

The xenocentric tourist: An examination of motivation and purchase intention in the Dominican Republic's Tourism Sector

El turista xenocéntrico: análisis de la motivación y la intención de compra en el sector turístico de República Dominicana

Luis Jose Camacho^a

Rosilda Miranda^b

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Abstract

This study develops and empirically tests a structural model that integrates consumer xenocentrism (XENO), travel motivation (MOT), and tourist purchase intention (TPI) in the context of international tourism behaviour in the Dominican Republic. Drawing on identity theory, the theory of planned behaviour, and the push-pull motivation framework, the research examines how aspirational admiration for foreign cultures influences motivational states and behavioural intentions. Data was collected from 577 participants using validated multi-item scales and analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) with bootstrapped mediation testing. Findings indicate that XENO significantly predicts both MOT and TPI, confirming its role as a core cognitive-affective antecedent of tourism behaviour. MOT also mediates the relationship between XENO and behavioural intention, highlighting a sequential process through which global orientation is translated into action. These results contribute to tourism and consumer behaviour theory by extending XENO beyond brand evaluation into experiential contexts and by integrating motivational psychology with identity-based segmentation. The study provides practical insights for marketers and policymakers in emerging markets, highlighting the importance of aligning tourism strategies with the symbolic and aspirational aspects of travel.

Resumen

Este estudio desarrolla y prueba de manera empírica un modelo estructural que integra el xenocentrismo del consumidor (XENO), la motivación de viaje (MOT) y la intención de compra del turista (IPT) en el contexto del comportamiento turístico internacional en la República Dominicana. Basándose en la teoría de la identidad, la teoría del comportamiento planificado y el marco de motivación *push-pull*, la investigación examina cómo la admiración aspiracional por culturas extranjeras influye en los estados motivacionales y las intenciones de comportamiento. Se recopiló datos de 577 participantes mediante escalas multiítem validadas y se analizaron mediante modelos de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM) con pruebas de mediación *bootstrap*. Los hallazgos indican que el XENO predice de manera significativa tanto la MOT como la IPT, lo que confirma su papel como antecedente cognitivo-afectivo central del comportamiento turístico. La MOT también media la relación entre el XENO y la intención de comportamiento, destacando un proceso secuencial mediante el cual la orientación global se traduce en acción. Estos resultados contribuyen a la teoría del turismo y el comportamiento del consumidor al extender el XENO más allá de la evaluación de marca a contextos experienciales e integrar la psicología motivacional con la segmentación basada en la identidad. El estudio ofrece perspectivas prácticas para profesionales del *marketing* y responsables de políticas en mercados emergentes, destacando la importancia de alinear las estrategias turísticas con los aspectos simbólicos y aspiracionales de los viajes.

^a SUNY Empire State University, School of Business, Saratoga Springs, NY, USA. Email: Luis.Camacho@sunyempire.edu; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7167-2371>

^b Universidad APEC, Dirección of Acreditación, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Email: rmiranda@adm.unapec.edu.do; <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4834-9397>

Keywords: Xenocentrism, travel motivation, emerging markets, purchase intention, Dominican Republic.

Palabras clave: Xenocentrismo, motivación de viaje, mercados emergentes, intención de compra, República Dominicana.

■ Introduction

Tourism significantly drives the Dominican Republic's macroeconomic growth by generating foreign exchange, creating employment opportunities, and fostering sustained investment. However, beyond these economic outcomes, an important yet under studied psychological dimension emerges: the impact of a predominantly foreign-branded tourism environment on domestic consumers' identities, attitudes, and consumption behaviours. Dominican state policies prioritise foreign investment and actively position international brands as superior symbols of quality, reinforcing a symbolic hierarchy wherein foreignness is intrinsically linked with prestige. Such dynamics may foster consumer preferences that underrate local alternatives, thereby embedding a mindset that associates leisure quality exclusively with external, international origins (Banerjee et al., 2017; Pérez-Pineda et al., 2017).

Within this context, the Dominican Republic provides a unique natural experiment to explore xenocentric consumer behaviour. Unlike markets where consumers routinely evaluate domestic versus foreign alternatives, Dominican tourism, particularly its premium segment, is largely dominated by international brands and experiences (Duffy et al., 2015). Consequently, local consumers predominantly choose among globally branded options, rarely encountering high-status domestic tourism providers. This market structure facilitates the internalisation of cultural narratives positioning foreign experiences as inherently superior, thereby reinforcing identity-based consumption patterns aligned with perceptions of global prestige (López-Guzmán et al., 2016). As articulated by Global Consumer Culture Theory, these narratives are perpetuated by global marketing systems and institutional structures, particularly in economically dependent or postcolonial settings such as the Dominican Republic (Rivera, 2016).

