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The expenditure patterns of Zimbabweans travelling to and from South Africa for Visiting Friends and Relatives purposes

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Abstract

Tourism contributes to economic development in both developed and developing countries. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel is one of the largest forms of tourism on a global level. However, there has been limited research over the past decades on VFR travel especially in developing countries. In recent times, VFR travel has attracted the attention of researchers due to an increasing rate of migration resulting in the promotion of regional tourism through VFR travel. Despite the influx of migrants in South Africa, research on international VFR travel has been limited as most research on VFR travel has been on a local level from one province to another. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the expenditure patterns of Zimbabweans travelling to and from South Africa for VFR purposes. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify the benefits of VFR travel to individual households in Zimbabwe. Using a quantitative framework, 200 questionnaires were distributed to Zimbabweans and a Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) was used as an analytical tool. Data analysis and discussion of the results reveal that VFR travellers from South Africa spend more than VFR travellers to South Africa on transport costs, food and beverages, entertainment and financial remittances. The expenditure is based on socio-demographics and the actual expenditure at a destination. Due to VFR travellers' expenditure, the benefits, which are directed to individual households in Zimbabwe, include household upkeep, education, business investment, health and other reasons. Thus, this study focuses attention on international VFR travel and its contribution to the tourism economy both in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Keywords: Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), Tourism, Migration, Expenditure, Regional Tourism, South Africa, Zimbabwe.

Introduction

The concept of Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel involves people travelling to a different location from their place of residence to visit friends and relatives and is distinct from other forms of tourism, such as business or long term travellers such as missionaries or volunteers (Barnet *et al*., 2010; Papathanassis, 2011). Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel contributes to international and domestic markets through various activities that people partake in during the course of the visit (Morrison *et al*., 1995a; Morrison *et al*., 1995b; Seaton and Palmer, 1997; Rogerson, 2017a; 2017b). Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) tourism enables the tourists to have a feeling of being home, even though they are in a foreign land or place, thus VFR can be practiced within national and international boundaries (Morrison *et al*., 1995; Seaton and Palmer, 1997; Lehto *et al*., 2001; Uriely, 2010). The mobility of VFR

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tourism usually extends to the activities, which takes place outside one's normal place of residence. Globally, the importance of VFR tourism is not only practiced in developed countries (Cohen and Harris, 1998; Morrison *et al*., 2000a; Pennington-Gray, 2003; Lehto *et al*., 2001; Griffin, 2013; Barnet *et al*., 2010). Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel also connects regional tourism and migration (Uriely, 2010, William and Hall, 2000; Marschall, 2017a; Marschall, 2017b). The concept of international Visiting Friends and Relatives travel in Africa, has not been given the same attention as in developed countries even though Africa is using tourism as a tool for economic development (Rogerson, 2012; Rogerson, 2015a). In the Sub-Saharan region, South Africa has become one of the top countries, which receive a number of foreign migrants coming from countries such as Botswana, Gabon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Swaziland and Zimbabwe (Maphosa, 2007, Marschall, 2017a; Rogerson, 2017b). Visiting Friends and Relatives travel is mainly concerned with individual activities and expenditures (Uriely, 2010). In order to understand VFR travel, it is important to evaluate traveller's expenditure at a destination. Expenditures "consist of the transaction cost, including taxes of goods and services" (Paulin, 2008, 20). This expenditure refers to all the purchases made at a point of sale (Paulin, 2008). This study defines expenditure as the total expenses of VFR travellers (as group or individual) that may be incurred from transport costs; activities at a destination, accommodation, food and beverages, gifts and other goods; entertainment and monetary remittances. A remittance is money sent back home from the country of employment to the country of origin (Russell, 1986; Boyd, 1989; Asiedu, 2005; Asiedu, 2008). Remittances in this study can be in the form of money or goods sent or brought to Zimbabwe, for example, food and beverage, gifts and other goods and entertainment (see Table 2).

South Africa is one of the countries in Africa that is focusing on the concept of VFR travel on a local level and people travelling from one province to another for VFR purposes (Rogerson, 2015a; South African Tourism Strategic Research Unit, 2013). However, South Africa currently pays little attention to **international** VFR travellers; they are regarded as part of regional tourism and classed statistically as normal tourists (South African Tourism Strategic Research Unit, 2013; Rogerson, 2015a; Rogerson, 2015b; Rogerson, 2017a). The South African 2012 Annual Tourism Report provides statistics that refer to domestic VFR travel only. Therefore, South Africa underestimates the contribution of international VFR travel from neighbouring countries to the tourism sector in Southern Africa (South African Tourism, Strategic Research Unit 2013). The report supports the idea that South Africa receives international tourists from African countries, which are of significance to the economic development of the country (South African Tourism Strategic Research Unit 2013). International VFR travel is influenced by economically stable countries that attract immigrants (Lehto *et al*., 2001). The focus of Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel in South Africa is on the most popular provinces: Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo (Rule *et al*., 2003). Domestically, the Gauteng province receives an influx of VFR travellers as a result of internal migration (Rule *et al*., 2003; Rogerson, 2017a).

Therefore, the aim of the study is to evaluate the contribution of VFR travellers by means of investigating their expenditure patterns and also providing knowledge concerning the socio-demographic and economic and characteristics of VFR travellers (Zimbabweans travelling to and from South Africa). The objectives of the study are to

1. To evaluate the expenditure patterns of Zimbabweans travelling to and from South Africa for VFR purposes.
2. To compare the expenditure pattern of Zimbabweans VFR travellers travelling to and from South Africa.
3. To identify the benefits of VFR travel to individual households in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabweans occupy more than 50% of immigrants settled in the Gauteng province with the majority settling in areas such as Hillbrow, Yeoville, and Berea amongst other places (Chereni, 2014). It is also very accessible for Zimbabweans to visit South Africa because the countries are separated by one geographical border (Maphosa, 2007). Zimbabweans migrate to South Africa for various reasons such as studying, working, vacations and business travel which also attract the development of VFR travel (Maphosa, 2007; United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 2008). Zimbabwean immigrants receive visitors hence these visitors are travelling for VFR purposes (Griffin, 2014). It is important to evaluate the expenditure patterns of Zimbabwean VFR travellers. Of 9.18 million international arrivals in 2012, 2.54 million were travelling for VFR purposes (South African Tourism Strategic Research Unit, 2013). This shows the importance of international VFR travel and the importance of this study.

