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Beyond Income: Social Drivers of Domestic Tourism Participation Among Public Sector Workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation among public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, Ghana, addressing a gap in the literature that has largely explained participation through economic and motivational lenses while overlooking family, peer, and community influences on travel decisions. Adopting a quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional survey design, the study targeted public sector workers drawn from institutions such as the Metropolitan Assembly and other government ministries, departments, and agencies. Because no consolidated register of this population existed, Cochran's formula for an unknown population determined a sample size of 303, with respondents selected through convenience sampling. Of 366 questionnaires distributed in person, 303 were retrieved and analysed, a response rate of approximately 82.8%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.554 and a significant Bartlett's test confirmed the data's suitability for factor analysis, which extracted six reliable dimensions: Interpersonal and Family Motivators, Social Bonds, Socio-Cultural Influence, Family Influence on Travel Decisions, Peer Motivation and Family Leisure Priorities, and Social Engagement. Family encouragement, peer recommendations, social obligations such as funerals and weddings, and the belief that travel strengthens social relationships emerged as the strongest motivators, while household responsibilities and aged family members were notable constraints. These findings confirm that domestic tourism participation among public sector workers is a socially negotiated experience rather than a purely economic one. The study recommends that public institutions design family-inclusive travel packages, flexible leave arrangements, and peer-network-based marketing to encourage greater participation.

Keywords: Domestic Tourism Participation, Social Drivers, Public Sector Workers, Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, Family Influence, Exploratory Factor Analysis
JEL Classifications: Z32, Z13, D91, J22

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism, in its domestic form, has become one of the fastest-growing components of the global travel economy, offering nations a resilient alternative to the volatility associated with international arrivals (Larionova et al., 2017; Makhaola and Proches, 2017). As highlighted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (2019), domestic tourism accounted for 73% of total global travel and tourism spending in 2018, underscoring its centrality to national economies, employment generation and regional development (Arbulú et al., 2021). Beyond its economic contribution, domestic tourism fosters cultural exchange, strengthens national identity and encourages environmental stewardship among citizens who might otherwise never encounter their own country's heritage and natural resources.

In Ghana, government agencies including the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA, 2019) have increasingly recognised domestic

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tourism as a strategic tool for diversifying the tourism sector and cushioning it against external shocks, a lesson reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which international travel restrictions and quarantine protocols exposed the vulnerability of tourism economies that depend heavily on inbound visitors (UNWTO, 2021). Yet, despite this policy attention, participation in domestic tourism among Ghanaians, including salaried professionals with the means and leave entitlements to travel, remains lower than its potential would suggest.

Much of the existing literature explains this gap through economic and motivational lenses, examining income, cost of travel, advertising and psychological motivation as the principal determinants of participation (Mansour and Mumuni, 2019; Mkwizu, 2018; Canh and Thanh, 2020; Bayih and Singh, 2020; Kara and Mkwizu, 2020). Comparatively less attention has been paid to the social architecture within which travel decisions are actually made: The family that encourages or discourages a trip, the friends whose recommendations are trusted over advertising, the funeral or wedding that turns into an impromptu journey and the community expectations that make travel feel obligatory rather than optional. Tourism, as a socially embedded activity, is rarely an individual decision and understanding it purely through economic or attitudinal models overlooks the interpersonal pressures, family responsibilities and communal obligations that shape whether, when, and with whom people travel (Ru et al., 2018; Crawford et al., 1991).

This gap is particularly salient among salaried public sector workers, a population with relatively stable incomes and structured annual leave, whose travel decisions are nonetheless embedded in family roles, caregiving responsibilities, and workplace social networks that may either enable or constrain participation. Public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, drawn from diverse institutions, departments, family structures and social backgrounds, offer a useful lens through which to examine how these social forces operate within a socially cohesive urban workforce.