Building on this theoretical foundation, the current research integrates three critical constructs (XENO, MOT, and TPI) to investigate how identity-driven preferences and motivational dynamics shape consumer decision-making within a foreign-dominated tourism landscape. XENO captures consumers' systematic preferences for foreign goods, services, and experiences, driven by identity-related aspirations and status considerations (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Rojas-Méndez & Chapa, 2020). MOT specifically reflects the internal "push" and external "pull" motivational factors prompting individuals to initiate travel and select particular destinations. TPI denotes the explicit consumer intention to engage in tourism-related purchases, functioning as the immediate antecedent of actual consumer behaviour. Prior research has predominantly addressed xenocentric attitudes towards tangible products and brands (Camacho et al., 2020, 2022a; Diamantopoulos et al., 2025; Hall et al., 2025; Mahmoud et al., 2023; Mueller et al., 2016), leaving significant gaps regarding intangible, experiential consumption domains such as tourism, particularly within non-Western, post-colonial contexts (Litheko, 2025).

This study contributes to addressing two critical gaps in existing literature. First, it extends xenocentrism research into the underexplored domain of intangible, service-oriented experiences within emerging economies characterised by deep foreign-brand saturation. Second, it innovatively examines MOT as a mediating mechanism, elucidating how xenocentric orientations influence tourism purchase intentions. Specifically, the study investigates: (1) how XENO influences both MOT and TPI; (2) whether MOT serves as a mediator between xenocentric attitudes and behavioural intentions; and (3) the strategic implications for tourism marketing and policy formulation in markets dominated by foreign-branded services. These questions collectively aim to bridge the gap between consumer identity and behavioural outcomes,

offering novel conceptual insights and practical guidance.

Theoretically, this research advances the application of XENO within the symbolic consumption literature, uniquely integrating motivational dynamics as an explanatory factor in tourism decision-making. Practically, insights derived from this study can inform stakeholders seeking inclusive, culturally sensitive segmentation and positioning strategies, ultimately contributing to psychologically sustainable tourism models that balance global integration with local cultural affirmation.

The manuscript is structured as follows: the subsequent section critically reviews literature on XENO, MOT, and TPI, positioning the conceptual model within broader theoretical frameworks. The third section details the methodological approach, including measurement, sampling, and data analysis techniques. The fourth section presents empirical results obtained through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). The fifth section discusses the findings within theoretical and policy contexts. Finally, the paper concludes by summarising its primary contributions, acknowledging limitations, and outlining directions for future research.

■ Literature review

■ Consumer xenocentrism

Xenocentrism (XENO) refers to a psychological orientation in which consumers perceive foreign products, brands, or services as inherently superior to their domestic counterparts (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Rojas-Méndez & Chapa, 2020). Unlike traditional consumer behaviour models that emphasise functional evaluations, such as price and quality, xenocentrism predominantly reflects symbolic and affective judgments. Drawing from Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), xenocentric consumers express an aspirational detachment from their cultural origins, associating external referents with greater symbolic value and social distinction. This contrasts with consumer ethnocentrism,

characterised by loyalty, patriotism, and moral obligations towards national products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). While ethnocentrism seeks to protect domestic interests through in-group favouritism, xenocentrism elevates the out-group, viewing domestic contexts as comparatively deficient (Camacho et al., 2020, 2022a; Strizhakova et al., 2008).

Despite their conceptual opposition, ethnocentrism and xenocentrism are not necessarily mutually exclusive; they may coexist, especially within culturally ambivalent consumers in transitional or postcolonial societies where identity is fragmented or contested (Camacho et al., 2022b; Rojas-Méndez & Chapa, 2020). Xenocentrism aligns with Status Consumption Theory (Eastman et al., 1999) by positioning foreign products and services as markers of prestige and cosmopolitan identity (Diamantopoulos et al., 2025; Rojas-Méndez & Kolotylo, 2022). In tourism contexts, xenocentric preferences manifest vividly, transforming international travel into symbolic expressions of global belonging and status (Rojas-Mendez & Davies, 2024).

