

Indian diaspora in Ghana: cultural and family heritage of tourists' travel preference

Indian diaspora tourism in Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose – The literature has acknowledged the importance of diaspora studies because of the influx of funds into the local economy, including the tourism and hospitality sector. However, little empirical research appears to be known about the subject matter, principally within the developing country perspective. This study aims to respond to research calls by investigating the impact of diasporic cultural heritage, family heritage on travel preference of West African Indian migrant visitors to their homeland.

Design/methodology/approach – This research is guided by the theory of acculturation. A quantitative data were gathered from a sample of 312 diasporas, and the regression analysis was used to analyze the data.

Findings – The study finds that cultural heritage and family heritage have positive and significant impact on travel preference of migrant visitors to their homeland. Further analysis of the independent sample *t*-test reveals a significant difference between Indian Ghanaians and Ghanaian Indians in their thought of cultural heritage. However, no significant differences were found in the Indian Ghanaian and Ghanaian Indian's family heritage and travel preference to their homeland.

Research limitations/implications – This study is destination-specific of Indian migrant visitors. The application of the study's outcome to other diaspora would demand a larger sample size for generalization to be made. The study offers compelling insights on cultural heritage, family heritage and travel preference to marketing a diaspora tourism site.

Originality/value – The study expands the application of the theory of acculturation within the diaspora literature and establishes that integration and separation strategies of the theory explain the positive interests of the migrant visitors' traveling preference to their homeland.

Keywords Cultural heritage, Family heritage, Travel preference, Migrant visitors, Diaspora tourism

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Where we love is home—home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts Oliver Wendell Holmes

It is evident that diaspora tourism provides opportunities for immigrants to reconnect with their families, friends and loved ones in their home country (Li *et al.*, 2020; Otoo *et al.*, 2021).

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Huang *et al.* (2013) defined this type of tourism as the return of migrant people to their homelands in search of their origins or reconnect with their past. Of course, the influx of funds into the local economy is an important aspect of this type of tourism. As a result, governments throughout the world have become more devoted to the development of the concept, which has led to the allocation of resources in national budgets (Sinclair and Connelly, 2018). The report showed that diaspora tourism of middle- and lower-income countries is estimated to be around \$551 billion and \$597 billion by the end of 2021 (Ratha *et al.*, 2019). This has made many countries tap into this niche by making diaspora tourism very attractive to those in the diaspora. In tourism extant literature, the issue of family and cultural heritage has long been argued as a community based resource (Hughes and Carlsen, 2010; MacDonald and Jolliffe, 2003; Preko *et al.*, 2020a, c), and it is among the important factors that drive migrants to participate in diaspora tourism. However, family and cultural heritage predicting travel preference has gained little academic recognition. In this respect, family and cultural heritage become very essential among migrant visitors.

In this research, we focus on cultural heritage, family heritage and preference to travel to the homeland in an attempt to contribute to literature in three main ways: First, with the exception of these studies (Du Preez and Govender, 2020; Huang *et al.*, 2018) (investigation on attachment to the home country or traveling to the motherland), there is almost total silence on the impact of cultural and family heritage on travel preference to homeland in the diaspora tourism literature. Second, our study has timely responded to research calls to advance country-specific understanding of the impact of family and cultural heritage on travel preferences of Indian diasporas in a developing continent context. Third, the acculturation theory has been expanded in two ways as a result of this research: One, our findings revealed integration and separation strategies; this was evidenced by how Indian migrant visitors expressed a positive interest in their travel preference to their homeland. Two, this study made the effort to understand how family and cultural heritage, grounded in acculturation theory, help in explaining Indian migrant visitors in Ghana.

Interestingly, much of the studies on diaspora tourism have concentrated on Asian Diaspora tourism from the western world's perspective (Harish, 2010; Huang and Chen, 2020; Huang *et al.*, 2013; Li, 2020; Murdy *et al.*, 2018; Tie and Seaton, 2013; Zaidi, 2014), with many of these studies documenting diasporic identity, traveling to the motherland, attachment to the home country, and ancestral tourist motivations, to reconnect to their roots. However, little research appears to be known about Indian diaspora tourism, with a focus on travel preferences, family and cultural heritage, which has created an evident gap in tourism literature. Prior studies (Huang *et al.*, 2018; Otoo, *et al.*, 2021) have made similar observations and recommended that more research on diaspora tourism should consider these factors. Therefore, the aim of this research is to respond to these calls by investigating diasporic cultural heritage, family heritage and travel preferences of West African Indian migrant visitors, which have been neglected in previous tourism literature. The varying characteristics of diasporic communities may have different ramifications for "diaspora tourism," as it is anchored in the typology of diasporas (Cohen, 1997). Consequently, this research attempts to examine the impact of Indian migrant visitors' cultural and family heritage on their preference to travel to their homeland, and test the hypotheses that cultural and family heritage have a positive impact on their preference to travel to one's homeland. Therefore, the study was guided by the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1. What is the impact of family heritage on travel preference of Indian migrant visitors?

RQ2. What is the impact of cultural heritage on travel preference of Indian migrant visitors?

