

What Motivates Tourists to Visit Religious Sites? A Case Study of Pashupatinath Area

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the motivation to visit religious site of Pashupatinath Area. Based on a structured questionnaire survey, the study sought if the three types of travel motivation, namely, construct motivation, religious motivation, and secular motivation push tourists to visit Pashupatinath. Using a purposive sampling technique 152 respondents who had stayed overnight in the hotels in Kathmandu Valley for Pashupati visit were successfully surveyed. The result revealed that secular motivation plays a significant role to visit the Pashupatinath followed by religious motivation. ANCOVA found no significant relation between marital status and age group as to what motivate one to visit religious sites.

Key words: Construct motivation, religious motivation, secular motivation

I. INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

Religious tourism is considered as the oldest form of people's travel and it is believed, since the dawn of time, human beings have defined some elements of the natural and built environment as spiritual sites regarding them as sacred (Blackwell, 2007). In many cases, people are made to believe that a visit to religious site provide them with super natural qualities. It is a type of tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reason (Rinoshada, 1992). The study further claimed that religious tourism would orient itself by the motive of the tourist journey to sacred places; it provides opportunity for the householder to detach themselves for some time from the cares and worries of daily life and to devote that time to prayer and listening to the spiritual discourses of the holy people. There are many sacred sites and the huge number of people travel to those sites not only for religious or spiritual purposes or to have a practice with the sacred in the traditional sense, but also

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because they are distinct and marketed as heritage or cultural attractions to be consumed (Timothy & Boyd, 2003)

The research and debate among scholars examining religious travel major focus has been on the tourist and the pilgrim, the main players in the relationship between religion and tourism (Cohen, 1992). Many literature-works view tourists, and pilgrims from two discrete perspectives, the first and most popular view is that tourists and pilgrims are similar, for even when the role of tourist and pilgrim are combined, they are necessarily different but form a range of inseparable elements (Grabum, 1997).

Although many literature works consider tourist and pilgrims to be similar, but there is contradiction and many radical thinkers deny that the pilgrims should be tourist (Oslen & Timothy, 2008). Several authors described a possible contrast between pilgrimage and tourism is that while a devout pilgrim needs to take part in some kind of admiration at a religious shrine, the tourist does not; however, other authors consider that a visit to a shrine may have reasons other than worshipping God (Ambrosio, 2007) such as identification with shrines and sacred places of historical and cultural meaning, whose serous images are important to both sacred and secular travellers to remember and relive the experience (Smith, 1992).

Past research has discovered that people visiting religious sites are not driven exclusively by external factors, such as religious institutions and their scripts, which merely fall into Dann (1977) category of pull factors, but also by push factors that may also entail non-religious motives. Similarly, Allport (1966) identified two main types of persons, the extrinsically motivated person who uses religion, religion playing only an instrumental role and serving assorted forms of self-interest, such as satisfying one's social life (Durkheim, 1984). Secondly, a intrinsically motivated person who has blind faith in religion, and fully devote their life in religion, neglecting the subjectivity of the religious experience according to which both the sacred and the secular elements may be of equal importance (Terzidou, Scarles, & Saunders, 2017).

Satyel (2002) claimed that Nepal could be called the home of sacred place of pilgrimage full of sacrament and lively age-old culture and arts. The study further claimed it was the other way of life inner mostly rooted in cultural practice and social customs. For the people of Nepal religion is more than belief; it is knowledge, practice and skill. Pashupatinath is the ancient temple and one of the most important and popular pilgrimage sites to the Hindus around the world, as they believe that their sins are absolved after the visit. Hundreds of thousands of people visit the site every year and it has a great impact on tourism. temple is listed in the UNESCO world heritage site list as well, that's why Pashupatinath area was selected for the present study. The present research focuses not only on religious motivations but the non-religious motivation as well and it has specifically emphasised on the implications of tourist motivation for visiting religious sites.

The study aimed at identifying the factor that motivates tourists to visit religious sites. Based on the gap identified following objectives are formulated.

- To explore the tourists' motivation in visiting Pashupatinath as a religious site; and

- To analyse the existence of differences by religious, construct and secular motivation in visiting Pashupatinath across marital status, age group and gender of the respondents

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the past literature works concerning the religious site visit motivation.