Empirical research consistently supports the symbolic nature of xenocentric preferences. Batra et al. (2000) demonstrated that consumers have a strong bias towards foreign brands, driven by symbolic rather than utilitarian considerations. Similarly, Podoshen et al. (2011) noted identity-driven loyalty towards foreign brands, transcending objective product evaluation. Tourism amplifies these tendencies due to its experiential nature, embedding deeper symbolic and emotional meanings in travel decisions. Foreign destinations, particularly those in developed economies, signify cultural capital and social differentiation (Cucato et al., 2025; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2015). As Ekinici et al. (2013) suggest, symbolic consumption, including prestigious tourism, is fundamentally about establishing and communicating social status.

Despite these insights, the exploration of xenocentrism within tourism remains limited, primarily focusing on tangible products (such as fashion, electronics, and luxury goods) rather than intangible, experiential services. Chang's (2018) "experience economy" framework

highlights postmodern consumers' pursuit of meaningful identity construction through experiential consumption, underscoring tourism's unique position to express xenocentric values. Recent studies have corroborated the positive relationship between xenocentrism and a preference for international destinations, which is influenced by demographics such as younger age, higher education, and international exposure (Akgün et al., 2022; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Camacho et al., 2022a; Litheko, 2025). Furthermore, social media reinforces these preferences through continuous exposure to idealised foreign imagery, deepening xenocentric attitudes, and promoting foreign brand advocacy (Arora et al., 2019).

Yet, critical gaps remain in the literature. First, there is a limited empirical understanding of the role of xenocentrism within service-dominant contexts, such as tourism. Second, the interplay between xenocentric orientation and travel motivation is poorly understood, particularly regarding the influence of identity-based constructs on motivational dynamics. Third, the position of xenocentrism as a fundamental antecedent of behavioural intention within tourism decision-making frameworks remains unexplored. This study addresses these gaps by examining xenocentrism's direct effects on MOT and TPI, proposing:

- H1: XENO positively influences MOT.
- H2: XENO positively influences TPI.

| Travel motivation

MOT, a core construct in tourism research, describes psychological drivers compelling individuals to seek and engage in travel experiences. Crompton's (1979) push-pull framework initially categorised motivations into internal "push" factors (escape, self-enhancement) and external "pull" factors (destination attributes). This framework has shown robust cross-cultural validity (Chi & Qu, 2008; Kozak & Rimmington, 1999), yet subsequent scholarship refined its binary structure to integrate broader psychological

distinctions (Ryan, 2010). Intrinsic motivations, such as novelty seeking and self-actualisation, contrast with extrinsic motivations driven by prestige and social identity management (Cohen et al., 2013; Pizam, 2021).

Recent studies have increasingly emphasised the symbolic dimensions of MOT, particularly in terms of novelty seeking and cultural exploration, which predict destination choices and consumer spending (Liang & Yu, 2019). Extrinsic motives associated with status and social identity have also gained prominence, positioning tourism as a performative act signalling cultural capital and global integration (Lam & Hsu, 2006). These motivational structures, reflecting both intrinsic desires and extrinsic identity management, align closely with xenocentric consumption dynamics.

Despite its recognised importance, MOT research frequently overlooks cultural and identity-based orientations such as xenocentrism. Emerging research suggests that motivational states are significantly shaped by identity constructs, such as global identity and place attachment (Dai et al., 2023; Vašaničová & Melnyk, 2025). Nevertheless, the precise directional relationship between xenocentric orientations and motivational states remains unresolved. Furthermore, existing scales measuring motivational constructs often neglect psycho-cultural orientations, thereby limiting a comprehensive understanding (Pearce, 2005). Addressing this gap, this research posits MOT as mediating the xenocentrism-intention relationship, proposing:

- H3: MOT positively influences TPI.

| Tourist purchase intention

TPI denotes consumers' cognitive and emotional readiness to engage in tourism-related activities such as booking and planning trips. Typically conceptualised within Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence intention. Recent enhancements integrate affective and identity-based dimensions,

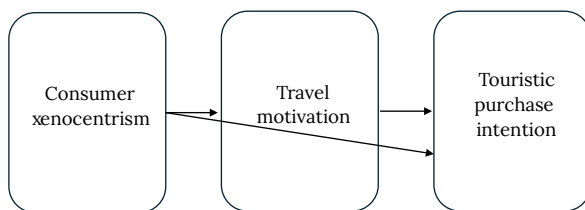
thereby better capturing symbolic consumption contexts, such as tourism.

Research consistently validates TPI as a reliable predictor of actual tourism behaviour, explaining substantial variance across cultural and demographic contexts (Floyd et al., 2003). However, psychological antecedents, such as global identity and cultural openness, also moderate intention, underscoring the centrality of identity in tourism decision-making (Rao et al., 2022).