This study has contextualized cultural heritage as diaspora tourists who travel to their homeland for vacation or sightseeing. While family heritage within this context is regarded as diaspora tourists, who travel to their homeland in order to be reconnected or to discover

their family roots. In this study, diaspora tourism is conceptualized as: an Indian Ghanaian is a first-generation Indian citizen who migrated to work in Ghana and acquired Ghanaian citizenship, one who visits India for vacation. On the other hand, a Ghanaian Indian is a second-generation Indian born in Ghana to both Indian parents or one parent who is an Indian residing in Ghana and visits India on holidays. In this research, Indian migrant visitors and diaspora tourists are used interchangeably as Indians who return to their homeland for holidays or sightseeing. The study is constructed as follows: literature review section presents the acculturation theory and existing literature review on family, culture and travel preference. The next section presents the methodology applied in the current paper. The discussion and conclusions follow in the other section. Finally, the last section consists of the implications, and limitations and areas for future research.

Literature review

Diaspora and tourism

Diaspora is the spread or dispersal of members of the same community (Butler, 2001). Various categories of diaspora exist, depending on the reason why people leave their homeland country, including religious freedom, work, imperial, escaping from political persecution and cultural diaspora (Huang and Chen, 2021). The activities of these migrants in terms of tourism have considerably received attention. This is because they have left for various reasons that can have an effect with the relationship they have with their homeland and their reasons for visiting after relocation. Given the diversity of diasporic, there is a slight consistency in the way family heritage and cultural heritage to homeland influence preference to travel (Huang *et al.*, 2018).

Visit to Family and Friend visiting friends and relatives (VFR) tourism have been linked to diaspora tourism as people traveling for the main purpose of visiting relatives and friends (Mortley, 2011). Nevertheless, visits by the diasporic community, who return home for a variety of reasons including business, festivals, culture and heritage, are not well described by VFR (Duval, 2003). That is, diaspora tourism intersect with VFR but not the same (Uriely, 2010). In all, diaspora tourism slightly differed from VFR tourism. In the first place, diaspora tourists to some extent are conversant with the country they are visiting in relation to their culture and language. While VFR tourism can be accomplished purely on friendship basis. Visiting a friend with a different language and culture on the basis of tourism. Second, diaspora tourists are more likely to visit destinations or sites in their home country that most foreign tourists (friends) do not visit. An example is visiting the slums within a kilometer of the Taj Mahal in Agra of India (Newland and Carylanna, 2010).

Theory of acculturation

This study on diaspora tourism was guided by the acculturation theory. The concept of acculturation was proposed and has received growing attention (Redfield *et al.*, 1936). An acculturation is characterized by the procedure in which migrants undergo behavioral and psychological change as a result of widespread interaction with another culture (Berry, 2005). The theory is further categorized as a “cultural ideology that highlights the ways that immigrants deal with their cultural heritage rooted in the country of origin, and their behaviour towards mainstream culture in the country of settlement” (Irimías, 2013, p. 182). Early, Berry (1997) established the bi-dimensional model of acculturation theory and suggested that psychological acculturation is based on two choices: the extent to which people are likely to interact and adopt aspects of their host culture, and the extent to which people are likely to preserve elements of their home culture. The choices made across these dimensions can lead to one of these psychological outcomes: integration, assimilation, marginalization and separation (Berry, 1997; Li *et al.*, 2019). Within the diaspora tourism context, the researchers hold the view that individuals who use an integration strategy accept

the home culture by engaging with, and adopting it, while keeping their own culture. Interestingly, individuals who embraced assimilation strategy adopted the host culture, while forsaking their home culture. Again, people who used marginalization strategy were unmotivated to engage with, embrace or maintain any culture. In contrast, persons who employ a separation strategy want to maintain their home culture, while still interested in interacting with, or adopting features of the host culture.

[Kivisto \(2017\)](#) grounded that within the conventional assimilation, the longer an individual remained in a host nation, the more he or she became absorbed into the new country and disengaged from his or her native origin. As a generation becomes more assimilated than their parents, links to the country of origin often begin to fade away, from generation to generation ([Levitt and Schiller, 2004](#)). However, not every migrant, chooses the same path. Due to diverse cultures, there is no set of guidelines for how diasporic membership and identities evolve. Nonetheless, one thing that all diasporas have in common is a deep sense of community, and a desire to stay connected to one's root ([Huang et al., 2018](#)). Of course, the transmission of memory, rituals, knowledge and other cultural activities inside families will continue from generation to generation ([Berg and Eckstein, 2015](#); [Hepner, 2015](#); [Huang et al., 2018](#)). Therefore, diasporas who wish to connect to family heritage, relive past experience and enjoy sightseeing of home country could be explained by the acculturation theory strategy, such as integration and separation.

The fundamental criticism of the acculturation theory is that it takes a "one size fits all" approach to migration and concentrates on changes at individual level, rather than taking into consideration the complex, mutual and reciprocal interactions that migrants share collectively with close persons, who are undergoing acculturation ([Chirkov, 2009](#); [Choi and Kim, 2010](#); [Gonzalez and Méndez-Pounds, 2018](#)). [Akosah-Twumasi et al. \(2020\)](#) applied acculturation theory to migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa living in Australia and concluded that a selected process of prioritizing family requirements dictates the acculturation strategy of Sub-Saharan families, assisting them in achieving their migration goals, assuring effective family units and allowing them to be productive members of the local community. Hence, this study applied the theory in context of the Indian diasporas from an emerging economy perspective.

