Factors Affecting Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention in Pokhara

Pradeep Sapkota
School of Business, Pokhara University
E-mail: ursparu061@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the factors affecting tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in Pokhara, Nepal. The sample consisted of 616 respondents from Pokhara, and data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The researchers used frequency percentage analysis, means score analysis, and structural equation modeling for data analysis using IBM SPSS AMOS. The findings revealed that infrastructure, price, IT and safety and security had a significant impact on both tourist satisfaction whereas only infrastructure had significant impact on revisit intention. This study suggests that understanding and these factors can enhance the tourist experience, encourage repeat visits, and promote sustainable tourism development in Pokhara, Nepal.

Keywords: Infrastructure, revisit intention, satisfaction, SEM, tourism

Introduction

Tourism is a substantial economic sector that involves individuals travelling to and remaining in locations beyond their normal surroundings for leisure, business, or other objectives (Omar et al., 2020). It is one of the major sources of revenue, employment, and investment for many countries around the world. It generates jobs directly and indirectly in different sectors, such as transportation, hospitality, and retail, and provides opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and prosper (Meyer and Meyer 2015). Tourism significantly contributes to the economic growth and quality of life in nearly every nation. In the context of Nepal, it has become one of the most dynamic and vital sectors, offering numerous employment opportunities, generating foreign exchange, and playing a major role in overall revenue production. The tourism sector in Nepal contributes nearly 8% to the total GDP, equivalent to around US $750 million annually, and has contributed on creating over one million jobs (WTTC 2021). This shows the value of tourism industry in Nepalese context. The effectiveness of the tourism industry is determined by its ability to meet tourists' needs and ensure their satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction holds immense importance in the tourism industry. A satisfied tourist not only becomes a loyal customer but also serves as a positive ambassador, sharing their pleasant experiences with others. The satisfaction of tourists directly impacts the reputation and success of a destination or tourism

service provider (Buonincontri et al., 2017). According to Rice and Khanin (2019) satisfied tourists are more likely to return for future visits, increasing the chances of repeat business and creating a stable customer base. Therefore, ensuring tourist satisfaction and fostering a desire to revisit are vital for the development and prosperity of the tourism sector. A proper evaluation of tourist satisfaction not only encourages the expansion of facilities but also improves customer retention, enhances competitiveness, and generates positive word-of-mouth referrals. Understanding the key drivers of satisfaction is a crucial focus of research in the tourism industry, as satisfied tourists tend to share their positive experiences with others and are more likely to revisit (Su, 2004).

Tourist satisfaction holds significant importance within the tourism industry and is influenced by a range of factors, including both tangible and intangible aspects (Amissah et al., 2022). Tangible factors refer to the measurable and visible components of a tourist's experience, including physical features and facilities. On the other hand, intangible factors relate to the emotional and psychological elements that are difficult to measure or define precisely. Extensive research conducted worldwide confirms that both tangible and intangible factors are crucial in determining tourist satisfaction and their likelihood of revisiting a tourist destination.

Tourism products consist of goods and services created and promoted to fulfill the expectations and preferences of travelers. Tangible elements are the physical parts of the tourism experience that can be clearly observed, touched, or measured. In contrast, intangible elements involve the emotional and psychological responses of tourists, which are harder to quantify. It is essential for individuals involved in the development and promotion of tourism products to understand both of these components. Mill et al. (2002) tourist System theory defines tourism as a complicated consumer experience that arises from a process in which travelers employ various travel services when they are in a certain location which includes tangible as well as intangible elements related to services. The model proposed by (Shostack 1982) on service blueprint is the most popular approach for getting insights into tangible and intangible elements of tourism products. Numerous global studies have demonstrated that both tangible and intangible elements play a vital role in ensuring tourist satisfaction and influencing their intention to revisit a destination. It is influenced by several tangible and intangible factors, including the quality of food, price, transportation, IT facilities, safety and security, amenities, and infrastructure at the destination (tangibles) (Hui et al., 2007), nature, local culture and customs, adventure, hospitality and perceived value (intangibles) (Rosa et al., 2018). Multiple studies have highlighted the importance of various factors, including infrastructure, pricing, information technology, safety, and security, influencing tourist satisfaction. Research has consistently demonstrated the significant role of infrastructure in shaping tourist satisfaction as well as revisiting. Akroush et al.(2016) highlighted that the presence of well-developed and high-quality infrastructure is crucial for enhancing the overall tourist experience and fostering loyalty among visitors. A study conducted by Mandic et al.(2018) revealed that there was a strong link between the destination and the number of arrivals, overnight stays, and the status of the infrastructure and facilities. Likewise, pricing has a considerable influence on the tourism industry. Tourists who perceive the cost of their travel as rea sonable are inclined to experience higher levels of satisfaction and are more likely to

