

## Modifying the Model: Developing the Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model

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**How to cite this article:** Harris, K.L. & Botha, C.R. (2023). Modifying the Model: Developing the Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 12(4):1291-1306. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.432>

### Abstract

COVID-19 brought travel as we know it to a complete standstill. At the time it was believed that the impact of the pandemic was unprecedented and that the projected recovery would need to be both different and transformative. This was particularly evident from a product (supply) point of view given the renewed attempts to increase tourists (demand) to destinations. As a result of this hiatus, the travel industry needed to reconsider the shape and form of the tourism product in order to revive and ensure its sustainability. The objective of this investigation is to demonstrate how the product (supply) could be remodelled in a destabilised environment as a contingency plan so as to maintain and sustain tourist arrivals (demand) in the wake of any internal crises and other external emergencies. As a result, this article presents research on a newly devised novel approach to remodel the actual supply-side of the domestic tourism value chain so as to become more resilient and resistant. In principle this remodelling hones in on stimulating the development of a tourism product that takes into account other dimensions that were not formerly or conventionally regarded as part of the hyper-local touristic experience.

**Keywords:** remodelling; domestic tourism; COVID-19; travel resilience; Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model (DTRM)

### Introduction

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the travel and tourism industry was one of the sector's that was the hardest hit as a result of the global novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). With borders closed, lockdowns implemented, flights grounded and people socially distanced, the very structure, nature and components of the industry were totally dismantled. This industry-wide devastation was apparent in both the global North and global South, and most evidently in those nation states that were (over) dependent on the travel industry as a major contributor to their annual gross domestic profit (GDP). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), there was much evidence to suggest that the impact and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic would need to be "unprecedented" and "unrivalled" (UNWTO, 2023). Moreover, in 2020–2021, as the pandemic continued to rage across the globe, many international bodies also indicated that the "restarting" of tourism after this disastrous global event, would inevitably need to "re-emerge" in a "reconfigured" form as the "status quo" of partaking in touristic activities was not shielded from external crises. Many within the industry also signalled that COVID-19 forced the industry to pause so as to "rethink" and "reflect" on a post-pandemic and future travel landscape.

In due course, and possibly from pure pragmatism, COVID-19 became to be regarded as the catalyst that forced the tourism sector to redefine, reimagine, and reignite itself in order to restart. This "R-factor", essentially amounted to scrutinizing the sector and then

“remodelling” it in order for it not only to recover, but also to become resilient to future risks. In other words, the reconfiguration of this market segment was to be a sustainable solution to mitigate and harness future internal and external challenges. In this milieu, much of the strategizing and deliberations around addressing the hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic pivoted around the possibilities of the domestic tourism market and travelling within it. Thus, as borders were closed and international travel stopped, countries across the globe were forced to look into their “own backyards”. As travel and tourism was heavily restricted, the industry became confined to the local (only). Thus, stakeholders, role players as well as practitioners had no other option but to embrace the domestic tourism market segment in an attempt to “stay in business” and in an effort to avoid a total collapse of the sector, its labour force and its ultimate GDP contribution.

By focussing on the modelling of the domestic tourism market segment, this article argues that one can remodel the product (supply) in order to have a knock-on effect in terms of tourist arrivals (demand) at a hyper-local level so as to resuscitate this industry in a post-pandemic and future travel landscape. A new unique model (Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model [DTRM]) was formulated to showcase a sustainable “back-to-basics” manner in which to remodel domestic tourism for future growth and viability.

### **Research approach**

This article utilises a participatory research methodology embedded in a qualitative research design situated within the transdisciplinary field of heritage and cultural tourism studies. The research approach firstly situated domestic tourism, and its subsequent models, within the aforementioned scholarship within the global North and global South. Secondly, information and data sets were analysed whereafter a preliminary model was developed to remodel domestic tourism. Thirdly, this model was workshopped at a hyper-local touristic level with stakeholders, and, fourthly, once participant perspectives were appraised the proposed model was practically refined to focus on four key areas within the domestic tourism market segment as a counter to crises the industry may face. Lastly, the applicability of this model in most hyper-local touristic settings (present and future) was considered. As such, the need for unity and proactive collaboration and partnerships were stressed as part of this remodelling attempt for the domestic tourism market segment. Participants included in the workshops were role players from the public sector, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, local tourism academia, as well as grassroots community members.

