Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development:
An Empirical Analysis from Nepal

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Abstract

Tourism development contributes significantly to economic growth and destination sustainability. This study examines how different factors such as societal barriers, socio-cultural attractions, elementary facilities, environmental management, and destination fears influence tourist perception toward tourism development. Data were collected from 389 foreign tourists using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through reliability testing, descriptive statistics, and association and effect analysis.

The findings indicate that these determinants significantly shape tourist perceptions, with infrastructure quality and environmental management playing particularly important roles. The results highlight the need for improved services, safety, and sustainable practices to enhance visitor satisfaction and long-term destination competitiveness.

Keywords: Elementary facilities, environmental management, Nepal tourism, socio-cultural attractions, sustainable tourism tourist perception, tourism development

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing global economic sectors, significantly contributing to economic development, employment, and cultural exchange. For developing countries like Nepal, tourism serves as a pathway to sustainable development, poverty reduction, and global recognition. In 2023, Nepal welcomed over one million international tourists, contributing about 6–7% to GDP and supporting over one million jobs. With its unique geography, including the Himalayas, Mount Everest, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, national parks, and vibrant cultural traditions, Nepal remains an attractive destination, supported by initiatives such as Visit Nepal 2025.

Despite this growth, the sector faces major challenges citation. Inadequate infrastructure, poor road and airport facilities, unreliable utilities, limited digital connectivity, inconsistent service quality, and environmental degradation in popular destinations negatively affect tourist experiences. Issues such as overtourism, weak waste management, and climate change further threaten sustainability.

Tourist perception—shaped by infrastructure, service quality, safety, environmental conditions, and cultural authenticity—plays a vital role in influencing destination choice, satisfaction, recommendations, and revisit intentions. As travelers become more environmentally and socially conscious, perceptions of sustainability practices increasingly determine destination image and long-term success.

Blocks to the development in the tourism sector of Nepal include infrastructure issues. Nepal Tourism Board (NTB, 2023) indicates that only half of visitors think that airports in the country are excellent, which is a major disparity in air accessibility. There is an issue with road connectivity; many of the most popular hiking trails and cultural attractions become closed during rainy seasons due to the lack of proper maintenance (World Bank, 2023). It is especially critical in the remote mountainous areas where the lack of basic needs such as reliable energy and clean water supplies is typically the norm, and as a result, many hotels are forced to use costly generators (ICIMOD, 2023). Such infrastructural shortcomings do not only lower the quality of visitor experiences but also curtail the capabilities of the industry to draw affluent tourists and rise in visitation beyond the average high seasons of the year.

The facilities and quality of service in Nepal continue to fall short of what tourists expect. According to recent surveys, 42 percent of the visitors are unhappy with the cleanliness and hygiene in popular tourist destinations (NTB Survey, 2023). Banking and digital connectivity are also significant concerns because there are numerous trekking tracks, which do not have good ATM machines or mobile coverage (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023). Lack of skilled tourism staff exacerbates such problems with inconsistency in the services provided by hotels, restaurants, and traveling firms. With its explosive growth, the adventure tourism, as it can be observed, has no emergency response systems and safety protocols in place, even though such tourism is reported to experience numerous rescues delays this year (Department of Tourism, 2023).

One of the biggest issues facing Nepal's tourist industry is environmental sustainability Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (2023) note that out of 12 tons of rubbish generated annually in the Everest region only 65% is managed in the right way. Due to the climate change, there are higher risk of disastrous floods as glacier lakes appear at disturbing rates that can directly hamper the trekking destinations and mountain landscapes (ICIMOD, 2023). In busy tourist periods, such tourist destinations as Pokhara and Chitwan experience rising problems of water shortage, construction is often permitted without proper regulation. It is these environmental issues that are threatening the very natural resources that make Nepal so popular as a travel destination, yet an essential aspect of the industry is still ignoring the principles of sustainable tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed one of the long-standing structural issues in the tourism sector in Nepal. Although in 2023, the inflow of tourists did not exceed 89 percent of the rates before the pandemic (2019), the average daily costs dropped to as low as $48 (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2023) (UNWTO, 2024). It is overly reliant on low-cost travelers' and seasonal periods, and the industry is not diversified into the higher-value market segments. Attempts to expand the tourism business are consistently delayed by poor policy execution, administrative roadblocks, and inadequate public-private partnership. Above all, Nepal struggles to market and promote itself as a vacation destination, which makes it challenging to inform potential visitors about its unique attractions outside of trekking and climbing (NTB, 2023). To maintain the industry's long-term viability and competitiveness in the global tourist market, these fundamental problems urgently need to be addressed.

Although tourist perception is widely recognized as important, limited comprehensive research exists in Nepal's context. This study addresses that gap by examining five key determinants: elementary facilities, low societal barriers, environmental management, no destination fears, and socio-cultural attractions. Using quantitative data from 389 international tourists, the research analyzes how these factors collectively shape perceptions and satisfaction.

