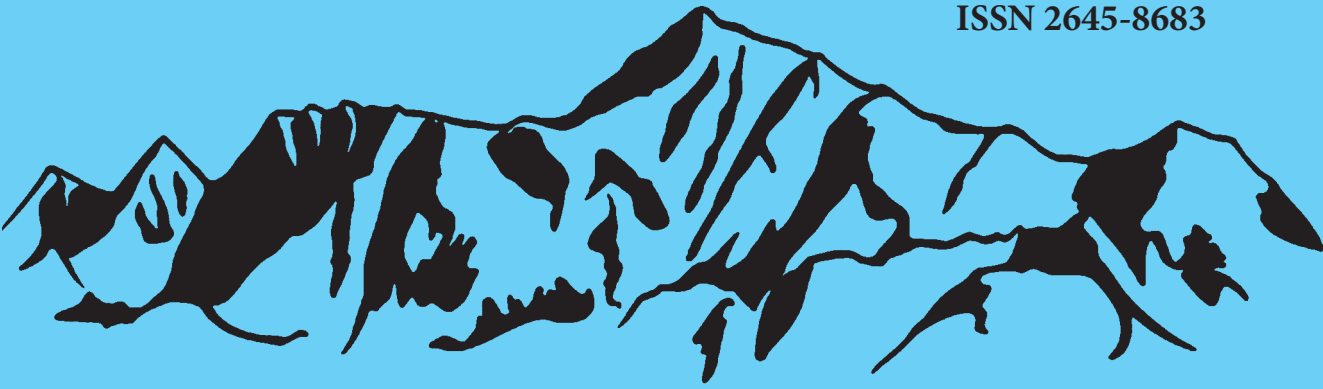


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Editor-in-Chief
Prof. Ramesh Raj Kunwar



Janapriya Multiple Campus (JMC)
(Affiliated to Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal)

Aims and scope

Journal of Tourism & Adventure (JTA) is an annual peer-reviewed journal launched by the Tribhuvan University, Janapriya Multiple Campus, Pokhara, Nepal in 2018. Journal is one of the most important sources of producing and disseminating the knowledge of concerned subject. This is an identity marker of academia and academics. It aims to provide an international knowledge based platform for innovative studies that make a significant contribution to the understanding tourism, hospitality, and event studies/management including risk recreational specialization (adventure). This journal welcomes original, academic and applied research from multi- and interdisciplinary perspectives.

The journal will be an impetus for carrying recent theoretical, conceptual, methodological and new paradigms of tourism studies. Thus, it will be very important for the students, researchers, journalists, policy makers, planners, entrepreneurs and other general readers. It is high time to make this effort for tourism innovation and development particularly in Nepal. It is believed that this knowledge based platform will make the industry and the institutions stronger.

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The journal welcomes the following topics: tourism, mountain tourism and mountaineering tourism, risk management, safety and security, tourism and natural disaster, accident, injuries, medicine and rescue, cultural heritage tourism, festival tourism, pilgrimage tourism, rural tourism, village tourism, urban tourism, geotourism, paper on extreme adventure tourism activities, ecotourism, environmental tourism, hospitality, event tourism, voluntourism, sustainable tourism, wildlife tourism, dark tourism, nostalgia tourism, tourism planning, destination development, tourism marketing, human resource management, adventure tourism education, tourism and research methodology, guiding profession, tourism, conflict and peace and remaining other areas of sea, air and land based adventure tourism research.

We welcome submissions of research paper on annual bases by the end of June for 2nd issue. In one issue, there will be minimum five research articles excluding research notes and book reviews, etc. Every year the journal will be published by the end of the following year. The article will be under the author(s)' copyright. Whoever is willing to contribute he/she/they should not pay any currency for publishing their papers in this journal. The published articles will go to online-www.nepjol.info.

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Journal of Tourism & Adventure accepts the following types of article: original research articles, case studies, research notes, conference reports, and book reviews.

Structure

The articles and research notes should be compiled in the following order: title page; author's introduction; abstract; keywords (maximum five); main text introduction, review of literature, research methodology, findings, discussion; acknowledgments; declaration of interest statement; references; table(s) with caption(s) (on individual pages) and figure(s).

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**Relationship Between Quality of Life and Quality of
Work life in a Small Island Destination: Millennial
Employees' Perspective**

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Abstract

The topic of Quality of Life (QoL) has received increased research attention in recent research years as tourism development should contribute to the wellbeing of destination communities and those who are employed by the tourism industry. The consideration of younger employees, that is the millennial work force is important globally but also for small island developing states with challenges of small population size and migration of the younger generation seeking better job opportunities abroad. To be prepared for the future, the tourism sector needs to understand and adapt to this younger workforce and investigate how they perceive their Quality of Work Life (QWL) and its impacts on their well-being. Examining how tourism contributes to QoL is important to better plan for tourism so as to support the prosperity of the population, industry and destination. Nevertheless, limited research has investigated QWL and QoL. The objectives of this study are to firstly examine the impact of QWL and QoL; secondly, to investigate the relationship between QWL and support for future tourism development and thirdly to examine the relationship between QoL and support for future

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tourism development. A mixed method approach with unstructured interviews and 400 questionnaires were used to investigate the issue. This study found that a relationship exists between QWL, QoL and support for tourism amongst millennials, and that age of the employees influenced this correlation.

Introduction

Research on tourism and quality of life (QoL) has received increasing attention in recent years (Woo et al., 2016) as the tourism industry impacts on the lives of the local population over time (Uysal et al., 2016). Moreover, in the context of small warm water island destinations with limited resources, tourism has long been recognised as a popular development option and acknowledged as a key strategy for economic advancement by governments to stimulate local economies. Nonetheless, debate still exists concerning the developmental outcomes of the tourism industry for local communities. Although tourism is essentially an economic activity, it has the potential to contribute to not only a destination's economy but to the wider personal and social well-being of residents particularly in less-developed nations including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016), resulting in a higher QoL. However, the benefits of tourism to the lives of the residents are still questionable and despite the attention on tourism as an attractive development option, the extent to which it contributes to QoL of residents requires further examination. Investigating how tourism contributes to QoL is important to better plan for tourism so as to support the prosperity of the population, industry and destination.

The motivation for tourism development in developing countries and SIDS has often been strongly connected to its potential to create employment for locals (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016). However, little is known on the extent to which it contributes to meaningful employment which uplifts the lives of the locals. Sirgy et al. (2008) suggest that QWL can enhance QoL. QWL has been regarded as a significant construct in the tourism industry (Lee et al., 2015; Sirgy et al., 2001) but its value has mostly been discussed from the organisational perspective. For example, QWL has been correlated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, labour turnover and retaining competent employees (Wahlberg, 2017; Lee et al., 2015; Bednarska, 2013; Deery & Jago, 2009). However, negligible studies have examined the relationship between QWL and QoL of the locals in the tourism industry.

Moreover, labour force demographics worldwide are changing and this has resulted in the Millennial generation entering the workforce, making up a significant proportion of those working in the tourism and hospitality industry in the world (Heo et al., 2018). Millennials consists of 62% hospitality industry workers globally (Ruiz & Davis, 2017), however employee turnover is a major source of concern (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2013). Commentators suggest that this generation will soon

dominate the workplace and by 2025, three out of every four workers globally will be millennials (Singapore Tourism Board, 2014). It is also argued that millennials are characterised as having different perceptions towards their careers, heightened expectations and the desire for a better lifestyle (Singapore Tourism Board, 2014). Retaining millennial employees in the tourism industry has become a challenge for managers since millennials demonstrate different characteristics as compared to older generations of employees (Johnson & Ng, 2015). Moreover, the limited studies carried out in the specific context of Mauritius suggest that young people are turning away from employment in the tourism industry and seeking work on cruise ships (Pearce & Naidoo, 2016) and this trend has resulted in hotels losing their qualified work force with the outcome of high employee turnover.

Studies have shown that millennial hospitality employees tend to quickly leave the industry because of extensive working hours, negative work–life balance, and unattractive compensation (Brown et al., 2015; Bosselman, 2015). Besides, high labour turnover from the millennial-generation employees creates operational instability (Brown et al., 2015) and may affect the reputation of the organisation and destination appeal specially for SIDS like Mauritius which has been acknowledged by repeat customers for the hospitality of its older generation employees. Local industry knowledge reveals that the destination has been praised by tourists for the warm hospitality of the loyal employees over the years resulting in repeat international customers over decades. However, the millennials exhibit different characteristics than the older generation employees and are more likely to change jobs resulting in lack of continuity in a tourism organisation. Since tourism is a major economic activity in SIDS, it is important to understand how the millennials perceived their QWL since they have the potential to provide the know-how and deliver service quality which will shape the industry in coming decades. Therefore, how this cohort perceives QWL has implications for the future of tourism development in the destination.

Another feature of tourism and hospitality is that there is very little academic literature on how the millennial employees perceive their QoL as a result of working in the tourism industry and if they are likely to support the tourism industry in the future. Research in this area is particularly important for SIDS which rely on the tourism industry for economic, personal and social advancement of their populations over time. Since little attention has been paid specifically to the implications of tourism development to the QWL of the millennial workforce, consequently, the objectives of this paper are to: (1) examine the relationship between the demographic variables of the millennials, QWL, QoL dimensions and support for tourism, (2) assess the relationship between QWL and QoL for the millennials employed in the tourism industry (3) identify if there is a relationship between QOL and future support for tourism development amongst the millennial workforce (4) determine if there is a

correlation between QWL and support for tourism development. The next section discusses the literature review.

Literature Review

Millennial Employees

Millennials are perceived as a worthwhile segment of the workforce because they are the emerging employees and represent the future of the tourism talent pool (Lucas et al., 2016). Although, there is no consensus on their precise birth years, this generation consists of those who were born between 1980 and early 2000 (Smith & Nichols, 2015). The millennials are also referred to as “Generation Y, Gen Yers, Gen Y, Nexters, Generation www, Echo Boomers, and the Internet Generation” (Heo et al., 2018: 1). A generation cohort can be described as a segment of people “that shares birth years, age, location and important life events at critical developmental stages, divided by 5 to 7 years in the first wave, core group and last wave” (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66). As a result, each generation embodies similar events that act as a foundation for their perspectives, which has an influence on how they interpret the world (Heo et al., 2018).

Millennials tend to have different expectations about work (Fenich, et al., 2014) and have values and opinions that differ from older generations (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015). Smith and Nichols (2015) suggest that the behaviour of millennials vary in terms of communication styles, attitude towards work, motivation and work habits. This group of youngsters are more demanding and expressive in their opinions, engage in multitasking (Solnet & Hood, 2008) and prefer to complete tasks in their own way and at their own pace (Heo et al., 2018). However, if the work conditions are not according to the expectations of this young segment, job dissatisfaction occurs and often results in intention to leave the workplace as compared to previous generations of employees (Lu & Gursoy, 2016) since millennials do not live to work. Ruiz and Davis (2017) suggest that the factor of fun is important for the millennial generation employees as they tend to quit an organisation if the work is not interesting or when they lack a supportive superior (Guchait et al., 2015).

QWL

QWL is an essential concept in the management of tourism industry employees. It deals with employees' well-being in the work place and is essential in how employees view the quality of their jobs in everyday life (Weaver, 2009). Wan and Chan (2013) suggest that QWL is a subjective construct regarding how an individual perceives his/her work and the working environment such as development opportunities and pay (Sirgy et al., 2001). QWL, therefore, assesses the effect of work on employees and “related components including the tasks, physical work environment, social environment, administrative system, and work–life balance” (Che Rose et al., 2006).

Studies have also noted that the concept of QWL is related to positive experiences derived from the work environment conducive to personal fulfilment (Malpas, 2005).

Studies have also shown that QWL affects job satisfaction and non-work domains such as family, leisure, social, financial life and subjective well-being (Lee et al., 2015; Sirgy et al., 2001). The argument is that when employees perceive that their QWL is high, they will tend to experience satisfaction with their job and other life domains. Roan and Diamond's (2003) identified three main dimensions of QWL, namely flexibility in working hours, work-life balance, and career potential. Kandasamy and Ancheri (2009) showed that good team relationships, good customer interaction, and good physical working conditions are three important QWL dimensions for hospitality employees. Bernardska (2013) suggests that QWL consists of several dimensions including pay, work-life balance, job security, job content, health/safety, career prospects, leadership and social relations. Although QWL has been examined in the tourism industry, there is a paucity of research surrounding how the former impacts on the QoL of locals directly employed in the tourism industry.

QoL

QoL is an emerging field of study and the concept is often interchangeably used with the term "well-being" (Uysal et al., 2016). Moscardo (2009: 162) defines the concept of QoL as "concerned with understanding people's perceived satisfaction with the circumstances in which they live". Research in QoL takes two broad measurement perspectives namely by examining (1) objective indicators (i.e level of education) and (2) subjective indicators (satisfaction with various aspects of life (Schalock, 1996). Several studies have examined how tourism affects QoL by examining the ways in which several factors, for instance, personal, social and physical environment contribute or detract from the betterment of the lives of people (Moscardo, 2009). The literature also suggests that economic measures of wealth alone is not sufficient to capture QoL as there are several dimensions which affect QoL and high income alone derived from tourism may have little influence on QoL (Andereck & Jurowski, 2006).

As a result, scholars have proposed several factors to be included in the assessment of QoL. For instance, Moscardo (2009) suggests that QoL is commonly assessed using an aggregate of capitals such as financial, natural, built, social, cultural, human and political. The model of Kim et al. (2013) suggest four main factors, namely material, community, health and safety and emotional well-being. Guo et al (2014) found that leisure time, family and societal atmosphere were important measure of QoL. Liang and Hui (2016) identified personal well-being and family as important dimensions of QoL. Andereck & Nyaupane (2011), Naidoo & Shapley (2015) and Suntikul et

al., (2016) found that recreational amenities were another important factor of QoL amongst other variables. Yamada et al. (2011) used five life domains namely health, wealth, safety, community contentment and cultural tourism development to assess QoL. Woo et al. (2016) examined community life, material life, health and safety and emotional life domains of QoL. Research in QoL is relatively recent as previous studies measured tourism impacts as a result of tourism development instead of specifically measuring QoL domains. A recent study on QoL has shown that residents who are affiliated with the tourism industry are more likely to support tourism development (Woo et al., 2016).

Methodology

Measurement

The study adopted a mixed method approach where both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used. Interviews were conducted with 15 millennials employed in the tourism industry to understand the factors they considered important to their QoL. These factors were then used to develop a self-administered questionnaire to assess their QWL and QoL perceptions in addition a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and survey instruments developed by past studies. This paper focuses on the quantitative findings and it is not in the scope of this work to provide a detailed overview of the interview methods and results.

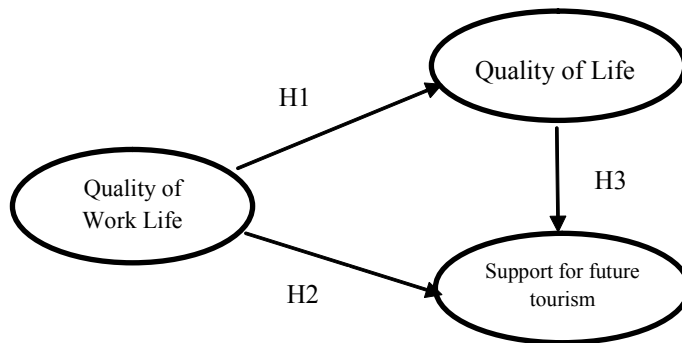
The first part of the questionnaire measured the respondents' perceptions of QWL in the tourism and 5 variables were adopted from the study of Bednarska (2013). The second part of the questionnaire measured four QoL factors: social well-being, material well-being, physical well-being, and emotional well-being and 24 items were adopted from past studies and interviews to capture the QoL factors. In addition, respondents were asked to rate their perceptions for support for future tourism development on 3 items. This study uses a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 (rating from strongly disagree to strongly agree) to measure the items of the three constructs. Finally, demographic information about age, gender, education, workplace and length of work was collected.

A convenience sample was used by distributing the surveys to local employees aged between 18 to 38 working in tourism and hospitality sector. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed and 341 (85.3%) questionnaires were retained for analysis. The relationships between the respondents' key demographic characteristics and their perception of QWL, the dimensions of QoL and support for future tourism development were investigated. A one-way ANOVA was employed to examine the differences of the study variables across other demographic variables. Significant ANOVA models were further undertaken using post-hoc testing (Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference statistic) to investigate specific differences among the

demographic variables and each of the three levels of the dependent variable. Figure 1 presents the constructs and the hypothesised relationships:

- H1: QWL has a positive and significant effect on QoL
- H2: QWL has a positive and significant effect on support for future tourism development
- H3: QoL has a positive and significant effect on support for future tourism development

Figure 1: Proposed Model



SPSS 20 and AMOS 21.0 were used to analyse the data. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, a measurement model was first estimated using confirmatory factor analysis. The high factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variances extracted (AVE) for each construct were used to confirm the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the instrument. The structural equation modelling was employed to test the hypotheses.

Results

Profile of the respondents

Table 1 presents the descriptive results of the respondents' demographic characteristics. There are more male respondents (56%) than female (44%). Respondents are mainly in the 18-25 years age group accounting for 46.3% of the sample, followed by the 32-38 years age group accounting for 27.6%. The leading workplace category is "hotel" (40.8%), followed by "airline company" (24.0%). Most of the respondents' length of work in the organisation were in the range of 1-3 years (35.5%), followed by less than one year (20.8%).

Table 1: Demographics of respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Gender	Female	150	44.0
	Male	197	56.0
Age	18-25	158	46.3
	26-31	89	26.1
	32-38	94	27.6
Workplace	Hotel	139	40.8
	Travel Agency	45	13.2
	Airline Company	82	24.0
	Tour Operator	32	9.4
	Recreational Company	43	12.6
Length of Work	< 1 year		
	1 – 3 years	71	20.8
	4 – 6 years	121	35.5
	7 – 9 years	62	18.2
	10 – 12 years	69	20.2
	13 - above	13	3.8
		5	1.5

Discussion

Demographic effects on QWL, QoL and Support for future tourism development

A one-way ANOVA was employed to examine the differences of QWL, the four dimensions of QoL and support for future tourism development across three demographic variables: gender, age and workplace. The tests utilised the summated variables of all model factors and estimated one-way ANOVA test using one of the three demographic factors as a factor determining the difference (Table 2). The results indicated non-significant results on all factors for gender and workplace, indicating that neither of these demographic variables impact on perceptions of QWL, QoL and support for future tourism development. Whereas for age, the one-way ANOVA model generated non-significant results on all factors except for physical well-being (PWB) ($F = 7.357, p < 0.001$) and Support for future tourism ($F = 5.043, p < 0.007$).

Table 2: ANOVA results for Gender, Age and Support for Future Tourism

ANOVA	Gender		Age		Workplace	
Factor	F-value	Sig.	F-value	Sig.	F-value	Sig.
QWL	1.364	0.244	1.152	0.317	0.804	0.523
SWB	3.146	0.077	0.293	0.746	1.063	0.375
MWB	0.250	0.617	0.585	0.558	2.38	0.052
PWB	0.504	0.478	7.357	0.001*	0.765	0.549
EWB	1.664	0.198	0.006	0.994	0.870	0.482
Support	0.724	0.396	5.043	0.007*	0.939	0.442

* $p < 0.01$

Tukey HSD tests were used to investigate specific differences in each age group and their strength on PWB and Support for future tourism development. The results showed that millennials in the 32-38 years' age group have significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher mean differences for PWB compared to respondents in the 18-25 and 26-31 years' age groups. These results indicate that millennials between the ages of 32 and 38 years perceive greater PWB than millennials aged 18-25 and 26-31 years. However, it further observed that millennials in the 18-25 years age group have significant influence on support for future tourism development as compared to millennials in the 26-31 and 32-38 years age group.

Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to confirm the structures of the four-factor QoL construct of this study. In order to ensure convergent validity, two items from MWB and one item from EWB were deleted, as they exhibited loadings of less than 0.4, thus increasing the average variance extracted (AVE) and enhancing composite reliability. After modification, the factor loadings of all remaining items of each construct were within the range of 0.611 and 0.882. Furthermore, the Cronbach's coefficients were above the suggested value of 0.60. As shown in Table 3, the composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.792 to 0.886, which were all above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010), indicating a good internal consistency reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.50 to 0.56. All of them were larger than or close to the suggested threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010) showing that all items captured sufficient variance in their underlying factors. The measurement model fit the data well as $\chi^2(58) = 179.1$ ($p = .000$), GFI = .925, NNFI = .968, CFI = .977, and RMSEA = .064.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and assessment of constructs' internal consistency reliability and convergent validity

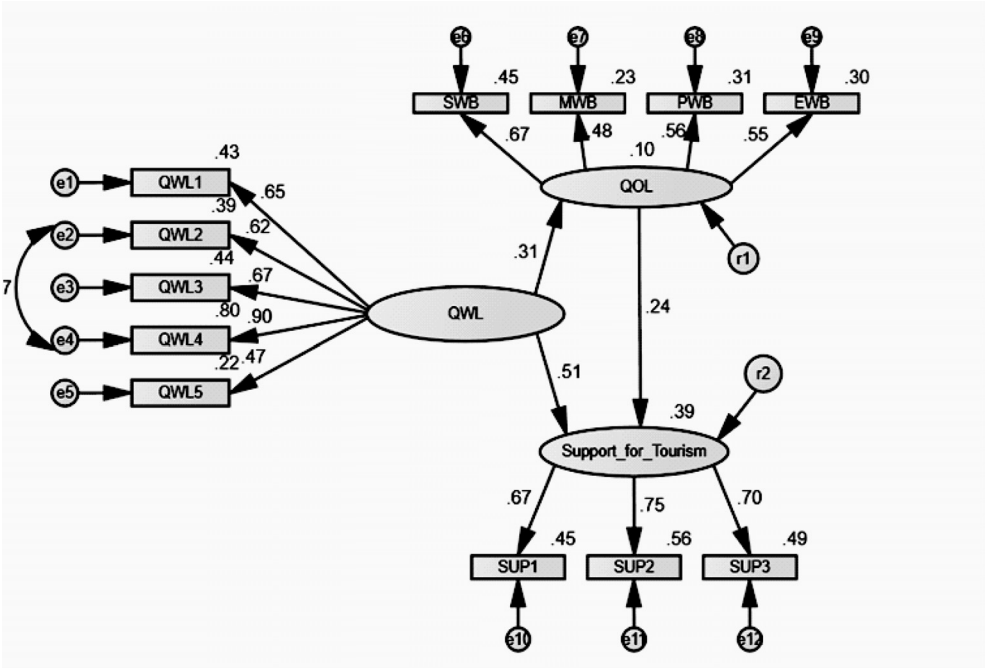
Constructs and Indicators	Mean (SD)	Loading	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
Social Well-Being (SWB)	3.52(0.78)		0.842	0.50	0.886
I have enough time for myself.	3.28(1.28)	0.62			
I feel comfortable in my community.	3.54(1.23)	0.71			
I like to spend my leisure time with my family.	3.61(1.19)	0.86			
I enjoy the company of others	3.54(1.20)	0.61			
I actively contribute to the lives of others.	3.46(1.24)	0.63			
I have a good status in the society.	3.57(1.26)	0.67			
I participate in leisure activities	3.53(1.23)	0.71			
People in my community respect me.	3.57(1.25)	0.78		0.51	0.829
Material Well-Being (MWB)	3.44(0.86)		0.720		
I possess more than others.	3.47(1.21)	0.64			
I am financially independent.	3.59(1.12)	0.79			
I am satisfied with the amount of income I generate.	3.51(1.19)	0.74			
I can afford expensive things.	3.29(1.28)	0.65			
I can satisfy my basic needs.	3.35(1.33)	0.68			
Physical Well-Being (PWB)	3.50(.75)		0.682	0.52	0.841

Constructs and Indicators	Mean (SD)	Loading	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
I am content with my health constitution.	3.45(1.22)	0.72			
I feel that I am totally fit.	3.45(1.08)	0.64			
I have healthy habits.	3.65(1.06)	0.88			
I am able to perform my daily living activities.	3.34(1.18)	0.65			
I am healthy.	3.59(1.17)	0.68			
Emotional Well-Being (EWB)	3.62 (.91)		0.667	0.56	0.792
I am satisfied with my life as a whole	3.58(1.13)	0.80			
I am living a fulfilled and meaningful life.	3.57(1.17)	0.77			
I am optimistic for the future.	3.72(1.06)	0.67			

Structural Model

Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses. The results of the structural model fit the data well: $\chi^2 (50) = 149.748$ ($p = .000$), $GFI = 0.927$, $NFI = 0.903$, $CFI = 0.902$, and $RMSEA = .078$. The standardized path coefficients for significant relationships are depicted in Figure 2. A significant and positive relationship between QWL and QoL was found ($\beta = .31$, $t = 4.323$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. The path coefficient between QWL and Support for future tourism was also positive ($\beta = .51$) and significant ($t = 6.982$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 proposed a significant positive relationship between QoL and Support for future tourism development. The path coefficient between QoL and Support for future tourism development was positive ($\beta = .24$) and significant ($t = 3.202$, $p < .01$), therefore Hypothesis 3 was supported. QWL explained 10% of the variance in QoL while QWL and QoL jointly explained 39% of the variance in Support for future tourism. Therefore, H1, H2 and H3 are all supported.

Figure 2: Structural Model Estimation



The ANOVA models for the demographic variables, gender and workplace produce non-significant results. The finding suggests that gender and workplace variables may not be effective bases of segmentation for examining the relationships among QWL, QoL and support for future tourism amongst the millennial employees. Concurrently, it was found that age may be useful in predicting QoL and support for future tourism. It appears that in general, younger employees support future tourism development, while older millennial employees perceive higher PWB. Hence, the more mature the millennials, that is the 32-38 years age group, the greater importance attached to physical well-being and adopting healthy lifestyle habits. The 18-25 years age group showed support for future tourism development indicating that the younger millennials are most favourable to tourism development as they are easily absorbed by the industry after high school or with their Hotel School or University degrees since the industry is highly labour intensive and requires a large front-line workforce.

This study also sought to understand the relationships among QWL, QoL and support for future tourism development for millennial employees in the tourism and hospitality industry. A strong positive relationship between millennials' QWL and support for future tourism development was found. Positive and significant relationships were also found for QWL and QoL and, QoL and support for future

tourism development respectively. Other studies such as the research of Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) have revealed that residents who feel that tourism affects their QoL from an economic perspective are more likely to support future tourism development in their community. The findings of Yu et al. (2018) also show that QoL was an important factor in predicting tourism support.

Conclusion

The tourism industry is one of the most important sectors in a small island state like Mauritius and thus its contribution to the wellbeing of employees is an important area of investigation. This study extends previous scholarly work on tourism development and the QoL of destination communities. It specifically examines the relationships among QWL, QoL, and support for tourism amongst employees. This approach helped the researchers to identify the most important QoL dimensions which are influenced by the QWL of the millennial employees. The major contribution of this study is therefore to advance knowledge by explaining if QWL influenced indicators of QoL and if they impact on support for future tourism development. This research contributes not only to exploring QoL but also investigating the relationships with QWL amongst the millennial employees who are the backbone and the future of the tourism industry and the experience economy.

Further studies on QWL and QoL could use a more comprehensive set of indicators for QWL and also extend the proposed framework by integrating the job satisfaction and employee retention of the tourism industry workforce. Moreover, studies could specifically examine ways to improve QWL for millennials as it has a direct relationship with QoL.

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Perspectives of Nepalese Youth on Ecotourism Practiced at Rara National Park, Western Nepal

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Abstract

Participatory conservation approach practiced in most of the protected areas of Nepal mandate the active role of people for conservation planning and implementation. Peoples' participation in conservation is largely regulated by the benefits they receive. Ecotourism, as it envisions the improved living standard of local people, could be one of the drivers for alluring local people towards biodiversity conservation. Thus, it is essential to assess ecotourism potential of a site for planning and implementing community engagement for biodiversity conservation. The potentiality of ecotourism depends upon three major factors i.e. visitors' satisfaction, willingness of local people to participate in ecotourism related activities, and enthusiasm of park authority. Studies on ecotourism potential in Nepal are limited in scope and time. Therefore, this study tends to recognize the perspective of youth towards ecotourism in Rara National Park, where visitors' numbers are growing of late. Scheduled interview was used to collect the perspectives of youth. Data were explored using descriptive statistics and association between the perceptions and visitors' general background were explored using Chi-Square test. In the

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study, length of stay was observed to be associated with educational background. As per the responses, ecotourism activities in the park were found to contribute in biodiversity conservation and betterment of livelihood of local people. Though, the number of tourists are increasing, they are not adequate yet with potential to increase further in near future. When optimum tourist visit the park area, ecotourism activities can create win-win situation to biodiversity and people.

Introduction

“Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”(UNWTO, 1994). Existing literatures relate the origin of tourism to antiquity when sporadic travels analogous to tourism were practiced which took a while to turn in to ‘The Modern Tourism’ and is proliferating since its emergence in the post war growth era in the 1940s (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Gyr, 2008). Such a growth can be attributed to strong and positive relation to economic growth of countries as per chosen degree of specialization of tourism (Braun, Lanza, & Pigliaru, 2007). Obtained economic growth is not stimulated by foreign exchange income alone but also with the employment opportunities created (Lee, Cheng, & Cheng, 2007). Tourism, with a projection of continued growth, currently is one of the fastest growing sectors across the globe (Wight, 1997). The similar trend can be observed as of late. The number of visitors increased by 3.9% globally in 2018 and contributed 10.4% to global GDP creating 319 million jobs (10% of total employment) (WTTC, 2019).

Endeavoring an explanation about the relationship between tourism and economic activity requires consideration of merits and demerits of tourism development (Sinclair, 1998). Tourism, like the other driving force of economic development, has potential positive and negative effects. The significance of tourism has been acknowledged by governments of different countries. Besides, it has been acknowledged in international forums as well. The Manila declaration on world Tourism of 1980 recognized its importance as “an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies, and on their international relations”.

Government of Nepal has also prioritized tourism sector. For the sake of enhancing tourism sector and encouraging locals in this field, development of the modern infrastructures has been focused by the Government of Nepal (Shakya et al., 2013). But despite the possibility of tourism on various sites across all the physiographic provinces, tourism activities are limited to few places like Kathmandu, Pokhara, Annapurna Conservation Area, Chitwan and Lumbini along with the climbing activities of snow-capped mountains. Though, Nepal is bestowed with features like

scenic beauty, rich biodiversity, snowcapped peaks, tangible and intangible cultural resources we are yet to capitalize those resources.

There are good prospects of tourism in Nepal which is encouraging to investors to grab the opportunity and gain good benefits (Bhote, 2018). Since Nepal has been granted with good varieties of factors required for tourism such as diverse landscape, biological resources and culture, it's being destined for visits and a good contribution to the Nepalese economy is being made (Gautam, 2008). Some of the available features fascinating tourists in Nepal have been natural and cultural heritages, mountain climbing, trekking, rafting, jungle safari, bird watching, mountain biking, mountain flight, paragliding, bungee jumping, rock climbing, etc.

The tourism potentiality can be converted into social and economic prosperity. In Nepal, significant relationship has been observed between earning from tourism and economic growth of the country (Gautam, 2011). The generation of job due to several tourism activities such as establishment of hotels, development of new economic activities like cycling, parking of vehicles, taking care of tourist's goods, tourist guide etc. help in the local economy and its development. Regarding adventure based tourism which is a major form of tourism includes more positive effects than adverse effects with congregating Nepal's national economy (Zurick, 1992). It is undeniable that in spite of its growing relevance and the proven contribution to GDP, jobs and spreads, tourism still lacks up to the level it could have been due to less political and economic recognition (UNWTO, 2010). Though tourism industry has been recognized for its remarkable economic and social benefits, providing jobs and increase in GDP, it has been regarded as the wide source of environmental problems, especially in developing countries like Nepal (Nyaupane & Thapa, 2006).

Ecotourism

Tourism industry enhances the economy of countries while strengthening their tourism industries strategically (Fayissa, Nsiah, & Tadasse, 2007). Tourism makes unknown known with the transverse and diverse communication media along with diffusion of information regarding the place to quench the thirst of tourists before and after travel which in other hand enhances the tourism (Isbășescu & Fîntîneru, 2013). Despite having such advantages, there have been already a consensus that poor and ill-conceived tourism activities exert adverse impacts on various aspects of environment. A general pattern has been like, 'more popular the place is, greater the adversities it faces' (Hillery, Nancarrow, Griffin, & Syme, 2001). Such situations may not always yield benefits from tourism after inclusion of cost incurred on treating negative consequences of the very activity and thus, requires another form of sustainable tourism.

Ecotourism is a nature based tourism which directly or indirectly promotes and supports sustainable economic development leading towards the development of local infrastructure and enhances the rural economy through the demand of essentials required for accommodation purpose (Nicula & Spânu, 2014). Out of many advantages those ecotourism has been providing, economic gains in terms of incomes and employment along with the conservation of nature are the major concern (Tisdell, 1996).

The International Ecotourism Society (1991) defines ecotourism as the responsible travel to the natural areas that conserve the natural environment and improve the living standard of the local people. Ecotourism is now defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”(TIES, 2015).

In 2002, Quebec Declaration suggested five distinct criteria to be used while defining ecotourism which are; nature based product, minimal impact management, environmental education, contribution to conservation, and contribution to community (Dowling & Fennell, 2009) and ecotourism is a component of the green economy as well (K.C., Rijal, & Sapkota, 2015). Ecotourism involves learning about several environmental aspects and preserving it with the active involvement of local people, which progressively optimize the benefits and minimize the problems (Boamah & Koeberl, 2007). Ecotourism is about conservation of resources, uplifting communities and sustainable development with minimal impacts on the physical, social, behavioral and psychological aspects with the recognition of rights and spiritual belief of indigenous people (Blamey, 2001).

Ecotourism potential is high in the case of Nepal but potentiality is not properly harnessed due to lack of proper policy and institutions to guide ecotourism activities (GoN/MoF, 2019). Ecotourism in Nepal, their role in sustainable development and impact of climate change on tourism are among a few pieces of works in regards that have been documented from Nepal (K.C., 2016; 2017). While ecotourism is being considered as the smartest tool for the conservation of the resources globally, it seems to be very appropriate in developing countries like Nepal as well since it allocates less amount of capital in the tourism sector (Tiwari, Nepali, Paudel, & Upadhaya, 2017).

Protected Area and Ecotourism

Protected areas are established with the motive of conserving the biodiversity of any region. They are often considered to be the cornerstone of conservation. But the conservation success in the protected areas are largely dependent on ability of park managers to invest in the conservation of Biodiversity. Park tourism supports the crucial component of conservation funding made to the park. Thus, it's crucial to consider about sufficiency of the visitors in the park (Eagles et al., 2006). Ecotourism

in protected areas is meaningful to establish mutual relationship between the park authority and local people (Xu, Lü, Chen, & Liu, 2009)

Poverty of people living in the vicinity of the park is one of the important drivers of environmental degradation in the protected areas (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008). Carefully planned ecotourism, besides making significant improvement in the living standard of people, also contributes to the conservation of biodiversity, which have been already evident in some protected areas of Nepal. Ecotourism activities have brought job opportunities and income to local people in Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal and have contributed to conservation of varied landscapes, culture and biodiversity (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008). Scaling up this success to other protected areas of Nepal can ease up the tension between local people and park authority arising either due to differential understanding about the resource use perspectives or due to human wildlife conflicts.

Modern history of conservation in Nepal was initiated with the establishment of Chitwan National Park in 1973. At the beginning the conservation was primarily guided by fine and fence approach. Local people whose livelihoods were historically dependent upon the natural resources were made deprived of those resources, creating the situation of tension between management authority and local people (Allendorf, 2007). This was later addressed in 1996 when the concept of buffer zone was introduced in Nepali conservation policy with the motive of reconciling conservation and development through enhanced participation of local people in conservation (Budhathoki, 2004). This shift in management and governance approach of Nepal's protected area system from a strict protectionism approach to a participatory management model over time, following the political turmoil where country's socio political systems have advanced to a more democratic system (Bhattarai et al., 2017).

The participatory approach involves people in management of resources in a sustainable manner meanwhile providing aid in different socioeconomic developmental activities for the communities. Assistance to communities for socioeconomic developmental activities is an important factor that motivates people in turn to be involved in management of resources (Lee, 2013). However, providing such a support to communities in a sustainable manner would be difficult unless there are sustainable ways to raise funding. In this context, ecotourism can be a fairly good solution for generating funding that will work as conservation finance. Furthermore, ecotourism supports in conservation through other activities like raising awareness, education and interpretation.

Despite the significance of ecotourism in Nepal, there are not enough researches that adequately address the perspectives of ecotourism. Policy documents of Nepal

also have failed to understand the difference of other nature based tourism from ecotourism (Aryal, Ghimire, & Niraula, 2019). Low priority by the government means, problems related to ecotourism are rarely addressed by concerned government authority. Ecotourism entrepreneurs have faced many tourism related problems during the operation (KC, Rijal & Sapkota, 2015) which have significant impact to the tourists as well. Similarly, awareness regarding environmental practices and sustaining experiences in ecotourism accommodation may lead to visualize positive environmental attitudes, thus increasing their interest in further ecotourism experiences (Won & Gianna 2005). Therefore this study examines potentiality of ecotourism at Rara National Park based on perception of youth towards ecotourism and associated attributes of Rara National Park by exploring the physical, social and economic fronts of the ecotourism activities at Rara National Park.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

This study was conducted in the Rara National Park (Figure 1). Rara National Park, 81° 59'54" to 82° 8'27" E, 29° 26'28" to 29° 33'11"N, with elevations ranging from 2754 to 4097 m, was established on 1976 and its buffer zone was declared in 2006. The total area of the park is 106 Sq. Km and buffer zone covers the area of 198 Sq. Km. Major portion of the park lies in Mugu district while a fraction of area lies in Jumla district. Rara Lake, which is the largest and deepest lake of Nepal is the major attraction of the park. The lake extend about 5 Km in length, 3 Km in breadth and is 167 m deep and the area is 10.65 Sq. Km. The Lake was listed as a Ramsar site in 2006.

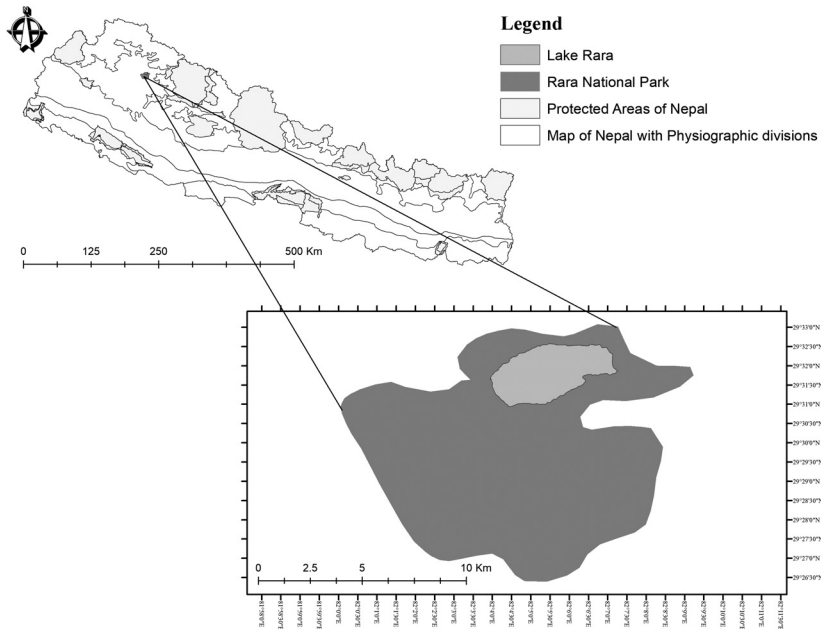
The climate of Rara National Park has Alpine climate and experiences very cold winters during the months of December to March. Temperature falls below zero degree Celsius mostly and accompanying heavy snowfall causes blocking of the high passes. High passes become accessible only after the temperature rises up from the months of April to June till the monsoon enters from June to August. The months of September and October with excellent weather conditions provide ideal conditions for the park visit.

The distribution of the vegetation in the Rara National Park varies on response to the change in elevation. The major forest type found in the locality are upper temperate blue pine forest, Fir forest, Birch-Rhododendron forest, and Moist Alpine scrubs. The area around the lake is dominated by Blue Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*) up to 3200 m. Other tree species include Rhododendron (*Rhododendron arboreum*), Black Juniper (*Juniperus indica*), west Himalayan Spruce (*Picea smithiana*), Oak (*Quercus semecarpifolia*), and Himalayan Cypress (*Cupressus torulosa*). A mixed forest of pine, spruce, and fir occurs from 3200 to 3550 m. At about 3350 m, the forest changes to a

coniferous-broadleaf forest of fir, oak, and birch. Other deciduous tree species include Indian Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus indica*), Walnut (*Juglans regia*), and Himalayan Poplar (*Populus ciliata*).

The park is home to 51 species of mammals. Some of the mammals found in the park are Himalayan Black Bear, Himalayan Tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*). Altogether 272 species of birds have been reported from the park area including the national bird of Nepal i.e. Danphe (*Lophophorus impejanus*). Rara Lake and the coniferous forest surrounding the lake serves as a habitat for different migratory birds. The Lake is home to three endemic species of fishes and one endemic frog species has been reported from the park area.

Figure 1: Map of Study Area showing Rara National Park and Rara Lake



Data Collection

Google forms were used to collect responses of the visitors. For the purpose of collection, schedule was prepared in the google forms. The schedule was divided into five sections. In first section, questions related to the general background of the visitors including their gender, age group, occupation, highest educational degree received, educational background, occupation, temporary address and permanent address were placed. Besides, 'information about the date of visit', 'length of stay at Rara National

Park' and 'source of information about the visit to the national park' were collected in the same section. In second section, questions related to the major attraction of the park were listed. Respondents were requested to rate geological attraction, cultural attraction, floral attraction, faunal attraction, recreation and amusement, uniqueness and wilderness in five point Likert scale with rating "1" assigned for poor and "5" assigned to exceptional. In same sections, respondents were asked to provide details of the major attraction and other places in the vicinity of the park to incorporate within the tourism circuit. In the third section, perception of the respondents about the facilities offered to the visitors at the park were collected. Likert scale was used in this section as well to rate the quality of the food, accommodation facility, water and sanitation status, ease for communication, level of security, medical facility and transportation facility to reach to Rara National Park. In the fourth section visitors were requested to provide perception on the impact of ecotourism activities on social and biological environment. Fifth and final section was designed to collect the response of the visitors about the impact of tourism activities within Rara National Park. Likert Scale was used over here as well. The visitors were requested to provide responses on the impact of tourism activities in physical, social and economic environments by assigning value "1" to indicate strongly negative impact and "5" to indicate strongly positive impact.

List of the tourists who have been to Rara National Park was prepared through various means including social media. We were able to list out 105 respondents with the help of social media and other people in our circle. Each of them were invited to participate in the survey by sending them a link to the questions. Respondents were asked to log-in with their email account to avoid duplicate responses. At the interval of one month, after sending invitation, they were reminded about the survey. If a person ignores even after two reminders, s/he was neglected.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to explore the nature of data. The association between the characteristics of the respondents (Gender, Age Group, Educational Background, Highest educational degree received, occupation, permanent address and temporary address) with their perception about the major attraction within the Rara National park, the facilities offered to them and impact on the different environments were explored using Chi-Square test at 95% confidence interval. All the analysis were performed using JASP software (JASP Team, 2019).

Results

General characteristics of respondents

In the online survey, of 105 respondents invited to participate, 85 respondents provided their response. Majority of the respondents were male (82.4%). The

respondents have at least completed higher school level (10+2) with majority of them either completing masters (65.9%) or bachelor level (31.8%). Most of the respondents those participated in the survey were the youth from 26-30 years followed by 21-25 age group (Table 1) dominated by the people involved private job and students (Table 2).

Table 1: Details of the age group of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
16-20	1	1.2
21-25	23	27.1
26-30	44	51.8
31-35	14	16.5
35-40	2	2.4
40+	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

Table 2: Occupational background of the respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Academic	2	2.4
Freelancer	13	15.3
Government job	12	14.1
Private Job	32	37.6
Students	24	28.2
Other	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0

Respondents from all seven province of Nepal were found to be participating in the online survey. Of these respondents, majority of the respondents were from province 3 followed by province 5. Almost 80% of the respondents were found to be living temporarily at province 3 (Table 3).