It is against this background that the present study investigates the social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation among public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. Specifically, the study examines the role of family encouragement and preferences, friendship and peer networks, social obligations such as funerals, weddings and festivals and broader community pressure in shaping workers' decisions to engage in domestic travel.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Domestic Tourism

Domestic tourism is the largest and the most significant form of tourism when compared to its international counterpart (Nguyen et al., 2025, Arbulú et al., 2021). Domestic tourism is the key driver of the tourism sector globally as demonstrated by the fact that it accounted for 73% of total travel and tourism spending in 2018 (World Travel Tourism Council, 2019). Domestic tourism has emerged as one of the most significant industries in the global economy (Nguyen et al., 2025). It is not only a vital source of income for many countries but also an industry that fosters cultural exchange, environmental awareness and social integration. Domestic tourism has over the years been connected to other concepts such as attitude and motivation, Osiako and Szente (2024); advertising, Mkwizu, 2018: Economic vulnerability, Canh and Thanh, 2020: Motivation and travel Bayih and Singh, 2020: Kara and Mkwizu, 2020. Conversely, the onset of COVID-19 pandemic raises a fundamental question on how domestic tourism should be defined in spaces of restricted travel and lockdowns. UNWTO (2021) added that not only travel restrictions were experienced in during the COVID-19 pandemic but also quarantine durations are among the key barriers to stimulating domestic tourism.

2.2. Social Drivers Influencing Domestic Tourism Participation

Domestic tourism participation is not solely a matter of income it patterned by social drivers which plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' decisions to participate. The influence of family, friends, peers, and broader community expectations cannot be overlooked, as tourism is often a socially embedded activity rather than an individual pursuit. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), subjective norms defined as perceived social pressure from significant others are critical determinants of travel intentions (Ru et al., 2018). Similarly, the leisure constraints model highlights how interpersonal factors such as family roles, caregiving responsibilities, and household obligations can either facilitate or hinder participation in tourism activities (Crawford et al., 1991).

Family plays a double role in influencing domestic tourism participation (Nisha and Cheung, 2025, Li et al., 2022). Family encouragement is one of the strongest motivators of domestic travel. Bayih and Singh (2020) shows that when family members are supportive, or when their preferences are considered in travel planning and decisions, individuals are more likely to embark on domestic trips (Bayih and Singh, 2020). Also, traveling with family members helps strengthens bonds, creates shared memories, and enhances the perceived value of travelling (Chevtaeva and Denizci Guillet, 2024). Individual are very characterized by household responsibilities, particularly caregiving for children or elderly relatives, often restrict opportunities for leisure travel. Crawford and Godbey (1987) observe that aged family members may discourage leisure trips, while caregiving obligations reduce both time and resources available for tourism participation.

Family composition and responsibilities influence travel patterns significantly (Feng et al., 2013). Individuals with children may prioritize family obligations and household expenses over tourism spending. Moreover, the absence of family-friendly tourism packages or inadequate infrastructure may discourage participation. As noted by GTA (2019), tourism policies in Ghana often overlook the specific needs of families, limiting inclusiveness and participation.

Beyond the family unit, Friends, colleagues and wider social networks exert considerable influence on travel decisions (Bilgihan

et al., 2016). Urena et al., (2019) indicated that recommendations from peers often act as trusted sources of information, reducing uncertainty about destinations and increasing confidence in decision-making for participation. Individuals are more likely to travel when friends or coworkers are also participating, in domestic tourism. In group travel contexts, collective participation reduces risks, shares costs, and enhances the enjoyment of trips, reinforcing tourism as a socially rewarding experience (Sengoz et al., 2025).

Social events also play a central role in shaping travel participation (Gramsch-Calvo and Axhausen, 2024). Festivals, traditional ceremonies and family obligations such as weddings and funerals are not only culturally significant but also act as catalysts for domestic mobility. In Ghana, for instance, events like the Ankos Masquerade Festival in Sekondi-Takoradi attract large numbers of domestic tourists by blending cultural heritage with social interaction (Fordjour, 2023). Likewise, Funerals in Ghana generate substantial domestic travel, as individuals attend to fulfill social obligations and reinforce kinship ties. Such events illustrate how social obligations can transform into opportunities for domestic tourism.

Social obligations embedded in community life also shape domestic tourism participation (Quang et al., 2024, Madkhali et al., 2024). Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) observed that community norms and societal expectations shape tourism participation through perceived social pressure. Aicher and Brenner (2015) found that when communities place a high value on travel, individuals feel compelled to participate, even if not intrinsically motivated. On the other hand, not all social drivers encourage travel; some individuals prefer home-centered leisure activities with family, citing convenience and reduced costs. Humagain and Singleton (2023) note that while opportunities to meet new people can be motivating, competing preferences for home-based leisure remain a barrier for many. Moreover, perceived societal pressure can also influence travel choices, where individuals feel compelled to travel because it is a norm within their peer group or community (Rahman and Sciara, 2022).