Conceptual Review

Grimin (2009) explained that tourism is related to traveling and is naturally a human character. People need change, and travel provides the change; travel has existed since the primitive period but not the concept of tourism. During those time motive for travel was not to seek holiday from the routine work but was trade and commerce or pilgrimage or to explore. Similarly, Mathieson (2008) has acknowledged that religion has been a powerful force and has long made people to travel to religious centres in many parts of the world. The study also claimed that there was a concern that holy places were being developed for tourism and it was distracting one from the religious significance which has made them famous. The change in traditional forms of pilgrimage destinations, with diffusion in spiritual motivation, has seen many temple and religious places are increasingly becoming tourist attractions as well as places of worship.

Religious tourism is a combination of two words tourism and religion, after this it is defined as a system of beliefs in a higher being that are held with great faith and commitment (Richards & Fernandes, 2007). Similarly, (Oliviera, 2008) advocate there is a confusion between the visitor motivated by religious secret and only interested in the culture of these events or locations. This happen due to the complex reality of the religious travel. According to Santos (2003), the idea of difference between religious pilgrimages arose in Europe in the post-war years, as a result of the decline in religious practice, the growing popularity of trips by car or bus, and the secularisation of societies and in some countries, the reduction in flows of traditional pilgrimages. Religion has not declined but is rather taking a different form, modern societies continuous to remain religious, but religion has become increasingly de-institutionalised (Sharpley & Japson, 2011). That's the reason why people who might be travelling for the reason related to religion or spirituality, may not observed as being directly religious (Richards & Fernandes, 2007).

There was a rare existence of tourism studies in academic field till 1970 (Nash 1996). However today religion and tourism are inseparable. It is still among the most common motivations for travel, and religiously motivated pilgrimage, which remains one of the world's oldest and most basic forms of population mobility, is emerging as a major tourism phenomenon in the twenty-first century (Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

With the development of studies about tourism in academic filed, the difference between tourism and pilgrimage began to emerge in the 1970 and the base for this development (MacCannell, 1973) proclamation that the tourist as a pilgrim are in search of something different and authenticity. After this claim (Graburn, 1977) characterized tourism as a kind of ritual, suggesting the existing of parallel processes in both formal pilgrimage and tourism that could be interpreted as sacred journeys. Although modern tourism is regarded as a relatively new phenomenon, it is clear that its origins are rooted in the age-old phenomenon of

pilgrimage. It is surprising, as the development of tourism is difficult to understand without a thorough understanding of religion and the practice of pilgrimage in ancient times (Timothy & Olsen, 2006).

Introduction of Study Area

The Pashupatinath temple is a one of the four most popular religious site for the Hindus around the world built in 5th century B.C. This sacred temple is located in the bank of Bagmati River, which is approximately 5 kilometres north-east of Kathmandu in the eastern part of Kathmandu Valley, the capital of Nepal. The temple is listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979. People active participation is observed at all times of day in Pashupatinath as it is considered as the centre of energy. It attracts thousands of pilgrims each year and has become well known for its collection of ashrams, images, and inscriptions raised over the centuries. More than one million devotees visit it in Maha Shivratri, one of the major festivals related to Pashupati. Non-Hindus are prohibited to the main temple of Pashupati, but they can have a good view of the temple from the opposite bank of the river.

Development of Conceptual Framework

The research in a religion and spirituality is done by different scholars taking different element into consideration. The present study has identified different variables from the different literature and incorporated in this work.

People get influenced by the impression of miracles produced by a myths and narratives by religious institutions, due to which they decide to travel to sacred places (Terzidou et al., 2017). Similarly, practices of discipline and power filled on people by institutions either religious or political shape the wider public and spread religious discourses and performances (Xie, 2011). Therefore, so as to motivate visitation patterns, religious authorities create 'induced imagery' (Fakaye & Crompton, 1991). Imagining, constructing and developing the insight of religious place with the help of narratives and visual media is the way they mostly follow the place, particularly directing towards certain spaces that are operated by ideological interpretations which is acquired through religious texts and language (Selwyn, 1998; Terzidou et al., 2017). In Hinduism sacred sites are visited mainly by the high castes (Bhardwaj, 1993; Rinschede, 1992). Whereas, Baudrillard (1981) said many religions create "strategies of desire", through which consumers-tourists are mobilized by promises, such as miraculous healing, as a unique source of handling and suffering, religion acts as a psychological support in reducing people's uncertainty and fear associated with death and health related issues.

