

Willingness to Pay for a Tourism Informal Sector Solidarity Fund in Mauritius: A Contingency Valuation Method Approach.

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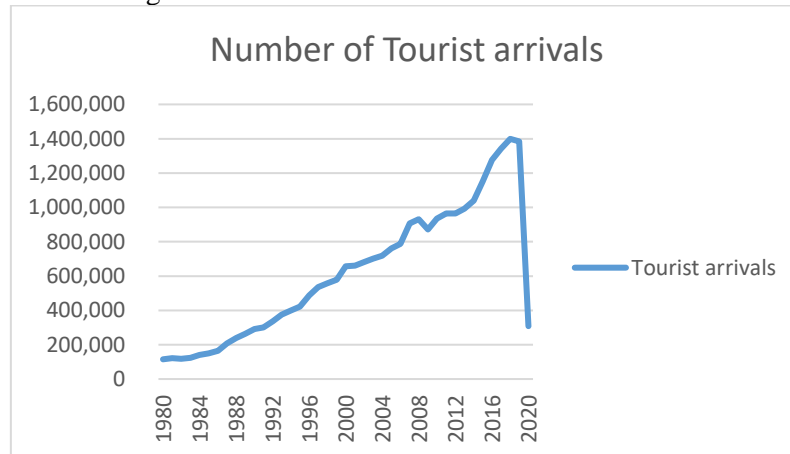
1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the African countries have encountered exceptional economic growth but unfortunately, this has not created the appropriate number of decent jobs for the youngsters entering in the labour market. (ECA, 2014). It is estimated that African countries experience an approximate amount of 122 million of new entrants in the labour marker each year, where only 37 million of jobs are created yearly. In addition to this 37 million of jobs created, only 28 percent are considered as formal jobs (Mckinsey, 2012).

The informal sector is constantly growing across Africa and generating around 70 percent in terms of employability of Sub-Saharan countries and 62 per cent for North African countries (Mbaye *et al*, 2012). The informal economy employs more than 80 per cent of the total labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa and that the informal economy represents 55 per cent of Africa's GDP (AU 2011). For the case of Mauritius, the informal economy represents between 20 to 25 per cent of the island's GDP, thus indicating the real important of this sector in Mauritius (Medina *et al*, 2017). Informal activities are through different forms but concerning the tourism sector, they are mostly traders or hawkers, street merchants, accommodation and transport providers, unregistered tour guides, unregistered music and choreography groups, handicrafts makers and others (Zhang, 2017). Sub-Saharan African countries are strategically located and as such, the potential for tourism growth is relatively high. The white sandy beaches, wildlife concepts, natural and cultural attractions and adventure opportunities are the competitive advantages that these countries possess (World Bank, 2013). SMEs in Mauritius in the 1980s and early 1990s have experienced a wonderful growth in terms of entrepreneurial activities and have led to rapid growth and employment creation. Most of the SMEs have now converted into large industrial groups.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the informal sector operators are mostly affected in the African continent, since tourism is their major source of revenue (ILO,2020). The informal sector operators in Africa have faced various difficulties, with financial, social or even health issues.

Figure 1: Number of tourist arrivals in Mauritius



Source: Authors’ own computation

Figure 1 shows the number of tourist arrivals in Mauritius. As from 18 March 2020, the island experienced its first cases of COVID-19 and as from 20 March 2020, the government has implemented a lockdown for two weeks. During this lockdown, only the basic services such as public hospitals, private clinics, dispensaries, police force and fire fighters were authorised to open.

Past studies have focused mainly on the major factors affecting willingness to pay for health insurance, social protection and pension schemes for labour operating in the informal sector (Miti *et al* 2021; Bonet *et al* 2018; Atake *et al*, 2016; Ahmed *et al* 2016; Bärnighausen *et al* 2007). As such, this paper brings some innovation in terms of the public perception concerning a one-off financial support to the informal tourism SMEs in Mauritius. This study contributes to the paper of Oleribe *et al* (2020) by coming up to new theories such as the perception of the public to consider the informal sector in government policies, and capturing the WTP of the public towards a fund that would help the tourism informal sector. Since paper only captures participant with social media accounts, our study overcomes this weakness by coming up with a drop off questionnaire and a more representative sample. This study also adds to the papers by Miti *et al* (2020) by introducing new theories that can influence the willingness to pay such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977), public perception towards current governmental support, trust towards the government. This study contributes one more time to the literature through the social desirability bias. This measure of biasness gives an indication about possible ‘socially acceptable’ or ‘socially desirable’ responses in the questionnaire as opposed to their ‘true’ answer (Bernardi *et al* 2008; Lavrakas, 2008).

