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**Prospect of Tourism Development in Khaptad National
Park: A Local Perspective**

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Abstract

Tourism in Nepal has flourished over the past two decades, making it one of the top global destinations for visit. Its abundant wildlife, stunning trekking routes, snow-fed rivers, picturesque lakes, and warm-hearted locals have been contributing perpetually to appeal to the global and local tourists. With the rise of the digital economy, tourism is experiencing modern advancements. This study aims to analyze the perceptions of local residents regarding tourism development. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to validate the research results, utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics. A sample size of 219 respondents was conveniently selected; indicating a higher interest among males and a predominance of economically active individuals aged 21-40 years. The study shows ICT development emerging as a common challenge for visitors to Khaptad National Park. The SEM results confirmed the fit and validity of five constructs. To establish KNP as a premier tourist destination, the Tourism Board, Government, and Municipality should prioritize its development and manage the influx of tourists. Notably, motivation and subjective norms

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significantly influence visitors' behavior, while perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention do not. Local communities should actively engage in promoting tourism through effective marketing strategies, and the improvement of ICT facilities will enhance travel convenience. Hence, efforts should be made to promote local business activities and products. The findings of this analysis will benefit various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal Tourism Board, Department of Tourism, hotel associations, Travel agencies, local governments, researchers, professionals, and prospective students. This article is an original work with no potential conflict of interest regarding its research and publication.

Introduction

Tourism possesses the potentiality of contributing in the national economy and branding a good image of the nation. It has the potential economic base that can enhance people's lives by providing jobs, outdoor leisure, cultural attractions, tax revenues, and economic diversification according to World Tourism Organization (Pradhan, 2016). Khaptad National Park is protected area of far-western region (Sun & Watanabe, 2021), Nepal that was established in 1984 (Li et al., 2021). Khaptad is a land of grassland and forests, which offers treks that range from short easy hikes to strenuous ones, religious sightseeing with its several sacred sites, quiet rejuvenation in its pristine surroundings and the rich cultural experience of *Sudar Sudurpaschim*, Nepal (Joshi, 2013). Tourism industries create jobs, generate revenue for local communities, encourage cultural exchange, and improve infrastructure (Mamirkulova et al., 2020); however, the growth of the tourism industry has a number of negative social, cultural, environmental, and economic consequences by disrupting communities (Uslu et al., 2020); but the negative consequences can be mitigated by pursuing sustainable tourism development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Tourism is the major source of revenue in Nepal (Acharya, 2022) and the increased number of tourism destinations have contributed to the employment opportunities (Kc et al., 2021). Nepal has a tremendous potential to boost up the tourism activities by attracting various international and domestic tourist (Kc et al., 2021). For successful development in tourism, the government has to be in line with local needs and aspirations, maintain the culture value of the place, conservation of environment and the requirement of skilled manpower (Devkota et al., 2021a). Transportation and communication system (Puri et al., 2022) of this modern era has narrowed down the world. The curiosity about distant land and culture, enjoying leisure and luxury in different places, exploring and enjoying the natural beauty, pilgrimages, education, business trips, excursions and seminars are key motives for travelling from one country to another. The diverse ecological zones with rich bio-diversity and unique socio-cultural identity have termed Nepal as one of the most fascinating tourist destinations of the world (Joshi, 2013). However, Nepal has faced various hazards in its smooth development of tourism sector due to socio-political reasons.

At present, tourism is recognized as a major international economic activity (Gautam et al., 2023) mainly in the developing countries like Nepal (Devkota et al., 2022). Tourism revenue is the main source of funds for protected area management and improving local

people's economic status. Tourism can empower and can provide direct incentives to the local stakeholders and consequently helps to develop positive attitudes toward the environment and conservation. Tourism is one of the active business activities aimed at producing products and services, with the intention of delivering goods and services to customers as well as local jobs and revenue (Gautam, 2004; Devkota et al., 2023). Economic behavior has a variety of direct, indirect, and economic effects. In essence, it increases foreign exchange earnings, creates employment opportunities, and generates more income (Gautam et al., 2023). As a result of the resulting income flow being exchanged in the economy, many economic activities will take place, stimulating further income rounds (Gautam, 2004).