Table 3: Permanent and temporary address of the respondents

Province	Permanent Address		Temporary Address	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gandaki Province	10	11.8	4	4.7
Karnali Province	8	9.4	2	2.4
Province 1	10	11.8	2	2.4
Province 2	1	1.2	2	2.4
Province 3	33	38.8	67	78.8
Province 5	16	18.8	6	7.1
Sudurpaschim Province	7	8.2	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0	85	100.0

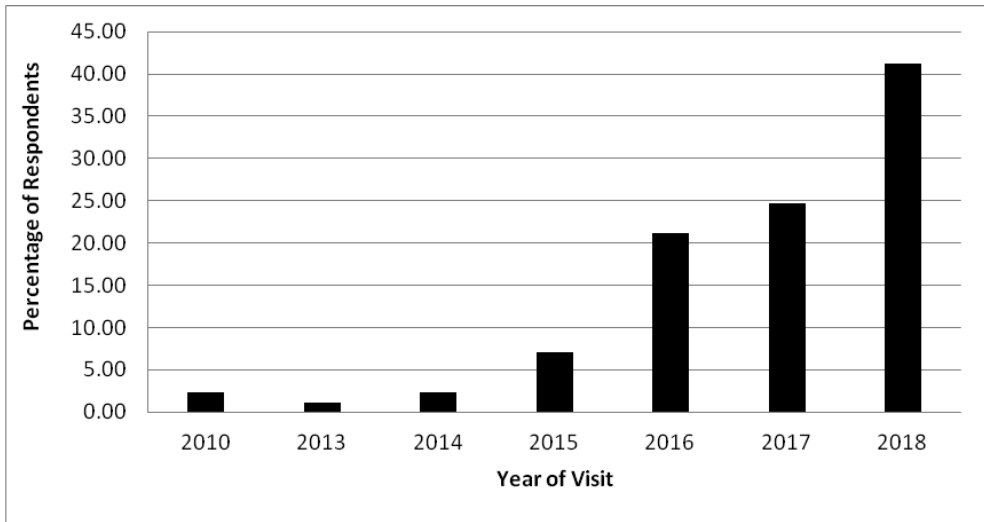
Information about the visit

Newspaper and information from friends were found to be the two important inspirations for the respondents to visit to Rara National Park (Table 4).

Table 4: Major source of inspiration that motivate respondents to visit to Rara National Park

What inspire visit to Rara	Frequency	Percent
Newspaper	33	38.8
Friends	24	28.2
Social Media	10	11.8
Book	4	4.7
Other	14	16.5
Total	85	100

Most of the respondents who participated in the survey had visited Rara National Park on the year from 2016-2018 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Details of the respondents' year of visit to Rara National Park

There was an observed variability in the length of stay of the respondents at Rara National Park (Table 5). Of the total respondents (N=85), 47.1% were found to be spending 2-6 days in and around the park while 43.5% of the respondents were found to spend only overnight. Only 9.4% of the respondents had spent more than a week in the area. The length of the stay was independent of gender ($\chi^2 = 0.188$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$), Age ($\chi^2 = 6.868$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$), the highest educational degree received ($\chi^2 = 3.550$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$), and occupation of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 11.01$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$). The length of stay was associated with the educational background of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 6.096$, N= 85, $p < 0.05$).

Table 5: Relation between Educational background and Length of stay

Educational Background	Length of stay			
	1 week or more	2-6 days	Over night	
Natural Science	4	23	11	38
Other	4	17	26	47
Total	8	40	37	85

Major attractions of Park

Majority of the respondents have evaluated the attractions within the Rara national park towards the high end (Table 6). Majority of the respondents have rated the uniqueness and geological attraction within the park in the top rank.

Table 6: Perception of tourists about the attraction of Rara National Park

Attraction	Response (N=85)				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Exceptional
Geological Attraction	4.7%	1.2%	5.9%	43.5%	44.7%
Cultural Attraction	5.9%	9.4%	29.4%	36.5%	18.8%
Floral Diversity Observable	1.2%	2.4%	20.0%	47.1%	29.4%
Faunal Diversity Observable	2.4%	10.6%	35.3%	32.9%	18.8%
Recreational Facility	7.1%	10.6%	31.8%	25.9%	24.7%
Uniqueness	0.0%	1.2%	14.1%	30.6%	54.1%
Wilderness	3.5%	3.5%	23.5%	41.2%	28.2%

The response of the respondents about the cultural, biological (flora and fauna) and recreational attraction along with the wilderness within the park were observed to be independent of all the variables explored (i.e. gender, age group, highest educational degree, educational background, occupation and both temporary and permanent address). While the response about the uniqueness of the park is dependent on the permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 30.53$, $df = 18$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$).

Respondents were asked to enlist the major attraction within the parks. Of the total respondents (N=85) Rara Lake was mentioned by 92.9% of the respondents and 72.9% have mentioned landscape within the Rara National Park as major attraction. Besides, the distinct fauna (28.7), distinct flora (29.9%) and distinct culture (18.4%) were also identified as the major attraction of the park. Sinja Valley of Jumla district, Murma Top within the Rara National Park, Chuchemara Peak, Majkatta Village, Gamgadhi and Talcha Airport are some of the nearby places recommended by the visitors to be included in tourism circuit.

Perception of Respondents about the facility

Majority of the respondents rated the quality of the food, accommodation and water and sanitation to be good while communication, medical facility and transportation to be fair. They have rated the security facility to be excellent at Rara National Park (Table 7).

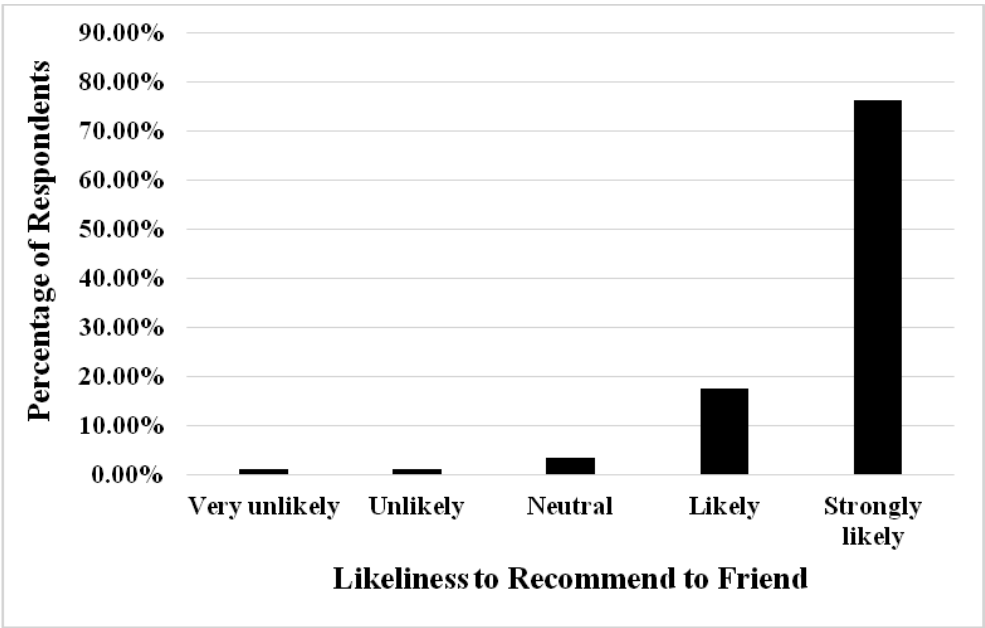
Table 7: Perception of respondents about the quality of service offered at Rara National Park

Facility	Response				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Exceptional
Food	10.6%	27.1%	35.3%	20.0%	7.1%
Accommodation	9.4%	28.2%	35.3%	18.8%	8.2%
Water and Sanitation	4.7%	30.6%	35.3%	22.4%	7.1%
Communication	14.1%	30.6%	29.4%	21.2%	4.7%
Security	4.7%	16.5%	27.1%	34.1%	17.6%
Medical	27.1%	38.8%	24.7%	5.9%	3.5%
Transportation	14.1%	38.8%	30.6%	12.9%	3.5%

The perception of respondents about the accommodation was significantly associated with educational background ($\chi^2 = 8.68$, $df = 4$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) while the perception about communication facility was found to be significantly associated with the highest educational degree received ($\chi^2 = 18.50$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$). Perception about the Medical facility ($\chi^2 = 30.25$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) and Transportation ($\chi^2 = 18.20$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) were also significantly associated with highest education level completed. Perception about Security within the park was significantly associated with highest education level completed ($\chi^2 = 20.62$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) and permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 40.79$, $df = 24$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$).

Majority of the respondents (87.5%) expressed the Rara National park to be as per their imagination before their visit to Rara and they were strongly likely to recommend their friends and others to visit to Rara National Park (Figure 3).

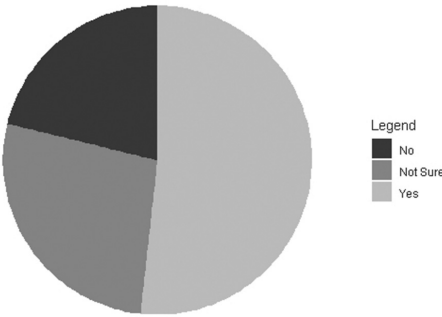
Figure 3: Likeliness of the respondents to recommend their friends to visit to Rara Natioanl Park



Ecotourism and Local People

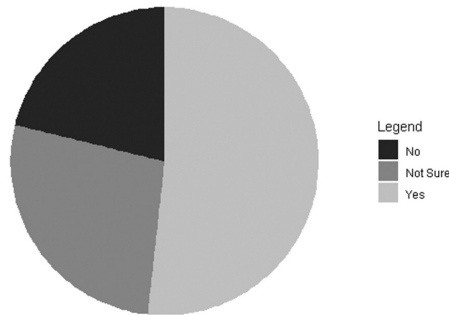
Of the total respondents, 38.8% found the local people to have moderate willingness to be involved in ecotourism activities while 35.5% found local people to have high willingness. The fractions of respondents who found such willingness of local people to be very low, low and very high were found to be 1.2%, 12.9% and 11.8% respectively. Majority of the respondents felt that local people are already participating (Figure 4) and getting benefit (Figure 5) from tourism related activities.

Figure 4: Response about the participation of local people in tourism



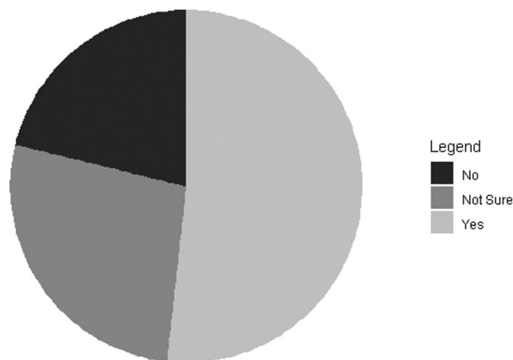
More than half of the respondents accepted that local people are getting benefits from ecotourism activities in Rara National Park and less than quarter disagreed with this fact (Figure 5). The perception about the benefit received by local people was significantly associated with the educational background of the respondents ($\chi^2=6.62$, $df=2$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

Figure 5: Perception about the local people being benefited from tourism activities in Rara National Park



Majority of the respondents have acknowledged that the tourism related activities at Rara National Park (Figure 6) are helping in uplifting status of livelihoods of local people. The perception about the improvement in the livelihood of local people were associated with the educational background ($\chi^2=8.93$, $df=2$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

Figure 6: Perception of the respondents about the change in livelihood of local people due to Ecotourism in Rara National Park

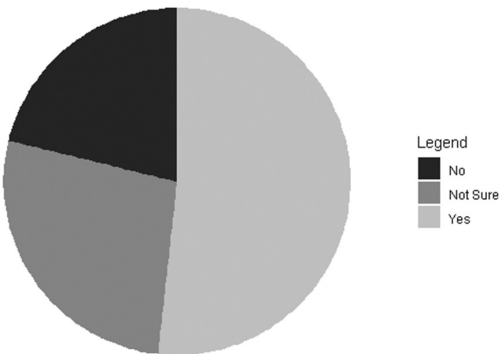


Ecotourism and Biodiversity

Majority of the respondents respond that the ecotourism activities have positive impacts on Conservation of Biodiversity at Rara National Park (Figure 7). The

response about the ecotourism-biodiversity conservation relation were not associated with any of the factors explored (Gender, Age, Educational Background, Highest Educational Degree Completed, Occupation and Temporary and Permanent Address of the respondents).

Figure 7: Perception of respondents about about the positive impact of ecotourism in Biodiversity



Impact of Tourism

Highest proportion of the respondents were neutral about the impact of tourism activities at Rara National Park and its cultural, social and biological environments (Table 8).

Table 8: Perception of respondents about the impact of tourism in different sector

Dimension	Rating (% of Respondents)				
	Highly Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Highly Positive
Impact on Culture	2.4	17.6	41.2	23.5	15.3
Social Impact	0	10.6	50.6	27.1	11.8
Impact on Flora	3.5	18.8	45.9	27.1	4.7
Impact on Fauna	4.7	23.5	43.5	22.4	5.9

The perception about the impact on social environment significantly differed according to their educational background ($\chi^2= 15.05$, $df = 4$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$), highest educational degree ($\chi^2= 16.49$, $df = 8$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$) and permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2= 36.93$, $df = 24$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$). Perception of the respondents about the impact of tourism in social environment were found to be significantly associated with the age group of the respondents ($\chi^2= 27.05$, $df = 15$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$), educational background ($\chi^2= 8.95$, $df = 3$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$) and the highest

educational degree received by the respondents ($\chi^2=20.87$, $df=6$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$). The perception about the impact of tourism on flora were significantly associated with the highest educational degree received ($\chi^2=44.00$, $df=8$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$). The highest educational degree received by the respondents was also associated significantly with the perception about impact on fauna ($\chi^2=35.62$, $df=8$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

The response about the solid waste management at Rara National Park varied. Of the total respondents ($N=85$), 16.5% of them found the solid waste management to be strongly discouraging, 29.4 % of the respondents found SWM to be discouraging, 34.1 % of the respondents expressed neutral opinion while 14.1% and 5.9% of the respondents found the waste management issues to be encouraging and highly encouraging respectively. The perception of the respondent was significantly associated with the permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2=39.61$, $df=24$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

Discussion

Attraction within the Park

Visitors are tempted to visit a protected area if they have some appealing features in terms of scenic beauty, cultural features or biological diversity (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996). In the case of Rara National park, there are several features to attract visitors to the park. The major attraction within the national park is the Rara Lake (also known as Mahendra Lake). This lake with an area of 10.5 Square Kilometer is the largest lake of Nepal and with 167-meter depth (Yagi et al., 2009) is the deepest lake in Nepal. Besides, being the deepest and largest Lake of Nepal, the scenic beauty amplified by the landscape surrounding the lake is crucial in attracting the visitors to the area. As the park is home to 272 species of the birds (DNPWC, 2018), birdwatching activities are one of the potential activities to fascinate tourists in the area. The beautiful landscape with a pleasant climate means the park is ideal to the trekkers and other nature lovers. Circular trail around the park for walking and cycling additional recreational opportunity offered by park. Sinja Valley, which is considered to be the place of origin of Nepali language (Owen-Smith, 2008) and different temples and shrines within the parks and the buffer zone are other factors for engaging the visitors.

The beauty of Rara Lake and surrounding landscape can be observed from the Murma top (3600m) and Chuhemara Peak (4039m) (GoN/NPC/CBS, 2014) as Mugu and Jumla districts are rich with Nepali folk songs, Buddhist culture and traditional attires. Majority of the respondents have given a high rating to the geological, cultural and biological features along with the uniqueness and wilderness of the park. Presence of some fauna species such as Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) (Sharma, Swenson, & Belant, 2014) along with Himalayan Monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*) make the area attractive on faunal perspectives. The moderate rating has been assigned to the floral attraction. This might be because the variation in floral blossom

and season of visitation. The area has floral attractiveness in pre-monsoon and post-monsoon (June to September) while the majority of Nepalese youth visit to the place in Autumn (Vacation of Dashain-Tihar) or early April (Baisakh-of Nepali Calendar). As the season of the visit was not collected, an association of season with the response about flora were not evaluated.

Tourism Facilities

Availability of the receptive factors such as facilities for food, accommodation, nutrition, entertainment and recreation are basic prerequisites for development of ecotourism in a destination (Bulatović, 2017). Respondents were found to be giving average rating to most of the facilities and the perception about those facilities were primarily determined by their level of education. This might be due to the fact that level of thinking are expected to be dependent on the level of education they receive. Respondents had given satisfactory rating to the food. Improvement in the sector can be made by promoting local foods, as eco-tourists usually seem fond of these items (Alias, Aziz, Karim, & Isa, 2016). Besides, park managers should initiate programs to aware about the quality of food and train the locals to prepare hygienic food from local resources (Nepal, 2002). Similar response have been received for sanitation and water facilities as well.

Accommodation in the ecologically and traditionally designed architectural structure with minimal impact to the environment are ideal for alluring eco-tourist to the destination (Bulatović, 2017). In the case of Rara National Park, majority of the respondents had rated accommodation facility to be good. Still there are rooms for improvement as more than one third of the respondents had rated the accommodation to be either poor or fair one. As evident elsewhere, with the increase in the tourism activity, when demand for accommodation increases, there is high chances that new resorts and hotels will be constructed in the area causing detrimental impact to the environment of the area (Wight, 1997). The problem can be addressed by promoting the homestay activity which will fulfill the dual motive of providing economic incentives to the local people and enhancing the experience of visitors.

The role of transportation in enhancing the potentiality of a destination varies according to different tourism types (Seetanah et al., 2011). In case of ecotourism, which is itself is a tourism with minimal ecological foot print, road and other infrastructure reaching to the park are of less importance. Despite this fact, we cannot ignore the issue of accessibility. In this study, transportation facility have been rated to be fair by majority of the respondents.

Peace and security are essential components for ecotourism development (Nepal, 2002). This was evident by the decline in tourism related activities in Nepal during the Maoist Insurgency period as well. As higher fraction of respondents had rated security

facility with high rating, the efforts can be considered to be sufficient for now. The perception of respondents about the security significantly differed according to their permanent address. This might be explained by the differences in the geography of the fear (Modly, 2009). Permanent address of the respondents were taken at Province level and Karnali Region is usually projected by media and other as backward region which might have affected their perception about the security status.

Peoples' involvement

In the case of Rara National Park, majority of the respondents have reported willingness of the local people to participate in ecotourism related activities and a fraction of local peoples were already observed to be involved in such activities. Additionally, ecotourism activities were seen to bring positive benefits to the local people. As conservation policy in Nepal have emphasized for people centered conservation (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008) the signs in Rara National Park are encouraging. Strong participation of the local people in tourism activity are vital for ecotourism driven sustainable development (Zhang & Lei, 2012). Poverty of the people living in the vicinity of the park is one of the crucial drivers of environmental degradation in the protected areas as evident in Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) of Nepal (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008). Policy level intervention to encourage local people to participate in ecotourism activities and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefit are essential (T. H. Lee, 2013). It is the responsibility of Park authority of Rara National Park to devise and implement policy to encourage local people in ecotourism related activity. This will bring job opportunities and income to local people and contribute to conservation of varied landscapes, culture and biodiversity as evident at ACA in Nepal (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008).

Ecotourism and Environment at Rara National Park

Ecotourism has been reported to have neutral impact on the environment, according to the response of respondents. As ecotourism is considered to be an environmental friendly tourism promoted with the motive of bringing positive change in physical, biological and socio-economic environment (Wearing & Neil, 2009), further research on these aspects are essential before making some claims.

Way Forward

Despite the high potentiality for development of ecotourism at Rara National Park, the visitors are not adequately visiting the Park. Promotional activities and increasing other tourism infrastructures are essential. As length of the stay of youth with natural science background are relatively high, promotional activity targeting the students of natural science for field excursion could be fruitful. Furthermore, as this research, primarily, is based on the perception of visitors, more insights can be gained by exploring the views of local residents.

Conclusions

Along with its appealing geophysical, biological, and cultural features, Rara National Park is found to be a promising site for ecotourism activities which will help in reconciling conservation and development of the area. Perception of visitors on facilities available like transportation, medical, communication and others pinpoints the sectors to be emphasized for promoting ecotourism activities. So far, the dire environmental issues are not apparent till date. But, with the increase in tourism activity, they are presumed to increase if prior care are not given by the park authority. Besides, proper planning and zonation for ecotourism infrastructures are essential to regulate construction activities. Additionally, as visitors are staying for short duration, people from fraction of areas within the parks are getting benefits. Thus, design and implementation of an effective plan that facilitates and involves local people with all other stakeholders to establish ecotourism in the park area will help to increase the visitors' number up to the permissible limit. This in turn can give a win-win situation of reducing negative impacts to the site and overall status growth of local inhabitants.

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Ecotourism Potential of Tinjure Milke Jaljale Area: A Rhododendron Capital of Nepal

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Article

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Abstract

Keywords

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Ecotourism is a growing arena of tourism industry and is a potential tool for sustainable development. This study focuses identifying potentials of ecotourism in Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale (TMJ) area in Eastern Nepal via assessing flow of tourists, purpose for visits, major natural attractions, physical infrastructures and human resources available in the region. Direct interviews were conducted with respondents purposively selected from 50 households using structured questionnaires. Demographic variables and visit purpose were expressed in numbers and percentage using MS-Excel software. A descriptive analysis was performed for the natural features, human resource, physical infrastructures and cultural entities which were collected using standard checklist. Results showed that TMJ was visited by approximately 1, 00,000 internal and 600 international tourists throughout the year in 2018. The main purpose of visit to TMJ was to adhere the beauty of rhododendron or landscape followed by religious, study and recreational purposes respectively. While 80% percent of the respondents were aware of the need towards biodiversity

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conservation focusing Rhododendron forests which listed as a major attraction in the region and 78% agreed to impacts of tourism the area, 75% were unfamiliar with the concept ecotourism. The region with more than 80% forest coverage harbors natural and cultural attractions such as Deurali Bhulke picnic spot, Rock and Rhododendron Garden, Basantapur Botanical garden and view Tower, Tinjure Dada Pathivara Temple, Gupha Pokhari, Singhabahini Devi Temple, Gaunkhuridham, Siddhakali, Sabhapokhari. The present natural and culturally important areas in TMJ show good prospects for ecotourism. However, a detailed study focusing number of seasonal flow of tourists and services provided addressing visitor's perception is seen important to improve ecotourism.

Background

Tourism includes activities in which people travel and stay outside their usual place for not more than one year leisure, business, and other purposes (World Tourism Organization, 1994). Tourism causes both positive and negative impacts to tourism destinations (Vanhove, 2005). Tourism contributes to socioeconomic development (Minciu, 2004) and tourism also promotes conservation (Nyaupane & Thapa, 2006). Likewise, tourism causes environmental impacts such as noise, air, water and land pollution and as well as land use (Kunwar, 2017). This also leads to conflicts due to number of residents and visitors in different time and space as well as the behavior of the visitors and local (Postma & Schmuecker, 2017). To overcome these problems there is a need of sustainable tourism and ecotourism can be an alternative.

In case of Nepal, tourism has become one of the important pillars for economic development (Thapa, 2003) although it has a lot of issues (Bishnu, 2011) that need to be solved. In Himalayan region, tourism has raised demand for firewood and timber resulting in loss of wildlife and soil erosion. This has also enhanced litter leading to soil and water pollution (Gurung, 1990; Thakali, 1995). In Terai region of Nepal, pressure on forest for firewood, vehicular movement and pollutant emission have increased (Banskota & Sharma, 1996). To lower the pressure on environment, several researchers from Nepal have argued and provided evidence that ecotourism can lower the negative impacts of tourism as well as improve income. For example, in ACAP, people use alternative energy which has lower firewood usage. There are evidences where the income of local people can be enhanced through the promotion of ecotourism (K.C., Rijal & Sapkota, 2015; Nyaupane & Thapa, 2004).

Nepal's landscape, biodiversity and cultural areas have been a basis of increasing tourism industry in Nepal. Hilly region above 2200 m has unique diversity and has been famous for their iconic places. Most of them are under protected areas and some are in forming process. The tourism sector creates opportunities for the people as well as for nature conservation. In Nepal, Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur,

Lumbini, Pokhara, Palpa, Gorkha, Manang, Mustang, Chitwan have been major tourist attraction areas. Nepal is in pace of developing tourism sector through plan and policy and there is an urgent need of formulation of practical plans and policies to address the new issues related to ecotourism (Aryal, Ghimire & Niraula, 2019).

Researchers like Aryal and Maharjan (2018) pointed out the need of further research to assess the potential of ecotourism which includes demand, community's willingness, socioeconomic connection to biodiversity conservation, the attractive features of the area and host the visitors (Carroll & Groom, 2006). Most of the researchers working in ecotourism of Nepal have also focused their studies inside the protected areas. Therefore, this study has made an attempt to find out the ecotourism potential of TMJ-the capital of Rhododendron of Nepal by assessing the flow of tourists, naturalness of site, physical features and human resources availability such as Bekele, Teshome, & Asteray (2017). This study will benefit the concerned authorities and local people.

Tourism

Tourism industry has been getting great attention in recent years as it is enhancing the co-operation between different countries and regions as well as it is one of the fastest growing economic activities (Pao, 2005). The different countries of Asia and Africa are gaining great economic benefits from this industry. Tourism is an act of spending time away from the home temporary for recreation and pleasure as well as activities taken during their stay and facilities provided for their needs (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; p.1, Kunwar, 2017,p.11).

Tourism impact on ecosystem through erosion, emission of waste and harming structural and function features of ecosystem resulting environmental degradation (Kipler, 2013). These forms of impact can be controlled or minimized through alternative tourism such as adventure tourism, sports tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism as well as ecotourism which lead to sustainable tourism (Wearing & Neil, 2009; Buckley, 1994).

Sustainable tourism is a tourism which can address the demand of local communities and tourist as well as improve opportunity for future generations (World Tourism Organization, 2018). Its market is growing day by day in the world (Butzmann, 2017) as well as in Nepal, particularly in the form of ecotourism.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is considered as a responsible tourism which has been passing through a debate and controversy since a decade (Page & Dowling, 2002). Several definitions are given for ecotourism but major variables of the definition are conservation, education; culture (Fennel, 2001). Ecotourism is a form of tourism that appreciates

nature and enhances learning of environment through best management (Weaver, 2002).

Some researchers state ecotourism arose as a growing concern due to the increasing impact of tourism on environment (EGA, 2008) and often it is viewed as an alternative to lower negative impact of tourism and to foster environment management (Honey, 2008) whereas Garcia Herrera (2011) states ecotourism concept has originated as a tool for nature conservation as it is concern with protecting nature.

Ecotourism is a fastest growing concept in tourism industry (Hvenegaard, 1994) as it promotes environment conservation and socioeconomic development (Rijal & Sapkota, 2014). The International Ecotourism society (TIES, 1990) defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people”. Ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact. Ecotourism involves visiting natural areas in emphasis to learn, environment protection and sustainability. Ecotourism helps in community development by providing the alternate source of livelihood to local community which is more sustainable (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018).

Among the different types of tourism industry, ecotourism shows commitment towards conservation. Ecotourism contributes to protect biodiversity, enhance local people livelihood, minimize non-renewable energy use and create job opportunity (Poiani, Baumgartner, Buttrick, Green, Hopkins, Ivey, Seaton & Sutter, 1998; Daniel, Manning & Krymkowski, 2005). However, if it is not managed properly, there is threat of environmental degradation through tourism instability, economic, cultural distortions and visitor's misbehavior (Drumm & Moore, 2005).

Ecotourism activities are confined in natural resources rich areas (Nuva & Shamsudin, 2009) as such areas are critical component of a life support system (Ervin et al., 2010) and such areas should be promoted in such a way that it should prevent environment degradation (Fennell, 2001). Protected areas are a model of such areas. Such areas are believed as major assets of developing country as locals get livelihood option (Pananjay et al., 2011).

Research Methodology

Study Area

The study area lies in the middle Himalaya region in between 27°65'7" to 27°30'28" North latitude and 87°19'46" to 87°38'14" East longitudes with elevation ranges 1700 to 5000 masl. It is the one of the longest mountain ridges lying between the watersheds of Arun and Tamor rivers (IUCN, 1992). The area is located between two large protected areas of Nepal, the Makalu-Barun National Park (MBCNP) to the

west and Kanchanjunga Conservation Area (KCA) to the east (IUCN, 1992). The area covers seven formal Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Sankhuwasabha, ten former VDCs of Tehrathum and six VDCs of Taplejung (Figure 1).

Climate

The area has a wide climatic range from warm temperate in the lower region to alpine in the upper hill slopes. The climate of the study area is moist temperate with temperatures ranging from 10⁰C-15⁰C and average rainfall measuring 2250 mm (Limbu et al., 2012).

Biodiversity

The TMJ area is the biodiversity treasure as well as the crucial biological hotspot site of Nepal (Limbu et al., 2012) as it hosts varieties of flora, fauna and ecosystem.

Faunal diversity

The area is rich in faunal diversity it host 97 species of fauna from 30 families (Koirala, 2002) with a total of 25 mammalian wildlife species.

Floral Diversity

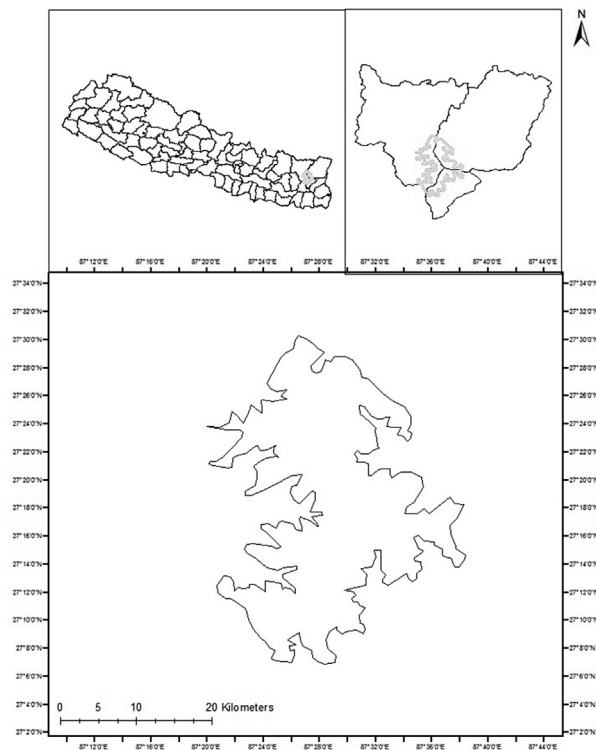
The area is rich in floral diversity and has 216 species of angiosperm (Koirala & Limbu, 2010). A total of 326 species belonging to 83 families and 219 genera of Angiosperm plants have been documented from TMJ (Limbu, Koirala & Shang, 2012). The major plants reported are herbs. There are 178 species of herbs, 67 species of shrubs, 62 species of trees, 15 species of climbers and 4 other species and is home to 28 Rhododendron species out of 31 species that are found in Nepal (Chaudhary & Taylor, 2000).

Ecosystem diversity

The area is rich in ecosystem diversity with different natural ecosystem such as forest, grasslands, meadows and wetlands (rivers and ponds) and rock and barren areas. The TMJ area is one of the largest potential rangeland ecosystems among the wet rangeland areas of Nepal.

Socio-economic features

The population of area is 85,881 with 18,377 total number of households distributed in 23 formal VDCs (CBS, 2011). The negative population growth is recorded over the area as compared to the national population growth rate i.e. 1.35 per annum. The TMJ area is also rich in ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. There are more than ten ethnic groups, who have their own cultural and religious practices, traditions and languages. TMJ is an important tourist destination 10000 of internal and international tourist visit here each year.

Figure 1: Location map of Tinjure, Milkhe and Jaljale

Data Collection and Analysis

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary and Secondary Methods were adopted to gain both qualitative and quantitative data.

Primary Methods of Data Collection

A total of 50 Households were surveyed purposefully based on their presence in households as well as only those houses close to the TMJ road to collect primary data. Beside interview observations of flora fauna, socioeconomic conditions of the people including customs and traditions, religious sites were done. The data were collected in between January 2019 to July 2019.

Secondary Methods of Data Collection

The reviews of related literature were done which includes journals articles, reports and books were done for secondary data collection. The information found in the walls and pillars of the religious sites were also considered for the study. For land use map, the study area's land cover was extracted from land use data 2010 published by

ICIMOD on the date 2013-04-12. The outline of the TMJ region was extracted based on image previously used in IUCN report (IUCN, 2010) for the extracting roads and trails and cover categories that was obtained from the data set (Bajracharya, 2013).

Data Analysis

Esri. Arc GIS Version 10.2.1 was used to extract the data from downloaded raster image. The raster image was converted into polygon using raster to vector conversion tools. Spatial analyst tool was used to extract the land use from the region based on Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development's provided shape file of Nepal (MoFALD, 2019). Microsoft Excel 2010 was used to analyze the data. Bar graphs, pie charts and doughnut were made as far as possible and results were shown in percentage and number.

Results

Tourist Flow

From the observation and survey it is known that TMJ has a potential to attract tourists throughout the year. However, due to the lack of infrastructure, tourists were not provided with any services in the month of April and May and in November and December when the national flower Rhododendron blooms and snow falls respectively. Internal tourist flow is reported to be high in this area. Domestic tourists from Dharan, Itahari, Biratnagar, Dhankuta, Jhapa fall under the majority to visit the place. From the key informant survey, every year approximately 1, 00,000 internal tourists visit the place whereas the number of international tourists visiting the place is only 600 per year approximately.

Reason for Visiting TMJ

Based on field observation and key-informant it was known that TMJ has attractive natural areas with extension of unique landscape to 585.26 km². A survey of 50 people showed that 56% people visit TMJ for Rhododendron forest, 24% said that the purpose of their visit was to see the landscape, 10 % visit for religious purpose and 10% replied that they visited TMJ for other purpose like study, picnic and snowfall.

Likewise 58% of people believed that the excellent factor of TMJ is the Rhododendron forest, 24% believe Ecology and Environment, 10% climate and 8% other features like varieties of birds and animals

Natural Features

The processes run for land use showed that the region is mostly covered by forest area with more than 80% of the land cover in the region (Table 1) which host varieties of flora and fauna. From the interview and observation it was known that TMJ consists of tall trees of mixed rhododendron forests especially in south

and east facing slopes. *Rhododendron barbatum*, *R. daldhousiae* (climber species), *R. cinnabarinum*, *R. griffithianum*, *Abies spectabilis*, *Betula utilis*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*, *Mahonia nepaulensis*, *Pieries formosa*, *D. papyracea*, *Edgeworthia gardneri*, *lycopodium spp.*, *Taxus baccata* are the major tree species of the area. The forest was also reported to support different fauna. Wildlife within the community forest area include Himalayan Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjac*), Masked Palm Civet (*Paguma larvata*), Nepal Grey Langur (*Semnopithecus schistaceus*), Assamese Monkey (*Macaca assamensis*), Hoary-bellied Squirrel (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*), Large-eared Pika (*Ochotona macrotis*), Red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), Leopard (*panthera pardus*) and Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*). Among mammals, Assamese Monkey, Himalayan black bear and Leopard are listed in vulnerable conservation status. Similarly, bird species include Hill Partridge (*Arborophila rufogularis*), Himalayan Monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*), Kalij Pheasant (*Lophura leucomelanos*), Koklass Pheasant (*Pucrasia macrolopha*), Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Great Barbet (*Megalaima virens*), Common Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), Crested Kingfisher (*Megaceryle lugubris*), Little Owl (*Athene noctua*), Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*), Snow Pigeon (*Columba leuconota*), Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*), Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*), Crested Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Long-tailed shrike (*Lanius schach*), Grey-backed Shrike (*Lanius tephronotus*), Grey Treepie (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*), Large-billed Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*), Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*), Ashy Drongo (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*), Spangled Drongo (*Dicrurus hottentottus*), Long-tailed Minivet (*Pericrocotus ethologus*), Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*), Yellow-billed Blue Magpie (*Urocissa flavirostris*), Red-billed Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*), Yellow-billed Chough (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*), Yellow-bellied Fantail (*Rhipidura hypoxantha*), Brown Dipper (*Cinclus pallasi*), Blue Whistling Thrush (*Myophonus caeruleus*), Chestnut Thrush (*Turdus rubrocanus*), Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), Verditter Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*), Blue-throated Flycatcher (*Cyornis rubeculoides*), Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), Hodgson's Redstart (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*), White-winged Redstart (*Phoenicurus erythrogaster*), Plumbeous water Redstart (*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*), Rufous-backed Redstart (*Phoenicurus erythronota*), Little Forktail (*Enicurus scouleri*), Spotted Forktail (*Enicurus maculatus*), Common Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*), Grey Bushchat (*Saxicola ferrea*), Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and Jungle Myna (*Acridotheres fuscus*). Likewise, herpetofauna species (amphibians and reptiles) include Skittering Frog (*Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis*), Himalayan Toad (*Duttafrynushimalayanus*), Black-Spinned Toad (*Bufo melanostictus*), Black-throated frog (*Microhyla Ornata*), Common garden lizard (*Calotes versicolor*) and Mountain keelback (*Amphiesma platyceps*).

Agricultural area covers approximately 9% of the total land. The major agricultural products of TMJ are Millet, Barley and potato. The grassland covers 3% of the land approximately which is important for livestock like sheep and Yak. Less than 1% of the land (0.02%) of the total land is barren in the region.

Table 1: Land Use condition of TMJ

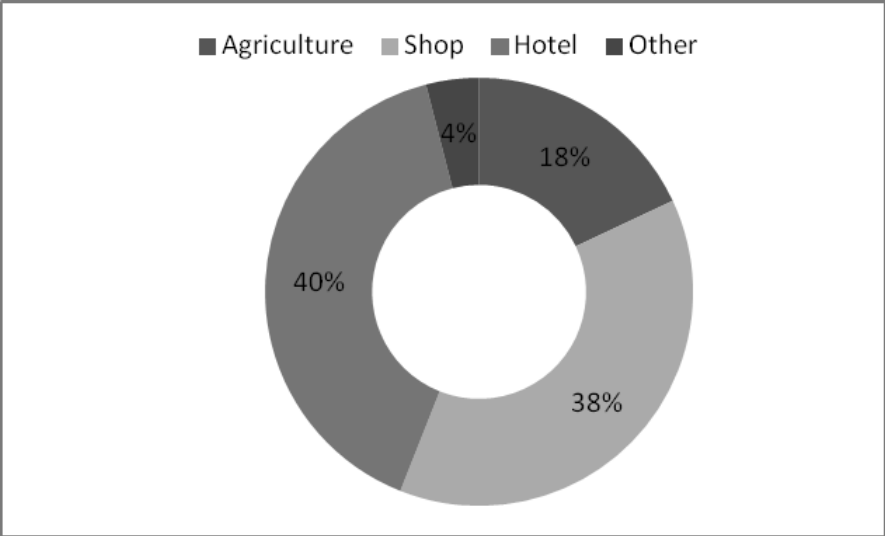
Category	Area coverage(m ²)
Forest	467718238.2
Agricultural Area	50419368.29
Barren Area	1133900.81
Grassland	47591056
Scrubland	19906817.67
Total TMJ area	586769381

Human resource features

Characteristics of Respondent

Among the 50 respondents, the maximum number of respondents was from age group 31-45 and the minimum number of respondents was from age group above 50. The major occupation of the area was hotel jobs followed by shop and agriculture (Figure 2). Altogether 82 rooms were found in 20 hotels with maximum of 8 rooms and minimum of 4 rooms in each hotel. The capacity of each room is 2 to 6 people. People were keeping sheep, pig, hen, goat and other cattle as livestock.

Figure2: Occupation of people in TMJ

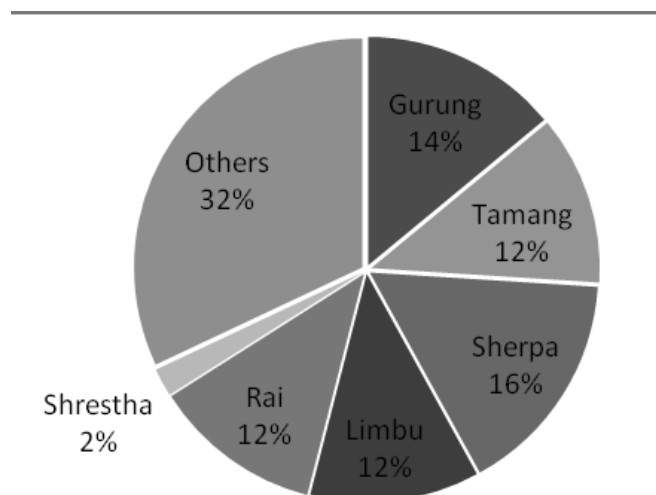


Cultural Features

Ethnic Group

Out of 50 households surveyed, the majority of the people belonged to Janajati (67%) which includes Gurung, Sherpa, Tamang, Limbu, Rai and Shrestha and other caste groups like Chhetri and Brahmin were only 33%, (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Cultural features of TMJ



The special food items were Tongba, Churpi, Sukuti, wine and local hen. Out of 50 households, Tongba was available in 16 households, Churpi was available in 7 households, wine was available in 10 households, and local hen was available in 2 households for sale to local people. Dashain, tihar, Baishake Purnima,, Lhosar, Pushe Mela, Baisakhi Mela, Fagu Mela are special festival of this area. The Chandi dance of Rai, Dhan Nach and Chyaprunge dance of Limbu were found to be the special cultural feature of this area. Singhadevi, Siddhakali, Gaunkhuridham and Pathibara temples were reported as the important religious site of this area.

Deurali Bhulke picnic spot

This place is famous for family picnic. There is a large terrace with good environment.

Rock and Rhododendron Garden

The rock and rhododendron is one of the attractive sites of TMJ area at Basantapur, Terahathum. The park has natural ecosystems which include forest, grassland, rock and barren areas. With the prospect of sustainable development and immense potential of ecotourism, the infrastructure and facilities are being developed. The Rhododendron

forest as well as other rich biodiversity and panoramic views, magnificent landscape abundantly rich in natural, cultural, historical and religious diversity can make the best ecotourism hub in the Eastern Development Region.

Basantapur Botanical garden and view Tower

The tower which is on the construction lies on the top of city. From here we can see hills, Himalayas, varieties of flora and fauna and beautiful places around TMJ area. These are ideal locations for increasing ecotourism.

Tinjure Dada Pathivara Temple

The temple is very famous from religious point of view. Most of the domestic tourist mainly Hindus come here to worship.

Gupha Pokhari

Gupha Pokhari is a natural pond situated in the height of 2890 meter which is pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists. Gupha pokhari is a peaceful lake set on ridge east towards the Kanchenjunga and west toward the Makalu which lies on the trekking trail from Basantapur to Terahthum. The beautiful panoramic views of mountains like Mt. Makalu, Mt. Kanchenjunga and Mt. Everest can be seen from this lake. Most of the people visit this place for research of flora and fauna. The global eco 200 region lies in this area.

Singhabahini Devi Temple

Singhabahini temple is one of the famous religious sites located in Myanglung Terahathum and is believed that if one prays in this holy place with pure heart then their wishes will come true.

Gaunkhuridham

Gaunkhuridham is an important religious site in Terahathum. Most of the pilgrimage visits this place in Maghe Sakranti which falls on January.

Siddhakali

The Siddhakali temple is located in Sankhuwasabha and is known as the incarnation of God Shiva. It has its own religious importance. The site attracts pilgrims seeking spiritual fulfillment and blessings from ancestor.