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 A Theoretical Framework on Contingency Valuation and Willingness to Pay (WTP)

Alejandro (2012) states that the valuation methods of non-marketed goods can be categorised into two methods, namely direct and indirect methods. Concerning indirect methods, the behaviour of citizens is being observed about goods or services which are usually correlated to the one of interest. Coming to indirect methods, which include travel cost method, hedonic pricing and averting behaviour and defensive expenditures (Hanley *et al*, 2007).

With reference to Alejandro (2012), there are three ways towards which WTP could be extracted with the help of contingent valuation. Firstly, we have open-ended questions, where people are asked about how much are they ready/willing to pay for a good or service. The second option is through payment cards, where people are introduced with different amounts for possible payments and are asked to choose the payment that suits or is not far from the person’s estimation. Finally, we have the

dichotomous choice questions, where a hypothetical scenario is described to the individual and just after, the individual is asked about their willingness to pay a sum of money.

The theory of consumer behaviour is the basement of the theoretical construction of the CVM. Concerning a hypothetical scenario in determining WTP, an indirect utility function can be undertaken. Assuming a rational person whose objective is to maximise his utility from a hypothetical good given the quantity is Q and income is Y . The utility function could be represented as follows:

$$U(W, Q), \text{ where } W \text{ is a vector of the good.} \tag{1}$$

Normally, a person may want to maximise the utility function $U(\cdot)$ under the condition of budget constraint,

$$PW = Y \tag{2}$$

Where P represents the vector of price. Assuming that level of Q , the answer is a mixture of Marshallian demand functions,

$$W_i(P, Y, Q) \tag{3}$$

With reference to theories elaborated above, the CVM uses indirect utility functions,

$$V_i(P, M; Q): \forall i \tag{4}$$

where $i = 1, 2, \dots, I$, representing individuals.

Using the CVM, as the ‘hypothetical scenario’ is applied, Q ameliorates from Q_0 to Q_1 . The compensating surplus an individual is willing to pay for the TISSF, i.e. remains the same compensated utility level, can be measured as:

$$U_i(P, Y; Q_0) = U_i(P, Q_1, Y - WTP) \tag{5}$$

A person’s WTP for the TISSF could be denoted as follows:

$$WTP_i = (P, Q_1, U_0) - x(P, Q_0, U_0) = P\{H(P, Q_1, U_0) - H(P, Q_0, U_0)\} \tag{6}$$

With reference to equations that have just been elaborated, $x(\cdot)$ indicates the expenditure function and $H(\cdot)$ represents the Hicksian compensated demand function. WTP for the TISSF depends on the assumption of maximising utility and the principles regarding rational consumer preferences. Usually, people are ready to spend their money in order to procure the maximum utility. (Del Saz-Salazar *et al*, 2008).

Atake *et al* (2017) investigated the WTP of informal workers to access social protection in Togo. The data was collected from 7436 households covering both urban and rural areas. The study used a Contingent Valuation Method to estimate the WTP. Features such as household size, gender, income, age, education and health status are significantly correlated with WTP. Another important result is that irrespective of the sector of activity, education and income remain essential factors influencing household’s WTP. Finally, investing in social protection for informal workers most particularly in rural areas will be an essential pillar for inclusive economic growth and in reducing the poverty rate.