In the present context of Nepal, we see tourism as a new form of cultural expression and nation-building success. Nepal is prepared to use tourism as a way of building a sense of belonging and unity in the modern world. We've built policies that have a direct effect on tourism and continue to do so. Nepal is heavily promoting tourism as a means of promoting the nation's economy and diplomacy by creating a new "brand" to attract tourists (Devkota et al., 2022a). A country may strive to highlight its specific character and uniqueness and to reflect itself in a way that flatters and reinforces national identity by creating a new "brand" to attract tourists.

Tourism is known as a leading economic transformation in developing countries however tourism has not developed as much to solve the problem of poverty (Devkota et al., 2021). The government has yet to explore and identify new tourism potentialities and develop, advertise and promote them (Devkota et al., 2020) to attract new tourists. The present need is additional tourism destinations of the country that should be recognized, advertised; and in addition, careful planning and promotion activities from the government agencies, and other stake holders should be carried out. The government has yet to explore and identify new tourism potentialities and develop, advertise and promote them. The present need is additional tourism destinations of the country that should be recognized, advertised; and in addition, careful planning and promotion activities from the government agencies, and other stake holders should be carried out. There are a lot of prospects in tourism sector, this study aims to find out the locals' perception to develop Khaptad National Park as a tourist destination, the challenges that are faced to develop Khaptad as a tourist destination and at last the managerial solutions.

The remaining part of the study is organized in to four different sections. The next section will show the methodology of the study, where conceptual framework, hypothesis formulation, studies area, research instrument are discussed. Then, the result of the study is presented through the socio-demographic variable, challenges and managerial solutions. At last, the discussion and conclusion are presented.

Research methods

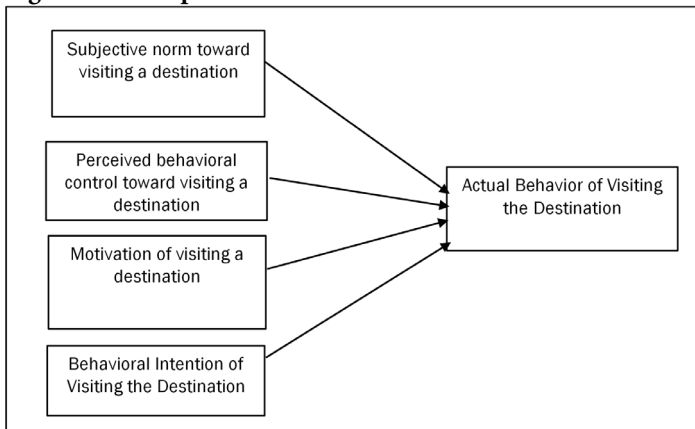
In this section the conceptual framework, hypothesis formulation, research variable, research design is discussed.

Conceptual framework

This study exploits different theories as discussion to measure the prospects of tourism in Khaptad National Park. The major ones are Theory of Planned Behavior Kan et al., (2020), Tourism Development Theory (Yoon et al., 2001), Actor-Network Theory (Jørgensen, 2017), Sociological Theory (Dann & Cohen, 2018) and Place Theory (Kianicka et al., 2006). The theory of planned behavior impact on cognitive factors such as attitudes, social norms and intentions on behaviors of the person Kan et al., (2020). Tourism development theories, the modification in the tourism market are taking place now not due to the economic, social, or bodily reasons, however due to the fact of the changing nature of the tourism market and the altering vacationer motivation (Yoon et al., 2001). Sociological theory by Dann and Cohen (2018) can in large measure be written in terms of an alternation between two contrasting emphases. The nature of tourism, its relationship with society, as well as the sociological techniques to its evaluation and interpretation, underwent a vast transformation (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). A theory by Jørgensen (2017), the theory of Actor-network idea (ANT) captures the thought that for any actor to act, many others need to act as well. Place Theory consider that for the visitors, the feel of location is mainly influenced through the esthetics and characteristics of the region they go to in the shape of recreational activities (Kianicka et al., 2006). Hence, the recreational activities too contribute in touristic activities.