recommend the destination to others (Campo and Yagüe, 2008). The influence of price on satisfaction varies depending on factors such as the tourist's profile, quality of transportation, food, hotel type etc. (Ngurah et al. 2017). One of the key characteristics of a location that determines not only the enjoyment of visitors but also the existence of the tourism industry as a whole is safety and security (Bogale and Wondirad, 2019). Visitors prefer to go to places with comparable levels of safety and security (Fourie et al., 2020). Additionally, studies conducted in recent years Chia et al. (2021) has shown that IT is directly related for making destination choices and their evaluations. According to (Azis et al. 2020) smart tourism technologies have significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty.

The study findings emphasize the vital role that both tangible and intangible elements play in shaping the destination experience. These factors significantly influence tourist satisfaction levels and their willingness to revisit a location. The maintenance and quality of these elements greatly affect the overall experience and the likelihood of tourists returning. While most research worldwide has primarily focused on factors affecting tourist satisfaction, this study aims to identify and assess the tangible factors impacting tourist satisfaction in Pokhara. It also examines how the overall quality of products and services meets tourist expectations. Furthermore, the study explores the factors that drive tourists' intentions to revisit the area. By addressing gaps in existing literature and offering fresh insights, this research enhances the understanding of key factors influencing tourism and their implications for Nepal's tourism sector.

Data and Methods

This study utilized a cross-sectional research design. The population for this study includes international and local visitors who stayed overnight in the designated area between November 2021 and February 2022 and involved a sample of 616 tourists visiting various tourist destinations in the Pokhara, Nepal. The destinations were chosen using a non-probability convenience sampling technique, as described by (Wilson and Laskey 2003). A self-administered questionnaire was utilized as a method for data collection and the source of data was primary where data collection was done through field survey. The questionnaire focused on tourists' perceptions of the factors influencing their satisfaction and intention to revisit. The measurement items under each factor were considered from previous studies (Hamid et al. 2017), (Poon and Low 2005), (Gunn 1988), (Chi and Qu 2008), (Pai et al. 2020), (Quintal and Polczynski 2010). Informed ethical consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. For validity and reliability Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, Average variance extracted (AVE) tests was done. The study used frequency distribution analysis, mean score analysis, and SEM for data analysis using IBM SPSS AMOS.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Status

Table 1 provides an overview of the socio-demographic profile of the 616 participants in the sample. It covers variables including gender, age, education level, monthly income, marital status, spending per visit, time of visit to Pokhara, and duration of stay in the area.

Table 1
Socio-demographic status

Variables	Category	Frequency (%)	Variables	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	366(59.4)	Marital Status	Married	326(52.9)
	Female	250(40.6)		Unmarried	261(42.4)
				Others	29(4.7)
Age of Respondents	25 or below	42(6.8)	Monthly Income ($)	No income	70(11.4)
	25-39	198(32.14)		Up to 500	111(18.0)
	40-49	278(45.12)		501-1000	82(13.3)
	Above 50	98(15.9)		1001-1500	52(8.4)
				1501-2000	99(16.1)
Education	Up to Secondary Education	88(14.3)		More than 2000	202(32.8)
	Undergraduate	198(32.1)	Times of visit in Pokhara	First time	355(57.6)
	Postgraduate	296(48.1)		Second Time	114(18.5)
	Ph.D. and above	34(7.3)		Third Time	51(8.3)
Expenses per visit ($)	Up to 250	175(28.4)		More than a Third Time	96(15.6)
	251-500	204(33.1)	Length of Stay in Pokhara	1-2 days	76(12.3)
	501-750	131(21.3)		3-4 days	206(33.4)
	751-1000	85(13.8)		5-7 days	166(26.9)
	More than 1000	21(3.40)		Above 7 days	168(27.3)
Total		**616 (100.0)**	**Total**		**616 (100.0)**