The findings contribute theoretically to destination image and sustainable tourism literature while offering practical guidance for policymakers and tourism stakeholders. The study supports evidence-based planning, improved service delivery, stronger infrastructure, and sustainable tourism strategies, particularly in line with Nepal's Visit Nepal 2025 campaign and its goal of becoming a competitive and sustainable global destination. Thus, the major objectives of this study are to assess the current level of tourist satisfaction with the available tourism services, facilities, and infrastructure at the destination in Nepal, To examine the relationships between tourist perception and tourism experience determinants and To evaluate the impact of tourism experience determinants on tourist perceptions.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of this study draws upon several established frameworks in tourism research, focusing on theories that explain tourist

behavior, perception formation, and destination development dynamics. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), provides a fundamental framework for understanding how tourist perceptions are formed and translated into behavioral intentions. TPB posits that human behavior is guided by three types of considerations: behavioral beliefs (attitudes), normative beliefs (subjective norms), and control beliefs (perceived behavioral control). In tourism contexts, this theory has been extensively applied to predict tourist intentions and behaviors, demonstrating that attitudes toward destinations—shaped by media exposure, cultural norms, and prior experiences—significantly influence travel decisions (Lam & Hsu, 2006). The theory's emphasis on perceived behavioral control is particularly relevant for understanding how factors such as infrastructure quality, safety concerns, and accessibility influence tourist perceptions and destination choices.

Social Exchange Theory (SET), introduced by Blau (1964), offers valuable insights into the reciprocal nature of tourism experiences. SET suggests that individuals evaluate relationships and experiences by weighing perceived benefits against perceived costs. In tourism contexts, tourists assess their experiences by comparing tangible benefits (enjoyment, cultural enrichment, relaxation) against costs (financial expenditure, time, inconvenience, environmental concerns). When perceived benefits exceed costs, positive perceptions and satisfaction emerge, leading to destination loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Ap, 1992). This theory is particularly applicable to understanding how tourists evaluate the trade-offs between tourism development benefits and potential negative impacts such as environmental degradation or cultural commodification.

Destination Image Theory, pioneered by Crompton (1979) and further developed by Gartner (1993), emphasizes that destination image comprises both cognitive (knowledge-based) and affective (emotion-based) components. This theory suggests that tourist perceptions are shaped by multiple image formation agents, including autonomous sources (media, documentaries), induced sources (marketing materials), and organic sources (personal experiences, word-of-mouth). The theory is particularly relevant for understanding how pre-visit perceptions are formed and how actual experiences either confirm or disconfirm these expectations, ultimately influencing satisfaction and revisit intentions.

Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model (1980) provides a temporal perspective on destination development, suggesting that destinations evolve through distinct stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and either decline or rejuvenation. This model is crucial for understanding how tourist perceptions may vary depending on the developmental stage of a destination. Early-stage destinations often appeal to tourists seeking authenticity and uniqueness, while mature destinations may face challenges of over-commercialization and environmental degradation that negatively impact perceptions (Getz, 1992). Understanding Nepal's position within this lifecycle helps contextualize current tourist perceptions and anticipate future challenges.

Empirical research on tourist perception has identified several key determinants that significantly influence how tourists evaluate destinations. Infrastructure and elementary

facilities consistently emerge as fundamental factors affecting tourist satisfaction. Studies have shown that transportation accessibility, accommodation quality, sanitation facilities, and digital connectivity are baseline requirements that strongly influence overall destination evaluation (Buhalis, 2000). Research in developing countries has particularly highlighted infrastructure deficiencies as major barriers to positive tourist experiences (Pike & Ryan, 2004).

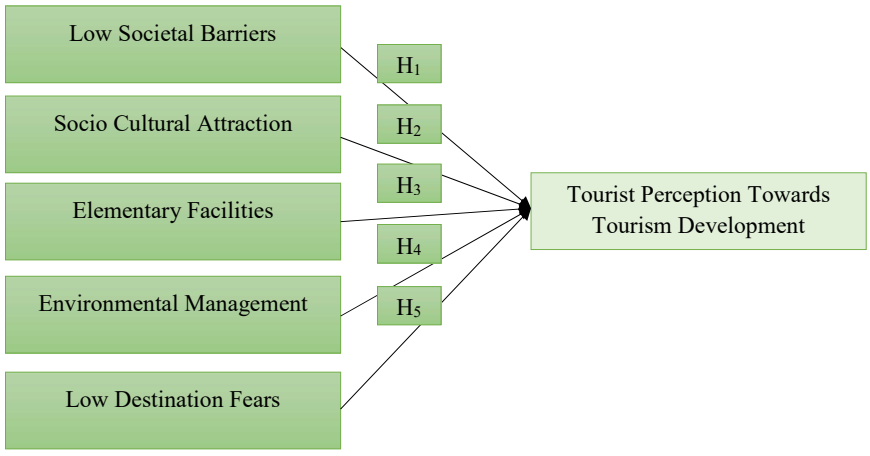
Socio-cultural attractiveness has been extensively studied as a critical determinant of tourist perception. Cultural authenticity, heritage preservation, local hospitality, and opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and destination image (Cohen, 1988; MacCannell, 1973). However, research also warns of the risks of cultural commodification and staged authenticity, which can lead to tourist disappointment and negative perceptions when cultural experiences are perceived as inauthentic (Wang, 1999).