Sabhapokhari

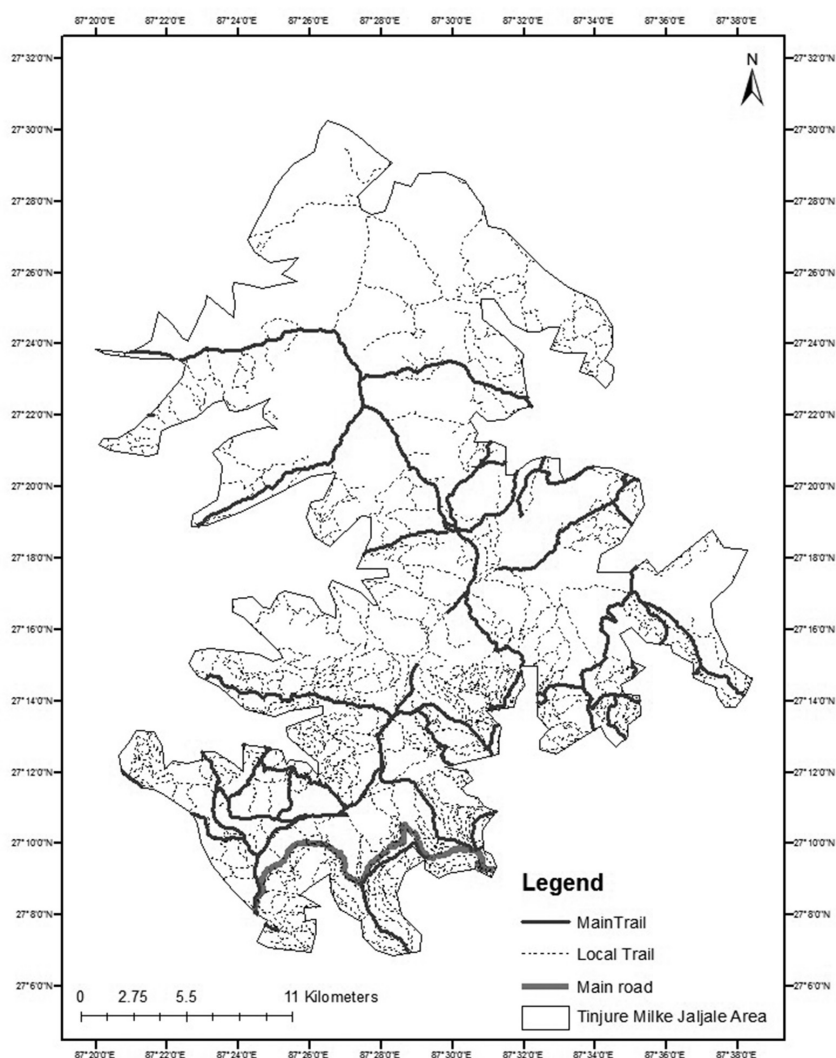
Sabhapokhari is located at an altitude of 4,240m. *Sabha Pokhari* is a natural lake that has religious significance. The place, where the lake is situated, is an extraordinary example of natural beauty and landscape and the place is good for trekking.

Physical infrastructure

Road Network

There is one main road of length of 22.3 km; there is a main trail of length 246.3km and number of local trail of length 1091.6 km (Figure 4). The entry points of the main road are Basantapur Deurali and Morhang. The entry points of main trail are Menchyam Rural Municipality, Chainpur Municipality, Madi Municipality, and Saghu Munucipality.

Figure 4: Road and trails around TMJ



Source of energy used in TMJ

Woods and LPG gas are the major source of energy which were utilized by the people of TMJ area. LPG gas was considered to be the major source of energy which was 56% and wood is the second major source which was 44%. Two micro hydropower projects provide electricity to all the areas of TMJ.

Waste Management

Burning, open dumping and close dumping are the main ways to manage waste in TMJ area. From the survey of 50 people it was found that 50% of the people were found to be burning waste, 26% were openly dumping and 24% were closely dumping waste in TMJ.

Water and Health Facilities

There are basic facilities of drinking water. There are three government managed hospitals and 90 sub health post.

Impact of tourism in environment

Various problems may arise due to tourism in specific places. So from a total of 50 respondents, study found that 78% of the people agreeing on impact of tourism and 22% disagreeing in TMJ area.

The 70% people reported tourist are moderately friendly, 20% are very friendly and 10% are not friendly.

Knowledge of eco-tourism

In TMJ area, it was found that few people knew about ecotourism (24%) and majority of people (76%) were unfamiliar with the concept of ecotourism.

Activities carried out for the promotion of Ecotourism

Out of the 50 respondents interviewed, 33.33 % reported that participation of locals are increasing to enhance the ecotourism related work, 26.67% reported that awareness programs on conservation and tourism are going on, 6.67% reported that they were given hotel trainings, 6.67% said that the extension of touristic areas with the development of infrastructure and facilities is advancing. However, 30% of the respondents were unaware about it.

Besides, these people were also aware about environment conservation. The response from the survey showed that 80% of the people from the area of TMJ are aware of biodiversity protection mainly Rhododendron conservation and 20% are not aware due to the fact that the strategy was just in implementation phase. Different awareness programs and training have been conducted to empower local people. Community forest user groups and women groups of TMJ had taken initiative of conservation activities by nursery establishment of rhododendron and preventing

cutting down of rhododendron. The Environment Action Club (EAC) has been established in schools to raise awareness among the students.

Discussion

Ecotourism has been generating great changes in socio-cultural and economic aspects which serves for the socio-economic development as well as increases the awareness of nature conservation among the locals (Kiper, 2013). TMJ and its periphery can be suitable area to practice rural and sustainable ecotourism. Hotels and guest houses initiated by locals can be expected to be fruitful in creating an alternative livelihood options for local people and helps tourists to visit the place freely. Although geographical condition of this area is tough, the landscape view of rhododendron forest, climatic conditions are positive parts which makes tourists want to visit the place. Transportation facilities and all the other infrastructure aspects makes TMJ fall behind but alternative options like re-opening trek route, establishing home stay may help them to regain the tourism potential.

TMJ has been hosting both internal and external tourists. There are more than one lakh tourists each year. The flow of internal tourist is reported to be higher than external tourist. The number of external tourists visiting is only around 600. This indicates that the site can be developed in the field of ecotourism in terms of market demand.

TMJ has striking natural features for attracting tourists. The area gives full opportunity to enjoy beauty of landscape, diversity of flora especially species of Rhododendron and fauna. The disturbance in the site is also low. 80% of the area is covered with forests. This indicates that the site is good for ecotourism (Osunsina, Ogunjinmi, Meduna & Oyeleke, 2008; Aciksoz, Gormus & Karadeniz, 2010; Stankov, Stojanovic, Dragicevic & Arsenović, 2011).

TMJ has over 30 mammalian species, 274 bird species, a floral diversity of more than 250 species which has the ability to attract tourists (IUCN, 2010). The site with unique diversity of flora and fauna has potential for ecotourism (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018; Bahmanpour, Laghai & Moharamnejad, 2012).

TMJ has 9% of agricultural land which could host native varieties of crops and 3% of grassland which can serve herbivorous and livestock. These features help to enhance ecotourism. There are various examples from the Alpine Region where an agricultural area created large ecological value among tourists than lands that were extremely reduced (Scialabba & Williamson, 2004).

Physical infrastructure is key for tourism development (Ray, Das, Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2015). The site was equipped with electricity facilities. The energy used was mostly firewood, potable water but there was not any specific sewage disposal

and treatment facilities. The site had trails and a road. The area is moderate in basic facilities for visitors which create low attractions for tourists (Erduran, Ceng z & Saglik, 2012).

TMJ is rich in cultural features. 67% of the households are Janjati with varieties and unique forms of festivals, food items, dances as well as religious sites. This sort of varieties of culture indicates that the site has good potential for tourism in terms of culture (Hillstrom & Hillstrom, 2003). The area has low number of tourist guides, and has manpower to serve the tourists in hotels but lacks trained manpower. This indicates that the site is weak in terms of skilled manpower because human resources are key in determining ecotourism (Lee, San & Hsu, 2011; Libreros, 2008).

Recently, it is found that the number of tourists visiting natural areas have increased (Kiper, 2013). The number of tourists in TMJ area was found to be increasing in spring season mainly due to Rhododendron forest. Relatively peaceful environment, improved tourism structure, increased charm of travelling among local people are the main things which attract tourists in this place. Despite having a high potential, TMJ lacks proper policy and management in tourism sectors. Lack of proper guides, tourist information centers, homestays, and trek routes in this area has caused difficulty to maintain the flow of tourist. Although a place with massive opportunities for rural ecotourism, TMJ suffers from heavy exploitation and lack of road construction which basically harms the natural resources and daily lifestyle of local communities. Tourism education is necessary for local people to run tourism programs. Training in guiding tourists, improving the local breeds, establishing good hotels, preparing local cuisines will encourage local youths to run tourism businesses.

In ecologically poor regions, increment in human interference with the environment can result in permanent damage to the ecological processes (Kiper, 2013). Deforestation, exploitation and poaching are the negative parts that led the natural resources to degrade. Most of the visitors come to see the beautiful Rhododendron forests and may not be aware about their impact on the surrounding environment during their trip. Therefore, the local management committee, government sectors, local authorities, policy makers should be conscious and stand strong to stop this kind of illegal activities in this place. Enforcement of environmental guidelines is not possible until tourists and hosts realize the impacts of tourism in such areas. Hence if there is a tourism conscious society, both locals and visitors can complement the upkeep of guidelines. This can further bring positive changes in exploitation of natural resources in the name of tourism.

Local people, who are the residents of the area, should be integrated in the program to have better results. Awareness programs should be given to motivate the locals to develop a positive attitude in tourism sector. Proper planning in tourism,

conservation and economic development can be done with the help of knowledge and experience of local people (K.C., 2016). Through a strong collaboration, there can be constructive impact of ecotourism on visitors, locals, management and operators. This would bring a sense of responsibility towards the environment (Ly & Anh, 2011). The study found TMJ has high potential to import national and international tourist in large numbers. All it needs a proper plan and execution. This may be an alternative place for tourists where they can enjoy the rhododendron forest, local foods, and natural beauty. It is found that accommodation facilities and connectivity are inadequate to meet the basic requirements of tourists in TMJ. Local participation can be enhanced by encouraging home stay accommodation for visitors thereby avoiding new constructions. According to Boxill and Severin (2004), community participation is an important aspect for sustainable ecotourism. In case of new constructions, ecological considerations should be given due importance. Any change in land use pattern or poor architectural designs may also result in environmental hazards. So, local people should be concerned with the approach of homestay which was newly planned in TMJ area.

Conclusion

The TMJ has good potential of ecotourism. Tourists enjoy beautiful Rhododendron forest in March-April, escape the hot weather in June-July-August, watch the beautiful panorama of mountains in September-October and enjoy snowfall in winter. This suggests that the area has distinctive offerings throughout the year to host tourists. Travelers seek for natural beauty during their visit to different places. The presence of high diversity of flora, fauna and bird species makes the site ideal as ecotourism destination. Besides that, domestic tourists also visit TMJ for culturally important places such as Basantapur Botanical Garden and View Tower, Tinjure Dada Pathivara Temple, Gupha Pokhari, Singhabahini Devi Temple. The infrastructure and facilities that are being developed suggest high chances for advancement of ecotourism in the area. If the plans and policies are formulated within few years, then ecotourism can improve in TMJ area. The plan and policy must include some concrete idea to attract international tourist. However, further research must be done on the number of tourist flow according to seasons or services provided to them to improve ecotourism.

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**Contested Interpretation of Vietnam War Heritage:
Tour Guides' Mediating Roles**

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Abstract

The legacy of the Vietnam War associates Vietnam with being a destination for dark tourism. Located in the central Vietnam, Quang Tri, the former Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has high density of historical sites left from the Vietnam War. Visitation to the war-related sites for commemoration and secular pilgrimage is among the top motivations for tourists arriving in the city. The current research seeks to investigate the mediating roles of on-site guides at the historical sites of Quang Tri. By observing on-site tour guide performance, analysing their narratives and conducting interviews with guides working at monuments and historical sites, and reflection of tourists visiting the sites, the authors provide a unique perspective of guiding at contested war heritage, where on-site guides perform multiple mediating roles. The findings of the study highlight the need to reappraise the role of on-site guides and have implications for the planning and development of guiding services at historic sites.

Keywords

*Dark tourism,
Vietnam war, tour
guide, interpretation,
mediation*

Introduction

War heritage sites play an important part in the process of struggling for independence in Southeast Asian states (Hitchcock, King, & Parnwell, 2009). Nationally important

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historical sites connect the past and the present in the sense of heritage defined by Smith (2006) as “a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present” (p. 44). The meanings and memories of past human experiences are recalled through contemporary interactions with physical places along the principles of cultural politics of where “even the very substance of a heritage is a political construction of what is remembered” (Richter, 1989, p. 109). The “dominant ideology hypothesis” (Ashworth, 1994, p. 20) asserts that governments will project a message legitimating their position. Therefore, official narratives in nationally important war-related sites are highly selective and contribute to “the effort to create more purely nationalistic narratives” (Long, 2012, p. 210). Narratives of historical places related to major wars for independence are commonly used to build patriotism on the domestic level (Timothy & Boyd, 2006), however, they appear differently to international visitors. The movement of people from different regions, social cultural and political backgrounds around the world for touristic purposes, therefore, complicates the interpretation of historical heritage sites, which are primarily designed to serve the domestic audience. However, the interpretation of contested war heritage sites has been poorly understood in tourism studies.

Visitation to war related sites, commonly known as war/battlefield tourism (Smith, 1996, 1998; Dann, 1998; Stone, 2006; Butler & Suntikul, 2013) is not limited to places where war has occurred but also cemeteries, monuments, museums and other institutions. Parallel to this terminology are general concepts such “thanatourism” (Seaton, 1996), “heritage of atrocity” (Achworth & Harmann, 2005) and “black spot” (Rojek, 1993). The act of visitation to these “dark” sites, or “dark tourism” entails a different meaning depending on how the experience is interpreted from place identify (White & Frew, 2016), geographic, cultural and religious perspectives (Hooper & Lennon, 2017). For instance, Cohen (2018) points out that dark tourism in the West is motivated by “the contemplation of their own mortality” while it is a counterpart of local customs, culture and religions for Asians (p. 169).

The tourist experience at dark tourism site encompasses awareness, education and entertainment (Kunwar et al., 2019), however, while some tourists may “be interested in interpretation that is educational, others may be seeking an emotional, spiritual, or sentimental experience” (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011, p. 825). Therefore, the tour guide plays an important role in directing and influencing the interpretation of battlefield sites (Iles, 2008) in terms of both the manner in which the site is presented and the information the guide conveys (Sharpley, 2009). On-site guides have also seen as critical in endowing deeper understanding for tourists, not through instruction but by means of provocation (Tilden, 1977, cited in Miles, 2014). In other words, on-site interpretation is a co-creation process involving both on-site guides and tourists for crafting stories, reflections and understandings by sharing viewpoints and stories.

Despite being known as one of the most controversial wars of the twentieth century, research on the Vietnam War from a dark tourism perspective has been relatively ignored. Previous research about dark tourism in Vietnam, to name a few, offers an overview of war-related sites (Henderson, 2000; 2007, Schwenkel, 2006; Upton et al., 2018) which paid attention to popular sites near Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in Southern Vietnam, such as Cu Chi Tunnel (Gillen, 2018; Le, 2014), or the War Remnant Museum (Laderman, 2009; Gillen, 2014) located in the city centre are relatively well addressed). In Northern Vietnam, Hoa Lo Prison located in the central precinct of Hanoi, the place detained political prisoners during French colonialization, then American pilots captured in the Vietnam War. Being listed as one of thirty most attractive dark tourist sites worldwide (Fonseca et al., 2016, p. 4), surprisingly, very little research has been conducted in this site (Logan, 2009). Being the border between the North and the South that hosted many fierce fights, Quang Tri is home of 436 important vestiges, the majority of them related to the Vietnam War (Quang Tri Tourism Guidebook, 2016). The relics are dotted around the city, making the entire city and its outskirts part of an integrated dark tourism complex. Despite holding a special position in the heart of Vietnamese (and to a lesser extent, American soldiers of the Vietnam War), research on dark tourism in Quang Tri former DMZ has long been ignored. Acknowledging an existing gap of dark tourism associated with the Vietnam War, the authors of this research aim to find out answers to the research question: What is the role of tour guides in creation of a 'host' perspective of war heritage sites? This research will employ qualitative critical narrative analysis, with evidence derived from qualitative in-depth interviews and observation to support the researchers in investigating the role of on-site tour guides at dark heritage sites.

Literature review

This is a review of the literature shaping the theoretical ground for the current research, which encompasses the conceptualization of dark tourism, visitation to and interpretation of war heritage sites. This literature review also specifically addresses the context of the Vietnam War with a focus on the DMZ area of Quang Tri from historical and political perspectives.

The term "dark tourism" appeared in the tourism literature in the mid-90s (Lennon & Foley, 1996). Dark tourism refers to visitation to death sites, battlefields, cemeteries, museums, prisons, and genocide sites. Parallel to this terminology are general concepts such "thanatourism" (Seaton, 1996), "battlefield tourism" (Ryan, 2007), and "tourism and war" (Smith, 1998; Butler & Suntikul, 2013). Visitation to death-related sites can also be termed as "cemetery tourism" (Logan, 2009), "ghost tourism" (Inglis, 2003; Davies, 2009; Holloway, 2010), "heritage of atrocity" (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005), or "fright tourism" (Bristow & Newman, 2004). Visitation to the dark sites provides

“awareness, education and entertainment on several cases of history and heritage, tourism and tragedies” (Kunwar et al., 2019, p. 105). Research on Holocaust sites and museums (Beech, 2000; Ashworth, 2002; Isaac & Cakmak, 2014; Kidron, 2013, Thurnell-Read, 2009), study of visitation to genocide sites (Beech, 2009; Lennon, 2009; Sharpley, 2012, Friedrich & Johnston, 2013), war-related sites (Farmaki, 2013; Iles, 2012, Johnnton, 2011, 2016), and atomic bomb sites (Bui, Yoshida, & Lee, 2018) has flourished in from the beginning of the 21st century, reflecting growing interest in dark tourism both from industry and academia.

The purpose of visitation to the sites of past conflicts includes commemoration, education, pilgrimage, and light entertainment in some circumstances (Dunkley, Morgan & Westwood, 2011). Consuming dark tourism is thus a means of confronting death in modern societies (Stone & Sharpley, 2008) as John et al. (2016) contend “visits to sites of death can be exceptionally powerful experiences, which may have deep personal impacts on a tourist” (p. 160), a kind of “psychological outcome” desired and satisfied by the tourists (Kunwar & Karki, 2019, p. 55). Demand for visitation to the dark sites is highly heterogeneous (Light, 2017) reflecting multi-layered and multi-faceted notion of dark tourism. However, Western and Asian visitation to the dark sites are not similar. For example, Kang et al., (2012) study dark tourism within a peace paradigm between North and South Korea; Yoshida et al. (2016) explore the matrix of educational and war tourism in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan), and suggest that Eurocentric perspectives of dark tourism are not necessarily applicable to other indigenous Asian perspectives. Cohen (2018) argues that in some Asian countries, namely, India, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, dark tourism can be dimensioned and affected by local customs and religious traditions. In particular, the belief in life after death, glorifying war death and customs of ancestor worship and religious ritual are all associated with dark tourism, thus, visitors to death-related sites can be motivated by mythical and inspirational stories. These characteristics also affect the interpretation at the site.

Interpretation in the context of tourism is considered as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” (Tilden, 1957, p.8, cited in Leshem, 2018). Previous studies have indicated the crucial role of tour guides in tourism (Bowman, 1992, Cohen, 1985, Schmidt, 1979; Dahles, 2002). Based on group characteristics, guides can be classified as official guides, alternative guides, or entrepreneurial guides (including commercial, event and coach tours); on the other hand, based on place characteristics, guides can be classified as private, independent, and residential guides (Bryon, 2012). The essential role of tour guides is to build a bridge to connect other stakeholders in the process of money flow, services, activities and information (Gurung, Simons,

& Devlin, 1996), with tour guides being “outer-directed” as organizers while tour leaders are “inner-directed” as entertainers and educators/teachers (p.107).

The key role of tour guide is not only as an experience broker (Jennings & Weiler, 2006), but also as a mediator (Weiler & Walker, 2014). A guide can broker visitors’ physical access to places, visitor encounters (interactions with the host community and environment), visitor understanding (cognitive access) and visitor empathy (affective or emotional access) (McGrath, 2007). Beyond the four roles of guides conceptualised in the literature, tour guides at sites of national importance also perform a political role. For example, Dahles (2002) addresses the way the Indonesian government uses propaganda to manifest and restrict both the narrative and tourist guide policy. In the case of sites linked to lost lives for nation-building and independence, the narrative certainly “provide[s] particular (political) interpretations of past events” (Sharpley, 2009, p.8). Therefore, on-site tour guides for historical sites also perform political and ideological roles embedded in official narratives of the sites designated to form part of the national history.

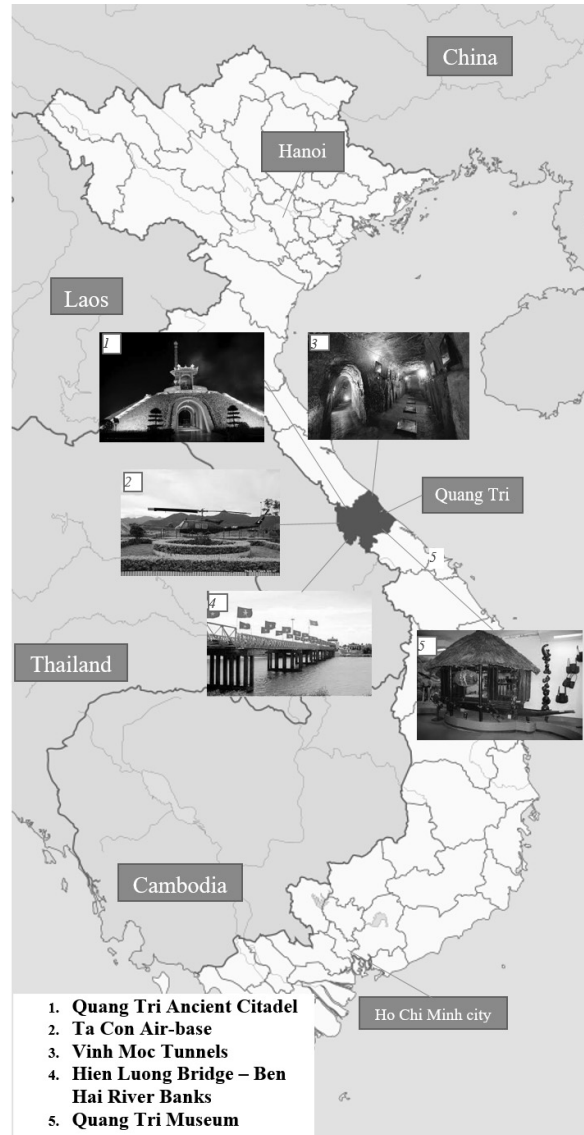
Interpretation of dark heritage sites is multifaceted and multi-layered in design and purpose (Sharpley & Stone, 2009), “while some tourists may be interested in interpretation that is educational, others may be seeking an emotional, spiritual, or sentimental experience” (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011, p.825). Thus, it is not easy to interpret a site in a way that is satisfied by all the parties with different memories and perspectives (Boyles, 2005). If the interpretation is misled, trivialised or commercialised, it becomes “a barrier” to achieve both cognitive and effective outcomes of tourist experience (Kunwar & Karki, 2019, p. 52). The visitors’ experience might be influenced by on-site interpretation (Crawford, 2016). Interpretation of war-related sites is highly contested when the winners and the losers holding different memories of the same event (Baldwen & Sharpley, 2009). Therefore, “market separation” solution (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005) is proposed.

The notion of on-site interpretation is co-creation by the guides and the tourists (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Robb, 2009; Walby & Piche, 2011). When stories conveyed at the dark sites are contentious or multi-layered, visitors tend to ‘read’ or ‘see’ the sites through their own lenses of experience, knowledge, and perspectives (Light, 2017). For instance, veteran had first-hand experience at war sites can provide additional details, or shed different light on the stories delivered by guides. Therefore, not only the supply side, i.e. museums, relics, heritage sites provides interpretation, but also the demand side, i.e. tourists, pilgrimages, veterans...involves actively in the construction of the sites’ narratives.

In this context, on-site tour guides at dark sites in terms of both the manner in which they are presented and the information they convey are critical in endowing

deeper understanding for tourists, not through instruction, but by way of provocation (Tilden, 1977, cited in Miles, 2014). Tour guides at historic dark sites perform the additional role of storytelling and meaning-making for the tourist's trip. "The key to success in managing dark tourism attractions is to engage the staff in storytelling" to understand the proper narrative for every tourist (Wiltshier, 2016, p.44). The role of the tour guide becomes extremely important in places that mark important historical events, where tour guides perform all roles of logistics, and political and educational functions, in addition to storytelling and meaning-making of historical events.

The Vietnam War is controversial and complicated as it included the involvement of foreign forces. For the Vietnamese, the War reminds of a period of division along the 17th Parallel by the Ben Hai River in Quang Tri Province. Quang Tri is known for the fiercest battles of Vietnam War, giving the land sacred status in the national history owing to the enormous sacrifice of lives. There is a high concentration of war-related historical sites of the former DMZ, including the Ben Hai River and the Hien Luong Bridge. The area was known for the fiercest battles by American forces such as the Battle of Khe Sanh. Conversely, for Vietnamese, Quang Tri is the home of the Legendary Ho Chi Minh Trail (known as Truong Son Trail in Western literature), the Ancient Quang Tri Citadel, and the underground tunnels of Vinh Moc.

Figure 1. Selected war-related sites in Quang Tri, Vietnam

Owing to twenty-five years of the history of Vietnam War with involvement of various troops from different countries and political alliances, the war heritage of Quang Tri is highly complex and appear to have different meanings to different groups of visitors. For example, to understand the symbolic meanings of the sites, history and the war should be understood from various angles. For instance, sites

related to American troops such as Khe Sanh and Ta Con Airbase are interesting to international tourists driven by American involvement, while sites associated with fights and battles with Vietnamese involvement require an understanding of the war from the Vietnamese perspective. Therefore, on-site tour guides have incorporated many stories about what happened in the past from different sides of the war, and function mediating roles. How the on-site guide delivers narratives of historical sites remain an unanswered question and warrants further investigation.

Research Methods

The authors employed a combination of qualitative methods. Data for the research were derived from observations and interviews with on-site guides, tourists, together with analysis of guide narratives. Qualitative methods utilise various skills, such as intensive listening, careful note-taking, detailed planning and sufficient preparation (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Interviews are the natural method when the “researchers send interviewers to ask the questions orally and to record respondents’ answers” (Barbie, 2010, p. 267). Based on the assumption that the narrative is “anything that tells or presents a story” (Jahn, 2017, p.1.2), the authors have made full use of the information obtained from the on-site guides interviewed to analyse how these stories were delivered.

The researchers conducted 14 interviews with six visitors, five on-site guides and three tour guides from tourism agencies over two weeks in late April 2019. Table 1 shows the respondents’ profiles. Each interview lasted about 30 - 40 minutes. Questions for on-site tour guides were about the types of tourists who visited the historic sites, tourists’ questions, attitudes and perceptions of the sites, and seasonality of visitation. The visitors were asked about why they visited, any new information/knowledge gained from the on-site guides; while also eliciting tourists’ comments on guides’ knowledge, attitude and skills. Questions about demographic characteristics of the informants were also asked.

Convenient sampling strategy was employed to recruit interview informants. A researcher observed tour groups visiting historic sites and recorded both guide’s narrative and visitor’s reaction. To recruit informants from group tours, the researcher approached tourists and asked for their consent to participate in the interview. The researcher stayed on sites to interview tour guides while they were in between services. Recruitment of informants was difficult in the hottest month of the summer when the study was carried out. Tourists got tired under the heat and often quickly returned to their air-conditioned cars and buses. Although the researcher had approached many potential informants, very few tourists agreed to participate in the study. The recruitment of tour guides for interview sample was easier as the guides often stay indoor at the site upon completion of their duty. In addition to 14 informants consented

to participate in the study, the researcher conducted more than 20 informal talks to visitors and guides on various topics in relation to site interpretation. Interview recordings were transcribed and analysed along with observations and field notes of informal talks.

Table 1. Interview respondent profiles.

Respondents	Gender	Nationality	Occupation	Residence
Tourist 1	Female	Vietnamese	Student	Phu Yen
Tourist 2	Male	Vietnamese	Veteran	Hanoi
Tourist 3	Female	Vietnamese	Unknown	Quang Binh
Tourist 4	Male	Vietnamese	Officer	Thanh Hoa
Tourist 5	Male	Vietnamese	Veteran	Ha Nam
Tourist 6	Female	Vietnamese	Unknown	Quang Binh
On-site guide 1	Female	Vietnamese	Tour guide at Vinh Moc Historical Relic	Quang Tri
On-site guide 2	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide at Vinh Moc Historical Relic	Quang Tri
On-site guide 3	Female	Vietnamese	Tour guide at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel	Quang Tri
On-site guide 4	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel	Quang Tri
On-site guide 5	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide at Hien Luong Historical Relic	Quang Tri
Tour guide 1	Male	Vietnamese	Independent tour guide	Hue
Tour guide 2	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide	Hanoi
Tour guide 3	Female	Vietnamese	Independent tour guide	Quang Binh

In addition to interviews, participant observation was also employed to provide additional contextual data to aid the interview process. Having involvement with a given social group, the researcher is able to create a personal relationship with its members, and is able to describe their actions and motivations (Corbetta, 2003). The authors could observe visitor-guide interactions by following guided groups on their

tours. One of the two researchers was born and raised locally, became deeply involved with locals and built trusting relationships with tour companies. Their proximity to the culture, industry experience, and Vietnamese language skills, and intimate knowledge of local values and customs enabled understanding of the respective local contexts.

The authors adopted thematic analysis with a confirmatory approach to analyse data based on conceptual categories determined prior to reviewing the text (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). First, the authors analysed discourses of groups associated with tour guides and tourists separately. Second, the themes that emerged from different groups were compared, connected and organized into major themes that appeared on both sides, which centred on the interpretation of the given war-related site. Themes that emerged from interviews were triangulated with data derived from observation and presented in the findings of the study below.

Findings

Having analysed data collected from interviews and participant observation, four types of roles for tour guides emerged. The first set consists of ascribed roles for political and educational purposes, and the second set consists of mediating roles between contrasted elements such as past-present and war-peace, involving the mediation of visitor emotion and the mediation of visitor understanding.

Political Broker

The Vietnam War is controversial and complicated with the involvement of foreign forces. Quang Tri is where the 17th Parallel by the Ben Hai River was set to divide former North Vietnam and South Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement signed in 1954, which led to twenty years of the war from 1956 to 1974. The province has a high concentration of war-related historical sites including the Ben Hai River, a natural border dividing North and South Vietnam that forms the DMZ area, and the Hien Luong Bridge which traverses the river. Former battlefields such as Ancient Quang Tri Citadel and Khe Sanh witnessed some of the fiercest battles of the Vietnam War where the various troops involved lost thousands of lives. For Vietnamese, Quang Tri is a sacred place of the legendary Ho Chi Minh Trail, where 20,000 lives of young Vietnamese were lost building a complicated logistical support network from North to South Vietnam. Their remains lay in nine national war cemeteries in Quang Tri. As a witness of important events the twenty-year Vietnam War, Quang Tri is a sacred place in the national history. Therefore, official narratives of national history associated with the sites are highly regulated and sharing these narratives is the official task of on-site tour guides, in fact reflecting Ashworth's (1994) "dominant ideology hypothesis" (p. 20). For example, a tour-guide expressed the following restriction in the interview:

The DMZ tour is usually chosen for learning about history... Tourists have often learned about these sites before arriving. Additional information was collected through the [on-site] guide's interpretation at the site. In my personal experience, I seldom express my political viewpoints as tourists might have a very different view on the related events I mention. I let the on-site guide explain the national narrative of the events as they are authorized to do so. (Tour guide 1).

Symbolic meaning can only be conveyed through skilful and knowledgeable guides who deeply understand and are attached to the sites. If qualified on-site guides are not available, ordinary group tour guides often omit the sites from the tour itinerary. For example, the ruins of the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel of the 81-day battle in summer 1972 is one of the most visited sites for domestic tourists. However, delivering the historical narrative and symbolic meaning of the site is not easy as explanation and is highly abstract. This special task can only be performed by professional on-site guides, and ordinary guides may find it extremely challenging:

Quang Tri Ancient Citadel is officially included in the package tour, but is often omitted from the itinerary for international travellers. Firstly, it is not easy to interpret as it requires deep and specialized historical knowledge. Secondly, the Citadel has a high symbolic meaning with very few tangible exhibits to show visitors. Apart from the common grave and museum, it is difficult to explain historical events that occurred in the past (Tour guide 2).

Educational Broker

Educational activities are designed to carry out political ideology. Visitation to historical sites is an indispensable program that applies to all levels of education, from primary to secondary school and tertiary education in Vietnam. Historical site-visitation offers opportunities for critical thinking (Paul, 1990), situational instruction (Smith, 1989) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) through activity-based learning. Political education is embedded in the official narratives of historic sites. Interactions through physical settings (the site) and symbolic interpretation performed by the guide retains students' interest in historical lessons. Generations of school and university students have come to Quang Tri to learn about the war and related events. This type of educational travel in Vietnamese is called '*du lich ve nguon*', which means educating the younger generation about their origin. In this context, the on-site guide performs as a broker facilitating visitor interaction with physical sites to enhance the educational experience.

Students are from universities nationwide, mainly from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, from the departments of history and tourism. There are also students from the Da Nang University of Science and Technology. Local

school and college students visit the site for the educational program on the occasions of Youth Day (March 26th) and National Reunification Day (April 30th) (On-site guide 1).

Educating younger generations about history is one of the major tasks for tourism industry and heritage site management in Quang Tri, which has been recognised by tourists:

Coming here, you will feel both national pain and pride very clearly that makes it the best place for the education of the younger generation (Tourist 3).

Site interpretation for the young audience, however, is slightly different from the official narrative for adults. In the narratives targeted at children, the stories often center on the skills for survival, ensuring continuity of lives, despite the hardship and darkness of the war, with remarkable examples of how children lived through wartime in the Vinh Moc underground tunnels:

Each person in Vinh Linh suffered through more than seven tons of bombs on average. However, life still arose from suffering and death; 17 children were born in the heart of the Vinh Moc tunnels (On-site guide 3).

Through meaningful interpretation, on-site guides convey messages on humanity, heroism, peace loving, goodness and selflessness. It reflects points made by Poria et al. (2009), that interpretation not only has a knowledge function to the tourist, but it can also build up their experience. Along with their functional role to convey a political message and educating young generations, on-site guides also performed a symbolic role as a bridge between the past and the present, while also reconciling conflicts between former enemies.

Mediating Visitor Emotions

Vietnamese veterans often visit former battlefields through regular programs organised by the Veteran Association, such as “Memorial of the old battlefields and comrades”, “Legendary road” on the occasions of national commemorative events such as Victory Day (April 30th), War Invalids and Martyrs’ Day (July 27th), and Independence Day (September 2nd). Visitation to Quang Tri includes pilgrims, visiting as a kind of ritual to pay respect to those who sacrificed their lives, as a way to connect the past and the present. Tour guides at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel witness many emotional moments of veterans and their relatives when they have returned to the sacred land where their comrades and beloved ones lay. The guides become agents, mediating the past and the present, between the dead and the living, by telling the stories of the past battles.

Tourists shed tears when they hear the tour guide tell about soldiers’ painful stories from the war. There is a story of Le Van Huynh – a young soldier who could

predict what would happen to him and wrote a farewell letter to his mother and wife the day before the final battle, in which he was certain of his fate. He knew in advance where he would be buried and guided the family to find his remains. Here is a part of the contents of his final letter, read to tourists by an on-site guide at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel:

I'm leaving, my mom please take care, as if I am always with you. Don't be sad, so my soul can be free. My father has gone so far to let you know how hard it is. Currently, I have grown up, then... Well, please don't be sad, I have lived my life for the future fatherland (Guides' narrative from the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel).

It can be affirmed that, for each different visitor, on-site tour guides play a different role. For Vietnamese tourists, they are mediating agents between the present and the past, while for international visitors, guides are telling them different stories and sometimes, helping veterans to heal their pain from the past.

Mediating Visitor Understanding

Almost half of a century has passed since the time of the Vietnam War, yet foreign veterans have kept coming back to the former battlefields to relive memories. Their motivation to return to Vietnam is to find out what has not been told and what is missing in the Western narratives of the Vietnam War by asking various questions to the on-site guides.

The most frequent question being asked is why American forces wanted to destroy Vinh Linh? How was life in the tunnel? Where did they find food? How did they light up the tunnel? What are Vietnamese attitudes towards Americans? Do Vietnamese hate Americans? (On-site guide 2).

By telling the stories from a Vietnamese perspective, on-site guides contribute to boosting mutual understanding between both sides, bringing a new perspective of the war to foreigners. One of the authors had the personal experience of guiding an Australian veteran who had fought in the Vietnam War. He returned to Quang Tri with the desire to build a water supply system for local people. He showed a photo taken in Khe Sanh when he was a young man in an army uniform. Visiting sites such as the Hien Luong Bridge, the Vinh Moc Tunnels and Khe Sanh to recall the battles of long ago and learning from guides' narratives of stories from the other side of the war, was a healing therapy for him. The trip to the former battlefields had somehow released him from the burden of the past.

The narratives and stories through guide interpretation shared and created new meaning and motivated tourists to explore the sites further. For example, after visiting and being interpreted to by an on-site tour guide's narrative, a visitor affirmed that:

From the national Highway 1A I can unconsciously see the old bridges, loudspeaker systems, flagpoles and some other items on both sides. Even knowing that this place had a long separation over 20 years, I really could not visualize the true meaning of the historical stories and what remains today until I was exposed to them by a guide's interpretation (Tourist 2).

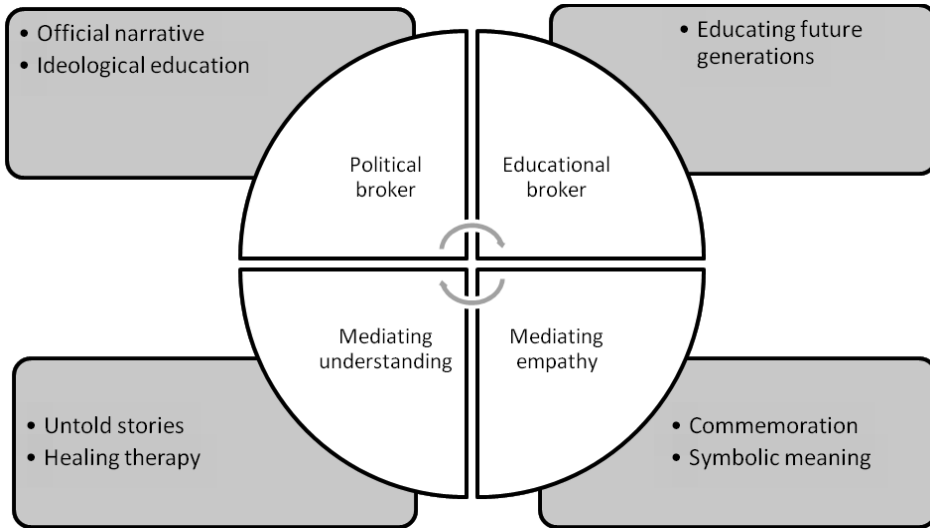
A good tourist product should be accompanied by professional guides and friendly staff in addition to service and facility quality, as well as including foreign language proficiency. Currently, only English tour guides are available in limited supply. It is impossible to meet the demands of foreign tourists with non-English speaking backgrounds requesting a tour guide at the sites.

In fact, our agency has some training courses for the employees. However, in addition to specialized knowledge, foreign languages are a major obstacle. Most employees do not study foreign languages. Although some foreign language classes are held, only a low level of English is offered. Some tourists require French- or Italian-speaking guides, which is impossible to be provided (On-site guide 2).

With all functions listed above, the on-site tour guides are those who make sites meaningful and worthwhile to visit. Hence, in parallel with the process of improving the quality and diversity of tourism products, it is necessary to improve the knowledge and skills of tourist guides at those historic sites. In particular, guides with good and diverse foreign language proficiency are limited.

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to investigate the roles of on-site tour guides in the interpretation of dark heritage sites of the Vietnam War in the case of Quang Tri, the war's former DMZ area. The authors employed qualitative critical narrative analysis driven from in-depth interviews and observation. The researchers identified four major roles of on-site tour guides in the dark heritage sites as showed in Figure 1. The division of four roles is for the purpose of conceptualisation and is relative as in reality, multiple roles are interchangeable and inseparable.

Figure 2. Four major roles of on-site guides

The roles of regular tour guides and on-site tour guides differ. Ordinary tour guides are responsible to facilitate a safe route following a strict timetable and designated itinerary (Cohen, 1985), while satisfying tourists with complete tour service and enhancing their overall experience (Huang et al., 2009). Differently, the key role of on-site guides at historic sites place emphasis on their role as a broker and mediator. Drawing on the four mediating roles for visitors' access, encounters, understanding and empathy asserted by McGrath (2007), our study finds out that on-site tour guides especially perform the latter two roles: being mediators for visitor cognitive and affective access. Beyond these ascribed roles, tour guides at nationally important sites in Quang Tri also perform the roles of political and educational brokers under the strict governance of official interpretation of the sites. These perspectives reflect Dahles's (2002) argument on government manifestation and restriction of the narrative and guiding policy in Indonesia. In the context of Vietnam, where political narratives are embedded in the educational system and curriculum, both political and educational roles become priority tasks to perform for on-site guides.

The important role of the on-site guide in storytelling and meaning-making for tourist trips reflects Uzzel (1988) points out that "emotions colour our memories and experience" (p. 152). The mediating role of on-site guides at controversial sites moves beyond understanding and emotion. The guides have acted as ambassadors to bring former enemies closer to each other. In other words, they perform the role of an ambassador of peace. Similarly, the mediating role of visitor emotional access, in fact, is the mediation between the dead and the living, between the past and the

present. The guides tell stories of death to visitors and interpret the past to the present audience. In that way, they perform the roles of political and educational brokers. The four roles identified for on-site guides are closely related and interchangeable.

Tourism and its development facilitates the movement of people from different regional, social, cultural and political backgrounds from around the world. Therefore, it complicates the process of heritage politicization as Richter (1989) defined as “a political construction of what is remembered” (p.109). Narrated on the basis of the winner of the war, site interpretation reflects authorised narratives of the national struggle for independence in Vietnam, which reaffirms Ashworth’s (1994) “dominant ideology hypothesis” (p. 20). The narratives of war heritage in Quang Tri asserts that governments would project messages legitimating their position, and therefore are highly selective and “purely nationalistic narratives” (Long, 2012, p. 210). Narratives of historical places related to national struggles for independence are used to build patriotism at the domestic level (Timothy & Boyd, 2006) however, they appear differently to international visitors (and some domestic visitors) with different backgrounds and understanding. Therefore, the on-site guide’s mediating role to enhance visitors understanding is highly challenging and complex and requires careful consideration about the stories being told.

Findings from our fieldwork challenge Ashworth and Hartmann’s (2005) notion of “market separation”. Visitors to the war-heritage are aware of the winners’ intention glorify their victory, and that ideology might frame the picture of the war. Their visitation to the war sites has often been motivated by their personal connection, history and memory of both individual and collective level. Once encountering contested interpretation of the war sites, tourists and guides might involve in a co-creation process when viewpoints and historical facts and truths are exchanged to enrich the experiences of the visitors and stories of the guides. Particularly, when Vietnamese government makes effort to close the painful past and promotes reconciliation for peace and friendship, the co-creation solution for on-site guiding has proved to be a feasible and appropriate option for contested interpretation.

Another significant finding from our study is the paradox of dark and light associated with war heritage pilgrimages in the Asian context. War death is not necessarily presented only as the dark side of the story. The way the Vietnamese commemorate the war dead and construct interpretation of tragic events is to glorify death, in which the soldiers’ sacrifices for nation-building and independence should be remembered and glorified. This notion reflects Heap’s (2009) contention “simply that dark tourism is really an attempt to package death in a sort of ‘glory way’ without right and wrong” (p.94). In this process, tour guides are those who convey the message of glorification. Hence, dark tourism does not only contain a “dark”, negative side, but also fuels a “light”, positive experience among the visitors.

Conclusion

This research analyses the roles of on-site tour guides in the context of war-related sites in Vietnam. It also reveals that apart from the historical value embedded in the physical component of the site, on-site tour guides significantly convey meaningful messages to tourists by enhancing their cognitive and affective access to historical sites with their knowledge and interpretation. They contribute to visitors' understanding of the political and educational contexts of the experience. The mediating role of on-site guides bridges the past and the present, and brings opposite sides of the Vietnam War to a common understating and empathy.

The research has several implications for theoretical development and practical implementation. In terms of the theoretical perspective, this exploratory research raises a question about the intertwined nature of political and educational aspects in dark tourism, together with the separation of emotional and cognitive elements of meditated experience at dark tourism sites. Thus, the dualistic dark-light tourism classification should be challenged and deserves further investigation. For practitioners, findings from the research emphasize the need to enhance the performance of on-site tour guides at historical sites, as they play a much more important role than information givers. The multiple roles which on-site guides play should be enhanced and recognised in the process of peace-building and carry on the education of history to future generations.