The current study validates the notion that the TPB is a theoretical and practical framework for understanding tourists 'intention to revisit in the context of creative tourism. For tourism destination marketers should endeavor to provide different types of creative activities in the marketing communication that suggests visiting frequently (Devkota et al., 2023). Creative tourism attractions is within one's own control that it is easy to participate in creative workshops, and that develops creative potential (Hsu & Huang, 2012).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Hsu and Huang (2012)

Many researchers have explored tourists' motivation from social, psychological, and cultural views. Tourism motivation models conceptualize the study of motivation in relation to expectation and attitude for the study. Four motivation factors identified in the study included Knowledge, Relaxation, Novelty and Shopping.

Subjective norm and behavior intention: Subjective norm is an individual's perception of social references, or relevant others' beliefs that he or she should or should not perform such behavior. People always turn to particular groups for their standards of judgment, any person(s) served as a reference group could have a key influence on individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and choices (Hsu & Huang, 2012).

H1: Subjective norm of visiting a destination have a direct effect on their behavioral intention of visiting the destination.

Motivation and behavior intension: An increasing number of intervening events can change people's behavioral, normative or control beliefs, modify attitudes, subjective norms or perceptions of control, thus generating revised intentions (Ajzen, 2011).

H2: Tourists' motivation of visiting a destination has a direct effect on their behavioral intention of visiting the destination.

Perceived behavioral control and behavior intention: Perceived behavioral control is people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest. Perceived behavioral control can influence actual behavior may influence intentions. Therefore, perceived behavioral control should influence intention independent of attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms (Kan et al., 2020).

H3: Perceived behavioral control of visiting a destination have a direct effect on their behavioral intention of visiting the destination.

Behavior intention and actual behavior: Hsu and Huang (2012) found that subjective norm and perceived behavioral control were correlated with behavior intention in choosing places as a destination. In their study, however, the path between attitude and behavior intention was insignificant. Although behavior intention was to predict actual behavior, it is the actual behavior. Positive and negative implications of the shopping motivation serve as a relatively strong predictor of behavior intention.

H4: Tourists' behavioral intention of visiting a destination has a direct effect on their actual behavior of visiting the destination.

The study has used the 4 constructs to measure the actual behavior of visiting the destination. Perceived behavioral control has uses the 4 items whereas the subjective norms uses (5 items), motivation (3 items), behavioral intension (4 items), actual intension (3 items) and all of the items are used from the Hsu and Huang (2012) which is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Variable and their definitions:

Construct	Observed Variables	Variable Notation	Description
Perceived Behavioral Control (PB)	Resources, time and opportunities	PBC3	You have resources, time, and opportunities to stay at KNP when travelling.
	Control	PBC4	You have to complete control over visiting KNP in the near future
	Confident	PBC5	You are confident that if you want, you could easily visit KNP
	Information	PBC6	You are confident that if you want, you could easily obtain information of KNP.
Subjective Norms (SN)	Thinking	SNO1	Most people who are important to you think you should visit KNP in the near future
	Opinions/ Views	SNO2	The people in your life whose opinions you value would approve your visiting KNP in the near future
	Importance	SNO3	Most people who are important to you would visit KNP in the near future
	Good idea	SNO4	Most people who are important to you think that it is good idea to visit KNP.
	Cultural changes	SNO5	Most people who are important to you think that you should try to mitigate changes in local culture of KNP.
Motivation (MO)	Enjoyable	MOT3	You enjoy happy time with family and friends who travel together at KNP
	Thinking	MOT4	You visit KNP destination as most people think it deserve as a visit place
	History learning	MOT5	You visit for cultural and historical attraction towards KNP
Behavioral Intention (BI)	Intension on visit	BIN1	You intend to visit KNP in the next 6 months
	Planning	BIN2	Your plan to visit KNP in the next 6 months
	Want on visit after 6 months	BIN3	I want to visit KNP in the next 6 months
	Probable of visiting	BIN4	I probably will visit KNP in the next 6 months