The concept and evolution of visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travel

Globally, tourism is a rapidly growing economic sector (Hall and Page, 1999; Guliani and Rizwan, 2016; World Bank, 2016; World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016). The phenomenon of tourism is dynamic, mainly influenced by economic, social, political, environmental and technological factors and these benefits will assist to achieve economic development (Feng and Page, 2000). There are various types of tourism activities and the concept of Visiting Friends and Relatives travel is one of the major forms of tourism, which forms the backbone of this study. The concept of VFR travellers was not given much attention until the 1990s (Yousuf and Backer, 2016) which shows that the VFR has not received much attention in tourism in general (Morrison *et al*., 2000a; Feng and Page, 2000; Hu and Morrison, 2002; Backer, 2008).

However, due to the rapid increase in participation and growth of VFR travel, more research has been dedicated to this subject (Morrison *et al*., 1995; Morrison *et al*., 2000a; Moscardo *et al*., 2000; Butler, 2003; Muri and Sagesser, 2003; Asiedu, 2005; Backer, 2007; Seaton and Palmer, 1997; Asiedu. 2008; Backer, 2010; Pearce, 2012). Visiting Friends and Relatives travel has value for tourism development (Seaton and Palmer, 1997; Papathanassis, 2011; Shani and Uriely, 2012) and people who cannot afford to travel for a pleasure holiday but certainly travel for visiting friends and relative's purposes (Backer and Morrison, 2015; Rogerson, 2015c). The concept of VFR travel can be regarded as a motivation why people visit a particular destination (Pennington-Gray, 2003; Murphy *et al*., 2007; Backer and Morrison, 2015). Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel is not homogenous; it encompasses the differentiation between Visiting both Friends and Relatives (VFR) Visiting Relatives (VR) and Visiting Friends (VF) (Morrison and O'Leary, 1995; Moscardo *et al*., 2000; Butler, 2003). Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers involve either day or night visitors; international or domestic VFR travellers in relation to the activities they undertake during the course of the trip (Morrison and O'Leary, 1995; Moscardo *et al*., 2000; Butler, 2003; Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis, 2007).

The importance of visiting friends and relative travel to the economy

Visiting Friends and Relatives travel is essential to the development of a country especially in developing countries (Palovic *et al*, 2014). The mobility of VFR travellers across international boundaries contributes significantly to the development of household and individual benefits through VFR travel. The benefits of VFR travel can be viewed in one of two ways: the benefits it brings to the place of visit and the benefits it brings to the place of origin (original country where the person comes from (Feng and Page, 2000; *Lehto et al.,* 2001; Asiedu, 2005; Asiedu, 2008; Rogerson, 2015a). This denotes that VFR travel is important because these benefits contribute to economic, socio-cultural and environmental development for the country visited and to the original place of stay (Morrison and O'Leary, 1995; MacEachern *et al*., 2007). It is argued that the overall expenditure of VFR travel is low, however if these expenditures are

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added together, it contributes to the local development of a particular area through travel, retail, entertainment and other services (Lehto *et al*., 2001; Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis, 2007).

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel also contributes to development on a local level through tourism attractions, accommodation sectors, profitable recreation organisations, restaurants, and travel networks (Lehto *et al*., 2001). The importance of VFR travel is brought-out by the use of paid accommodation depending on their length of stay. However, some VFR travellers opt to stay with friends and relatives (Seaton and Palmer, 1997; King *et al*., 2013) which allow them to be able to spend money on other goods and services. Seaton and Palmer (1997) support that VFR travel contributes less in terms of spending than other forms of tourism. Although VFR tourists spend less than leisure tourists on accommodation, they contribute to the tourism revenue even though it is a smaller percentage than other forms of travel (Poel *et al*., 2004). Research conducted in Australia on the importance of VFR travel reveals that domestic VFR travel has more benefits than international VFR. These benefits include sustaining the profitability of routes to access local destination and the promotion of local culture (Morrison *et al.,* 2000b). Based on these arguments, if the concept of VFR travel is promoted in developing countries, especially with the link to migration, it can contribute to the economic development of individual households in developing countries. The next section discusses the link between VFR travel and migration.

The influence of migration on visiting friends and relatives (VFR) travel

The link between VFR travel and migration was given scant attention by various scholars until 1990 because that is when the concept of VFR travel made a significant turnaround in developing and developed countries (King *et al*., 2013). Migration influences tourism development through regional tourism (Gamage and King, 1999; Feng and Page, 2000; William and Hall, 2000; Butler, 2003; O'Reilly, 2003; Rogerson and Visser, 2006; Rogerson and Kiambo, 2007; Rogerson, 2015d; Yousuf and Backer, 2016; Rogerson, 2017a). Seetaram and Dwyer (2009) pointed out the reasons that influence the development of tourism through migration. The reasons include permanent migration in which the immigrant communicates with friends and relatives, informing them about the attractions, hence influencing them to visit (William and Hall, 2000; Seetaram and Dwyer, 2009). Furthermore, the link between migration and VFR travel is as a result of the connection between communication and information technology and how the media has contributed to the shaping of the physical relationships (Feng and Page, 2000; Casado-Diaz *et al*., 2014; Palovic *et al.,* 2014; Rogerson, 2017a). Social networks promote VFR travel and the relationship between space, place and time (King *et al*., 2013; Janta *et al.,* 2014). Migration influences social networks and trust between people due to the distance that separates migrants and their friends and relatives (Boyd, 1989; William and Hall, 2000; William *et al*., 2000; Palovic *et al*., 2014).

Visiting Friends and Relatives travel contribution to tourism studies is mainly driven by the phenomenon of multiple homes (second home tourism) (Visser, 2003; Hui, 2008; Hoogendoorn and Gustav, 2011; Rogerson and Hoogendoorn, 2014; McLeod and Busser, 2014). The link between migration and second home tourism is crucial in understanding VFR travel. When people migrate to a new place, they settle there and have homes that provide temporary accommodation especially for friends and relatives visiting (McLeod and Busser, 2014; Rogerson and Hoogendoorn, 2014). The temporary accommodation provided by friends and relatives acts as second homes to the hosts visited (Rogerson and Hoogendoorn, 2014).