Despite this, the direct relationship between xenocentrism and TPI remains underexplored, typically being positioned only as an antecedent to attitudinal variables (Jiang et al., 2022). This study explicitly situates xenocentrism at the core of intention formation, aligning with Global Consumer Culture Theory's assertion that global identities shape consumption trajectories (Cleveland & Laroche, 2007). Thus, xenocentrism interacts synergistically with motivation, jointly shaping tourism intentions. Building on these theoretical insights, the study posits:

- H4: MOT mediates the relationship between XENO and TPI.

Figure 1. Research model



■ Methodology

▮ Research design and objectives

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate structural relationships among XENO, MOT, and TPI within the context of international tourism in the Dominican Republic. The primary objective was to validate a conceptual model where XENO directly affects MOT and TPI, with MOT mediating this relationship. A quantitative approach was selected to ensure generalisability, facilitate precise hypothesis testing, and allow for

the robust modelling of latent constructs using validated psychometric instruments. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed as the primary analytical method due to its capacity to evaluate multiple interrelated dependencies and control measurement error simultaneously.

Sampling and data collection [22]

The study targeted adult consumers (18 years and older) in the Dominican Republic who had either previously engaged in international travel or expressed a marked interest in travelling abroad. A purposive, non-probability sampling strategy was adopted to ensure alignment with the study's focus on identity-based tourism behaviours. Recruitment was conducted via multiple digital channels, including university distribution lists, social media platforms with travel-related content, and online forums dedicated to tourism and cultural exchange. This recruitment strategy ensured the sample comprised individuals whose profiles were aligned with the study's conceptual variables.

Data collection took place during the first quarter of 2025, yielding a total of 786 initial responses. Following standard data quality procedures, such as screening for incomplete entries, random responses, and straight-lining, 577 completed and valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, representing a 73.4% response efficiency. Participants reflected a broad cross-section of educational attainment and income levels, generally representative of the Dominican Republic's emerging middle-class segment, a demographic increasingly involved in global consumption and international tourism. In adherence to research ethics protocols, respondents were informed of the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, and the strict confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained explicitly prior to commencing the survey, and all data were anonymised to ensure respondent privacy.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 50 participants to assess translation fidelity and the clarity of the questionnaire. The survey instrument

was initially developed in English and then translated into Spanish. A back-translation procedure was employed, wherein the Spanish version was retranslated into English by an independent bilingual expert. The original and back-translated English versions were compared to verify linguistic equivalence and conceptual consistency, thereby enhancing the cross-cultural validity of the measures. The final survey was administered electronically using the SurveyMonkey platform. Participants accessed the questionnaire through links distributed via professional email lists, academic networks, and targeted social media campaigns. Instructions were provided at the outset of the survey to ensure clarity, and participation required explicit agreement to an informed consent form.

Measurement of constructs

Constructs were measured using previously validated multi-item Likert-type scales, with response anchors ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). XENO was assessed using eight items adapted from Rojas-Méndez and Chapa (2020) and Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2016), capturing consumers’ beliefs in the superiority of foreign products and services. MOT was measured using four items grounded in Crompton’s (1979) push-pull framework, which has been extensively validated in tourism studies by Chi and Qu (2008). TPI was operationalised with four items adapted from Lam and Hsu (2006), focused explicitly on consumers’ intention to engage in international tourism. Prior to confirmatory modelling, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to purify scales and ensure item appropriateness.

Validity and reliability

Psychometric validation utilised a two-stage process: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in SPSS, followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in AMOS. Composite reliability (CR) indices ranged between 0.892 and 0.899, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70. At the same time, Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

exceeded the recommended benchmark of 0.50 for all constructs, confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was confirmed through both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with all HTMT values significantly below the conservative threshold of 0.85.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), employing maximum likelihood estimation, examined the hypothesised structural relationships among the latent constructs, including paths from XENO to MOT and TPI, as well as from MOT to TPI. Mediation effects were assessed using bootstrapping procedures (5,000 resamples) to establish 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals. The model demonstrated strong fit indices (CFI = 0.963, TLI = 0.954, RMSEA = 0.046, SRMR = 0.041), indicating excellent model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All path coefficients were statistically significant ($p < .001$), demonstrating medium to strong effect sizes (standardised estimates > 0.39), consistent with Cohen’s (1977) recommendations.