Construct	Observed Variables	Variable Notation	Description
Actual Behavior (AB)	Enjoyable destination	ABB4	You refer KNP to your family and friends as it's an enjoyable place for destination to visit
	Opinions	ABB5	Your general opinion on KNP is favorable
	Idea about destination	ABB6	Through KNP, you got to know more idea about tourism destination

*NOTE: variable which excluded after analysis of the structural Equation Modeling

Research design

This study uses the explanatory research design, as this study is conducted to determine the extent and nature of the cause and successful relationship. Explanatory research design is used to show the causal relationship with the variables (Rahi, 2017). The study aims to find the effect of subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, motivation and behavioral intention to actual behavior of the customer.

Study area, population and sample size

This study covers Khaptad district, with focusing major destinations of *Sudurpaschim*. Doti lies on the geographical coordinates that entails 28°54'-29°28' latitude and 80°30'-81°14' longitudes. Khaptad National Park is a protected area in the *Sudurpaschim*, Nepal that was established in 1984. Stretching over the four districts of Bajhang, Bajura, Achham and Doti, it covers an area of 225 km² (87 sq.m) and ranges in elevation from 1,400 m (4,600 ft) to 3,300 m (10,800 ft) (Thapa et al., 2016). Khaptad lies in *Sudurpaschim* as it is the business hub of this region, people of different caste and ethnicity live here, and different star hotels are growing in Khaptad these days, different natural, cultural, religious and historical sites are in easy access from Dhangadhi (Pradhan, 2016). The best time to visit Khaptad is during autumn and spring, month from October-November and March to May months. Subtropical forest of Chirpine at lower altitude and sub alpine forests of fir, hemlock, oak and rhododendron in the higher areas cover the National Park. The area boasts of 224 species of medicinal herbs and is described as the living garden of herbs and a museum of natural history. It is estimated that about 567 species, 11 percent of flowering plants of Nepal, are found in Khaptad. The Park also offers excellent bird watching opportunities, with 270 species of birds, the common ones being different varieties of impeyan pheasant, partridges, flycatchers, bulbuls, cuckoos and eagles. The Park is also fairly rich in its variety of wild animals, common ones being barking deer, wild dog, wild boar, ghorals, himalayan black bear, yellow-throated marten, rhesus monkey and langur monkeys (Joshi, 2013).

Research instrument, data collection, and analysis

In the research instruments; observation, opinion of expert, survey questionnaire and reports (Paudel et al., 2021) are used. Structured questionnaires are used as research

instruments for the first section of this study. For the purpose of collecting data from primary source structured questionnaire is prepared. It uses the 5 Likert scale for the construct from 1 to 5, where (1= strongly disagree) and (5 = strongly Agree). The study uses 219 respondents, while KOBO toolbox is used to collect the data and pilot testing is done from 5 samples. Since the data collection was done during pandemic session most of respondents' data were collected physically from mobile application of KOBO tool box and rest few respondents' data through use of social media sites as well. Data is analyzed from descriptive and inferential methods, which uses structural equation modeling (SEM). Different software are used for analysis such as, Microsoft Excel, SPSS and SPSS AMOS to analyze inferential data.

Sampling technique and determination of sample size

The sample size taken for study is 280, but due to the ongoing COVID situation, as in the covid time government has restricted the social moments. Due to that the required sample size as per the formula ($n = z^2pq/l^2$) the researchers could not collect data of 280 respondents in *Sudurpaschim*. So, the total respondents of survey data of researcher are 219 only in this study. The research has used non-probability sampling and it is one of the techniques for conducting research (Maharjan et al., 2022). The researcher has selected convenience sampling method for the study analysis and data presentation. Convenience sampling is applied in this research survey to analyze peoples' view on prospect of tourism in Khaptad National Park in *Sudurpaschim*, Nepal.