As a result of migration, there is a rapid growth of regional tourism in developing countries, even though this phenomenon is neglected in social research (Rogerson and Kiambo, 2007; Ghimire, 2001a; Ghimire, 2001b; Karambakuwa *et al*., 2011; William and Hall, 2002; Rogerson, 2014a; Rogerson, 2014b). An estimate of 73% of tourists visiting southern Africa are from other African countries, thus contributing to economic development (Ghimire, 2001b; Rogerson, 2015). It is projected that by 2020, intra-regional tourists will expand in numbers

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with an estimate of 50 million as compared to 30 million of long haul (international) tourists in Africa (Rogerson, 2015a). Regional tourism in South Africa has been given little attention, especially the contribution to the tourism economy before 1994 (Rogerson, 2014a), however, the perception after 1994 when the concept was given more attention (Rogerson and Visser, 2006; Rogerson, 2014b). In 2009, 9.93 million International tourists arrived in South Africa; and 77. 9% were from African countries (Rogerson 2011). Regional tourists visit South Africa with Gauteng province as the main target for African regional tourists (Rogerson and Kiambo, 2007; Rogerson 2011; Rogerson, 2014b; Rogerson, 2017a). It is estimated that 33. 2% of tourists from African countries travel for shopping, business or leisure purposes (Rogerson, 2011). Regional tourism is influenced by various factors such as the expansion of international tourists, improved infrastructure, the development of improved transport systems, foreign exchange earnings, improved telecommunication skills and the Internet (Rogerson and Kiambo, 2007, Rogerson, 2014b).

South Africa recognizes the benefits of tourism activities and its contribution to the development of the economy (Rogerson, 2011) and VFR travel is one of the major contributors (Rule *et al*., 2004; Rogerson, 2015d; Rogerson and Zoleka, 2015). Visiting Friends and Relatives travel in South Africa pays more attention on domestic VFR as compared with international VFR travel (Rule *et al*., 2004; Rogerson, 2015d; Rogerson and Zoleka, 2015).

The factors influencing the expenditure patterns of VFR travellers

The expenditure of VFR travel can be linked to the concept of the customer behaviour theory which states that a customer's purchase of goods and services is determined by various factors. These factors include age and lifestyle stage, occupation, personality, economic situation, taste and preferences, social status, thoughts and feelings, perception, attitude and motivation (Aslin and Rothschild, 1987; Peerapandit, 1999; Abdallat and Emam, 2001; Bray, 2008; Ushadevi, 2013; Zlega, 2014). The spending patterns of tourists assists in the planning and marketing of a destination (Sung *et al*., 2001; Soteriades and Arvanitis, 2006). The tourist's expenditure is crucial in order to understand the cost and profits linked to the tourism industry (Perez and Sampol, 2000). Tourists spending at a destination is influenced by two main factors, namely socio-demographic characteristics and travel-related factors (Jang *et al*., 2004; Soteriades and Arvanitis, 2006). Socio-demographic factors include income, nationality, marital status, educational level, employment status, age and sex (Cai, 1999; Mok and Iverson, 2000; Perez and Sampol, 2000; Sung *et al*., 2001; Soteriades and Arvanitis, 2006; Wang *et al*., 2006). These factors can influence tourists' decisions before they actually travel to a particular destination. Travel-related factors encompass the activities at a destination which determine the spending pattern of VFR travellers (Wang *et al*., 2006; Wang and Davidson, 2010). It is argued that travel-related factors contribute more to expenditure patterns than socio-demographic factors (Hsieh *et al*., 1997; Wang *et al*., 2006).

Goods and services purchased by tourists at a destination determine expenditure distribution and are mainly achieved through the evaluating socio-demographic characteristics of tourists and travel-related factors at a destination (Alegre and Pou, 2006; Soteriades and Arvanitis, 2006). Tourists evaluate if they are connecting emotionally with the new environment thus assisting them in making decisions. The more excited the tourist is about a destination, the more they are likely to spend at the destination (Wang *et al*., 2006; Wang and Davidson, 2010). This argument has been supported by Downward and Lumsdon (2004) who argue that the destination attracts tourists and motivates them to visit the destination and will determine their spending. Research conducted on Taiwanese tourists to the USA demonstrated that socio-economic characteristics and trip characteristics influenced tourists spending at a destination (Lehto *et al*., 2004b). Research conducted on the Balearic Islands shows that socio-demographic factors play a role in the choice of destination and holiday activities (Alegre and Pou, 2006). Based on the expenditure patterns of sports events in the USA, the results

revealed that there is a relationship between spending patterns, trip preferences and trip characteristics (Dixon *et al*., 2012).

The expenditure of VFR travelling to and from their country of origin contributes to remittances. A remittance is money sent back home from the country of employment to the country of origin (Russell, 1986; Boyd, 1989; Asiedu, 2005; Asiedu, 2008). Remittances in this study can be in the form of money or goods sent or brought to Zimbabwe, for example, food and beverage, gifts and other goods and entertainment (Table 2). Visiting Friends and Relatives travel benefits as discussed in the previous section is also brought out through remittances sent from country of employment to the country of origin (Russell, 1986; Boyd, 1989; Asiedu, 2005; Asiedu, 2008). These remittances were used for educational purposes, provision of food, investment in land, starting a business and development of household purposes (Boyd, 1989; Asiedu, 2005; van Dalen *et al*., 2005; Wong, 2006; Asiedu, 2008). Remittances sent to countries of origin also contribute to the reduction of poverty in developing countries (Acosta, 2008). The literature discussed above form the basis of the methods, data analysis and the overall conclusion of the study.

Methods and Study site

The actual research was conducted in the Gauteng province focusing on the two major cities Johannesburg and Pretoria. The research was conducted at two major stations: Johannesburg Park Station and Pretoria Bosman Station. These are the main stations in Gauteng that Zimbabweans use when they arrive/depart in/from South Africa (Government Gazette, 2015). The map (see Figure 1) shows the exact points of the two locations where the researcher found respondents as possible interviewees. On the same map, the areas which the researcher collected additional data are also highlighted to show their proximity from the two main stations in Gauteng. Johannesburg Park Station and the Pretoria Bosman Station are connected by the N1 road, which is a major road in South Africa used by Zimbabweans travelling to and from South Africa.