Djahini-Afawoubo *et al*. (2018) studied the WTP of informal sector workers to acquire a Mandatory Health Insurance (MHI) and most importantly to find out the major factors influencing WTP. The study focuses on 4296 informal sector workers including both rural and urban areas. A contingent valuation method was undertaken to analyse the WTP and a tobit model was used for the determinants. The results show that 92 percent of informal sector workers are for the MHI but however, women have a lower WTP as opposed to men and the authors have attributed this to the lower level of education, income, lack of employment opportunities as opposed to men. In addition to this, the size of the household, the gender of the head of the household, level of education and income groups are the major factors affecting the WTP.

2.2 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1. We can observe that the framework is represented by the three main components that are expected to influence the WTP of the public and most importantly, they have not been considered in previous empirical studies. These theories include the Theory of Planned Behaviour, trust in the government, Social Desirability Bias, Altruistic behaviour (Liebe *et al*, 2007), Norm Activation Model (Schwartz, 1977), public perception towards governmental support. Most of the models which include frameworks of contribution have used the CVM

(Kahneman et al, 1992; Kahneman et al, 1993; Guagnano et al 1994). With reference to Liebe *et al* (2011), the altruistic behaviour has been break up into ‘general warm glow’ and ‘subjective obligation to pay’. The two categories of altruistic behaviour captures the extent towards which people may encourage the benefits of others at their own expense.

3. Control Variables

According to Pavel *et al* (2015) and Al-Hanawi *et al* (2018), it is essential to include factors such as education level, age, gender, residential area, income level and family size into the control variables.

4. Data Gathering

4.1 Survey design and implementation

In order to have a big picture about the average amount that individuals are willing and able to pay for the TISSF, we have opted for a drop-off survey with a sample size representing 100 respondents. An open-ended question was used to facilitate the bidding process for the second questionnaire. We opted for such survey for our study, due to the major sanitary restrictions implemented by the Mauritian government and it was essential to protect myself as well as the respondents. In addition to this, the drop-off survey is said to have multiple benefits over the other types of primary research, where for instance it ensures a higher response rate (Bernardi and Guptill, 2008).

Respondents were asked to imagine a hypothetical future situation where a “Tourism Informal Sector Support Fund (TISSF) is created and financed by a one-off voluntary contribution. The fund will be managed by the government to help tourism informal sector workers to limit the risks of contagion, access to affordable healthcare, provide training, income, food security. Then a bidding process was undertaken to identify the amount respondents are willing to contribute for this fund.

4.2 Control of biasness

The social desirability bias captures whether respondents have answered to the questionnaire with ‘socially acceptable’ or ‘socially desirable’ answers rather than their ‘true’ answer (Bernardi et al 2008; Lavrakas, 2008). The Social Desirability bias is based on a scale of 17 questions, where Stober (1999, 2001) has shown that it is reliable and has also proved to be in line with the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Lie Scale (EPQ; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991). With the presence of an interviewer, the social desirability bias is more likely to happen, since respondents may tend to give answers that the interviewer is waiting for or even to be in line with the norms of the society (Leggett *et al*, pg 562). In addition, when respondents know that their answers are being closely examined, they will tend to have a more moralistic and pro-social behaviour (Lusk et al, pg290).

4.3 Sampling

It is essential for a sample to be adequate in size so as to ensure a representation of the population (Andrade, 2020). Jakobsson *et al* (1996) mention that it is essential for a survey to provide clear and precise information that could be understood clearly by respondents. In our study, we have ensured to have a good representation of the population and the sample includes the working population, that is the income earners in Mauritius. Raosoft (2014) introduced the sample size software in order to estimate the sample size required with reference to the population size. The working population of Mauritius is estimated to be 551,300 in year 2019 (Statistics Mauritius, 2020). As such, the minimum sample size for this population size is 663 participants. For the use of dichotomous choice, the contingent valuation method is mostly used and a sample of about 500-1000 respondents is mostly recommended (Bateman *et al*, 2002). In addition, the larger is the sample, the less biased will be the study (Cooper and Loomis, 1993; Kanninen, 1995). A total of 1000 valid survey questionnaires were disseminated but only 888 questionnaires were considered, since the rest were considered as incomplete ones or protest responses. Normally, protest responses are not considered in contingent valuation model, since it may cause concept inconsistency or even underestimation of the value of the WTP (Mitchell and Carson, 1993; Whitehead et al., 1993; Tyrväinen and Väänänen, 1998). In order to have an idea about the average WTP of respondents, a pilot test was undertaken using 100 questionnaires (Jeetoo *et al*, 2020). With reference to Al-Hanawi *et al* (2018), the population was

segmented as per regions and for our study, the sample includes respondents from the 9 different districts of Mauritius.