Demographic characteristics (Table 1) showed a highly educated sample, with over 81% possessing some post-secondary education and nearly half (48.35%) holding a bachelor’s degree or higher. This educational distribution is conducive to sophisticated cognitive engagement relevant to constructs such as xenocentrism. Income data indicated a lower-middle-class skew, with approximately 67% of the sample earning below \$15,000 annually, which is crucial for interpreting behavioural intentions within the economic constraints of the sample. The age distribution revealed a predominantly younger cohort (79% below 38 years), aligning with existing literature that identifies younger consumers as being globally oriented, digitally influenced, and experience-focused. Gender representation was balanced, allowing for potential moderation analyses related to the effects of gender on the modelled relationships.

Table 1. Demographics

Education	Income		Frequency	Percent	
	Frequency	Percent			
High school degree	39	6.76	\$0-\$4,999	135	28.21
Technician	67	11.61	\$5,000-\$9,999	120	25.13
College student	192	33.28	\$10,000-\$14,999	97	14.1
Bachelor's degree	233	40.38	\$15,000-\$19,999	56	8.21
Graduate	46	7.97	\$20,000-\$24,999	107	15.38
Age			\$25,000 and up	62	8.97
18-27	248	43	Gender		
28-37	205	35.5	Male	284	49.22
38-47	81	14	Female	277	48.01
48-57	36	6.2	Prefer not to answer	16	2.77
58 +	7	1.2			

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 2 summarises the descriptive statistics and correlations among the primary constructs: XENO, MOT, and TPI. Each construct demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.89, surpassing the recommended threshold (Hair et al., 2010). Among these constructs, XENO recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.69$), highlighting a pronounced consumer preference for foreign tourism experiences. TPI showed a similarly high mean ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.79$), indicating strong purchase intentions for international tourism services. MOT, however, exhibited a lower mean and higher variability ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.98$), possibly reflecting diverse motivational drivers and socioeconomic constraints. Correlations among constructs were robust and aligned with theoretical predictions. Xenocentrism was strongly correlated with tourist purchase intention ($r = .633$, $p < 0.001$), and motivation was significantly correlated with TPI ($r = 0.643$, $p < 0.001$). The moderate correlation between XENO and MOT ($r = 0.346$, $p < 0.001$) supports their distinct yet related conceptualisations.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

	XENO	TPI	MOT
M	3.7481	3.6399	3.4367
SD	0.69067	0.79483	0.98078
CA	0.900	0.896	0.898
Correlations			
	XENO	TPI	MOT
XENO	0.727		
TPI	0.633***	0.83	
MOT	0.346***	0.643***	0.821

Significance of correlations: *** $p < 0.001$.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 3 presents the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results, which confirmed the construct validity of the measurement model. All standardised factor loadings met or exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2010), indicating satisfactory item reliability. Specifically, loadings ranged from 0.631 to 0.839 for XENO, 0.726 to 0.890 for TPI, and 0.750 to 0.864 for MOT. Items XENO6 (0.631) and XENO2 (0.670) were retained due to their theoretical significance and acceptable contribution to construct measurement. Convergent validity was supported, as all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the 0.50 threshold: XENO = 0.529, TPI = 0.689, and MOT = 0.674, indicating that each

construct accounted for more than half of the variance in its observed indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs were greater than 0.89, demonstrating strong internal consistency reliability. Discriminant validity was established by verifying that the AVE values for each construct exceeded their respective Maximum Shared Variance (MSV). Further, MaxR(H) values remained below the conservative threshold of 0.95 (Hancock & Mueller, 2001), confirming that each latent construct was empirically distinct from the others. These results provide robust psychometric evidence that the constructs of xenocentrism, motivation, and touristic purchase intention are conceptually sound and appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 3. Model fit

Factor/Item	FL	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
XENO		0.899	0.529	0.401	0.909
XENO1	0.683				
XENO2	0.67				
XENO3	0.764				
XENO4	0.839				
XENO5	0.817				
XENO6	0.631				
XENO7	0.706				
XENO8	0.682				
TPI		0.898	0.689	0.414	0.909
TPI1	0.843				
TPI2	0.89				
TPI3	0.852				
TPI4	0.726				
MOT		0.892	0.674	0.414	0.898
MOT1	0.864				
MOT2	0.75				
MOT3	0.827				
MOT4	0.838				

Notes. FL: Factor Loading; CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average Variance extracted; MSV: Maximum shared variance; MaxR(H): Maximal Reliability.