Environmental management and sustainability practices have gained increasing attention in tourism research, particularly as environmentally conscious tourism grows. Studies demonstrate that tourists increasingly value destinations that demonstrate commitment to environmental conservation, waste management, and sustainable practices (Han et al., 2010; Miller et al., 2010). Environmental degradation, pollution, and overtourism have been identified as factors that significantly diminish tourist satisfaction and damage destination reputation (Buckley, 2012).

Safety and security concerns, conceptualized in this study as destination fears, play a crucial role in destination selection and tourist satisfaction. Research has shown that perceived risks—whether related to crime, health hazards, natural disasters, or political instability—can override even the most attractive destination attributes (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). The COVID-19 pandemic has further heightened the importance of health safety perceptions in tourism decision-making (Zenker & Kock, 2020).

Figure: 1

Conceptual Framework



While extensive research exists on individual determinants of tourist perception, limited studies have comprehensively examined the relative importance and collective impact of multiple determinants in developing country contexts. Most research has been conducted in developed tourism destinations with mature infrastructure and established tourism industries, limiting the applicability of findings to countries like Nepal with unique developmental challenges and opportunities. This study addresses this gap by systematically examining multiple determinants of tourist perception in the specific context of Nepal's tourism development.

Based on the above objectives and literature review, the following theoretical framework has been developed.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach to examine tourist perception towards tourism development in Nepal. The quantitative methodology was selected as it allows for systematic measurement of variables, statistical analysis of relationships between constructs, and generalization of findings to the broader tourist population (Creswell, 2014). The cross-sectional design enabled data collection at a single point in time, capturing current tourist perceptions and experiences efficiently.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprised international tourists visiting Nepal during the research period. Using convenience sampling combined with judgmental sampling techniques, a sample of 389 international tourists was selected from major tourist destinations in Nepal, including Kathmandu, Pokhara, and popular trekking routes. The sample size was determined based on Hair et al.'s (2010) recommendation of a minimum of 5-10 observations per measured variable for multivariate analysis. Respondents were selected based on their willingness to participate and their completion of at least three days in Nepal to ensure adequate exposure to tourism facilities and experiences.

Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire comprised multiple sections: (1) demographic information including gender, age, country of origin, education level, marital status, and occupation; (2) five independent variable constructs measured using 5-point Likert scales (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree): low societal barriers, socio-cultural attractions, elementary facilities, environmental management, and low destination fears; and (3) the dependent variable of tourist perception towards tourism development. The instrument was pre-tested with 30 tourists to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha confirmed internal consistency of all constructs ($\alpha > 0.70$).

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 26.0. The analytical procedures included: (1) Descriptive statistics to summarize demographic characteristics and variable distributions; (2) Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency; (3) Correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine relationships between variables; (4) Multiple regression analysis to determine the impact of independent variables on tourist perception; (5) Multicollinearity testing using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to ensure model validity; and (6) Model fit assessment using R-squared, adjusted R-squared, F-statistics, and residual diagnostics. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < 0.05$ level.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Out of 389 respondents, 52.6% were female and 47.4% were male. It can be said that most of the respondents were women and this is shown by 205 respondents, representing 52.6 percent of the total sample, which is somewhat more in comparison to the number of male respondents.

Based on the data, the largest number of respondents (50) comprising 12.8 per cent of the overall sample, indicated that they were Australian residents. This is succeeded by 48 respondents of India (12.3%), 47 respondents of USA (12.1%), 45 respondents of Germany (11.5%), 43 respondents of China (11.3%), 39 respondents of Canada (10.0%), 38 respondents of France (9.7%), 37 respondents of the UK and the smallest number of respondents of 37 respondents was representing United Kingdom (9.5%).

The data shows that among all the respondents (131 out of 389) that were part of the total sample (33.8) had a Postgraduate degree. It is then succeeded by 129 respondents in the World Bank Secondary level group (33.1%), and 129 respondents in the Undergraduate level group (33.1%). It can thus be concluded that most of the tourists who took part in the study were well-qualified academically, with Postgraduate degree holders slightly taking the lead in the sample as reflected by 132 respondents, which is 33.8% of the total sample.

As the data indicate, of the total sample of 389 respondents, 50.3 percent were married and the rest were unmarried. Thus, one can conclude that most of the tourists surveyed were married, with the percentage of 196 respondents, who constitute 50.3% of the entire sample being a bit more dominant in comparison with unmarried respondents. This indicates that the sample is comprised of almost equal number of married and unmarried people implying that the marital composition of the tourists is balanced. This narrow distribution facilitates wider perception of tourist to tourism development without given preference to marital aspect because the two groups almost led in responses set.