4.4 Questionnaire Design

For the introduction part of the questionnaire, the title of the study has been mentioned, with a clear insight about the purpose of the study. In addition, it has been clearly mentioned that confidentiality is preserved during the survey. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Data on personal information about respondents has been captured in Section A. The WTP with the hypothetical scenario was captured in Section B. Section C captures the public perception about government support to the informal sector. Section D and Section E consist about the planned and perceived behaviour respectively. Finally, Section F captures the Social Desirability Bias.

Willig (1976) mentions that the CVM is mostly used to measure the WTP of individuals and this can be carried down through the income-compensating function. WTP can normally be affected by different factors such as the respondent’s personal characteristics, theories of planned and perceived behaviours and economic conditions. The WTP function of the individual can be shown below:

$$WTP(q_1) = f(P, b_1, t_0, S, M, X')$$

where P represents the perception of the public towards informal sector, b_1 is the theory of planned behaviour, t_0 represents trust, S is a vector of SDR, M is income, and X' is a vector of the individual’s tastes or personal characteristics. It is assumed that P , S and b_1 remain constant for everyone. In order to estimate the monetary value of a change in economic welfare caused by changes in q_1 , Equation (1) establishes the basement of the valuation function. (Yoo and Yang, 2001). Let $i = 1, \dots, N$ be the index for each individual. Acting as these stimulators of WTP as a vector, x_i , and assuming a log-linear functional form, the WTP can be algebraically represented as:

$$\ln WTP_i^* = x_i' \beta + u_i \tag{8}$$

, where x_i represents a vector of explanatory variables, β represents a vector of parameters, and $u_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$. According to the hypotheses, explanatory variables are linked to the socioeconomic indicators (residence, level of education, level of income, age, gender and family size). Other important indicators were captured such as Altruistic Behaviour (General Warm Glow and Subjective Obligation to Pay), Trust in the government (Perceived Transparency, Perceived Accountability and Perceived Responsiveness), Theory of Planned Behaviour (Attitude, Subjective norms and Perceived Behavioural Control), perception towards COVID-19 support of the government, perception towards inclusion of informal sector into governmental policies, descriptive norms and Social Desirability Bias.

In order to undertake the CVM, let G_i represent the generic bid for respondent i and G_i^0 represent the initial bid. Suppose that the individual replies with a “yes” to G_i^0 , the upper bound follow-up $G_i^U > G_i^0$ is proposed, else a lower bound follow-up bid of $G_i^L < G_i^0$ is asked. In our questionnaire, each respondent has the choice between two particular bids and this has been represented by four responses, namely:

- ✓ “yes-yes”
- ✓ “no-no”
- ✓ “yes-no”
- ✓ “no-yes”

Assuming their binary-valued indicator functions are I_i^{YY} , I_i^{NN} , I_i^{YN} and I_i^{NY} appropriately in the sense that:

$$I_i^{YY} = I(\text{response of respondent } i \text{ is "yes-yes"})$$

$$I_i^{NN} = I(\text{response of respondent } i \text{ is "no-no"})$$

$$I_i^{YN} = I(\text{response of respondent } i \text{ is "yes-no"})$$

$$I_i^{NY} = I(\text{response of respondent } i \text{ is "no-yes"})$$

where $I(\cdot)$ shows an indicator function, which represents to one if ever the statement is true or else it is zero. Our model assumes that respondents are rational, that is they do not accept to pay a higher value than they are willing to do so. As such, the set of observed bid responses will definitely yield the set of intervals for estimating WTP. With the help of maximum likelihood estimation, we will be able to estimate β and σ (Lopez-Feldman, 2012). Let $\Phi(\cdot)$ represents the standard normal cumulative distribution function. In order to estimate the parameters of the equation, the log-likelihood function needs to be maximised. This could be shown in the Equation (1):