Family heritage. In recent years, heritage ([Castillo-Villar and Merlo-Simoni, 2021](#); [Mohammed et al., 2021](#)) has significantly gained academic recognition due to the propensity of diaspora tourists interest in tracing their origins through family lineage. In tourism research, diaspora tourism has attracted the attention of scholars who have expanded literature on this subject ([Etemaddar et al., 2016](#); [Li and Chan, 2017](#); [Zhu, 2020](#); [Zou et al., 2021](#)). This clearly shows the importance of family heritage in the understanding of diaspora tourism ([Chhabra, 2013](#)). In this study, family heritage is conceptualized as sense of identity such as values, ethnic and national identity handed over by previous generations. This could enhance diaspora tourists to travel to their homeland in order to be reconnected or to discover their family roots. Despite family heritage serving as an important factor in this regard ([Schanzel et al., 2012](#)), surprisingly, there has been paucity of research related to this area ([Otoo, 2019](#)). [Du Preez and Govender \(2020\)](#) recognized that diaspora with family lineage has a strong quest to re-enforce diaspora tourism but also stressed on the need for more studies. Therefore, there is the need for understanding family heritage, which could enhance travelers' feeling of belongingness to a location and group, and providing persons with personal pleasure, and a deeper connection to oneself by resolving identity concerns.

Cultural heritage. Culture is an essential part of tourism that is frequently viewed as generic, stable and uniform in cultural tourism literature within an ethnic group ([Atsiz et al., 2020](#); [Weaver et al., 2017](#)). Interestingly, cultural heritage, which is an important concept in diaspora literature, has been characterized as a visitation of locations significant to the past or present cultural identity of certain groups of people ([Gannon et al., 2021](#); [McNulty and Koff,](#)

2014). Cultural heritage in this study has been conceptualized as a way of living established by a diasporic community and transit from one generation to the other, which could be linked to the country of origin. This can contribute to diaspora tourists who travel to their homeland for vacation or sightseeing. In host nations, the diaspora is frequently a cultural minority, and this aggregation of minority cultures confuses the interchangeable sense of culture. Traveling, of course, aids individuals to reconciling concerns of nationality, place and culture, since several diasporas have a dual sense of devotion to their home and host nation (Cheer and Reeves, 2013; Huang, *et al.*, 2013). People from non-indigenous cultures, on the other hand, often maintain a sense of cultural affiliation, a desire to return to one's homeland, and an urge to return to their ancestral past (Alexander, *et al.*, 2017; Fourie and Santana-Gallega, 2013; Warren, 2019). Although diaspora tourism has been recognized in literature (Otoo *et al.*, 2021b; Seraphin *et al.*, 2021; Scheyvens, 2007), there is inadequate study on cultural heritage as a factor for diasporic tourism (Boukhris, 2017; Dillette, 2021; Hussan, 2019), making it worthy of academic investigation within diaspora tourism. Thus, this study attempts to advance the empirical understanding of cultural heritage of Indian migrants in context.

Travel preference. Preference has been characterized as the underlining intrinsic, psychological or mental urge that motivates a person to engage in recreational activities (Allaberganov and Preko, 2021; Pearce and Lee, 2005). The significance of preference within tourism research is inherent in recognizing tourists' requirements and appropriately connect those demands to the right activities, hobbies or destination qualities (Albayrak and Caber, 2018; Jackman and Nairam, 2021). This study conceptualized the constructs with factors such as family heritage and cultural heritage as an antecedent that influences tourists toward preference to travel. Hence, preference to travel has been conceptualized as destination choice (i.e. India) with regard to sightseeing and reliving the past. Extant tourism literature has considered numerous outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty (Feng *et al.*, 2020; Mathew, 2021; Preko *et al.*, 2020b), intention to revisit (Mohammed *et al.*, 2021) and activity participation patterns (Kang and Lee, 2021). In diaspora tourism, previous studies have examined aspects that deal with attachment to home country (Huang *et al.*, 2013); engagement in social capital building (Li, 2020), experiences and acculturation (Ferrari *et al.*, 2021; Preko and Gyepi-Garbrah, 2021), transnational leisure and contemporary migrants (Huang and Chen, 2020), while neglecting the issue of preference to travel. Additionally, Huang *et al.* (2018) argued that further research could look at tourist preference as a factor or an outcome to diaspora tourism as it might respond to other variables to explain diaspora tourism, making the concept worthy of research.

Methodology

Study respondents

The focus of this study was Indian diaspora. This includes Indian Ghanaian and Ghanaian Indian migrants, who permanently reside and work in the host country Ghana, but usually travel to their home country for business, leisure and entertainment. These descriptions were used as one of the scanning questions in sampling the targeted participants for the survey. In addition, the respondents for this study must be 18 years or above and should have possessed Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) identification card. This card is the closest appropriation of dual citizenship for Indians who possessed other foreign passports (India Bureau of Immigration, 2021). This study chose the Indian diaspora in Ghana because of the following reasons: first, the Indian diaspora constitutes the second-largest migrant workers with 10,000 Indians in Ghana (High Commission of India, 2020).