Map of study area

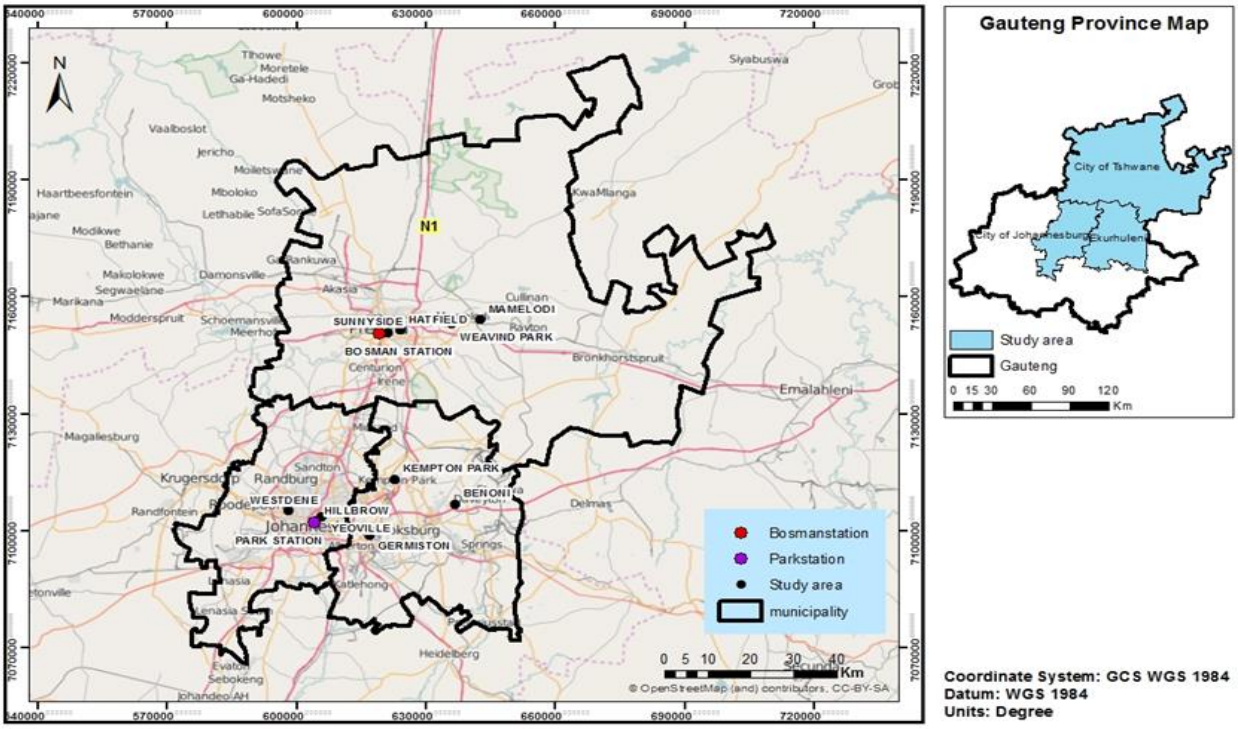


Figure 1: Map showing Park Station and Bosman Station and the study areas within the Gauteng Province (Author's Map).

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Data collection process

The convenience and snowball samples were used to identify the respondents (Ellison *et al*., 2009; Heckathorn, 2011). Convenience sampling was used at both the station and the surrounding areas, from respondents readily available at the study site and willing to respond and participate in the study. Convenience sampling was mainly undertaken for the researcher as a result of being familiar with the study area; it is easy to access and in this case the researcher is familiar with Zimbabwean languages (Shona and Ndebele) (Dzikiti, 2017). The snowballing technique was applied in identifying respondents in areas which were identified by respondents at the two bus stations were the majority of Zimbabweans stay (see Figure 1).

The following snowballing techniques was used in these areas:

1. A direct encounter with fellow Zimbabweans (colleagues, friends and relatives).
2. Asking respondents at Pretoria Bosman and Johannesburg Park Station.
3. The door-to-door approach in the areas identified above in an attempt to reach the sampling size of this research (Dzikiti, 2017).

The data was collected after the visit, therefore, VFR travellers **from** South Africa when they arrive at the bus station and also in the surrounding areas where they reside whilst VFR travellers **to** South Africa were approached whilst they were waiting to depart at the bus station were targeted (Dzikiti, 2017). The data as collected over a period of four months: September 2015-December 2015. The survey was collected at the Johannesburg Park Station and Pretoria Bosman Station (see Figure 1), the respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire (Dzikiti, 2017).

A total of 200 questionnaires were collected during this period. Because the study was based on evaluating the expenditure patterns of VFR travellers travelling to and from South Africa and its contribution to individual household development, most questions were related to the expenditure. The questions were divided into four sections:

I. Socio-demographic characteristics (age; educational level; income; employment status; place of stay).
II. Factors determining how much they are going to spend on the actual visit (the purpose of travel; type of accommodation used; activities VFR travellers were involved in; what made VFR travellers to travel (influences) and length of stay).
III. The actual expenditure at a destination (the amount of money spent on transport, food and beverages (groceries), gifts and other goods (clothes and furniture), entertainment and monetary remittances).
IV. The possible benefits directed back to individual households in Zimbabwe through VFR travel.

Not all questionnaires were utilized for analysis because the questionnaires were incomplete and therefore were discarded. A total of 200 questionnaires were filled out and only 180 questionnaires were left, which were filled in with all the questions being answered and were settled for analysis. This paper has a limitation in that it only addressed the socio-demographic characteristics, the actual expenditure at a destination and the benefits of the visit to individual households in Zimbabwe (Dzikiti, 2017).

Throughout the data collection process the researcher faced limitations for example, due to the widespread xenophobic attack, some respondents were not willing to participate in the study and were not comfortable in answering the questionnaire in public places. Some respondents were not always willing to participate especially at the bus station because of time constraints. In most cases, the respondents struggled to finish completing the

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questionnaire because the buses were ready to depart and I had to assist them in completing the questionnaires (Dzikiti, 2017).