$$\ln \ell = \sum_{i=1}^N \left\{ I_i^{YY} \ln \left[1 - \Phi \left(\frac{\beta_i^H - x_i' \beta}{\sigma} \right) \right] + I_i^{NN} \ln \left[\Phi \left(\frac{\beta_i^L - x_i' \beta}{\sigma} \right) \right] + I_i^{YN} \ln \left[\Phi \left(\frac{\beta_i^H - x_i' \beta}{\sigma} \right) - \Phi \left(\frac{\beta_i - x_i' \beta}{\sigma} \right) \right] + I_i^{NY} \ln \left[\Phi \left(\frac{\beta_i - x_i' \beta}{\sigma} \right) - \Phi \left(\frac{\beta_i^L - x_i' \beta}{\sigma} \right) \right] \right\} \tag{10}$$

The WTP can be estimated by the β and σ

5 . Data Analysis

Table 1. Summary of Statistics.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Dependent:				
lnbid1	6.887	0.785	5.858	7.937
lnbid2	6.954	0.945	5.165	8.631
answer1	0.548	0.498	0	1
answer2	0.687	0.464	0	1
Independent:				
Age	37.832	12.040	18	64
Gender:				
Female (R)	0.332	0.471	0	1
Male	0.668	0.471	0	1
Residential Area:				
Urban(R)	0.470	0.499	0	1
Rural	0.530	0.499	0	1
Educational Level:				
Primary	0.032	0.175	0	1
Secondary(R)	0.180	0.384	0	1
Diploma	0.130	0.337	0	1
Bachelor	0.494	0.500	0	1
Others	0.164	0.371	0	1
Income Level:				
Income1: Rs.10200-Rs.20000(R)	0.172	0.378	0	1
Income2: Rs.20001-Rs.30000	0.472	0.500	0	1
Income3: Rs.30001-Rs.40000	0.273	0.446	0	1
Income4: Above Rs.40000	0.083	0.276	0	1
Family Size	2.52	0.998	1	8
Civil Status:				
Single(R)	0.169	0.375	0	1
Married	0.694	0.461	0	1

Divorce	0.136	0.072	0	1
Others	0.001	0.034	0	1
Altruistic Behaviour:				
General Warm Glow	3.589	1.354	1	5
Subjective Obligation to Pay	3.208	1.190	1	5
Trust	3.603	0.876	1	5
Descriptive Norms	3.507	1.149	1	5
Public perception about government support				
Financial support	2.239	1.285	1	5
Included in local government policies	3.703	1.019	1	5
Planned Behaviour:				
Attitude	3.606	0.743	1	5
Subjective Norms	3.640	1.045	1	5
Perceived Behavioural Control	3.912	0.734	1.25	5
Social Desirability Scale	6.983	4.437	0	15

Note: R denotes reference category.

With reference to Table 1, we can observe that public perception concerning the financial support given by the government to the informal sector shows a mean value of 2.239 and varies between 1 to 5. This clearly shows us that the public is more dissatisfied by the financial support. Coming to public perception towards the inclusion of informal sector in local government policies, there is a mean value of 3.703 and varies between 1 to 5. The results are quite positive, where we can observe that the public is for this inclusion.

Table 4 shows the summary of responses towards the TISSF. The categories of the planned behaviour, that is Attitude, Subjective norm and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) show positive results, where more than 50% of the respondents were at least satisfied. This clearly shows that the respondents have a positive view of the TISSF and that they are clearly willing to contribute to the fund. The results concerning trust in government are also positive, since it has been clearly mentioned in our questionnaire that the TISSF would be managed by the government. The results in Table 4 show that the public are quite satisfied by the government in Mauritius and at least 50% of the respondents trust the government.