### **Situating domestic tourism**

Domestic tourism can be defined as tourism that takes place between and within regions of a particular sovereign nation state (Williams, 1997). It therefore effectively includes intra-regional and inter-regional tourism, meaning that travelling takes place within the boundaries of a specific country. Domestic tourism is considered to be one of the oldest forms of tourism (Jafari, 1986). However, despite this inherent developmental legacy, in most contemporary travel settings this market segment is often used for achieving an array of national growth strategies. These include: the distribution of the economic benefits from tourism; the political and technological capital extracted from travel; for social and cultural upliftment, community pride and boosting nation-building endeavors amongst citizens; for sustainable and responsible environmental efforts; as well as for counteracting the seasonality of international tourist arrivals and the phenomenon of “peak seasons” within a specific tourism environment (Archer, 1987; Pearce, 1989). Besides this, domestic tourism has been found in a handful of instances to also have the ability to serve as a “recovery tool” in times of international crises, be this socially, technologically, economically, environmentally, or politically imposed (STEEP

approach). However, despite this outlined importance, domestic tourism remains one of the most underrated niches within the tourism fraternity (Rogerson & Liza, 2005). Typically, the tourism domain is associated with “iconic” and “on-the-beaten-track” global destinations at the expense of what is deemed by many to be “uniconic” and “off-the-beaten-track” local domestic attractions. Yet, although people travel often to experience new, different and distinct cultures, sites as well as places, the “local” (domestic) is often overlooked in its entirety by tourists and scholars alike.

According to the European Travel Commission (ETC) domestic tourism accounted for between 70% - 75% of the total spending on travel and tourism globally in 2018. (ETC, 2021) Therefore, it could be argued that domestic tourism remains a key pillar within the global tourism sphere, and may be regarded as a crucial segment of many economies – albeit primarily in the global North. However, within the global South there appears to be a greater dependency on international tourism, particularly from the global North, with its concomitant revenue. According to the African Union (AU), this perspective essentially overshadows the value and contribution of the local domestic market in the global South (AU, 2023). Furthermore in 2018, the UNWTO – almost prophetically – found that a strong domestic tourism sector could assist and enable a country to “withstand shocks and demand fluctuations that may arise when crises affect external source markets” (UNWTO, 2022). These diverging standpoints, made prior to the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, were of pivotal importance during the crisis, seeing as it endorsed the current need to “remodel” local travel settings and landscapes to “rescue” and “re-unify” the tourism sector at a domestic level from a theoretical as well as practical point of view.

Similarly, Scheyvens (2007) finds that solely focusing on international tourism is short-sighted and fails to recognise the value of domestic tourism. She argues that the promotion of domestic tourism can advance inclusive nation-building; offer far greater economic, social and environmental benefits than international tourism; is not as prone to market leakages like global travel; and showcases that the government cares for its citizens well-being and holiday opportunities. Additionally, Scheyvens (2007: 308) also points out that: “in many countries there is an insidious perception that domestic tourism is the ‘poor cousin’ of the more glamorous international tourism market, and that domestic tourism cannot bring the same range of development benefits to a country” (Scheyvens, 2007).

This stance is corroborated by the fact that domestic tourism needs less foreign investment to develop; is less vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations; contributes more to local development because of the higher sales of locally produced products; local production is more labour intensive providing more employment opportunities; and lastly, there are more opportunities to enhance the “multiplier effect” (Harris et al., 2022; 2023). Scheyvens (2007) in turn stated that travel stakeholders and practitioners, in the public and/or private sector, should avoid the temptation of focusing solely on international tourism and should rather develop strategies that support and encourage inclusive domestic tourism, and new as well as novel approaches to these domestic travel experiences. (Scheyvens, 2007). The COVID-19 pandemic compelled governments and businesses to focus on the “poor cousin” – domestic tourism. It was, thus, propelled to centre stage as not only a contingency plan, but also a platform for resilience and much needed revenue in the wake of the devastation caused by this external crisis. It also meant that the future shape and prospect of tourism highlighted domestic tourism as a viable, and somewhat neglected, segment of the industry.

### **Conventional tourism models**

Since the beginning of the study of modern tourism, scholars have developed various models to conceptualise the different components of the tourism market. According to Tribe (1997),