Discriminant validity (HTMT analysis)

To assess discriminant validity, Table 4 reports the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), following the criteria established by Henseler et al. (2015). All HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming that the constructs are distinct. The HTMT value between XENO and TPI was 0.579, while the value between MOT and TPI was 0.571. The lowest HTMT value was observed between XENO and MOT, at 0.306. These results provide strong support for the discriminant validity of the measurement model, confirming that each construct can be reliably interpreted as representing a distinct dimension of tourist behaviour.

Table 4. HTMT analysis

	XENO	TPI	MOT
XENO			
TPI	0.579		
MOT	0.306	0.571	

Note. All HTMT values < 0.85 (strict threshold), confirming discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Structural model and hypothesis validation

SEM supported all three hypothesised relationships with strong statistical significance and theoretical alignment. Table 5 shows the standardised path coefficients, standard errors, critical ratios, and *p*-values. All paths were significant at *p* < 0.001, with C.R. values above ±1.96, confirming robust empirical support. XENO had a significant direct effect on MOT ($\beta = 0.533, p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This suggests that individuals who admire foreign cultures are more intrinsically motivated to travel internationally. The effect size reflects a moderate to strong relationship, consistent with identity-based theories framing xenocentrism as a global orientation linked to aspirational consumption (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Strizhakova & Coulter, 2015). XENO also had a strong influence on TPI ($\beta = 0.592, p < 0.001$), supporting H2. As the most pronounced path, this indicates that xenocentric beliefs extend beyond attitudes to behavioural intentions. This supports findings that consumers in emerging markets

Table 5. Hypothesis validation

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Decision
MO	<---	XENO	0.533	0.075	7.103	***	Supported
TPI	<---	XENO	0.592	0.056	10.666	***	Supported
TPI	<---	MO	0.397	0.033	11.913	***	Supported

Note. Bootstrapped with 5,000 samples; * $p < .01$.

often prioritise foreign experiences over domestic ones, especially in symbolic and experiential contexts (Camacho et al., 2020; Rojas-Méndez et al., 2022). MOT significantly predicted TPI ($\beta = 0.397, p < 0.001$), confirming H3. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and push-pull frameworks (Crompton, 1979), which identify motivation as a key antecedent of intention. These results validate the model, showing that identity-based (xenocentrism) and

psychological (motivation) factors independently shape international travel intentions.

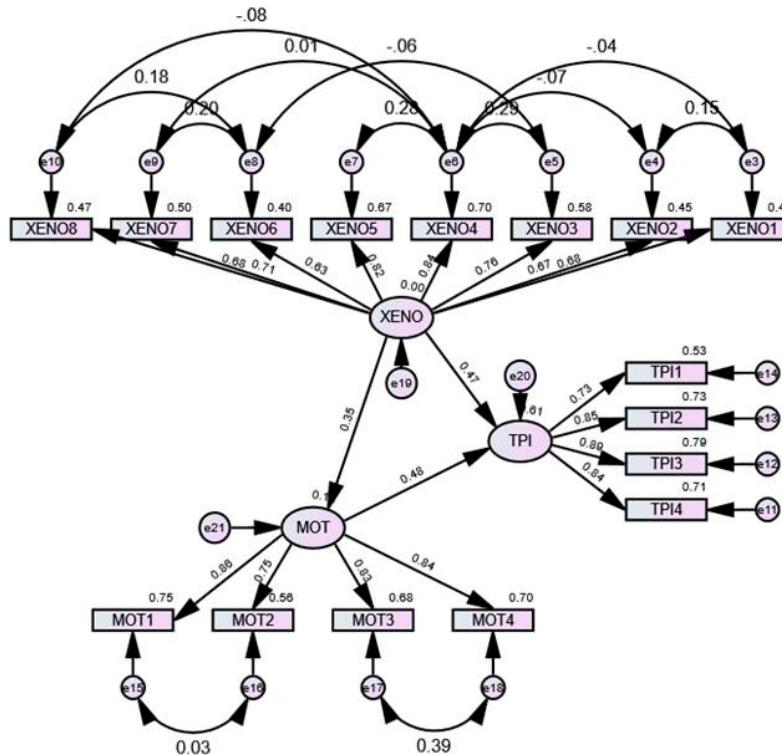
Mediation analysis

Figure 2 and table 6 present the results of the mediation analysis. A bootstrapped procedure with 5,000 resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals was employed to test the mediating role of MOT between XENO and TPI, following the guidelines of Preacher and Hayes

