

Factor Influencing Touristic Consumer Behavior in Nepal

Abhishek Shah*

Abstract

This study examines the factor influencing touristic consumer behavior in Nepal. Consumer behavior is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are natural beauty and landscape, adventure of tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding natural beauty and landscape, adventure of tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, local hospitality, and consumer behavior. The study is based on primary data of 100 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of factor influencing touristic consumer behavior in Nepal.

The study shows that natural beauty and landscape is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that natural beauty and landscape attract the tourist that lead to change in the consumer behavior. Similarly, adventure tourism is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that tourists engage in adventure activities such as trekking, climbing, rafting, scuba diving etc. lead to change in the behavior of consumer towards tourism industry. Likewise, cultural diversity is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that diversity in culture leads to change in the behavior of consumer towards tourism industry. Further, cost of travel is also positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that affordable cost of travel leads to attract consumer to travel. In addition, local hospitality is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that availability of local hospitality leads to attract consumer towards tourist destination.

Keywords: natural beauty and landscape, adventure of tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, local hospitality, consumer behavior.

1. Introduction

Touristic consumer behavior is influenced by a myriad of factors that shape individuals' decisions when it comes to selecting destinations, activities, accommodations, and overall travel experiences. One of the primary influencers is socio-cultural factors, encompassing personal values, beliefs, attitudes, and cultural norms. These factors dictate preferences regarding travel destinations, activities, and the type of experiences sought. For instance, individuals from collectivist cultures may prioritize group travel and communal experiences, while those from individualistic cultures may seek more independent and unique adventures. According to Wilcox *et al.* (2009), behaviour counterfeited studies generally try and evaluate the consumer's ethical versus practical motivations to purchase counterfeit articles through surveys. Haque and Rahman (2010) stated that the Malaysian telecommunication industry has become very competitive because of the rapid improvement in information technology. The number of subscribers in mobile market of Malaysia has been jumped from twentieth century to twenty first century. The number is 20 million in 2006 and the industry has an annual growth of 25% (Chongn and Wong, 2007). The growth is possible because of very advanced technology and information service and other factors are like good communication and Knowledge has become the most precious asset in this rising competitive environment of the telecommunication industry (Syed-Ikhsan and Rowland, 2004). The Knowledge has become the nucleus of global economic transformation and competitive advantage of

* Mr. Shah is a Freelance Researcher, Kathmandu, Nepal.

an organization and a country and to achieve sustainable economic growth and to remain globally competitive, Malaysia realizes that it cannot ignore knowledge economy (Syed-Ikhsan & Rowland, 2004).

Comparative advantage is the tendency for countries to export those commodities which they are relatively skillful at producing, then the rest of the world and country can produce a good at a lower relative cost than other countries, then with trade, that country should devote more of its resources to the production of that particular good (Serin and Civan, 2008). According to Gretzel and Yoo (2008), the three-quarters of travellers have considered online consumer reviews as an information source when planning their trips. In other disciplines, studies had shown online user-generated reviews could significantly influence the sales of products like books, CDs, and movies. Although experience goods perfectly match the nature of the hospitality and tourism industries, the issue of the impact of online consumer-generated reviews on the performance of hospitality businesses has been overlooked by researchers. The most prevalent model from this perspective is utility theory which proposes that consumers make choices based on the expected outcomes of their decisions and consumers are viewed as rational decisionmakers who are only concerned with self-interest (Zinkhan, 1992). It was not long after which marketing scholars responded to the concept and growth of consumer behaviour and activities that impact the consumer decision (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). Touristic there has been a distinct lack of studies on hotel guest behavior while it's been considered a major sector of the tourism market and of economic significance to many countries worldwide (Jeddi *et al.*, 2013).