Results

Socio-demographic analysis

Total 219 respondents have taken part in the survey and majority like 64.38% are male followed by female by 35.62%. It shows that the male is highly influenced towards tourism sector for the purpose of visiting. The study depicts that the majority of respondents were from economically active age group 21-30 and 31-40 i.e., 61.64% and 24.66% respectively. Almost all the respondents are educated and men respondents have bachelor's degree educated i.e. 43.58%, only few are illiterate (4.11%). The respondents are belonging to joint family (48%), (6%) from extended family and (46%) are from nuclear family. The involved respondents are from service sector (22.37%), agriculture (20.55%), industry (7.31%), business sector (10.50%) and (11.87%) are students. Majority of the respondents' (46.58%) income level is less than 20000 and only (0.91%) have more than 100001.

Table 2: Socio-demographic variables

Title	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	141	64.38
	Female	78	35.62

Title	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Age	<20	10	4.57
	21-30	135	61.64
	31-40	54	24.66
	41-50	16	7.31
	>51	4	1.83
Education Level	No Education	9	4.11
	Up to Grade 10	27	12.33
	Class 12	44	20.09
	Undergraduate	102	46.58
	Master Degree	37	16.89
	40,000-60,000	49	12.16
	60,000-80,000	14	3.47
	80,000-1,00,000	7	1.74
1,00,000 and above	8	1.99	
Family Type	Nuclear	101	46.12
	Extended	13	5.93
	Joint	105	47.95
Occupation	Unemployed	26	11.87
	Agriculture	45	20.55
	Business	39	17.81
	Service	49	22.37
	Others	60	27.40
Monthly Income (in NRs)	<20000	102	46.58
	20000-40000	86	39.27
	40001-60000	25	11.42
	60001-80000	3	1.37
	80001-100000	1	0.46
	>100000	2	0.91

General information of visitor in Khaptad National Park

The study explores that Khaptad offers: treks that range from short easy hikes to strenuous ones, religious sightseeing with its several sacred sites, quiet rejuvenation in its pristine surroundings and the rich cultural experience of Sudurpaschim, Nepal (Thapa et al., 2016). The study reveals that the 63% of the respondents already visited the Khaptad

National park, while 37% haven't. Visitors have the different purposes to visit there, 84.78% respondents has visited there to enjoy the natural beauty, (40.58%) visited to have cultural and religious knowledge. The study shows that the (53.42%) spent their time 3-7 days, they get the information about the Khaptad National Park from family and relatives (37.50%), and other get the information through close friends, social media, mass media and school/University. The result of the study (98%) reveals that the Khaptad National Park should be developed as tourist destination, and among them 20% feels that homestay facility needs to be developed. The result shows that the behavior of the tourist is normal (36.99%), (33.79%) feel that they have helpful behavior and (27.85%) feel they have frank behavior. Respondent are asked about the infrastructure and development and (47.03%) reveal that the satisfactory, while 25.57% feel the moderate level of the infrastructure development and 17.81% find less satisfactory and only 2.28% find it extremely satisfactory. 52.51% of respondents believe that the present condition of promotion level in Khaptad National Park are satisfactory, while 27.40% believe it to be moderate, 16.44% believe it to be less satisfactory, 2.28% believe it to be very less satisfactory and 1.37% believe it to be extremely satisfactory. Majority of the respondent think that the role played by the government is satisfactory (33.33%) and (32.42%) feel moderate level of satisfaction.

Table 3: General information of visitors

Title	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Detail information of KNP	Yes	138	63.01
	No	81	36.99
Attractions in KNP	Cultural and religious	89	40.64
	Natural beauty	97	44.29
	Sight seeing	18	8.22
	Study purpose	12	5.48
	Others	3	1.37
Length of Stay of Tourists	<3 days	63	28.77
	3-7 days	117	53.42
	7-10 days	29	13.24
	>10 days	10	4.57
Source of Tourism Knowledge	Family and relatives	82	37.44
	Friends	56	25.57
	Social media	35	15.98
	Mass media	30	13.70
	School/university	12	5.48
	Others	4	1.83