The power of sharing of religious tourism experiences and of community narratives can help to generate, maintain and intensify the authenticity of the visited site (Belhassen et al., 2008), plus this highlights the power of word-of-mouth along with the trust in the experiences of others and the power of word of mouth (Lester & Scarles, 2013).

The innovation in tourism industry made religious tourism closely connected to holiday and cultural tourism, as spiritual journeys and visits are not the main and dominant motives for travel (Rinschede, 1992). In the same way, Keeling (2000) argued in his study that the basic activities in the most religious sites is worship and prayer, along with this, the scholar further claimed that when visitors go to cathedrals in England, spiritual motives are not the only reasons why people visit them. This indicates that religious and secular motives are often

intertwined. Similar motives for visitation was identified by Nolan and Nolan (1992), Shackley (2001), Smith (1992), and (Vukonic, 1998) that many people tend to visit religious heritage sites for recreational, educational or cultural interests rather than spiritual reasons. This indicate that the visitor travel to the religious site not only for the religious purpose but also for different other purpose as well, which are yet to be discovered.

Pilgrims undertake a journey of pilgrimage with strong expectations that they will experience something extraordinary and life changing (Diganca, 2003, Turner & Turner, 2011). The relationship between the human and the divine has increased in the context of a vow (Badona, 1990), similarly Olsen's (2008) accept the view that pilgrims believe they can obtain divine assistance by undertaking a journey for the sake of sacredness. Religious visions and apparitions are strong motivators of action, as they create affective bonds with the sacred, constituting signs and symbols that provide order and meaning to the faithful (Gester, 1996).



Fig 1: Conceptual framework for religious travel motivation

Design and Methodological Paradigm

The study applied a quantitative research method of research applying a survey approach data collection which comprised of descriptive and causal research design. Quantitative research focuses on the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationship.

Descriptive design, based on detailed conceptual framework of the study and different variables considered in it, the present study developed a set of survey questionnaires structured in rating scale to study and analyse the travel motivation to the religious site. It is basically correlational research in nature, as it emphasises on relationships between dependent variable and the independent variables.

Further based on various statistic computed and hypotheses taken into consideration needful statistical test comprising, T-test, ANOVA was run as per the nature of statistics and unit of analyses.

Population and Data Sampling

Tourist visiting the Pashupatinath area of Kathmandu district were selected as the population of study purpose. For accuracy in result, only those respondents were selected who stayed overnight in the hotels in Kathmandu valley. Sampling were collected during the month of February, March, and April. Purposive sampling method was used, 250 questionnaires were distributed out of which 98 questionnaires were found incomplete. Hence, 152 valid questionnaires were used for the data analysis. The profile of sample respondents is depicted in Appendix 1.

Table 1

Motivation to travel Pashupatinath

Motivation to travel	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Religious place	30	19.7	19.7
Leisure time spent purpose	40	26.3	46.1
A part of the package	13	8.6	54.6
To see the place	65	42.8	97.4
others purposes	4	2.6	100
Total	152	100	

Note: Calculated from the authors' survey, 2019

The table indicates that 42.8 per cent of visitors confirm that they visit the site to see the place followed by the purpose of spending leisure time which is 40 per cent. Similarly, 30 per cent of the visitor visited the site because it's a religious place.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics

Panel A: Religious motivation			
Components	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Pilgrimage	2.395	1.180	
Getting something Closer to sacred	2.362	1.046	
Ethnic diversity is unique	2.000	1.137	
Searching for forgiveness	3.026	1.223	
Religious activities are worth following	2.296	0.927	
Expressing love and respect for god	2.053	1.078	
Total	2.434	1.102	
Panel B: Construct motivation			
Components	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Planned travel after watching television	2.724	1.158	
Tales of miracles	2.895	1.213	
National pride	2.086	1.179	
Word of mouth	2.645	1.289	
Dreamed about this place	3.526	1.423	
Total	2.769	1.054	

