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Tourist Satisfaction and Sustainable Homestay Management: Insights from Six Rural Communities in Western Nepal

Devi Raman Tiwari[1], Niranjan Devkota[2] & Purnima Lawaju[3]*

[1]Kathmandu Model College, Tribhuvan University, Bagbazar, Kathmandu, Nepal
[2]Policy Resaerch Institute, Government of Nepal
[3]Quest Research Management Cell, Quest International College, Pokhara University, Gwarko, Nepal
[*]Corresponding email: deviraman2080@gmail.com

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Abstract

Background: Sustainable homestay tourism promotes tourist satisfaction by contributing to environmentally conscious travelers through eco-friendly practices, while also supporting local economies and culture. There is lack of research on how homestay tourism affects local livelihoods, its economic viability compared to corporate-led tourism, including potential benefits for sustainable homestay tourism.

Purpose : This study aims to examine the sustainability of homestay tourism in rural Nepal, with a focus on tourist satisfaction and its implications for sustainable management practices.

Methodology: This study utilizes the triple-bottom-line theory and integrated sustainability approaches to maximize satisfaction in homestay tourism. This study used an explanatory research design to explore the causal relationship between different variables and non-probability sampling techniques. The data collected from 267 respondents, Annapurna Rural Municipality, Kaski, was analyzed using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) version 4.0 software.

Finding: The study found that tourist satisfaction in homestay tourism is influenced by leisure, financial considerations, and cultural immersion, with community involvement crucial despite challenges. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers and development partners, enabling them to understand the deriving factors of tourists' satisfaction regarding sustainable homestay tourism.

Conclusion: Tourist satisfaction in homestay tourism is driven by leisure, affordability and cultural experiences with community involvement playing a key role. These insights help policymakers and stakeholders promote more sustainable and fulfilling homestay tourism.

Keywords: Sustainable Homestay Management, Community Based Practice, Tourists' Satisfaction, PLS-SEM 4.0, Western Nepal

Introduction

Homestay tourism, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is a form of tourism where visitors stay in private homes, offering them opportunities to experience local culture, traditions, and lifestyles firsthand (ILO, 2016). This immersive and interactive form of travel is gaining popularity globally, especially in regions rich in cultural and natural heritage. It represents a sustainable alternative to conventional tourism by creating authentic and meaningful travel experiences that foster cultural exchange, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. Sustainable homestay tourism aims to preserve local traditions, bolster economic development, and minimize the negative environmental impacts of tourism (Pan et al., 2018). In the context of Nepal, the concept of homestay tourism has evolved as a promising avenue to promote rural development, preserve cultural heritage, and empower local communities. With its rich diversity in geography, culture, and traditions, Nepal offers unique opportunities for tourists seeking authentic experiences. The government of Nepal has recognized the potential of homestay tourism and has implemented various initiatives, such as the "Visit Nepal 2022" campaign and the establishment of the "Community Homestay Network," to promote sustainable tourism practices (Acharya, 2022). These efforts align with global trends emphasizing responsible tourism as a tool for achieving broader socio-economic and environmental goals.

Sustainability in homestay tourism has become increasingly critical due to the growing awareness of its potential to generate economic benefits while minimizing adverse effects on the environment and local communities. By focusing on sustainable practices, homestay tourism contributes to preserving cultural heritage, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting environmental conservation (Chan et al., 2021). Moreover, it offers an alternative source of livelihood for rural communities, enabling them to leverage their unique cultural and natural assets. Despite its potential, the sustainability of homestay tourism faces several challenges. In developing countries like Nepal, a lack of infrastructure, insufficient training for homestay operators, and inadequate policy support often hinder the development of sustainable homestay tourism initiatives. These barriers highlight the need for empirical research to understand the best practices and strategies for fostering sustainability in this sector (Regmi & Walter, 2017).

Annapurna Rural Municipality in Kaski District is a leading hub for tourism in Nepal. Comprising areas like Dhikurpokhari, Lumle, Salyan, Bhadauretamagi, Dangsing, and Ghandruk, this region exemplifies the potential of sustainable homestay tourism. Known for its breathtaking Himalayan landscapes and vibrant cultural heritage, Annapurna attracts tourists seeking authentic rural experiences. The municipality has embraced homestay tourism as a means to promote responsible tourism practices and drive socio-economic development. However, achieving sustainability in homestay tourism requires addressing several critical issues, including environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and equitable economic benefits. Studies have emphasized the need for collaboration among local governments, communities, and tourism stakeholders to develop sustainable tourism frameworks that align with the region's long-term development goals (Soedarwo et al., 2022).

Globally, sustainable homestay tourism has gained prominence as an alternative form of tourism that prioritizes cultural exchange and environmental protection. Countries like Indonesia, Thailand, and India have implemented successful homestay tourism programs that provide valuable insights for Nepal. These programs often involve collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations, emphasizing community participation, training, and certification programs (Mehri et al., 2017). For example, Indonesia's community-based tourism initiatives have demonstrated the potential of homestay tourism to alleviate poverty and empower local communities. In developed countries like the United States and Canada, sustainable homestay tourism serves as a tool for rural development, providing supplementary income to host families while promoting environmental conservation. These examples underscore the importance of capacity-building, infrastructure development, and policy support in fostering sustainable homestay tourism (Kamisan Pusiran & Xiao, 2013).

Despite its potential, sustainable homestay tourism in Nepal faces significant challenges. Many homestay

operators lack access to training and resources necessary for adopting sustainable practices. In rural areas, poor infrastructure and limited connectivity further complicate efforts to establish sustainable homestay tourism. Additionally, the rapid commercialization of tourism poses risks to cultural integrity and environmental sustainability (Badal, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving local communities, government agencies, and tourism organizations. Opportunities for sustainable homestay tourism in Nepal lie in its rich cultural diversity, natural beauty, and growing interest in responsible travel. By leveraging these assets, Nepal can position itself as a global leader in sustainable tourism. Strategies such as promoting eco-friendly practices, providing training for homestay operators, and enhancing community participation can contribute to the long-term viability of homestay tourism (Kim Lian & Binti Saikim, 2021).