Results and discussion

Demographics

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of VFR travellers to and from South Africa (in percentages).

Age	18-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	Above 60
SA-ZW	48	27	18	6	1
ZW-SA	40	36	15	6	3

Education Level	None	Primary	High	Diploma	Degree	Honours	Masters and PhD
SA to ZW	0	1	12	18	28	31	10
ZW to SA	2	5	16	34	29	9	5

Employment status	YES	NO
SA to ZW	78	28
ZW to SA	72	22

Job Description	Industrial	Retail	Banking	Self-Employed	Academic	Student	None
SA to ZW	15	12	12	15	18	14	16
ZW to SA	30	31	5	5	7	10	12

Income	≤ R2 000	R2 001-R5 000	R5 001-R10 000	R10 001-R25 000	R25 001-R50 000	Above R50 000
SA to ZW	14	13	21	24	20	8
ZW to SA	10	20	29	19	20	2

Permanent Residency	Zimbabwe	South Africa
SA to ZW	25	75
ZW to SA	84	16

(Author's Data)

Based on the socio-demographic characteristics it is evident that VFR travellers between 18-30-years-old are the most active group in the context of VFR travellers. This is the case because this group is considered to be active because of their employment status, having a larger friendship cycle and they also have more time to travel (Dzikiti, 2017). The literature on VFR travels argues that VFR travellers above the age of 65 travel more as compared with other age groups (US Department of Labour Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2002; Seaton and Palmer, 2007). This finding is contrasting with the results of this study in which the age group of 65 years is the least travellers in VFR travel. In term of educational level, both groups of VFR travellers to and from South Africa are educated which enables them to get a job and enables them to have money to travel and spend (Dzikiti, 2017). It could be argued that the more educated one is, the more likely they are to travel and spend at a destination (Cai, 1999; Mok and Iverson, 2000; Perez and Sampol, 2000).

Employment status concur with occupation status in which there is a variety of job opportunities in South Africa as compared with Zimbabwe. Visiting Friends and Relatives **from** South Africa have a higher income than VFR travellers **to** South Africa. 75% of the total respondents of Zimbabweans regard South Africa as a permanent place of stay. 84% of the total Zimbabwean respondents regard Zimbabwe as a temporary place of stay (Dzikiti, 2017). This shows that place of stay is important because it will assist with VFR travellers with accommodation during the course of their visit. Visiting Friends and Relatives to South Africa

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have an added advantage because an estimate of 46% of immigrants in Gauteng are Zimbabweans (Chereni, 2014).

Factors VFR travellers consider before the actual visit

Figure 2 shows the activities of VFR travellers to and from South Africa at a destination.

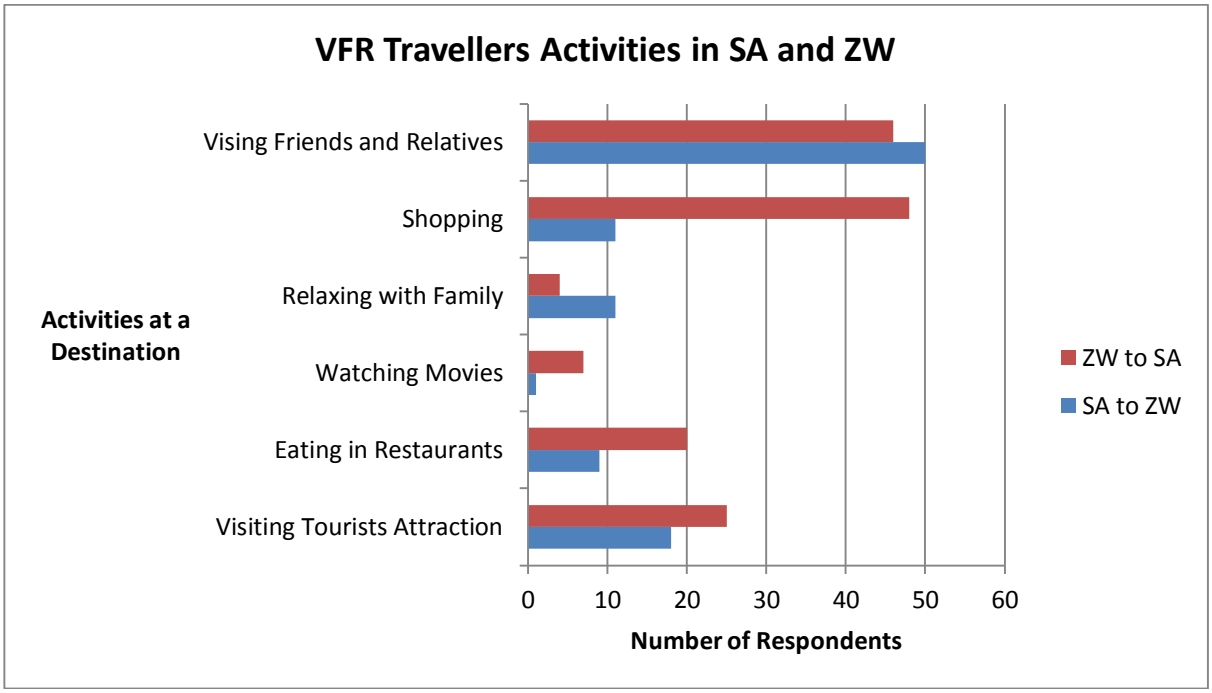


Figure 2: Recreational Activities of Zimbabweans Travelling to and from South Africa (Author's Data).

When VFR travellers travel to at a destination, even though the main purpose of travel is to visit friends and relatives they are also involved in other activities. Based on the results of the study, 86% of VFR travellers **to** South Africa are also involved strongly in shopping as compared to 76% of VFR travellers **from** South Africa (see Figure 2). The level of participation of VFR travellers to South Africa is mainly affected by the US Dollar-Rand exchange rate where goods are relatively expensive in Zimbabwe as compared with goods in South Africa (Dzikiti, 2017). A VFR traveller **from** South Africa argues that:

> There is value in South Africa because of the US Dollar-Rand exchange rate. The Rand has better value in South Africa than when converted to Dollars in Zimbabwe (Respondent 13).