When it comes to occupation, the above analysis reveals that how the respondents were distributed in terms of their professional or employment background as they were being interviewed in the survey. Under the data, 110 respondents of the total sample of 389

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	184	47.4
	Female	205	52.6
	Total	389	100.0
Age	21–30	102	26.2
	31–40	90	23.1
	41–50	87	22.3
	Over 50	110	28.5
	Total	389	100.0
Nationality	Australia	50	12.8
	Canada	39	10.0
	China	43	11.3
	France	38	9.7
	Germany	45	11.5
	India	48	12.3
	Mwwwalta	42	10.8
	UK	37	9.5
	USA	47	12.1
	Total	389	100.0
Education Level	Secondary	129	33.1
	Undergraduate	129	33.1
	Postgraduate	131	33.8
	Total	389	100.0
Marital Status	Married	196	50.3
	Unmarried	193	49.7
	Total	389	100.0
Occupation	Students	103	26.4
	Government Job	89	22.8
	Private Job	87	22.6
	Personal Business	110	28.2
	Total	389	100.0

respondents (28.2) were engaged in Personal Business which makes it the biggest job category by occupation. This is followed by 103 respondents who identified themselves as Students (26.4%), 89 respondents as Government jobs (22.8%), and 87 respondents as people working in the Private sector jobs (22.6%). Thus, it may be assumed that most of the tourists involved in the survey were involved in personal business activities as 110 respondents, comprising 28.2 percent of the entire sample pointed out. This is also

indicative that the second group is student respondents, and they participate highly among young and economically active people.

Reliability Analysis

The most important characteristic of reliability testing is to identify the random and systematic errors of the measure to ensure accuracy and efficiency (Mukaka, 2012).

Cronbach's alpha is a method used to evaluate the reliability or internal consistency of a set of scale or test items. It assesses how reliably a measurement consistently captures a concept, serving as a measure to gauge the strength of this consistency (Mukaka, 2012).

Table 2
Reliability Analysis

Code	Variable	No of Items	Cronbach´s Alpha	Status
LSB	Low Societal Barriers	4	0.782	Reliable
SA	Socio cultural Attraction	4	0.779	Reliable
EF	Elementary Facilities	4	0.781	Reliable
EM	Environmental Management	4	0.758	Reliable
LDF	Low Destination Fears	4	0.731	Reliable
TPTTD	Tourist Perception towards Tourism Development	9	0.846	Reliable

Table 2 demonstrates the findings of the reliability test of the measurement scales adopted to measure the tourist perception to tourism development and the factors affecting the same. The Cronbach Alpha of Low Societal Barriers (0.782), Socio-Cultural Attraction (0.779), Elementary Facilities (0.781), Environmental Management (0.758) and Low Destination Fears (0.731) which consist of four items each are above the acceptable value of 0.70, a good indicator of internal consistency.

According to the above analysis, it can be noted that all the constructs are above the required standard to prove that questionnaire items are consistently relevant to measuring the corresponding variables. Hence, the measurement scales in this research study are effective and can be analyzed further using statistics and then made available to academic interpretation. In general, the results of the reliability indicate that the research tool can be considered rather consistent and reliable. No scale items were eliminated in the analysis since none of the variables used had a value lower than the acceptable level of reliability. Therefore, the questionnaire may be regarded as one of the valid instruments to evaluate the perceptions of the tourists regarding the tourism development and the associated dimensions.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were performed to present the average (mean) and variability (standard deviation) of each individual scale item, as well as the overall variable. This

approach summarizes the data in terms of mean, standard deviation, etc. Descriptive statistics aid in organizing extensive data related to variables in a meaningful manner.

Additionally, respondents were asked Five-Point Likert Scale questions ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for all variables in the survey research. Each question item had 389 respondents (N). The questions pertaining to each determinant and their descriptive statistics are presented below, indicating the level of agreement among the respondents.

The summary of descriptive analysis shows the dependent variable (Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development) and the independent variables' overall average of mean and standard deviation respectively.

Table 3
Descriptive Analysis Summary

Variables	Mean	SD
Low Societal Barriers	3.27	0.92
Socio- Cultural Attractions	4.28	0.80
Elementary Facilities	2.86	0.99
Environment Management	2.97	1.00
Low Destination Fears	3.62	0.89
Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development.	4.57	0.76

Above table gives a summary of the descriptive analysis of the six key dimensions that were examined in the study, using the responses of 389 participants measured using a five-point Likert scale. The table gives a summary of the general average means, and standard deviations of the mean scores of each of the constructs, which allows it to be comparatively evaluated in relation to the perceptions of the tourists concerning the various factors of the destination.

Out of the dimensions that were evaluated, Tourist Perceptions Towards Tourism Development (TPTTD) gave the highest overall mean score of 4.57 and SD of 0.76, which means that there is very strong and consistently positive perception on tourism development. This is an indication that tourists strongly favor tourism promotion, infrastructure development, long-term planning and have acknowledged tourism as a significant source of destination economy.

The second highest was the Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA) which had the highest average mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.80. This is indicative of such a high percentage of agreement among respondents on the factors of local hospitality, cultural preservation, availability of religious and spiritual landmarks, and participation by means of festivals and events. The standard deviation is relatively moderate, which also means that experiences of tourists in this dimension were rather similar.

The mean score of Low Destination Fears (DF) was 3.62 with the standard deviation of 0.89 which indicated the moderately positive perception and relatively low levels of concern among the tourists. Although the respondents were quite confident, they were happy with the prices and felt that the heritage was preserved, the average value suggests that there are still certain concerns, especially concerning industrial development and safety. On the other hand, the average mean score and standard deviation of Low Societal Barriers (LSB) were 3.27 and 0.92 respectively, which indicated a neutral to slightly positive perception. This ensures that the perception of tourists on safety, prevention of crime, crowding, and substance were ambivalent and there was apparent difference in the experiences of the respondents.