Table 2: Summary of responses on TISSF

Statements used in the questionnaire	S.D.	D.	N.	A.	S.A.
Attitude					
19. You think that the idea of contribution to the TISSF is beneficial.	10.08	2.72	29.56	32.62	25.03
	5.10	7.81	27.97	32.96	26.16
20. You think that the idea of contribution to the TISSF is accountable.	7.13	5.89	33.07	22.76	31.14
	9.29	4.30	26.73	32.28	27.41
21. You think that the idea of contribution to the TISSF is brilliant.	11.66	10.08	22.20	31.94	24.12
22. You think that the idea of contribution to the TISSF is practical.	10.08	6.57	23.67	26.61	33.07
23. You think that the idea of contribution to the TISSF is an urgency.	8.61	6.23	25.82	33.18	26.16
Subjective Norm	14.50	5.55	24.35	30.58	25.03
24. The people who are important to you think that you should contribute to the TISSF.	7.13	6.23	26.39	28.20	32.05
25. The people who are important to you expect you to contribute to the TISSF.	5.78	7.47	21.74	36.69	28.31
26. The people whose opinions you value would contribute					

to the TISSF.	4.19	5.32	15.86	35.90	38.73
	2.83	2.60	13.82	34.20	46.55
Perceived Behavioural Control					
30. It would be difficult for you to contribute to the TISSF.					
31. You consider that the fact you contribute to the TISSF would not improve the current situation.	11.90	9.07	26.08	29.25	23.70
32. You have the resources, time and opportunities to the TISSF	5.78	11.55	26.05	30.01	26.61
33. It is mostly up to you to contribute to the TISSF.	6.12	9.63	24.58	33.18	26.50
Trust in the government					
41. You trust the government in providing the relevant information about the COVID-19.	7.25	8.15	22.99	27.52	34.09
42. You trust the measures taken by the government to help the informal sector (e.g. allowance).	8.04	6.34	35.45	27.18	22.99
43. You believe that the government has the ability to support the informal sector during a pandemic.					
44. You generally believe in the ability of the government to manage a situation of crisis (e.g. COVID-19).					
Descriptive Norms					
45. The effort the other citizens are ready to make to contribute to the informal sector fund is very high.					

Note: S.D., D., N., A. and S.A denote strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree respectively.

Finally, concerning descriptive norms, the results show that more than 50% of the public think that other citizens are ready to make an effort to contribute to the TISSF. This is really positive and shows that our idea is favourable towards the public.

According to Henson (2001), the Cronbach’s alpha is usually used in various empirical research so as to ensure the reliability of the statements in our questionnaire. Cronbach (1951) is defined as the internal consistency as the proportion of the test variance. In other words, it measures the reliability of the coefficient alpha. If the value of the Cronbach alpha is greater than 0.6, this definitely shows that the index is highly reliable and acceptable (Pallant, 2001; Nunnally *et al*, 1994). As it can be seen in Table 6, all of the variables used show a cronbach alpha which is higher than 0.6, hence showing that all of these variables are reliable and acceptable.

Table 3: Cronbach alpha

Variables	Cronbach alpha
Trust in the government	0.7068
Planned behaviour	
Attitude	0.6096
Subjective Norm	0.6149
Perceived Behavioural Control	0.6034
Social Desirability Bias	0.8965

Table 4: Double Bounded Dichotomous Choice Hierarchical Modelling.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)
Gender:								
Male	-0.112	-0.099	-0.092	-0.109	-0.113	-0.103	-0.102	-0.105