It can be observed that most respondents were male, accounting for 59.4% of the sample, while 52.9% were married. The age range that occurred most frequently was 31-40 years, representing 45.12% of the respondents. Regarding education, a significant portion of the participants held at least a postgraduate degree, accounting for 55.4% of the sample. In terms of monthly income, the most common category was a monthly income of over $2000, with 32.8% of respondents falling into this range. Among the respondents, 33.1% reported expenses per visit within the range of $251-500. Additionally, many participants (57.6%) were first-time visitors to Pokhara, and the typical length of stay was between 3 and 4 days, accounting for 33.4% of respondents.

Mean score analysis

The mean score analysis of the perception of tourists toward different factors related to tourist satisfaction is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Perceptions of Tourist Satisfaction and Intention to Return

Factor	Mean
Infrastructure	2.97
Price	3.91
safety and Security	3.8
IT	2.95
Satisfaction	4.2
Revisit Intention	4.03

Table 2 presents mean scores value for various. The items are categorized into infrastructure, price, IT, safety and security, satisfaction, and revisit intention. The infrastructure-related items received mean

scores ranging from 2.5 to 3.26, with a mean score of 2.97 suggesting no positive response among respondents. Similarly, the mean scores for price-related items ranged from 3.65 to 4.17 with a mean score of 3.91 indicating positive response with the pricing. Safety and security-related items received mean scores ranging from 3.8 to 4.37 with a mean score of 3.98 reflecting positive response and IT related statements ranged from 2.48 to 3.38 with a mean score of 2.95 suggesting no positive opinions. Similarly, the satisfaction-related items had average scores between 4.0 and 4.37, while the items related to revisit intention scored between 3.77 and 3.95. Overall, the mean scores of 4.2 for satisfaction and 4.03 for revisit intention reflect a positive attitude among the respondents.

Structural Equation Modelling

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used for evaluating relationships and testing hypotheses. This included both the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model examined the model's accuracy, validity, and appropriateness, and the structural model, which investigates how independent and dependent variables are related. Several measures, such as CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA (absolute fit measures), and NFI, CFI, IFI, and TLI (incremental fit measures), are employed to evaluate the fitness of the model. CA and CR are utilized to evaluate the consistency of the model, while AVE is used to assess the convergence of the model. Forenell and Lacker's criteria are used to evaluate the discriminant validity. This study implies SEM to measure tourist satisfaction and revisiting intention.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA offers a formal assessment of the measurement model's validity by evaluating how well the proposed model fits the observed data. In this study, the researcher also conducted CFA to validate the results of EFA. Initially, CFA was conducted for six constructs (Price, Safety and Security, Information Technology, Infrastructure, Satisfaction and Revisit Intention) and thirty-eight items, including PRI1-PRI6, SAS1-SAS6, IT1-IT8, INF1-INF5, SAT1-SAT8, and REV1-REV5 respectively. Eleven items from different constructs were removed as they do not fit the model. The final 27 items were fit for the model and used for further analysis.

Table 3

Model Fit Summary

Fit Indices	Criteria	Calculate value	Remarks
Absolute Fit Measures			
CMIN/DF	< 3	2.424	Well fitted
GFI	0.9 or above	0.917	Well fitted
AGFI	0.9 or above	0.901	Well fitted
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.051	Well fitted
Incremental Fit Measures			
NFI	0.9 or above	0.902	Well fitted
IFI	0.9 or above	0.94	Well fitted
TLI	0.9 or above	0.931	Well fitted
CFI	0.9 or above	0.94	Well fitted