Environmental Management (EM) and Elementary Facilities (EF) had lower means. The overall mean of Environmental Management was 2.97 with a standard deviation of 1.00 which indicated a borderline satisfaction level with a level of emerging dissatisfaction especially on the aspects of waste management and environmental protection and cleanliness. On the same note, the overall mean score and standard deviation of Elementary Facilities is 2.86 with a standard deviation of 0.99 showing that the tourists were generally dissatisfied with the basic facilities like electricity, medical facilities, fair prices, and access of clean water to drink.

In general, the findings indicate a definite difference between high positive perceptions of tourism development and socio-cultural assets and lower ratings of supporting infrastructure, environmental management, and basic facilities. The standard deviation in EF and EM are relatively higher, which shows that there is more variability in the experience of tourists, which shows inconsistencies in the quality of services provided in the destination.

Conclusively, although tourists show a great support towards tourism development and hold a high value on the socio-cultural capabilities of the destination, it is important to address the gaps in the elementary facilities, environmental management as well as the conditions in the societies. By overhauling these lesser dimensions, not only the overall tourist satisfaction would be enhanced but also the future sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism industry of that destination.

Correlation Analysis

To test the aspects of relationships between the variables, correlation analysis was carried out. Correlation coefficient between Pearson was used when the variables had multiple-choice answers. The strength and direction of relations were determined by creating a correlation matrix in which the variables in the research were correlated. The positive correlation states that an increase in the value of one variable causes the increase in the value of another variable, whereas the negative one states that the increase in the value of one variable causes a decrease in the value of the other variable (Sharma & Chaudhary, 2018).

The intensity and direction of the relations was calculated by developing a correlation matrix whereby the research variables were correlated. The positive relation is that the growth in the value of one variable leads to the growth in the value of another variable

whereas the negative relation is that the growth in the value of one variable leads to the decrease in the value of the other variable (Sharma & Chaudhary, 2018).

The Pearson correlation coefficients of six significant variables in terms of tourism perception and destination characteristics, which are Low Societal Barriers (LSB), Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA), Elementary facilities (EF), Environment management (EM), Low Destination Fears (LDF) and Tourist perception towards tourism development (TPTTD) are statistically significant at the level of 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Through the analysis, it has been found that there were positive correlations between all the variables which means that there tends to be higher values in one aspect of the tourist experience with higher values in the other aspects. The correlations have moderate to strong strength.

Table 4
Correlation Matrix

	LSB	SA	EF	EM	DF	TPTTD
LSB	1					
SA	0.538	1				
EF	0.516	0.523	1			
EM	0.535	0.565	0.562	1		
DF	0.453	0.502	0.489	0.506	1	
TPTTD	0.708	0.718	0.723	0.761	0.661	1

Note. LSB – Low Societal Barriers, SA- Socio- Cultural Attractions, EF- Elementary facilities, EM- Environment management, DF-Low Destination fears, TPTTD- Tourist perception Towards Tourism Development.

In the case study, an example of this is the moderate positive relationship between SB and SA ($r = 0.538$) and EF ($r = 0.516$): the more the tourists hold the positive views on the barriers to accessing the society, the more they will hold positive views on the socio-cultural attractions and basic facilities. In the same vein, SB correlates with TPTTD having a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.708$) meaning that the societal barriers are directly related to the general views of tourists regarding tourism development. SA also shows moderate to high correlations with other variables, including EM ($r = 0.565$) and TPTTD ($r = 0.718$) which means that socio-cultural attractions play significant roles in the overall perception of tourism development by tourists.

The correlation between EF and EM is positive ($r = 0.562$) indicating that better facilities in the form of elementary are linked with better environmental management practices at the destination. DF has moderate positive relationships with other variables, including TPTTD ($r = 0.661$), which means that the perception of destination fears by tourists remains moderate in accordance with their general perception of tourism development. The general interpretation is that all dimensions of tourist perceptions are interconnected, and positive changes in one area have high chances to have a positive impact in other areas.

To illustrate, developing the environment or socio-cultural attractions can also result in increasing the general opinion of the tourists about tourism development. The fact that all

the variables have high correlations with TPTTD (0.661-0.761) shows that the perception of tourists towards tourism development is greatly affected by various destination attributes, which means that it is a key factor in the assessment of overall tourist experience.

Conclusively, the correlation result portrays a close trend of positive relationships between attributes of destination and the perceptions of the tourists. This means that destination managers need to consider the holistic approach in planning and development bearing in mind that improvement in all the various dimensions as shown through socio-cultural attractions, environment management, and even basic facilities enhances the perceptions of tourists on tourism development.

Regression Analysis

It is necessary that there are some assumptions that should be satisfied before performing regression analysis. They are the linearity and multicollinearity tests.

Linear Test: Linear regression examines the relationship between two variables by regressing a linear equation to the data. Under this approach, a single variable is used as an explanatory one, and the other is dependent. In the case where the correlation between the independent and the dependent scores is not linear, the result of the regression analysis might underscore the actual correlation.