In Ghana, Indians entertain themselves by celebrating some of their festivals, notable is the Diwali festival (Plate 1). Second, Indians are the second-largest projects investors, notably the construction of the Presidential complex, rural electrification project, Pan African E-Network project, Advance Information Technology Institute – Kofi Annan Centre of



Plate 1.
Diwali festival
in Ghana

Source(s): Adapted from Modern Ghana

Excellence in Ghana. Third, there is a lot of Indian public and private companies such as Bank of Baroda, Tata, Bharti Airtel, Ashok, Leyland, Mahindra and Mahindra, educational institutions including universities, and several pharmaceutical businesses in Ghana ([India-Africa Partnership, 2015](#)). Fourth, according to the National Tourism Development Plan (2013–2027), statistics show that India is among the top 8 foreign tourism sources to the Ghanaian Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector. Finally, a report by [OECD/ILO \(2018\)](#) reveals that many of the Indian businesses, especially in electronic and fabric trading, employ a lot of immigrants in the trade sector.

The Indian Embassy in Accra provided a population of targeted 3,000 Indian migrants holding foreign nationalities, living and working in Ghana ([High Commission of India, 2020](#)). The research target population was considered as a finite population, which was used as a guide in the determination of the study's sample size. A finite population is defined as a circumstance, where the entire number of people of the populace is countable or known ([Kozak, 2008](#)). Following the suggestion of [Tillé \(2020\)](#), Krejcie and Morgan, sample size determination table is one of the appropriate and widely used formulae for estimating sample size for finite population. Hence, [Krejcie and Morgan's \(1970\)](#) sample size determination table was employed to target 341 individuals for the present study. Data for this study were collected in three main cities (Accra, Tema and Kumasi), given that the largest figures of migrant workers reside in these locations. The questionnaire was plainly written in English language and was converted from paper-based to digital version enabled by the opine software installed on smartphones and tablets, to aid total compliance to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) safety protocols. In this study, several sampling methods were used for collecting information. This is due to the fact that the participants were in different locations.

Primarily, the convenience sampling was utilized to collect data, and then the migrants recommended the enumerators to add relevant migrants, as in snowball sampling. After exhausting the snowball sampling approach, the data collectors employed the detect methodology to select respondents in public venues such as shopping malls, churches, sports clubs, mosques, golf courses and companies or organizations with a large migrant workforce. Again, ethical consideration, confidentiality and anonymity were observed. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the adoption of online survey. The authors addressed the

issues of non-response level and attrition in this research, adding 15% to the sample size (51). This resulted in 392 samples. Approximately, 400 questionnaires were administered between October 2020 to February 2021; 367 questionnaires were received, and only 312 were useable representing a 78% response rate. Note that earlier, the researchers called the sampled participants and confirmed their eligibility for/(in taking) the survey. A participant who did not meet any of the conditions was purposively replaced. This research utilized personal survey method due to the following reasons. First, this study benefited from the personal survey method, particularly in the referrals of participants that will have been difficult to reach in the data collection process. Second, the data collectors also had the opportunity to clearly interact with the participants in explaining the purpose of this study in aiding the response rate for the study.

Survey instrument

To measure Indian cultural heritage, six items were adapted (William and Vaske, 2003), five items for family heritage (see: Kluin and Lehto, 2012) and eight items for tourist preference (see: Kyle *et al.*, 2004). In all, a total of 19 items were adapted using the 5-point scale anchored from strongly disagree as “1” to strongly agree “5.” In this study, the adoption of the Likert scale was based on these reasons. One, previous studies (Kluin and Lehto, 2012; Kyle *et al.*, 2004; William and Vaske, 2003) that have developed and used these items have utilized the 5-point scale. Two, the merit associated with the use of a 5-point scale, as it decreases the degree of respondents’ frustration and improves the rate and quality of their answers (Krosnick and Presser, 2010). This research provided a detailed account on how the adapted instruments were operationalized within context, and the number of items are presented in Table 1. Furthermore, before administering the main survey, the questionnaire was pretested to lessen potential errors of clarity and reliability of items borrowed for this research. The convenience sampling method was employed to sample thirty (30) Indian migrant visitors in pretesting the questionnaires. The result revealed 0.73 internal reliability, and some corrections such as spelling mistakes and editing were done to enhance the final questionnaire.

Next, the gender demographics revealed that 65.02% of the respondents were male and 78.32% were married. Furthermore, the most of the participants (64.31%) were 40 years and above. It is observed that the male participants were more than female. Possibly, this could be attributed to the following factors. One, within the Indian diaspora, mostly the male counterparts are the frontliners (businessmen, investors etc.), so this could be one of the reasons for the high response rate among the male participants. Two, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020a, b), statistics showed that 52% of foreign migrants were male; 48% were female. Notably, migration is usually a gendered process and impacts men and women differently. Women migrants most often are employed into specific service sectors that include domestic and care work. Similarly, 74.34% of the migrant visitors were graduates. Sixty-seven (67) percent of the participants earn monthly income of US\$4,000. The study also reported on number of trips made by the participants to their homeland (India), which showed that 34.2% visited home once or twice in a year. In all, 51.6% of the participants of this study were Indian–Ghanaian migrants. In all, Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for both Indian Ghanaians and Ghanaian Indians.