One of the cross-border traders from Zimbabwe supported the argument that it is cheaper to buy good in South Africa than Zimbabwe and stated that:

> I buy more stuff with little money when they change their money to Rands as compared to buying in US Dollars in Zimbabwe (Respondent 90).

Various scholars argue that VFR travellers do not participate in tourism activities (Teye, 1998; Rogerson and Visser, 2006; Rogerson, 2014a). However, based on Figure 2, it is shown that in reality VFR travellers participate in various tourism activities. Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers do not spend much on tourism activities because of the financial support they provide to their families through remittances (see Table 2). However, a study conducted by Marschall (2017a) shows that when migrants visit their home countries they participate in tourism activities. This argument supports this study even though VFR travellers from South

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Africa do not spend much on tourism activities thus contributing to the development of tourism on both local and national levels.

The expenditure patterns of VFR travellers

Table 2: Spending Patterns of VFR travellers to and from South Africa

	SA to ZW		**ZW to SA**	
VFR Travellers Spending	Total Contribution	Average per Traveller	Total Contribution	Average per Traveller
Transport Cost	**R267 900**	R2 977	R164 100	R1 823
Food and Beverages	**R360 920**	R4 010	R202 000	R2 244
Gifts and Other Goods	R202 650	R2 252	**R422 550**	R4 695
Entertainment	**R150 290**	R1 670	R109 950	R1 222
Financial Remittances	**R650 500**	R7 228	R220 000	R2 444

(Author's Data)

Travel/transport cost expenditure

Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **from** South Africa spend more money on transport than VFR travellers **to** South Africa. 47% of the total respondents of VFR travellers from South Africa and 34% of the total respondents of VFR travellers to South Africa spend on transport (see Table 2). This is because VFR travellers from South Africa spend more on transport probably because when they travel by bus, they also pay for their luggage thus it will be costly (Dzikiti, 2017). Also during the peak holiday season for example, in December the bus fare also rises, thus, at the end the amount of money paid by VFR travellers from South Africa is more than VFR travellers to South Africa (Dzikiti, 2017). Visiting Friends and Relative travellers to South Africa spend less because for those who travel during the off-peak season between September and November the bus fares will be reasonably low and would want to spend more money on shopping (see Figure 2).

Transport cost are crucial in evaluating the expenditure of VFR travellers. Zimbabwe and South Africa are divided by one geographical border, which makes it easy for VFR travellers to travel between the two countries (Timothy,1995; Rogerson and Kiambo; 2007). Based on Table 2, VFR travellers to South Africa spend less on transport and more on shopping and other goods because these travellers probably feel the need to spend more on goods that they feel will contribute to individual household development. This claim can be supported by the perception of VFR travellers from South Africa on the value of goods and services between South Africa and Zimbabwe. One respondent argued that:

> Yes, there is more value for money in South Africa. Firstly, because in Zimbabwe we do not use our own national currency, which already depreciates the value for money and secondly the cost of living is very high in Zimbabwe due to the economic crisis and goods are charged very high than in South Africa (Respondent 2).

Food and beverage (grocery) expenditure

Zimbabweans are supported by remittances sent by VFR travellers which can also be in the form of food and beverages (groceries), gifts and other goods (clothes and furniture) (see Table 2) which contribute to household upkeep. The money spent by Zimbabweans travelling

to and from South Africa on food and beverages (groceries) for family and friends and expenditures includes what they leave or send as grocery remittances to Zimbabwe (Dzikiti, 2017). Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **from** South Africa spend more on food and beverages compared with VFR travellers **to** South Africa (see Table 2). This is so because VFR travellers from South Africa believe that buying goods in South Africa is better than buying in Zimbabwe because of the US-Dollar exchange rates (Dzikiti, 2017). At the same time, VFR travellers from South Africa cater for VFR travellers to South Africa during a visit. However, this does not imply that Zimbabwean VFR travellers to South Africa do not spend on food and beverages but in most cases whatever they spend contributes to grocery remittances (see Figure 2). Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **from** South Africa spend more than VFR travellers **to** South Africa because some travellers act as breadwinners for their families. There is a significant difference in the amount of money spent on food and beverages for both travellers to and from South Africa. The purchasing of food and beverages at a destination contributes to the development of the local economy. This is in the view of Gamage and King (1999), based on a study on Sri Lanka immigrants, where 76% of VFR spending is used on food and beverages. Visiting Friends and Relative travellers to South Africa argue that there is more value for goods and services in South Africa than Zimbabwe:

> In South Africa, I get value for money because it's a country that has a stable economy and it doesn't depend on imports unlike in Zimbabwe. South Africa has got its own currency and its value is determined by the performances of the economy i.e. GDP and other external factors that affect world economies unlike in Zimbabwe that is dependent on a currency that is not theirs; most commodities are overpriced (Respondent 28).

This argument confirms the reason why VFR travellers to South Africa spend more on gifts and other goods than VFR travellers from South Africa (Dzikiti, 2017).

Gifts and other goods

Visiting Friends and Relative travellers to South Africa spend more than VFR travellers from South Africa on gifts and other goods (see Table 2). This is because VFR travellers to South Africa travel to buy goods which will assist them when they return to Zimbabwe as clothes and furniture remittances, for example, for individual household development and to start a business (see Figure 3). Littrell *et al.* (2004) argued that shopping acts as a source of tourism profits thus contributing to economic development. The longer VFR tourists stay at a destination, the more they will spend especially on shopping than other types of tourists (Table 2). It is evident that the majority of Zimbabweans travelling between South Africa and Zimbabwe are involved in shopping activities (Dzikiti, 2017). Gift and other goods expenditure for VFR travel (see Figure 2) show that 48% of Zimbabweans travel to South Africa for shopping purposes. The findings from this study supports the findings by Ramachandran (2006) who argues that VFR travellers spend mostly on shopping and entertainment rather than on increased accommodation thus they choose to stay with friends and relatives.