Residential Area:	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)
Rural	0.161 (0.074)* *	0.167 (0.074)* *	0.170 (0.073)* *	0.171 (0.073)* *	0.168 (0.073)* *	0.160 (0.073)* *	0.160 (0.073)* *	0.159 (0.073)* *
Educational Level:	-0.116 (0.219)	-0.110 (0.218)	-0.114 (0.217)	-0.126 (0.216)	-0.119 (0.216)	-0.119 (0.216)	-0.117 (0.214)	-0.115 (0.215)
Secondary	0.261 (0.247)	0.206 (0.246)	0.200 (0.245)	0.164 (0.245)	0.162 (0.244)	0.155 (0.244)	0.119 (0.243)	0.115 (0.243)
Diploma	0.459 (0.245)	0.429 (0.244)	0.427 (0.244)	0.394 (0.243)	0.392 (0.243)	0.382 (0.242)	0.355 (0.242)	0.352 (0.242)
Bachelor	0.832 (0.274)*	0.805 (0.272)*	0.797 (0.272)	0.760 (0.271)	0.766 (0.271)	0.747 (0.270)	0.727 (0.270)	0.725 (0.270)
Others	0.247 (0.147)*	0.278 (0.146)	0.288 (0.146)* *	0.314 (0.146)* *	0.319 (0.146)* *	0.323 (0.145)* *	0.304 (0.145)* *	0.307 (0.145)* *
Income Level:	0.355 (0.175)* *	0.382 (0.174)* *	0.392 (0.174)* *	0.428 (0.174)* *	0.436 (0.174)* *	0.448 (0.173)* *	0.418 (0.173)	0.422 (0.173)
Income2: Rs.20001- Rs.30000	0.901 (0.240)* **	0.897 (0.239)* **	0.920 (0.239)* **	0.964 (0.239)* **	0.967 (0.239)* **	0.981 (0.238)* **	0.951 (0.238)* **	0.953 (0.238)* **
Income3: Rs.30000- Rs.40000	-0.004 (0.039)	0.004 (0.040)	0.005 (0.040)	0.009 (0.040)	0.007 (0.040)	0.007 (0.040)	0.013 (0.040)	0.013 (0.040)
Income4: Above Rs.40000	-0.040 (0.115)	-0.066 (0.115)	-0.065 (0.114)	0.066 (0.114)	-0.064 (0.114)	-0.067 (0.114)	-0.096 (0.114)	-0.095 (0.114)
Family Size	-0.026 (0.150)	-0.055 (0.150)	-0.048 (0.150)	-0.061 (0.149)	-0.062 (0.149)	-0.059 (0.149)	-0.070 (0.148)	-0.069 (0.148)
Civil Status:	-2.080 (1.037)* *	-1.899 (1.033)	-1.871 (1.031)	-1.987 (1.027)* *	-2.015 (1.026)* *	-1.989 (1.023)* *	-1.908 (1.018)	-1.891 (1.018)
Married								
Divorce								
Others	- -	-0.088 (0.029)	-0.094 (0.029)* **	-0.085 (0.029)	-0.084 (0.029)	-0.071 (0.030)	-0.050 (0.030)*	-0.052 (0.030)*
Public perception about government support	- -	- -	-0.058 (0.036)	-0.066 (0.036)	-0.070 (0.036)* *	-0.064 (0.036)	-0.062 (0.037)*	-0.064 (0.037)*
Financial support	- -	- -	- -	-0.011 (0.028)*	-0.016 (0.028)*	-0.027 (0.028)*	-0.042 (0.029)*	-0.041 (0.029)*
	-	-	-	0.098		0.083	0.064 (0.032)*	0.063 (0.032)*

Included in local government policies	-	-	-	(0.031)	0.093 (0.031)	(0.032)	*	*
	-	-	-	-	0.048 (0.032)	0.053 (0.032)*	0.059 (0.032)*	0.058 (0.032)*
	-	-	-	-	-	0.121 (0.043)*	0.079 (0.045)*	0.080 (0.045)*
Altruistic Behaviour:	-	-	-	-	-	*	*	*
General Warm Glow	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.037 (0.053)*	0.040 (0.054)
Subjective Obligation to Pay	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.070 (0.036)	0.070 (0.036)*
	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.134 (0.057)	0.133 (0.057)
Descriptive Norms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.004 (0.009)
Trust	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planned Behaviour	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Attitude Subjective Norm	6.455 (0.244)* **	6.631 (0.249)* **	6.847 (0.282)* **	6.611 (0.309)* **	6.503 (0.316)* **	6.093 (0.348)* **	5.391 (0.413)* **	5.426 (0.420)* **
Social Desirability Scale								
Constant								
Log-Likelihood	1268.366	1263.738	1262.437	1257.496	1256.390	1252.451	1246.683	1246.593
Observations	883	883	883	883	883	883	883	883
Wald χ^2	165.16	165.16	177.63	187.41	189.66	197.16	207.97	208.45
Prob > χ^2	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
R ²	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
R ²	0.06039	0.06382	0.06478	0.06544	0.06926	0.07218	0.07645	0.07652
ΔR^2	2	1	3	2	5	3	8	4
	-	5.67703 4	1.50688 4	5.64897 5	1.20143 5	4.21392 6	5.92162 3	0.08720 1