Table 3 presents the fit indices and corresponding criteria used to assess the goodness of fit of the statistical model. It includes the calculated values for each fit index alongside evaluations of the model's adequacy based on established thresholds. The CMIN/DF ratio of 2.424 falls below the recommended cutoff of 3, indicating a good model fit. Additionally, the GFI and AGFI values of 0.917 and 0.901 exceed the minimum acceptable level of 0.9. The RMSEA value of 0.051 is also below the threshold of 0.08, further confirming the model's suitability. Regarding incremental fit indices, the NFI (0.902), IFI (0.94), TLI (0.931), and CFI (0.94) all surpass the 0.9 benchmark, supporting the conclusion that the model fits the data well. Figure 3 illustrates the measurement model for tangible attributes, visitor satisfaction, and revisit intention
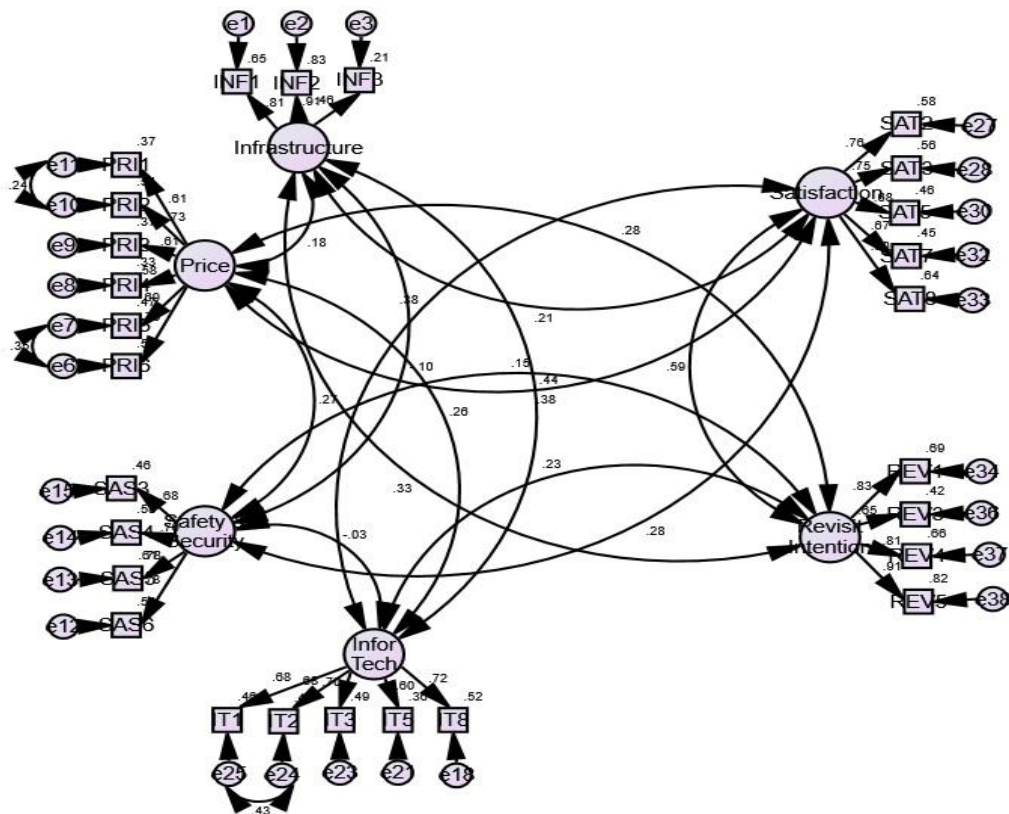
Figure 1

Measurement model

Table 4

Result of CFA, Reliability and Validity Test

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	S.E.	C.R.	P	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Price	PRI6	0.73	----	----	----	0.826	0.82	0.434
	PRI5	0.685	0.051	18.479	***			
	PRI4	0.578	0.071	12.339	***			
	PRI3	0.605	0.084	12.855	***			
	PRI2	0.732	0.08	14.502	***			
	PRI1	0.606	0.072	12.265	***			
Safety and Security	SAS6	0.734	----	----	----	0.819	0.826	0.544
	SAS5	0.779	0.049	16.943	***			
	SAS4	0.758	0.05	16.625	***			
	SAS3	0.675	0.063	15.047	***			
Information Technology	IT8	0.72	----	----	----	0.823	0.808	0.458
	IT5	0.602	0.063	12.852	***			
	IT3	0.701	0.071	14.572	***			
	IT2	0.68	0.071	14.005	***			
	IT1	0.675	0.068	13.913	***			
Infrastructure	INF1	0.805	----	----	----	0.747	0.781	0.56
	INF2	0.909	0.063	17.231	***			
	INF3	0.455	0.048	10.931	***			
Satisfaction	SAT2	0.762	----	----	----	0.849	0.853	0.539
	SAT3	0.747	0.052	18.117	***			
	SAT5	0.678	0.055	16.343	***			
	SAT7	0.674	0.056	16.237	***			
	SAT8	0.801	0.05	19.436	***			
Revisit Intention	REV1	0.832	----	----	----	0.873	0.88	0.504
	REV3	0.649	0.044	17.269	***			
	REV4	0.815	0.042	23.482	***			
	REV5	0.906	0.038	26.703	***			