Table 6. Mediation analysis

Indirect path	Unstandardised estimate	Lower	Upper	P-Value	Standardised estimate
XENO → MOT → TPI	0.211	0.148	0.285	0.001	0.167**

Figure 2. Structural equation model



(2008). As shown in Table 6, the indirect effect was significant (unstandardised = 0.211; standardised $\beta = 0.167$, $p = 0.001$), with a confidence interval of 0.148 to 0.285, indicating partial mediation. These results suggest that xenocentric orientations influence travel intentions through internal motivational states, including exploration, prestige, and symbolic consumption. This supports the view of motivation as a psychological bridge between identity-based values and behaviour (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Camacho et al., 2020). Psychologically, this pathway reveals how symbolic preferences for foreignness become behaviourally relevant through motivational activation. The moderate effect size ($\beta = 0.167$) highlights the role of motivation in shaping travel intentions, supporting models that integrate identity and affective-cognitive mechanisms (Dai et al., 2023; Srivastava & Fernandes, 2025).

■ Discussion

This research developed and empirically tested a conceptual model elucidating the complex interrelationships among XENO, MOT, and TPI within the context of the Dominican Republic's international tourism. The results significantly contribute to understanding how identity-driven orientations shape psychological processes and subsequently influence behavioural outcomes in symbolic consumption. The strong positive relationship identified between XENO and MOT underscores that xenocentric attitudes extend beyond simple preferences or admiration for foreign experiences. Instead, xenocentrism functions as a psychological catalyst that motivates individuals to pursue global engagement through tourism, reflecting deeper aspirations linked to global identities and lifestyles (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2016; Murphy et al., 2007). This finding extends previous xenocentrism literature, which has been predominantly centred on tangible products and brands (Batra et al., 2000), highlighting xenocentrism's influential role in experiential consumption. By applying XENO to tourism, a context characterised by symbolic and affective experiences, the study broadens the theoretical understanding of how identity

aspirations are expressed through consumer behaviours.

Furthermore, the significant direct relationship between XENO and TPI indicates that identity-based preferences are robust predictors of consumer behaviour, aligning well with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The context of the Dominican Republic, marked by strong symbolic associations with international travel, positions xenocentrism as not only an identity orientation but also as a potent behavioural driver. These findings align with prior studies by Camacho et al. (2020) and Srivastava and Fernandes (2025), but uniquely quantify this relationship through structural modelling, affirming travel as a performative enactment of global identity and aspirations for social mobility.

Crucially, the mediation analysis illuminated MOT's role as a key mechanism linking xenocentric orientations to tangible behavioural intentions. Motivation, characterised by intrinsic factors such as novelty seeking, self-enhancement, and cultural curiosity, emerges as a crucial intermediate step that enables identity-based aspirations to materialise into concrete travel intentions. Unlike earlier studies that predominantly positioned motivation alongside intention as independent constructs (Chi & Qu, 2008; Pearce, 2005), this study offers a more integrated perspective, revealing the sequential process by which identity orientations activate psychological motivations leading to actionable outcomes. Thus, the findings provide compelling evidence for viewing tourism decision-making as a coherent cognitive-affective trajectory.

Theoretically, the study advances the understanding of consumer behaviour by addressing three primary gaps. First, it expands xenocentrism theory into the underexplored domain of intangible, symbolic consumption, emphasising the applicability and relevance of identity constructs beyond material goods. Second, by establishing motivation as a mediating variable, this research clarifies the cognitive-affective pathways by which identity orientations influence consumer behaviours, thereby addressing calls for more integrative models in tourism research. Third, the findings highlight the

ongoing tension between global aspirations and local identity within emerging markets. In the Dominican context, where globalisation introduces consumers to conflicting identity signals, this study provides an empirical framework that effectively captures this duality.

From a practical perspective, the model holds significant implications for tourism marketers and policymakers. Understanding how xenocentrism activates motivational drivers allows for the development of targeted strategies that resonate with consumers' identity aspirations and motivational states. Stakeholders in the tourism industry can thus better align their offerings and communication strategies with the nuanced psychological and identity-driven preferences identified in this research, ultimately fostering deeper consumer engagement and satisfaction.

Lastly, while focused on tourism, the conceptual framework offers broader relevance to other service and experiential consumption contexts, such as luxury hospitality, international education, and global media consumption. Future research could explore the cross-sectoral applicability of these insights, further refining our understanding of how global identity orientations influence consumer preferences and behaviours.