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives that together explain how social relationships, obligations and needs shape participation in domestic tourism: The Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Leisure Constraints Model and Iso-Ahola's Escape-Seeking Theory of leisure motivation.

2.3.1. Theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour posits that behavioural intention, the most immediate antecedent of actual behaviour, is jointly determined by three factors: Attitude toward the behaviour, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms. Subjective norms, defined as the perceived social pressure exerted by significant others such as family, friends and colleagues, are of particular relevance to this study, as they capture the extent to which an individual's decision to travel is shaped by the expectations and encouragement of people who matter to them (Ru et al., 2018). Within the domestic tourism context, subjective norms explain why family encouragement, peer recommendations and community expectations can motivate participation even in the absence of strong personal attitudes toward travel, or conversely, discourage it when significant others express disapproval or indifference.

2.3.2. Leisure constraints model

The Leisure Constraints Model, developed through the work of Crawford and Godbey (1987) and later refined into a hierarchical framework by Crawford et al. (1991), identifies three categories of barriers to leisure participation: Intrapersonal constraints (psychological states such as stress or lack of interest), interpersonal constraints (the absence of a compatible companion or conflicting family obligations), and structural constraints (external barriers such as cost, time, or distance). This study draws principally on the interpersonal dimension of the model, which helps explain how household responsibilities, caregiving for children or elderly relatives and family roles can restrict opportunities for tourism participation, even among staff who may otherwise be willing and able to travel.

2.3.3. Iso-ahola's escape-seeking theory

Iso-Ahola's (1982) escape-seeking theory of leisure motivation proposes that individuals engage in leisure activities to satisfy two simultaneous needs: The need to escape the routine or stressful aspects of everyday personal and interpersonal environments and the need to seek intrinsic rewards such as social interaction, novelty and personal growth. This theory is particularly useful for explaining why some staff members are motivated to travel by the prospect of meeting new people and building social relationships, while others find equivalent psychological reward in home-based leisure with family, illustrating that the same underlying need for escape and reward can be satisfied through markedly different social arrangements.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research approach, underpinned by a positivist philosophy and employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed for the systematic collection of numerical data from a relatively large number of respondents at a single point in time, enabling the description of prevailing patterns and the statistical testing of relationships among the social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation (Bayih and Singh, 2020).

The target population for the study comprised public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, Ghana, drawn from institutions such as the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly, the Ghana Education Service, the Ghana Health Service, the security services (including the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Immigration Service and Ghana National Fire Service) and central government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) and subvented agencies operating within the Metropolis. Because no single, consolidated register captures every public sector worker across these numerous institutions, the exact population size could not be ascertained. Cochran's (1963) formula for determining sample size in an unknown population was therefore applied: $n = Z^2pq/e^2$. Using a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$) and assuming

maximum variability (p = q = 0.5), a sample size of 303 was adopted, corresponding to a margin of error of approximately 5.6%. Respondents were selected using convenience sampling, whereby consenting workers who were available and willing to participate at the time of data collection were administered the questionnaire across the sampled institutions.

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire developed from constructs identified in the reviewed literature. The instrument was organised into sections capturing respondents' background characteristics and their perceptions of the social drivers, namely family influence, peer and friendship networks, social obligations and community pressure, that shape participation in domestic tourism. Items measuring these constructs were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For ease of interpretation and presentation, response categories were subsequently collapsed into three broad categories, Agree, Neutral and Disagree, in the results reported in this study.

Prior to data collection, permission was sought from the heads and management of the sampled public institutions and respondents were assured of the voluntary nature of their participation. Questionnaires were administered in person as paper-based instruments to consenting workers across the sampled institutions. In total, 366 questionnaires were distributed, of which 303 were retrieved, screened for completeness and coded for analysis, representing a response rate of approximately 82.8%.

Quantitative data obtained were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS V 26). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' perceptions of the social drivers influencing participation. The internal consistency of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients above 0.7 generally considered acceptable (Taber, 2018). To uncover the underlying dimensions of the social drivers, exploratory factor analysis using principal component extraction and varimax rotation was performed. Prior to extraction, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were computed to confirm the suitability of the data set for factor analysis.