Consumer behavior refers to the study of how individuals, groups, or organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants. Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for businesses and marketers as it helps them anticipate and influence the decisions consumers make in the marketplace. Similarly, Michael and Johnson (2019) analyzed the role of environmental awareness in sustainable tourism. The study found that increasing environmental awareness among tourists is driving the demand for sustainable tourism practices, influencing choices towards eco-friendly accommodations and activities. Further, Green and Hiroshi (2018) examined the psychological factors influencing tourist behavior. The study found that psychological factors such as motivation, perception, and attitudes significantly affect tourist behavior, with different psychological profiles leading to varied travel preferences and satisfaction levels. Similarly, Taylor and Kuznetsova (2016) investigate the technological innovations and their impact on tourist experiences. The study found that technological innovations such as online booking systems, mobile apps, and virtual reality tours have significantly enhanced the tourist experience, making travel planning more efficient and personalized. Likewise, Anna and Thomas (2017) analyzed the impact of political stability on tourism. The study found that Political stability is a critical factor for tourism, with stable political environments attracting more tourists and unstable conditions deterring potential visitors. Further, William and Aisha (2015) examined the influence of lifestyle on tourist preferences. The study found that tourists' lifestyles, including their hobbies, interests, and daily routines, greatly influence their travel preferences and choices, shaping the type of destinations and activities they favor.

In the context of Nepal, tourist motivation and satisfaction in Nepal was analyzed by Thapa and Shrestha (2023). The study found that adventure and cultural experiences are primary motivations for tourists visiting Nepal, and satisfaction levels are closely tied to the

quality of these experiences. Likewise, Adhikari and Ghimire (2022) analyzed the impact of social media on tourist decision-making in Nepal. The study found that social media plays a significant role in influencing tourists' choices, with many travelers relying on reviews and recommendations from social media platforms when planning their trips to Nepal. Further, Sharma and Gurung (2021) assessed the economic factors influencing tourist expenditure in Nepal. The study found that tourists' expenditure in Nepal is significantly influenced by their income levels and the cost of travel, with budget travelers focusing more on affordable options. Likewise, Karki and Sharma (2020) assessed the cultural heritage and its impact on tourist behavior in Nepal. The study found that cultural heritage sites in Nepal, such as temples and historical landmarks, strongly influence tourists' behaviors and preferences, attracting those interested in history and culture.

Bhandari and Tamang (2019) examined the role of marketing strategies in promoting tourism in Nepal. The study found that effective marketing strategies, including digital marketing and targeted advertising, are crucial in enhancing Nepal's visibility as a tourist destination and attracting more visitors. Similarly, Shrestha and Thapa (2018) analyzed the technological advancements and their effect on tourism in Nepal. The study found that technological advancements, such as online booking systems and virtual tours, have significantly improved tourists' planning processes and overall experience in Nepal. Likewise, Poudel and Thapa (2017) stated that the environmental awareness and sustainable tourism practices in Nepal. The study found that increasing environmental awareness among tourists is driving the demand for sustainable tourism practices in Nepal, encouraging eco-friendly accommodations and activities. Further, Khanal and Rana (2016) analyzed the political stability and its impact on tourism in Nepal. The study that political stability is a crucial factor for tourism in Nepal, with periods of political unrest leading to a decline in tourist arrivals and overall industry performance. Similarly, Rijal and Ghimire (2015) examined the lifestyle and travel preferences of tourists visiting Nepal. The study found that tourists' lifestyles, including their hobbies and interests, greatly influence their travel preferences, with adventure seekers drawn to activities like trekking and mountaineering in Nepal.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the factor influencing touristic consumer behaviors. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the factor influencing touristic consumer behaviors in Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationship of natural beauty and landscape, adventure tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality with touristic consumer behaviors in Nepal.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 100 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents'

views were collected on natural beauty and landscape, adventure tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, local hospitality, and consumer behavior. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that the consumer behavior depends upon factor influencing touristic behavior. The dependent variable selected for the study is consumer behavior. Similarly, the selected independent variables are natural beauty and landscape adventure tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel and local hospitality. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

Consumer behavior = f (natural beauty and landscape, adventure tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality)

More specifically,

$$CB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NBAL + \beta_2 AT + \beta_3 CD + \beta_4 COT + \beta_5 LH + e$$

Where,

CB = Consumer behavior

NBAL = Natural beauty and landscape

AT = Adventure tourism

CD = Cultural diversity

COT = Cost of travel

LH = Local hospitality

Consumer behavior was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “The perception of Nepal’s natural beauty and landscape influences my decision to visit the country”, “The availability of adventure activities in Nepal affects my choice of travel destination” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.751$).

Natural beauty and landscape was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “It is important to access funding for natural beauty and landscape”, “Nepal’s natural landscapes offer opportunities for various outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, and wildlife watching” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.786$).

Adventure of tourism part supply was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Adventure tourism in Nepal contributes significantly to the country’s economic growth and development”, “The reputation of Nepal as a premier destination for trekking and mountaineering influences tourists’ decisions to visit the country”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the

Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.742$).