Ultimately, this study presents a comprehensive theoretical and empirical model that elucidates the complex relationships between XENO, MOT, and PTI. It underscores the importance of considering identity-driven psychological processes within consumer behaviour frameworks, positioning tourism as a dynamic performative space for global identity expression.

■ Conclusions and implications

This study introduces a theoretically comprehensive and empirically validated model that significantly advances understanding of identity-driven consumer behaviour within international tourism contexts. By elucidating the intricate relationships among XENO, MOT, and TPI, the research reveals how deeply

embedded admiration for foreign cultures serves as both a psychological motivator and a predictor of behavioural intention. Unlike conventional tourism models, which focus primarily on destination attributes or risk assessments, this model emphasises value-based identity orientations as fundamental drivers of tourism behaviour. Consequently, the research underscores symbolic consumption, aspirational identity constructs, and global cultural orientations as pivotal in shaping international tourism dynamics, especially within rapidly globalising emerging markets.

■ Theoretical implications

This research makes a meaningful contribution to both tourism theory and consumer behaviour literature in several ways. First, it extends xenocentrism theory from product-centric contexts into experiential and service-based consumption domains, establishing its significance as a predictive construct in symbolic consumption. This aligns with emerging theoretical perspectives advocating for broader, identity-centric applications of XENO (Cleveland & Balakrishnan, 2019; Srivastava & Fernandes, 2025). Second, by empirically validating the mediating role of MOT the study enhances integrated frameworks such as the push-pull and value-motivation-behaviour models, clarifying the cognitive-affective pathways linking identity-based cognitions to actionable consumer intentions (Camacho et al., 2020; Dai et al., 2023). Third, the study advances segmentation theory by illustrating that psychographic and identity-driven constructs, rather than traditional demographic factors alone, provide more powerful predictors for tourism behaviour. This addresses recent calls for culturally nuanced and psychographically driven segmentation in global tourism (Litheko, 2025; Rojas-Méndez & Kolotylo, 2022). Overall, the findings support the need to integrate socio-cultural identity variables into tourism consumer behaviour models, particularly in contexts where globalisation is intensifying and cultural identities are evolving.

Practical implications

The study offers actionable insights for tourism marketers, destination managers, and policymakers. Marketing strategies targeting xenocentric consumers should emphasise cultural prestige, global connectedness, and aspirational identities. Narratives that frame tourism as a transformational experience, highlighting personal growth, cultural immersion, and global belonging, are likely to strongly resonate with this audience. Destination marketing should thus shift from a traditional emphasis on sightseeing towards themes of authenticity, self-enhancement, and experiential depth.

For policymakers, particularly in emerging economies like the Dominican Republic, understanding consumers' dual orientations, rooted locally yet globally aspirational, can guide effective tourism and economic policies. Initiatives such as facilitating international travel through visa flexibility, financial incentives, and strategic partnerships can empower consumers while aligning national strategies with evolving cultural aspirations. Additionally, to counteract the potential undervaluation of domestic offerings, tourism development policies could emphasise hybrid positioning, portraying local experiences as globally competitive (e.g., branding Dominican resorts as "world-class" destinations that showcase rich local heritage). Investment in domestic brands to compete symbolically with international counterparts could also bolster national pride alongside global aspirations.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, suggesting that future longitudinal studies be conducted to track the evolution of xenocentric attitudes and motivations. Geographic restriction to the Dominican Republic raises concerns about generalisability; therefore, replication across diverse cultural and economic settings is advisable. Self-reported data introduces potential social desirability biases; incorporating experimental methods, implicit attitude measures, or behavioural data tracking would strengthen future research. Although Structural

Equation Modelling (SEM) robustly assessed latent constructs, its cross-sectional nature restricts causal interpretations. Future studies employing longitudinal or experimental designs would enhance our understanding of the causal dynamics between xenocentrism, motivation, and behavioural intentions.

Future research directions

Future research avenues could include comparative studies across countries with varying levels of globalisation, identity salience, and cultural openness to investigate the conditions under which xenocentrism exerts the strongest influence. Additionally, exploring the dynamic interplay between xenocentrism, ethnocentrism, and cosmopolitanism in response to global events (e.g., pandemics, geopolitical shifts) could further enrich understanding of identity-based consumer behaviours. Incorporating factors such as digital media exposure, influencer marketing, and global brand interactions would also help elucidate how contemporary digital ecosystems shape cultural perceptions and tourism behaviours. These expanded inquiries promise a richer, multi-dimensional understanding of xenocentric consumer dynamics in tourism and beyond.

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