Figure 2

Linearity Test

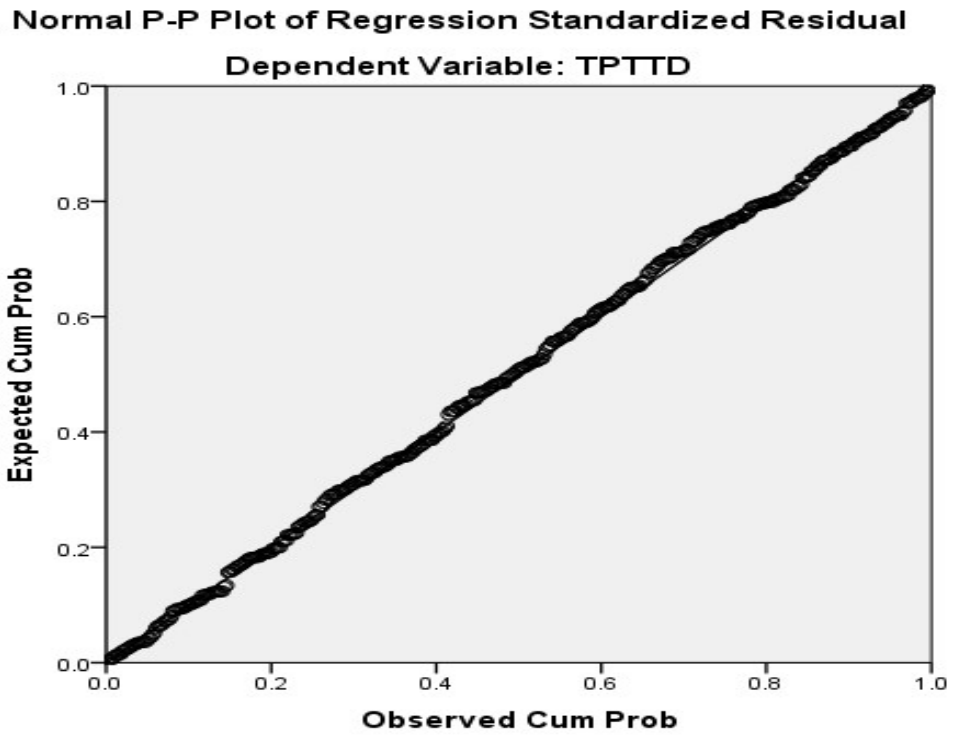


Figure above shows the Probability-Probability (P -P) Plot of regression standardized residuals against the dependent variable TPTTD. The plot of the observed cumulative probabilities of the standardized residual is compared with the expected cumulative probability of a normal distribution. The points are observed to be close to the diagonal reference line and this is an indication that the residuals are normally distributed. This further proves that the normality assumption of the regression model is being met satisfactorily hence, justifying the validity and reliability of regression findings.

Multi-Collinearity Test: Multicollinearity arises when two or more predictor variables in a multiple regression model are highly correlated, meaning they can be accurately predicted from each other in a linear fashion. This situation can lead to significant fluctuations in the coefficient estimates of the regression model with even minor changes in the data or model configuration. Although multicollinearity does not reduce the predictive power and the reliability of the model as a whole, it does affect prediction accuracy in regard to single predictors. Simply put, the multiple regression analysis model based on correlated predictors is useful in predicting outcomes with the full set of predictors but is not useful as individual predictor variables. The VIF measures the influence of collinearity among the variables in a regression model. Values of VIF that exceed 10 are often regarded as indicating multicollinearity, but in weaker models, values above 2.5 may be a cause for concern. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is 1/Tolerance is always greater than or equal to one. There is no formal VIF value for determining the presence of multicollinearity. That is, multiple regression models with correlated predictors indicate how well the entire set of predictors predicts the outcome variables, but they may not provide valid results about any individual predictor.

Table 5
Multicollinearity Test

Coefficientsa			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	LSB	0.590	1.695
	SA	0.550	1.818
	EF	0.569	1.757
	EM	0.530	1.886
	DF	0.634	1.576

a. Dependent Variable: TPTTD

The table shows that the tolerances of all variables were less than one and VIFs are less than 10. Particularly, there is the range of tolerance values between 0.530 and 0.634 and the range of VIF values between 1.576 and 1.886. The values of tolerance greater than 0.1 and VIF less than 10 would show that there is no occurrence of multicollinearity. Thus, the findings allow concluding that the regression analysis will not have any problems with multicollinearity.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis has been assimilated to inspect the cause and effect of relationship between variables. A line fitted to a set of data points to estimate the relationship between two variables is called regression line. A line fitted by the method of least square is the line of best fit. A line of regression gives the best estimate of one unfamiliar variable for any given value of the other variables. The model has been developed by undertaking the independent variables such as Societal Barriers, Socio-Cultural Attractions, Elementary Facilities, Environment Management, Low Destination Fears, and whereas Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development serves as the dependent variable.