Data analysis

The data collected were subjected to a data screening process. In this process, missing values were checked, outliers, normality and common method bias (CMB). The suggested steps by Hair *et al.* (2017) were followed to find missing values and the correct method. For this purpose, the mean substitution method was used, and the missing values were attributed

Constructs	Indian Ghanaian (<i>N</i> = 161)	Ghanaian Indian (<i>N</i> = 151)	Loading	AVE	Reliability	CR	Grand mean	SD
<i>Cultural heritage</i>	3.96	3.65		0.786		0.93	3.81	0.92
To visit interesting attractions	3.78	3.08	0.863		0.914		3.43	0.96
To learn more about my country	3.48	3.65	0.828		0.913		3.57	0.88
To enjoy my country's cuisine	4.02	3.12	0.852		0.913		3.57	0.91
To enrich my knowledge of my country's culture	4.25	3.56	0.708		0.914		3.91	0.91
To learn about the history of my people	3.75	4.21	0.785		0.896		3.98	1.01
To have some entertainment	4.45	4.30	0.678		0.895		4.38	1.21
<i>Family heritage</i>	3.79	3.75		0.815		0.93	3.77	1.04
To maintain my connection with my country	3.85	3.69	0.882		0.916		3.77	1.23
To discover my family roots	3.65	3.66	0.863		0.921		3.66	0.92
To listen to life stories about family members	3.46	3.89	0.785		0.934		3.68	1.14
To remember about our family history	3.78	3.65	0.769		0.913		3.72	0.89
To fulfil family obligations	4.23	3.86	0.774		0.920		4.05	1.04
<i>Travel preference</i>	3.96	3.45		0.770		0.95	3.70	1.19
<i>Preference-sightseeing</i>								
Tried new games	4.01	3.96	0.839		0.914		3.99	0.98
Tried new food/ restaurants	4.23	3.65	0.842		0.913		3.94	0.92
Visiting new sites	4.25	3.88	0.874		0.916		4.07	1.18
Visiting historical places	3.98	3.62	0.855		0.925		3.80	1.37
<i>Relive the past</i>				0.825		0.943		
Meeting old friends and relatives	3.82	2.33	0.771		0.916		3.08	1.20
Visiting the sites I visited before	3.54	3.51	0.668		0.912		3.53	1.17
Participating in events I did before	3.58	3.24	0.628		0.912		3.41	1.34
Eating local food I ate before	4.24	3.45	0.623		0.911		3.85	1.38

Table 1.
Items of the main
constructs for
the study

accordingly. The outliers were then determined by using Mahalanobis distance. No outliers were estimated (Mahalanobis $D(12) 25.841, p < 0.001$) (Hair *et al.*, 2013). Lastly, to verify for normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were analyzed. The thresholds for

skewness and kurtosis were between -1.5 and $+1.5$, showing no deviation from normality (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). The data were collected in a single period through the same questionnaire in this study. This brings on CMB, which is considered the main source of measurement error leading to misleading conclusions (Heppner *et al.*, 2008). A total variance of 26% (<50%) was obtained as the acceptable cut-off point, applying the simultaneous loading of all the items through exploratory factor analysis. This result signifies that CMB is not present in the dataset.

Factor analysis

Furthering, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the validity of the adapted constructs used in this study. The initial measurement model, comprising family heritage, cultural heritage and travel preference yielded an acceptable fit indices (with a significant regression weight at 0.01. Since all of the regression weights were significant at 0.001 level, the model was not changed. In Table 1, all of the construct had average variance extracted (AVE) scores greater than 0.50, and the CR values were likewise higher than 0.80 cut-off point, indicating convergent validity. To distinguish the latent instruments from others, discriminant validity was tested. The square of AVE ought to be bigger than the correlations between the instruments in a model for discriminant validity to be established within the data set (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). This can be seen in Table 2. Next, the study provided the Cronbach alpha reliability values, which revealed internal consistency of the items (See: Table 1).

Sensitive analysis of confounders

Preceding in this study, we used a cross sectional data, the sensitive analysis of confounders to screen for potential confounding variables (Greenland, 1996). This analysis was applied in identifying significant control variables. Prior research (Adie and Hall, 2017; Huang *et al.*, 2018) supported the notion that gender, age, educational level, income level and number of trips to homeland are significant predictors of cultural and family heritage in the tourism literature. This research calculated the crude and ultimate demographic characteristics that are significant for the final regression analysis. The sensitive analysis of the confounders showed significant cruel regression coefficients of family heritage on preference to travel ($\beta = 0.193$, $t = 5.07$, $p < 0.05$) and cultural heritage on preference to travel ($\beta = 0.771$, $t = 20.16$, $p < 0.05$).