The current research, however, has several inherent limitations that shed light for future research. Firstly, the research is limited to a small number of guides and tourists. It is necessary to expand the scope of the interviews to encompass the viewpoints of government officials, international tourists and other institutions such as schools, who could provide diverse understanding of the historical sites. Secondly, the study mainly explores Vietnamese perspectives of interpretation. It would be beneficial for the literature to compare narratives of these historical sites across different groups of visitors of various nationalities or age groups to elicit further viewpoints. Finally, the study of tour guiding should not be isolated from overall tourist experience studies. These suggestions can contribute to the literature on dark tourism by making future studies more meaningful.

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Strategies for Development of Yoga, Ayurveda, and Meditation-based Health Tourism in Nepal: Using SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

Now health tourism based on yoga, Ayurveda and meditation is growing sector in Nepalese Tourism. Health tourism as one of the most important forms of tourism is not an exception and preparing strategies for its development will not be possible without considering its specific and extraordinary environment. The objective of preparing and is writing this research paper is to formulate suitable strategies for health tourism development in Nepal. This study uses a qualitative approach. We conduct 38 semi-structured interviews with related stakeholder's of health tourism in Nepal, including health service providers, tourism service providers (as enterprise), and government officials. It was carried out in 2017 in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, and Pokhara. For strategy formulation, we employ the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis method to examine the internal and external factors comprehensively, in terms of health tourism development in Nepal. The strategy to the health tourism development will be considered in terms of four relations: strengths-opportunities (S-O), weaknesses-opportunities

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(W-O), strengths-threats (S-T), weakness-threats (W-T). The results of this study show that the strategy in health tourism development in Nepal, it is necessary to work on policy and regulation, promotion and branding, introducing the quality standards for health products and service as well as to establish the institutional support in order to successful implementation for the strategy of the health tourism development in Nepal.

Introduction

As a new form of tourism, health tourism has substantially grown over recent years. The nature of health tourism supply-side reform is to promote the coordinated development of health tourism supply and demand system, optimize stakeholder affecting factors, and improve health tourism quality. Nowadays, the theme of tourism supply-side reform has been the research focus. The new wave of health-care tourism originating from developed countries and heading toward developing ones is accepted as a major development that can reduce costs and increase efficiencies in the health systems of developed countries. The so-called third wave of medical tourism is expected to have a positive long-term effect on developing economies (Cohen, 2012). About 30 countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Hungary, Poland, Jordan, Slovenia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, India, Turkey and the USA, are considered as the major players in the international health tourism market (Bookman & Bookman, 2007; Eissler & Casken, 2013; Merrell et al., 2008; Pollard, 2013). Many governments, international agencies, and stakeholders consider medical tourism as a means of economic growth, which might cross-subsidize domestic health access where that is a central governmental objective and ensure a competitive cure for the global health system and the delivery of health services worldwide (Hall, 2013).

Bookman and Bookman (2007, in Horowitz et al., 2007) emphasize that the government of destination countries must implement and enforce appropriate macroeconomic redistributive policies to ensure that the local residents of these countries actually realize the potential benefits of the health tourism industry. Empirical research proves that health care service providing, distribution of health care products, and the increase of demand for health care treatments, serve as a catalyst for the globalization of health tourism movements, which generates significant economic effects such as investments, income, employment, tax revenues, and export earnings for host countries (Kesar & Rimac, 2011). The rational usage of available energy, a friendly entrepreneurial environment aimed towards the attraction of new investments and public-private partnerships, together with the development of specific packages in order to ensure a high quality of services, this special niche of tourism has a bright future in Nepal, and can significantly contribute to the country's economic growth.

Health tourists work as the demand side, which experienced health tourism supply directly, whose supply sensing results also directly affected their subsequent tourism behavior. That is to say, they will recommend when satisfied with the health provider of their quality standards and quality service, and they won't be back or even they give a bad review when unsatisfied. Health and tourism enterprises were the main health tourism supply providers, whose high or low evaluation on health service and tourism service will directly affect their investment and construction results of destination tourism supply.

There are different stakeholders in the health tourism industry. Thus, policymakers can plan, make a policy and decision, and use effective strategies to develop health tourism by designing a health tourism stakeholders' network, a health tourism council, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Some Asian countries such as India, Thailand, and Malaysia have been very active in the development of health tourism; as a result, these places have become top destinations for health tourists. It is because these countries have developed infrastructure for tourism and health treatment and provided good communication links between hospitals, insurance, and tourism agencies as well as lowering costs and waiting times (Yu & Ko, 2012).

Therefore, the perception of health tourism supply between the supply and demand sides should be taken full account to make a scientific and reasonable regulation for the structure optimization of health tourism supply. In recent years, many researchers have paid more attention to the perception of the factor affecting supply and demand sides. However, how to judge the development order of supply factors and how to optimize the destination competitiveness supply factors, which are still lack of in-depth study. The main objective of preparing and is writing this research paper is to formulate suitable strategies for health tourism development in Nepal. For this purpose we set the following research questions:

1. Which are the most affecting factors for health tourism development in Nepal and suitable strategies?
2. Who are the related stakeholders for the health tourism industry in Nepal?

Research Methodology

This research is descriptive-analytical and also a kind of applied research and it was carried out on December 10, 2017, to December 27, 2017 as an attempt to prioritize health tourism development factors of Nepal's health tourism industry. This research has been done upon the health tourism stakeholders of Nepal. Also, conduct interviews and experts' opinions in the field of health tourism and health services such as those in universities, Ministry of Health, Health Education, tourism industry experts, and other related stakeholders in Nepal were used to identify the internal and external factors such as the weakness and strength points and the opportunities

Stakeholders Interviewed	Criteria for Selection									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Stakeholder 15		Y					●			
Stakeholder 16		A								
Stakeholder 17					●					
Stakeholder 18					●					
Stakeholder 19		A								
Stakeholder 20										●
Stakeholder 21		Y		●		●				
Stakeholder 22										●
Stakeholder 23		A				●				
Stakeholder 24									●	
Stakeholder 25		Y								
Stakeholder 26		A								
Stakeholder 27									●	
Stakeholder 28		A		●			●			
Stakeholder 29		S							●	
Stakeholder 30									●	
Stakeholder 31		Y					●			
Stakeholder 32								●		
Stakeholder 33	H									
Stakeholder 34								●		
Stakeholder 35		A								
Stakeholder 36		A					●			
Stakeholder 37								●		
Stakeholder 38		Y					●			

Table 2: Criteria and key symbol used to select stakeholder for interview

Criteria	Description
1	Government Authorities: (H) Health Ministry Related (T) Tourism Ministry Related.
2	Health Providers : (A) Ayurveda, (Y) Yoga, and (S) SPA
3	Member of Nepal Tourism Board
4	Other Traditional and Natural Health Providers
5	University Authorities and Health-Related Research Organizations.
6	Spiritual Retreat/ Meditation
7	A facility offering medical tourism
8	Member of Ayurvedic Medical Council / Nepal Ayurvedic Doctor Association
9	Hotels with wellness facilities (i.e. SPA, Yoga and Massage)
10	Travel Agencies.

Methodology of Analysis

To formulate the development strategies of health tourism, the SWOT analyzing method was used. As the method requires, an effective strategy is the one that as a result of its implementing, the opportunities and strong points are maximized and the weaknesses and threats are minimized. In the end, a list of strengths and weaknesses, as the internal factors, and another list of opportunities and threats, as external factors, were developed. To analyze the key elements of the internal/external environment, internal factor evaluation SWOT analysis were created. Afterward, finally, by using the SWOT matrix, the factors were compared pairwise and four strategies (SO/ST/WO/WT) were recommended for the development of the industry both at macro and micro levels.

This step is to identify the four patterns of the SWOT model for the compatibility of the internal and external factors.

Strength and Opportunity (S-O): The first area is the best position. In this case, the system faces several environmental opportunities and it has a lot of strengths that encourages the use of opportunities. This condition is recommended as a growth strategy.

Strength and Threat (S-T): In the second area, the system has key strengths but faces threats in the environment. In this condition, the strategies are used by existing strengths to build the long term opportunities in other cases.

Weakness and Opportunity (W-O): In the third area, the system is faced with great opportunities but suffer from several internal weaknesses.

Weakness and Threat (W-T): In the fourth area, the system is faced neither with the opportunities nor with the strengths of internal environmental but is faced with the internal dimensions to many threats. In this case, the best strategy will be a reduction strategy (Mousavi, 2006).

Table 3: SWOT Matrix and How to Determine the Strategies

Internal Factors		
External Factors	STRENGTH (W)	WEAKNESS (W)
OPPORTUNITY (O)	SO STRATEGY Achieve opportunities that greatly match the organization`s Strengths.	WO STRATEGY Overcome weakness to attain opportunity.
THREATS (T)	ST STRATEGY Use strengths to reduce the organization`s threats.	WT STRATEGY Prevent weakness to avoid making the organization more susceptible to threats.

Source: Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007; Marpaung & Shimizu, 2018

Factor Affecting Health Tourism Development

In this section, we will discuss two sections of health tourism development. The first section, factor affecting the health tourism development, where we discuss potential factors which affect the supply side of the health tourism industry. The second section, stakeholders identification their role and scope to develop the health tourism industry.

Globally, people are increasingly becoming health conscious, (Katalin, 2009) notes that feeling and looking healthy appear to be the mantra for today's fast-moving generation. Most developed countries are taking advantage of this interest in healthy lifestyles to promote health tourism as a strategic tourism product. Meanwhile, very little is being done in developing economies regarding health tourism development

(Tomka et al., 2011). Health tourism has been actively embraced by governments and private-sector actors in a growing number of lower- and middle-income countries as a potentially powerful economic growth engine. Meanwhile, critics generally warn that health tourism may harm destinations by stimulating private health care development unresponsive to locals' needs and resources (Sengupta, 2011).

Health tourism destinations can be used to attract foreign exchange, mitigate health worker brain-drain, and improve health care and tourism infrastructure (Bookman & Bookman, 2007). The development of the sector in recent years is mainly caused by changes in the lifestyle, demographics, people perception, culture, and globalization. Table 4 shows the research on factor Affecting Health Tourist Attracting in Different Countries by different researchers.

Table 4: Research on Factor Affecting Health Tourist Attracting in Different Countries, compiled from various sources.

S.No	Reference	Country	Methodology & Sample	Findings
1	Heung et al. (2011)	China	Qualitative method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with hospital representatives, chief executives, directors of medical organizations, and representatives of relevant authorities in the healthcare sector.	Factors including the economy (costs), infrastructure, government attitude, policies and regulations, promotion, expertise, investment potential, language and communication, facilities and attractions are barriers to medical industry development in China.
2	Chomvilailuk and Srisomyong (2015)	Thailand	Qualitative and quantitative research methods. Fifteen interviews for which the interviewees mostly represent the supply side of medical tourism. Quantitative data were collected from 117 patients of one hospital in Pattaya.	Perceived congruence of demand-supply medical, perceived quality of demand-supply medical facilities and brand image of hospitality facilities affect destination brand choices.
3	Ulaş and Anadol (2016)	Turkey	Qualitative research was conducted, and primary data were collected from the 2 directors and 12 medical professionals in a case hospital.	Government support, infrastructure, economic factors such as cost, capacity, and human resources orientation are the main factors affecting the development of medical tourism for a private hospital.

S.No	Reference	Country	Methodology & Sample	Findings
4	Das and Mukherjee (2016) India	India	A qualitative study, 30 people whose residences were located in Kolkata was interviewed.	Four dimensions, namely, awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and authenticity were developed to assess medical destination brand equity.
5	Ebrahim and Ganguli (2017) Bahrain	Bahrain	Quantitative research methods, Data were collected from medical service providers in the Kingdom of Bahrain.	Careful planning and management of multi-stakeholder engagement in the medical tourism sector are crucial to ensure place attractiveness.
6	Ganguli and Ebrahim (2017)	Singapore	Qualitative research method, in-depth qualitative analysis, case study.	An enabling tourism sector, strategic planning, Public-Private Partnerships, marketing and branding strategies, technology and innovation, accreditation and governance and human capital development are the 7 pillars that Singapore's competitive advantage stems from.
7	Aydin and Karamehmet (2017)	Turkey	Qualitative research was conducted. Structured interviews were carried out in one public and three private hospitals in Turkey	Factors affecting health tourism include costs, cultural distance, political and/or economic stability, regulations & legal framework, overall quality of care and trust

Stakeholders Role in Health Tourism Development

Stakeholders mean any individual, group, or institution, which potentially affects or would be affected by project activities and has something to gain or lose if conditions change or stay the same (Freeman, 2010). One of the most important factors to balancing stakeholders' relations and interests is the efficient role of government for coordinating, organizing, strengthening, legitimating and networking stakeholder relations in Nepalese health tourism market.

The support of health & tourism stakeholders is essential for the development of health tourism, successful operation, and long-term sustainability of the health tourism industry. In the health tourism industry, there are many stakeholders and their role is most important to develop and improve the industry. Byrd (2007) stated that: "for sustainable tourism development to be successful, stakeholders must be involved in the process". However, not all stakeholders have the same level of interest in health tourism development and may be less active or not active at all. Moreover, some stakeholders are more important than others in determining the success of health tourism activities.

The possible potential stakeholders in health tourism were determined based on literature and document review. Then, from among them, the key stakeholder of this industry, in Nepal, was identified, by interviewing the experts of health tourism. The key stakeholders were three groups of organizations and people with an important role in health tourism. The list of possible and key stakeholders is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Possible and key stakeholders in the health tourism industry in Nepal.

Demand	Supply	Regulation
Health Tourist	Health Provider (H)	Health Ministry
	Travel Operator (T)	Tourism Ministry
	Insurance Companies (H)	Other Institution
	Destination/Markets/Hotel (TR)	
	Transportation (TR)	
	Farmers& Herbs Collector (HR)	
	Pharmaceutical Company (HR)	
	Health Equipment Supplier (HR)	
	University/ Vocational School (O)	
	Investors (O)	

(Here, H- Health Provider, HR- Health-related Supplier, T- Tourism Provider, TR- Tourism related supplier, O- Other suppliers)

According to the stakeholder theory, each group of stakeholders has different as well as similar characteristics depending on the basis of attributes and criteria appropriate to the situation. These may include the relative power and interest of each stakeholder (Freeman, 1984), the networks and coalitions to which they belong (Freeman & Gilbert, 1987) and the importance and influence they have (Grimble & Wellard, 1997).

The result showed in Table 5 that the key stakeholders were made up of three different groups in the health tourism industry in Nepal. First government side stakeholders, second supply-side stakeholders, and third demand-side stakeholders. Based on their characteristics supply-side stakeholders also divided into five groups (Table 5) health providers, tourism providers, health-related supplier, tourism-related supplier, and other suppliers.

Figure 1: Stakeholders Relation in Health Tourism Industry in Nepal

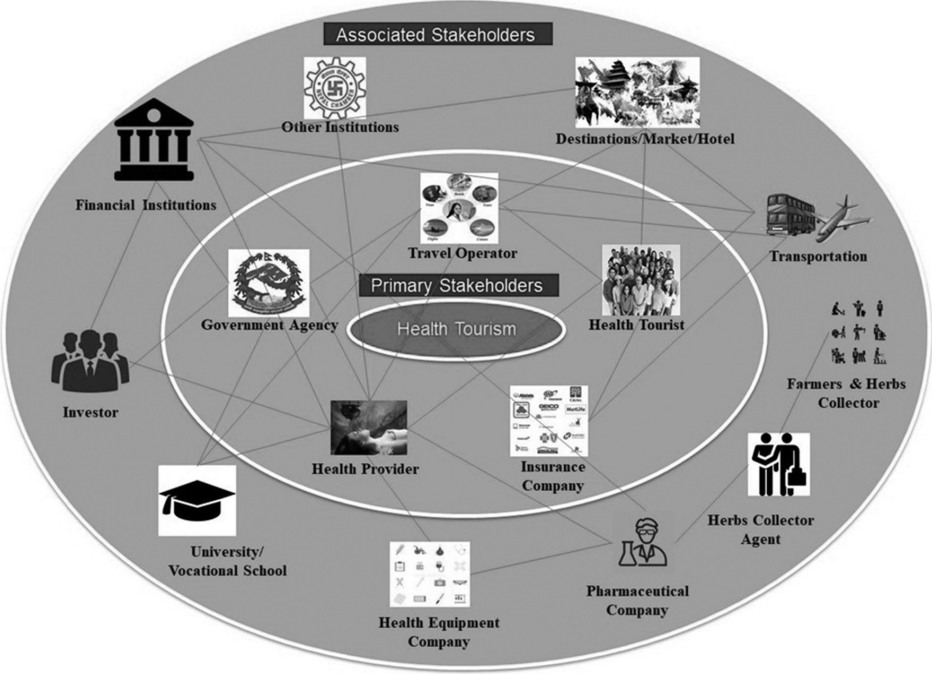


Figure 1 shows, in Health tourism industry in Nepal, there are primary stakeholders like health providers, tourism providers, insurance companies and government agencies and the other hand associated stakeholders as transportation, destinations, farmers and herbs collector, pharmacy, health equipment companies, universities, investor, financial institutes and other institution in vital role. We find here are many stakeholders and their relationship is too complex.

Thus, the government can make a plan, make a policy and decision, and use effective strategies to develop health tourism by designing a health tourism stakeholders' network, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

SWOT Analysis

In this research, we use the SWOT analysis method to find the most affecting factors for health tourism development and their suitable strategy. We conduct on-site interviews with the Nepalese government, health tourism providers, and health care providers. We then identify steps to more productively advance the discussion about the affecting factors and suitable strategy of health tourism development in Nepal. SWOT can serve as a basis for managers' and specialists' decisions and the determination of objectives (Nahman & Godfrey, 2010). Considering internal and external factors governing an organization it can provide a fit basis for formulating strategy (Chang & Huang, 2006).

Nepal Health Tourism Industry SWOT Analysis

Some of the SWOT analysis factors are identified by the author in their previous studies (Khanal & Shimizu 2019). And many of the factors are identified in this study and analysis for this research.

Table 6: Strength of Health Tourism Industry in Nepal

	STRENGTH	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a strength)
S1	Originality of Services	Nepal is the only country which health tourism services are based on mountains. Most of the herbs are coming from the mountainous area. The originality of the meditation, yoga and Ayurveda practices, and herbs.
S2	Medical Resources	BioDiversity in Nepal offers the possibility to explore original and high-value health tourism products. Nepal has good potential for medicinal herbs and medicinal plants.
S3	Professional Skill	Ayurvedic doctors and therapist provide health services. In addition, Nepal has many colleges and universities who provide medical education for Ayurveda and other health professional. Ayurvedic doctors are trained both Ayurvedic Treatment with allopathic treatment.
S4	Low Cost	The affordable price of health care and tourism services (health services, accommodation, etc.)

	STRENGTH	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a strength)
S5	Waiting Time and On Arrival Visa	Low waiting time for receiving health care services for health tourists. In addition, On arrival visa facilities for main tourists arrival countries.
S6	Tourism Attraction	Many Famous tourist attractions and trekking routes in Nepal. In addition, Nepal has five seasonal climates: spring, summer, monsoon, autumn, and winter.

Table 7: Weakness of Health Tourism Industry in Nepal

	WEAKNESS	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a weakness)
W1	Professional Human Resources	Lack of professional workforce for health tourism.
W2	Quality Standards	Poor quality control over services in health tourism centers.
W3	Lack of Promotion	Lack of proper operation of the mass media facilities (Broadcasting, local media, etc.) for health tourism marketing in the target market and Ineffective public information services to inform international health communities and failure to take part in international exhibits. In addition, another hand poor performance of Nepalese embassies in other countries regarding Nepal's health tourism potentials.
W4	Underdeveloped Infrastructure	Underdeveloped infrastructures (both overall and health providers)
W5	Lack of Government Support	Lack of governmental support to promote the health tourism industry. Failure of the ministry of health and ministry of tourism to keep the record of health tourists and even no health visa program for health tourist.
W6	Education and Training	In terms of hospitality and marketing education, health professional needs more education and training.

Table 8: Opportunity of Health Tourism Industry in Nepal

	OPPORTUNITY	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be an opportunity)
O1	Increasing Global Demand	Increasing awareness of Yoga and Ayurveda in developed countries like Japan, USA, Canada, and the UK with a high potential of health tourism and increasing Global demand for the health tourism industry.
O2	Increasing Cost of Healthcare	The cost of health service in the developed western world remaining high,
O3	Increasing Death of Lifestyle Cause of Disease	Fast-Paced lifestyle increases the demand for wellness tourism and alternative cures. Death caused by lifestyle diseases are increasing and the growth of demand for health attention.
O4	Government Attention	Attention to health tourism in country documents like Tourism Strategy (Vision 2020) National Tourism Policy (2016-2025)
O5	Developed Technology	Globalization and Internet technology, providing visibility to service providers around the world.
O6	Increasing no of Tourist	Nepal has potentials for historical, natural, cultural, adventure and religious tourism attractions. And the tourist growth rate is more than 25 percent per year.

Table 9: Threats of Health Tourism Industry in Nepal

	THREATS	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a threat)
T1	Global and regional competition	Intense competition among regional countries in attracting health tourists like India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
T2	Legal Problems	Facing some legal question from European countries for some Ayurvedic herbs and medicine about the quality standard.
T3	Limited Accessibility	Limited accessibility with many potentials tourist markets.

	THREATS	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a threat)
T4	Market Share and Promotion	Stronger marketing and promotion of other competitive health tourism destinations in Asia and the globe than Nepal.
T5	Brain-drain of Nepalese Health professionals	Because of high payment and opportunity availing in other similar health destinations, many of the Nepalese professionals working overseas.
T6	International Accreditation	Lack of healthcare centers approved by the international accreditation organization.

The potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of health tourism of Nepal from stakeholder’s perspective summarized that includes 6 strengths, 6 weaknesses, 6 opportunities and 6 threats (Table 6, 7, 8, and 9).

In table 6, According to the participant’s perspective, the most important strengths are originality of the service, medical resources, and professional skills, low cost of the treatment, low waiting time and Tourism attraction. Ricafort et al., in another study, presented the factors such as the reputation of the provider, low cost of the treatment, low waiting time for receiving treatment as factors affecting the choice of health providers or destination which is consistent with our results.

As table 7 shows lack of underdeveloped infrastructure, lack of promotion, lack of government support, lack of education and training and lack of quality standards is the main barrier for health tourism development. In another study of (Heung et al., 2011) also mention the lack of sufficient infrastructure and lack of promotion and marketing as a barrier for health tourism development.

In the opportunities, Table 8 shows increasing global demand of health tourism, increasing the cost of health treatment in developed countries, increasing the death of lifestyle cause disease, government attention, developed technology and increasing no of tourists are potential opportunities for health tourism development in Nepal.

In table 9, in terms of threats of the health tourism industry in Nepal; limited accessibility with other countries, low market share, and promotion, the brain drain of Nepalese health professionals and International accreditation are the most important threats.

SWOT Matrix

Table 10: Possible strategies for health tourism development in Nepal.

<p>Internal Factors</p> <p>External Factors</p>	<p>STRENGTHS (S)</p> <p>S1. Originality of Services S2. Medical Resources S3. Professional Skills S4. Low Cost S5. Waiting Time & On Arrival Visa S6. Tourism Attraction</p>	<p>WEAKNESS (W)</p> <p>W1. Professional Human Resources W2. Quality Standards W3. Lack of Promotion W4. Underdeveloped Infrastructure W5. Government Support W6. Education and Training</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITY (O)</p> <p>O1. Increasing Global Demand O2. Increasing Cost of Healthcare O3. Increase Lifestyle Cause Disease O4. Government Attention O5. Developed Technology O6. Increasing no of tourists</p>	<p>SO STRATEGY</p> <p>1. Promote originality of services and tourism attraction to attract the Global client. (S1, O1, O3) 2. Maintain cost of service with high quality. (S2, O2). 3. Increase the quality standard of medical resources to get the trust from health tourist. (S2, O5) 4. Conduct regular professional training; involve universities for research and development for human resource development. (S3, O4)</p>	<p>WO STRATEGY</p> <p>5. Establish Health tourism board to promote health tourism and design educational materials and training for health providers and also maintain the quality standards for health services. (O3, O4, W1, W2 W6) 6. Strong government involvement to develop health tourism policy and necessary regulations. (O4 O6, W5, W6) 7. Start a strong promotional campaign to attract health tourist from overseas countries. (O1, O2, O3, W3)</p>
<p>THREATS (T)</p> <p>T1. Global and Regional Competition T2. Legal Problems T3. Infrastructure T4. Low Market Share and Promotion T5. International Accreditation T6. Accessibility</p>	<p>ST STRATEGY</p> <p>8. Branding SPA, Meditation, Yoga, and Ayurveda as mountain-based health tourism. (S1, S2, T1) 9. Maintain a quality standard of health facility and overall services. (S3, T2, T5) 10. Encourage health providers to get accreditation from international organizations. (S1, S2, S3 T5)</p>	<p>WT STRATEGY</p> <p>11. Public-private partnership to develop overall infrastructure and increase investment in health tourism (T3, W4) 12. Use overseas embassies to promote health tourism in overseas markets. (T4, W3)</p>

Strategic Framework for Health Tourism Development

The purposed strategic framework begins with a vision statement aiming to develop Nepal as a perfect health tourism development destination. Among the vision, we have derived three objectives. These three objectives aim to support health tourism development in terms of policy, quality standard and promotion activities.

To develop competitive health tourism industry in Nepal, it is imperative to have a differentiated positioning and product offer. The positioning and unique product offer can assist to attract target related health tourist and help to increase awareness. The framework recommends that the focus theme be Health Tourism with Ayurveda, Yoga, Meditation & Spiritual and Medical SPA services as health tourism products.

Table 11 Strategic Framework for Health Tourism Development in Nepal.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH TOURISM IN NEPAL			
VISION			
Develop Nepal as a perfect health tourism destination in South Asia			
OBJECTIVE			
Regulation	Quality Standard	Promotion	
Make related policy and regulation standards to help the health tourism industry.	Maintain and control the quality standards of health products and overall services.	Promote Nepal as a unique and perfect health tourism destination in target markets.	
POSITIONING AND THEMES			
“Nepal as a Health Tourism Destination With Nature and Culture Tourism”			
Ayurveda Tourism	Yoga Tourism	Meditation and Spiritual Tourism	Ayurvedic & Medical SPA
STRATEGIC DIRECTION			
Short Term (In 1 Year)		Long Term (In 5 Years)	
1. Establish Health Tourism Licensing and Regulation Body with the involvement of Necessary Stakeholders. 2. Make the necessary policy and regulation to develop the health tourism industry. 3. nal organizations.		1. Increase Investment in Infrastructure at the list to benchmarking with competitors. 2. Branding SPA, Meditation, Yoga, and Ayurveda as mountain-based health tourism. 3. Promote originality of services and tourism attraction to attract the Global client.	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Establish Health Tourism Licensing and Regulation Body with the involvement of Necessary Stakeholders. 5. Make the necessary policy and regulation to develop the health tourism industry. 6. Capacity building: Basic Infrastructures like Water, Electricity and necessary roads. 7. Encourage health providers to get accreditation from international organizations. 8. Increase the quality standard of medical resources to get the trust from health tourist. 9. Conduct regular professional training; involve universities for research and development for human resource development. 10. Use overseas embassies to promote health tourism in overseas markets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Increase Investment in Infrastructure at the list to benchmarking with competitors. 5. Branding SPA, Meditation, Yoga, and Ayurveda as mountain-based health tourism. 6. Promote originality of services and tourism attraction to attract the Global client. 7. Strengthening health tourism product relevance to attract health tourist from other countries. 8. Full-Fledge branding & promotional initiatives. 9. Increase private sector participation and encourage strong public private partnership. 10. Establish a National accreditation system to control quality standard and support management activities of health providers.
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Recommended Coerces of Action

To develop Nepal as a perfect health tourism destination in South Asia and promoting and attract health tourist from overseas countries, a two-stage strategic direction is recommended.

First set of short term strategies to be carried out within the next one years that will bring Nepal to a competitive platform in the health tourism industry and build strong capabilities to create a unique health tourism destination. Next, set a long term plans to be carried out in the next five years that would catapult Nepal from the current state of an obscure destination to that of a preferred health tourism destination amongst the affluent markets by branding and marketing initiatives. Suggested strategies are listed in Table: 11.

Conclusion

The results represented that the health Tourism Industry of Nepal has many stakeholders. Even as some of the stakeholders have no direct relationship between them. Therefore, attention to these characteristics when planning development is

necessary. In addition, it is necessary to form a national health tourism council of health tourism, assign the main responsibilities, and delegate the necessary authority to stakeholders.

To recognize the strategic position of health tourism in Nepal (Table 11) can provide proper planning to get a share of health tourism high skilled manpower, high-quality health services, improved overall infrastructure and government support for promotion and policy-making are required. This study examined the Strength, Weakness, opportunities, and threats of the health tourism industry in Nepal. Nepal has a great potential for health tourism development with its uniqueness of service and location compare with other competitors country. Because of most of the countries health tourism base on the sea-based wellness and Nepal only country with mountain-based health tourism in the world.

Based on the SWOT analysis, some health tourism development strategies are possible to implement in order to attract foreign health tourist and develop the industry (Table 10). These strategies can be applied by policymakers or health tourism providers for betterment.

The results show that Marketing & Promotion, Infrastructure, Investment, Skilled human resources, poor quality standards, medical resources, policy & regulation and networking between stakeholders are the main barriers to the development of health tourism.

Further, it should design and implement long and short-term strategies in proportion to the problems raised. Policymakers can plan, make a policy and decision, and use effective strategies to develop health tourism by designing a health tourism stakeholders' network, a health tourism licensing and quality control body, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

Limitation of the Study

There are some limitations to this study; the most important are listed below:

- I. The complication of this research is mainly a health provider and the Governance side study (Supply Side and government side), therefore no experimental investigation was attempted or complied with the demand side.
- II. Lack of scientific Persian references in Nepal about health tourism issues.
- III. Lack of practical research that related to this topic in Nepal.

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**Prospects of Multifunctionality in Nepalese
Agriculture: The Agritourism Perspectives**

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Article

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Abstract

Multifunctionality of agriculture in the developed countries is employed as a means of rural revitalization and economic circulation. Although farm diversification in the developing countries is much more crucial, in most of the rural areas of the developing countries, it is not performed, and it is delayed. In this regard, the main objective of this study is to explore the possibilities of the multifunctionality of agriculture for the sustainable rural development for the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the developing countries. The empirical study was conducted in two of the rural districts of Nepal called Nuwakot and Rasuwa. The author intentionally chose these districts because it is one separate area north of the capital city Kathmandu and bordering to China. Further, even though the location is nearby the capital city, and the rural villages have excessive potentials for tourism activities, the farmers are still focusing on subsistence farming without getting benefits from tourism. Based on the macro data of Nepal government and field visit, the author conducted a case study. This study explored that most of the household heads are working in the agricultural sector, which can be one of the opportunities to launch multifunctionality of agriculture. However, due to their weak educational background, they are expecting external

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supports in terms of knowledge, technology, and more importantly, supportive policy. The federal and central government should give subsidy to the farmers so that they can start multifunctionality in their farms, which lead to sustainable rural development.

Introduction

Multifunctionality of agriculture is one of the hot issues for rural development, and many of the industrial countries practiced it (Ohe, 2001; Ciani et al., 2012, Ragkos et al., 2015). Recently, European Union (EU) developed the concept of territory development through the multifunctionality of agriculture (Todorova & Ikova, 2014; Lehman et al., 2009) which means not the only locality of the rural areas but also the areas of cities will prioritize where agriculture is the main occupation. Indeed, the small farmers of not only in the developing countries but also in the developed countries are facing many problems like selling their products and the low price even if they could sell the products and which ultimately pushes them towards poverty. Therefore, the farm diversification to generate additional income for the farmers is necessary both in developed countries and developing countries.

The poverty level of farmers in developing countries is more serious than in developed countries; 78% of the total poor population are living in the rural areas of developing countries and relying on farming (World Bank, 2014). It is because due to no or very low government support to the farmers (Yu et al., 2019), lack of adequate infrastructures and subsidies on the agricultural inputs, traditional farming system, conventional types of seeds used in the farms. These problems are causing low agricultural products and low farm income for the farmers. However, these problems of the farmers of developing countries can be taken as the identity of that particular destination and can be used as an opportunity to start tourism activities. The conventional farming system is more attractive for the tourists than the modern farming system because Ciolic et al. (2019) mentioned that traditional activities either in farms or households make the tourist participate actively or passively. Thus, if the multifunctional of agriculture is promoted properly, different tourism projects can be started. Due to the tourism activities in the locality, the additional income for the farmers will be generated, which leads towards the implementation of territory development.

In this regard, this study aims to explore the possibility of multifunctionality as a pillar for the economic diversification and economic circulation in the developing countries. For this purpose, the author decided to conduct a case study in Nepal because it is one of the developing countries, and this country can almost represent the characteristics of the developing countries. Furthermore, the farm diversification in Nepal is more necessary and possible because Nepal recently received the new constitution and got a stable government through the election (Bhatta & Ohe,

2019; Bhatta, Itagaki, & Ohe, 2019). The authors explored that farmers are willing to establish agritourism in the rural village where agritourism does not exist. The elected central government declared “Visit Nepal Year 2020” to double the current number of foreign tourist arrivals the country and the total number of visitors is expected to cross 2 million in the year 2020 (Tourism Vision 2020). At this moment, exploring the multifunctional activities in the country, first of all, help to diversify the farm income and economic circulations in the rural areas, secondly, it provides the additional tourism destinations for the visitors. Ultimately, the author believes that the multifunctionality of agriculture leads to poverty alleviation and SDGs implementation in developing countries.

Literature review

The concept of multifunctional agriculture emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century in developed countries where the economic importance of agriculture was negligible, and the community was increasingly concerned with the quality of consumed food and the surrounding environment (Todorova & Ikova, 2014). In the meantime, several policies to support the multifunctionality of agriculture, e.g., agri-environmental schemes started to be implemented in Europe (Lehman et al., 2009). Multifunctionality or multifunctional agriculture are terms used to indicate that agriculture can produce various non-commodity outputs in addition to food, for instance, rubber, latex, tobacco, drugs, etc. It is associated with particular characteristics of the agricultural production process and its outputs:

- the existence of multiple commodities and non-commodity outputs that are jointly produced by agriculture; and that
- some of the non-commodity outputs may exhibit the characteristics of externalities or public goods, such that markets for these goods function poorly or are non-existent. (OECD, 2003)

Multifunctional agriculture generates relatively high employment per additional unit of output; that is, the employment/production rate is higher in the multifunctional agriculture than in the primary agriculture (Heringa et al., 2013). Multifunctional activities in many rural areas are providing positive benefits to the farmers (Ohe, 2007). For instance, pluriactivities in the hamlets of rural Japan helped to prevent the farmland from being abandoned (Ohe, 2001); rural tourism activities by retirees could realize efficient and sustainable resource utilization of the farm and therefore enhance multifunctionality of agriculture (Ohe, 2008). Multifunctionality in Cyprus affected a range of social, economic, and environmental aspects of life on the island (Ragkos et al., 2015). Further, the total value of agricultural multifunctionality in Yangtze River Delta in China had increased by 23.2%, which was mainly attributed to a significant increase in food provision and cultural leisure values (Yu et al., 2019).

Based on these facts, the authors can say that multifunctionality is important for rural areas.

Due to the importance of multifunctional agriculture, in many countries, the multifunctionality of agriculture has been promoted (Ohe, 2001; Ragkos et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2019). The Antica Volce system in Italy is a territorial system, and it has emerged a great propensity at diversification activities. Indeed, almost 70% of the firms had at least one added activity to the classic production in this system (Borreli, 2016). Due to the multifunctionality of agriculture contributes positively to the farmers, the Thai citizens were willing to pay for changes toward multifunctional agriculture (Sangkapitux et al., 2017). Among the different attributes, Thai citizens suggested for the agri-environmental practices for being promoted, “organic agriculture in combination with agrobiodiversity conservation,” “organic farming as single practice” and “good agricultural practice combined with agrobiodiversity conservation” (Sangkapitux et al., 2017), which means that agritourism is very crucial for the farmers.

As the importance of the multifunctional agriculture is understood, Yu et al. (2019) suggested that the future land use policy should focus on both urban control and promoting agricultural multifunctionality to foster the sustainable development of agriculture in metropolitan agglomerations in China. Ongoing transformation practices, such as land consolidation, should aim to improve the biophysical and socio-economic functions of farmland (Yu et al., 2019).

To date, the majority of studies in multifunctionality of agriculture has been conducted focusing on the developing countries. Despite its importance, there is no such research conducted in the case of Nepal as many researchers agree that the multifunctionality of agriculture should be promoted in the farms (Ohe, 2001, 2006; Ragkos et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2019). The concept of multifunctional agriculture in Nepal should also be promoted in Nepal. Thus, the author investigates the prospects of multifunctional agriculture in Nepal.

Material and methods

Study area

As the main objective of this study is to explore the prospects of multifunctionality of agriculture in the rural areas to diversify the economic activities in the developing countries. The author chose Nepal because it is one of the developing countries, more than 2/3 of the total population are working in the agricultural sector however this sector is contributing less than 27% in the national GDP (MOF, 2018). Thus, the farm income for the Nepalese farmers should be increased, and diversifying farm activities is one of the ways of income generation for the farmers.

This study mainly focused on two districts of Nepal called Nuwakot and Rasuwa; these districts are located on the north of the capital city Kathmandu and becoming a separate area. Nuwakot is the neighboring district of the capital city, and Rasuwa has a border with China, and these two districts are crossed by the Pasang Lhamu highway, and one more highway which connects Raswagadi to Thori (under construction) which is proposed as the parts of OBOR (One-Belt-One-Road) initiatives of China government (Bhatta & Ohe, 2019). Similarly, Nuwakot district is connected by Pushpalal Lok Marga (a highway, which connects east and west of the country focusing on the hilly regions). A proposed inter-country railway also goes from these districts. Thus, shortly, this area is going to be a transportation hub.

Further, these districts are famous not only for nature as well as adventure tourism of Langtang National Park and Singla trekking trails but also famous for the religious attractions like holy lake Gosaikunda, and other 107 sacred lakes located in Rasuwa district and Bhairabi Temple, Devighat Temple, Dupcheswor, and others in Nuwakot district are the representative examples of religious sites (CBS, 2017a, 2017b). There are many more popular religious as well as cultural and historical places in these districts. Also, the habitat for the red panda in Langtang National Park attracts the visitor's attraction. These attractions and accessibilities can be the potential sources of tourists in the diversified farm activities after its establishment in the rural villages of both districts.

Data and analytical methodology

For the completion of this study, two types of data were administered. The table survey was conducted, and the secondary data was collected from the different websites of Nepal Government's authorized bodies such as the central bureau of statistics (CBS), Ministry of Finance (MOF), census reports of Nuwakot and Rasuwa, household survey of both districts, and Nepal Rastra Bank publications. The micro-level data were collected directly from the field survey in August 2017. A questionnaire interview to the farmers in one of the villages of Nuwakot called Phikuri was conducted. Phikuri is VDC in the previous administrative system of Nepal. The author first contacted the representatives of each ward of Phikuri VDC to help during the survey and requested to invite the farmers in a particular place for the survey purpose. Before the data collection, a presentation was given on the pros and cons of agritourism development in the village. In the beginning, there were around 80 farmers; however, some of them did not participate in the full process of the survey. A total of 64 farmers fully involved in the survey, which is the sample size of primary data. The Phikuri village is the combination of five ethnic groups, Brahman, Tamang, Chhetri, Damai, and Kami (Census, 2011). However, the majority of them are Brahmin and Tamang. Thus, data collection also focused on these communities.

As this study is mainly qualitative in nature, the author applied mostly the descriptive analysis, specifically tabulation and calculation of means in the appropriate places. Further, a case study was conducted based on primary and secondary data collection.

Results and Discussion

Both Nuwakot and Rasuwa districts have a significant number of people working in the agricultural sector. In Nuwakot, 97% of the household's primary source of income is agriculture, whereas, in Raswa, it is around 91% (Table 1). This data clarifies that most of the people of both districts are somehow depending on agriculture, and their income level is not good enough. As they are farmers, they focus more on farming, and the study was not their priority, which resulted in the lower literacy rate in both districts. Around 40% of the people are illiterate, and those who are literate also have some primary level of education. Female educational level is much lower compared to the male in both districts. Similarly, the number of female-headed households is only around one-fifth in both districts.

The role of the household head plays is essential for the multifunctional activity in agriculture. More than 95% of the household head of both districts are farmers, and their main source of income is farming. Thus, it can be assumed that the farmers are willing to develop the multifunctionality of agriculture to increase their income. Based on the result of the previous study conducted by Bhatta and Ohe (2019) and Bhatta et al. (2019), to explore the farmer's willingness to start agritourism, I can say that the farmers of the rural areas will be willing for the multifunctionality of agriculture. The scholars explored that farmers of rural Nepal, where agritourism does not exist were also willing to establish agritourism in their conventional farms.

Table 1: Statistics on the two districts

Item	Nuwakot	Rasuwa
Total farming population	264498 (person) 95.32% (percent) 53984 (holdings)	43798 (person) 87.30% (percent) 8504 (holdings)
Household whose main income is from agriculture	97.1%	91.30%
Literacy rate	59.8% (M=68.0%, F=52.4%)	59.80% (M=67.95, F=52.41)
Female-headed household	21%	22%
Household head is a farmer	51821 (95.98%)	8168 (96.04%)
Agricultural land area	32992 Hectare	4557 Hectare

Item	Nuwakot	Rasuwa
Total forest	43%	31.4%
Evergreen snow area	-	16.6%

Source: Nepal government, Household survey 2014.

Both districts have plenty of natural attractions, especially mountains and jungles. These jungles can be utilized for the major attractions for the tourism development in the villages. The buffer zone of Chitwan National Park is used for the jungle safari, Tharu cultural trail to the local communities is developed which increased the numbers of tourists in the nearby villages (Poudel, 2014) and Tharu culture is becoming an important attraction in Koshi (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018). Similarly, the jungles and buffer zone of Lang Tang National Park can be used as a complementary tourist attraction for the tourists.

This survey showed that at least one person from 45.3% household are either working in foreign countries currently or had worked in those countries for more than one year as a temporary worker (Table 2). The experience of the migrant returnee can be employed for the multifunctionality purpose because a study conducted by Bhatta and Ohe (2019) statistically proved that those who worked in the foreign countries more than one year are more likely to start agritourism in their home village. Working as a tourist supporter was also an additional supportive attribute for the diversification of the farm activities as the survey shows that 87.5% of the farmers have experience working as a tourist’s supporter. That means the farmers are already aware of the tourism environment, and they also know the pros and cons of tourism. Only 54% of the farmers said they have enough farm products to sustain their life. Which means the remaining 46% of the farmers need some extra income to run their daily life.

Table 2: Attributes of farmers

Item	Percentage	Sample size
At least one person worked in a foreign country	45.3%	64
Experience working as a tourist supporter	87.5%	64
Sufficiency of farm products	54.0%	64
Interested into new jobs	50.0%	64
*Regular student	41.6%	334
Handicrafts	50.0%	64

Source: Field survey Aug 2017.

*includes the information of the family members of the respondents and sample size only for this variable is 334.

On the other hand, 50% of farmers said that they want to challenge new job, farmers those who are willing to move towards new jobs can be employed in the multifunctionality of the farms. As a supplementary product of the farm, 50% of the respondents said that they are still producing some kinds of handicrafts in their homes. If we can monetize them, the young generation will also be attracted and contribute to sustainable development. Moreover, currently, 41.6% of the total sample are regular students. Based on this data, we can expect that if the farms start generating money, the new generation (youth) will also be attracted to farm activities.

Based on these presented information and field visit reports, the author conducted a SWOT analysis for that multifunctionality of agriculture in the two rural districts and presented in Table 3. The strengths and opportunities are the positive factors, whereas weaknesses and threats are the negative elements for the multifunctionality of agriculture. Therefore, the plus factors should be maximized, and the minus elements should be minimized for the sustainable tourism development in these districts.

Table 3: Swot analysis for the possibility of multifunctionality in the northern block

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plenty of attraction (natural, cultural, historical and religious)• Significant numbers of farmers are in agriculture• Some areas are performing specialized farming like rainbow trout fish farming, goat, yak farming and so on• Forest area and evergreen snow-covered landscape, Lang Tang National Park, evergreen snow-covered mountain range views	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor infrastructure• Small landholdings• Lack of coordination between the government bodies• The lower educational level of the farmers
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connected to China and the capital city• Crossed by the national highway and proposed train league between Nepal and China (Kerung)• 3rd popular tourist destination in Nepal including two popular trekking trails and one cultural trekking trail• Good geography (from the plain land to the mountain 7270m)• Ongoing transportation network development projects	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people do not like to work in agriculture• Easy to go to foreign countries especially for the temporary job and payment is comparatively high• Fear of losing local culture and tradition

Source: Author’s elaborations based on data analysis.