The study adhered to established ethical research standards. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence and confidentiality and anonymity of responses were assured throughout the data collection and reporting process. Formal ethical clearance for the study was obtained from Takoradi Technical University prior to the commencement of data collection.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Social Drivers Influencing Participation in Domestic Tourism among Public Sector Workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis

Table 1 presents the social drivers influencing workers' participation in domestic tourism in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The results were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Cronbach alpha was measured to confirm the reliability.

It can be seen in Table 1 that majority of the respondents, (F-238-78.5%) agreed that, their family encourage them to participate in domestic tourism, whiles (F-31, 10.2%) indicate neutral and the remaining (F-34, 11.2%) disagreed. This shows that family support plays a crucial role in shaping participation in domestic tourism. Family is seen as the primary social unit, such encouragement is often a decisive factor in leisure decisions and this confirms Wang and Li (2021) who argue that family is central to decision-making in travel participation.

Also, <½ of respondents (F148, 48.8%) agreed that they consider family preferences when planning trips, with neutral response of (F 95, 31.4%) of respondents and (F 60, 19.8%) disagreeing to the assertion. The results suggest that although family is important, not all decisions are made collectively, as some staff may prioritize personal convenience or financial factors. These findings confirm earlier work showing that family can be both a strong motivator and, at times, a competing influence in tourism decision-making (Li et al., 2023).

Respondents were asked whether travelling with friends increases likelihood of participation. It is evident that majority agreed with a response of (F 212, 70.0%) and (F 37, 12.2%) disagreeing, that travelling with friends increases participation. This reflects the social nature of tourism, where companionship enhances enjoyment and reduces risks and costs. Zhuang and Wang (2024) identified social interaction as a key motivator and these findings confirm that friendship networks encourage participation among public sector workers in the Metropolis.

With regards to how household responsibilities reduce participation in domestic tourism, almost half (F 142, 46.9%) of the respondents agreed and (F 89, 29.4%) of responses were obtained as were neutral, with (F72, 23.8%) of respondents disagreed, that household responsibilities reduce their participation in tourism. Domestic duties, childcare, and other family obligations appear to compete with leisure travel opportunities. Crawford et al. (1991) note that family roles often restrict leisure activities, supporting the idea that staff are constrained by responsibilities at home.

Recommendations from friends was seen among the social variables that influence participation, with majority (F 212, 70.0%) of the respondents supporting. Recommendations often carry credibility and personal relevance, making them more persuasive than formal advertising. Kumar (2026) emphasized that peer networks strongly shape tourism behaviors in such cultural settings, as individuals rely on interpersonal trust when making leisure decisions. Colleagues and peers influence had a response of (F 171, 56.4%) indicating that they are being influence by their travel decisions, with a neutral response of (F 72, 23.8%) and (F 60, 19.8%) disagreed to the aligned. Colleagues may share recommendations, experiences, or travel opportunities, which can encourage participation. Theodorakopoulos et al. (2025) similarly observed that while peers can shape leisure and tourism behaviors

Table 1: Social drivers to participation in domestic tourism among public sector workers

Social drivers	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha
	F%	F%	F%			
Family encourage to travel	238 (78.5$)	31 (10.2%)	34 (11.2%)	2.67	0.668	
Considering family preferences when planning trips	148 (48.8)	95 (31.4)	60 (19.8)	2.29	777	
Travelling with friends increase likelihood of participation	212 (70.0)	54 (17.8)	37 (12.2)	2.58	0.7	
Household responsibilities reduce participation	142 (46.9)	89 (29.4)	72 (23.8)	2.23	0.809	
Recommendations from friends motivate travel	212 (70.0)	58 (19.1)	33 (10.9)	2.59	0.679	
Colleges/peers influence travel decisions	171 (56.4)	72 (23.8)	60 (19.8)	2.37	0.794	
Domestic tourism strengthens social relationships	240 (79.2)	18 (5.9)	45 (14.9)	2.64	0.727	
Group travel motivates participation	137 (45.2)	62 (20.5)	104 (34.3)	2.11	0.887	0.736
Cultural festivals and events encourage travel	141 (46.5)	64 (21.1)	98 (32.3)	2.14	0.878	
Social obligations like wedding funerals influence travel	242 (79.9)	37 (12.2)	24 (7.9)	2.72	0.601	
Community pressure influence travel participation	176 (58.1)	91 (30.0)	36 (11.9)	2.46	0.698	
Aged family members discourage leisure travel	238 (78.5)	17 (5.6)	48 (15.8)	2.63	0.743	
Opportunities to meet new people motivate travel	198 (65.3)	56 (18.5)	49 (16.2)	2.49	0.758	
Preference for home leisure with family over domestic tourism	193 (63.7)	54 (17.8)	56 (18.5)	2.45	0.787	

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

through information sharing and subtle pressure, closer social bonds tend to exert stronger influence on actual decisions.