tourism is based on the theoretical formulation (intangible) and practical implementation (tangible) of abstract models within what is known as the tourism value chain (Tribe, 1997). Williams (1979), Darbellay and Stock (2012) concur with these findings and state that since its early formulation in the 1940s as an academic research area, what would become the “global tourism fraternity”, has relied heavily on conceptual models to provide it with a methodological base to serve as a “discipline”, “domain” or “field of interest” within global educational environments. This need for justification as a worthwhile academic space for exploration and research has likewise led to the continued modelling, and in some instances remodelling of demand and supply-side components of the tourism value chain. This means that as soon as a tourism model is adapted to a specific segment of the travel market, it is re-analysed and re-evaluated in an attempt to not only stay relevant within the scholarship theoretically – but to also remain practically applicable within a fast-changing travel landscape. Concurrently there have also been tourism models within the domain that have had to “evolve” and “adapt” along with it. This is not only to meet the various sustainable industry objectives but also to constantly acclimatise to the ever-changing needs and requirements of the tourists themselves who play a central role in all tourism flows of the modern industry. Moreover, this constant re-appraisal is evident when considering renowned tourism models that are continually being re-contextualised, from an array of perspectives and case studies, by tourism scholars. Some of the models that have stood the test of time are showcased in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Conventional tourism models – Demand and supply

SIDE	MODEL
DEMAND	“Functioning Tourism System” (Gunn, 1972)
	“Tourism System” (Leiper, 1979)
	“Tourist Decision-making Process” (Mathieson & Wall, 1982)
SUPPLY	“Tourist Area Life Cycle” (Butler, 1980)
	“Tourism Product” (Smith, 1994)

In the early 1970s Gunn (1972) devised the “Functioning Tourism System” to encapsulate the demand and supply components of the conventional tourism system. In this system, the demand relates to the “who”, in other words the tourist; while the supply equates to the “what”, the tourist destination (Gunn, 1972). In essence, the tourist is drawn by the experience based on the promotion and information provided to them beforehand, and then requires transportation from their point of origin, auxiliary services and attractions once at the destination, offered by the “hosts” (Gunn, 1972). In this model, the emphasis is thus placed on the demand-side of the tourism value chain.

In a follow-on tourism model, Leiper (1979) developed an industry tool which encapsulated the tourism industry in a holistic manner and was called the “Tourism System”. It identified the broader realm of the tourism system as being one that comprised six environments including: physical, cultural, social, economic, political, and technological. Within this multi-layered context, three geographical components were introduced that included: the tourist generating region; the transit region; and the tourist destination region (Leiper, 1979). This appears as a cyclical movement as the tourist departs from the generating region, takes a route to the destination and then returns back to the generating region. Leiper’s (1979) model reflects on the collective travel value chain, and encapsulates the movement of the tourist on the demand-side to the destination with its products and services, the supply-side. Butler (1980) introduced his now renowned “Tourist Area Life Cycle” model in 1980, which focuses specifically on the evolution of the supply-side of the tourism industry. It identifies five distinct phases of evolution: “exploration”, “involvement”, “development”, “consolidation” and “stagnation” which reflect on the inception and development status of the

area. Thereafter it can either decline or rejuvenate in the short and/or long-term depending on factors such as resource use, disasters or new features (Butler, 1980).

Also, in the 1980s, Mathieson and Wall (1982) invented a model entitled the “Tourist Decision-making Process”. This comprised five phases starting with: the desire to travel; collection of information; the decision and choice; the travel preparations; and culminating with the outcome and evaluation. These phases are impacted by four main components: the tourist profile; travel awareness; destination resources and characteristics; and trip features. In this context the tourist profile is influenced by a range of environmental features such as socio-economic and behavioural factors (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). This model can therefore be grouped as a demand-side model given its focus and emphasis on the tourist. Lastly, the model Smith (1994) developed entitled the “Tourism Product”, is a supply component of the tourism value chain. This concentric tourism model consists of the “physical plant”, the service, the hospitality, the freedom of choice (decision-making), and the involvement. In this milieu Smith (1994) maintains that these five elements combine to ensure a tourism product of high quality on the supply-side of the tourism value chain (Smith, 1994). In appraising these five classic conventional tourism models there are both similarities and differences. These show that while there are constants in defining the tourism process there still remain a number of dynamic and changing aspects. These are both time-bound as well as subjective and need to be taken into account when devising a tourism model for theoretical consideration and practical implementation. The “product” (supply) is a constant mean as is the presence of the “tourist” (demand). Another commonality is “information”, while a fourth is that within these five models only two of them briefly refer to “disaster” and “risk”.