A review of the existing literature reveals a lack of empirical research on the socio-economic and environmental impacts of homestay tourism in Nepal. While several studies highlight the potential benefits of homestay tourism, few examine its sustainability from the perspectives of host communities and tourists. This gap underscores the need for rigorous research to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices and identify areas for improvement (KC et al., 2021). Moreover, there is limited understanding of the role of government policies and community participation in promoting sustainable homestay tourism. Investigating these aspects can provide valuable insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders to develop targeted interventions that enhance the sustainability of homestay tourism in Nepal.

Sustainable homestay tourism represents a significant opportunity for Nepal to achieve its development goals while preserving its cultural and natural heritage. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities associated with this form of tourism, Nepal can create a sustainable tourism model that benefits both tourists and host communities. Empirical studies focusing on the sustainability of homestay tourism can provide critical insights for designing effective policies and practices that align with the principles of responsible tourism. As global interest in sustainable tourism grows, Nepal's homestay tourism sector stands at a crossroads. By adopting sustainable practices and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, Nepal can unlock the full potential of homestay tourism to drive inclusive and sustainable development. This study aims to contribute to this endeavor by examining the sustainability of homestay tourism in rural Nepal, with a focus on tourist satisfaction and its implications for sustainable management practices.

Methods

Conceptual Framework

This study is based on an explanatory research design. The explanatory research design is useful to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables (Cheng et al., 2010). Its objective is to establish a causal link between variables and to comprehend how changes in one variable influence changes in another variable. In this study, explanatory research design is used to explore the causal relationship between different variables in context to sustainable homestay tourism by using statistical techniques. Thus, it helps to explore the factors that contribute to sustainable homestay tourism and can help to guide decision-making that promotes sustainable practices.

There are several prominent theories used by different scholars to study sustainable homestay tourism. They are Triple-bottom line theory, Stakeholder theory, social exchange theory, Community-Based theory, sustainable -Tourism Development theory etc. These theories provided a framework for understanding and analyzing sustainable homestay tourism development, and they help guide scholars and practitioners in developing sustainable tourism practices and policies that benefit both local communities and visitors. To the study, Triple-bottom line theory is best suited. By considering all three factors, homestays can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable tourism industry that benefits the local community, the environment, and the business itself.

Based on Triple bottom line theory and existing empirical literature review, it has developed following

conceptual framework for the study purpose. Figure 1 helps to enhance the understanding of sustainable homestay tourism as a driving factor of tourist satisfaction. It consists of four variables that are mentioned namely: Sociocultural sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Economic sustainability, and Tourist Satisfaction. Socio-cultural, Environmental, and Economic sustainability work as an independent variable whereas Tourist satisfaction works as dependent variable (See Table 1).

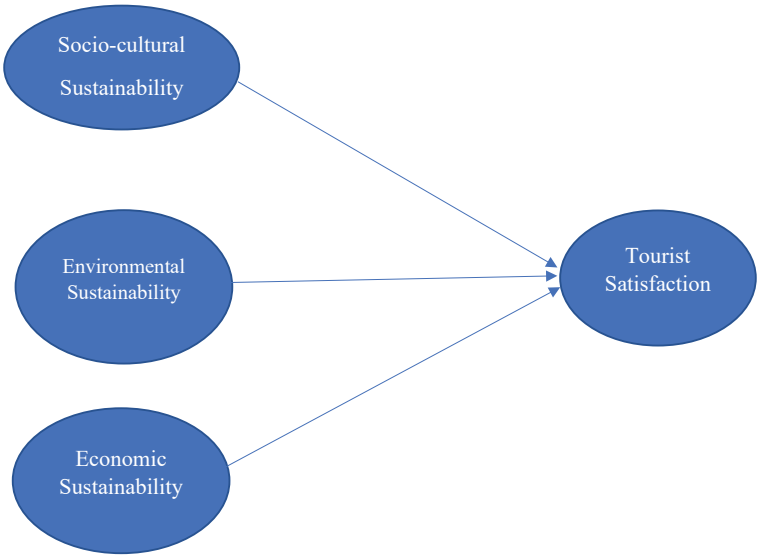

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Sustainable Homestay Tourism

Source: Modified from *Basak et al. (2021)*

Socio-cultural Sustainability and Tourist Satisfaction:

The degree to which tourists are happy with their travel experiences can be significantly influenced by socio-cultural sustainability. Tourists are more likely to have a satisfying experience and feel content with their trip if they believe that their travel activities promote and respect the cultural heritage and social customs of the host community (Tasci & Knutson, 2004). Tourists could feel uneasy, uninvited, and dissatisfied with their trip if the socio-cultural values of the local community are not taken into account or respected, on the other hand (Osman et al., 2020). As a result, encouraging socio-cultural sustainability may enhance visitor happiness, which may result in more return trips and effective word-of-mouth advertising for the location.

H1: There is a positive association between socio-cultural sustainability of homestay and tourist satisfaction.

Environmental Sustainability and Tourist Satisfaction:

The sustainability of the environment can play a significant role in deciding how satisfied tourists are with their vacation experiences (Teo et al., 2014). Tourists are more likely to feel satisfied with their vacation and have a great experience if they believe the destination to be environmentally responsible. For instance, visitors are more likely to feel that their trip is helping to preserve the environment if the destination offers clear and clean waterways, well-kept natural areas, and programs to reduce waste and pollution. Tourists may feel their presence is causing the environment to deteriorate and be dissatisfied with their experience if the site is filthy, overcrowded with visitors, or obviously bad for the ecosystem (Sanz-Blas et al., 2019). As a result, encouraging environmental sustainability can benefit

H2: There is a positive association between environmental sustainability of homestay and tourist satisfaction.