Interestingly majority of respondents (F 242, 79.2%) agreed that domestic tourism strengthens social relationships among staff, were 5.9% were neutral and 14.9% disagreed that domestic tourism strengthens social relationships. This finding shows that staff view domestic tourism as more than a leisure activity; it is also a means of building, nurturing, and sustaining social bonds this supports the assertion of Buzulukova and Lobova, (2023) who identified social relationship-building as one of the enduring motivators for travel, emphasizing that people often travel to spend meaningful time with others and reinforce social ties. More recent studies Jo (2024) also confirm that social benefits remain a central aspect of travel motivation, alongside relaxation and escape.

Furthermore, only (F 141, 45.2%) of respondents agreed, that group travel motivates their participation in domestic tourism with (F 62 20.5%) being neutral, and (F 104, 34.3%) disagreeing. This suggests that group travel is not a universally attractive option for staff. Group travel often involves higher costs, complex coordination, and less flexibility in terms of destination choice, timing, and activities. These constraints may discourage some staff who prefer the independence and autonomy of individual or family-based trips this confirm Jafarov and Isazada (2024) similarly reported that while group-based tourism offers opportunities for shared experiences, it does not appeal to everyone, particularly those who value freedom and personalized itineraries.

Moreover, it could be seen in Table 1 that, less than half of the respondents (F 141, 46.5%) agreed that cultural festivals and traditional events encourage their participation with (F98, 32.3%) of Respondents disagreed. The finding advocates that cultural events are not universally prioritized among public sector workers in the Metropolis, possibly due to competing responsibilities, financial limitations, or differences in personal interests to confirms Portugal et al. (2022) observation that while festivals remain important attractions, barriers such as cost, distance and time constraints reduce participation for many potential travelers.

Interesting when asked how social obligations influence participation, majority (F 242, 79.9%) of respondents agreed, whiles (F 37, 12.2%) indicated neutral, and only (24, 7.9%) disagreed that social obligations influence participation. This supports the assertion of Nengovhela et al. (2024) that funerals and weddings are more than personal or family events; they are deeply rooted communal practices that demand presence and participation.

The survey shows community pressure influences travel participation with (F176, 58.1%) of respondents agreed, and neutral response of (F 91, 30.0%), and (F 36, 11.9%) disagreed to their influence. Individuals participate in tourism not only for personal enjoyment but also to maintain social standing, fulfill obligations, or conform to peer expectations. Kumar (2026) note that social conformity and cultural values influence leisure and tourism behaviors, with some individuals feeling pressure to align their activities with community norms.

Regarding to, Aged family members discourage leisure travel saw majority (F 238, 78.5%) of respondents agreed, and (F17 5.6%) of respondents indicated neutral and 15.8% disagreed that the presence of aged family members discourages their leisure participation. This finding stresses how caregiving responsibilities for elderly relatives act as a significant barrier to domestic tourism participation, this illustrates the work of Crawford and Godbey (1987) who emphasize that such caregiving commitments create structural constraints that limit leisure activities. Similarly, Davy et al. (2022) notes that caregiving reduces opportunities for personal leisure, as individuals often prioritize the needs of dependents over their own recreation.

When asked whether opportunities to meet new people motivate them to travel, the results indicate that (F198, 65.3%) of respondents agreed and 18.5% were neutral, and the remaining (F49, 16.2%) of respondents disagreed with it opportunities. This finding underlines the social dimension of tourism, where travel is not only about recreation but also about expanding one's circle of relationships. Iso-Ahola's (1982) escape seeking theory provides a useful lens, highlighting that individuals engage in leisure to

escape routine settings while seeking rewarding social interactions and novel experiences. Tourism provides such opportunities for novelty and connection, enabling staff to engage beyond their existing family and peer networks. Similar observations have been made by Minnaert et al. (2011), who argue that social tourism enhances inclusion and belonging by facilitating new interpersonal contacts.