Butler (1980) notes that the destination area can “decline” as a result of external disasters, whereas in the case of Mathieson and Wall (1982), mention is made of perceived risks and uncertainties surrounding trip features. Yet, none of these conventional models consider “risk” and “disaster” at a broader level nor in an unprecedented format. Similarly, these conventional tourism models do not envisage nor structure the demand and/or supply side of the tourism value chain in such a manner to be buoyant in the event of unexpected crises or catastrophes. It is within this context that this article calls for the urgent modifying of the “status quo” of travel and tourism given the wide-reaching impacts felt by the travel market during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Modelling domestic tourism**

In light of the aforementioned, it becomes evident that tourism models are regarded as the foundation for tourism planning, and without them, travel as a service sector and economic industry would struggle to exist. Therefore, the central position of models of any kind, cannot be underestimated in contemporary tourism scholarship. This applies to the domestic tourism market segment as well. Domestic tourism, as a topic of inquiry has similarly not been excluded from this “modelification” and “remodelification” process within the travel industry. However, unlike conventional models that are generally grouped as a “collective” in the tourism fraternity, domestic tourism models are oftentimes sub-divided into two categories parallel to one another though still in the envisaged tourism value chain. These are the “demand-side domestic tourism models” and “supply-side domestic tourism models” (see Figure 1). This parallel division of domestic tourism models within the tourism value chain has also been researched from a range of viewpoints by various travel practitioners over the last half century. Over a hundred articles were considered to assess domestic tourism findings currently available in theory and in practice within the domestic travel fraternity.



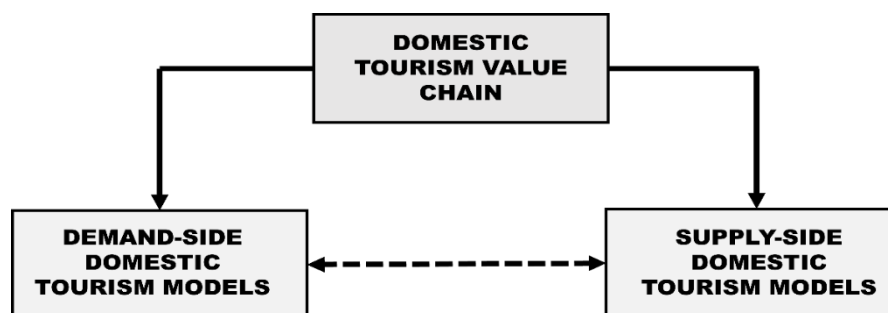


Figure 1: Domestic tourism model segmentation

This review of literature was also considered by way of a STEEP-approach, and then throughout the global North and global South. Thus, from a range of social, technological, economic, environmental, and political perspectives, and included quantitative, qualitative and case study sets of data and information across a travel spectrum (See Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Domestic tourism research segmentation (STEPP approach)

SEGMENT	RESEARCH
SOCIAL	Williams (1979), Jaakson (1986), Huybers (2003), Cochrane (2009), Yang, Liu and Qi (2014), Tsourgiannis, Delias, Polychronidou, Karasavvaglou and Valsamidis (2015), Li, Meng and Zhang (2016), Styliadis, Belhassen and Shani (2017), Herle (2018), Mansour and Mumuni (2019), Kumar and Nafi (2020), Lin, Qin, Li and Jiang (2022), Matiza and Slabbert (2022), Nunkoo, Daronkola and Gholipour (2022)
TECHNOLOGICAL	Wang, Chou and Wu (2010), Bader, Baldauf, Leinert, Fleck and Liebrich (2012), Alipour, Kilic and Zamani (2013), Al-Badi, Tarhini and Al-Sawaei (2017), Vanhoof, Hendrickx, Puussaar, Verstraeten, Ploetz and Smoreda (2017), Roth-Cohen and Lahav (2018), Mkwizu and Mtae (2019), Kalna-Dubinyuk (2020), Nofal, Al-Adwan, Yaseen and Alsheikh (2020), Briez, Eljalil and Ezzat (2021), Wu, Cao, Liu and Chen (2022)
ECONOMICAL	Coenen and Van Ekeren (2003), Rogerson and Liza (2005), Anthanasopoulos and Hyndman (2008), Allen and Yap (2009), Anthanasopoulos, Ahmed and Hyndman (2009) Jelusic (2017), Throane & Farstad (2011), Lubbe, Douglas and Du Preez (2013), Fralova, Ryabova, Kabanova, Rogach and Vetrova (2017), Canh and Thanh (2020), Alvarez-Dias, Hombres, Ghisetti and Pontarollo (2020), Bayih and Singh (2020), Giaeo, Vuong, Phuong and Dat (2021), Lee (2021), Muyobo and Fragouli (2021), Kirilova, Zhilinkova, Golovkina and Farko (2021), Nurov, Khamroyeva and Kadirova (2021), Boto-Garcia and Mayar (2022), Sahoo, Nayak and Mahalik (2022)
ENVIRONMENTAL	Taylor and Ortiz (2009), Skanavis and Sakellari (2011), Bujaso and Rossello (2013), Patuelli, Mussoni and Candela (2013), Priego, Rossello and Santana-Gallego (2015), Kim, Park, Lee, Son, Son, Kim and Yun (2017), Peng and Xiao (2018), Dong, Xu, Yu and Zhao (2019), Lee, Han and Ko (2020), Diaz-Perez, Garcia-Gonzalez and Fyall (2021), Wang, Wang, Liu and Wong (2021) Vu, Song, Li and Law (2023)
POLITICAL	Archer (1978), Jafari (1986), Pearce (1989), Adams (1998), Wang and Qu (2004), Adelaye, Carr and Insch (2019), Hussain and Fuste-Forne (2021), Volgger, Taplin and Aebli (2021), Galderon, Esquivel, Garcia and Lozano (2022), Gyimothy, Braun and Zenker (2022)