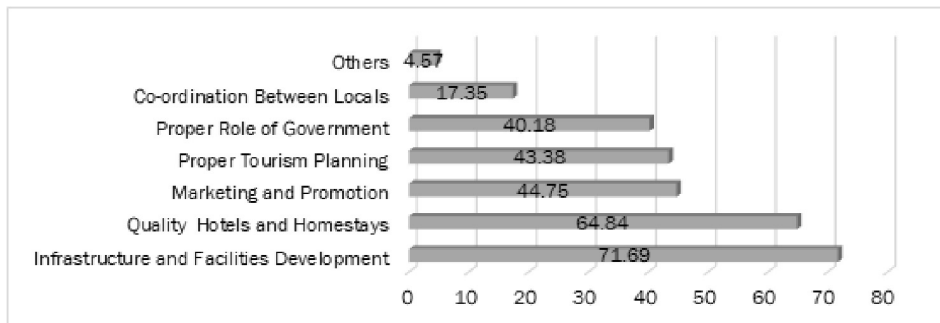
Title	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Needs for Tourism Development	Enhance hospitality facilities	87	39.73
	Establish a homestay	44	20.09
	Conserve the area	39	17.81
	Guide tourists	34	15.53
	Others	15	6.84
Satisfaction Towards Local Tourism Infrastructures	Very less satisfactory	16	7.31
	Less satisfactory	39	17.81
	Moderate	56	25.57
	More satisfactory	103	47.03
	Very much satisfactory	5	2.28

Challenges faced by tourism in Khaptad National Park

Nepal is an attractive and alluring destination in the world not only for adventure tourist, but also its pleasant climate and hospitable people (Dhakal & Kerava, 2015). The study reveals that 92% respondents believe that there are different challenges in KNP whereas, 8% feels that there are no any challenges.

The result of the study shows that the challenges of tourism in KNP is due to the government (59.36%), while (24.66%) reveal that the challenges arise due to local organization, (11.87%) believed that the challenges are due to the stakeholders. The challenges are occurred in moderate and less frequently.

Figure 2: Tourism challenges

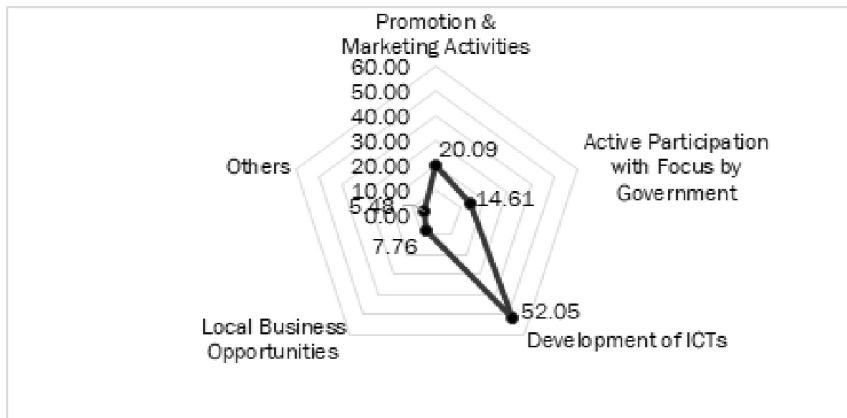


Managerial strategies to overcome the problems faced by tourism in KNP

It is critical for destination management to understand tourists’ behavioral intentions in the context of creative tourism. Such information could assist in guiding creative site managers to provide creative activities that fulfill tourists’ needs for meaningful and engaged experiences (Huang et al., 2019).

In this study, majority (97%) of the respondents believe that the challenges faced while visiting KNP could be managed properly if any remedy measures are adopted. There are various alternative ways to overcome with the challenges faced by tourism sector. Maximum number of respondents i.e., 66.21%, 56.16% and 53.42% believe that the challenges can be solved through active participation of government, local organization and NGOs, encouragement of local entrepreneurs and development of infrastructure and facilities respectively. The other organizations responsible for the challenges are tourism board, municipality, provincial government, and central government. Majority of respondents i.e., 76.26% find that tourism board is responsible whereas 68.49%, 63.01% 40.18%, 37.44%, 28.31% and 18.26% of them find municipality and provincial level of government. For the betterment of the Tourism sector in KNP, promotion and marketing activities, active participation with focus by Government, local business opportunities, development of ICTs need to be adopted and enhanced.