Economic Sustainability and Tourist Satisfaction:

The degree to which travelers are happy with their travel experiences can also be influenced by economic sustainability. Tourists are more likely to have a satisfying experience and feel good about their vacation if the local community financially benefits from tourism (Tosun et al., 2007). Tourists could feel that their presence is boosting the local economy and fostering a vibrant community, for instance, if they can access local goods and services and if locals work in the tourism sector. Tourists could believe that their trip is not helping the local economy if the advantages of tourism do not trickle down to the community and the industry is dominated by big multinational companies or foreign investors, on the other hand, making them feel less satisfied with their trip (Wang & Pfister, 2008).

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between the economic sustainability of homestay and tourist satisfaction.

Table 1: Variables and its Definition

Construct	Variable Notation	Observed Variable
Socio-cultural Sustainability	Sc1	Accountability and responsibility
	Sc2	Significance of local ethos for homestay growth
	Sc3	Quality of leisure activities
Environmental Sustainability	Evs1	Combination of homestay and environmental factors
	Evs2	Understanding of locals towards environmental sustainability
	Evs3	Tourist activities
	Evs4	Conservation of nature
	Evs5	Reduction of environmental harm
Economic Sustainability	Es1	Availability of Job facilities
	Es2	Equality between men and women
	Es3	Earning of local people
	Es4	Economic diversity
Tourist Satisfaction	TS1	Homestay operators made tourists to recommend others
	TS2	Local people are polite and friendly
	TS3	Homestay are comfortable and safe
	TS4	Accommodation facilities and price are satisfactory
	TS5	Tourist participation with locals

Empirical Framework

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a statistical method that allows researchers to test and refine theoretical models of complex relationships among variables. It is an extension of multiple regression analysis, but SEM can model latent variables (i.e., variables that are not directly observable) and allow for the examination of direct and indirect effects of variables on each other (Williams et al., 2009). SEM can also be used to test hypotheses about causality, and to estimate the strengths of relationships between variables while controlling for measurement error. In this study, SEM is used, which provides a comprehensive and integrated method for investing the association between these concepts and their impacts.

According to Stein et al. (2017), SEM is a set of statistical methods that examines at the relationships between a number of independent variables (IVs), which can be continuous or discrete, and a number of dependent variables (DVs), which can also be continuous or discrete. SEM is a method of statistics that combines path analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis, which has its roots in psychometric, aims to evaluate quietly affecting psychological characteristics like satisfaction and

attitude (Fan et al., 2016).The relationships between observable and latent variables are evaluated using the statistical method of structural equation modeling. Latent variables are variables that are measured by connecting to seen variables, whereas observed variables are elements that are directly tested during the data collection process (Civelek, 2018). By allowing a variety of measures to be employed to represent constructs, SEM solves the issue of measure-specific errors (Weston & Gore, 2006). While taking into account the effects of other potential causal variables, SEM offers more accurate estimates of the effects of a postulated causal variable (Ramlall, 2016). This SEM model evaluates the impact of external CSR practices on client devotion. It provides the two division which are dimension idea and structural equation model. (Muthén & Asparouhov, 2012) shows the SEM equation as:

$$y = \Lambda_y \eta + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (1)$$

$$x = \Lambda_x \xi + \delta \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (2)$$

Structural equation model is specified as:

$$H = \alpha + \beta\eta + \Gamma\xi + \zeta \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (3)$$

Form the equations, y represents to the vector of observed variables and x is represents the vector of input variables. The vector ε and δ are measurement errors in y and x. Both of latent variables (η and ξ) are unobserved, the observed response variables y and x are used to estimate the factor loadings (Λ_y and Λ_x) on these latent variables. The structural model parameter α is a vector of intercepts, β is the matrix of co-efficient for the regressions among the endogenous variables (η_i), which has zeros in the diagonal and (I – β) is non-singular; Γ is a matrix of coefficients of exogenous latent variables (ξ) in the structural relationship; and ζ is a random vector residuals.

However, if there are errors only in y- variables, then the reduced form of the structural model in equations (1) – (3) can be expressed as:

$$y = \Lambda_y (I-\beta)^{-1} (\Gamma\xi + \zeta) + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (4)$$

Study Area and Population

Annapurna Rural Municipality, Kaski was established in 2017 as a local government of Gandaki Province, Nepal. The total area of the Annapurna Rural Municipality is 417.74 km2 (161.29 sq mi) and the total population of the municipality is according to 2021 Nepal census is 22,099 individuals. The major economic sources of this Gaupalika are leading area tourism, agriculture and animal husbandry. The major homestay tourism area of this Gaupalika are Ghandruk, Dhikurpokhari, Lumle, Salyan, Bhadauretamagi, Dangsing. Annapurna Rural Municipality, Kaski district has been chosen as the study area for this research work. Since the Pokhara is situated in Kaski district which is an important tourism destination in Nepal. Annapurna Gaupalika, mountainous as well as Himalayan and hilly region is located in western part of Nepal and northern part of Pokhara. There are many homestays operating in Gaupalika which makes this place appropriate to conduct study on homestay. The information has been collected form national and international tourists.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size Determination

Sampling is the procedure used for choosing a sample, in which a large number of samples are chosen from a large group while still maintaining individual selection. In this study, non-probability sampling is used to select samples based on factors other than randomness, such as availability, subject matter expertise, and participant interest. A sampling strategy is a methodology used in research to choose a portion of people or things from a larger population, allowing researchers to make generalizations about the full group without looking at every individual. To make sure the sample accurately represents the population and minimizes bias in research projects, a variety of approaches are used, such as random, stratified, or cluster sampling.