In 2015, the government of Zimbabwe through the Zimbabwean Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) decided that certain goods were not allowed in the country without declaring them. Basic commodities such as cooking oil, camphor cream mayonnaise, washing soap and bathing soap, amongst other goods, were banned (Xolisa, 2016). The decision was made in accordance with the Zimbabwe's Statutory Instrument No.64 of 2016 "which banned the import of basic foodstuffs and other products from South Africa" (African News Agency (ANA) Reporter, 2016a). The Zimbabwean government argued that goods banned from South Africa are available in Zimbabwe; therefore, there is no need to continue importing goods which are already available in the country. The ban on importation of goods has had a negative impact on the majority of Zimbabweans who relied on this system for survival (South Africa Broadcast

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Corporation (SABC), 16 July 2016). This also had an effect on VFR travellers to and from Zimbabwe since they travel to South Africa on a regular basis. The situation worsened in 2016, when a complete ban of certain goods from South Africa to Zimbabwe was imposed which has not only affected Zimbabwe but also South Africa with shop owners losing market especially in Musina (African News Agency (ANA) Reporter, 2016b).

Entertainment

Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **from** South Africa spend more on entertainment than VFR travellers **to** South Africa because the majority of these travellers are travelling for a substantial period of time (see Table 2). It is possible for VFR travellers **from** South Africa to visit newly developed space in Zimbabwe as tourist destinations (see Figure 2). Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **from** South Africa visit various places of interest in Zimbabwe during the period they will be visiting. These places include visiting tourist attractions, watching movies, eating in restaurants, shopping and visiting friends and relatives (see Figure 2). Various scholars argue that visiting places of interest plays a role in determining the entertainment expenditure of VFR travellers, the more they travel, the more they are likely to spend on entertainment and vice versa (William and Hall, 2000; Seetaram and Dwyer, 2009; Pearce,2012; Pennington- Gray, 2013 and Griffin, 2014). However, VFR travellers to South Africa spend less on entertainment than VFR travellers from South Africa because they are saving for other expenditures which can be used for remittances thus contributing to the development of individual households (Dzikiti, 2017). The development and contribution of the tourism economy in developing countries is important (Rogerson and Hoogendoorn 2014; Rogerson 2015a; 2015b; 2015c). The previous argument shows that VFR travel contributes to the development of both the regional and local tourism economy.

Financial remittances

Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **from** South Africa send more financial remittances as compared with VFR travellers **to** South Africa. The reason is that VFR travellers constantly send money to Zimbabwe on a regular/monthly basis. When they return to Zimbabwe, VFR travellers **to** South Africa prefer buying gifts and other goods because of the exchange rates. Financial remittances are vital for people in Zimbabwe and the majority of them depend on VFR travellers **from** South Africa to send them the money (Dzikiti, 2017). This observation is interesting because of the difference in economic levels between Zimbabwe and South Africa as evidenced by a VFR traveller to South Africa who stated that:

> Yes, because the South African economy is competitive and stable as compared to the Zimbabwean economy. In terms of prices, there is variety and quality in Zimbabwe and most locally produced goods are priced beyond the intended use hence it gives a comparative leverage on the South African goods and services (Respondent 77).

Visiting Friends and Relatives travellers **to** South Africa also return to Zimbabwe with some of the remittances sent by family living in South Africa. Therefore, remittances in terms of monetary value and goods are continually remitted to Zimbabwe as long as the concept of VFR travel is practiced (Dzikiti, 2017). These findings with regards to monetary remittances (see Table 4) are similar to those observed by Feng and Page (2000); Lehto *et al*. (2001); Asiedu (2005); Asiedu (2008) and Rogerson (2015a) which show the benefits VFR brings to both place of stay and place of origin. The flow of remittances to Zimbabwe from migrants in South Africa will remain a continuous process.

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Contribution of VFR travel to individual households in Zimbabwe through remittances

The money sent by immigrants is used for various purposes such as education, food, investments and to start businesses amongst others (Boyd, 1989; Asiedu, 2005; Asiedu, 2008). The last section of this chapter discusses the contribution of VFR travel through remittances to an individual household in Zimbabwe (see Figure 3).

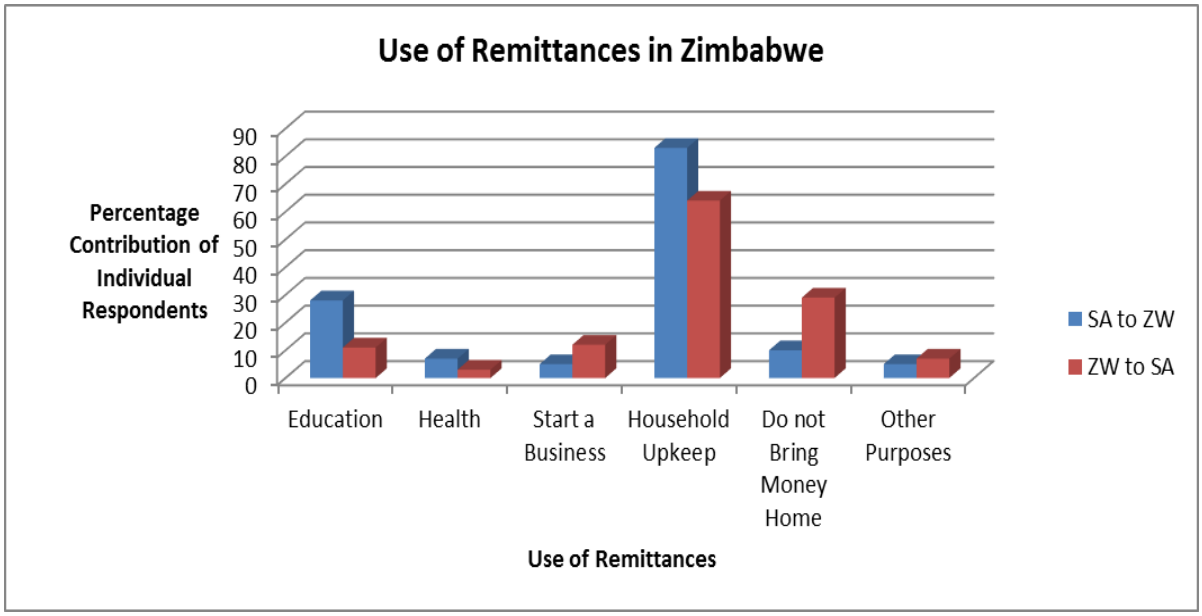


Figure 3: Remittances Use in individual households in Zimbabwe (Author's Data).