Table 3: Domestic tourism across the global North and South

REGION	COUNTRY AND SCHOLAR(S)
GLOBAL NORTH	Australia (Gardiner, Grace and King, 2014), Canada (Shen, Jappe, Choi and Huang, 2018) Italy (Massidda and Etzo, 2012), Israel (Singh and Krakaer, 2015), Japan (Ehrentraut, 1993), New Zealand (Hong-Tsui, 2017), South Korea (Kong, Kim and Nicholls, 2014), Spain (Priego, Rossello and, Santana-Gallego, 2015), United Kingdom (Canavan, 2013), United States of America (Witt, Newbould and Watkins, 2016)
GLOBAL SOUTH	Algeria (Mohamed, 2022), Botswana (Morupisi, Mokgalo and Unlu, 2017) Brazil (Haddad, Porsse and Rabahty (2013), China (Wen, 1997), Egypt (Soliman, 2011), India (Rao & Suresh, 2001), Iran (Ghaderi, 2011), Jordan (Mustafa, 2012), Kenya (Sindiga, 1996), Malaysia (Lim, Ramli, Yusof and Cheah, 2015), Mexico (Mora-Rivera, Ceron-Monroy and Garcia-Mora, 2019), Russia (Kulgachev, Zaitseva, Lorionova, Yumatov and Kiryanova, 2017), Rwanda (Mazimhaka, 2007), Saudi-Arabia (Bogari, Growtler and Marr, 2003), Serbia (Bozic, Jovanovic, Tomic and Vasiljevic, 2017), South Africa (Rogerson, 2015), Tanzania (Melubo, 2020), Turkey (Seckelmann, 2002), Vietnam (Bui & Jolliffe, 2011), Zimbabwe (Woyo, 2021)

However, this extensive review of domestic tourism at a local, regional, national, continental and international level across the global North as well as the global South produced only the following fifteen publications specifically focusing on “domestic tourism models” conceptualised by the following scholars (See Table 4).

Table 4: Domestic tourism models – Demand and supply

SIDE	MODEL
DEMAND	“Local Tourist Budgeting Model” (Coenen and Van Eekeren, 2003) “Domestic Tourist Choice Modelling” (Huybers, 2003) “Forecasting Model for Domestic Tourism” (Anthanasopoulos and Hyndman, 2008) “Demand Panel Modelling for Local Travels” (Allen and Yap, 2009) “Spatial Interaction Model for Domestic Tourists” (Patuelli et al., 2013) “Local Tourism Consumption Model” (Jelusic, 2017) “Domestic Tourist Marketing Model” (Stylidis et al., 2017) “Domestic Travel Flow Model” (Alvarez-Dias et al., 2020) “Domestic Tourist Motivation and Satisfaction Framework” (Bayih and Singh, 2020) Domestic Tourist Satisfactory Model (Giaeo et al., 2021) “Sustainable Domestic Tourism Flows Strategy” (Kirillova et al., 2021) “Local Experiences Model” (Vu et al., 2023)
SUPPLY	“Domestic Product Segmentation Model” (Lubbe, Douglas and Du Preez, 2013) “Adaptive-release Domestic Tourism Model (Alipour, Kilic and Zamani, 2013) “Theoretical Recovery Model” Kumar and Nafi (2020)

In light of this, when considering the models produced in the last half century on the demand and supply sides of the domestic tourism value chain, it becomes quite evident that similar to the conventional tourism models, demand-side domestic tourism models (the tourist) have received more academic attention as opposed to supply-side domestic tourism models (the product). This again underscores the fragmentation of the market and makes it evident that domestic tourists are seen as more of an academic and industry priority in sharp contrast to domestic tourism products. This is concerning as it stands to reason that without products, tourists would not have a domestic destination, attraction nor site to explore. The latter lacuna in research is problematic in the light of the fact that these two components should work in tandem with one another, and not in competition to deliver a unique, authentic and memorable touristic experience for the domestic tourist travelling to their local destination of choice. This, imbalance and under-representation of the supply-side of domestic tourism models raises concerns for the sector as a whole, especially in its attempt to recover and build resilience to internal and external threats, accompanied by the need to become more adaptable to mitigate unprecedented crises. Similarly, to conventional tourism models, there is a need to remodel domestic tourism models (globally and locally) to accommodate future changes and challenges.