Conclusion

In this study, the author first defined why multifunctionality of agriculture is necessary for developing countries, and later on, the author presented how to farm diversification is possible in one of the separate rural areas of Nepal. The author presented a case study based on both primary and secondary data and explored that the rural villages have the potential for multifunctional agriculture. Also, the author defined SWOT for the multifunctionality of farms in the villages and its possibilities.

This study explored that the rural area of Nepal has possibilities of multifunctionality of agriculture. The results show that most of the household heads are working in the agricultural sector, which can be one of the opportunities to launch multifunctionality of agriculture. However, due to their weak educational background, they are expecting external supports in terms of knowledge, technology, and more importantly, supportive policy. Farmers those who are willing to challenge and to start new works can be another opportunity. Similarly, the available attraction (natural, religious, cultural, historical) supports the additional activities in and around the territory should be promoted from the tourism point of view.

Based on this study, the author suggests the following implications for the policymakers. For the multifunctionality of agriculture, the adequate infrastructure development, capacity building of the farmers should be done as early as possible. For instance, just the development of view towers in different destinations increase the numbers of visitors in the rural areas. The additional supportive activities can be developed in the nearby jungles, and the trekking and hiking in the snow-covered areas can be employed. The different villages can be connected in a single trail, and the agritourism trail can be developed where tourist can enjoy many different culture and traditions of the different communities. For instance, the red panda trail, agritourism trekking trails, the multi-ethnic cultural trail can be developed by joining multiple villages in the single package according to their interest.

This study deals only the macro data, the micro-level survey of a village, and the capacity of the farmers on hosting tourist and implementing multifunctionality should be the next step of the study.

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Relationship Between Quality of Life and Quality of Work life in a Small Island Destination: Millennial Employees' Perspective

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Abstract

The topic of Quality of Life (QoL) has received increased research attention in recent research years as tourism development should contribute to the wellbeing of destination communities and those who are employed by the tourism industry. The consideration of younger employees, that is the millennial work force is important globally but also for small island developing states with challenges of small population size and migration of the younger generation seeking better job opportunities abroad. To be prepared for the future, the tourism sector needs to understand and adapt to this younger workforce and investigate how they perceive their Quality of Work Life (QWL) and its impacts on their well-being. Examining how tourism contributes to QoL is important to better plan for tourism so as to support the prosperity of the population, industry and destination. Nevertheless, limited research has investigated QWL and QoL. The objectives of this study are to firstly examine the impact of QWL and QoL; secondly, to investigate the relationship between QWL and support for future tourism development and thirdly to examine the relationship between QoL and support for future

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tourism development. A mixed method approach with unstructured interviews and 400 questionnaires were used to investigate the issue. This study found that a relationship exists between QWL, QoL and support for tourism amongst millennials, and that age of the employees influenced this correlation.

Introduction

Research on tourism and quality of life (QoL) has received increasing attention in recent years (Woo et al., 2016) as the tourism industry impacts on the lives of the local population over time (Uysal et al., 2016). Moreover, in the context of small warm water island destinations with limited resources, tourism has long been recognised as a popular development option and acknowledged as a key strategy for economic advancement by governments to stimulate local economies. Nonetheless, debate still exists concerning the developmental outcomes of the tourism industry for local communities. Although tourism is essentially an economic activity, it has the potential to contribute to not only a destination's economy but to the wider personal and social well-being of residents particularly in less-developed nations including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016), resulting in a higher QoL. However, the benefits of tourism to the lives of the residents are still questionable and despite the attention on tourism as an attractive development option, the extent to which it contributes to QoL of residents requires further examination. Investigating how tourism contributes to QoL is important to better plan for tourism so as to support the prosperity of the population, industry and destination.

The motivation for tourism development in developing countries and SIDS has often been strongly connected to its potential to create employment for locals (Naidoo & Sharpley, 2016). However, little is known on the extent to which it contributes to meaningful employment which uplifts the lives of the locals. Sirgy et al. (2008) suggest that QWL can enhance QoL. QWL has been regarded as a significant construct in the tourism industry (Lee et al., 2015; Sirgy et al., 2001) but its value has mostly been discussed from the organisational perspective. For example, QWL has been correlated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, labour turnover and retaining competent employees (Wahlberg, 2017; Lee et al., 2015; Bednarska, 2013; Deery & Jago, 2009). However, negligible studies have examined the relationship between QWL and QoL of the locals in the tourism industry.

Moreover, labour force demographics worldwide are changing and this has resulted in the Millennial generation entering the workforce, making up a significant proportion of those working in the tourism and hospitality industry in the world (Heo et al., 2018). Millennials consists of 62% hospitality industry workers globally (Ruiz & Davis, 2017), however employee turnover is a major source of concern (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2013). Commentators suggest that this generation will soon

dominate the workplace and by 2025, three out of every four workers globally will be millennials (Singapore Tourism Board, 2014). It is also argued that millennials are characterised as having different perceptions towards their careers, heightened expectations and the desire for a better lifestyle (Singapore Tourism Board, 2014). Retaining millennial employees in the tourism industry has become a challenge for managers since millennials demonstrate different characteristics as compared to older generations of employees (Johnson & Ng, 2015). Moreover, the limited studies carried out in the specific context of Mauritius suggest that young people are turning away from employment in the tourism industry and seeking work on cruise ships (Pearce & Naidoo, 2016) and this trend has resulted in hotels losing their qualified work force with the outcome of high employee turnover.

Studies have shown that millennial hospitality employees tend to quickly leave the industry because of extensive working hours, negative work–life balance, and unattractive compensation (Brown et al., 2015; Bosselman, 2015). Besides, high labour turnover from the millennial-generation employees creates operational instability (Brown et al., 2015) and may affect the reputation of the organisation and destination appeal specially for SIDS like Mauritius which has been acknowledged by repeat customers for the hospitality of its older generation employees. Local industry knowledge reveals that the destination has been praised by tourists for the warm hospitality of the loyal employees over the years resulting in repeat international customers over decades. However, the millennials exhibit different characteristics than the older generation employees and are more likely to change jobs resulting in lack of continuity in a tourism organisation. Since tourism is a major economic activity in SIDS, it is important to understand how the millennials perceived their QWL since they have the potential to provide the know-how and deliver service quality which will shape the industry in coming decades. Therefore, how this cohort perceives QWL has implications for the future of tourism development in the destination.

Another feature of tourism and hospitality is that there is very little academic literature on how the millennial employees perceive their QoL as a result of working in the tourism industry and if they are likely to support the tourism industry in the future. Research in this area is particularly important for SIDS which rely on the tourism industry for economic, personal and social advancement of their populations over time. Since little attention has been paid specifically to the implications of tourism development to the QWL of the millennial workforce, consequently, the objectives of this paper are to: (1) examine the relationship between the demographic variables of the millennials, QWL, QoL dimensions and support for tourism, (2) assess the relationship between QWL and QoL for the millennials employed in the tourism industry (3) identify if there is a relationship between QOL and future support for tourism development amongst the millennial workforce (4) determine if there is a

correlation between QWL and support for tourism development. The next section discusses the literature review.

Literature review

Millennial employees

Millennials are perceived as a worthwhile segment of the workforce because they are the emerging employees and represent the future of the tourism talent pool (Lucas et al., 2016). Although, there is no consensus on their precise birth years, this generation consists of those who were born between 1980 and early 2000 (Smith & Nichols, 2015). The millennials are also referred to as “Generation Y, Gen Yers, Gen Y, Nexters, Generation www, Echo Boomers, and the Internet Generation” (Heo et al., 2018: 1). A generation cohort can be described as a segment of people “that shares birth years, age, location and important life events at critical developmental stages, divided by 5 to 7 years in the first wave, core group and last wave” (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66). As a result, each generation embodies similar events that act as a foundation for their perspectives, which has an influence on how they interpret the world (Heo et al., 2018).

Millennials tend to have different expectations about work (Fenich, et al., 2014) and have values and opinions that differ from older generations (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2015). Smith and Nichols (2015) suggest that the behaviour of millennials vary in terms of communication styles, attitude towards work, motivation and work habits. This group of youngsters are more demanding and expressive in their opinions, engage in multitasking (Solnet & Hood, 2008) and prefer to complete tasks in their own way and at their own pace (Heo et al., 2018). However, if the work conditions are not according to the expectations of this young segment, job dissatisfaction occurs and often results in intention to leave the workplace as compared to previous generations of employees (Lu & Gursoy, 2016) since millennials do not live to work. Ruiz and Davis (2017) suggest that the factor of fun is important for the millennial generation employees as they tend to quit an organisation if the work is not interesting or when they lack a supportive superior (Guchait et al., 2015).

QWL

QWL is an essential concept in the management of tourism industry employees. It deals with employees' well-being in the work place and is essential in how employees view the quality of their jobs in everyday life (Weaver, 2009). Wan and Chan (2013) suggest that QWL is a subjective construct regarding how an individual perceives his/her work and the working environment such as development opportunities and pay (Sirgy et al., 2001). QWL, therefore, assesses the effect of work on employees and “related components including the tasks, physical work environment, social environment, administrative system, and work–life balance” (Che Rose et al., 2006).

Studies have also noted that the concept of QWL is related to positive experiences derived from the work environment conducive to personal fulfilment (Malpas, 2005).

Studies have also shown that QWL affects job satisfaction and non-work domains such as family, leisure, social, financial life and subjective well-being (Lee et al., 2015; Sirgy et al., 2001). The argument is that when employees perceive that their QWL is high, they will tend to experience satisfaction with their job and other life domains. Roan and Diamond's (2003) identified three main dimensions of QWL, namely flexibility in working hours, work-life balance, and career potential. Kandasamy and Ancheri (2009) showed that good team relationships, good customer interaction, and good physical working conditions are three important QWL dimensions for hospitality employees. Bernardska (2013) suggests that QWL consists of several dimensions including pay, work-life balance, job security, job content, health/safety, career prospects, leadership and social relations. Although QWL has been examined in the tourism industry, there is a paucity of research surrounding how the former impacts on the QoL of locals directly employed in the tourism industry.

QoL

QoL is an emerging field of study and the concept is often interchangeably used with the term "well-being" (Uysal et al., 2016). Moscardo (2009: 162) defines the concept of QoL as "concerned with understanding people's perceived satisfaction with the circumstances in which they live". Research in QoL takes two broad measurement perspectives namely by examining (1) objective indicators (i.e level of education) and (2) subjective indicators (satisfaction with various aspects of life (Schalock, 1996). Several studies have examined how tourism affects QoL by examining the ways in which several factors, for instance, personal, social and physical environment contribute or detract from the betterment of the lives of people (Moscardo, 2009). The literature also suggests that economic measures of wealth alone is not sufficient to capture QoL as there are several dimensions which affect QoL and high income alone derived from tourism may have little influence on QoL (Andereck & Jurowski, 2006).

As a result, scholars have proposed several factors to be included in the assessment of QoL. For instance, Moscardo (2009) suggests that QoL is commonly assessed using an aggregate of capitals such as financial, natural, built, social, cultural, human and political. The model of Kim et al. (2013) suggest four main factors, namely material, community, health and safety and emotional well-being. Guo et al (2014) found that leisure time, family and societal atmosphere were important measure of QoL. Liang and Hui (2016) identified personal well-being and family as important dimensions of QoL. Andereck & Nyaupane (2011), Naidoo & Shapley (2015) and Suntikul et

al., (2016) found that recreational amenities were another important factor of QoL amongst other variables. Yamada et al. (2011) used five life domains namely health, wealth, safety, community contentment and cultural tourism development to assess QoL. Woo et al. (2016) examined community life, material life, health and safety and emotional life domains of QoL. Research in QoL is relatively recent as previous studies measured tourism impacts as a result of tourism development instead of specifically measuring QoL domains. A recent study on QoL has shown that residents who are affiliated with the tourism industry are more likely to support tourism development (Woo et al., 2016).

Methodology

Measurement

The study adopted a mixed method approach where both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used. Interviews were conducted with 15 millennials employed in the tourism industry to understand the factors they considered important to their QoL. These factors were then used to develop a self-administered questionnaire to assess their QWL and QoL perceptions in addition a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and survey instruments developed by past studies. This paper focuses on the quantitative findings and it is not in the scope of this work to provide a detailed overview of the interview methods and results.

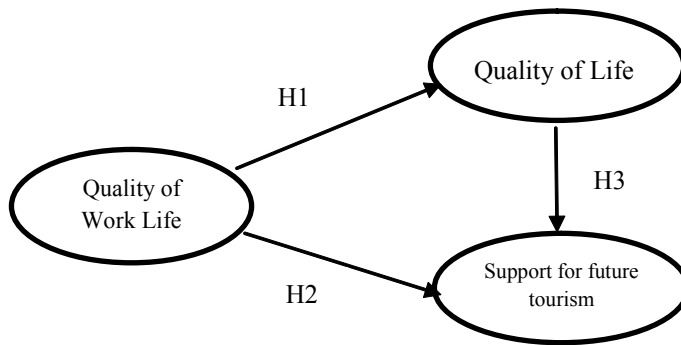
The first part of the questionnaire measured the respondents' perceptions of QWL in the tourism and 5 variables were adopted from the study of Bednarska (2013). The second part of the questionnaire measured four QoL factors: social well-being, material well-being, physical well-being, and emotional well-being and 24 items were adopted from past studies and interviews to capture the QoL factors. In addition, respondents were asked to rate their perceptions for support for future tourism development on 3 items. This study uses a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 (rating from strongly disagree to strongly agree) to measure the items of the three constructs. Finally, demographic information about age, gender, education, workplace and length of work was collected.

A convenience sample was used by distributing the surveys to local employees aged between 18 to 38 working in tourism and hospitality sector. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed and 341 (85.3%) questionnaires were retained for analysis. The relationships between the respondents' key demographic characteristics and their perception of QWL, the dimensions of QoL and support for future tourism development were investigated. A one-way ANOVA was employed to examine the differences of the study variables across other demographic variables. Significant ANOVA models were further undertaken using post-hoc testing (Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference statistic) to investigate specific differences among the

demographic variables and each of the three levels of the dependent variable. Figure 1 presents the constructs and the hypothesised relationships:

- H1: QWL has a positive and significant effect on QoL
- H2: QWL has a positive and significant effect on support for future tourism development
- H3: QoL has a positive and significant effect on support for future tourism development

Figure 1: Proposed model



SPSS 20 and AMOS 21.0 were used to analyse the data. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, a measurement model was first estimated using confirmatory factor analysis. The high factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variances extracted (AVE) for each construct were used to confirm the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the instrument. The structural equation modelling was employed to test the hypotheses.

Results

Profile of the respondents

Table 1 presents the descriptive results of the respondents' demographic characteristics. There are more male respondents (56%) than female (44%). Respondents are mainly in the 18-25 years age group accounting for 46.3% of the sample, followed by the 32-38 years age group accounting for 27.6%. The leading workplace category is "hotel" (40.8%), followed by "airline company" (24.0%). Most of the respondents' length of work in the organisation were in the range of 1-3 years (35.5%), followed by less than one year (20.8%).

Table 1: Demographics of respondents

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Gender	Female	150	44.0
	Male	197	56.0
Age	18-25	158	46.3
	26-31	89	26.1
	32-38	94	27.6
Workplace	Hotel	139	40.8
	Travel Agency	45	13.2
	Airline Company	82	24.0
	Tour Operator	32	9.4
	Recreational Company	43	12.6
Length of Work	< 1 year		
	1 – 3 years	71	20.8
	4 – 6 years	121	35.5
	7 – 9 years	62	18.2
	10 – 12 years	69	20.2
	13 - above	13	3.8
		5	1.5

Discussion

Demographic effects on QWL, QoL and support for future tourism development

A one-way ANOVA was employed to examine the differences of QWL, the four dimensions of QoL and support for future tourism development across three demographic variables: gender, age and workplace. The tests utilised the summated variables of all model factors and estimated one-way ANOVA test using one of the three demographic factors as a factor determining the difference (Table 2). The results indicated non-significant results on all factors for gender and workplace, indicating that neither of these demographic variables impact on perceptions of QWL, QoL and support for future tourism development. Whereas for age, the one-way ANOVA model generated non-significant results on all factors except for physical well-being (PWB) ($F = 7.357, p < 0.001$) and Support for future tourism ($F = 5.043, p < 0.007$).

Table 2: ANOVA results for gender, age and support for future tourism

ANOVA	Gender		Age		Workplace	
Factor	F-value	Sig.	F-value	Sig.	F-value	Sig.
QWL	1.364	0.244	1.152	0.317	0.804	0.523
SWB	3.146	0.077	0.293	0.746	1.063	0.375
MWB	0.250	0.617	0.585	0.558	2.38	0.052
PWB	0.504	0.478	7.357	0.001*	0.765	0.549
EWB	1.664	0.198	0.006	0.994	0.870	0.482
Support	0.724	0.396	5.043	0.007*	0.939	0.442

* $p < 0.01$

Tukey HSD tests were used to investigate specific differences in each age group and their strength on PWB and Support for future tourism development. The results showed that millennials in the 32-38 years' age group have significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher mean differences for PWB compared to respondents in the 18-25 and 26-31 years' age groups. These results indicate that millennials between the ages of 32 and 38 years perceive greater PWB than millennials aged 18-25 and 26-31 years. However, it further observed that millennials in the 18-25 years age group have significant influence on support for future tourism development as compared to millennials in the 26-31 and 32-38 years age group.

Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to confirm the structures of the four-factor QoL construct of this study. In order to ensure convergent validity, two items from MWB and one item from EWB were deleted, as they exhibited loadings of less than 0.4, thus increasing the average variance extracted (AVE) and enhancing composite reliability. After modification, the factor loadings of all remaining items of each construct were within the range of 0.611 and 0.882. Furthermore, the Cronbach's coefficients were above the suggested value of 0.60. As shown in Table 3, the composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.792 to 0.886, which were all above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010), indicating a good internal consistency reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.50 to 0.56. All of them were larger than or close to the suggested threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010) showing that all items captured sufficient variance in their underlying factors. The measurement model fit the data well as $\chi^2(58) = 179.1$ ($p = .000$), GFI = .925, NNFI = .968, CFI = .977, and RMSEA = .064.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and assessment of constructs' internal consistency reliability and convergent validity

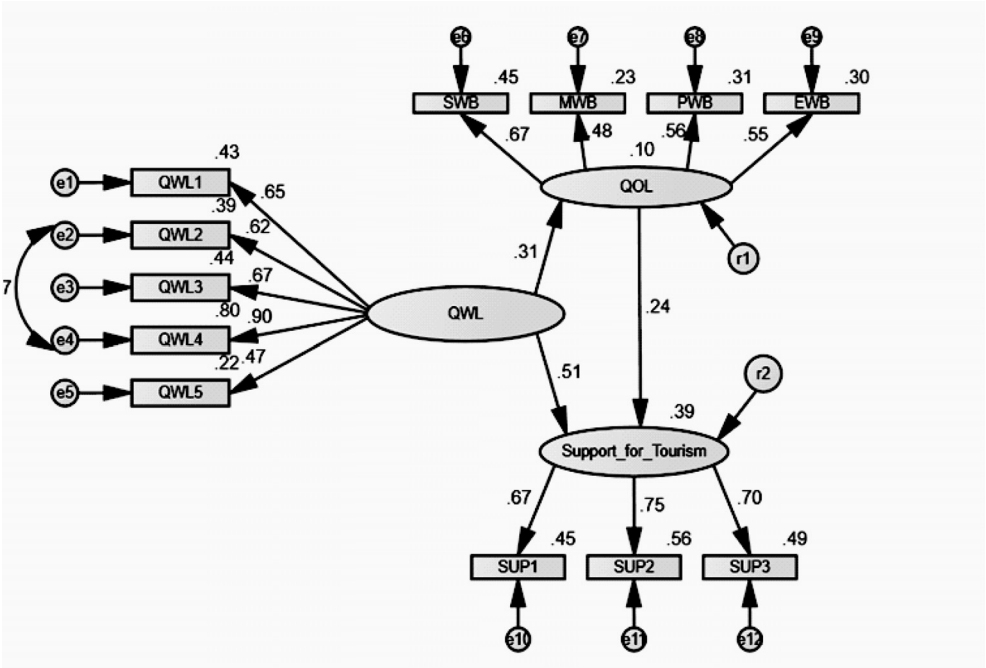
Constructs and Indicators	Mean (SD)	Loading	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
Social Well-Being (SWB)	3.52(0.78)		0.842	0.50	0.886
I have enough time for myself.	3.28(1.28)	0.62			
I feel comfortable in my community.	3.54(1.23)	0.71			
I like to spend my leisure time with my family.	3.61(1.19)	0.86			
I enjoy the company of others	3.54(1.20)	0.61			
I actively contribute to the lives of others.	3.46(1.24)	0.63			
I have a good status in the society.	3.57(1.26)	0.67			
I participate in leisure activities	3.53(1.23)	0.71			
People in my community respect me.	3.57(1.25)	0.78		0.51	0.829
Material Well-Being (MWB)	3.44(0.86)		0.720		
I possess more than others.	3.47(1.21)	0.64			
I am financially independent.	3.59(1.12)	0.79			
I am satisfied with the amount of income I generate.	3.51(1.19)	0.74			
I can afford expensive things.	3.29(1.28)	0.65			
I can satisfy my basic needs.	3.35(1.33)	0.68			
Physical Well-Being (PWB)	3.50(.75)		0.682	0.52	0.841

Constructs and Indicators	Mean (SD)	Loading	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
I am content with my health constitution.	3.45(1.22)	0.72			
I feel that I am totally fit.	3.45(1.08)	0.64			
I have healthy habits.	3.65(1.06)	0.88			
I am able to perform my daily living activities.	3.34(1.18)	0.65			
I am healthy.	3.59(1.17)	0.68			
Emotional Well-Being (EWB)	3.62 (.91)		0.667	0.56	0.792
I am satisfied with my life as a whole	3.58(1.13)	0.80			
I am living a fulfilled and meaningful life.	3.57(1.17)	0.77			
I am optimistic for the future.	3.72(1.06)	0.67			

Structural model

Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses. The results of the structural model fit the data well: $\chi^2 (50) = 149.748$ ($p = .000$), $GFI = 0.927$, $NFI = 0.903$, $CFI = 0.902$, and $RMSEA = .078$. The standardized path coefficients for significant relationships are depicted in Figure 2. A significant and positive relationship between QWL and QoL was found ($\beta = .31$, $t = 4.323$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. The path coefficient between QWL and Support for future tourism was also positive ($\beta = .51$) and significant ($t = 6.982$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 proposed a significant positive relationship between QoL and Support for future tourism development. The path coefficient between QoL and Support for future tourism development was positive ($\beta = .24$) and significant ($t = 3.202$, $p < .01$), therefore Hypothesis 3 was supported. QWL explained 10% of the variance in QoL while QWL and QoL jointly explained 39% of the variance in Support for future tourism. Therefore, H1, H2 and H3 are all supported.

Figure 2: Structural model estimation



The ANOVA models for the demographic variables, gender and workplace produce non-significant results. The finding suggests that gender and workplace variables may not be effective bases of segmentation for examining the relationships among QWL, QoL and support for future tourism amongst the millennial employees. Concurrently, it was found that age may be useful in predicting QoL and support for future tourism. It appears that in general, younger employees support future tourism development, while older millennial employees perceive higher PWB. Hence, the more mature the millennials, that is the 32-38 years age group, the greater importance attached to physical well-being and adopting healthy lifestyle habits. The 18-25 years age group showed support for future tourism development indicating that the younger millennials are most favourable to tourism development as they are easily absorbed by the industry after high school or with their Hotel School or University degrees since the industry is highly labour intensive and requires a large front-line workforce.

This study also sought to understand the relationships among QWL, QoL and support for future tourism development for millennial employees in the tourism and hospitality industry. A strong positive relationship between millennials' QWL and support for future tourism development was found. Positive and significant relationships were also found for QWL and QoL and, QoL and support for future

tourism development respectively. Other studies such as the research of Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) have revealed that residents who feel that tourism affects their QoL from an economic perspective are more likely to support future tourism development in their community. The findings of Yu et al. (2018) also show that QoL was an important factor in predicting tourism support.

Conclusion

The tourism industry is one of the most important sectors in a small island state like Mauritius and thus its contribution to the wellbeing of employees is an important area of investigation. This study extends previous scholarly work on tourism development and the QoL of destination communities. It specifically examines the relationships among QWL, QoL, and support for tourism amongst employees. This approach helped the researchers to identify the most important QoL dimensions which are influenced by the QWL of the millennial employees. The major contribution of this study is therefore to advance knowledge by explaining if QWL influenced indicators of QoL and if they impact on support for future tourism development. This research contributes not only to exploring QoL but also investigating the relationships with QWL amongst the millennial employees who are the backbone and the future of the tourism industry and the experience economy.

Further studies on QWL and QoL could use a more comprehensive set of indicators for QWL and also extend the proposed framework by integrating the job satisfaction and employee retention of the tourism industry workforce. Moreover, studies could specifically examine ways to improve QWL for millennials as it has a direct relationship with QoL.

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Perspectives of Nepalese Youth on Ecotourism Practiced at Rara National Park, Western Nepal

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Abstract

Participatory conservation approach practiced in most of the protected areas of Nepal mandate the active role of people for conservation planning and implementation. Peoples' participation in conservation is largely regulated by the benefits they receive. Ecotourism, as it envisions the improved living standard of local people, could be one of the drivers for alluring local people towards biodiversity conservation. Thus, it is essential to assess ecotourism potential of a site for planning and implementing community engagement for biodiversity conservation. The potentiality of ecotourism depends upon three major factors i.e. visitors' satisfaction, willingness of local people to participate in ecotourism related activities, and enthusiasm of park authority. Studies on ecotourism potential in Nepal are limited in scope and time. Therefore, this study tends to recognize the perspective of youth towards ecotourism in Rara National Park, where visitors' numbers are growing of late. Scheduled interview was used to collect the perspectives of youth. Data were explored using descriptive statistics and association between the perceptions and visitors' general background were explored using Chi-Square test. In the

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study, length of stay was observed to be associated with educational background. As per the responses, ecotourism activities in the park were found to contribute in biodiversity conservation and betterment of livelihood of local people. Though, the number of tourists are increasing, they are not adequate yet with potential to increase further in near future. When optimum tourist visit the park area, ecotourism activities can create win-win situation to biodiversity and people.

Introduction

“Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”(UNWTO, 1994). Existing literatures relate the origin of tourism to antiquity when sporadic travels analogous to tourism were practiced which took a while to turn in to ‘The Modern Tourism’ and is proliferating since its emergence in the post war growth era in the 1940s (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Gyr, 2008). Such a growth can be attributed to strong and positive relation to economic growth of countries as per chosen degree of specialization of tourism (Brau, Lanza, & Pigliaru, 2007). Obtained economic growth is not stimulated by foreign exchange income alone but also with the employment opportunities created (Lee, Cheng, & Cheng, 2007). Tourism, with a projection of continued growth, currently is one of the fastest growing sectors across the globe (Wight, 1997). The similar trend can be observed as of late. The number of visitors increased by 3.9% globally in 2018 and contributed 10.4% to global GDP creating 319 million jobs (10% of total employment) (WTTC, 2019).

Endeavoring an explanation about the relationship between tourism and economic activity requires consideration of merits and demerits of tourism development (Sinclair, 1998). Tourism, like the other driving force of economic development, has potential positive and negative effects. The significance of tourism has been acknowledged by governments of different countries. Besides, it has been acknowledged in international forums as well. The Manila declaration on world Tourism of 1980 recognized its importance as “an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies, and on their international relations”.

Government of Nepal has also prioritized tourism sector. For the sake of enhancing tourism sector and encouraging locals in this field, development of the modern infrastructures has been focused by the Government of Nepal (Shakya et al., 2013). But despite the possibility of tourism on various sites across all the physiographic provinces, tourism activities are limited to few places like Kathmandu, Pokhara, Annapurna Conservation Area, Chitwan and Lumbini along with the climbing activities of snow-capped mountains. Though, Nepal is bestowed with features like

scenic beauty, rich biodiversity, snowcapped peaks, tangible and intangible cultural resources we are yet to capitalize those resources.

There are good prospects of tourism in Nepal which is encouraging to investors to grab the opportunity and gain good benefits (Bhote, 2018). Since Nepal has been granted with good varieties of factors required for tourism such as diverse landscape, biological resources and culture, it's being destined for visits and a good contribution to the Nepalese economy is being made (Gautam, 2008). Some of the available features fascinating tourists in Nepal have been natural and cultural heritages, mountain climbing, trekking, rafting, jungle safari, bird watching, mountain biking, mountain flight, paragliding, bungee jumping, rock climbing, etc.

The tourism potentiality can be converted into social and economic prosperity. In Nepal, significant relationship has been observed between earning from tourism and economic growth of the country (Gautam, 2011). The generation of job due to several tourism activities such as establishment of hotels, development of new economic activities like cycling, parking of vehicles, taking care of tourist's goods, tourist guide etc. help in the local economy and its development. Regarding adventure based tourism which is a major form of tourism includes more positive effects than adverse effects with congregating Nepal's national economy (Zurick, 1992). It is undeniable that in spite of its growing relevance and the proven contribution to GDP, jobs and spreads, tourism still lacks up to the level it could have been due to less political and economic recognition (UNWTO, 2010). Though tourism industry has been recognized for its remarkable economic and social benefits, providing jobs and increase in GDP, it has been regarded as the wide source of environmental problems, especially in developing countries like Nepal (Nyaupane & Thapa, 2006).

Ecotourism

Tourism industry enhances the economy of countries while strengthening their tourism industries strategically (Fayissa, Nsiah, & Tadasse, 2007). Tourism makes unknown known with the transverse and diverse communication media along with diffusion of information regarding the place to quench the thirst of tourists before and after travel which in other hand enhances the tourism (Isbășescu & Fîntîneru, 2013). Despite having such advantages, there have been already a consensus that poor and ill-conceived tourism activities exert adverse impacts on various aspects of environment. A general pattern has been like, 'more popular the place is, greater the adversities it faces' (Hillery, Nancarrow, Griffin, & Syme, 2001). Such situations may not always yield benefits from tourism after inclusion of cost incurred on treating negative consequences of the very activity and thus, requires another form of sustainable tourism.

Ecotourism is a nature based tourism which directly or indirectly promotes and supports sustainable economic development leading towards the development of local infrastructure and enhances the rural economy through the demand of essentials required for accommodation purpose (Nicula & Spânu, 2014). Out of many advantages those ecotourism has been providing, economic gains in terms of incomes and employment along with the conservation of nature are the major concern (Tisdell, 1996).

The International Ecotourism Society (1991) defines ecotourism as the responsible travel to the natural areas that conserve the natural environment and improve the living standard of the local people. Ecotourism is now defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”(TIES, 2015).

In 2002, Quebec Declaration suggested five distinct criteria to be used while defining ecotourism which are; nature based product, minimal impact management, environmental education, contribution to conservation, and contribution to community (Dowling & Fennell, 2009) and ecotourism is a component of the green economy as well (K.C., Rijal, & Sapkota, 2015). Ecotourism involves learning about several environmental aspects and preserving it with the active involvement of local people, which progressively optimize the benefits and minimize the problems (Boamah & Koeberl, 2007). Ecotourism is about conservation of resources, uplifting communities and sustainable development with minimal impacts on the physical, social, behavioral and psychological aspects with the recognition of rights and spiritual belief of indigenous people (Blamey, 2001).

Ecotourism potential is high in the case of Nepal but potentiality is not properly harnessed due to lack of proper policy and institutions to guide ecotourism activities (GoN/MoF, 2019). Ecotourism in Nepal, their role in sustainable development and impact of climate change on tourism are among a few pieces of works in regards that have been documented from Nepal (K.C., 2016; 2017). While ecotourism is being considered as the smartest tool for the conservation of the resources globally, it seems to be very appropriate in developing countries like Nepal as well since it allocates less amount of capital in the tourism sector (Tiwari, Nepali, Paudel, & Upadhaya, 2017).

Protected area and ecotourism

Protected areas are established with the motive of conserving the biodiversity of any region. They are often considered to be the cornerstone of conservation. But the conservation success in the protected areas are largely dependent on ability of park managers to invest in the conservation of Biodiversity. Park tourism supports the crucial component of conservation funding made to the park. Thus, it's crucial to consider about sufficiency of the visitors in the park (Eagles et al., 2006). Ecotourism

in protected areas is meaningful to establish mutual relationship between the park authority and local people (Xu, Lü, Chen, & Liu, 2009)

Poverty of people living in the vicinity of the park is one of the important drivers of environmental degradation in the protected areas (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008). Carefully planned ecotourism, besides making significant improvement in the living standard of people, also contributes to the conservation of biodiversity, which have been already evident in some protected areas of Nepal. Ecotourism activities have brought job opportunities and income to local people in Annapurna Conservation Area in Nepal and have contributed to conservation of varied landscapes, culture and biodiversity (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008). Scaling up this success to other protected areas of Nepal can ease up the tension between local people and park authority arising either due to differential understanding about the resource use perspectives or due to human wildlife conflicts.

Modern history of conservation in Nepal was initiated with the establishment of Chitwan National Park in 1973. At the beginning the conservation was primarily guided by fine and fence approach. Local people whose livelihoods were historically dependent upon the natural resources were made deprived of those resources, creating the situation of tension between management authority and local people (Allendorf, 2007). This was later addressed in 1996 when the concept of buffer zone was introduced in Nepali conservation policy with the motive of reconciling conservation and development through enhanced participation of local people in conservation (Budhathoki, 2004). This shift in management and governance approach of Nepal's protected area system from a strict protectionism approach to a participatory management model over time, following the political turmoil where country's socio political systems have advanced to a more democratic system (Bhattarai et al., 2017).

The participatory approach involves people in management of resources in a sustainable manner meanwhile providing aid in different socioeconomic developmental activities for the communities. Assistance to communities for socioeconomic developmental activities is an important factor that motivates people in turn to be involved in management of resources (Lee, 2013). However, providing such a support to communities in a sustainable manner would be difficult unless there are sustainable ways to raise funding. In this context, ecotourism can be a fairly good solution for generating funding that will work as conservation finance. Furthermore, ecotourism supports in conservation through other activities like raising awareness, education and interpretation.

Despite the significance of ecotourism in Nepal, there are not enough researches that adequately address the perspectives of ecotourism. Policy documents of Nepal

also have failed to understand the difference of other nature based tourism from ecotourism (Aryal, Ghimire, & Niraula, 2019). Low priority by the government means, problems related to ecotourism are rarely addressed by concerned government authority. Ecotourism entrepreneurs have faced many tourism related problems during the operation (KC, Rijal & Sapkota, 2015) which have significant impact to the tourists as well. Similarly, awareness regarding environmental practices and sustaining experiences in ecotourism accommodation may lead to visualize positive environmental attitudes, thus increasing their interest in further ecotourism experiences (Won & Gianna 2005). Therefore this study examines potentiality of ecotourism at Rara National Park based on perception of youth towards ecotourism and associated attributes of Rara National Park by exploring the physical, social and economic fronts of the ecotourism activities at Rara National Park.

Research methods

Study area

This study was conducted in the Rara National Park (Figure 1). Rara National Park, 81° 59'54" to 82° 8'27" E, 29° 26'28" to 29° 33'11"N, with elevations ranging from 2754 to 4097 m, was established on 1976 and its buffer zone was declared in 2006. The total area of the park is 106 Sq. Km and buffer zone covers the area of 198 Sq. Km. Major portion of the park lies in Mugu district while a fraction of area lies in Jumla district. Rara Lake, which is the largest and deepest lake of Nepal is the major attraction of the park. The lake extend about 5 Km in length, 3 Km in breadth and is 167 m deep and the area is 10.65 Sq. Km. The Lake was listed as a Ramsar site in 2006.

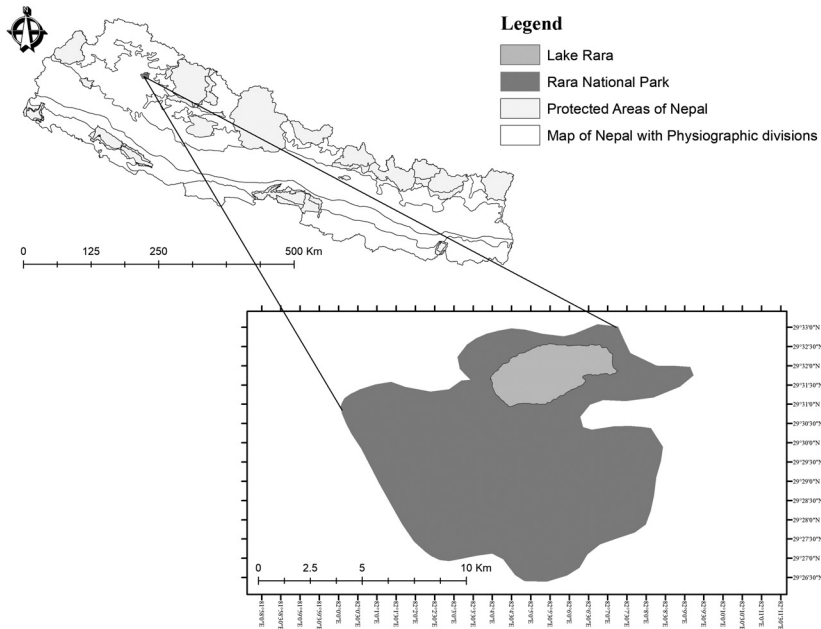
The climate of Rara National Park has Alpine climate and experiences very cold winters during the months of December to March. Temperature falls below zero degree Celsius mostly and accompanying heavy snowfall causes blocking of the high passes. High passes become accessible only after the temperature rises up from the months of April to June till the monsoon enters from June to August. The months of September and October with excellent weather conditions provide ideal conditions for the park visit.

The distribution of the vegetation in the Rara National Park varies on response to the change in elevation. The major forest type found in the locality are upper temperate blue pine forest, Fir forest, Birch-Rhododendron forest, and Moist Alpine scrubs. The area around the lake is dominated by Blue Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*) up to 3200 m. Other tree species include Rhododendron (*Rhododendron arboreum*), Black Juniper (*Juniperus indica*), west Himalayan Spruce (*Picea smithiana*), Oak (*Quercus semecarpifolia*), and Himalayan Cypress (*Cupressus torulosa*). A mixed forest of pine, spruce, and fir occurs from 3200 to 3550 m. At about 3350 m, the forest changes to a

coniferous-broadleaf forest of fir, oak, and birch. Other deciduous tree species include Indian Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus indica*), Walnut (*Juglans regia*), and Himalayan Poplar (*Populus ciliata*).

The park is home to 51 species of mammals. Some of the mammals found in the park are Himalayan Black Bear, Himalayan Tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*). Altogether 272 species of birds have been reported from the park area including the national bird of Nepal i.e. Danphe (*Lophophorus impejanus*). Rara Lake and the coniferous forest surrounding the lake serves as a habitat for different migratory birds. The Lake is home to three endemic species of fishes and one endemic frog species has been reported from the park area.

Figure 1: Map of study area showing Rara National Park and Rara Lake



Data collection

Google forms were used to collect responses of the visitors. For the purpose of collection, schedule was prepared in the google forms. The schedule was divided into five sections. In first section, questions related to the general background of the visitors including their gender, age group, occupation, highest educational degree received, educational background, occupation, temporary address and permanent address were placed. Besides, 'information about the date of visit', 'length of stay at Rara National

Park' and 'source of information about the visit to the national park' were collected in the same section. In second section, questions related to the major attraction of the park were listed. Respondents were requested to rate geological attraction, cultural attraction, floral attraction, faunal attraction, recreation and amusement, uniqueness and wilderness in five point Likert scale with rating "1" assigned for poor and "5" assigned to exceptional. In same sections, respondents were asked to provide details of the major attraction and other places in the vicinity of the park to incorporate within the tourism circuit. In the third section, perception of the respondents about the facilities offered to the visitors at the park were collected. Likert scale was used in this section as well to rate the quality of the food, accommodation facility, water and sanitation status, ease for communication, level of security, medical facility and transportation facility to reach to Rara National Park. In the fourth section visitors were requested to provide perception on the impact of ecotourism activities on social and biological environment. Fifth and final section was designed to collect the response of the visitors about the impact of tourism activities within Rara National Park. Likert Scale was used over here as well. The visitors were requested to provide responses on the impact of tourism activities in physical, social and economic environments by assigning value "1" to indicate strongly negative impact and "5" to indicate strongly positive impact.

List of the tourists who have been to Rara National Park was prepared through various means including social media. We were able to list out 105 respondents with the help of social media and other people in our circle. Each of them were invited to participate in the survey by sending them a link to the questions. Respondents were asked to log-in with their email account to avoid duplicate responses. At the interval of one month, after sending invitation, they were reminded about the survey. If a person ignores even after two reminders, s/he was neglected.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to explore the nature of data. The association between the characteristics of the respondents (Gender, Age Group, Educational Background, Highest educational degree received, occupation, permanent address and temporary address) with their perception about the major attraction within the Rara National park, the facilities offered to them and impact on the different environments were explored using Chi-Square test at 95% confidence interval. All the analysis were performed using JASP software (JASP Team, 2019).

Results

General characteristics of respondents

In the online survey, of 105 respondents invited to participate, 85 respondents provided their response. Majority of the respondents were male (82.4%). The

respondents have at least completed higher school level (10+2) with majority of them either completing masters (65.9%) or bachelor level (31.8%). Most of the respondents those participated in the survey were the youth from 26-30 years followed by 21-25 age group (Table 1) dominated by the people involved private job and students (Table 2).

Table 1: Details of the age group of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
16-20	1	1.2
21-25	23	27.1
26-30	44	51.8
31-35	14	16.5
35-40	2	2.4
40+	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

Table 2: Occupational background of the respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Academic	2	2.4
Freelancer	13	15.3
Government job	12	14.1
Private Job	32	37.6
Students	24	28.2
Other	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0

Respondents from all seven province of Nepal were found to be participating in the online survey. Of these respondents, majority of the respondents were from province 3 followed by province 5. Almost 80% of the respondents were found to be living temporarily at province 3 (Table 3).

Table 3: Permanent and temporary address of the respondents

Province	Permanent Address		Temporary Address	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gandaki Province	10	11.8	4	4.7
Karnali Province	8	9.4	2	2.4
Province 1	10	11.8	2	2.4
Province 2	1	1.2	2	2.4
Province 3	33	38.8	67	78.8
Province 5	16	18.8	6	7.1
Sudurpaschim Province	7	8.2	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0	85	100.0

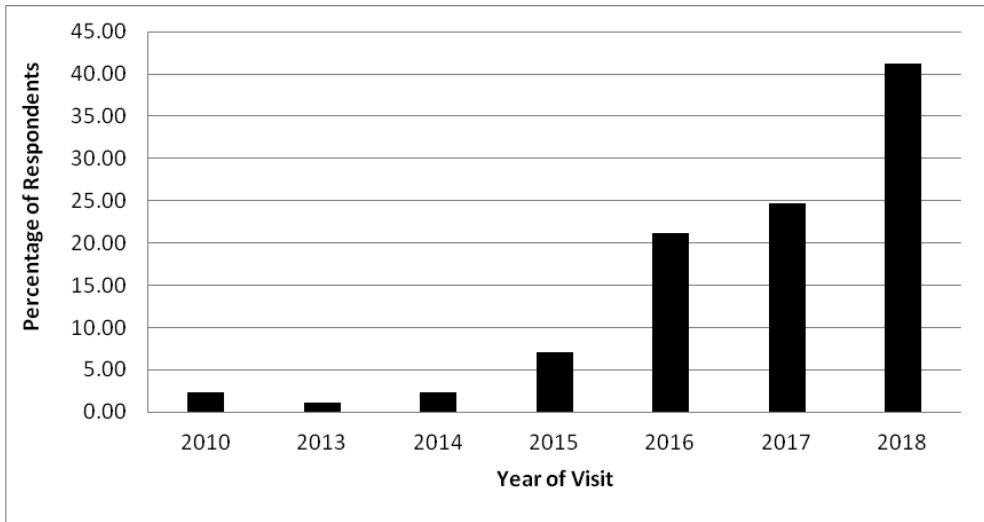
Information about the visit

Newspaper and information from friends were found to be the two important inspirations for the respondents to visit to Rara National Park (Table 4).