This study is based on non-probability sampling techniques as the population for the study was unknown.

Based on the convenience sampling technique, this study collected the sample. According to Hair et al. (2017) criterion for determining sample size, the sample size above 200 respondents is regarded as minimum sample size. Likewise, online sample size calculator (calculator.net, 2015) determined 267 sample size as an adequate at 95% level of confidence and 6% level of margin of error.

Research Instruments and Data Collection and Analysis

The primary research tool for this study will be a structured questionnaire combined with an interview. Surveys and interviews with owners of homestay operators in the Kaksi district will be used to gather the primary data. The study's topic will be covered by both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The sequence and arrangement of the questionnaire will be the researcher's primary emphasis after the questionnaire has been prepared. For the purpose of gathering data, the prepared structured questionnaires will be used with KOBO toolbox. In order to assess the instrument's consistency, accuracy, and question-language clarity, a pilot survey with a few representative questions will be conducted.

Descriptive and inferential analysis has been used to undertake data analysis. Microsoft Excel was utilized for data entry and tabulation, and software like KOBO Toolbox, Smart Pls and Microsoft Excel is used for data analysis. The data has been gathered using Kobo Toolbox first, then modified, coded, and cleaned in Excel before being exported for analysis. Statistical software was utilized for in-depth analysis after the data has been prepared. The initial section of this research focuses on examining socio-demographic profiles and the general understanding of homestay tourism. In the subsequent section employs the inferential statistics to scrutinize variables related to tourist satisfaction.

In order to identify patterns and information, descriptive analysis evaluates and presents data in certain ways. The features of the sample are explained using descriptive facts, which are also used to validate the variables, test hypotheses, and handle research-related issues. It provides a thorough summary of how participants responded to the inquiry's questions and factors. In order to describe and comprehend data, descriptive analysis uses measures of frequency, central tendency, dispersion, and location as well as several types of variables (nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio). It is crucial to compute descriptive statistics prior to doing inferential statistical comparisons because they condense data into a concise summary, facilitating the assessment of particular populations.

A key component of statistical study, inferential analysis enables us to infer information about populations from sample data. Early 20th-century pioneering work by Sir Ronald A. Fisher, Jerzy Neyman, and Egon Pearson is where it first began to take shape. Fisher laid the groundwork for contemporary inferential statistics with the introduction of ground-breaking ideas including the null hypothesis, p-value, and analysis of variance. Neyman and Pearson improved the techniques for making conclusions from data at the same time they created the notion of hypothesis testing. These early advancements paved the way for a wide range of statistical techniques, enabling researchers to decide wisely, forecast trends, and solve challenging issues in a variety of sectors, from economics to healthcare. The development of inferential analysis, which is essential to scientific advancement, is ongoing.

Results

Socio - Demographic Status of the Respondents

The socio-demographic analysis of 248 respondents highlights diverse characteristics and factors influencing their engagement with homestay tourism. The gender distribution shows a slight male predominance (57.7%), while 42.3% are female. Most respondents are Nepali (83.9%), with 16.1% being foreigners. Income levels reveal a broad range, with 27.03% earning below NPR 20,000 and 11.67% earning above NPR 200,000 monthly. Friends (36.7%) and official relations (32.2%) serve as the primary sources of inspiration for engagement in homestay tourism, while family and advertisements have lesser influence. Education levels are relatively high, with 41.1% holding a bachelor's degree and 29.8% having a master's degree, while illiteracy is minimal (2.1%). Marital status shows a higher proportion of unmarried respondents (53.2%) compared to married individuals (44%). A majority (61.2%) have

no children, indicating a younger demographic. Occupationally, students dominate (33%), followed by educators (23.4%) and businesspersons (12.9%). The geographical distribution reflects significant representation from Gandaki Province (41.1%), with notable participation from Bagmati (18.5%) and Lumbini (8.5%) provinces (See Table 2). This demographic data underscores the diversity among respondents and highlights the importance of tailoring tourism strategies to their unique socio-economic and regional profiles.

Table 2: Demographic Analysis

Title		Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	143	57.7
	Female	105	42.3
Nationality	Nepali	208	83.9
	Foreigner	40	16.1
Income	0 to 20,000	67	27.03
	20,000 to 50,000	62	25
	50,000 to 100,000	57	23
	100,000 to 200,000	33	13.3
	200,000 and above	29	11.67
Inspired by	Friends	91	36.7
	Official Relation	80	32.2
	Family	34	13.7
	Advertisement	19	7.7
	Other	24	9.7
Education	Bachelor	102	41.1
	Master	74	29.8
	Higher Education	36	14.5
	MPhil/PhD	13	5.2
	Primary/Lower Secondary	18	7.3
	Illiterate	5	2.1
Marital Status	Married	109	44
	Unmarried	132	53.2
	Divorced	4	1.6
	Widow/Widower	3	1.2
Children	None	152	61.2
	1	46	18.6
	2	35	14.2
	3	12	4.8
	4 and above	3	1.2

Occupation	Students	82	33
	Educators	58	23.4
	Business	32	12.9
	Agricultural Farmer	20	8
	Engineer	19	7.7
	Health	18	7.2
	Unemployed	11	4.4
	Artists	8	3.2
	Research Sector	6	2.4
Coming From	Gandaki province	102	41.1
	Bagmati province	46	18.5
	Lumbini province	21	8.5
	Sudurpaschim province	11	4.4
	Karnali province	10	4
	Madesh province	13	5.2
	Koshi province	9	3.6
	Foreigners	40	16.1

Source: Field Survey (2023)