### Remodelling the model for domestic tourism

While the tourist and the product remain fundamental to domestic tourism, the remodelling of the model proposed by this research suggests the application of the “R-factor” to the domestic product (supply) for the domestic tourist (demand). In this context the DTRM was devised and at its core was formulated to mitigate internal risks and circumvent external disasters (See Figure 2)

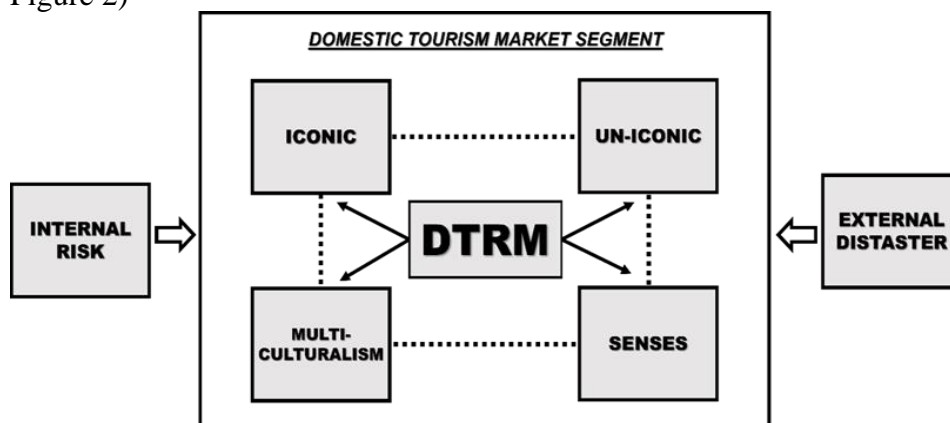


Figure 2: Visualising the DTRM



The DTRM model aims to fundamentally, in theory and in practice, break away from the “status quo” of “doing”, “partaking” and “engaging” with domestic tourism as outlined above. The DTRM model is thus a supply-side sustainable development tool which could be implemented within a hyper-local travel market setting so as to refocus and re-energise the domestic tourism product in these grassroots tourism environments. The DTRM in principle is, therefore, devised to incorporate what exists, and then expand and extend the domestic product so as to make the domestic tourism market more attractive and profitable, especially to local travellers.

The DTRM comprises four basic elements which can be applied to a range of localised travel spaces. The essential idea in the developing and deployment of the DTRM is to ascertain what a particular local destination has to offer in terms of its “iconic” attractions; then determine what “uniconic” attractions exist and can be explored in the area; then to go beyond the iconic as well as uniconic to embrace other multi-cultural features within the region; and then finally to encapsulate the holistic tourist by including all five of their senses – see, hear, taste, touch and smell – in the touristic experience (See Table 5). These four elements make up the components for strengthening the domestic tourism market and for making it more resilient. We argue that the stabilisation of the local tourism market will stand the domestic domain in good stead as a contingency plan in preparation for the return of the international travel sector in the short as well as long-term.

The first element, the “iconic”, refers to a popular and well-recognised tourist attraction which could be natural or cultural. These attractions feature prominently in all destination marketing materials and are also the traditional or customary drawcards for tourists to a specific area. They are highly regarded attractions of choice and cater to both a local, provincial and national audience. Within this context the purpose-built infrastructures and auxiliary services are usually well-developed and comply with industry standards and tourist expectations. In addition, information regarding these iconic attractions are well-known and widely promoted. In this scenario the supply (product), complies with the demand (tourist) and is connected through the available information.

Table 5: Domestic Tourism Remodelling Model (DTRM) – Four elements

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTOR
1) ICONIC	Popular and well-recognised tourist attractions – natural or cultural, tangible or intangible; featured on marketing materials and are drawcards to a specific area.
2) UNICONIC	Under-acknowledged, unidentified, and unrecognised tourist attractions: natural or cultural, tangible or intangible; do not feature in destination marketing materials and are generally unknown to tourists.
3) MULTI-CULTURALISM	The inclusion of diverse backgrounds, cultures, races, nations and ethnicities; incorporates a broader spectrum of tangible and intangible elements; participation and engagements are fundamentally different.
4) SENSORY	Incorporates all five senses into the touristic encounter and has the potential to make for a more holistic and diversified experience, which can enhance the overall sensory experience at the tourist attraction; intangible in nature, however, inspires tangible involvement.