The contribution of remittances of VFR travellers to and from South Africa is mainly for household upkeep (see Figure 3). 83% of the total VFR respondents **from** South Africa and 64% of the total VFR respondents **to** South Africa contribute to household upkeep. Household upkeep is one of the major reasons why VFR travellers, especially from South Africa, send financial remittances to Zimbabwe (Dzikiti, 2017). These remittances serve to secure food security and other vital necessities. As compared with other categories household upkeep is an important aspect for VFR travellers and their families in Zimbabwe (Dzikiti, 2017). The finding of the contribution of remittances towards household upkeep is similar to those of Crush and Tevera (2010) who argue that Zimbabweans who migrated to South Africa support at least five people at home. This shows the importance of remittances towards household upkeep.

The importance of remittances is supported by various scholars (Asiedu, 2005; Asiedu, 2008; van Dalen *et al*., 2005). The mobility of VFR travellers contributes to the development of household and individual benefits. Sending money home shows that there are opportunities in a foreign land, thus influencing future migration. Wong (2006) holds the view that money sent home by immigrants is often used to start small businesses and household development as evidenced by Ghanaian women working in Toronto. The benefits of remittances in Ghana are the same as in Zimbabwe where remittances contribute to household development, business and education. The remittance of VFR travellers travelling to and from South Africa is also used for business and education purposes, which concur with the findings of Asiedu (2005); Wong (2006) and Asiedu (2008).

Based on Figure 2, VFR travellers to and from South Africa identified education and health as important elements which are supported by the remittances sent to Zimbabwe. Visiting Friends and Relatives to South Africa spend 11% and VFR travellers from South Africa spend 28% of the financial remittances towards education. Also, VFR travellers to South Africa spend 3% and VFR travellers from South Africa spend 7% of the financial remittances directed to health

respectively. The remittances of VFR travellers to and from South Africa may be used to start a business which might, in turn, generate revenues which will assist individual households (see Figure 2).

Some VFR travellers to and from South Africa do not bring money. Some Visiting Friends and Relative travellers do not send or bring money because they might be students or are unemployed and travel to and from South Africa for VFR and holiday purposes (see Table 2). The results of this study show that the contribution of VFR travel is crucial for the development of a country (Dzikiti, 2017). The benefits of VFR travel contribute to the economic, socio-cultural and environmental development of the country as well as on a local level (Morrison and O'Leary, 1995; Lehto *et al*., 2001; MacEachern *et al*., 2007). However, it is argued that the overall expenditure on VFR travel is relatively low (Lehto *et al*., 2001; Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis, 2007). If added together the expenditure of VFR travellers contributes to the local development of an area visited through remittances (Lehto *et al*., 2001; Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis, 2007). Therefore, the findings of Lehto *et al*., (2001), and Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis (2007), are supported by this study where the benefits of VFR travel are directed to individual households through remittances.

The majority of VFR travellers to and from South Africa have a stable income such that at a destination they are able to make personal decisions that allow them to spend on goods and services that will benefit individual households (Dzikiti, 2017). In this case, the benefits are through the remittances, which contribute to the benefits of individual households (Dzikiti, 2017). In order for consumption to take place, knowledge and information are crucial in determining the decision-making process goods and services.

Conclusion

"In the final analysis, it is argued that VFR travel matters to tourism scholarship in sub-Saharan Africa and that the neglect of VFR travellers should be addressed by an expanded research agenda, the findings of which can have potential relevance for policy makers" (Rogerson, 2017b:10). This paper in small measure addressed this call. With the concept of international VFR travel estimated in South Africa to be of growing significance (Rogerson, 2017b), this study has brought to light the importance of VFR travel both to the country visited and the country of origin (Dzikiti, 2017). It is evident that socio-demographic characteristics of VFR travellerss such as age, household income, employment and occupation level, education level and place of stay play a significant role in VFR travellers decision to travel and spend money at a destination.

In terms of the actual expenditure of VFR travellers **from** South Africa it was shown that they spend more than VFR travellers **to** South Africa on transport, groceries, entertainment and financial remittances. This is possible because VFR travellers f**rom** South Africa have a strong socio-demographic background as compared to VFR travellers **to** South Africa due to employment opportunities, their ability to have improved education and working opportunities in South Africa (Dzikiti, 2017). Visiting Friends and Relatives **to** South Africa spend more on gifts and other goods as compared with VFR travellers **from** South Africa. The spending of both VFR travellers to and from South Africa contributes significantly to the development of individual households in Zimbabwe. The remittances sent to Zimbabwean where monetary and goods contributes mostly towards household upkeep. Other respondents mentioned education, health and other purposes (Dzikiti, 2017). However, due the strict regulation imposed by the Zimbabwean government about the flow of basic commodities from South Africa, this have a major effect on the movement and expenditures of VFR travellers travelling to and from South Africa.

The link between migration and tourism has contributed to the development of cultural dilution, with Zimbabweans adapting to the South African culture and norms; and South Africans

adapting to some of the Zimbabweans practices (Dzikiti, 2017). With many of Zimbabweans settling in South Africa, this has led to the development and establishment of permanent homes, thus receiving more VFR travellers from Zimbabwe. The movement of VFR travellers to and from South Africa has implications, which should be considered by the government of both countries. The government of Zimbabwe should encourage the movement of VFR to South Africa as it contributes to the development of household and Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMME) amongst individuals. However, the scenario is different with the South African government imposing strict rules and regulation that limit the number of days Zimbabweans may visit South Africa (Dzikiti, 2017).

As a result of migrants moving to South Africa, there is pressure on the land and resources as population is growing, especially in Gauteng. As much as the South Africa government is imposing strict rules on reducing the number of Zimbabweans in South Africa, there is also positive effects of VFR travel through tourism (Dzikiti, 2017). The government of South Africa should look at the positive side as VFR travel as contributing to the development of the tourism economy on both local and national levels. Since tourism is one of the main factors which drives the tourism economy, policy implementation in this regard is crucial (Dzikiti, 2017). Summing up this study, here is a need to promote international VFR travel through immigrants and their contribution to remittances and further research could be conducted in this regard.

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