Table 6

Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.912a	.831	.829	.40265

a. Dependent Variable: TPTTD

b. Predictors (Constant): SB, SA, EF, EM, DF

Above analysis shows that the model summary shows that the combination of independent variables, namely Low Societal Barriers (LSB), Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA), Elementary Facilities (EF), Environment Management (EM) and Low Destination Fears (LDF) has a strong positive correlation with the dependent variable, which is Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development (TPTTD) with R = 0.912. The R-SQ value of 0.831 shows that the joint contribution of these predictors has an explanation of 83.1 percent on the variability in the perceptions of tourists on tourism development. This proves that the explanatory capacity of the model is high though 16.9 percent variation is also determined by other variables not contained in this work. This adjusted R-Squared of 0.829 indicates that likely 82.9 percent of the change in TPTTD can be creditably explained by the predictors and it takes into consideration the number of independent variables. It indicates that the addition of SB, SA, EF, EM and DF can greatly enhance the effect of the model to explain the perceptions of tourists. Standard error of the estimate = 0.40265 with a value of 0.40265 representing the average error in the estimated and the observed value.

The standard error is relatively low which gives indication that the model has a great predictive power i.e. it can predict the estimations of perceptions of tourists with a lot of reliability given the identified factors. In conclusion, the model summary indicates that the variables used as independent are strongly positively related to the perceptions of the tourists with regard to tourism development. Although the model provides informative ideas, it also shows that more studies on other variables that can affect the perception of the tourists are necessary.

Table 7

ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	306.141	5	61.228	377.653	.000[b]
	Residual	62.095	383	.162		
	Total	368.236	388			

a. Dependent Variable: TPTTD
b. Predictors (Constant): SB, SA, EF, EM, DF,

As Table 7 indicates, the ANOVA results have a p-value of 0.000 which is significantly low compared to the traditional alpha of 0.05. This means that the regression equation is statistically significant, that is, there is a significant effect in the combination of the independent variables, which is the socio-cultural attractiveness, Low Societal Barriers (LSB), Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA), Elementary facilities (EF), Environment management (EM), and Low Destination Fears (LDF) on the dependent variable, which is the Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development (TPTTD).

The F-value of 377.653 shows that the percentage of explained variance relative to unexplained one is very large, so, it can be concluded that the combination of independent variables provides a significant explanation to the variance in perceptions of tourists. The high value of F indicates that the regression model fits better as compared to the model with independent variables.

Altogether, the findings of ANOVA analysis support the view that the combination of predictors is an important factor in determining the perceptions of tourists. This explains why these factors should be considered in the assessment and planning of tourism development as they have a direct impact on the perceptions of tourists concerning the development of tourism in Nepal.

Coefficients

The table presents the betas value for all the attributes or independent variables taken in the study to determine its influence on Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development.

The independent variables used were Low Societal Barriers (LSB), Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA), Elementary Facilities (EF), Environment Management (EM) and Low Destination Fears (LDF), in order to predict Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development (TPTTD) as the dependent variable as follows:

TPTTD= a + b1SB + b2SA + b3EF + b4EM + b5 DF

According to the unstandardized coefficients given in the table, the regression equation is: TPTTD=0.2 + 0.249SB + 0.224SA + 0.253EF + 0.296EM + 0.207D

The constant coefficient of 0.200 shows the expected value of TPTTD when all the

Table 8
Regression Coefficients

Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	Coefficients	t	Sig.
1		0.200	0.088		7.947	0.000
	LSB	0.249	0.029	0.232	8.487	0.000
	SA	0.224	0.030	0.210	7.440	0.000
	EF	0.253	0.029	0.240	8.633	0.000
	EM	0.296	0.030	0.289	10.012	0.000
	DF	0.207	0.029	0.186	7.075	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: TPTTD
b. Predictors (Constant): SB, SA, EF, EM, DF

Table 9
Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta (β)	Significance (p-value)	Result
H1	Low Societal Barriers → TPTTD	0.249	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H2	Socio-Cultural Attractions → TPTTD	0.224	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H3	Elementary Facilities → TPTTD	0.253	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H4	Environmental Management → TPTTD	0.296	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H5	Low Destination Fears → TPTTD	0.207	$p < 0.001$	Supported

independent variables assume a value of 0. The coefficients of independent variables will show the direction and the strength of the relationship between the independent variables and the perceptions of the tourists:

The effect of Low Societal Barriers (LSB) is positive (0.249, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that the higher the barriers are dealt with, the higher the perception of the tourists. It also influences Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA) positively and significantly (0.224, $p < 0.001$) underlining the role of the cultural and social experience in determining the tourist perception. Elementary Facilities (EF) is positively significant (0.253, $p < 0.001$) which means that improved basic facilities bring better tourist satisfaction. Environment Management (EM) demonstrates the most significant positive impact (0.296, $p < 0.001$), the importance of environmental care in tourism impression cannot be overestimated.

There is a positive and significant relationship between Low Destination Fears (DF) and the reduction of fears and risks in the destination (0.207, $p < 0.001$) that indicates that the decrease in fears and risks at the destination has a positive influence on the perception of the tourist. In general, the regression coefficients show that all the five independent variables are significant positive predictors of TPTTD. The most significant influence is

made by Environment Management (EM), Elementary Facilities (EF) and Socio-Cultural Attractions (SA) among them. This indicates that environmental, infrastructural and cultural dimensions should be considered to improve the perception of the tourists towards tourism development in Nepal.