General Understanding on Homestay

This study explores respondents' understanding of homestay management and sustainability in Kaski District's Annapurna Municipality, revealing key insights into homestay tourism. The primary purpose for visiting homestays includes cultural exploration (24%), entertainment (18%), and education (16.6%), while budget considerations (11.2%) and business (7.2%) are less common motivations. Local involvement emerges as a critical factor, with 67.8% of respondents identifying it as a major role in ensuring sustainable homestay management. Challenges for hosts include environmental (27%) and cultural limitations (21.8%), along with economic difficulties (21.4%), underscoring the multifaceted obstacles to sustainability (See Table 3). Tourist satisfaction is driven predominantly by natural beauty (31.9%) and cultural experiences (20.6%), with environmental friendliness (20.1%) and affordability (14.1%) also contributing. For local communities, the benefits of homestay tourism are primarily increased job opportunities (35.9%) and infrastructure development (23.4%), with profit generation (19.8%) and educational enhancements (16.9%) also noted. However, 4% of respondents remain unaware of these benefits. These findings highlight the importance of integrating community involvement, addressing host challenges, and enhancing visitor experiences to ensure sustainable homestay tourism. Strategic interventions, including policy support and capacity building, could further promote sustainable practices and maximize benefits for local communities.

Table 3: General Understanding

Questions	Options	Respondents	Percentage
Purpose to Visit Homestay	To understand local culture	121	24
	To entertain	91	18
	Educational tour	84	16.6
	To expand the leisure time	82	16.3
	Budget friendly	56	11.2
	Business	36	7.2
	To visit the relatives	34	6.7
Importance of local's Involvement Ensuring Sustainable Homestay Management	Major role of local	168	67.8
	Nominal role of local	41	16.5
	Critical (need to take action by government)	32	12.9
	Irrelevant	7	2.8
Challenges to Hosts to Ensure Sustainability Homestay	Environmental limitation	67	27.0
	Cultural Limitation	54	21.8
	Economic problems	53	21.4
	Opposition of local community	42	16.9
	No challenges at all	32	12.9
Factors that Ensuring the Tourist Satisfaction	Natural beauty	79	31.9
	Cultural experiences	51	20.6
	Environmental friendliness	50	20.1
	Low cost	35	14.1
	Qualities of local interactions	33	13.3
Local Communities are benefited as	More job opportunities for locals	89	35.9
	Better infrastructure development	58	23.4
	Increases profit or business	49	19.8
	Enhanced the educational opportunity	42	16.9
	I don't know	10	4.0

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis includes the descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory analysis, measurement model and path analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis was utilized to ascertain the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis of the study variables. The observed items exhibit mean scores ranging from 3.335 to 3.863, indicating a moderate level of agreement or neutrality across the statements. Additionally, the standard deviation values range from 0.889 to 1.023, suggesting a moderate to high degree of response variability, signifying diverse viewpoints among respondents for each statement. Consequently, responses are distributed

relatively flat, showcasing a broad spectrum of opinions. The skewness values range from -0.671 to 1.397, falling between -1 and 0, indicating a negatively skewed distribution, with more observations having lower values than higher values (See Table 4). Conversely, kurtosis values range from -0.824 to 1.397, within the range of -1 and +1, suggesting an approximately normal or mesokurtic distribution. Thus, both skewness and kurtosis values meet the predetermined limits, affirming the satisfaction of normal distribution assumptions and indicating the data's suitability for further statistical analysis.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis

Name	N Statistics	Mean	Scale min	Scale max	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness
ES_1	248	3.726	1	5	1.019	-0.006	-0.718
ES_2	248	3.448	1	5	1.023	-0.671	-0.392
ES_3	248	3.794	1	5	1.005	0.17	-0.824
ES_4	248	3.512	1	5	0.929	-0.025	-0.582
EVS_1	248	3.335	1	5	0.927	-0.622	-0.104
EVS_2	248	3.52	1	5	0.959	-0.564	-0.32
EVS_3	248	3.617	1	5	1.001	-0.513	-0.434
EVS_4	248	3.5	1	5	0.889	-0.253	-0.398
EVS_5	248	3.452	1	5	0.897	-0.355	-0.242
SC_1	248	3.73	1	5	0.948	0.253	-0.635
SC_2	248	3.593	1	5	0.959	-0.078	-0.488
SC_3	248	3.649	1	5	0.985	-0.129	-0.549
TS_1	248	3.77	1	5	0.95	1.397	-1.086
TS_2	248	3.863	1	5	0.999	1.02	-1.066
TS_3	248	3.649	1	5	0.926	1.053	-0.965
TS_4	248	3.762	1	5	0.94	1.295	-1.034
TS_5	248	3.722	1	5	0.979	0.668	-0.843

Source: Researchers Calculation from Field Survey (2023)

Measurement Model Results

Reliability and Validity

The consistency of scale tools is referred to as reliability. Individual item reliability and internal consistency are two of the measuring indications. Factor loading is used to test the reliability of each individual item among them. Latent variable composition reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha are used to verify the internal consistency. It is necessary for the recommended value to be greater than 0.7 (See Table 5). The scale tool's correctness is referred to as validity, and the measurement indications include discriminant and convergent validity. Determining the average variance extraction (AVE) and measuring the correlation between items in the same dimension are the two main purposes of convergent validity. The suggested value must be higher than 0.5. The square root value of the AVE test is used to quantify the discriminant validity, which measures the relationship between items with various features. Discriminate validity can be verified if the diagonal AVE's square root value is greater than the horizontal or vertical column's correlation coefficient value. The verification requirements have been satisfied as it is known that all of the questionnaire items in this study component have factor loadings larger than 0.7. All dimensions show strong reliability and internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha and CR values greater

than 0.7. Good convergent validity is indicated by each dimension's AVE value is greater than 0.5. The diagonal AVE's square root value is larger than the matrix's other correlation coefficient values, indicates. Table indicates that, as determined by heterotrait–monotrait analysis, all values are smaller than 0.9, which shows the strong discriminant validity.