In the initial stage, gender, age group, educational level, income levels, number of trips to homeland in a year and immigration generations were reverted on cultural heritage. The probability values obtained for gender ($p = 0.82$), educational level ($p = 0.45$) and income levels ($p = 0.46$) were above the threshold $p > 0.25$ (Greenland, 2014), and were removed from the analysis. While number of trips to homeland ($p = 0.22$), and immigration generation

Constructs	Mean	SD	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5
Travel preference	3.89	0.871	0.770	0.932	0.877	0.575**	0.643**	0.246**	0.371**
Family heritage	4.01	0.866	0.815	0.935	0.575**	0.902	0.590**	0.126*	0.345**
Cultural heritage	3.66	0.939	0.786	0.951	0.643**	0.590**	0.887	0.241**	0.350**
Number of trips	–	–	–	–	0.246**	0.126*	0.241**	–	0.170**
Immigration generation	–	–	–	–	0.371**	0.345**	0.350**	0.170**	–

Note(s): ** $p \leq 0.01$, * $p \leq 0.05$, SD = Standard Deviation, Number of trips in a year = (0 = 1, 1 = 2 and more), Immigration generation (0 = Indian Ghanaian, 1 = Ghanaian Indian) (Travel preference, family and cultural heritages (Scale: 1–5)

Table 2. Inter factor correlation matrix

($p = 0.09$) were retained. In the second phase, the percentage change in the cruel coefficient of cultural heritage ($\beta = 0.57$) and coefficient of number of trips to homeland ($\beta = 0.69$) and immigration generation ($\beta = 0.42$) of the participants revealed 36% and -17% respectively, which have surpassed the required threshold of $\pm > 10\%$ (Greenland, 2014). This denotes that number of trips to homeland in a year and immigration generations are ultimate confounders in this study.

Subsequently, the same procedures were repeated for family heritage and the demographics (gender, age group, educational level, income levels, number of trips to homeland in a year and immigration generation). Repeatedly, the results showed that, number of trips to homeland and immigration generations were recognized as ultimate confounders. These variables produce a cultural heritage cruel coefficient percentage change ($\beta = 0.74$) and number of trips to homeland ($\beta = 0.56$) and immigration generations ($\beta = 0.33$) produced 32 and 124%, respectively, which met the acceptable cut-off point $\pm > 10\%$. Overall, the number of trips to homeland in a year and immigration generation of diasporic tourists were shown to be final confounders and were maintained in the main regression analysis.

Findings

The multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the impacts of family heritage and cultural heritage including the confounder (age) on tourists' preference to travel (see Table 3 and Figure 1). The results revealed that family heritage ($\beta = 0.314, p < 0.05$), cultural heritage ($\beta = 0.465, p < 0.05$), immigration generations of the diasporic tourists ($\beta = 0.643, p < 0.05$) and number of trips to homeland in a year ($\beta = 0.354, p < 0.05$)

Hypotheses	Paths	Beta coefficient	Result
Control variable 1	IG → travel preference	0.643***	-
Control variable 2	NTH → travel preference	0.354**	-
H1	Family heritage → travel preference	0.314**	Supported
H2	Cultural heritage → travel preference	0.465**	Supported
R^2 value		0.5748	

Table 3.
Hypotheses testing

Note(s): *** $p \leq 0.001$, ** $p \leq 0.01$: IG= Immigration Generation, NTH: Number of trips to homeland

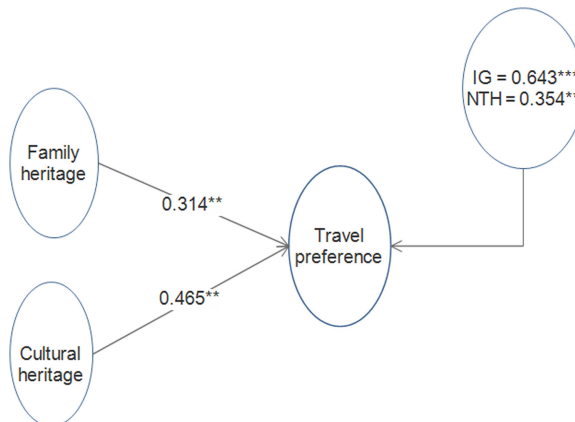


Figure 1.
Tested Indian diaspora tourists travel preference

positively and significantly impacted tourists' preference to travel to their homeland. Together, the four predictors explained 57.48% variation in the Indian migrant visitors' preference to travel to their homeland. "Notably, the Durbin–Watson analysis showed a value of 2.04, which was within the suggested cut-off points of 1.5–2.50 (Hair *et al.*, 1998); infers that the concept of the independence of errors was not compromised." Finally, the correlation coefficients presented in Table 4 provided evidence of the absence of multicollinearity as all the coefficients were not above 0.80 (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Subsequently, the independent “*t*-test was conducted to examine whether” there are significant mean differences between Indian Ghanaians and Ghanaian Indians toward their level of agreement about cultural heritage, family heritage and travel preference (Table 4). There is a significant difference between Indian Ghanaians and Ghanaian Indians in their thought of cultural heritage (Indian Ghanaian, $M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.73$, and Ghanaian Indian $M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.82$; $t(310) = 3.391$, $p = 0.01$, two-tailed). No significant differences were found in the Indian Ghanaian and Ghanaian Indian's family heritage and travel preference to their homeland.

Discussion and conclusions

Discussion

Due to the recent improvements in information technology, digitalization and transportation systems throughout the world, migration for work and study has been on the rise, leading to the creation of diasporas with a variety of feelings toward the host, as well as their own home countries (Marschall, 2018). Ultimately, this study attempted to analyze the influence of cultural and family heritage of the Indian migrants from diasporas of Ghana, residing mainly in Accra, Kumasi, and Tema on their travel preferences back to their homeland from the perspective of developing country context. Analysis and results of this study have demonstrated that Indian migrant workers residing and working in Ghana are highly impacted by their family and cultural heritage, when choosing India as a place to visit. Particularly, these findings are supported by the psychological acculturation dimension, which explains the extent to which diasporas are likely to interact with their family and host culture.