The second element, the “uniconic”, is in essence everything that element 1 is not. In other words, the “uniconic” refers to under-acknowledged, unidentified, and unrecognised tourist attractions which could be natural or cultural. Thus, attractions which are in principle unknown to tourists. Similarly, these attractions hardly ever feature in destination marketing materials or advertising campaigns. While these might not be highly regarded tourist attractions, they still have the inherent potential to attract and interest a select or niche audience. However, in this context these uniconic attractions usually have no infrastructures and are mostly underdeveloped. Thus, it can be argued that these settings are essentially void of tourist drawcards and therefore do not conform with industry standards nor can they fulfil tourist expectations in their current undeveloped state. In this scenario the supply (product) cannot comply with the demand (tourist) due to a lack of information.



The third element of the DTRM, “multiculturalism”, has a range of meanings in different disciplines and domains. For the purpose of this study “multiculturalism” refers to the inclusion of diverse backgrounds, cultures, races, ethnicities and identities that are often not considered within the “mainstream” of tourism. This element goes beyond the identification of the local to incorporate a broader spectrum of tangible and intangible elements which in the context of tourism includes flavours, traditions, practices, histories, trends and contributions of the “other”. This multicultural element thus aligns with the idea of showcasing all cultural aspects found within a specific region beyond the known, recognised and dominant identities within a particular travel landscape. This will potentially attract local travellers (demand) to partake in a different experiential touristic engagement by utilising the local product (supply) in a wide variety of ways. Information for this element is readily available to utilize, but needs to be activated.

The final component, element 4, relates to the five senses. This element challenges the notion that tourism is primarily a “look-and-see” industry and urges the incorporation of all five senses into the touristic encounter within an attraction and has the potential to make for a more holistic and diversified experience. Instead of merely “seeing an attraction” the tourist should be engaged to hear, smell, taste and touch the components of the local travel site as well. This has the potential to enhance the overall sensory experience at the tourist attraction giving it a more fulfilling, encompassing and interactive dimension. Thus, the tourist (demand) is holistically doing, partaking and engaging with the domestic tourism product (supply). Information can therefore be created whilst partaking in the domestic touristic experience.

While the first of these four elements will consolidate the already established (albeit the waning) tourist attractions, the remaining three elements are intended to reinvigorate the local travel market. Through a facilitated participatory and narrative-induced workshopping process the local tourism stakeholders in these settings will be encouraged to embrace different dimensions of the domestic domain, while at the same time be compelled to approach tourism products from a different and innovative perspective. The DTRM is therefore intended as a catalyst to fundamentally reshape the form, core, nature and “status quo” of the domestic tourism landscape and its associated products in order to attract a wider tourist audience. The intention of the DTRM is to engage and/or rebuild the existing tourism features and augment them with new attractions as well as add innovative dimensions, especially suited to a future travel landscape. When integrating the DTRM in the broader domestic tourism continuum, it is evident that it will play a critical role in the flow between the demand and supply by radically changing the product. Thus, it essentially modifies the supply component which will enhance tourist expectations (demand) within the destination offerings (supply). While this will enhance the tourism offerings at a domestic level, it will also prepare the local industry for a wide range of travellers, tourists and visitors. The newly modelled attractions will in turn facilitate the provision of information about options to enhance the supply which in turn will trigger the demand. Once the product has been reinvigorated the destination marketing can be enhanced and feed directly into domestic tourism. Thus, it is maintained that the DTRM has the potential to transform local domestic offerings, whereby it will re-build, re-strengthen and reinvigorate existing and stimulate non-existing aspects of the local travel experience. At the same time, the enhancement of the domestic tourism industry by way of the DTRM will in the long run prepare nations for a future travel landscape.

### **Results, reflections and recommendations**

This research set out to address the long-term impact(s) of COVID-19 which devastated the tourism sector more seriously than any previous disaster. In addition, there was no precedent to this situation which could assist with its recovery and future prospects. The idea was to

revisit, modify and remodel the local domestic tourism market at its core in order to allow for a recovery and revitalisation for a sustainable future. An analysis of the conventional components that make up tourism, indicated the indispensable position and role of the product (supply) and hence the research focussed on developing innovative ways of reinvigorating the domestic tourism destination. The development discourse in conventional and domestic tourism models from a demand as well as supply point of view were also considered. In resolving this crisis, an innovative and unique model (the DTRM) was developed and deployed by way of a participatory research methodology which was found to have the potential to address the twenty-first century crisis that impinge on tourism globally.