Table 5: Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Indicators	SFL	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Economic Sustainability	ES_1	0.829	0.86	0.905	0.704
	ES_2	0.795			
	ES_3	0.871			
	ES_4	0.859			
Environmental Sustainability	EVS_1	0.717	0.84	0.893	0.676
	EVS_2	0.849			
	EVS_3	0.878			
	EVS_4	0.835			
Social Sustainability	SC_1	0.835	0.806	0.883	0.717
	SC_2	0.809			
	SC_3	0.893			
Tourist Satisfaction	TS_1	0.864	0.913	0.935	0.741
	TS_2	0.873			
	TS_3	0.850			
	TS_4	0.873			
	TS_5	0.844			

Source: Researchers Calculation from Field Survey (2023)

The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Economic Sustainability demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.86$), strong reliability (CR = 0.905), and captured 70.4% of the variance (AVE = 0.704), meeting validity thresholds. Environmental Sustainability showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.84$), strong reliability (CR = 0.893), and explained 67.6% of the variance (AVE = 0.676), with potential for improvement in validity. Social Sustainability exhibited satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.806$), strong reliability (CR = 0.883), and captured 71.7% of the variance (AVE = 0.717), meeting validity standards. Tourist Satisfaction demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.913$, CR = 0.935) and explained 74.1% of the variance (AVE = 0.741), highlighting the robustness of the construction. Overall, the constructions showed satisfactory to strong reliability and validity, with some room for enhancing the AVE for Economic and Environmental Sustainability to further strengthen their validity.

Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion Analysis

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion is utilized to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs by comparing the square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) with the correlations between constructs. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion analysis confirms the discriminant validity of the constructs in which each construct captures unique variance and distinct from other constructs in the model where the correlations between constructs are lower than the square roots of their respective AVEs. Therefore, the study's measurement model indicates adequate discriminant validity, enhancing the reliability of the research

findings. Further, by comparing the correlations within the same construct (monotrait correlations) and the correlations between distinct constructs (heterotrait correlations), the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) technique evaluates discriminant validity. Good discriminant validity is indicated by a ratio much lower than 1, whereas poor discriminant validity is suggested by a ratio near to 1.

Table 6: Discriminant Validity

	ES	EVS	SC	TS
ES	0.839			
EVS	0.042	0.822		
SC	0.059	0.266	0.847	
TS	0.381	0.299	0.263	0.861

Source: Researchers Calculation from Field Survey (2023)

Table 7: HTMT Ratio of Correlation

	ES	EVS	SC	TS
ES				
EVS	0.087			
SC	0.078	0.31		
TS	0.427	0.335	0.296	

Source: Researchers Calculation from Field Survey (2023)

The diagonal value (0.839) represents the square root of the AVE for economic sustainability. The correlations between economic sustainability and other constructs are lower than the AVE square root, indicating discriminant validity. The diagonal value (0.822) represents the square root of the AVE for environmental sustainability and other constructs are lower than the AVE square root. The diagonal value (0.847) represents the square root of the AVE for socio-cultural sustainability indicating other constructs are lower than the AVE square root which shows the discriminant validity (See Table 6).

There are no values provided in the ES row and column, as it represents the correlations within the Economic Sustainability construct. Therefore, it is not applicable for HTMT analysis. The HTMT ratio between EVS and ES (0.087) is significantly lower than 1, indicating good discriminant validity. This suggests that the correlation between EVS and ES is much weaker compared to correlations between different constructs. The HTMT ratios between SC and ES (0.078) and between SC and EVS (0.310) are significantly lower than 1. This suggests that the correlations between SC and ES and between SC and EVS are much weaker compared to correlations between different constructs. The HTMT ratios between TS and ES (0.427), TS and EVS (0.335), and TS and SC (0.296) are all significantly lower than 1, indicating good discriminant validity (See Table 7). The HTMT analysis confirms the discriminant validity of the constructs, as the ratios between different constructs are significantly lower than 1. This indicates that the correlations between different constructs are much weaker compared to correlations within the same construct, showing that each construct captures unique variance and is distinct from other constructs in the model.

Discriminant Validity: Cross loading Analysis

Cross loadings analysis examines the relationships between observed variables (indicators) and latent constructs (factors) in a measurement model. The cross-loading result shows a strong relationship between the tourist satisfaction as dependent variable (TS) and economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and socio-economic sustainability are as independent variables (ES, EVS, and SC) respectively (See Table 8). Notably, across all measured examples (ES_1: 0.829, ES_2: 0.795, ES_3: 0.871, ES_4: 0.859),

ES continuously displays large positive correlations with TS, suggesting a significant effect of economic sustainability on tourist satisfaction. Environmental sustainability also shows moderate to large positive correlations with tourist satisfaction (EVS_1: 0.717, EVS_2: 0.849, EVS_3: 0.878, EVS_4: 0.835), indicates that environmental sustainability plays a major role in tourist satisfaction. Though not as much as with economic and environmental sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability also shows favorable correlations with tourist satisfaction (SC_1: 0.835, SC_2: 0.809, and SC_3: 0.893). These numerical results underscore the multidimensional influence of sustainability factors on tourist experiences and perceptions, with economic and environmental sustainability playing particularly prominent roles.