Based on the results in table 9, all hypotheses are accepted, as each independent variable has a statistically significant influence on Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development ($p < 0.001$). H1 is supported as Low Societal Barriers significantly influence tourist perception. H2 is also supported as Socio-Cultural Attractions positively influence perception. Likewise, H3 is supported as Elementary Facilities significantly enhance perception and H4 is strongly supported as Environmental Management has the highest impact; and H5 is supported as Low Destination Fears significantly affect perception.

Summary, Conclusion and Implication

The study aimed to examine tourists' perceptions of tourism development in Nepal by analyzing five key destination-related factors: societal barriers, socio-cultural attractions, elementary facilities, environmental management, and destination fears. Primary data were collected from 389 international tourists visiting selected destinations. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were used to assess perceptions and examine relationships among variables.

Demographically, the sample was balanced, with slightly more female respondents than male. Tourists aged above 50 formed the largest group, followed by younger age groups, showing good age representation. Respondents came from diverse countries, including Australia, India, the USA, Germany, and China. Most were well-educated, with postgraduate and undergraduate degrees, and marital status was almost evenly split. Occupationally, respondents included businesspersons, students, government employees, and private-sector workers.

Descriptive results show that overall Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development (TPTTD) had the highest mean score, indicating strong support for tourism growth and its economic importance. Socio-cultural attractions were also rated highly, reflecting positive views of local hospitality, cultural heritage, and festivals. Destination fears and low societal barriers were rated at moderate levels, suggesting general feelings of safety and social comfort, though some concerns remain. In contrast, environmental management and elementary facilities received the lowest mean scores, indicating dissatisfaction with infrastructure, waste management, environmental protection, utilities, healthcare access, and price fairness.

Correlation analysis revealed that all five independent variables were positively and significantly related to overall tourist perception. Environmental management showed the strongest correlation, followed by elementary facilities, socio-cultural attractions, low societal barriers, and low destination fears. This suggests that improvements in environmental practices and infrastructure are closely linked to enhanced tourist perceptions.

Multiple regression results confirmed the model's strong explanatory power, accounting for over 83% of the variation in tourist perception. The model was statistically significant, and all independent variables had a positive and significant effect. Environmental management was the most influential factor, followed by elementary facilities, low societal barriers, socio-cultural attractions, and low destination fears.

Overall, the findings indicate that while tourists hold very positive perceptions of tourism development and appreciate Nepal's socio-cultural strengths, weaknesses in infrastructure and environmental management significantly affect satisfaction. Addressing these issues through improved basic services, better waste management, stronger environmental conservation, and infrastructure development is essential for enhancing tourist satisfaction and ensuring sustainable tourism growth in Nepal.

The findings show that tourists generally hold very positive perceptions toward tourism development in Nepal, especially due to its strong socio-cultural assets. The high mean score for overall Tourist Perception Towards Tourism Development indicates strong support for tourism promotion, infrastructure expansion, and long-term policy planning. This aligns with destination development theory, which emphasizes the importance of positive stakeholder perceptions in sustaining tourism growth and competitiveness.

Socio-cultural attractions are another major strength, with tourists expressing highly favorable views of local hospitality, cultural preservation, religious and spiritual sites, and festivals. These results reinforce Nepal's international image as a culturally rich and welcoming destination and support destination competitiveness theory, which highlights cultural heritage as a key source of competitive advantage.

Destination fears are moderately positive, suggesting that tourists generally feel safe and satisfied with price fairness and heritage protection. However, concerns remain regarding industrial development and security issues. This supports existing research that identifies safety and risk perception as important factors in destination choice and sustainability.

Despite these strengths, significant weaknesses are evident in elementary facilities and environmental management, which received the lowest mean scores. Tourists expressed dissatisfaction with basic services such as drinking water, electricity, healthcare access, waste management, and environmental protection. These findings reflect the service quality gap model, which explains dissatisfaction when service performance fails to meet expectations. Regression analysis further confirms that environmental management and elementary facilities significantly influence overall tourist perception, with environmental management being the most influential factor. This supports sustainable tourism theory, which stresses environmental quality as essential for long-term viability and visitor satisfaction.

The regression model explains a large proportion of variation in tourist perception, indicating that destination-related factors collectively shape overall attitudes. Correlation results also show that tourists evaluate different destination attributes separately, consistent with the multi-attribute attitude model, meaning strong cultural appeal cannot fully compensate for weak infrastructure or environmental practices.

The diverse demographic profile of respondents enhances the generalizability of the findings. However, the results highlight structural challenges in Nepal's tourism system, particularly in service delivery and environmental management, similar to patterns seen in emerging tourism destinations with limited infrastructure and institutional coordination.

Overall, while Nepal benefits from strong socio-cultural heritage and favorable tourist attitudes, sustainable tourism development requires significant improvements in basic infrastructure, environmental conservation, and destination management. A balanced approach that combines cultural strengths with reliable facilities and effective environmental practices is essential for enhancing tourist satisfaction and ensuring long-term competitiveness.

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