Table 4: Major source of inspiration that motivate respondents to visit to Rara National Park

What inspire visit to Rara	Frequency	Percent
Newspaper	33	38.8
Friends	24	28.2
Social Media	10	11.8
Book	4	4.7
Other	14	16.5
Total	85	100

Most of the respondents who participated in the survey had visited Rara National Park on the year from 2016-2018 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Details of the respondents' year of visit to Rara National Park

There was an observed variability in the length of stay of the respondents at Rara National Park (Table 5). Of the total respondents (N=85), 47.1% were found to be spending 2-6 days in and around the park while 43.5% of the respondents were found to spend only overnight. Only 9.4% of the respondents had spent more than a week in the area. The length of the stay was independent of gender ($\chi^2 = 0.188$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$), Age ($\chi^2 = 6.868$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$), the highest educational degree received ($\chi^2 = 3.550$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$), and occupation of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 11.01$, N= 85, $p > 0.05$). The length of stay was associated with the educational background of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 6.096$, N= 85, $p < 0.05$).

Table 5: Relation between educational background and length of stay

Educational Background	Length of stay			
	1 week or more	2-6 days	Over night	
Natural Science	4	23	11	38
Other	4	17	26	47
Total	8	40	37	85

Major attractions of Park

Majority of the respondents have evaluated the attractions within the Rara national park towards the high end (Table 6). Majority of the respondents have rated the uniqueness and geological attraction within the park in the top rank.

Table 6: Perception of tourists about the attraction of Rara National Park

Attraction	Response (N=85)				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Exceptional
Geological Attraction	4.7%	1.2%	5.9%	43.5%	44.7%
Cultural Attraction	5.9%	9.4%	29.4%	36.5%	18.8%
Floral Diversity Observable	1.2%	2.4%	20.0%	47.1%	29.4%
Faunal Diversity Observable	2.4%	10.6%	35.3%	32.9%	18.8%
Recreational Facility	7.1%	10.6%	31.8%	25.9%	24.7%
Uniqueness	0.0%	1.2%	14.1%	30.6%	54.1%
Wilderness	3.5%	3.5%	23.5%	41.2%	28.2%

The response of the respondents about the cultural, biological (flora and fauna) and recreational attraction along with the wilderness within the park were observed to be independent of all the variables explored (i.e. gender, age group, highest educational degree, educational background, occupation and both temporary and permanent address). While the response about the uniqueness of the park is dependent on the permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 30.53$, $df = 18$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$).

Respondents were asked to enlist the major attraction within the parks. Of the total respondents (N=85) Rara Lake was mentioned by 92.9% of the respondents and 72.9% have mentioned landscape within the Rara National Park as major attraction. Besides, the distinct fauna (28.7), distinct flora (29.9%) and distinct culture (18.4%) were also identified as the major attraction of the park. Sinja Valley of Jumla district, Murma Top within the Rara National Park, Chuchemara Peak, Majkatta Village, Gamgadhi and Talcha Airport are some of the nearby places recommended by the visitors to be included in tourism circuit.

Perception of respondents about the facility

Majority of the respondents rated the quality of the food, accommodation and water and sanitation to be good while communication, medical facility and transportation to be fair. They have rated the security facility to be excellent at Rara National Park (Table 7).

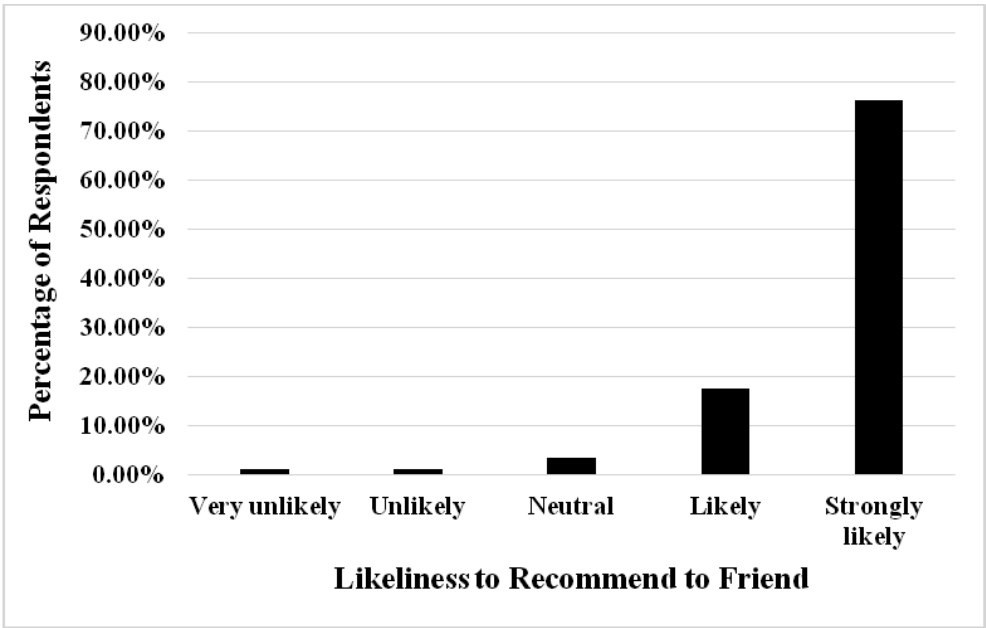
Table 7: Perception of respondents about the quality of service offered at Rara National Park

Facility	Response				
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Exceptional
Food	10.6%	27.1%	35.3%	20.0%	7.1%
Accommodation	9.4%	28.2%	35.3%	18.8%	8.2%
Water and Sanitation	4.7%	30.6%	35.3%	22.4%	7.1%
Communication	14.1%	30.6%	29.4%	21.2%	4.7%
Security	4.7%	16.5%	27.1%	34.1%	17.6%
Medical	27.1%	38.8%	24.7%	5.9%	3.5%
Transportation	14.1%	38.8%	30.6%	12.9%	3.5%

The perception of respondents about the accommodation was significantly associated with educational background ($\chi^2 = 8.68$, $df = 4$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) while the perception about communication facility was found to be significantly associated with the highest educational degree received ($\chi^2 = 18.50$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$). Perception about the Medical facility ($\chi^2 = 30.25$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) and Transportation ($\chi^2 = 18.20$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) were also significantly associated with highest education level completed. Perception about Security within the park was significantly associated with highest education level completed ($\chi^2 = 20.62$, $df = 8$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$) and permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 40.79$, $df = 24$, $N = 85$, $p < 0.05$).

Majority of the respondents (87.5%) expressed the Rara National park to be as per their imagination before their visit to Rara and they were strongly likely to recommend their friends and others to visit to Rara National Park (Figure 3).

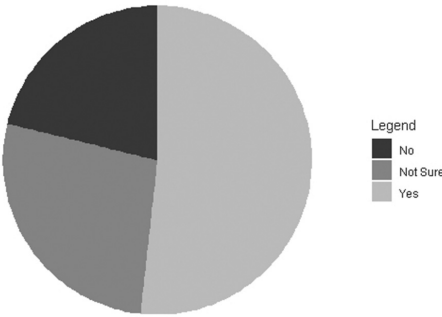
Figure 3: Likeliness of the respondents to recommend their friends to visit to Rara Natioanl Park



Ecotourism and local people

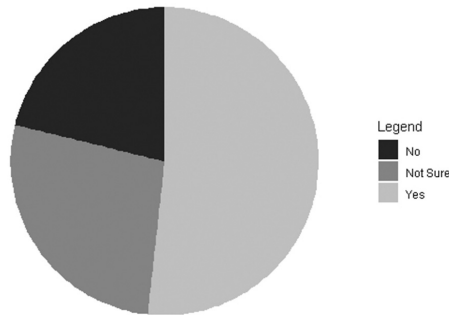
Of the total respondents, 38.8% found the local people to have moderate willingness to be involved in ecotourism activities while 35.5% found local people to have high willingness. The fractions of respondents who found such willingness of local people to be very low, low and very high were found to be 1.2%, 12.9% and 11.8% respectively. Majority of the respondents felt that local people are already participating (Figure 4) and getting benefit (Figure 5) from tourism related activities.

Figure 4: Response about the participation of local people in tourism



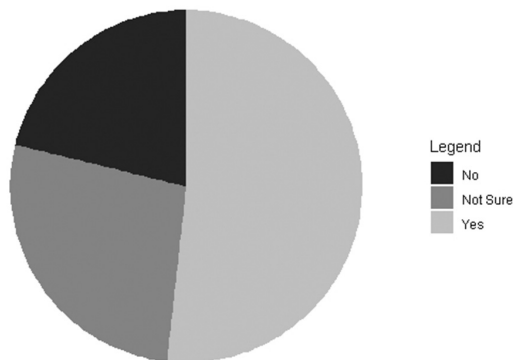
More than half of the respondents accepted that local people are getting benefits from ecotourism activities in Rara National Park and less than quarter disagreed with this fact (Figure 5). The perception about the benefit received by local people was significantly associated with the educational background of the respondents ($\chi^2=6.62$, $df=2$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

Figure 5: Perception about the local people being benefited from tourism activities in Rara National Park



Majority of the respondents have acknowledged that the tourism related activities at Rara National Park (Figure 6) are helping in uplifting status of livelihoods of local people. The perception about the improvement in the livelihood of local people were associated with the educational background ($\chi^2=8.93$, $df=2$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

Figure 6: Perception of the respondents about the change in livelihood of local people due to Ecotourism in Rara National Park

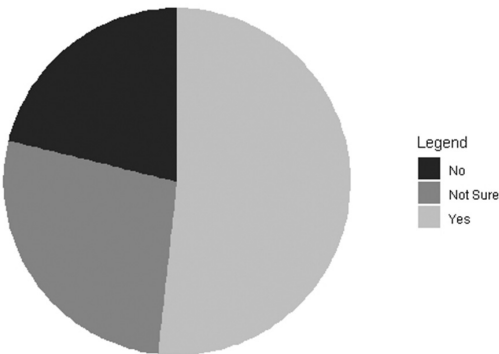


Ecotourism and biodiversity

Majority of the respondents respond that the ecotourism activities have positive impacts on Conservation of Biodiversity at Rara National Park (Figure 7). The

response about the ecotourism-biodiversity conservation relation were not associated with any of the factors explored (Gender, Age, Educational Background, Highest Educational Degree Completed, Occupation and Temporary and Permanent Address of the respondents).

Figure 7: Perception of respondents about about the positive impact of ecotourism in biodiversity



Impact of tourism

Highest proportion of the respondents were neutral about the impact of tourism activities at Rara National Park and its cultural, social and biological environments (Table 8).

Table 8: Perception of respondents about the impact of tourism in different sector

Dimension	Rating (% of Respondents)				
	Highly Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Highly Positive
Impact on Culture	2.4	17.6	41.2	23.5	15.3
Social Impact	0	10.6	50.6	27.1	11.8
Impact on Flora	3.5	18.8	45.9	27.1	4.7
Impact on Fauna	4.7	23.5	43.5	22.4	5.9

The perception about the impact on social environment significantly differed according to their educational background ($\chi^2= 15.05$, $df = 4$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$), highest educational degree ($\chi^2= 16.49$, $df = 8$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$) and permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2= 36.93$, $df = 24$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$). Perception of the respondents about the impact of tourism in social environment were found to be significantly associated with the age group of the respondents ($\chi^2= 27.05$, $df = 15$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$), educational background ($\chi^2= 8.95$, $df = 3$, $N= 85$, $p <0.05$) and the highest

educational degree received by the respondents ($\chi^2=20.87$, $df=6$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$). The perception about the impact of tourism on flora were significantly associated with the highest educational degree received ($\chi^2=44.00$, $df=8$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$). The highest educational degree received by the respondents was also associated significantly with the perception about impact on fauna ($\chi^2=35.62$, $df=8$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

The response about the solid waste management at Rara National Park varied. Of the total respondents ($N=85$), 16.5% of them found the solid waste management to be strongly discouraging, 29.4 % of the respondents found SWM to be discouraging, 34.1 % of the respondents expressed neutral opinion while 14.1% and 5.9% of the respondents found the waste management issues to be encouraging and highly encouraging respectively. The perception of the respondent was significantly associated with the permanent address of the respondents ($\chi^2=39.61$, $df=24$, $N=85$, $p<0.05$).

Discussion

Attraction within the Park

Visitors are tempted to visit a protected area if they have some appealing features in terms of scenic beauty, cultural features or biological diversity (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996). In the case of Rara National park, there are several features to attract visitors to the park. The major attraction within the national park is the Rara Lake (also known as Mahendra Lake). This lake with an area of 10.5 Square Kilometer is the largest lake of Nepal and with 167-meter depth (Yagi et al., 2009) is the deepest lake in Nepal. Besides, being the deepest and largest Lake of Nepal, the scenic beauty amplified by the landscape surrounding the lake is crucial in attracting the visitors to the area. As the park is home to 272 species of the birds (DNPWC, 2018), birdwatching activities are one of the potential activities to fascinate tourists in the area. The beautiful landscape with a pleasant climate means the park is ideal to the trekkers and other nature lovers. Circular trail around the park for walking and cycling additional recreational opportunity offered by park. Sinja Valley, which is considered to be the place of origin of Nepali language (Owen-Smith, 2008) and different temples and shrines within the parks and the buffer zone are other factors for engaging the visitors.

The beauty of Rara Lake and surrounding landscape can be observed from the Murma top (3600m) and Chuhemara Peak (4039m) (GoN/NPC/CBS, 2014) as Mugu and Jumla districts are rich with Nepali folk songs, Buddhist culture and traditional attires. Majority of the respondents have given a high rating to the geological, cultural and biological features along with the uniqueness and wilderness of the park. Presence of some fauna species such as Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) (Sharma, Swenson, & Belant, 2014) along with Himalayan Monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*) make the area attractive on faunal perspectives. The moderate rating has been assigned to the floral attraction. This might be because the variation in floral blossom

and season of visitation. The area has floral attractiveness in pre-monsoon and post-monsoon (June to September) while the majority of Nepalese youth visit to the place in Autumn (Vacation of Dashain-Tihar) or early April (Baisakh-of Nepali Calendar). As the season of the visit was not collected, an association of season with the response about flora were not evaluated.

Tourism facilities

Availability of the receptive factors such as facilities for food, accommodation, nutrition, entertainment and recreation are basic prerequisites for development of ecotourism in a destination (Bulatović, 2017). Respondents were found to be giving average rating to most of the facilities and the perception about those facilities were primarily determined by their level of education. This might be due to the fact that level of thinking are expected to be dependent on the level of education they receive. Respondents had given satisfactory rating to the food. Improvement in the sector can be made by promoting local foods, as eco-tourists usually seem fond of these items (Alias, Aziz, Karim, & Isa, 2016). Besides, park managers should initiate programs to aware about the quality of food and train the locals to prepare hygienic food from local resources (Nepal, 2002). Similar response have been received for sanitation and water facilities as well.

Accommodation in the ecologically and traditionally designed architectural structure with minimal impact to the environment are ideal for alluring eco-tourist to the destination (Bulatović, 2017). In the case of Rara National Park, majority of the respondents had rated accommodation facility to be good. Still there are rooms for improvement as more than one third of the respondents had rated the accommodation to be either poor or fair one. As evident elsewhere, with the increase in the tourism activity, when demand for accommodation increases, there is high chances that new resorts and hotels will be constructed in the area causing detrimental impact to the environment of the area (Wight, 1997). The problem can be addressed by promoting the homestay activity which will fulfill the dual motive of providing economic incentives to the local people and enhancing the experience of visitors.

The role of transportation in enhancing the potentiality of a destination varies according to different tourism types (Seetanah et al., 2011). In case of ecotourism, which is itself is a tourism with minimal ecological foot print, road and other infrastructure reaching to the park are of less importance. Despite this fact, we cannot ignore the issue of accessibility. In this study, transportation facility have been rated to be fair by majority of the respondents.

Peace and security are essential components for ecotourism development (Nepal, 2002). This was evident by the decline in tourism related activities in Nepal during the Maoist Insurgency period as well. As higher fraction of respondents had rated security

facility with high rating, the efforts can be considered to be sufficient for now. The perception of respondents about the security significantly differed according to their permanent address. This might be explained by the differences in the geography of the fear (Modly, 2009). Permanent address of the respondents were taken at Province level and Karnali Region is usually projected by media and other as backward region which might have affected their perception about the security status.

Peoples' involvement

In the case of Rara National Park, majority of the respondents have reported willingness of the local people to participate in ecotourism related activities and a fraction of local peoples were already observed to be involved in such activities. Additionally, ecotourism activities were seen to bring positive benefits to the local people. As conservation policy in Nepal have emphasized for people centered conservation (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008) the signs in Rara National Park are encouraging. Strong participation of the local people in tourism activity are vital for ecotourism driven sustainable development (Zhang & Lei, 2012). Poverty of the people living in the vicinity of the park is one of the crucial drivers of environmental degradation in the protected areas as evident in Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) of Nepal (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008). Policy level intervention to encourage local people to participate in ecotourism activities and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefit are essential (T. H. Lee, 2013). It is the responsibility of Park authority of Rara National Park to devise and implement policy to encourage local people in ecotourism related activity. This will bring job opportunities and income to local people and contribute to conservation of varied landscapes, culture and biodiversity as evident at ACA in Nepal (Bajracharya & Lama, 2008).

Ecotourism and environment at Rara National Park

Ecotourism has been reported to have neutral impact on the environment, according to the response of respondents. As ecotourism is considered to be an environmental friendly tourism promoted with the motive of bringing positive change in physical, biological and socio-economic environment (Wearing & Neil, 2009), further research on these aspects are essential before making some claims.

Way forward

Despite the high potentiality for development of ecotourism at Rara National Park, the visitors are not adequately visiting the Park. Promotional activities and increasing other tourism infrastructures are essential. As length of the stay of youth with natural science background are relatively high, promotional activity targeting the students of natural science for field excursion could be fruitful. Furthermore, as this research, primarily, is based on the perception of visitors, more insights can be gained by exploring the views of local residents.

Conclusions

Along with its appealing geophysical, biological, and cultural features, Rara National Park is found to be a promising site for ecotourism activities which will help in reconciling conservation and development of the area. Perception of visitors on facilities available like transportation, medical, communication and others pinpoints the sectors to be emphasized for promoting ecotourism activities. So far, the dire environmental issues are not apparent till date. But, with the increase in tourism activity, they are presumed to increase if prior care are not given by the park authority. Besides, proper planning and zonation for ecotourism infrastructures are essential to regulate construction activities. Additionally, as visitors are staying for short duration, people from fraction of areas within the parks are getting benefits. Thus, design and implementation of an effective plan that facilitates and involves local people with all other stakeholders to establish ecotourism in the park area will help to increase the visitors' number up to the permissible limit. This in turn can give a win-win situation of reducing negative impacts to the site and overall status growth of local inhabitants.

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Ecotourism Potential of Tinjure Milke Jaljale Area: A Rhododendron Capital of Nepal

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Article

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Abstract

Keywords

*Ecotourism,
attractions,
natural,
rhododendron,
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Ecotourism is a growing arena of tourism industry and is a potential tool for sustainable development. This study focuses identifying potentials of ecotourism in Tinjure-Milke-Jaljale (TMJ) area in Eastern Nepal via assessing flow of tourists, purpose for visits, major natural attractions, physical infrastructures and human resources available in the region. Direct interviews were conducted with respondents purposively selected from 50 households using structured questionnaires. Demographic variables and visit purpose were expressed in numbers and percentage using MS-Excel software. A descriptive analysis was performed for the natural features, human resource, physical infrastructures and cultural entities which were collected using standard checklist. Results showed that TMJ was visited by approximately 1, 00,000 internal and 600 international tourists throughout the year in 2018. The main purpose of visit to TMJ was to adhere the beauty of rhododendron or landscape followed by religious, study and recreational purposes respectively. While 80% percent of the respondents were aware of the need towards biodiversity

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conservation focusing Rhododendron forests which listed as a major attraction in the region and 78% agreed to impacts of tourism the area, 75% were unfamiliar with the concept ecotourism. The region with more than 80% forest coverage harbors natural and cultural attractions such as Deurali Bhulke picnic spot, Rock and Rhododendron Garden, Basantapur Botanical garden and view Tower, Tinjure Dada Pathivara Temple, Gupha Pokhari, Singhabahini Devi Temple, Gaunkhuridham, Siddhakali, Sabhapokhari. The present natural and culturally important areas in TMJ show good prospects for ecotourism. However, a detailed study focusing number of seasonal flow of tourists and services provided addressing visitor's perception is seen important to improve ecotourism.

Background

Tourism includes activities in which people travel and stay outside their usual place for not more than one year leisure, business, and other purposes (World Tourism Organization, 1994). Tourism causes both positive and negative impacts to tourism destinations (Vanhove, 2005). Tourism contributes to socioeconomic development (Minciu, 2004) and tourism also promotes conservation (Nyaupane & Thapa, 2006). Likewise, tourism causes environmental impacts such as noise, air, water and land pollution and as well as land use (Kunwar, 2017). This also leads to conflicts due to number of residents and visitors in different time and space as well as the behavior of the visitors and local (Postma & Schmuecker, 2017). To overcome these problems there is a need of sustainable tourism and ecotourism can be an alternative.

In case of Nepal, tourism has become one of the important pillars for economic development (Thapa, 2003) although it has a lot of issues (Bishnu, 2011) that need to be solved. In Himalayan region, tourism has raised demand for firewood and timber resulting in loss of wildlife and soil erosion. This has also enhanced litter leading to soil and water pollution (Gurung, 1990; Thakali, 1995). In Terai region of Nepal, pressure on forest for firewood, vehicular movement and pollutant emission have increased (Banskota & Sharma, 1996). To lower the pressure on environment, several researchers from Nepal have argued and provided evidence that ecotourism can lower the negative impacts of tourism as well as improve income. For example, in ACAP, people use alternative energy which has lower firewood usage. There are evidences where the income of local people can be enhanced through the promotion of ecotourism (K.C., Rijal & Sapkota, 2015; Nyaupane & Thapa, 2004).

Nepal's landscape, biodiversity and cultural areas have been a basis of increasing tourism industry in Nepal. Hilly region above 2200 m has unique diversity and has been famous for their iconic places. Most of them are under protected areas and some are in forming process. The tourism sector creates opportunities for the people as well as for nature conservation. In Nepal, Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur,

Lumbini, Pokhara, Palpa, Gorkha, Manang, Mustang, Chitwan have been major tourist attraction areas. Nepal is in pace of developing tourism sector through plan and policy and there is an urgent need of formulation of practical plans and policies to address the new issues related to ecotourism (Aryal, Ghimire & Niraula, 2019).

Researchers like Aryal and Maharjan (2018) pointed out the need of further research to assess the potential of ecotourism which includes demand, community's willingness, socioeconomic connection to biodiversity conservation, the attractive features of the area and host the visitors (Carroll & Groom, 2006). Most of the researchers working in ecotourism of Nepal have also focused their studies inside the protected areas. Therefore, this study has made an attempt to find out the ecotourism potential of TMJ-the capital of Rhododendron of Nepal by assessing the flow of tourists, naturalness of site, physical features and human resources availability such as Bekele, Teshome, & Asteray (2017). This study will benefit the concerned authorities and local people.

Tourism

Tourism industry has been getting great attention in recent years as it is enhancing the co-operation between different countries and regions as well as it is one of the fastest growing economic activities (Pao, 2005). The different countries of Asia and Africa are gaining great economic benefits from this industry. Tourism is an act of spending time away from the home temporary for recreation and pleasure as well as activities taken during their stay and facilities provided for their needs (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; p.1, Kunwar, 2017,p.11).

Tourism impact on ecosystem through erosion, emission of waste and harming structural and function features of ecosystem resulting environmental degradation (Kipler, 2013). These forms of impact can be controlled or minimized through alternative tourism such as adventure tourism, sports tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism as well as ecotourism which lead to sustainable tourism (Wearing & Neil, 2009; Buckley, 1994).

Sustainable tourism is a tourism which can address the demand of local communities and tourist as well as improve opportunity for future generations (World Tourism Organization, 2018). Its market is growing day by day in the world (Butzmann, 2017) as well as in Nepal, particularly in the form of ecotourism.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is considered as a responsible tourism which has been passing through a debate and controversy since a decade (Page & Dowling, 2002). Several definitions are given for ecotourism but major variables of the definition are conservation, education; culture (Fennel, 2001). Ecotourism is a form of tourism that appreciates

nature and enhances learning of environment through best management (Weaver, 2002).

Some researchers state ecotourism arose as a growing concern due to the increasing impact of tourism on environment (EGA, 2008) and often it is viewed as an alternative to lower negative impact of tourism and to foster environment management (Honey, 2008) whereas Garcia Herrera (2011) states ecotourism concept has originated as a tool for nature conservation as it is concern with protecting nature.

Ecotourism is a fastest growing concept in tourism industry (Hvenegaard, 1994) as it promotes environment conservation and socioeconomic development (Rijal & Sapkota, 2014). The International Ecotourism society (TIES, 1990) defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people”. Ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact. Ecotourism involves visiting natural areas in emphasis to learn, environment protection and sustainability. Ecotourism helps in community development by providing the alternate source of livelihood to local community which is more sustainable (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018).

Among the different types of tourism industry, ecotourism shows commitment towards conservation. Ecotourism contributes to protect biodiversity, enhance local people livelihood, minimize non-renewable energy use and create job opportunity (Poiani, Baumgartner, Buttrick, Green, Hopkins, Ivey, Seaton & Sutter, 1998; Daniel, Manning & Krymkowski, 2005). However, if it is not managed properly, there is threat of environmental degradation through tourism instability, economic, cultural distortions and visitor's misbehavior (Drumm & Moore, 2005).

Ecotourism activities are confined in natural resources rich areas (Nuva & Shamsudin, 2009) as such areas are critical component of a life support system (Ervin et al., 2010) and such areas should be promoted in such a way that it should prevent environment degradation (Fennell, 2001). Protected areas are a model of such areas. Such areas are believed as major assets of developing country as locals get livelihood option (Pananjay et al., 2011).

Research methodology

Study area

The study area lies in the middle Himalaya region in between 27°65'7" to 27°30'28" North latitude and 87°19'46" to 87°38'14" East longitudes with elevation ranges 1700 to 5000 masl. It is the one of the longest mountain ridges lying between the watersheds of Arun and Tamor rivers (IUCN, 1992). The area is located between two large protected areas of Nepal, the Makalu-Barun National Park (MBCNP) to the

west and Kanchanjunga Conservation Area (KCA) to the east (IUCN, 1992). The area covers seven formal Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Sankhuwasabha, ten former VDCs of Tehrathum and six VDCs of Taplejung (Figure 1).

Climate

The area has a wide climatic range from warm temperate in the lower region to alpine in the upper hill slopes. The climate of the study area is moist temperate with temperatures ranging from 10°C-15°C and average rainfall measuring 2250 mm (Limbu et al., 2012).

Biodiversity

The TMJ area is the biodiversity treasure as well as the crucial biological hotspot site of Nepal (Limbu et al., 2012) as it hosts varieties of flora, fauna and ecosystem.

Faunal diversity

The area is rich in faunal diversity it host 97 species of fauna from 30 families (Koirala, 2002) with a total of 25 mammalian wildlife species.

Floral diversity

The area is rich in floral diversity and has 216 species of angiosperm (Koirala & Limbu, 2010). A total of 326 species belonging to 83 families and 219 genera of Angiosperm plants have been documented from TMJ (Limbu, Koirala & Shang, 2012). The major plants reported are herbs. There are 178 species of herbs, 67 species of shrubs, 62 species of trees, 15 species of climbers and 4 other species and is home to 28 Rhododendron species out of 31 species that are found in Nepal (Chaudhary & Taylor, 2000).

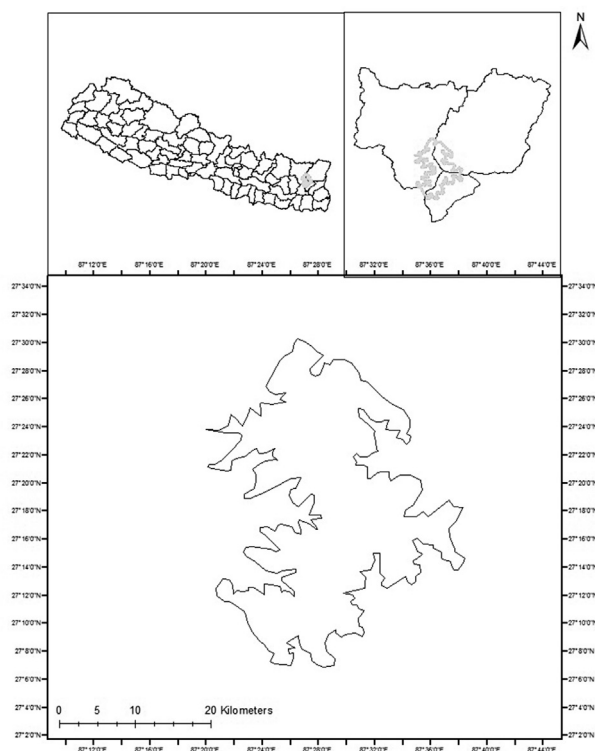
Ecosystem diversity

The area is rich in ecosystem diversity with different natural ecosystem such as forest, grasslands, meadows and wetlands (rivers and ponds) and rock and barren areas. The TMJ area is one of the largest potential rangeland ecosystems among the wet rangeland areas of Nepal.

Socio-economic features

The population of area is 85,881 with 18,377 total number of households distributed in 23 formal VDCs (CBS, 2011). The negative population growth is recorded over the area as compared to the national population growth rate i.e. 1.35 per annum. The TMJ area is also rich in ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. There are more than ten ethnic groups, who have their own cultural and religious practices, traditions and languages. TMJ is an important tourist destination 10000 of internal and international tourist visit here each year.

Figure 1: Location map of Tinjure, Milkhe and Jaljale



Data collection and analysis

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Primary and Secondary Methods were adopted to gain both qualitative and quantitative data.

Primary methods of data collection

A total of 50 Households were surveyed purposefully based on their presence in households as well as only those houses close to the TMJ road to collect primary data. Beside interview observations of flora fauna, socioeconomic conditions of the people including customs and traditions, religious sites were done. The data were collected in between January 2019 to July 2019.

Secondary methods of data collection

The reviews of related literature were done which includes journals articles, reports and books were done for secondary data collection. The information found in the walls and pillars of the religious sites were also considered for the study. For land use map, the study area's land cover was extracted from land use data 2010 published by

ICIMOD on the date 2013-04-12. The outline of the TMJ region was extracted based on image previously used in IUCN report (IUCN, 2010) for the extracting roads and trails and cover categories that was obtained from the data set (Bajracharya, 2013).

Data analysis

Esri. Arc GIS Version 10.2.1 was used to extract the data from downloaded raster image. The raster image was converted into polygon using raster to vector conversion tools. Spatial analyst tool was used to extract the land use from the region based on Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development's provided shape file of Nepal (MoFALD, 2019). Microsoft Excel 2010 was used to analyze the data. Bar graphs, pie charts and doughnut were made as far as possible and results were shown in percentage and number.

Results

Tourist flow

From the observation and survey it is known that TMJ has a potential to attract tourists throughout the year. However, due to the lack of infrastructure, tourists were not provided with any services in the month of April and May and in November and December when the national flower Rhododendron blooms and snow falls respectively. Internal tourist flow is reported to be high in this area. Domestic tourists from Dharan, Itahari, Biratnagar, Dhankuta, Jhapa fall under the majority to visit the place. From the key informant survey, every year approximately 1, 00,000 internal tourists visit the place whereas the number of international tourists visiting the place is only 600 per year approximately.

Reason for visiting TMJ

Based on field observation and key-informant it was known that TMJ has attractive natural areas with extension of unique landscape to 585.26 km². A survey of 50 people showed that 56% people visit TMJ for Rhododendron forest, 24% said that the purpose of their visit was to see the landscape, 10 % visit for religious purpose and 10% replied that they visited TMJ for other purpose like study, picnic and snowfall.

Likewise 58% of people believed that the excellent factor of TMJ is the Rhododendron forest, 24% believe Ecology and Environment, 10% climate and 8% other features like varieties of birds and animals

Natural features

The processes run for land use showed that the region is mostly covered by forest area with more than 80% of the land cover in the region (Table 1) which host varieties of flora and fauna. From the interview and observation it was known that TMJ consists of tall trees of mixed rhododendron forests especially in south

and east facing slopes. *Rhododendron barbatum*, *R. daldhousiae* (climber species), *R. cinnabarinum*, *R. griffithianum*, *Abies spectabilis*, *Betula utilis*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*, *Mahonia nepaulensis*, *Pieries formosa*, *D. papyracea*, *Edgeworthia gardneri*, *lycopodium spp*, *Taxus baccata* are the major tree species of the area. The forest was also reported to support different fauna. Wildlife within the community forest area include Himalayan Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjac*), Masked Palm Civet (*Paguma larvata*), Nepal Grey Langur (*Semnopithecus schistaceus*), Assamese Monkey (*Macaca assamensis*), Hoary-bellied Squirrel (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*), Large-eared Pika (*Ochotona macrotis*), Red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), Leopard (*panthera pardus*) and Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*). Among mammals, Assamese Monkey, Himalayan black bear and Leopard are listed in vulnerable conservation status. Similarly, bird species include Hill Partridge (*Arborophila rufogularis*), Himalayan Monal (*Lophophorus impejanus*), Kalij Pheasant (*Lophura leucomelanos*), Koklass Pheasant (*Pucrasia macrolopha*), Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Great Barbet (*Megalaima virens*), Common Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), Crested Kingfisher (*Megaceryle lugubris*), Little Owl (*Athene noctua*), Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*), Snow Pigeon (*Columba leuconota*), Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*), Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*), Crested Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*), Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Long-tailed shrike (*Lanius schach*), Grey-backed Shrike (*Lanius tephronotus*), Grey Treepie (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*), Large-billed Crow (*Corvus macrorhynchos*), Black Drongo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*), Ashy Drongo (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*), Spangled Drongo (*Dicrurus hottentottus*), Long-tailed Minivet (*Pericrocotus ethologus*), Scarlet Minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*), Yellow-billed Blue Magpie (*Urocissa flavirostris*), Red-billed Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*), Yellow-billed Chough (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*), Yellow-bellied Fantail (*Rhipidura hypoxantha*), Brown Dipper (*Cinclus pallasi*), Blue Whistling Thrush (*Myophonus caeruleus*), Chestnut Thrush (*Turdus rubrocanus*), Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), Verditter Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*), Blue-throated Flycatcher (*Cyornis rubeculoides*), Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), Hodgson's Redstart (*Phoenicurus hodgsoni*), White-winged Redstart (*Phoenicurus erythrogaster*), Plumbeous water Redstart (*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*), Rufous-backed Redstart (*Phoenicurus erythronota*), Little Forktail (*Enicurus scouleri*), Spotted Forktail (*Enicurus maculatus*), Common Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*), Grey Bushchat (*Saxicola ferrea*), Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and Jungle Myna (*Acridotheres fuscus*). Likewise, herpetofauna species (amphibians and reptiles) include Skittering Frog (*Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis*), Himalayan Toad (*Duttafrynushimalayanus*), Black-Spinned Toad (*Bufo melanostictus*), Black-throated frog (*Microhyla Ornata*), Common garden lizard (*Calotes versicolor*) and Mountain keelback (*Amphiesma platyceps*).

Agricultural area covers approximately 9% of the total land. The major agricultural products of TMJ are Millet, Barley and potato. The grassland covers 3% of the land approximately which is important for livestock like sheep and Yak. Less than 1% of the land (0.02%) of the total land is barren in the region.

Table 1: Land Use condition of TMJ

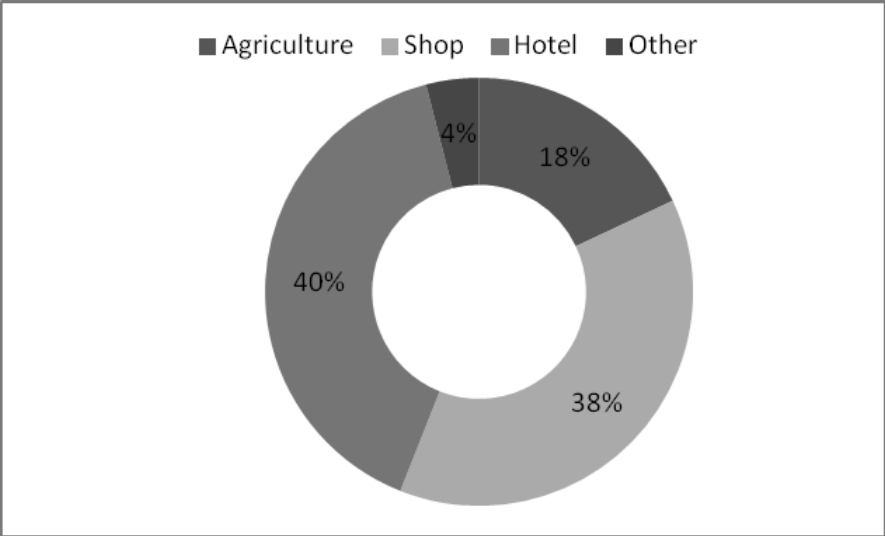
Category	Area coverage(m ²)
Forest	467718238.2
Agricultural Area	50419368.29
Barren Area	1133900.81
Grassland	47591056
Scrubland	19906817.67
Total TMJ area	586769381

Human resource features

Characteristics of respondent

Among the 50 respondents, the maximum number of respondents was from age group 31-45 and the minimum number of respondents was from age group above 50. The major occupation of the area was hotel jobs followed by shop and agriculture (Figure 2). Altogether 82 rooms were found in 20 hotels with maximum of 8 rooms and minimum of 4 rooms in each hotel. The capacity of each room is 2 to 6 people. People were keeping sheep, pig, hen, goat and other cattle as livestock.

Figure2: Occupation of people in TMJ

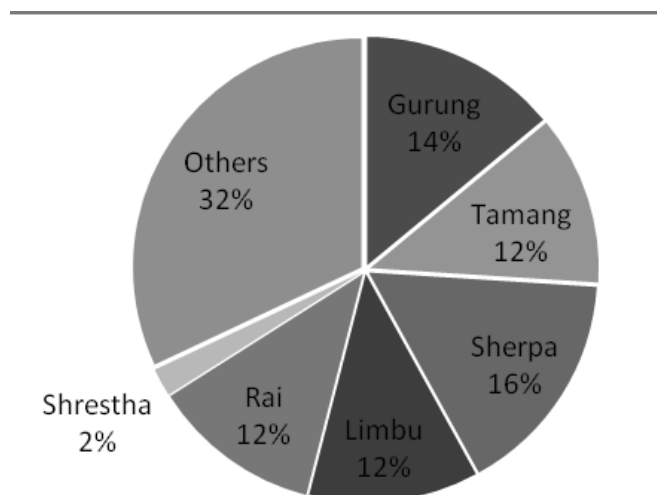


Cultural features

Ethnic group

Out of 50 households surveyed, the majority of the people belonged to Janajati (67%) which includes Gurung, Sherpa, Tamang, Limbu, Rai and Shrestha and other caste groups like Chhetri and Brahmin were only 33%, (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Cultural features of TMJ



The special food items were Tongba, Churpi, Sukuti, wine and local hen. Out of 50 households, Tongba was available in 16 households, Churpi was available in 7 households, wine was available in 10 households, and local hen was available in 2 households for sale to local people. Dashain, tihar, Baishake Purnima,, Lhosar, Pushe Mela, Baisakhi Mela, Fagu Mela are special festival of this area. The Chandi dance of Rai, Dhan Nach and Chyapruno dance of Limbu were found to be the special cultural feature of this area. Singhadevi, Siddhakali, Gaunkhuridham and Pathibara temples were reported as the important religious site of this area.

Deurali Bhulke picnic spot

This place is famous for family picnic. There is a large terrace with good environment.

Rock and Rhododendron Garden

The rock and rhododendron is one of the attractive sites of TMJ area at Basantapur, Terahathum. The park has natural ecosystems which include forest, grassland, rock and barren areas. With the prospect of sustainable development and immense potential of ecotourism, the infrastructure and facilities are being developed. The Rhododendron

forest as well as other rich biodiversity and panoramic views, magnificent landscape abundantly rich in natural, cultural, historical and religious diversity can make the best ecotourism hub in the Eastern Development Region.

Basantapur Botanical Garden and View Tower

The tower which is on the construction lies on the top of city. From here we can see hills, Himalayas, varieties of flora and fauna and beautiful places around TMJ area. These are ideal locations for increasing ecotourism.

Tinjure Dada Pathivara Temple

The temple is very famous from religious point of view. Most of the domestic tourist mainly Hindus come here to worship.

Gupha Pokhari

Gupha Pokhari is a natural pond situated in the height of 2890 meter which is pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists. Gupha pokhari is a peaceful lake set on ridge east towards the Kanchenjunga and west toward the Makalu which lies on the trekking trail from Basantapur to Terahthum. The beautiful panoramic views of mountains like Mt. Makalu, Mt. Kanchenjunga and Mt. Everest can be seen from this lake. Most of the people visit this place for research of flora and fauna. The global eco 200 region lies in this area.

Singhabahini Devi Temple

Singhabahini temple is one of the famous religious sites located in Myanglung Terahathum and is believed that if one prays in this holy place with pure heart then their wishes will come true.

Gaunkhuridham

Gaunkhuridham is an important religious site in Terahathum. Most of the pilgrimage visits this place in Maghe Sakranti which falls on January.

Siddhakali

The Siddhakali temple is located in Sankhuwasabha and is known as the incarnation of God Shiva. It has its own religious importance. The site attracts pilgrims seeking spiritual fulfillment and blessings from ancestor.

Sabhapokhari

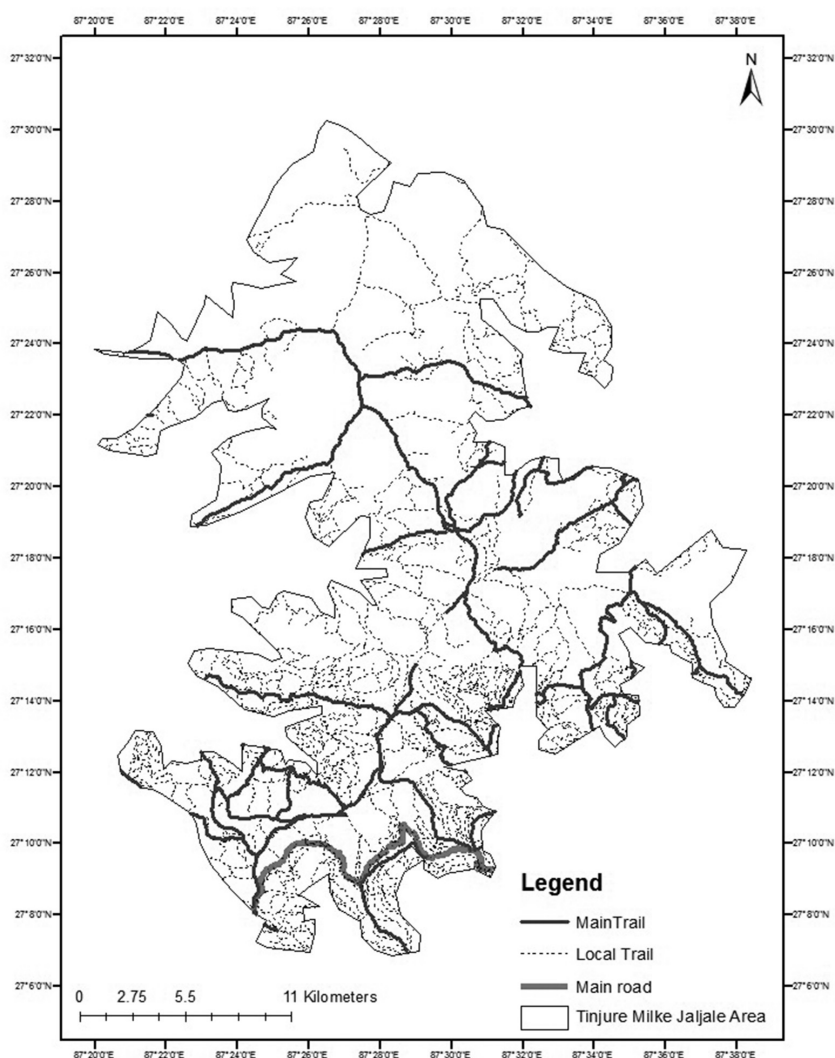
Sabhapokhari is located at an altitude of 4,240m. *Sabha Pokhari* is a natural lake that has religious significance. The place, where the lake is situated, is an extraordinary example of natural beauty and landscape and the place is good for trekking.