Table 4 displays the results of CFA, reliability, and validity tests done on six constructs: infrastructure, safety and security, price, IT, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable (Meimand et al. 2017). Cronbach's alpha (CA) value for price in this case is 0.826, composite reliability (CR) value is 0.82, CA value for safety and security is 0.819, CR value is 0.826, CA value for IT is 0.823, CR value is 0.808, CA value for infrastructure is 0.747, CR value is 0.781, CA value for satisfaction is 0.849, CR value is 0.853, and CA and CR values for revisit intention are 0.873 and 0. All six constructs have CA and CR values that are higher than the threshold value of 0.7, indicating that the constructs have a high degree of internal consistency. Similarly, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is utilized to assess the amount of variance in a construct that is accounted for by its indicators. An AVE value of 0.5 or above is typically regarded as satisfactory. However, an AVE of 0.40 or more is also acceptable when CR is greater than 0.70 (Meimand et al. 2017) . In this case, the AVE values for safety and security, infrastructure, satisfaction, and revisit intention are 0.544, 0.56, 0.539, 0.504, respectively, which is greater than 0.5, whereas AVE for price is 0.434, and IT is 0.458, which is greater than the required value of 0Similarly, Fornell & Larcker Criteria were applied to determine the discriminant validity. According to (Fornell and Larcker 1981) if the square root of the AVE of a construct is greater than the correlation of the construct

with all other constructs, discriminant validity is proven.

Table 5

Fornell Lacker's Criteria- Discriminant Validity

	PRI	SAS	IT	INF	SAT	REV
PRI	**0.659**					
SAS	0.27	**0.738**				
IT	0.26	-0.031	**0.677**			
INF	0.178	-0.099	0.436	**0.748**		
SAT	0.382	0.281	0.384	0.214	**0.734**	
REV	0.281	0.153	0.226	0.334	0.585	**0.806**

Table 5 shows that the square root of the AVE for Price is 0.659, Safety and Security is 0.738, Information Technology is 0.677, Infrastructure is 0.748, Satisfaction is 0.734, and Revisit Intention is 0.806. The table indicates that the AVE values for all constructs exceed their corresponding correlation coefficients, confirming the establishment of discriminant validity. This means that the constructs under study—Price, Safety and Security, Information Technology, Infrastructure, Tourist Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention—are clearly distinct from one another, fulfilling the necessary criteria.

Structural Model

After meeting the fit index criteria in the CFA, a structural model was developed to examine the impact of tangible factors on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. The overall fit of the model appears to be strong, with a CMIN/DF ratio of 2.424, which is below the recommended cutoff of 3, indicating a good fit. Additionally, the GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, and TLI values all exceed the 0.9 threshold. The RMSEA value of 0.051 is also below the acceptable limit of 0.08, further confirming the model's suitability. Based on these fit indices, the model demonstrates a good fit with the data.

Figure 2

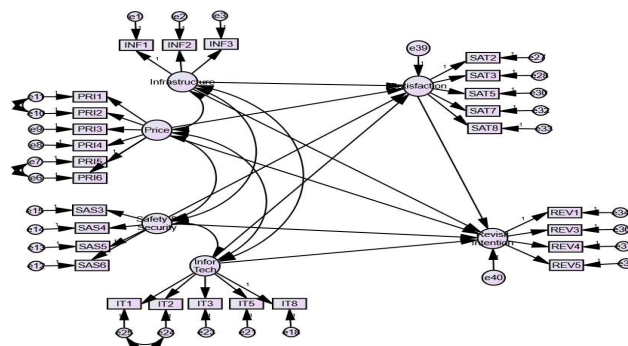Impact of Tangible Factors on Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