	Levene's test for equality of variances		<i>t</i> -test for equality of means					95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	SE difference	Lower	Upper
<i>Cultural heritage</i>									
Equal variances assumed	3.391	0.001	3.288	310	0.001	-0.06956	0.09556	-0.25759	0.11848
Equal variances not assumed			-3.288	309.833	0.001	-0.06956	0.09544	-0.25735	0.11823
<i>Family heritage</i>									
Equal variances assumed	0.185	0.667	-1.112	310	0.267	-0.09041	0.08133	-0.25045	0.06962
Equal variances not assumed			-1.110	306.423	0.268	-0.09041	0.08145	-0.25068	0.06985
<i>Travel preference</i>									
Equal variances assumed	0.501	0.062	-1.154	310	0.249	-0.11133	0.09645	-0.30111	0.07846
Equal variances not assumed			-1.146	286.297	0.253	-0.11133	0.09715	-0.30255	0.07990

Table 4. Independent sample *T*-test of culture, family heritage and travel preference by generation

Given that this study was deeply grounded on earlier studies of Schanzel *et al.* (2012) that attested to the importance of understanding a family. Agreed that, a family serves as a significant factor of diaspora tourism, as it provides a method to reunite the family, and for members of the family to learn and spend time with each other. In other words, the findings of our study suggest that the Indian migrants are interested in visiting their direct family members and distant relatives back in their homeland as a way to strengthen their bond with them. As this provides the Indian diasporas the chance to connect to their family roots (friends and loved ones), visit interesting attractions, enjoy their cuisine and deepen their knowledge of their culture. Our findings extend diaspora tourism on the importance of family heritage to tourism literature.

Furthermore, the study has also confirmed that there is a profound influence of cultural heritage on the Indian migrants' travel preferences to Indians from the diasporas of Ghana. This in turn confirms the previous studies of diaspora tourism in literature (see: Huang *et al.*, 2018; Du Preez and Govender, 2020). The finding again, strengthens the role of culture, as the core element in explaining the acculturation theory. It is argued that cultural kinship aids diasporas to return to their ancestral past (Du Preez and Govender, 2020). Also, McNulty and Koff (2014) emphasized that cultural heritage is a key component in diaspora tourism. This is because, diasporas are more likely to visit places that are connected to their past or present cultural identity. This concept is explained by the fact that, travelling home enables people to reunite with their national culture (Cheer and Reeves, 2013), and again a strong sense of culture makes individuals remain connected to the homeland (Huang *et al.*, 2018). This result substantiated the importance of cultural heritage as a significant predictor of traveling preference which expands the frontiers of the underpinning theory of acculturation.

Next, number of trips to homeland and immigration generations were significant control factors that impact one's preference to travel, which supported earlier studies of Huang *et al.* (2013). In their research result, there was significant association between the number of diaspora tourism trips and feelings at their ancestral homelands. This shows how important socially shared identities is/can be to drive travel to an ancestral homeland. It is observed in relation to the findings that the Indian diasporas showed a positive interest in their traveling preference to their homeland. This signifies that the Indian diaspora tourists love their home. This agreed with the quote of Oliver Wendell Holmes "Where we love is home—home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts." This strengthens the integration and separation strategies of the acculturation theory in context. Again, the result on the significant difference in cultural heritage between Indian Ghanaian and Ghanaian Indian migrants solidifies the separation strategy of the acculturation theory. "This applies that the Indian diasporas preserve their own culture, and are interested in engaging with or acquiring features of the host (Ghanaian) culture." The variations in the cultural heritage difference could be explained by the fact that some of the diasporas are born to a Ghanaian father or mother.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study provides a significant contribution to the wider understanding of the influence of cultural and family heritage on the travel preferences of diaspora tourists from the non-western in developing country perspective. Furthermore, the study was able to evidence that cultural and family heritage of the diaspora members have a profound impact on their travel preferences. The current study makes significant contributions that fill gaps in extant diaspora tourism literature. First, this study has responded to the research calls in contributing to existing knowledge, which is evident in the broadening of our understanding of the role that cultural and family heritage play in diaspora tourism and its significant

impact on travel preference. This is vital in developing tourism business strategies and planning. Second, our study has comprehensively examined country-specific Indian diaspora tourism with culture and family perspectives, and how number of trips to homeland and immigration generations as significant control variables help in explaining travel preference of diaspora tourism. This was achieved through the adoption of quantitative data utilizing the regression analysis.

Third, our research findings differ from earlier diaspora research (Huang *et al.*, 2018), who found the relevance of social bonding of diaspora tourists traveling to their ancestral homelands using data of Chinese residing in North America. Fourth, this study extends diaspora tourism studies (Du Preez and Govender, 2020; Huang *et al.*, 2013, 2018) on culture, family heritage and travel preference to ancestral homeland within literature by using first-hand quantitative data from the Indian migrants residing and working in the Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Ghana. Lastly, through acculturation theory lenses, the study contributes to existing literature by highlighting the importance of the family and cultural heritage on travel preference of Indian migrants in context.