Cultural diversity was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Nepal's rich cultural diversity, including its various ethnic groups and traditions, is a significant attraction for tourists", "Nepal's historical sites, religious monuments, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites showcase its rich cultural heritage and attract tourists", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.779$).

Cost of travel was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The affordability of travel expenses, including transportation and accommodation, significantly influences tourists' decisions to visit Nepal", "The perception of Nepal as a budget-friendly destination encourages tourists to choose it over other destinations", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.749$).

Local hospitality was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The warmth and friendliness of the Nepalese people significantly enhance tourists' experiences in Nepal", "The hospitality extended by locals, including homestay experiences and cultural interactions, positively impact tourists' perceptions of Nepal", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.769$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Natural beauty and landscape

Natural Beauty refers to the aesthetic and intrinsic qualities of a natural environment that evoke pleasure, admiration, and inspiration. Hall (2021) argued that there is a positive relationship between natural beauty and landscape and consumer behavior. Similarly, Williams and Lee (2021) revealed that there is a positive relationship between consumer behavior and natural beauty and landscape. Likewise, Halicioglu (2019) argued that there is a significant relationship between natural beauty and landscape and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between natural beauty and landscape and consumer behavior.

Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism refers to travel activities that involve exploration, excitement, and risk in natural or remote environments. Stephen (2012) showed that there is a positive relationship between adventure tourism experiences and adventure tourism. Likewise, Joanne (2012) claim that there is positive relationship between adventure tourism the impact of personal attitudes on travel behavior and consumer behavior. Moreover, Mehmet (2015) revealed there is positive relationship between adventure tourism and consumer behavior. Likewise, Simmons (2019) assured that there is positive relationship between adventure

tourisms and attitudes of adventure tourists. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between adventure tourism and consumer behavior

Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity Cultural diversity encompasses the rich tapestry of human experiences, reflecting the multitude of cultural groups, traditions, languages, beliefs, and customs that coexist within societies worldwide. Clara (2018) showed that there is a positive relationship between the cultural diversity and consumer behavior. Similarly, Heikkinen (2018) stated that there is a positive relationship between cultural diversity and consumer behavior. Likewise, Alvarez (2019) revealed that there is a significant relationship between cultural diversity and consumer behavior. Similarly, Sonja (2020) found that there is a positive relationship between cultural differences influence tourists' decision-making processes. Likewise, Kim (2021) concluded that there is a negative relationship between behavior from cultural diversity and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between cultural diversity and consumer behaviour

Cost of travel

The cost of travel refers to the financial expenditure associated with undertaking a journey or trip from one location to another. Anne (2018) argued that there is a positive relationship between cost of travel and consumer behavior. Similarly, Ferreira (2018) revealed that there is a positive relationship between price sensitivity and travel behavior. Likewise, Emily (2017) determined that there is a positive relationship between perceived quality, unique experiences, and cost justification. Similarly, Sandra (2019) found that there is positive relationship between actors influence and cost-related decisions. Similarly, Michael (2016) argued that there is a positive relation between cost of travel and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between cost of travel and customer behavior.

Local hospitality

Local hospitality refers to the warmth, generosity, and welcoming attitude extended by residents of a particular community or destination towards visitors. Susan (2020) found that there is a positive relationship between local hospitality and consumer human behavior. Similarly, Michal (2018) showed that there is a positive relationship between local hospitality and consumer. Likewise, Susan (2020) found that there is a positive relationship between local hospitality and consumer behavior. Similarly, Michael and Shaw (2018) showed that there is a positive relationship between local hospitality and consumer behavior. Further, Robert J and Lewis (2021) found that there is a positive relationship between local hospitality and consumer behavior towards improving local hospitality. Likewise, Smith (2021) showed that there is a significant relationship between local hospitality and consumer behavior. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between local hospitality and consumer behavior.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 100 observations. The dependent variable is CB (Consumer behavior). The independent variables are NBAL (Natural beauty and landscape), AD (Adventure tourism), CD (Cultural diversity), COT (Cost of travel), and LH (Local hospitality).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	CB	NBAL	AT	CD	COT	LH
CB	2.311	0.602	1					
NBAL	2.268	0.661	0.517**	1				
AT	2.370	0.704	0.525**	0.634**	1			
CD	2.361	0.679	0.569**	0.527**	0.573**	1		
COT	2.328	0.642	0.573**	0.500**	0.592**	0.622**	1	
LH	2.342	0.622	0.628**	0.510**	0.527**	0.605**	0.576**	1