Estimated Willingness to Pay

Our study shows that the figure of the annual mean WTP for the TISSF is estimated to be Rs 1375.89 (35 USD). With reference to Statistics Mauritius (2019), the average salary for a Mauritian employee is at Rs 22,600 (571 USD). This is a quite positive result, since it shows that Mauritians are definitely willing to support the tourism informal sector operators in order to reduce contamination risks, encourage availability of healthcare, provision of training, income and food security accordingly to the report of ILO in 2020 entitled 'COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges'.

Demographic and socioeconomic indicators

Jaunky *et al.*, (2020) proposed eight models concerning the hierarchical DBDC models and as such, we have also decided to run the same number of models in Table 7. In all the eight models, we can observe that the coefficient 'Rural' shows a positive and significant sign all along ($p < 0.01$). This means that inhabitants from rural areas are more willing to pay for the TISSF. Many studies have shown that the rural inhabitants are mostly concerned by informality, especially when they suffer from high income inequality and lack of job opportunities (De Ferranti *et al.* 2003; Perry *et al.* 2006). Concerning Income level, we can observe that Income 2 and Income 4 are all positive and statistically significant. We can observe that the higher is the income level, the higher is the WTP for the TISSF. Bärnighausen *et al.*, (2007) also shown that the income level tend to be significant with the WTP of informal workers for social health insurance.

Coming to public perception towards the financial support provided by the Mauritian government to the informal sector, we can observe that it shows a negative sign in all models and only model 3, model 7 and model 8 are statistically significant. This shows that the more the respondents do not agree with the support given by the government, the more they are willing to pay for the TISSF. Also, we observe that the variable of public perception towards the inclusion of the informal sector into local government policies is negative in all of the eight models and is significant in model 5, model 7 and model 8. We may observe that the less they agree to this inclusion, the higher is their WTP.

6Conclusion and policy implication

The value of the mean WTP for the TISSF is Rs 1375.89, with the use of the double-bounded dichotomous CVM assessment. The variables that affect the WTP values are the income level, people living in rural areas, altruistic behaviour, descriptive norms, trust and planned behaviour. With the introduction of these variables, this has improved the theoretical framework in determining the WTP.

A decisive result of the study is that the more negative is the public perception towards the financial support given by the Mauritian government, the more they are willing to contribute to the TISSF. This clearly supports the policy recommendations proposed by ILO 2020. Lazarus *et al.*, (2020) clearly mention that public perceptions about COVID-19 responses made by the government may definitely improve the cooperation of the public. We have observed that the respondents do also agree to implement the informal tourism sector issues into local government policies. This is a clear proof that respondents feel that the informal tourism sector plays an important role in the Mauritian economy and that it is high time to consider long-term solutions to support them.

Coming to trust, we have also observe positive results, where the bigger is the trust towards the government and the institutions, the greater will be their willingness to pay for the TISSF. OECD 2013, supports that encouraging trust will stimulate economic recovery and social well-being for the future. It is recommended that the government shows greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness. This will definitely motivate the population to support policies implemented by the government. According to Jannah *et al.* (2022), in order to promote good governance, it is essential for the government to provide the relevant information. The government should build trust through its openness and transparency about public information.

The results of the descriptive norms are also very encouraging, where we can conclude that the people around the respondents are expected to have a positive perception about the TISSF. This shows that the idea of supporting the informal tourism sector is positive among the respondents and their surroundings. This result shows that the local population is willing to pay for the TISSF and by

implementing this financial support as proposed by ILO 2020, this will improve the current situation of the informal tourism sector businesses.

Finally, one of the greatest strength of this study is the Social Desirability Bias. As mentioned earlier, the results from the SDR are statistically insignificant and negative. The results from our study show that our results are reliable and that the questionnaire are not biased. The shortcomings of various studies with primary research is that there is no guarantee about the reliance of the research. A major recommendation is that it is essential for future studies undertaking primary research to check the reliability of the researches before interpreting results.

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