Theoretical implications

In general, this study employed the theory of acculturation to better understand the influence of family and cultural heritage (Mathew, 2021) on the travel preferences of Indian diaspora tourists to their ancestral homeland (India). Despite the fact that acculturation theory has been utilized in the previous studies of diaspora tourism, the literature from the perspective of Indian diaspora tourists' travel preferences, as regards insights on travel from Ghana to their ancestral homeland, remain tenuous. Hence, the application of acculturation theory in the diaspora tourism from the developing country perspective, remains one of the main theoretical implications of this study. Next, acculturation theory was applicable as well as useful in explaining the influence of family and cultural heritage on the travel preferences of Indian diaspora tourists in Ghana when traveling back to India. This is evident in how the Indian culture and family heritage influence their citizens to go back for vacations and holidays. Evidently, majority of the earlier studies (Biswas, 2005; Modi and Taylor, 2017) on Indian diaspora behavior are outside the scope of Ghana. Thus, our research has made an effort to examine travel preference of Indian diaspora tourists in Ghana. This highlights the prospect of developing diaspora tourism strategies between the two countries. Furthermore, our study develops a conceptual model that is underpinned by the acculturation theory and introduces significant control variables such as number of trips to homeland in a year and immigration generations. The introduction of these advances understanding of diaspora tourists, and serves as a significant contribution to diaspora tourism literature.

Practical implications

Diaspora tourists or migrants from various countries visiting their homeland have become an integral part of the tourism industry, and many governments are taking advantage in developing niche marketing efforts to enter this unique travel. However, dealing with diaspora tourism poses its own challenges due to the intricate nature of migration and acculturation, which requires rigorous and carefully planned products to satisfy the travelers' needs (Li *et al.*, 2020). For example, according to the report of the IOM (2020a, b, p. 1) on diaspora, "... in spite of the health pandemic challenges, diaspora communities are already mobilizing to help their families, friends, and communities most vulnerable to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic even while they themselves may be facing challenging times and an uncertain future in their countries of destination." Consequently, stemming from the findings of the influence of cultural and family heritage on the Indian migrants'

travel preferences back to their homeland, the following practical and managerial recommendations can be proffered for practitioners in the diaspora tourism industry.

As the Indian migrant visitors of Ghana are influenced by their cultural heritage from their homeland, it implies that travel agencies and tour operators should introduce special tour packages with an affordable budget for Indian migrant visitors to tour destinations in their homeland, like The Taj Mahal, Agra, The Holy City of Varanasi, Harmandir, The Red Fort of New Delhi, among others that meet their expectations. It is confirmed that people travel to destinations that are more familiar to them (Pearce, 2018); thus, product contents reminiscent of Indian culture and heritage could be employed. This could be augmented with cultural appreciation events and meetings organized by various stakeholders aimed toward the Indian diasporas of Ghana, where Indian cuisine in Ghana such as the Kohinoor Indian restaurant, Khana Khazana Indian restaurant, Tandoor Indian restaurant, dance (Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Odissi), literature, and art could be showcased. These appreciation events and meetings can boost the influence of the cultural heritage on the travel behavior of Indian diasporas. Besides, family ties and bonding are especially prevalent for diaspora tourists and promotional activities (direct marketing, sales promotions, personal selling and advertising) should be geared towards more hometown or home country (Huang *et al.*, 2018). The same recommendation could be proposed in this study as well for the Indian diasporas of Ghana traveling back to their homeland. The messages and tour packages for Indian diasporas can be designed and customized with more social and emotional attachment to their local communities and towns back in India.

Limitations and areas for future research

One of the main limitations of this study is that the data were mainly collected from Indian Ghanaian migrants and Ghanaian Indian migrants without specific generations (first, second, third etc.) in Ghana, which hinders the findings from being generalized. As the diaspora tourism is heterogenous (Li *et al.*, 2020), and motivation to travel to homeland can vary based on the generation (Huang *et al.*, 2018), this study recommends to collect data from different specific generations of Indian migrants in Ghana. This could allow more detailed understanding of diaspora travel behavior for better market segmentation. Another prospective and promising research area to look at in diaspora tourism in Ghana is the application of additional variables such as social bonding and identity of Indian migrants. Applying these additional variables could enhance the understanding of travel behavior of diaspora tourism in Ghana. Furthermore, this study did not employ categorization of the generation which could be essential in broader understanding of diaspora tourism of Indian migrants in Ghana from the perspective of demographic segmentation. Thus, future studies can consider categorizing immigration generations based on age and gender.

Also, when collecting data, this study did not segment the diaspora tourists based on the reasons for migrating to Ghana. Future studies can look into reasons to migrate such as voluntary or forced migration into Ghana by Indian migrants. Finally, this study employed quantitative method of data collection, thus future studies can also apply qualitative approach to gather more information on the travel preferences of diaspora tourists from Ghana. Qualitative approach could provide detailed understanding on the impact of family and cultural heritage of diaspora tourists on their travel behavior. Final one is the integration and separation strategies of the acculturation theory manifested in the findings of this study. Hence, further studies should focus on the marginalization and assimilation strategies, as well as studies on VFR within similar or different geographical contexts.

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