The results showed more respondents acknowledging that they prefer home-based leisure with family over domestic tourism with an agreement of (F 193, 63.7%) of respondents, with (F54, 17.8%) being neutral, and (F 56,18.5%) disagreed, that they prefer home-based leisure with family over domestic tourism. This indicates a competing social priority, where staying home with family is sometimes valued more than traveling. Iso-Ahola (1982) noted that leisure choices often balance between escape and familiarity and for many staff, home-based family leisure appears equally fulfilling.

The reliability scores in Table 1 showing a Cronbach Alpha = 0.735 confirms the internal consistency of the items used, validating the strength of the social drivers. The findings indicate that public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis are interested in domestic tourism but are influenced by social drivers. Addressing these variables will be necessary to influence participation.

4.2. Social Drivers Influencing Domestic Tourism Participation

Determining the underlying dimensions of social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation among public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, factor analysis using varimax rotation was conducted on the items in the questionnaire about the social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted prior to analysis in order to check for quality in the data. The value of KMO index in Table 2 is 0.554, which is greater than the ideal value of 0.5 indicating a good sample size as well as inter-variable relationship. Bartlett's test of sphericity is also statistically significant at $P < 0.001$, meaning that the data set is, a requirement for beneficial factor analysis. This shows that the dataset is well suited for exposure underlying factors making it appropriate to proceed with the social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation.

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The total variance explained, as seen in Table 3, reveals that six distinct factors were obtained from the analysis. These six factors cumulatively describe the reasons for participation, of which the first factor accounts for 18.347% of variance, the second 15.276%, the third 11.055%, the fourth 10.501%, the fifth factor 8.533% and the sixth factor also accounts for 7.537% of variance. Together, the six factors collectively account for 7.537% of the variance.

The scree plot (Figure 1) also confirms the findings, since the curve flattens at factors six and seven, which suggest an optimal retention of six factors.

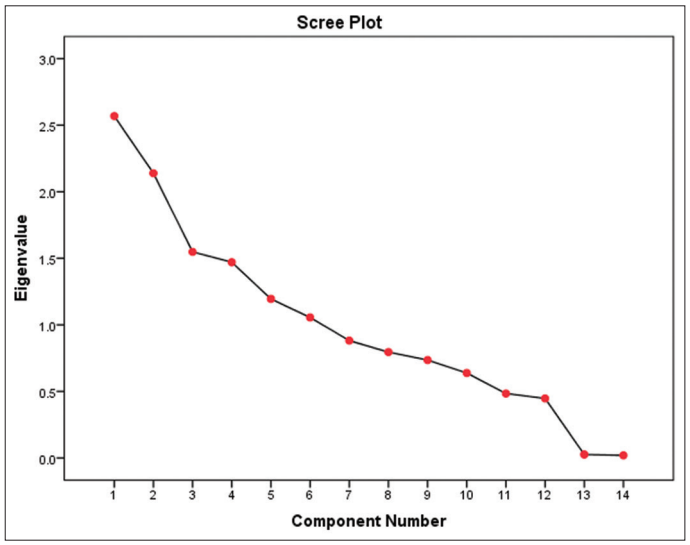
Table 4 presents the extracted factors and their associated items, factor loadings, mean scores, standard deviations, and the percentage of variance explained by each factor. The analysis reveals that six key dimensions that underlie the social drivers regarding domestic tourism participation. Each factor represents a group of related variables with internal consistency, as shown by Cronbach's alpha (α) values, indicating the reliability of items under each factor values >0.7 are generally considered acceptable (Taber, 2018).

In Table 4, Factor one labelled "Interpersonal and Family Motivators accounted for the largest explained variance (18.3%) with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.801$. The results indicate that traveling with family members (loading = 0.966) and recommendations from friends (loading = 0.960) strongly influence domestic tourism participation. Social obligations, such as weddings, funerals, and other family events (loading = 0.538), were also recognized as key drivers. This highlights the importance of interpersonal networks and family ties as primary motivators in the domestic tourism decision-making process.

The second factor labeled "Social Bonds explained 15.3% of the variance with excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.986$). The analysis showed that aged family members can discourage leisure travel (loading = 0.976), while participation in domestic tourism strengthens social relationships (loading = 0.971). This suggests that domestic tourism serves a dual purpose acting as a means of fostering social relationships while also being constrained by family care responsibilities.