The DTRM which evolved from this research, is a newly conceived model of particular relevance to the domestic tourism industry. Critical to this solution is the understanding that tourism in the global South, has been largely over-dependent on the revenue generated by the international tourist market. This dependency was entirely obliterated by the COVID-19 pandemic and left the industry reeling as the international travel market collapsed. The tourism fraternity was jettisoned into realising that this overreliance on the international component of the tourism value chain (demand and supply) was vulnerable and problematic. It showed that tourism had to re-strategize and reconfigure so as to become more resilient and sustainable to overcome disruptions and grow a future travel landscape. It also became apparent that the domestic tourism sector needed to be revived, if not resuscitated, to “heal” and strengthen an ailing and destabilised industry. In this context it is believed that the DTRM model can resurrect and remodel the domestic tourism market segment from a uniquely and distinct hyper-local perspective. This given that it focuses on the “supply” component, the product, which is indispensable in reviving the destination in order to encourage the tourist, the “demand”. This remodelling is intended to re-strengthen and renew the domestic tourism market at the grassroots product level (supply) in order to activate a new interest among the domestic tourist (demand) within the broader tourism value chain. This envisaged development discourse of the DTRM is envisaged in Figure 3 below.

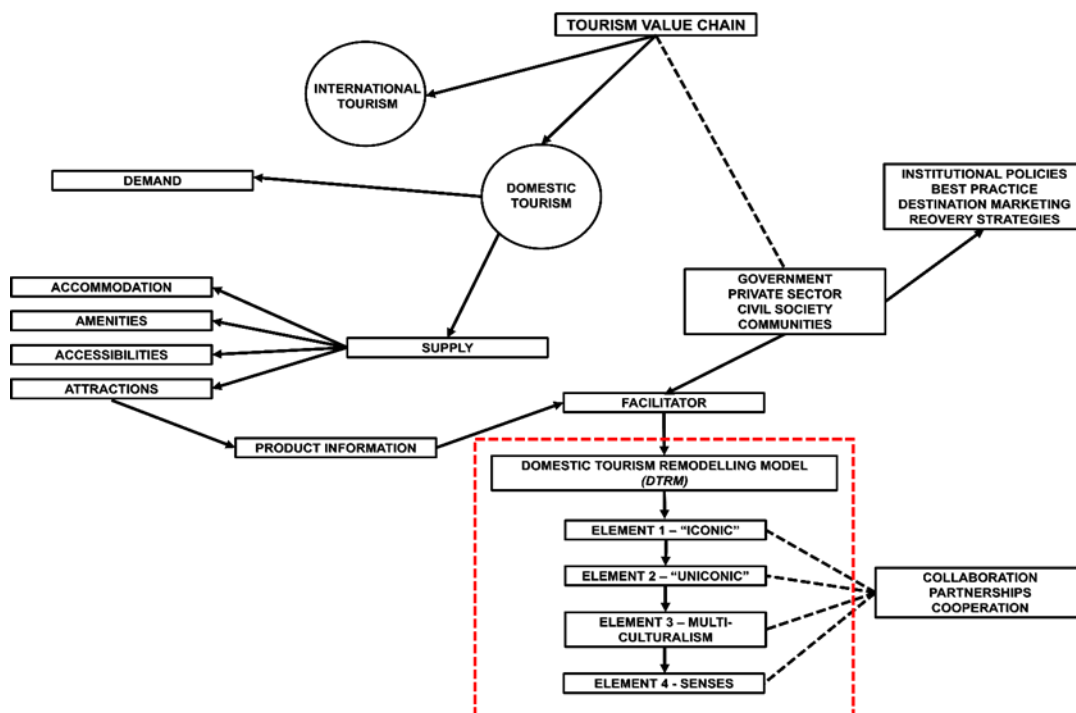


Figure 3: DTRM in the domestic tourism value chain – Post COVID-19

## Acknowledgements

The findings noted in this article were generated from two research projects undertaken by the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria that were commissioned by the Department of Tourism (South Africa) in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. These projects were respectively titled: “Remodelling the local domestic tourism market in South Africa within a COVID-19 environment”; and “The piloting and refining of the domestic tourism remodelling model”. The DTRM model is currently being deployed and evaluated in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. This research also acknowledges the continued collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism on the rejuvenation of South Africa’s domestic tourism market segment. Additionally, the authors would also like to acknowledge the anonymous peer-reviewers for their feedback, comments and insights.

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