unique attributes and overall image of a destination, including its cultural richness, natural beauty, historical significance, and overall experience, play a crucial role in attracting travelers. These elements not only appeal independently but also complement personal travel motivations such as

seeking new experiences and personal fulfillment. The alignment between a destination's distinctive image and travelers' personal motivations enhances its attractiveness, making it a key factor in travel decisions. The tables below outline key findings from the interviews, offering insights into travelers' motivations and expectations. The findings are categorized into two main tables: the first focuses on push factors such as escape, seeking relaxation, cultural experiences, knowledge, and other personal motivations. The second delves into pull factors, highlighting travelers' expectations regarding the destination, including its unique image, residents, infrastructure, information, reachability, and other considerations. These findings are also categorized into themes to provide a clearer understanding of the underlying motivations and expectations.

The tables that follow encapsulate the predetermined factors and the subthemes that surfaced, along with recommended marketing strategies for addressing these factors, facilitating a nuanced exploration of participants' motivations and expectations.

Table 5. Filipino Young Professional Motivations (Push Factors) Marketing Strategy

Push Factors	Subthemes	Marketing Strategy
Escape	Escaping Urban Stress	Wellness and Mindfulness Retreats
	Seeking Personal Freedom	Wellness and Mindfulness Retreats
Rest and Relaxation	Preference for Relaxation over Adventure	Wellness and Mindfulness Retreats
	Spa and Massages as Part of the Experience	Wellness and Mindfulness Retreats
	Vacation as Leisure and Rejuvenation	Wellness and Mindfulness Retreats
	Chill Beach Experience	Custom Adventure Packages
	Appreciation for Laid-back Destination	Custom Adventure Packages
Cultural Experience	Engagement with Locals	Local Experience Partnerships
	Interest in Cultural Diversity	Educational and Cultural Experiences
	Exploration of Cultural Heritage	Educational and Cultural Experiences
Knowledge	Learning, Growth, and Self-Discovery	Authenticity-Centric Branding
	Excitement and Novelty	Authenticity-Centric Branding
	Cultural immersion and authentic experiences	Educational and Cultural Experiences

Push Factors	Subthemes	Marketing Strategy
	Local Perspective Over Media Portrayals	Local Experience Partnerships
Personal Push Factors	Personal Goals and Growth	Custom Adventure Packages
	Activities that are parallel to existing hobbies and interests	Custom Adventure Packages
	Food and Delicacies as a Priority Experience	Educational and Cultural Experiences
	Personal Relationships	Custom Adventure Packages
	Utilization of Work Opportunities for Leisure	Custom Adventure Packages

Table 6. Filipino Young Professional Expectations (Pull Factors)
Marketing Strategy

Pull Factors	Subthemes	Marketing Strategy
Destination's Unique Image	Adventure and Outdoors Activity	Custom Adventure Packages
	Travel Preferences and Destination Choices	Custom Adventure Packages
	Environmental and Scenic Appreciation	Sustainability and Responsible Tourism
	Safety and Hospitality as Key Factors	Authenticity-Centric Branding
	Food and Culture as a Main Attraction	Authenticity-Centric Branding
Destination's Residents	Authentic Cultural Engagement	Educational and Cultural Experiences
	Local Hospitality and Friendliness	Local Experience Partnerships
	Inclusive Community Engagement	Educational and Cultural Experiences
	Warm Hospitality and Safety Assurance	Content Marketing Campaigns
Destination's Infrastructure Facilities	Cultural Education and Local Initiative	Educational and Cultural Experiences
	Essential Comforts and Quality Amenities	Continuous Innovation and Adaptation
	Safety as a Priority	Continuous Innovation and Adaptation

Pull Factors	Subthemes	Marketing Strategy
	Expectation vs Reality	Authenticity-Centric Branding
	Exclusive Experiences and Personalized Service	Custom Adventure Packages
Destination's Information	Local Insights and Planning	Local Experience Partnerships
	Available Information Online	Content Marketing Campaigns
	Authenticity of Information	Authenticity-Centric Branding
Reachability	Convenient Accessibility	Continuous Innovation and Adaptation
	Logistical Ease and Permissions	Continuous Innovation and Adaptation
	Familiarity and Convenience	Continuous Innovation and Adaptation
	Versatile Attractions and Transportation Solutions	Continuous Innovation and Adaptation
Personal Pull Factors	Diverse Activities and Recreational Activities	Custom Adventure Packages
	Authenticity of the location and experiences	Authenticity-Centric Branding
	Strong Local Cuisine and Tourist Attractions	Authenticity-Centric Branding
	Disdain for Overhyped Destinations	Authenticity-Centric Branding

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study underscores the significance of both push and pull factors in shaping travel behaviors. Personal motivations are critical in initiating the desire to travel, while the distinctive Image of a destination significantly influences the choice of travel location. Relevant stakeholders in the tourism value chain should consider these insights to tailor their strategies, enhancing personal connections with potential travelers and emphasizing the distinctive features of their destinations to attract more visitors. By understanding the preferences of Filipino young professionals as somehow presented in this study, stakeholders can have a glimpse of what this segment might need and expect from their domestic leisure travel experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the thorough thematic analysis conducted in this study, it is recommended that future investigations delve deeper into the nuanced subthemes elucidated within the motivations and expectations of young Filipino professional travelers. By engaging in a more nuanced exploration of these

subthemes, researchers can unearth additional layers of comprehension that can enrich our understanding of travel motivations and preferences within this demographic context.

Furthermore, the findings of this study carry substantial potential for theoretical applications within academic discourse as well as practical implications for policy formulation and strategic decision-making in the business sphere. Academically, the insights provide valuable contributions to the existing literature in tourism studies and consumer behavior, elucidating the intricate interplay of push and pull factors that shape travel decisions. Subsequent research endeavors can capitalize on these findings to refine theoretical frameworks and deepen conceptual understandings of the multifaceted nature of travel motivations and expectations.

From a policy perspective, the discernments derived from this study can inform the development of tailored tourism policies and initiatives that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of young Filipino travelers. By aligning policy interventions with the identified motivations and expectations, policymakers can foster an environment conducive to sustainable and inclusive tourism development, thereby promoting socio-economic growth and cultural exchange.

In practice, businesses operating within the tourism sector can leverage the findings to optimize their marketing strategies and service offerings. This is to better resonate with the target demographic for a more strategic and efficient execution and practice.

In conclusion, this study not only offers illuminating insights into the motivations and expectations of the select young Filipino professional travelers but also serves as a catalyst for further inquiry, policy formulation, and strategic adaptation within the tourism industry. By harnessing these insights, stakeholders can collaboratively work towards cultivating a dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive tourism landscape that fulfills the diverse needs and aspirations of travelers while contributing positively to local communities and economies.

Implication for Future Studies

Given the constraints of time and resources, my exploration of this research has been necessarily focused on specific aspects. Nevertheless, working on this have ignited my interest in other areas that could be of equal importance.

1. **Exploring the Influence of Social Media on Travelers' Perceptions of Overly Hyped versus Non-Touristy Destinations.** This research can further study the impact of social media on travelers' perceptions, scrutinizing how it shapes attitudes towards both excessively advertised tourist destinations and lesser-known, non-touristy locales here in the Philippines and how discernment can play a huge role in seeing through authentic and inauthentic influencers.

2. **Sustainability and Responsible Tourism Practices.** With the increasing emphasis on sustainability and responsible tourism practices, future studies could explore the attitudes and behaviors of young professional Filipino domestic travelers towards environmental conservation, community engagement, and ethical tourism. This could include examining factors influencing sustainable travel choices and the willingness to support eco-friendly initiatives.

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