The third factor is labelled "Socio-Cultural Influence," accounted for 11.1% of the variance with good reliability ($\alpha = 0.796$). Items

Figure 1: Scree plot of six drivers



under this factor included group travel (loading = 0.700), societal pressure to participate when others are travelling (loading = 0.669), household responsibilities that reduce travel opportunities (loading = 0.623), and cultural festivals that encourage travel (loading = 0.613). These findings reflect the role of community norms, cultural practices, and household duties in shaping domestic tourism decisions, with responses showing consistent agreement across these socio-cultural influences.

The fourth factor captured Family Influence on Travel Decisions, explained 10.5% of the variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.747. Respondents considered family preferences when making domestic tourism decisions (loading = 0.819) and were encouraged by family members to participate (loading = 0.795). The acceptable reliability confirms that family influence is a consistent and dependable driver of participation among respondents.

Factor 5, labelled Peer Motivation and Family Leisure Priorities, accounted for 8.5% of the variance with acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.741$). Respondents indicated that they were more likely to travel if peers were also travelling (loading = 0.793). However,

Table 2: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test on social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		0.554
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	2222.603
	df	91
	Significance	0.000

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 3: Variance on social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation

Component	Initial eigenvalues			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	Percentage of variance	Cumulative (%)	Total	Percentage of variance	Cumulative (%)
1	2.569	18.347	18.347	2.569	18.347	18.347
2	2.139	15.276	33.623	2.139	15.276	33.623
3	1.548	11.055	44.679	1.548	11.055	44.679
4	1.470	10.501	55.180	1.470	10.501	55.180
5	1.195	8.533	63.713	1.195	8.533	63.713
6	1.055	7.537	71.250	1.055	7.537	71.250
7	0.881	6.295	77.546			
8	0.795	5.678	83.224			
9	0.735	5.252	88.475			
10	0.638	4.557	93.032			
11	0.484	3.456	96.488			
12	0.447	3.191	99.678			
13	0.026	0.184	99.862			
14	0.019	0.138	100.000			

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 4: Social drivers to domestic tourism participation

Factors	Mean	SD	Factor loading	Explained variance (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: Interpersonal and Family Motivators				18.347	0.801
• Traveling with family members increases my likelihood of participating in domestic tourism.	2.580	0.700	0.966		
• Recommendations from friends motivate me to participate in domestic tourism.	2.590	0.679	0.960		
• Social obligations such as weddings, funerals, and other family events influence my travel decisions.	2.720	0.601	0.538		
Factor 2: Social Bonds				15.276	0.986
• Aged family members sometimes discourage leisure travel, affecting my participation.	2.630	0.743	0.976		
• Participation in domestic tourism strengthens my social relationships	2.640	0.727	0.971		
Factor 3: Socio-Cultural Influence				11.055	0.796
• Groups travels motivates me to take part in domestic trips.	2.110	0.887	0.700		
• I feel societal pressure to participate in domestic tourism when others in my community are travelling.	2.460	0.698	0.669		
• Household responsibilities reduce my ability to engage in domestic tourism	2.230	0.809	0.623		
• Cultural festivals and traditional events encourage me to travel domestically.	2.140	0.878	0.613		
Factor 4: Family influence on travel decisions				10.501	0.747
• I consider my family's preferences when deciding on domestic tourism trips	2.290	0.777	0.819		
• My family encourages me to participate in domestic tourism activities.	2.670	0.668	0.795		
Factor 5: Peer motivation and family leisure priorities				8.533	0.741
• I am more likely to travel if my colleagues or peers are also travelling.	2.370	0.794	0.793		
• I prefer spending leisure time with family at home rather than engaging in domestic tourism.	2.450	0.787	0.665		
Factor 6: Social engagement				7.537	0.000
• Opportunities to meet new people motivate me to engage in domestic tourism.	2.49	0.758	0.586		

some preferred spending leisure time with family at home rather than engaging in tourism (loading = 0.665). This factor reflects a balance between peer influence and prioritizing family-centered leisure activities.

On the last Factor Social Engagement contributed 7.5% of the explained variance. The sole item under this factor opportunities to meet new people (loading = 0.586) indicated that social exploration and interaction also motivate participation in domestic tourism, though this influence was weaker compared to other factors. These findings paint a rich picture of the multidimensional nature of participation in domestic tourism. The factor analysis reveals six primary perceived barriers that influence staff participation in domestic tourism. Among these, safety concerns, disengagement, infrastructure, and cost are the most dominant.