Figure 3: Improvement for betterment of tourism sector in KNP



Inferential analysis

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) seeks to discover the significance of a series of responses influencing constructs (Pett et al., 2003). KMO and Bartlett’s Test are used for this analysis. The KMO value is 0.861 that is greater than 0.5 values, which indicates that factor analysis is useful with our data and the data doesn’t have any issues of reliability and validity. On the other hand, for Bartlett’s test of Sphericity the data is also significant as the value is 0.000 because it is less than 0.05 which indicates that factor analysis is useful with our data and also fits for further process.

Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) tests whether a certain set of constructs affect the responses in a predicted manner (Kumari, 2021). CMINDF, RMR, GFI, CFI, IFI, TLI and

RMSEA are used for confirmatory analysis. The obtained value of the indicators is compared with standard required of the variables. The standard values are CMIN/DF<3, RMR<0.08, GFI>0.90, CFI>0.90, IFI >0.90, TLI >0.90 and RMSEA <0.08 (Ul Hadia et al., 2016). In our study CMIN/DF=2.390, RMR=0.072, GFI=0.868, CFI>0.926, IFI =0.926, TLI =0.911 and RMSEA =0.08 which lies under the standard indicating outstanding goodness of fit.

Measurement model

The validity and reliability of data collected are measured in this measurement model of the study. Among all the validity methods in this study, we consider only two validities i.e., convergent validity and discriminant validity in order to assess the measurement instruments. All constructs should have AVE> 0.5, CR> 0.7 and CR>AVE for convergent validity and should have AVE>MSV and for discriminant validity. A general accepted is CR value of 0.6-0.7 indicating an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater a very good level (Ursachi et al., 2015). In our study all the criteria are fulfilled indicating that our study is free from reliability and validity problem. In case of Cronbach's alpha, the value needs to be over 0.7 for it to be acceptable (Sharma, 2016) and in our study all the Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.7, which indicates that the internal consistency of data is acceptable.

Table 2: Reliability and validity

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	CR	AVE	MSV
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC3	.812	.929	0.911	0.719	0.194
	PBC4	.860				
	PBC5	.866				
	PBC6	.878				
Subjective Norms	SNO1	.743	.867	0.866	0.571	0.323
	SNO2	.786				
	SNO3	.815				
	SNO4	.739				
	SNO5	.571				
Behavioral Intension	BIN1	.865	.884	0.939	0.793	0.318
	BIN2	.862				
	BIN3	.839				
	BIN4	.889				
Motivation	MOT3	.792	.842	0.776	0.538	0.530
	MOT4	.625				
	MOT5	.735				

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	CR	AVE	MSV
Actual Behavior	ABE4	.640	.849	0.773	0.534	0.530
	ABE5	.764				
	ABE6	.790				

Table 3: Latent construct correlation

Variables	MO	BI	SN	PB	AB
MO	0.734				
BI	0.345	0.890			
SN	0.568	0.564	0.756		
PB	0.293	0.440	0.380	0.848	
AB	0.728	0.410	0.564	0.394	0.731

Hypothesis testing

The study has formulated and tested four hypotheses related to the relationship between the actual behavior and its independent variable that only two hypotheses of this study was significantly supported as the significance level (P-value) of the hypothesis is less than 0.05 and the remaining two of the hypotheses was rejected as the significance level (P-value) of the hypothesis is more than 0.05. Therefore, Subjective Norm and Motivation have significant impact on actual behavior whereas the study showed Perceived Behavioral Control and Behavioral Intension doesn't have significant impact on actual behavior.