Table 8: Cross Loading Analysis

	ES	EVS	SC	TS
ES_1	**0.829**	-0.003	0.028	0.282
ES_2	**0.795**	0.012	0.013	0.318
ES_3	**0.871**	0.057	0.081	0.324
ES_4	**0.859**	0.067	0.071	0.349
EVS_1	-0.045	**0.717**	0.103	0.187
EVS_2	0.061	**0.849**	0.256	0.263
EVS_3	0.083	**0.878**	0.252	0.29
EVS_4	0.009	**0.835**	0.238	0.226
SC_1	0.05	0.241	**0.835**	0.191
SC_2	0.005	0.181	**0.809**	0.18
SC_3	0.08	0.248	**0.893**	0.276
TS_1	0.329	0.269	0.196	**0.864**
TS_2	0.358	0.275	0.24	**0.873**
TS_3	0.298	0.256	0.208	**0.85**
TS_4	0.342	0.251	0.243	**0.873**
TS_5	0.309	0.234	0.243	**0.844**

Source: Researchers Calculation from Field Survey (2023)

Structural Model Analysis

Collinearity Statistics

Collinearity statistics, specifically Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), are used to assess multicollinearity among predictor variables in a regression analysis. High VIF values indicate potential issues with multicollinearity, which can lead to unreliable coefficient estimates and decreased model interpret ability. The VIF values for most observed variables range from approximately 1.484 to 2.787, hence there is no any issue of multicollinearity in the datasets.

Hypothesis Testing

From the figure 2 it can be observed that the value indicates that the tourist satisfaction has 25.5% of explanatory power with = 0.255 which is considered as a moderator effect. From this structure estimates indicates that the economic sustainability = 0.36 1 t-value = 4. 169 and P value = 0.0 is significant (estimates) predictors of tourist satisfaction at level P 0.05. It supports to the hypothesis H1 (See Table 9). Accordingly, H2 has been supported by the relationship between environmental sustainability and tourist satisfaction where is = 0.236, t-value = 3.391 and P-value = 0.01 as environmental sustainability

is also significant predictor of tourist satisfaction. H3 is concerning the relationship between sociocultural sustainability and tourist satisfaction. The result shows that there is also positive relationship between sociocultural sustainability and tourist satisfaction as = 0.179, t-value = 2.745 and P-value = 0.06. Hence H1, H2 and H3 accepted. For the better understanding of the given model effect size value were measured. The value of above 0.15 is considered as a good enough effect that is moderated effect, less than 0.02 is considered as a small effect and anything about 0.35 is large effect. The findings for demonstrated that the path of economic sustainability has the largest effect size on Tourist satisfaction with = 0.174 which is greater than 0.215 and its moderate effect. Accordingly, the environment sustainability has less effect than economic sustainability as moderate effect (= 0.0690.02) and very less effect of sociocultural sustainability (= 0.040.02) to the tourist satisfaction.

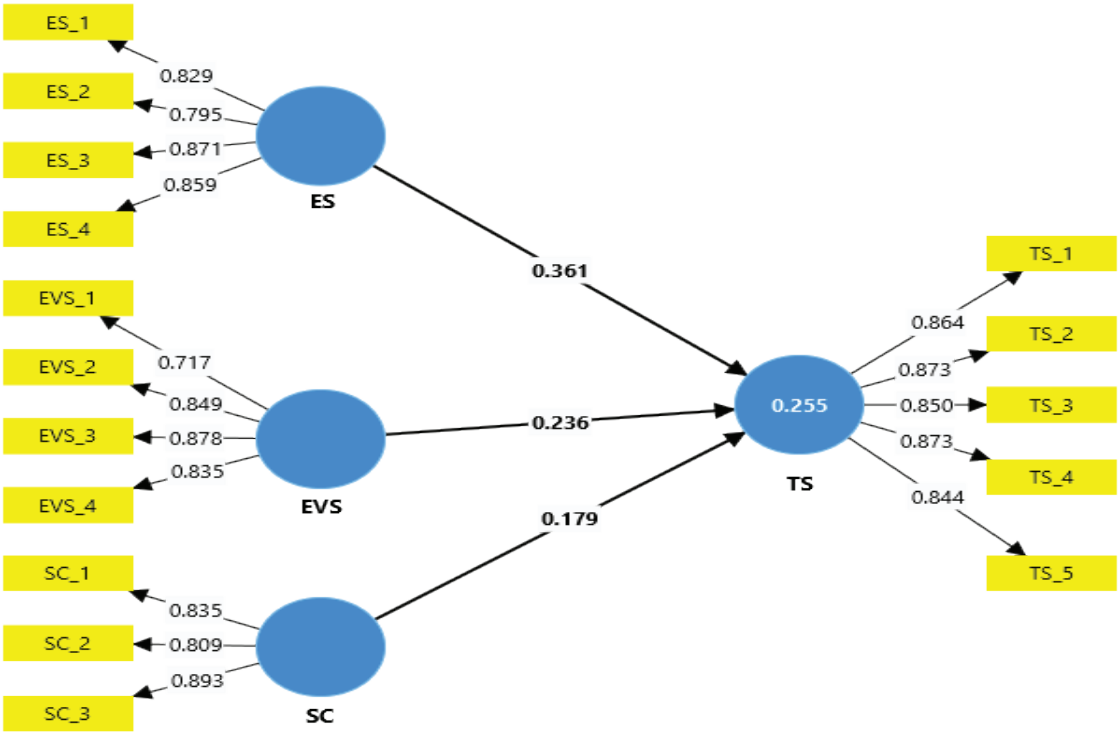

Figure 2*:* **Path Analysis**

Table 9: Hypothesis Testing and Conclusion

Structural Path	Beta Coefficient (B)	Standard Deviation	t-statistics	P values	Conclusion
ES -> TS	0.361	0.087	4.169	0	Supported
EVS -> TS	0.236	0.07	3.391	0.001	Supported
SC -> TS	0.179	0.065	2.745	0.006	Supported

Source: Researchers Calculation from Field Survey (2023)

Discussion

The results of this study conducted in the Annapurna Rural Municipality of Kaski district shed light on various aspects of homestay tourism. Understanding the motivations behind tourists' satisfaction reveals a spectrum of objectives, ranging from leisure to financial considerations and cultural immersion. Additionally, the study highlights the crucial role of community involvement in sustaining tourism

activities. Challenges faced by hosts, including social and environmental constraints, demonstrates the intricacies of fostering sustainable tourism. Natural beauty and cultural engagement emerge as significant factors enhancing tourist satisfaction, underscoring the diverse array of experiences available to visitors.