This results confirm that social drivers significantly affect participation in domestic tourism. Interpersonal relationships, family obligations, and social networks emerged as the most powerful motivators, while cultural practices, peer pressure, and opportunities for socialization provided additional, albeit weaker, influences. These findings underscore the idea that domestic tourism is not only about destinations but is deeply embedded in family ties, social obligations, and communal values.

5. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the social drivers influencing domestic tourism participation among public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The descriptive results show that family encouragement, recommendations from friends, social obligations such as funerals and weddings, and the perception that domestic tourism strengthens social relationships were the strongest and most consistently endorsed motivators of participation, each recording high mean scores and broad agreement among respondents. By contrast, drivers such as group travel and cultural festivals attracted more divided opinions, while household responsibilities and the presence of aged family members emerged as notable constraints on workers' ability to travel.

The exploratory factor analysis, supported by a satisfactory KMO value of 0.554 and a statistically significant Bartlett's test, extracted six underlying dimensions of the social drivers influencing participation: Interpersonal and Family Motivators, Social Bonds, Socio-Cultural Influence, Family Influence on Travel Decisions, Peer Motivation and Family Leisure Priorities, and Social Engagement. Together, these six drivers accounted for a substantial share of the variance in respondents' social experience of domestic tourism, with interpersonal and family-related dimensions consistently emerging as the most influential, and social engagement, though weaker, still confirming that the desire for new social connections plays a role in travel decisions.

Taken together, these findings confirm the study's theoretical proposition that domestic tourism participation among public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis is not simply a function of income or personal attitude, but is deeply embedded in family ties, peer relationships, and communal obligations, in line with the subjective-norm component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and constrained in a manner consistent with the interpersonal dimension of the Leisure Constraints Model. The findings also affirm that participation partly reflects an underlying need for social interaction and escape from routine, as theorised by Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking framework. In sum, domestic tourism among public sector workers in Ghana is best understood as a socially negotiated experience, shaped as much by relationships and obligations as by resources and personal preference.

5.1. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling, necessitated by the absence of a consolidated register of public sector workers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, means that respondents were not selected through a probability-based procedure; this limits the extent to which the findings can be statistically generalised to the broader population of public sector workers, both within the Metropolis and beyond it. Second, the cross-sectional design captured workers' perceptions and travel behaviour at a single point in time, and cannot account for seasonal variation in domestic tourism participation or establish causal relationships between the social drivers examined and actual travel behaviour. Third, data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire relying on respondents' self-reports, which may be subject to social desirability and recall bias. Finally, the study focused exclusively on public sector workers and on social drivers of participation, deliberately setting aside economic and attitudinal determinants; as such, the findings may not extend to private-sector or informal-sector workers, and do not capture how social and economic factors might interact to jointly shape domestic tourism participation.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed for public sector institutions in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, tourism sector stakeholders, and future researchers.

1. Management of public sector institutions in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, through their human resource and staff welfare committees, should design family-inclusive domestic tourism packages and incentives, given that family encouragement and shared family travel emerged as the strongest motivators of participation among workers.
2. Since aged family members and household responsibilities were identified as significant constraints on participation, these institutions should consider flexible leave arrangements or family support schemes, such as subsidised eldercare or childcare support during designated travel periods, to ease the interpersonal burden on workers who wish to travel.
3. Given the strong influence of peer recommendations and friendship networks, these institutions and destination marketers should leverage staff associations, departmental groups, and social media platforms to facilitate peer-to-peer sharing of domestic travel experiences and group booking opportunities.
4. Because cultural festivals and group travel generated relatively mixed responses, targeted awareness campaigns, developed

in partnership with the Ghana Tourism Authority and local festival organisers, should better communicate the value and accessibility of culturally rooted domestic tourism experiences to staff.

5. Tourism operators and institutional welfare offices should design travel options that combine social engagement opportunities, such as networking-oriented retreats or staff exchange visits between sister institutions, to appeal to workers who are motivated by the prospect of meeting new people.
6. Future research should replicate this study across other metropolitan and municipal areas and public-sector populations in Ghana to assess the generalisability of the six-factor structure identified here, and should consider combining the present social-driver lens with economic and motivational variables, using longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, to build a more comprehensive model of domestic tourism participation.

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