Figure 4: Structure model

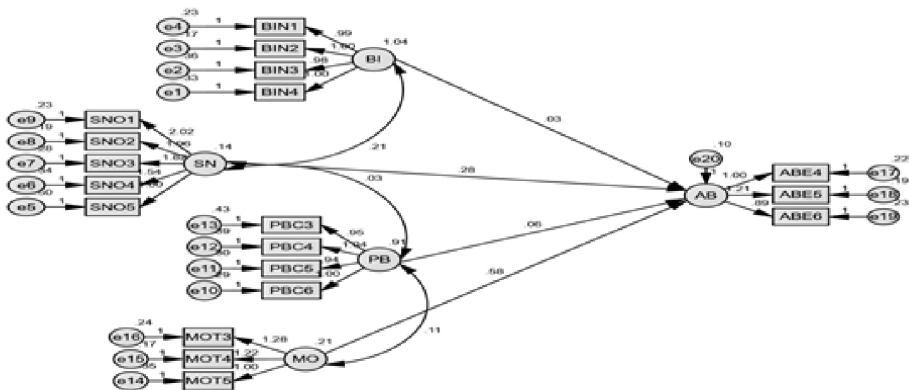


Table 4: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Significance/ Insignificance
H1: Subjective Norm →Actual Behavior	.281	.108	2.611	.009	Supported
H2: Motivation →Actual Behavior	.581	.102	5.704	***	Supported
H3: Perceived Behavioral Control → Actual Behavior	.063	.034	1.878	.060	Not Supported
H4: Behavioral Intension → Actual Behavior	.034	.036	.948	.343	Supported

Discussion

This research identifies the prospects of tourism in Khaptad National Park. The study has measured four hypotheses to measure the actual behavior of the respondents. Hypothesis H1 related the Subjective norms, it points out that the social reference, believe of the particular group influence the individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and choices (Hsu & Huang, 2012). Hypothesis H2 relates to the motivation, as the intervening events can change the peoples' behavior and the control beliefs (Ajzen, 2011). The finding shows the significant relationship of subjective norms with behavioral intension. The study by Soliman (2021); Hasan et al. (2020), shows the similar type of the result, which shows that the revisit intension has significant relationship with subjective norm and motivation. Hypothesis 3 associated with perceived behavioral control, as the peoples' perception of ease or difficulty of performing the task influence their behavior (Kan et al., 2020). The perceived behavioral control has insignificant relationship with actual behavior, which shows the similar result as per the study by Ahmad et al. (2020), customer perception to the ability to do any task contradict the actual behavior. Hypothesis H4 empathize with Behavioral intension is the subjective probability to perform certain behavior (Warshaw & Davis, 1985), the result shows that the behavioral intension has insignificant relationship with actual intension, the study by Javed et al. (2020), behavior intension and the actual decision has insignificant relationship. Additionally, different theories are discussed as Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) appropriate for the study, as per the theory of planned behavior subjective norms, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and intension plays a significant role in actual intention (Ajzen, 1991). As per the results, subjective norms and motivation play the significant relationship, while other factors play insignificant relation as the people perception of ease and difficulty changes person to person. Due to the pandemic only 219 data are collected, and for further research data size can be increased.

Conclusion

Sudurpaschim province has got less exposure and attention from the tourism authorities and government on Nepal. In the new administration system, federal government needs to

focus to develop the areas (Joshi, 2022). The study ascertains that tourism is a major tool for socioeconomic transformation in the developing countries like Nepal (Sapkota, 2023). Tourism provides an opportunity to understand the different societies, cultures, tradition, foods and life style of various countries around the world. It creates mutual relation among nations to bring diverse people close to each other and interact in close proximity. In a nutshell:

- i.) Challenges faced by Khaptad area are: Lack of infrastructure facility, inadequate quality hotels and homestays, invisible marketing and promotion, lack of proper tourism planning and development, not any proper roles from government and lack of co-ordination among the local organizations.
- ii.) Knowing the tourists' motivation, intention and behavior are vital to prosper and sustain tourism in Nepal. The core properties and unique selling points of the particular destinations should be taken in consideration.
- iii.) Tourism can uplift sense of belonging and unity in the nation. New destinations should be developed, planned and promoted that tourists get allured to visit and revisit.
- iv.) To mitigate the challenges the activities like: Promotion and marketing activities, active participation by Government, local business, and development of ICTs can be implemented. Local needs and aspirations should be maintained to preserve the culture value of the place, conservation of environment and the requirement of skilled manpower.

Thus, Khaptad National Park as the natural beauty and cultural diversity attracts the global tourists to visit. There is immense prospect to develop the Khaptad National Park as significant tourism destination in collaboration with local government and Nepal Tourism Board.

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