Regarding economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and socio-cultural sustainability exhibit significant associations with tourist satisfaction, thereby supporting the formulated hypotheses. The positive relationship between economic sustainability and tourist satisfaction is particularly notable, with economic sustainability demonstrating the largest effect size among the three variables. Environmental sustainability also significantly influences tourist satisfaction, albeit to a lesser extent than economic sustainability. Meanwhile, socio-cultural sustainability, although showing a positive relationship, exhibits a relatively smaller effect on tourist satisfaction compared to the other variables.

The results of your study indicate a positive association between socio-cultural sustainability of homestays and tourist satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous research in the field. For instance, Smith and Font (2014) conducted a study on sustainable tourism development and found that initiatives focusing on preserving local culture and promoting community engagement positively influence tourist satisfaction. Similarly, Jones et al. (2024) explored the role of socio-cultural sustainability in ecotourism and concluded that tourists' value authentic cultural experiences, which enhance their overall satisfaction. Moreover, a study by García-Rosell et al. (2021) investigated the impact of community involvement in sustainable tourism initiatives and discovered that tourists perceive destinations more positively when they perceive genuine interactions with local communities. Therefore, your findings corroborate the existing literature on the importance of socio-cultural sustainability in enhancing tourist satisfaction in homestay settings.

The study also found a positive association between environmental sustainability of homestays and tourist satisfaction. This result is consistent with findings from various previous studies. For example, Kim et al (2021) examined the influence of environmental sustainability practices in accommodations on tourist satisfaction and concluded that eco-friendly initiatives positively affect tourists' perceptions of their overall experience. Additionally, research by Gössling et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of environmental conservation in tourism destinations, highlighting that tourists are more satisfied when they perceive efforts to protect natural resources.

The study also confirms a significant relationship between economic sustainability of homestays and tourist satisfaction. This finding is consistent with prior research in the field. Furthermore, a study by DeCarlo (2018) examined the role of economic sustainability in community-based tourism and concluded that tourists are more satisfied when they perceive their expenditures benefiting local residents. Additionally, Kim et al. (2017) explored the relationship between economic sustainability and tourist satisfaction in homestay settings and found that economic benefits for host communities enhance overall visitor experiences.

Moreover, the findings highlight the relevance of the triple-bottom-line theory, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social factors in sustainable development. By corroborating the positive associations between sustainability dimensions and tourist satisfaction, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism management. This study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of sustainable homestay tourism in the Kaski district, emphasizing the significance of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability in shaping tourist satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of implementing holistic approaches to tourism management that prioritize sustainability across multiple dimensions.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study, conducted in the Annapurna Rural Municipality of Kaski district, offer valuable insights into sustainable homestay tourism. Understanding tourists' motivations reveals a spectrum of objectives, from leisure to cultural immersion, underscoring the multifaceted nature of their experiences. Community involvement emerges as crucial for sustaining tourism activities, despite challenges faced by

hosts, including social and environmental constraints. Significantly, economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability exhibit significant associations with tourist satisfaction, supporting formulated hypotheses. Economic sustainability demonstrates the largest effect size, followed by environmental sustainability, while socio-cultural sustainability exhibits a relatively smaller effect. These findings corroborate previous research emphasizing the importance of sustainability dimensions in enhancing tourist satisfaction. Specifically, socio-cultural sustainability positively influences tourist satisfaction by preserving local culture and promoting community engagement. Similarly, environmental sustainability, through eco-friendly initiatives, contributes to tourists' overall experience. Moreover, economic sustainability, by supporting local economies, enhances visitor experiences in homestay settings.

The study demonstrates the relevance of the triple-bottom-line theory, emphasizing the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social factors in sustainable tourism development. By advocating for holistic approaches to tourism management, prioritizing sustainability across multiple dimensions, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism. In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into sustainable homestay tourism in the Kaski district, highlighting the importance of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability in shaping tourist satisfaction. These findings highlight the significance of implementing comprehensive strategies to promote sustainability in tourism destinations.

Area for Further Study

The current research work also has several limitations and constraints, like any other survey-based report. Firstly, the study is based on international and national tourists who visit the homestay of Annapurna Rural Municipality, Kaski district. Hence the finding of this study cannot be generalized to other tourist and their satisfaction due to the differences in cultural, economic, and environmental factors. Secondly, the study relied on cross-sectional data for analysis, which may have been influenced by self-report bias from tourist and their tourist. Finally, time constraints, researcher bias, and lack of consensus on the definition and criteria for sustainable homestay tourism are additional limitations that should be considered. There's the potential to add novel factors and perspectives to the existing framework for reviewing sustainability in homestay operations. To have a deeper knowledge of sustainability in homestay, one may explore factors such as guest happiness, cultural heritage preservation, and community involvement. Likewise examining the effects of technology integration—for example, the implementation of eco-friendly practices or online booking systems—may provide information about the ways in which innovation impacts sustainable practices in homestay operators. Comparative research across other Kaski district, may highlight regional differences in sustainability issues and provide specific solutions for promoting grassroots sustainable tourism development. Researchers can improve our understanding of sustainability in homestay operations and help to ensure the implementation of successful methods that promote social, environmental, and economic well-being by expanding the scope of their inquiry to include these many variables and opinions.

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