Notes: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the result are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that natural beauty and landscape is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that natural beauty and landscape attract the tourist that led to change in the consumer behavior. Similarly, adventure tourism is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that tourists engage in adventure activities such as trekking, climbing, rafting, scuba diving etc. lead to change in the behavior of consumer towards tourism industry. Likewise, cultural diversity is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that diversity in culture leads to change in the behavior of consumer towards tourism industry. Further, cost of travel is also positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that affordable cost of travel leads to attract consumer to travel. In addition, local hospitality is positively correlated to consumer behavior. It indicates that availability of local hospitality leads to attract consumer towards tourist destination.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of natural and beauty, adventure tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality on consumer behavior

Table 2

Estimated regression results of natural and beauty, adventure tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality on consumer behavior

The results are based on 100 observations using linear regression model. The model is $BP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NBAL + \beta_2 SAD$

+ β_3 CD + β_4 MCOT + β_5 LH + e where the dependent variable is CB (Consumer behavior). The independent variables are NBAL (Natural beauty and landscape), AD (Adventure tourism), CD (Cultural diversity), COT (Cost of travel), and LH (Local hospitality).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar²	SEE	F-value
		NBAL	AT	CD	COT	LH			
1	1.979 (10.280)**	0.289 (7.219)**					0.046	0.415	55.790
2	1.572 (14.304)**		0.347 (8.190)**				0.400	0.329	67.069
3	1.639 (17.023)**			0.380 (8.726)**			0.431	0.320	76.137
4	1.582 (15.817)**				0.387 (8.726)**		0.444	0.317	79.979
5	1.541 (5.310)**					0.422 (9.294)**	0.469	0.311	86.387
6	0.306 (2.432)*	0.819 (4.535)**	0.370 (9.486)**				0.510	0.300	50.513
7	0.306 (2.432)*	0.224 (8.335)**	0.286 (11.020)**	0.325 (11.829)**			0.794	0.192	4128.543
8	0.133 (1.667)	0.205 (12.137)**	0.231 (13.652)**	0.272 (15.330)**	0.220 (12.372)**		0.919	0.120	283.228
9	0.377 (2.682)**	0.064 (0.721)	0.010 (0.117)	0.157 (1.766)	0.224 (2.207)*	0.733 (3.957)**	0.627	0.367	40.982

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
- iii. Consumer Behaviors is dependent variable.

The regression results show that the beta coefficients natural beauty and landscape are positive with touristic consumer behavior. It indicates that natural beauty and landscape has a positive impact on touristic consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Williams and Lee (2021). Similarly, the beta coefficients for adventure tourism are positive with touristic consumer behavior. It indicates that adventure tourism has a positive impact on touristic consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Stephen (2012). Likewise, the beta coefficients for cultural diversity are positive with touristic consumer behavior. It indicates that cultural diversity has a positive impact on touristic consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Clara (2018). Further, the beta coefficients for cost of travels are positive with touristic consumer behavior. It indicates that cost of travels have positive impact on touristic consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Anne (2018). In addition, the beta coefficients for local hospitality are positive with touristic consumer behavior. It indicates that local hospitality has a positive impact on touristic consumer behavior. This finding is similar to the findings of Susan (2020).

4. Summary and conclusion

Touristic consumer behavior is influenced by a myriad of factors that shape individuals’ decisions when it comes to selecting destinations, activities, accommodations, and overall travel experiences. One of the primary influencers is socio-cultural factors, encompassing personal values, beliefs, attitudes, and cultural norms. These factors dictate preferences regarding travel destinations, activities, and the type of experiences sought. For instance, individuals from collectivist cultures may prioritize group travel and communal experiences, while those from individualistic cultures may seek more independent and unique adventures.

This study attempts to examine the factor influencing touristic consumer behaviors in Nepal. The study is based on primary data of 100 respondents.

The major conclusion of the study is that natural beauty and landscape, adventure of tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality have positive impact on consumer behavior. It indicates that higher the natural beauty and landscape, adventure of tourism, cultural diversity, cost of travel, and local hospitality, higher would be the consumer behaviors. The study also concludes that local hospitality is the most significant factor followed by cost of travels that determines the change in consumer behaviors.

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