Physical infrastructure

Road network

There is one main road of length of 22.3 km; there is a main trail of length 246.3km and number of local trail of length 1091.6 km (Figure 4). The entry points of the main road are Basantapur Deurali and Morhang. The entry points of main trail are Menchyam Rural Municipality, Chainpur Municipality, Madi Municipality, and Saghu Munucipality.

Figure 4: Road and trails around TMJ



Source of energy used in TMJ

Woods and LPG gas are the major source of energy which were utilized by the people of TMJ area. LPG gas was considered to be the major source of energy which was 56% and wood is the second major source which was 44%. Two micro hydropower projects provide electricity to all the areas of TMJ.

Waste management

Burning, open dumping and close dumping are the main ways to manage waste in TMJ area. From the survey of 50 people it was found that 50% of the people were found to be burning waste, 26% were openly dumping and 24% were closely dumping waste in TMJ.

Water and health facilities

There are basic facilities of drinking water. There are three government managed hospitals and 90 sub health post.

Impact of tourism in environment

Various problems may arise due to tourism in specific places. So from a total of 50 respondents, study found that 78% of the people agreeing on impact of tourism and 22% disagreeing in TMJ area.

The 70% people reported tourist are moderately friendly, 20% are very friendly and 10% are not friendly.

Knowledge of eco-tourism

In TMJ area, it was found that few people knew about ecotourism (24%) and majority of people (76%) were unfamiliar with the concept of ecotourism.

Activities carried out for the promotion of ecotourism

Out of the 50 respondents interviewed, 33.33 % reported that participation of locals are increasing to enhance the ecotourism related work, 26.67% reported that awareness programs on conservation and tourism are going on, 6.67% reported that they were given hotel trainings, 6.67% said that the extension of touristic areas with the development of infrastructure and facilities is advancing. However, 30% of the respondents were unaware about it.

Besides, these people were also aware about environment conservation. The response from the survey showed that 80% of the people from the area of TMJ are aware of biodiversity protection mainly Rhododendron conservation and 20% are not aware due to the fact that the strategy was just in implementation phase. Different awareness programs and training have been conducted to empower local people. Community forest user groups and women groups of TMJ had taken initiative of conservation activities by nursery establishment of rhododendron and preventing

cutting down of rhododendron. The Environment Action Club (EAC) has been established in schools to raise awareness among the students.

Discussion

Ecotourism has been generating great changes in socio-cultural and economic aspects which serves for the socio-economic development as well as increases the awareness of nature conservation among the locals (Kiper, 2013). TMJ and its periphery can be suitable area to practice rural and sustainable ecotourism. Hotels and guest houses initiated by locals can be expected to be fruitful in creating an alternative livelihood options for local people and helps tourists to visit the place freely. Although geographical condition of this area is tough, the landscape view of rhododendron forest, climatic conditions are positive parts which makes tourists want to visit the place. Transportation facilities and all the other infrastructure aspects makes TMJ fall behind but alternative options like re-opening trek route, establishing home stay may help them to regain the tourism potential.

TMJ has been hosting both internal and external tourists. There are more than one lakh tourists each year. The flow of internal tourist is reported to be higher than external tourist. The number of external tourists visiting is only around 600. This indicates that the site can be developed in the field of ecotourism in terms of market demand.

TMJ has striking natural features for attracting tourists. The area gives full opportunity to enjoy beauty of landscape, diversity of flora especially species of Rhododendron and fauna. The disturbance in the site is also low. 80% of the area is covered with forests. This indicates that the site is good for ecotourism (Osunsina, Ogunjinmi, Meduna & Oyeleke, 2008; Aciksoz, Gormus & Karadeniz, 2010; Stankov, Stojanovic, Dragicevic & Arsenović, 2011).

TMJ has over 30 mammalian species, 274 bird species, a floral diversity of more than 250 species which has the ability to attract tourists (IUCN, 2010). The site with unique diversity of flora and fauna has potential for ecotourism (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018; Bahmanpour, Laghai & Moharamnejad, 2012).

TMJ has 9% of agricultural land which could host native varieties of crops and 3% of grassland which can serve herbivorous and livestock. These features help to enhance ecotourism. There are various examples from the Alpine Region where an agricultural area created large ecological value among tourists than lands that were extremely reduced (Scialabba & Williamson, 2004).

Physical infrastructure is key for tourism development (Ray, Das, Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2015). The site was equipped with electricity facilities. The energy used was mostly firewood, potable water but there was not any specific sewage disposal

and treatment facilities. The site had trails and a road. The area is moderate in basic facilities for visitors which create low attractions for tourists (Erduran, Ceng z & Saglik, 2012).

TMJ is rich in cultural features. 67% of the households are Janjati with varieties and unique forms of festivals, food items, dances as well as religious sites. This sort of varieties of culture indicates that the site has good potential for tourism in terms of culture (Hillstrom & Hillstrom, 2003). The area has low number of tourist guides, and has manpower to serve the tourists in hotels but lacks trained manpower. This indicates that the site is weak in terms of skilled manpower because human resources are key in determining ecotourism (Lee, San & Hsu, 2011; Libreros, 2008).

Recently, it is found that the number of tourists visiting natural areas have increased (Kiper, 2013). The number of tourists in TMJ area was found to be increasing in spring season mainly due to Rhododendron forest. Relatively peaceful environment, improved tourism structure, increased charm of travelling among local people are the main things which attract tourists in this place. Despite having a high potential, TMJ lacks proper policy and management in tourism sectors. Lack of proper guides, tourist information centers, homestays, and trek routes in this area has caused difficulty to maintain the flow of tourist. Although a place with massive opportunities for rural ecotourism, TMJ suffers from heavy exploitation and lack of road construction which basically harms the natural resources and daily lifestyle of local communities. Tourism education is necessary for local people to run tourism programs. Training in guiding tourists, improving the local breeds, establishing good hotels, preparing local cuisines will encourage local youths to run tourism businesses.

In ecologically poor regions, increment in human interference with the environment can result in permanent damage to the ecological processes (Kiper, 2013). Deforestation, exploitation and poaching are the negative parts that led the natural resources to degrade. Most of the visitors come to see the beautiful Rhododendron forests and may not be aware about their impact on the surrounding environment during their trip. Therefore, the local management committee, government sectors, local authorities, policy makers should be conscious and stand strong to stop this kind of illegal activities in this place. Enforcement of environmental guidelines is not possible until tourists and hosts realize the impacts of tourism in such areas. Hence if there is a tourism conscious society, both locals and visitors can complement the upkeep of guidelines. This can further bring positive changes in exploitation of natural resources in the name of tourism.

Local people, who are the residents of the area, should be integrated in the program to have better results. Awareness programs should be given to motivate the locals to develop a positive attitude in tourism sector. Proper planning in tourism,

conservation and economic development can be done with the help of knowledge and experience of local people (K.C., 2016). Through a strong collaboration, there can be constructive impact of ecotourism on visitors, locals, management and operators. This would bring a sense of responsibility towards the environment (Ly & Anh, 2011). The study found TMJ has high potential to import national and international tourist in large numbers. All it needs a proper plan and execution. This may be an alternative place for tourists where they can enjoy the rhododendron forest, local foods, and natural beauty. It is found that accommodation facilities and connectivity are inadequate to meet the basic requirements of tourists in TMJ. Local participation can be enhanced by encouraging home stay accommodation for visitors thereby avoiding new constructions. According to Boxill and Severin (2004), community participation is an important aspect for sustainable ecotourism. In case of new constructions, ecological considerations should be given due importance. Any change in land use pattern or poor architectural designs may also result in environmental hazards. So, local people should be concerned with the approach of homestay which was newly planned in TMJ area.

Conclusion

The TMJ has good potential of ecotourism. Tourists enjoy beautiful Rhododendron forest in March-April, escape the hot weather in June-July-August, watch the beautiful panorama of mountains in September-October and enjoy snowfall in winter. This suggests that the area has distinctive offerings throughout the year to host tourists. Travelers seek for natural beauty during their visit to different places. The presence of high diversity of flora, fauna and bird species makes the site ideal as ecotourism destination. Besides that, domestic tourists also visit TMJ for culturally important places such as Basantapur Botanical Garden and View Tower, Tinjure Dada Pathivara Temple, Gupha Pokhari, Singhabahini Devi Temple. The infrastructure and facilities that are being developed suggest high chances for advancement of ecotourism in the area. If the plans and policies are formulated within few years, then ecotourism can improve in TMJ area. The plan and policy must include some concrete idea to attract international tourist. However, further research must be done on the number of tourist flow according to seasons or services provided to them to improve ecotourism.

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**Contested Interpretation of Vietnam War Heritage:
Tour Guides' Mediating Roles**

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Article

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Abstract

The legacy of the Vietnam War associates Vietnam with being a destination for dark tourism. Located in the central Vietnam, Quang Tri, the former Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has high density of historical sites left from the Vietnam War. Visitation to the war-related sites for commemoration and secular pilgrimage is among the top motivations for tourists arriving in the city. The current research seeks to investigate the mediating roles of on-site guides at the historical sites of Quang Tri. By observing on-site tour guide performance, analysing their narratives and conducting interviews with guides working at monuments and historical sites, and reflection of tourists visiting the sites, the authors provide a unique perspective of guiding at contested war heritage, where on-site guides perform multiple mediating roles. The findings of the study highlight the need to reappraise the role of on-site guides and have implications for the planning and development of guiding services at historic sites.

Keywords

*Dark tourism,
Vietnam war, tour
guide, interpretation,
mediation*

Introduction

War heritage sites play an important part in the process of struggling for independence in Southeast Asian states (Hitchcock, King, & Parnwell, 2009). Nationally important

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historical sites connect the past and the present in the sense of heritage defined by Smith (2006) as “a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present” (p. 44). The meanings and memories of past human experiences are recalled through contemporary interactions with physical places along the principles of cultural politics of where “even the very substance of a heritage is a political construction of what is remembered” (Richter, 1989, p. 109). The “dominant ideology hypothesis” (Ashworth, 1994, p. 20) asserts that governments will project a message legitimating their position. Therefore, official narratives in nationally important war-related sites are highly selective and contribute to “the effort to create more purely nationalistic narratives” (Long, 2012, p. 210). Narratives of historical places related to major wars for independence are commonly used to build patriotism on the domestic level (Timothy & Boyd, 2006), however, they appear differently to international visitors. The movement of people from different regions, social cultural and political backgrounds around the world for touristic purposes, therefore, complicates the interpretation of historical heritage sites, which are primarily designed to serve the domestic audience. However, the interpretation of contested war heritage sites has been poorly understood in tourism studies.

Visitation to war related sites, commonly known as war/battlefield tourism (Smith, 1996, 1998; Dann, 1998; Stone, 2006; Butler & Suntikul, 2013) is not limited to places where war has occurred but also cemeteries, monuments, museums and other institutions. Parallel to this terminology are general concepts such “thanatourism” (Seaton, 1996), “heritage of atrocity” (Achworth & Harmann, 2005) and “black spot” (Rojek, 1993). The act of visitation to these “dark” sites, or “dark tourism” entails a different meaning depending on how the experience is interpreted from place identify (White & Frew, 2016), geographic, cultural and religious perspectives (Hooper & Lennon, 2017). For instance, Cohen (2018) points out that dark tourism in the West is motivated by “the contemplation of their own mortality” while it is a counterpart of local customs, culture and religions for Asians (p. 169).

The tourist experience at dark tourism site encompasses awareness, education and entertainment (Kunwar et al., 2019), however, while some tourists may “be interested in interpretation that is educational, others may be seeking an emotional, spiritual, or sentimental experience” (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011, p. 825). Therefore, the tour guide plays an important role in directing and influencing the interpretation of battlefield sites (Iles, 2008) in terms of both the manner in which the site is presented and the information the guide conveys (Sharpley, 2009). On-site guides have also seen as critical in endowing deeper understanding for tourists, not through instruction but by means of provocation (Tilden, 1977, cited in Miles, 2014). In other words, on-site interpretation is a co-creation process involving both on-site guides and tourists for crafting stories, reflections and understandings by sharing viewpoints and stories.

Despite being known as one of the most controversial wars of the twentieth century, research on the Vietnam War from a dark tourism perspective has been relatively ignored. Previous research about dark tourism in Vietnam, to name a few, offers an overview of war-related sites (Henderson, 2000; 2007, Schwenkel, 2006; Upton et al., 2018) which paid attention to popular sites near Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in Southern Vietnam, such as Cu Chi Tunnel (Gillen, 2018; Le, 2014), or the War Remnant Museum (Laderman, 2009; Gillen, 2014) located in the city centre are relatively well addressed). In Northern Vietnam, Hoa Lo Prison located in the central precinct of Hanoi, the place detained political prisoners during French colonialization, then American pilots captured in the Vietnam War. Being listed as one of thirty most attractive dark tourist sites worldwide (Fonseca et al., 2016, p. 4), surprisingly, very little research has been conducted in this site (Logan, 2009). Being the border between the North and the South that hosted many fierce fights, Quang Tri is home of 436 important vestiges, the majority of them related to the Vietnam War (Quang Tri Tourism Guidebook, 2016). The relics are dotted around the city, making the entire city and its outskirts part of an integrated dark tourism complex. Despite holding a special position in the heart of Vietnamese (and to a lesser extent, American soldiers of the Vietnam War), research on dark tourism in Quang Tri former DMZ has long been ignored. Acknowledging an existing gap of dark tourism associated with the Vietnam War, the authors of this research aim to find out answers to the research question: What is the role of tour guides in creation of a 'host' perspective of war heritage sites? This research will employ qualitative critical narrative analysis, with evidence derived from qualitative in-depth interviews and observation to support the researchers in investigating the role of on-site tour guides at dark heritage sites.

Literature review

This is a review of the literature shaping the theoretical ground for the current research, which encompasses the conceptualization of dark tourism, visitation to and interpretation of war heritage sites. This literature review also specifically addresses the context of the Vietnam War with a focus on the DMZ area of Quang Tri from historical and political perspectives.

The term "dark tourism" appeared in the tourism literature in the mid-90s (Lennon & Foley, 1996). Dark tourism refers to visitation to death sites, battlefields, cemeteries, museums, prisons, and genocide sites. Parallel to this terminology are general concepts such as "thanatourism" (Seaton, 1996), "battlefield tourism" (Ryan, 2007), and "tourism and war" (Smith, 1998; Butler & Suntikul, 2013). Visitation to death-related sites can also be termed as "cemetery tourism" (Logan, 2009), "ghost tourism" (Inglis, 2003; Davies, 2009; Holloway, 2010), "heritage of atrocity" (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005), or "fright tourism" (Bristow & Newman, 2004). Visitation to the dark sites provides

“awareness, education and entertainment on several cases of history and heritage, tourism and tragedies” (Kunwar et al., 2019, p. 105). Research on Holocaust sites and museums (Beech, 2000; Ashworth, 2002; Isaac & Cakmak, 2014; Kidron, 2013, Thurnell-Read, 2009), study of visitation to genocide sites (Beech, 2009; Lennon, 2009; Sharples, 2012, Friedrich & Johnston, 2013), war-related sites (Farmaki, 2013; Iles, 2012, Johnston, 2011, 2016), and atomic bomb sites (Bui, Yoshida, & Lee, 2018) has flourished in from the beginning of the 21st century, reflecting growing interest in dark tourism both from industry and academia.

The purpose of visitation to the sites of past conflicts includes commemoration, education, pilgrimage, and light entertainment in some circumstances (Dunkley, Morgan & Westwood, 2011). Consuming dark tourism is thus a means of confronting death in modern societies (Stone & Sharples, 2008) as John et al. (2016) contend “visits to sites of death can be exceptionally powerful experiences, which may have deep personal impacts on a tourist” (p. 160), a kind of “psychological outcome” desired and satisfied by the tourists (Kunwar & Karki, 2019, p. 55). Demand for visitation to the dark sites is highly heterogeneous (Light, 2017) reflecting multi-layered and multi-faceted notion of dark tourism. However, Western and Asian visitation to the dark sites are not similar. For example, Kang et al., (2012) study dark tourism within a peace paradigm between North and South Korea; Yoshida et al. (2016) explore the matrix of educational and war tourism in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan), and suggest that Eurocentric perspectives of dark tourism are not necessarily applicable to other indigenous Asian perspectives. Cohen (2018) argues that in some Asian countries, namely, India, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, dark tourism can be dimensioned and affected by local customs and religious traditions. In particular, the belief in life after death, glorifying war death and customs of ancestor worship and religious ritual are all associated with dark tourism, thus, visitors to death-related sites can be motivated by mythical and inspirational stories. These characteristics also affect the interpretation at the site.

Interpretation in the context of tourism is considered as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information” (Tilden, 1957, p.8, cited in Leshem, 2018). Previous studies have indicated the crucial role of tour guides in tourism (Bowman, 1992, Cohen, 1985, Schmidt, 1979; Dahles, 2002). Based on group characteristics, guides can be classified as official guides, alternative guides, or entrepreneurial guides (including commercial, event and coach tours); on the other hand, based on place characteristics, guides can be classified as private, independent, and residential guides (Bryon, 2012). The essential role of tour guides is to build a bridge to connect other stakeholders in the process of money flow, services, activities and information (Gurung, Simons,

& Devlin, 1996), with tour guides being “outer-directed” as organizers while tour leaders are “inner-directed” as entertainers and educators/teachers (p.107).

The key role of tour guide is not only as an experience broker (Jennings & Weiler, 2006), but also as a mediator (Weiler & Walker, 2014). A guide can broker visitors’ physical access to places, visitor encounters (interactions with the host community and environment), visitor understanding (cognitive access) and visitor empathy (affective or emotional access) (McGrath, 2007). Beyond the four roles of guides conceptualised in the literature, tour guides at sites of national importance also perform a political role. For example, Dahles (2002) addresses the way the Indonesian government uses propaganda to manifest and restrict both the narrative and tourist guide policy. In the case of sites linked to lost lives for nation-building and independence, the narrative certainly “provide[s] particular (political) interpretations of past events” (Sharpley, 2009, p.8). Therefore, on-site tour guides for historical sites also perform political and ideological roles embedded in official narratives of the sites designated to form part of the national history.

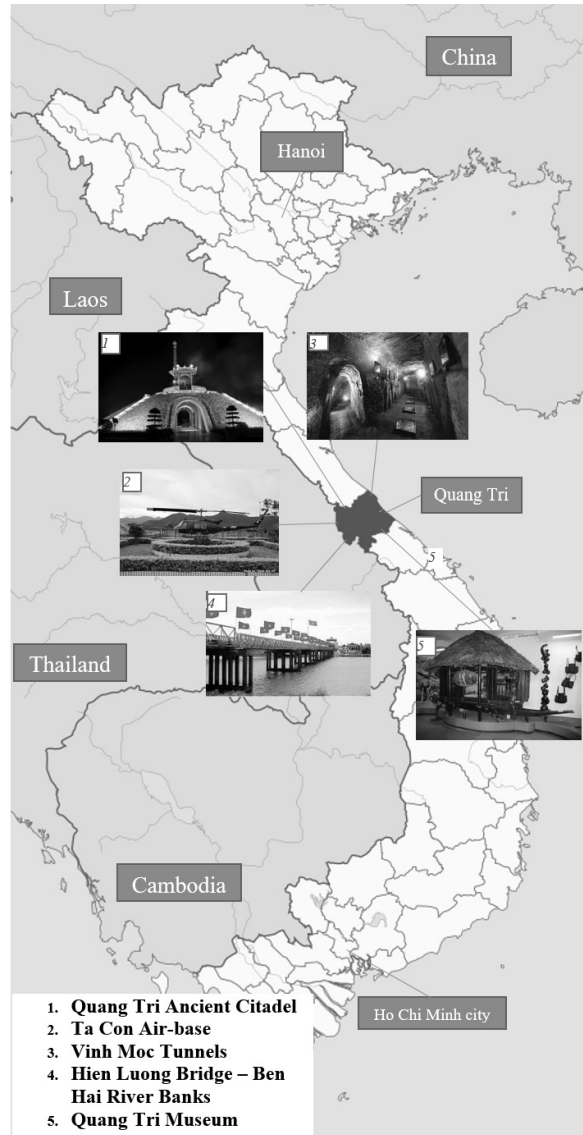
Interpretation of dark heritage sites is multifaceted and multi-layered in design and purpose (Sharpley & Stone, 2009), “while some tourists may be interested in interpretation that is educational, others may be seeking an emotional, spiritual, or sentimental experience” (Biran, Poria & Oren, 2011, p.825). Thus, it is not easy to interpret a site in a way that is satisfied by all the parties with different memories and perspectives (Boyles, 2005). If the interpretation is misled, trivialised or commercialised, it becomes “a barrier” to achieve both cognitive and effective outcomes of tourist experience (Kunwar & Karki, 2019, p. 52). The visitors’ experience might be influenced by on-site interpretation (Crawford, 2016). Interpretation of war-related sites is highly contested when the winners and the losers holding different memories of the same event (Baldwen & Sharpley, 2009). Therefore, “market separation” solution (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005) is proposed.

The notion of on-site interpretation is co-creation by the guides and the tourists (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Robb, 2009; Walby & Piche, 2011). When stories conveyed at the dark sites are contentious or multi-layered, visitors tend to ‘read’ or ‘see’ the sites through their own lenses of experience, knowledge, and perspectives (Light, 2017). For instance, veteran had first-hand experience at war sites can provide additional details, or shed different light on the stories delivered by guides. Therefore, not only the supply side, i.e. museums, relics, heritage sites provides interpretation, but also the demand side, i.e. tourists, pilgrimages, veterans...involves actively in the construction of the sites’ narratives.

In this context, on-site tour guides at dark sites in terms of both the manner in which they are presented and the information they convey are critical in endowing

deeper understanding for tourists, not through instruction, but by way of provocation (Tilden, 1977, cited in Miles, 2014). Tour guides at historic dark sites perform the additional role of storytelling and meaning-making for the tourist's trip. "The key to success in managing dark tourism attractions is to engage the staff in storytelling" to understand the proper narrative for every tourist (Wiltshier, 2016, p.44). The role of the tour guide becomes extremely important in places that mark important historical events, where tour guides perform all roles of logistics, and political and educational functions, in addition to storytelling and meaning-making of historical events.

The Vietnam War is controversial and complicated as it included the involvement of foreign forces. For the Vietnamese, the War reminds of a period of division along the 17th Parallel by the Ben Hai River in Quang Tri Province. Quang Tri is known for the fiercest battles of Vietnam War, giving the land sacred status in the national history owing to the enormous sacrifice of lives. There is a high concentration of war-related historical sites of the former DMZ, including the Ben Hai River and the Hien Luong Bridge. The area was known for the fiercest battles by American forces such as the Battle of Khe Sanh. Conversely, for Vietnamese, Quang Tri is the home of the Legendary Ho Chi Minh Trail (known as Truong Son Trail in Western literature), the Ancient Quang Tri Citadel, and the underground tunnels of Vinh Moc.

Figure 1. Selected war-related sites in Quang Tri, Vietnam

Owing to twenty-five years of the history of Vietnam War with involvement of various troops from different countries and political alliances, the war heritage of Quang Tri is highly complex and appear to have different meanings to different groups of visitors. For example, to understand the symbolic meanings of the sites, history and the war should be understood from various angles. For instance, sites

related to American troops such as Khe Sanh and Ta Con Airbase are interesting to international tourists driven by American involvement, while sites associated with fights and battles with Vietnamese involvement require an understanding of the war from the Vietnamese perspective. Therefore, on-site tour guides have incorporated many stories about what happened in the past from different sides of the war, and function mediating roles. How the on-site guide delivers narratives of historical sites remain an unanswered question and warrants further investigation.

Research methods

The authors employed a combination of qualitative methods. Data for the research were derived from observations and interviews with on-site guides, tourists, together with analysis of guide narratives. Qualitative methods utilise various skills, such as intensive listening, careful note-taking, detailed planning and sufficient preparation (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Interviews are the natural method when the “researchers send interviewers to ask the questions orally and to record respondents’ answers” (Barbie, 2010, p. 267). Based on the assumption that the narrative is “anything that tells or presents a story” (Jahn, 2017, p.1.2), the authors have made full use of the information obtained from the on-site guides interviewed to analyse how these stories were delivered.

The researchers conducted 14 interviews with six visitors, five on-site guides and three tour guides from tourism agencies over two weeks in late April 2019. Table 1 shows the respondents’ profiles. Each interview lasted about 30 - 40 minutes. Questions for on-site tour guides were about the types of tourists who visited the historic sites, tourists’ questions, attitudes and perceptions of the sites, and seasonality of visitation. The visitors were asked about why they visited, any new information/knowledge gained from the on-site guides; while also eliciting tourists’ comments on guides’ knowledge, attitude and skills. Questions about demographic characteristics of the informants were also asked.

Convenient sampling strategy was employed to recruit interview informants. A researcher observed tour groups visiting historic sites and recorded both guide’s narrative and visitor’s reaction. To recruit informants from group tours, the researcher approached tourists and asked for their consent to participate in the interview. The researcher stayed on sites to interview tour guides while they were in between services. Recruitment of informants was difficult in the hottest month of the summer when the study was carried out. Tourists got tired under the heat and often quickly returned to their air-conditioned cars and buses. Although the researcher had approached many potential informants, very few tourists agreed to participate in the study. The recruitment of tour guides for interview sample was easier as the guides often stay indoor at the site upon completion of their duty. In addition to 14 informants consented

to participate in the study, the researcher conducted more than 20 informal talks to visitors and guides on various topics in relation to site interpretation. Interview recordings were transcribed and analysed along with observations and field notes of informal talks.

Table 1. Interview respondent profiles.

Respondents	Gender	Nationality	Occupation	Residence
Tourist 1	Female	Vietnamese	Student	Phu Yen
Tourist 2	Male	Vietnamese	Veteran	Hanoi
Tourist 3	Female	Vietnamese	Unknown	Quang Binh
Tourist 4	Male	Vietnamese	Officer	Thanh Hoa
Tourist 5	Male	Vietnamese	Veteran	Ha Nam
Tourist 6	Female	Vietnamese	Unknown	Quang Binh
On-site guide 1	Female	Vietnamese	Tour guide at Vinh Moc Historical Relic	Quang Tri
On-site guide 2	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide at Vinh Moc Historical Relic	Quang Tri
On-site guide 3	Female	Vietnamese	Tour guide at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel	Quang Tri
On-site guide 4	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel	Quang Tri
On-site guide 5	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide at Hien Luong Historical Relic	Quang Tri
Tour guide 1	Male	Vietnamese	Independent tour guide	Hue
Tour guide 2	Male	Vietnamese	Tour guide	Hanoi
Tour guide 3	Female	Vietnamese	Independent tour guide	Quang Binh

In addition to interviews, participant observation was also employed to provide additional contextual data to aid the interview process. Having involvement with a given social group, the researcher is able to create a personal relationship with its members, and is able to describe their actions and motivations (Corbetta, 2003). The authors could observe visitor-guide interactions by following guided groups on their

tours. One of the two researchers was born and raised locally, became deeply involved with locals and built trusting relationships with tour companies. Their proximity to the culture, industry experience, and Vietnamese language skills, and intimate knowledge of local values and customs enabled understanding of the respective local contexts.

The authors adopted thematic analysis with a confirmatory approach to analyse data based on conceptual categories determined prior to reviewing the text (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). First, the authors analysed discourses of groups associated with tour guides and tourists separately. Second, the themes that emerged from different groups were compared, connected and organized into major themes that appeared on both sides, which centred on the interpretation of the given war-related site. Themes that emerged from interviews were triangulated with data derived from observation and presented in the findings of the study below.

Findings

Having analysed data collected from interviews and participant observation, four types of roles for tour guides emerged. The first set consists of ascribed roles for political and educational purposes, and the second set consists of mediating roles between contrasted elements such as past-present and war-peace, involving the mediation of visitor emotion and the mediation of visitor understanding.

Political broker

The Vietnam War is controversial and complicated with the involvement of foreign forces. Quang Tri is where the 17th Parallel by the Ben Hai River was set to divide former North Vietnam and South Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement signed in 1954, which led to twenty years of the war from 1956 to 1974. The province has a high concentration of war-related historical sites including the Ben Hai River, a natural border dividing North and South Vietnam that forms the DMZ area, and the Hien Luong Bridge which traverses the river. Former battlefields such as Ancient Quang Tri Citadel and Khe Sanh witnessed some of the fiercest battles of the Vietnam War where the various troops involved lost thousands of lives. For Vietnamese, Quang Tri is a sacred place of the legendary Ho Chi Minh Trail, where 20,000 lives of young Vietnamese were lost building a complicated logistical support network from North to South Vietnam. Their remains lay in nine national war cemeteries in Quang Tri. As a witness of important events the twenty-year Vietnam War, Quang Tri is a sacred place in the national history. Therefore, official narratives of national history associated with the sites are highly regulated and sharing these narratives is the official task of on-site tour guides, in fact reflecting Ashworth's (1994) "dominant ideology hypothesis" (p. 20). For example, a tour-guide expressed the following restriction in the interview:

The DMZ tour is usually chosen for learning about history... Tourists have often learned about these sites before arriving. Additional information was collected through the [on-site] guide's interpretation at the site. In my personal experience, I seldom express my political viewpoints as tourists might have a very different view on the related events I mention. I let the on-site guide explain the national narrative of the events as they are authorized to do so. (Tour guide 1).

Symbolic meaning can only be conveyed through skilful and knowledgeable guides who deeply understand and are attached to the sites. If qualified on-site guides are not available, ordinary group tour guides often omit the sites from the tour itinerary. For example, the ruins of the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel of the 81-day battle in summer 1972 is one of the most visited sites for domestic tourists. However, delivering the historical narrative and symbolic meaning of the site is not easy as explanation and is highly abstract. This special task can only be performed by professional on-site guides, and ordinary guides may find it extremely challenging:

Quang Tri Ancient Citadel is officially included in the package tour, but is often omitted from the itinerary for international travellers. Firstly, it is not easy to interpret as it requires deep and specialized historical knowledge. Secondly, the Citadel has a high symbolic meaning with very few tangible exhibits to show visitors. Apart from the common grave and museum, it is difficult to explain historical events that occurred in the past (Tour guide 2).

Educational broker

Educational activities are designed to carry out political ideology. Visitation to historical sites is an indispensable program that applies to all levels of education, from primary to secondary school and tertiary education in Vietnam. Historical site-visitation offers opportunities for critical thinking (Paul, 1990), situational instruction (Smith, 1989) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) through activity-based learning. Political education is embedded in the official narratives of historic sites. Interactions through physical settings (the site) and symbolic interpretation performed by the guide retains students' interest in historical lessons. Generations of school and university students have come to Quang Tri to learn about the war and related events. This type of educational travel in Vietnamese is called '*du lich ve nguon*', which means educating the younger generation about their origin. In this context, the on-site guide performs as a broker facilitating visitor interaction with physical sites to enhance the educational experience.

Students are from universities nationwide, mainly from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, from the departments of history and tourism. There are also students from the Da Nang University of Science and Technology. Local

school and college students visit the site for the educational program on the occasions of Youth Day (March 26th) and National Reunification Day (April 30th) (On-site guide 1).

Educating younger generations about history is one of the major tasks for tourism industry and heritage site management in Quang Tri, which has been recognised by tourists:

Coming here, you will feel both national pain and pride very clearly that makes it the best place for the education of the younger generation (Tourist 3).

Site interpretation for the young audience, however, is slightly different from the official narrative for adults. In the narratives targeted at children, the stories often center on the skills for survival, ensuring continuity of lives, despite the hardship and darkness of the war, with remarkable examples of how children lived through wartime in the Vinh Moc underground tunnels:

Each person in Vinh Linh suffered through more than seven tons of bombs on average. However, life still arose from suffering and death; 17 children were born in the heart of the Vinh Moc tunnels (On-site guide 3).

Through meaningful interpretation, on-site guides convey messages on humanity, heroism, peace loving, goodness and selflessness. It reflects points made by Poria et al. (2009), that interpretation not only has a knowledge function to the tourist, but it can also build up their experience. Along with their functional role to convey a political message and educating young generations, on-site guides also performed a symbolic role as a bridge between the past and the present, while also reconciling conflicts between former enemies.

Mediating visitor emotions

Vietnamese veterans often visit former battlefields through regular programs organised by the Veteran Association, such as “Memorial of the old battlefields and comrades”, “Legendary road” on the occasions of national commemorative events such as Victory Day (April 30th), War Invalids and Martyrs’ Day (July 27th), and Independence Day (September 2nd). Visitation to Quang Tri includes pilgrims, visiting as a kind of ritual to pay respect to those who sacrificed their lives, as a way to connect the past and the present. Tour guides at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel witness many emotional moments of veterans and their relatives when they have returned to the sacred land where their comrades and beloved ones lay. The guides become agents, mediating the past and the present, between the dead and the living, by telling the stories of the past battles.

Tourists shed tears when they hear the tour guide tell about soldiers’ painful stories from the war. There is a story of Le Van Huynh – a young soldier who could

predict what would happen to him and wrote a farewell letter to his mother and wife the day before the final battle, in which he was certain of his fate. He knew in advance where he would be buried and guided the family to find his remains. Here is a part of the contents of his final letter, read to tourists by an on-site guide at the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel:

I'm leaving, my mom please take care, as if I am always with you. Don't be sad, so my soul can be free. My father has gone so far to let you know how hard it is. Currently, I have grown up, then... Well, please don't be sad, I have lived my life for the future fatherland (Guides' narrative from the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel).

It can be affirmed that, for each different visitor, on-site tour guides play a different role. For Vietnamese tourists, they are mediating agents between the present and the past, while for international visitors, guides are telling them different stories and sometimes, helping veterans to heal their pain from the past.

Mediating visitor understanding

Almost half of a century has passed since the time of the Vietnam War, yet foreign veterans have kept coming back to the former battlefields to relive memories. Their motivation to return to Vietnam is to find out what has not been told and what is missing in the Western narratives of the Vietnam War by asking various questions to the on-site guides.

The most frequent question being asked is why American forces wanted to destroy Vinh Linh? How was life in the tunnel? Where did they find food? How did they light up the tunnel? What are Vietnamese attitudes towards Americans? Do Vietnamese hate Americans? (On-site guide 2).

By telling the stories from a Vietnamese perspective, on-site guides contribute to boosting mutual understanding between both sides, bringing a new perspective of the war to foreigners. One of the authors had the personal experience of guiding an Australian veteran who had fought in the Vietnam War. He returned to Quang Tri with the desire to build a water supply system for local people. He showed a photo taken in Khe Sanh when he was a young man in an army uniform. Visiting sites such as the Hien Luong Bridge, the Vinh Moc Tunnels and Khe Sanh to recall the battles of long ago and learning from guides' narratives of stories from the other side of the war, was a healing therapy for him. The trip to the former battlefields had somehow released him from the burden of the past.

The narratives and stories through guide interpretation shared and created new meaning and motivated tourists to explore the sites further. For example, after visiting and being interpreted to by an on-site tour guide's narrative, a visitor affirmed that:

From the national Highway 1A I can unconsciously see the old bridges, loudspeaker systems, flagpoles and some other items on both sides. Even knowing that this place had a long separation over 20 years, I really could not visualize the true meaning of the historical stories and what remains today until I was exposed to them by a guide's interpretation (Tourist 2).

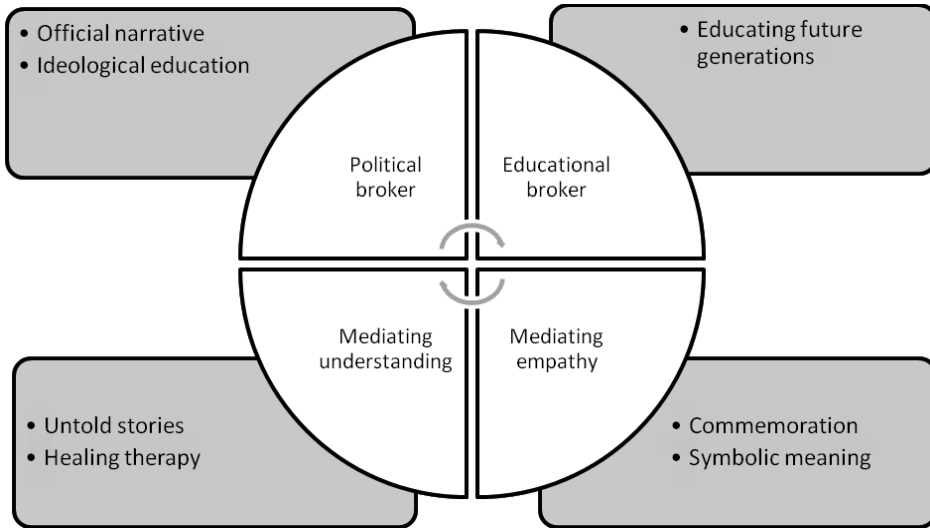
A good tourist product should be accompanied by professional guides and friendly staff in addition to service and facility quality, as well as including foreign language proficiency. Currently, only English tour guides are available in limited supply. It is impossible to meet the demands of foreign tourists with non-English speaking backgrounds requesting a tour guide at the sites.

In fact, our agency has some training courses for the employees. However, in addition to specialized knowledge, foreign languages are a major obstacle. Most employees do not study foreign languages. Although some foreign language classes are held, only a low level of English is offered. Some tourists require French- or Italian-speaking guides, which is impossible to be provided (On-site guide 2).

With all functions listed above, the on-site tour guides are those who make sites meaningful and worthwhile to visit. Hence, in parallel with the process of improving the quality and diversity of tourism products, it is necessary to improve the knowledge and skills of tourist guides at those historic sites. In particular, guides with good and diverse foreign language proficiency are limited.

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to investigate the roles of on-site tour guides in the interpretation of dark heritage sites of the Vietnam War in the case of Quang Tri, the war's former DMZ area. The authors employed qualitative critical narrative analysis driven from in-depth interviews and observation. The researchers identified four major roles of on-site tour guides in the dark heritage sites as showed in Figure 1. The division of four roles is for the purpose of conceptualisation and is relative as in reality, multiple roles are interchangeable and inseparable.

Figure 2. Four major roles of on-site guides

The roles of regular tour guides and on-site tour guides differ. Ordinary tour guides are responsible to facilitate a safe route following a strict timetable and designated itinerary (Cohen, 1985), while satisfying tourists with complete tour service and enhancing their overall experience (Huang et al., 2009). Differently, the key role of on-site guides at historic sites place emphasis on their role as a broker and mediator. Drawing on the four mediating roles for visitors' access, encounters, understanding and empathy asserted by McGrath (2007), our study finds out that on-site tour guides especially perform the latter two roles: being mediators for visitor cognitive and affective access. Beyond these ascribed roles, tour guides at nationally important sites in Quang Tri also perform the roles of political and educational brokers under the strict governance of official interpretation of the sites. These perspectives reflect Dahles's (2002) argument on government manifestation and restriction of the narrative and guiding policy in Indonesia. In the context of Vietnam, where political narratives are embedded in the educational system and curriculum, both political and educational roles become priority tasks to perform for on-site guides.

The important role of the on-site guide in storytelling and meaning-making for tourist trips reflects Uzzel (1988) points out that "emotions colour our memories and experience" (p. 152). The mediating role of on-site guides at controversial sites moves beyond understanding and emotion. The guides have acted as ambassadors to bring former enemies closer to each other. In other words, they perform the role of an ambassador of peace. Similarly, the mediating role of visitor emotional access, in fact, is the mediation between the dead and the living, between the past and the

present. The guides tell stories of death to visitors and interpret the past to the present audience. In that way, they perform the roles of political and educational brokers. The four roles identified for on-site guides are closely related and interchangeable.

Tourism and its development facilitates the movement of people from different regional, social, cultural and political backgrounds from around the world. Therefore, it complicates the process of heritage politicization as Richter (1989) defined as “a political construction of what is remembered” (p.109). Narrated on the basis of the winner of the war, site interpretation reflects authorised narratives of the national struggle for independence in Vietnam, which reaffirms Ashworth’s (1994) “dominant ideology hypothesis” (p. 20). The narratives of war heritage in Quang Tri asserts that governments would project messages legitimating their position, and therefore are highly selective and “purely nationalistic narratives” (Long, 2012, p. 210). Narratives of historical places related to national struggles for independence are used to build patriotism at the domestic level (Timothy & Boyd, 2006) however, they appear differently to international visitors (and some domestic visitors) with different backgrounds and understanding. Therefore, the on-site guide’s mediating role to enhance visitors understanding is highly challenging and complex and requires careful consideration about the stories being told.

Findings from our fieldwork challenge Ashworth and Hartmann’s (2005) notion of “market separation”. Visitors to the war-heritage are aware of the winners’ intention glorify their victory, and that ideology might frame the picture of the war. Their visitation to the war sites has often been motivated by their personal connection, history and memory of both individual and collective level. Once encountering contested interpretation of the war sites, tourists and guides might involve in a co-creation process when viewpoints and historical facts and truths are exchanged to enrich the experiences of the visitors and stories of the guides. Particularly, when Vietnamese government makes effort to close the painful past and promotes reconciliation for peace and friendship, the co-creation solution for on-site guiding has proved to be a feasible and appropriate option for contested interpretation.

Another significant finding from our study is the paradox of dark and light associated with war heritage pilgrimages in the Asian context. War death is not necessarily presented only as the dark side of the story. The way the Vietnamese commemorate the war dead and construct interpretation of tragic events is to glorify death, in which the soldiers’ sacrifices for nation-building and independence should be remembered and glorified. This notion reflects Heap’s (2009) contention “simply that dark tourism is really an attempt to package death in a sort of ‘glory way’ without right and wrong” (p.94). In this process, tour guides are those who convey the message of glorification. Hence, dark tourism does not only contain a “dark”, negative side, but also fuels a “light”, positive experience among the visitors.

Conclusion

This research analyses the roles of on-site tour guides in the context of war-related sites in Vietnam. It also reveals that apart from the historical value embedded in the physical component of the site, on-site tour guides significantly convey meaningful messages to tourists by enhancing their cognitive and affective access to historical sites with their knowledge and interpretation. They contribute to visitors' understanding of the political and educational contexts of the experience. The mediating role of on-site guides bridges the past and the present, and brings opposite sides of the Vietnam War to a common understating and empathy.

The research has several implications for theoretical development and practical implementation. In terms of the theoretical perspective, this exploratory research raises a question about the intertwined nature of political and educational aspects in dark tourism, together with the separation of emotional and cognitive elements of meditated experience at dark tourism sites. Thus, the dualistic dark-light tourism classification should be challenged and deserves further investigation. For practitioners, findings from the research emphasize the need to enhance the performance of on-site tour guides at historical sites, as they play a much more important role than information givers. The multiple roles which on-site guides play should be enhanced and recognised in the process of peace-building and carry on the education of history to future generations.

The current research, however, has several inherent limitations that shed light for future research. Firstly, the research is limited to a small number of guides and tourists. It is necessary to expand the scope of the interviews to encompass the viewpoints of government officials, international tourists and other institutions such as schools, who could provide diverse understanding of the historical sites. Secondly, the study mainly explores Vietnamese perspectives of interpretation. It would be beneficial for the literature to compare narratives of these historical sites across different groups of visitors of various nationalities or age groups to elicit further viewpoints. Finally, the study of tour guiding should not be isolated from overall tourist experience studies. These suggestions can contribute to the literature on dark tourism by making future studies more meaningful.

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Strategies for Development of Yoga, Ayurveda, and Meditation-based Health Tourism in Nepal: Using SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

Now health tourism based on yoga, Ayurveda and meditation is growing sector in Nepalese Tourism. Health tourism as one of the most important forms of tourism is not an exception and preparing strategies for its development will not be possible without considering its specific and extraordinary environment. The objective of preparing and is writing this research paper is to formulate suitable strategies for health tourism development in Nepal. This study uses a qualitative approach. We conduct 38 semi-structured interviews with related stakeholder's of health tourism in Nepal, including health service providers, tourism service providers (as enterprise), and government officials. It was carried out in 2017 in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, and Pokhara. For strategy formulation, we employ the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis method to examine the internal and external factors comprehensively, in terms of health tourism development in Nepal. The strategy to the health tourism development will be considered in terms of four relations: strengths-opportunities (S-O), weaknesses-opportunities

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(W-O), strengths-threats (S-T), weakness-threats (W-T). The results of this study show that the strategy in health tourism development in Nepal, it is necessary to work on policy and regulation, promotion and branding, introducing the quality standards for health products and service as well as to establish the institutional support in order to successful implementation for the strategy of the health tourism development in Nepal.