Table 6

Result of Hypothesis Testing – Tangible factors

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
INF→ SAT	0.464	0.035	6.706	***	Rejected
PRI→ SAT	0.228	0.045	4.53	***	Rejected
SAS→ SAT	0.235	0.034	4.962	***	Rejected
IT→ SAT	0.304	0.039	5.567	***	Rejected
INF→ REV	0.256	0.041	5.619	***	Rejected
PRI→ REV	0.052	0.063	1.131	0.258	Accepted
SAS→ REV	0.125	0.049	3.117	0.019	Rejected
IT→ REV	0.054	0.021	1.205	0.183	Accepted

Table 6 displays the path coefficient results, showing that infrastructure (Beta = 0.464, t = 6.706, p < 0.01), price (Beta = 0.228, t = 4.53, p < 0.01), safety and security (Beta = 0.235, t = 4.962, p < 0.01), and information technology (Beta = 0.304, t = 5.567, p < 0.01) all have a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction. Among these, infrastructure has the highest beta value (0.464), indicating it plays the most influential role in shaping tourist satisfaction in Pokhara, Nepal. Additionally, infrastructure (Beta = 0.256, t = 5.619, p < 0.01) and safety and security (Beta = 0.125, t = 3.117, p > 0.05) significantly and positively affect tourists' intention to revisit. In contrast, price (Beta = 0.052, t = 1.331, p > 0.05) and information technology (Beta = 0.054, t = 1.205, p > 0.05) do not show a significant relationship with tourists' revisit intention.

The findings underscore the critical role of both tangible and intangible factors in influencing tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions in Pokhara, Nepal, aligning with existing literature on tourism dynamics. Infrastructure emerges as a dominant driver, exhibiting the highest beta value for tourist satisfaction (0.464) and a significant impact on revisit intentions (Beta = 0.256). This reinforces previous studies by Akroush et al. (2016) and Mandic et al. (2018), highlighting the essential role of well-developed infrastructure in enhancing tourist experiences and fostering loyalty. Furthermore, safety and security (Beta = 0.235) significantly contribute to satisfaction, mirroring Bogale and Wondirad (2019) and Fourie et al. (2020), who emphasized tourists' preference for secure destinations. Conversely, price and IT, while significant for satisfaction, show no significant relationship with revisit intentions, suggesting their influence may vary depending on traveler profiles or contextual factors, as noted by Campo and Yagüe (2008) and Ngurah et al. (2017). The literature also affirms the importance of IT in shaping destination choices (Chia et al., 2021) and satisfaction (Azis et al., 2020), yet its limited impact on loyalty warrants further exploration. These insights highlight the necessity for tourism stakeholders to prioritize infrastructure, safety, and security while also refining strategies for leveraging IT and pricing to cater to diverse tourist expectations.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the different factors influencing tourist satisfaction and their intention to return to Pokhara, Nepal. Drawing from existing literature, four key factors were identified: infrastructure, safety and security, price, and information technology. The mean score analysis revealed that tourists visiting Pokhara reported high levels of satisfaction and showed positive intentions to revisit the

destination, especially regarding price and safety and security. However, there were mixed opinions regarding infrastructure and IT, suggesting areas that further improvement is needed to enhance tourist experience in the region.

Further, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to examine the impact of these factors on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. The results indicate that infrastructure, price, safety and security, and information technology significantly contribute to tourist satisfaction, with infrastructure emerging as the most influential factor. Infrastructure stands out as the most influential factor in determining tourist satisfaction. When it comes to revisiting intention factors such as infrastructure and safety and security contribute to tourists' decision to revisit the destination. Price and IT, however, do not show a significant relationship with revisit intention.

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that tourism stakeholders in Pokhara prioritize enhancing infrastructure and improving safety and security measures, as these factors significantly influence both tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. Investment in high-quality infrastructure, such as transportation and amenities, should be a top priority to elevate the overall tourist experience. While price and IT were found to be less impactful on revisit intentions, they remain essential for satisfaction; thus, efforts should also focus on optimizing pricing strategies and integrating smart tourism technologies to meet diverse tourist expectations and remain competitive in the market.

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