Introduction

As a new form of tourism, health tourism has substantially grown over recent years. The nature of health tourism supply-side reform is to promote the coordinated development of health tourism supply and demand system, optimize stakeholder affecting factors, and improve health tourism quality. Nowadays, the theme of tourism supply-side reform has been the research focus. The new wave of health-care tourism originating from developed countries and heading toward developing ones is accepted as a major development that can reduce costs and increase efficiencies in the health systems of developed countries. The so-called third wave of medical tourism is expected to have a positive long-term effect on developing economies (Cohen, 2012). About 30 countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Hungary, Poland, Jordan, Slovenia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, India, Turkey and the USA, are considered as the major players in the international health tourism market (Bookman & Bookman, 2007; Eissler & Casken, 2013; Merrell et al., 2008; Pollard, 2013). Many governments, international agencies, and stakeholders consider medical tourism as a means of economic growth, which might cross-subsidize domestic health access where that is a central governmental objective and ensure a competitive cure for the global health system and the delivery of health services worldwide (Hall, 2013).

Bookman and Bookman (2007, in Horowitz et al., 2007) emphasize that the government of destination countries must implement and enforce appropriate macroeconomic redistributive policies to ensure that the local residents of these countries actually realize the potential benefits of the health tourism industry. Empirical research proves that health care service providing, distribution of health care products, and the increase of demand for health care treatments, serve as a catalyst for the globalization of health tourism movements, which generates significant economic effects such as investments, income, employment, tax revenues, and export earnings for host countries (Kesar & Rimac, 2011). The rational usage of available energy, a friendly entrepreneurial environment aimed towards the attraction of new investments and public-private partnerships, together with the development of specific packages in order to ensure a high quality of services, this special niche of tourism has a bright future in Nepal, and can significantly contribute to the country's economic growth.

Health tourists work as the demand side, which experienced health tourism supply directly, whose supply sensing results also directly affected their subsequent tourism behavior. That is to say, they will recommend when satisfied with the health provider of their quality standards and quality service, and they won't be back or even they give a bad review when unsatisfied. Health and tourism enterprises were the main health tourism supply providers, whose high or low evaluation on health service and tourism service will directly affect their investment and construction results of destination tourism supply.

There are different stakeholders in the health tourism industry. Thus, policymakers can plan, make a policy and decision, and use effective strategies to develop health tourism by designing a health tourism stakeholders' network, a health tourism council, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Some Asian countries such as India, Thailand, and Malaysia have been very active in the development of health tourism; as a result, these places have become top destinations for health tourists. It is because these countries have developed infrastructure for tourism and health treatment and provided good communication links between hospitals, insurance, and tourism agencies as well as lowering costs and waiting times (Yu & Ko, 2012).

Therefore, the perception of health tourism supply between the supply and demand sides should be taken full account to make a scientific and reasonable regulation for the structure optimization of health tourism supply. In recent years, many researchers have paid more attention to the perception of the factor affecting supply and demand sides. However, how to judge the development order of supply factors and how to optimize the destination competitiveness supply factors, which are still lack of in-depth study. The main objective of preparing and is writing this research paper is to formulate suitable strategies for health tourism development in Nepal. For this purpose we set the following research questions:

1. Which are the most affecting factors for health tourism development in Nepal and suitable strategies?
2. Who are the related stakeholders for the health tourism industry in Nepal?

Research methodology

This research is descriptive-analytical and also a kind of applied research and it was carried out on December 10, 2017, to December 27, 2017 as an attempt to prioritize health tourism development factors of Nepal's health tourism industry. This research has been done upon the health tourism stakeholders of Nepal. Also, conduct interviews and experts' opinions in the field of health tourism and health services such as those in universities, Ministry of Health, Health Education, tourism industry experts, and other related stakeholders in Nepal were used to identify the internal and external factors such as the weakness and strength points and the opportunities

Stakeholders Interviewed	Criteria for Selection									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Stakeholder 15		Y					●			
Stakeholder 16		A								
Stakeholder 17					●					
Stakeholder 18					●					
Stakeholder 19		A								
Stakeholder 20										●
Stakeholder 21		Y		●		●				
Stakeholder 22										●
Stakeholder 23		A				●				
Stakeholder 24									●	
Stakeholder 25		Y								
Stakeholder 26		A								
Stakeholder 27									●	
Stakeholder 28		A		●			●			
Stakeholder 29		S							●	
Stakeholder 30									●	
Stakeholder 31		Y					●			
Stakeholder 32								●		
Stakeholder 33	H									
Stakeholder 34								●		
Stakeholder 35		A								
Stakeholder 36		A					●			
Stakeholder 37								●		
Stakeholder 38		Y					●			

Table 2: Criteria and key symbol used to select stakeholder for interview

Criteria	Description
1	Government Authorities: (H) Health Ministry Related (T) Tourism Ministry Related.
2	Health Providers : (A) Ayurveda, (Y) Yoga, and (S) SPA
3	Member of Nepal Tourism Board
4	Other Traditional and Natural Health Providers
5	University Authorities and Health-Related Research Organizations.
6	Spiritual Retreat/ Meditation
7	A facility offering medical tourism
8	Member of Ayurvedic Medical Council / Nepal Ayurvedic Doctor Association
9	Hotels with wellness facilities (i.e. SPA, Yoga and Massage)
10	Travel Agencies.

Methodology of analysis

To formulate the development strategies of health tourism, the SWOT analyzing method was used. As the method requires, an effective strategy is the one that as a result of its implementing, the opportunities and strong points are maximized and the weaknesses and threats are minimized. In the end, a list of strengths and weaknesses, as the internal factors, and another list of opportunities and threats, as external factors, were developed. To analyze the key elements of the internal/external environment, internal factor evaluation SWOT analysis were created. Afterward, finally, by using the SWOT matrix, the factors were compared pairwise and four strategies (SO/ST/WO/WT) were recommended for the development of the industry both at macro and micro levels.

This step is to identify the four patterns of the SWOT model for the compatibility of the internal and external factors.

Strength and Opportunity (S-O): The first area is the best position. In this case, the system faces several environmental opportunities and it has a lot of strengths that encourages the use of opportunities. This condition is recommended as a growth strategy.

Strength and Threat (S-T): In the second area, the system has key strengths but faces threats in the environment. In this condition, the strategies are used by existing strengths to build the long term opportunities in other cases.

Weakness and Opportunity (W-O): In the third area, the system is faced with great opportunities but suffer from several internal weaknesses.

Weakness and Threat (W-T): In the fourth area, the system is faced neither with the opportunities nor with the strengths of internal environmental but is faced with the internal dimensions to many threats. In this case, the best strategy will be a reduction strategy (Mousavi, 2006).

Table 3: SWOT Matrix and how to determine the strategies

Internal Factors		
External Factors	STRENGTH (W)	WEAKNESS (W)
OPPORTUNITY (O)	SO STRATEGY Achieve opportunities that greatly match the organization`s Strengths.	WO STRATEGY Overcome weakness to attain opportunity.
THREATS (T)	ST STRATEGY Use strengths to reduce the organization`s threats.	WT STRATEGY Prevent weakness to avoid making the organization more susceptible to threats.

Source: Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007; Marpaung & Shimizu, 2018

Factor affecting health tourism development

In this section, we will discuss two sections of health tourism development. The first section, factor affecting the health tourism development, where we discuss potential factors which affect the supply side of the health tourism industry. The second section, stakeholders identification their role and scope to develop the health tourism industry.

Globally, people are increasingly becoming health conscious, (Katalin, 2009) notes that feeling and looking healthy appear to be the mantra for today's fast-moving generation. Most developed countries are taking advantage of this interest in healthy lifestyles to promote health tourism as a strategic tourism product. Meanwhile, very little is being done in developing economies regarding health tourism development

(Tomka et al., 2011). Health tourism has been actively embraced by governments and private-sector actors in a growing number of lower- and middle-income countries as a potentially powerful economic growth engine. Meanwhile, critics generally warn that health tourism may harm destinations by stimulating private health care development unresponsive to locals' needs and resources (Sengupta, 2011).

Health tourism destinations can be used to attract foreign exchange, mitigate health worker brain-drain, and improve health care and tourism infrastructure (Bookman & Bookman, 2007). The development of the sector in recent years is mainly caused by changes in the lifestyle, demographics, people perception, culture, and globalization. Table 4 shows the research on factor Affecting Health Tourist Attracting in Different Countries by different researchers.

Table 4: Research on factor affecting health tourist attracting in different countries, compiled from various sources.

S.No	Reference	Country	Methodology & Sample	Findings
1	Heung et al. (2011)	China	Qualitative method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with hospital representatives, chief executives, directors of medical organizations, and representatives of relevant authorities in the healthcare sector.	Factors including the economy (costs), infrastructure, government attitude, policies and regulations, promotion, expertise, investment potential, language and communication, facilities and attractions are barriers to medical industry development in China.
2	Chomvilailuk and Srisomyong (2015)	Thailand	Qualitative and quantitative research methods. Fifteen interviews for which the interviewees mostly represent the supply side of medical tourism. Quantitative data were collected from 117 patients of one hospital in Pattaya.	Perceived congruence of demand-supply medical, perceived quality of demand-supply medical facilities and brand image of hospitality facilities affect destination brand choices.
3	Ulaş and Anadol (2016)	Turkey	Qualitative research was conducted, and primary data were collected from the 2 directors and 12 medical professionals in a case hospital.	Government support, infrastructure, economic factors such as cost, capacity, and human resources orientation are the main factors affecting the development of medical tourism for a private hospital.

S.No	Reference	Country	Methodology & Sample	Findings
4	Das and Mukherjee (2016) India	India	A qualitative study, 30 people whose residences were located in Kolkata was interviewed.	Four dimensions, namely, awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and authenticity were developed to assess medical destination brand equity.
5	Ebrahim and Ganguli (2017) Bahrain	Bahrain	Quantitative research methods, Data were collected from medical service providers in the Kingdom of Bahrain.	Careful planning and management of multi-stakeholder engagement in the medical tourism sector are crucial to ensure place attractiveness.
6	Ganguli and Ebrahim (2017)	Singapore	Qualitative research method, in-depth qualitative analysis, case study.	An enabling tourism sector, strategic planning, Public-Private Partnerships, marketing and branding strategies, technology and innovation, accreditation and governance and human capital development are the 7 pillars that Singapore's competitive advantage stems from.
7	Aydin and Karamehmet (2017)	Turkey	Qualitative research was conducted. Structured interviews were carried out in one public and three private hospitals in Turkey	Factors affecting health tourism include costs, cultural distance, political and/or economic stability, regulations & legal framework, overall quality of care and trust

Stakeholders role in health tourism development

Stakeholders mean any individual, group, or institution, which potentially affects or would be affected by project activities and has something to gain or lose if conditions change or stay the same (Freeman, 2010). One of the most important factors to balancing stakeholders' relations and interests is the efficient role of government for coordinating, organizing, strengthening, legitimating and networking stakeholder relations in Nepalese health tourism market.

The support of health & tourism stakeholders is essential for the development of health tourism, successful operation, and long-term sustainability of the health tourism industry. In the health tourism industry, there are many stakeholders and their role is most important to develop and improve the industry. Byrd (2007) stated that: "for sustainable tourism development to be successful, stakeholders must be involved in the process". However, not all stakeholders have the same level of interest in health tourism development and may be less active or not active at all. Moreover, some stakeholders are more important than others in determining the success of health tourism activities.

The possible potential stakeholders in health tourism were determined based on literature and document review. Then, from among them, the key stakeholder of this industry, in Nepal, was identified, by interviewing the experts of health tourism. The key stakeholders were three groups of organizations and people with an important role in health tourism. The list of possible and key stakeholders is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Possible and key stakeholders in the health tourism industry in Nepal.

Demand	Supply	Regulation
Health Tourist	Health Provider (H)	Health Ministry
	Travel Operator (T)	Tourism Ministry
	Insurance Companies (H)	Other Institution
	Destination/Markets/Hotel (TR)	
	Transportation (TR)	
	Farmers& Herbs Collector (HR)	
	Pharmaceutical Company (HR)	
	Health Equipment Supplier (HR)	
	University/ Vocational School (O)	
	Investors (O)	

(Here, H- Health Provider, HR- Health-related Supplier, T- Tourism Provider, TR- Tourism related supplier, O- Other suppliers)

According to the stakeholder theory, each group of stakeholders has different as well as similar characteristics depending on the basis of attributes and criteria appropriate to the situation. These may include the relative power and interest of each stakeholder (Freeman, 1984), the networks and coalitions to which they belong (Freeman & Gilbert, 1987) and the importance and influence they have (Grimble & Wellard, 1997).

The result showed in Table 5 that the key stakeholders were made up of three different groups in the health tourism industry in Nepal. First government side stakeholders, second supply-side stakeholders, and third demand-side stakeholders. Based on their characteristics supply-side stakeholders also divided into five groups (Table 5) health providers, tourism providers, health-related supplier, tourism-related supplier, and other suppliers.

Figure 1: Stakeholders relation in health tourism industry in Nepal

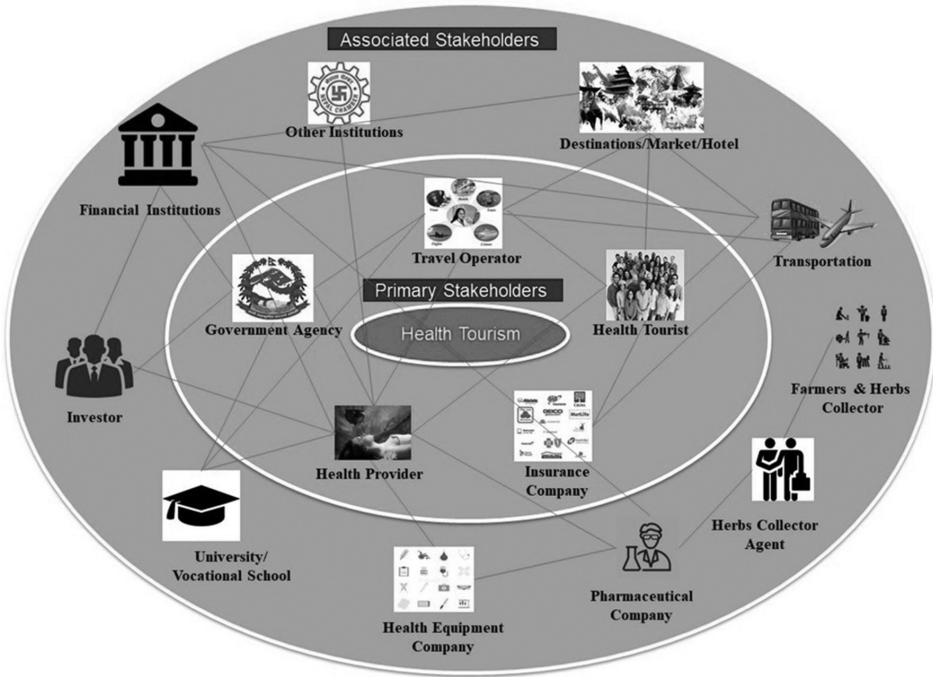


Figure 1 shows, in Health tourism industry in Nepal, there are primary stakeholders like health providers, tourism providers, insurance companies and government agencies and the other hand associated stakeholders as transportation, destinations, farmers and herbs collector, pharmacy, health equipment companies, universities, investor, financial institutes and other institution in vital role. We find here are many stakeholders and their relationship is too complex.

Thus, the government can make a plan, make a policy and decision, and use effective strategies to develop health tourism by designing a health tourism stakeholders' network, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

SWOT analysis

In this research, we use the SWOT analysis method to find the most affecting factors for health tourism development and their suitable strategy. We conduct on-site interviews with the Nepalese government, health tourism providers, and health care providers. We then identify steps to more productively advance the discussion about the affecting factors and suitable strategy of health tourism development in Nepal. SWOT can serve as a basis for managers' and specialists' decisions and the determination of objectives (Nahman & Godfrey, 2010). Considering internal and external factors governing an organization it can provide a fit basis for formulating strategy (Chang & Huang, 2006).

Nepal health tourism industry SWOT analysis

Some of the SWOT analysis factors are identified by the author in their previous studies (Khanal & Shimizu 2019). And many of the factors are identified in this study and analysis for this research.

Table 6: Strength of health tourism industry in Nepal

	STRENGTH	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a strength)
S1	Originality of Services	Nepal is the only country which health tourism services are based on mountains. Most of the herbs are coming from the mountainous area. The originality of the meditation, yoga and Ayurveda practices, and herbs.
S2	Medical Resources	BioDiversity in Nepal offers the possibility to explore original and high-value health tourism products. Nepal has good potential for medicinal herbs and medicinal plants.
S3	Professional Skill	Ayurvedic doctors and therapist provide health services. In addition, Nepal has many colleges and universities who provide medical education for Ayurveda and other health professional. Ayurvedic doctors are trained both Ayurvedic Treatment with allopathic treatment.
S4	Low Cost	The affordable price of health care and tourism services (health services, accommodation, etc.)

	STRENGTH	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a strength)
S5	Waiting Time and On Arrival Visa	Low waiting time for receiving health care services for health tourists. In addition, On arrival visa facilities for main tourists arrival countries.
S6	Tourism Attraction	Many Famous tourist attractions and trekking routes in Nepal. In addition, Nepal has five seasonal climates: spring, summer, monsoon, autumn, and winter.

Table 7: Weakness of health tourism industry in Nepal

	WEAKNESS	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a weakness)
W1	Professional Human Resources	Lack of professional workforce for health tourism.
W2	Quality Standards	Poor quality control over services in health tourism centers.
W3	Lack of Promotion	Lack of proper operation of the mass media facilities (Broadcasting, local media, etc.) for health tourism marketing in the target market and Ineffective public information services to inform international health communities and failure to take part in international exhibits. In addition, another hand poor performance of Nepalese embassies in other countries regarding Nepal's health tourism potentials.
W4	Underdeveloped Infrastructure	Underdeveloped infrastructures (both overall and health providers)
W5	Lack of Government Support	Lack of governmental support to promote the health tourism industry. Failure of the ministry of health and ministry of tourism to keep the record of health tourists and even no health visa program for health tourist.
W6	Education and Training	In terms of hospitality and marketing education, health professional needs more education and training.

Table 8: Opportunity of health tourism industry in Nepal

	OPPORTUNITY	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be an opportunity)
O1	Increasing Global Demand	Increasing awareness of Yoga and Ayurveda in developed countries like Japan, USA, Canada, and the UK with a high potential of health tourism and increasing Global demand for the health tourism industry.
O2	Increasing Cost of Healthcare	The cost of health service in the developed western world remaining high,
O3	Increasing Death of Lifestyle Cause of Disease	Fast-Paced lifestyle increases the demand for wellness tourism and alternative cures. Death caused by lifestyle diseases are increasing and the growth of demand for health attention.
O4	Government Attention	Attention to health tourism in country documents like Tourism Strategy (Vision 2020) National Tourism Policy (2016-2025)
O5	Developed Technology	Globalization and Internet technology, providing visibility to service providers around the world.
O6	Increasing no of Tourist	Nepal has potentials for historical, natural, cultural, adventure and religious tourism attractions. And the tourist growth rate is more than 25 percent per year.

Table 9: Threats of health tourism industry in Nepal

	THREATS	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a threat)
T1	Global and regional competition	Intense competition among regional countries in attracting health tourists like India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
T2	Legal Problems	Facing some legal question from European countries for some Ayurvedic herbs and medicine about the quality standard.
T3	Limited Accessibility	Limited accessibility with many potentials tourist markets.

	THREATS	Why? (Justification- why we consider a particular factor to be a threat)
T4	Market Share and Promotion	Stronger marketing and promotion of other competitive health tourism destinations in Asia and the globe than Nepal.
T5	Brain-drain of Nepalese Health professionals	Because of high payment and opportunity availing in other similar health destinations, many of the Nepalese professionals working overseas.
T6	International Accreditation	Lack of healthcare centers approved by the international accreditation organization.

The potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of health tourism of Nepal from stakeholder’s perspective summarized that includes 6 strengths, 6 weaknesses, 6 opportunities and 6 threats (Table 6, 7, 8, and 9).

In table 6, According to the participant’s perspective, the most important strengths are originality of the service, medical resources, and professional skills, low cost of the treatment, low waiting time and Tourism attraction. Ricafort et al., in another study, presented the factors such as the reputation of the provider, low cost of the treatment, low waiting time for receiving treatment as factors affecting the choice of health providers or destination which is consistent with our results.

As table 7 shows lack of underdeveloped infrastructure, lack of promotion, lack of government support, lack of education and training and lack of quality standards is the main barrier for health tourism development. In another study of (Heung et al., 2011) also mention the lack of sufficient infrastructure and lack of promotion and marketing as a barrier for health tourism development.

In the opportunities, Table 8 shows increasing global demand of health tourism, increasing the cost of health treatment in developed countries, increasing the death of lifestyle cause disease, government attention, developed technology and increasing no of tourists are potential opportunities for health tourism development in Nepal.

In table 9, in terms of threats of the health tourism industry in Nepal; limited accessibility with other countries, low market share, and promotion, the brain drain of Nepalese health professionals and International accreditation are the most important threats.

SWOT Matrix

Table 10: Possible strategies for health tourism development in Nepal.

<p>Internal Factors</p> <p>External Factors</p>	<p>STRENGTHS (S)</p> <p>S1. Originality of Services S2. Medical Resources S3. Professional Skills S4. Low Cost S5. Waiting Time & On Arrival Visa S6. Tourism Attraction</p>		<p>WEAKNESS (W)</p> <p>W1. Professional Human Resources W2. Quality Standards W3. Lack of Promotion W4. Underdeveloped Infrastructure W5. Government Support W6. Education and Training</p>	
	<p>SO STRATEGY</p> <p>1. Promote originality of services and tourism attraction to attract the Global client. (S1, O1, O3) 2. Maintain cost of service with high quality. (S2, O2). 3. Increase the quality standard of medical resources to get the trust from health tourist. (S2, O5) 4. Conduct regular professional training; involve universities for research and development for human resource development. (S3, O4)</p>		<p>WO STRATEGY</p> <p>5. Establish Health tourism board to promote health tourism and design educational materials and training for health providers and also maintain the quality standards for health services. (O3, O4, W1, W2 W6) 6. Strong government involvement to develop health tourism policy and necessary regulations. (O4 O6, W5, W6) 7. Start a strong promotional campaign to attract health tourist from overseas countries. (O1, O2, O3, W3)</p>	
<p>THREATS (T)</p> <p>T1. Global and Regional Competition T2. Legal Problems T3. Infrastructure T4. Low Market Share and Promotion T5. International Accreditation T6. Accessibility</p>	<p>ST STRATEGY</p> <p>8. Branding SPA, Meditation, Yoga, and Ayurveda as mountain-based health tourism. (S1, S2, T1) 9. Maintain a quality standard of health facility and overall services. (S3, T2, T5) 10. Encourage health providers to get accreditation from international organizations. (S1, S2, S3 T5)</p>		<p>WT STRATEGY</p> <p>11. Public-private partnership to develop overall infrastructure and increase investment in health tourism (T3, W4) 12. Use overseas embassies to promote health tourism in overseas markets. (T4, W3)</p>	

Strategic framework for health tourism development

The purposed strategic framework begins with a vision statement aiming to develop Nepal as a perfect health tourism development destination. Among the vision, we have derived three objectives. These three objectives aim to support health tourism development in terms of policy, quality standard and promotion activities.

To develop competitive health tourism industry in Nepal, it is imperative to have a differentiated positioning and product offer. The positioning and unique product offer can assist to attract target related health tourist and help to increase awareness. The framework recommends that the focus theme be Health Tourism with Ayurveda, Yoga, Meditation & Spiritual and Medical SPA services as health tourism products.

Table 11: Strategic framework for health tourism development in Nepal

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH TOURISM IN NEPAL			
VISION			
Develop Nepal as a perfect health tourism destination in South Asia			
OBJECTIVE			
Regulation	Quality Standard	Promotion	
Make related policy and regulation standards to help the health tourism industry.	Maintain and control the quality standards of health products and overall services.	Promote Nepal as a unique and perfect health tourism destination in target markets.	
POSITIONING AND THEMES			
“Nepal as a Health Tourism Destination With Nature and Culture Tourism”			
Ayurveda Tourism	Yoga Tourism	Meditation and Spiritual Tourism	Ayurvedic & Medical SPA
STRATEGIC DIRECTION			
Short Term (In 1 Year)		Long Term (In 5 Years)	
1. Establish Health Tourism Licensing and Regulation Body with the involvement of Necessary Stakeholders. 2. Make the necessary policy and regulation to develop the health tourism industry. 3. nal organizations.		1. Increase Investment in Infrastructure at the list to benchmarking with competitors. 2. Branding SPA, Meditation, Yoga, and Ayurveda as mountain-based health tourism. 3. Promote originality of services and tourism attraction to attract the Global client.	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Establish Health Tourism Licensing and Regulation Body with the involvement of Necessary Stakeholders. 5. Make the necessary policy and regulation to develop the health tourism industry. 6. Capacity building: Basic Infrastructures like Water, Electricity and necessary roads. 7. Encourage health providers to get accreditation from international organizations. 8. Increase the quality standard of medical resources to get the trust from health tourist. 9. Conduct regular professional training; involve universities for research and development for human resource development. 10. Use overseas embassies to promote health tourism in overseas markets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Increase Investment in Infrastructure at the list to benchmarking with competitors. 5. Branding SPA, Meditation, Yoga, and Ayurveda as mountain-based health tourism. 6. Promote originality of services and tourism attraction to attract the Global client. 7. Strengthening health tourism product relevance to attract health tourist from other countries. 8. Full-Fledge branding & promotional initiatives. 9. Increase private sector participation and encourage strong public private partnership. 10. Establish a National accreditation system to control quality standard and support management activities of health providers.
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Recommended coerces of action

To develop Nepal as a perfect health tourism destination in South Asia and promoting and attract health tourist from overseas countries, a two-stage strategic direction is recommended.

First set of short term strategies to be carried out within the next one years that will bring Nepal to a competitive platform in the health tourism industry and build strong capabilities to create a unique health tourism destination. Next, set a long term plans to be carried out in the next five years that would catapult Nepal from the current state of an obscure destination to that of a preferred health tourism destination amongst the affluent markets by branding and marketing initiatives. Suggested strategies are listed in Table: 11.

Conclusion

The results represented that the health Tourism Industry of Nepal has many stakeholders. Even as some of the stakeholders have no direct relationship between them. Therefore, attention to these characteristics when planning development is

necessary. In addition, it is necessary to form a national health tourism council of health tourism, assign the main responsibilities, and delegate the necessary authority to stakeholders.

To recognize the strategic position of health tourism in Nepal (Table 11) can provide proper planning to get a share of health tourism high skilled manpower, high-quality health services, improved overall infrastructure and government support for promotion and policy-making are required. This study examined the Strength, Weakness, opportunities, and threats of the health tourism industry in Nepal. Nepal has a great potential for health tourism development with its uniqueness of service and location compare with other competitors country. Because of most of the countries health tourism base on the sea-based wellness and Nepal only country with mountain-based health tourism in the world.

Based on the SWOT analysis, some health tourism development strategies are possible to implement in order to attract foreign health tourist and develop the industry (Table 10). These strategies can be applied by policymakers or health tourism providers for betterment.

The results show that Marketing & Promotion, Infrastructure, Investment, Skilled human resources, poor quality standards, medical resources, policy & regulation and networking between stakeholders are the main barriers to the development of health tourism.

Further, it should design and implement long and short-term strategies in proportion to the problems raised. Policymakers can plan, make a policy and decision, and use effective strategies to develop health tourism by designing a health tourism stakeholders' network, a health tourism licensing and quality control body, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

Limitation of the study

There are some limitations to this study; the most important are listed below:

- I. The complication of this research is mainly a health provider and the Governance side study (Supply Side and government side), therefore no experimental investigation was attempted or complied with the demand side.
- II. Lack of scientific Persian references in Nepal about health tourism issues.
- III. Lack of practical research that related to this topic in Nepal.

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**Prospects of Multifunctionality in Nepalese
Agriculture: The Agritourism Perspectives**

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Article

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Abstract

Multifunctionality of agriculture in the developed countries is employed as a means of rural revitalization and economic circulation. Although farm diversification in the developing countries is much more crucial, in most of the rural areas of the developing countries, it is not performed, and it is delayed. In this regard, the main objective of this study is to explore the possibilities of the multifunctionality of agriculture for the sustainable rural development for the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the developing countries. The empirical study was conducted in two of the rural districts of Nepal called Nuwakot and Rasuwa. The author intentionally chose these districts because it is one separate area north of the capital city Kathmandu and bordering to China. Further, even though the location is nearby the capital city, and the rural villages have excessive potentials for tourism activities, the farmers are still focusing on subsistence farming without getting benefits from tourism. Based on the macro data of Nepal government and field visit, the author conducted a case study. This study explored that most of the household heads are working in the agricultural sector, which can be one of the opportunities to launch multifunctionality of agriculture. However, due to their weak educational background, they are expecting external

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supports in terms of knowledge, technology, and more importantly, supportive policy. The federal and central government should give subsidy to the farmers so that they can start multifunctionality in their farms, which lead to sustainable rural development.

Introduction

Multifunctionality of agriculture is one of the hot issues for rural development, and many of the industrial countries practiced it (Ohe, 2001; Ciani et al., 2012, Ragkos et al., 2015). Recently, European Union (EU) developed the concept of territory development through the multifunctionality of agriculture (Todorova & Ikova, 2014; Lehman et al., 2009) which means not the only locality of the rural areas but also the areas of cities will prioritize where agriculture is the main occupation. Indeed, the small farmers of not only in the developing countries but also in the developed countries are facing many problems like selling their products and the low price even if they could sell the products and which ultimately pushes them towards poverty. Therefore, the farm diversification to generate additional income for the farmers is necessary both in developed countries and developing countries.

The poverty level of farmers in developing countries is more serious than in developed countries; 78% of the total poor population are living in the rural areas of developing countries and relying on farming (World Bank, 2014). It is because due to no or very low government support to the farmers (Yu et al., 2019), lack of adequate infrastructures and subsidies on the agricultural inputs, traditional farming system, conventional types of seeds used in the farms. These problems are causing low agricultural products and low farm income for the farmers. However, these problems of the farmers of developing countries can be taken as the identity of that particular destination and can be used as an opportunity to start tourism activities. The conventional farming system is more attractive for the tourists than the modern farming system because Ciolic et al. (2019) mentioned that traditional activities either in farms or households make the tourist participate actively or passively. Thus, if the multifunctional of agriculture is promoted properly, different tourism projects can be started. Due to the tourism activities in the locality, the additional income for the farmers will be generated, which leads towards the implementation of territory development.

In this regard, this study aims to explore the possibility of multifunctionality as a pillar for the economic diversification and economic circulation in the developing countries. For this purpose, the author decided to conduct a case study in Nepal because it is one of the developing countries, and this country can almost represent the characteristics of the developing countries. Furthermore, the farm diversification in Nepal is more necessary and possible because Nepal recently received the new constitution and got a stable government through the election (Bhatta & Ohe,

2019; Bhatta, Itagaki, & Ohe, 2019). The authors explored that farmers are willing to establish agritourism in the rural village where agritourism does not exist. The elected central government declared “Visit Nepal Year 2020” to double the current number of foreign tourist arrivals the country and the total number of visitors is expected to cross 2 million in the year 2020 (Tourism Vision 2020). At this moment, exploring the multifunctional activities in the country, first of all, help to diversify the farm income and economic circulations in the rural areas, secondly, it provides the additional tourism destinations for the visitors. Ultimately, the author believes that the multifunctionality of agriculture leads to poverty alleviation and SDGs implementation in developing countries.

Literature review

The concept of multifunctional agriculture emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century in developed countries where the economic importance of agriculture was negligible, and the community was increasingly concerned with the quality of consumed food and the surrounding environment (Todorova & Ikova, 2014). In the meantime, several policies to support the multifunctionality of agriculture, e.g., agri-environmental schemes started to be implemented in Europe (Lehman et al., 2009). Multifunctionality or multifunctional agriculture are terms used to indicate that agriculture can produce various non-commodity outputs in addition to food, for instance, rubber, latex, tobacco, drugs, etc. It is associated with particular characteristics of the agricultural production process and its outputs:

- the existence of multiple commodities and non-commodity outputs that are jointly produced by agriculture; and that
- some of the non-commodity outputs may exhibit the characteristics of externalities or public goods, such that markets for these goods function poorly or are non-existent. (OECD, 2003)

Multifunctional agriculture generates relatively high employment per additional unit of output; that is, the employment/production rate is higher in the multifunctional agriculture than in the primary agriculture (Heringa et al., 2013). Multifunctional activities in many rural areas are providing positive benefits to the farmers (Ohe, 2007). For instance, pluriactivities in the hamlets of rural Japan helped to prevent the farmland from being abandoned (Ohe, 2001); rural tourism activities by retirees could realize efficient and sustainable resource utilization of the farm and therefore enhance multifunctionality of agriculture (Ohe, 2008). Multifunctionality in Cyprus affected a range of social, economic, and environmental aspects of life on the island (Ragkos et al., 2015). Further, the total value of agricultural multifunctionality in Yangtze River Delta in China had increased by 23.2%, which was mainly attributed to a significant increase in food provision and cultural leisure values (Yu et al., 2019).

Based on these facts, the authors can say that multifunctionality is important for rural areas.

Due to the importance of multifunctional agriculture, in many countries, the multifunctionality of agriculture has been promoted (Ohe, 2001; Ragkos et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2019). The Antica Volce system in Italy is a territorial system, and it has emerged a great propensity at diversification activities. Indeed, almost 70% of the firms had at least one added activity to the classic production in this system (Borrelli, 2016). Due to the multifunctionality of agriculture contributes positively to the farmers, the Thai citizens were willing to pay for changes toward multifunctional agriculture (Sangkapitux et al., 2017). Among the different attributes, Thai citizens suggested for the agri-environmental practices for being promoted, “organic agriculture in combination with agrobiodiversity conservation,” “organic farming as single practice” and “good agricultural practice combined with agrobiodiversity conservation” (Sangkapitux et al., 2017), which means that agritourism is very crucial for the farmers.

As the importance of the multifunctional agriculture is understood, Yu et al. (2019) suggested that the future land use policy should focus on both urban control and promoting agricultural multifunctionality to foster the sustainable development of agriculture in metropolitan agglomerations in China. Ongoing transformation practices, such as land consolidation, should aim to improve the biophysical and socio-economic functions of farmland (Yu et al., 2019).

To date, the majority of studies in multifunctionality of agriculture has been conducted focusing on the developing countries. Despite its importance, there is no such research conducted in the case of Nepal as many researchers agree that the multifunctionality of agriculture should be promoted in the farms (Ohe, 2001, 2006; Ragkos et al., 2015; Yu et al., 2019). The concept of multifunctional agriculture in Nepal should also be promoted in Nepal. Thus, the author investigates the prospects of multifunctional agriculture in Nepal.

Material and methods

Study area

As the main objective of this study is to explore the prospects of multifunctionality of agriculture in the rural areas to diversify the economic activities in the developing countries. The author chose Nepal because it is one of the developing countries, more than 2/3 of the total population are working in the agricultural sector however this sector is contributing less than 27% in the national GDP (MOF, 2018). Thus, the farm income for the Nepalese farmers should be increased, and diversifying farm activities is one of the ways of income generation for the farmers.

This study mainly focused on two districts of Nepal called Nuwakot and Rasuwa; these districts are located on the north of the capital city Kathmandu and becoming a separate area. Nuwakot is the neighboring district of the capital city, and Rasuwa has a border with China, and these two districts are crossed by the Pasang Lhamu highway, and one more highway which connects Raswagadi to Thori (under construction) which is proposed as the parts of OBOR (One-Belt-One-Road) initiatives of China government (Bhatta & Ohe, 2019). Similarly, Nuwakot district is connected by Pushpalal Lok Marga (a highway, which connects east and west of the country focusing on the hilly regions). A proposed inter-country railway also goes from these districts. Thus, shortly, this area is going to be a transportation hub.

Further, these districts are famous not only for nature as well as adventure tourism of Langtang National Park and Singla trekking trails but also famous for the religious attractions like holy lake Gosaikunda, and other 107 sacred lakes located in Rasuwa district and Bhairabi Temple, Devighat Temple, Dupcheswor, and others in Nuwakot district are the representative examples of religious sites (CBS, 2017a, 2017b). There are many more popular religious as well as cultural and historical places in these districts. Also, the habitat for the red panda in Langtang National Park attracts the visitor's attraction. These attractions and accessibilities can be the potential sources of tourists in the diversified farm activities after its establishment in the rural villages of both districts.

Data and analytical methodology

For the completion of this study, two types of data were administered. The table survey was conducted, and the secondary data was collected from the different websites of Nepal Government's authorized bodies such as the central bureau of statistics (CBS), Ministry of Finance (MOF), census reports of Nuwakot and Rasuwa, household survey of both districts, and Nepal Rastra Bank publications. The micro-level data were collected directly from the field survey in August 2017. A questionnaire interview to the farmers in one of the villages of Nuwakot called Phikuri was conducted. Phikuri is VDC in the previous administrative system of Nepal. The author first contacted the representatives of each ward of Phikuri VDC to help during the survey and requested to invite the farmers in a particular place for the survey purpose. Before the data collection, a presentation was given on the pros and cons of agritourism development in the village. In the beginning, there were around 80 farmers; however, some of them did not participate in the full process of the survey. A total of 64 farmers fully involved in the survey, which is the sample size of primary data. The Phikuri village is the combination of five ethnic groups, Brahman, Tamang, Chhetri, Damai, and Kami (Census, 2011). However, the majority of them are Brahmin and Tamang. Thus, data collection also focused on these communities.

As this study is mainly qualitative in nature, the author applied mostly the descriptive analysis, specifically tabulation and calculation of means in the appropriate places. Further, a case study was conducted based on primary and secondary data collection.

Results and discussion

Both Nuwakot and Rasuwa districts have a significant number of people working in the agricultural sector. In Nuwakot, 97% of the household's primary source of income is agriculture, whereas, in Raswa, it is around 91% (Table 1). This data clarifies that most of the people of both districts are somehow depending on agriculture, and their income level is not good enough. As they are farmers, they focus more on farming, and the study was not their priority, which resulted in the lower literacy rate in both districts. Around 40% of the people are illiterate, and those who are literate also have some primary level of education. Female educational level is much lower compared to the male in both districts. Similarly, the number of female-headed households is only around one-fifth in both districts.

The role of the household head plays is essential for the multifunctional activity in agriculture. More than 95% of the household head of both districts are farmers, and their main source of income is farming. Thus, it can be assumed that the farmers are willing to develop the multifunctionality of agriculture to increase their income. Based on the result of the previous study conducted by Bhatta and Ohe (2019) and Bhatta et al. (2019), to explore the farmer's willingness to start agritourism, I can say that the farmers of the rural areas will be willing for the multifunctionality of agriculture. The scholars explored that farmers of rural Nepal, where agritourism does not exist were also willing to establish agritourism in their conventional farms.

Table 1: Statistics on the two districts

Item	Nuwakot	Rasuwa
Total farming population	264498 (person) 95.32% (percent) 53984 (holdings)	43798 (person) 87.30% (percent) 8504 (holdings)
Household whose main income is from agriculture	97.1%	91.30%
Literacy rate	59.8% (M=68.0%, F=52.4%)	59.80% (M=67.95, F=52.41)
Female-headed household	21%	22%
Household head is a farmer	51821 (95.98%)	8168 (96.04%)
Agricultural land area	32992 Hectare	4557 Hectare

Item	Nuwakot	Rasuwa
Total forest	43%	31.4%
Evergreen snow area	-	16.6%

Source: Nepal government, Household survey 2014.

Both districts have plenty of natural attractions, especially mountains and jungles. These jungles can be utilized for the major attractions for the tourism development in the villages. The buffer zone of Chitwan National Park is used for the jungle safari, Tharu cultural trail to the local communities is developed which increased the numbers of tourists in the nearby villages (Poudel, 2014) and Tharu culture is becoming an important attraction in Koshi (Aryal & Maharjan, 2018). Similarly, the jungles and buffer zone of Lang Tang National Park can be used as a complementary tourist attraction for the tourists.

This survey showed that at least one person from 45.3% household are either working in foreign countries currently or had worked in those countries for more than one year as a temporary worker (Table 2). The experience of the migrant returnee can be employed for the multifunctionality purpose because a study conducted by Bhatta and Ohe (2019) statistically proved that those who worked in the foreign countries more than one year are more likely to start agritourism in their home village. Working as a tourist supporter was also an additional supportive attribute for the diversification of the farm activities as the survey shows that 87.5% of the farmers have experience working as a tourist's supporter. That means the farmers are already aware of the tourism environment, and they also know the pros and cons of tourism. Only 54% of the farmers said they have enough farm products to sustain their life. Which means the remaining 46% of the farmers need some extra income to run their daily life.

Table 2: Attributes of farmers

Item	Percentage	Sample size
At least one person worked in a foreign country	45.3%	64
Experience working as a tourist supporter	87.5%	64
Sufficiency of farm products	54.0%	64
Interested into new jobs	50.0%	64
*Regular student	41.6%	334
Handicrafts	50.0%	64

Source: Field survey Aug 2017.

*includes the information of the family members of the respondents and sample size only for this variable is 334.

On the other hand, 50% of farmers said that they want to challenge new job, farmers those who are willing to move towards new jobs can be employed in the multifunctionality of the farms. As a supplementary product of the farm, 50% of the respondents said that they are still producing some kinds of handicrafts in their homes. If we can monetize them, the young generation will also be attracted and contribute to sustainable development. Moreover, currently, 41.6% of the total sample are regular students. Based on this data, we can expect that if the farms start generating money, the new generation (youth) will also be attracted to farm activities.

Based on these presented information and field visit reports, the author conducted a SWOT analysis for that multifunctionality of agriculture in the two rural districts and presented in Table 3. The strengths and opportunities are the positive factors, whereas weaknesses and threats are the negative elements for the multifunctionality of agriculture. Therefore, the plus factors should be maximized, and the minus elements should be minimized for the sustainable tourism development in these districts.

Table 3: SWOT analysis for the possibility of multifunctionality in the northern block

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plenty of attraction (natural, cultural, historical and religious)• Significant numbers of farmers are in agriculture• Some areas are performing specialized farming like rainbow trout fish farming, goat, yak farming and so on• Forest area and evergreen snow-covered landscape, Lang Tang National Park, evergreen snow-covered mountain range views	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor infrastructure• Small landholdings• Lack of coordination between the government bodies• The lower educational level of the farmers
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connected to China and the capital city• Crossed by the national highway and proposed train league between Nepal and China (Kerung)• 3rd popular tourist destination in Nepal including two popular trekking trails and one cultural trekking trail• Good geography (from the plain land to the mountain 7270m)• Ongoing transportation network development projects	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people do not like to work in agriculture• Easy to go to foreign countries especially for the temporary job and payment is comparatively high• Fear of losing local culture and tradition

Source: Author’s elaborations based on data analysis.

Conclusion

In this study, the author first defined why multifunctionality of agriculture is necessary for developing countries, and later on, the author presented how to farm diversification is possible in one of the separate rural areas of Nepal. The author presented a case study based on both primary and secondary data and explored that the rural villages have the potential for multifunctional agriculture. Also, the author defined SWOT for the multifunctionality of farms in the villages and its possibilities.

This study explored that the rural area of Nepal has possibilities of multifunctionality of agriculture. The results show that most of the household heads are working in the agricultural sector, which can be one of the opportunities to launch multifunctionality of agriculture. However, due to their weak educational background, they are expecting external supports in terms of knowledge, technology, and more importantly, supportive policy. Farmers those who are willing to challenge and to start new works can be another opportunity. Similarly, the available attraction (natural, religious, cultural, historical) supports the additional activities in and around the territory should be promoted from the tourism point of view.

Based on this study, the author suggests the following implications for the policymakers. For the multifunctionality of agriculture, the adequate infrastructure development, capacity building of the farmers should be done as early as possible. For instance, just the development of view towers in different destinations increase the numbers of visitors in the rural areas. The additional supportive activities can be developed in the nearby jungles, and the trekking and hiking in the snow-covered areas can be employed. The different villages can be connected in a single trail, and the agritourism trail can be developed where tourist can enjoy many different culture and traditions of the different communities. For instance, the red panda trail, agritourism trekking trails, the multi-ethnic cultural trail can be developed by joining multiple villages in the single package according to their interest.

This study deals only the macro data, the micro-level survey of a village, and the capacity of the farmers on hosting tourist and implementing multifunctionality should be the next step of the study.

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