Panel C: Secular motivation			
Components	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Historic value	1.658	0.892	
Pashupatinath area is visually appealing	1.934	0.874	
Cultural value and architecture	1.743	0.888	
Destination respects natural environment	2.079	0.973	
Exploring the legends and interesting stories about the temple	2.112	1.020	
Following the modern trends in travelling	2.375	1.254	
Total	1.984	0.984	

Note: Calculated from the authors' survey, 2019

Six statement were used in all the variables to measure descriptive analysis. In religious motivation Statement four (Searching for forgiveness) has the highest mean score of 3.028. Whereas statement three (Ethnic diversity is unique) has the lowest mean score of 2.0. Eventually, statement four (Searching for forgiveness) has highest standard deviation of 1.223. Likewise, statement five Religious activities are worth following has lowest standard deviation of 0.926. The table shows that the overall item has a mean value 2.434 which indicates that the response is positive.

Similarly, in secular motivation, the highest mean is observed in statement six (Following the modern trends in travelling) by 2.375, whereas lowest is observed in statement one (Historic value) by 1.658. Eventually, statement 6 (Following the modern trends in traveling) has highest standard deviation by 1.25448 comparing lowest statement 2 (Pashupatinath area is visually appealing) by 0.874. The table shows that the overall item has a mean value 1.984 which indicate that the response is positive.

Finally construct motivation, Statement Six (Dreamed about this place) has the highest mean score of 3.528, whereas statement four (National pride) observed lowest mean score of 2.088 Eventually, statement (Dreamed about this place) has highest standard deviation of 1.423 comparing lowest statement two (Planned travel after watching television) by 1.158. The table shows that the overall item has a mean value 2.789 which indicate that the response is positive.

Table 3

Analysis of variance on motivation of visiting religious sites across marital status

Variables		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Religious motivation	Between Groups	0.78	0.39		
	Within Groups	77.109	0.389	1.001	0.369
	Total	77.889			
Construct motivation	Between Groups	1.363	0.652		
	Within Groups	92.363	0.466	1.463	0.234
	Total	93.626			
Secular motivation	Between Groups	0.087	0.043		
	Within Groups	43.402	0.229	0.189	0.828
	Total	43.489			

Note: Calculated from the authors' survey, 2019

The table 3 indicates there does not exist the differences in religious motivation, construct motivation and secular motivation for visiting Pashupatinath temple across three levels of marital status of the respondents ($P>0.05$).

Table 4

Analysis of variance on motivation of visiting religious sites across age group

Variables		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Religious motivation	Between Groups	2.37	0.76	2.081	0.107
	Within Groups	75.519	0.383		
	Total	77.889			
Construct motivation	Between Groups	1.21	0.407	0.857	0.459
	Within Groups	92.406	0.469		
	Total	93.626			
Secular motivation	Between Groups	0.595	0.198	0.871	0.457
	Within Groups	44.893	0.228		
	Total	45.488			

Note: Calculated from the authors' survey, 2019

In the table 4, the analyses of variance (ANOVA) on motivation of religious site across gender was performed, the p value for all the variable was observed greater than 0.05, which specified that there is no significant relationship between travel motivation to the religious site and the age group of the respondents.

Table 5

Analysis of mean difference on motivation of travelling religious sites across gender

		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Religious Motivation	Equal variances assumed	1.560	.214	.308	150	.560	.194
	Equal variances not assumed			.288	81.77	.774	.194
Construct Motivation	Equal variances assumed	1.977	.162	-1.128	150	.261	-.783
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.089	82.97	.288	-.783
Secular Motivation	Equal variances assumed	.025	.874	.791	150	.430	.396
	Equal variances not assumed			.803	98.29	.424	.396

Note: Calculated from the authors' survey, 2019

Independent sample t-test was run so as to clarify the gender perception towards the religious site travel motivation, the test confirms the equal variances assumed which proves that gender perception towards religious motivation and construct motivation is highly significant whereas as secular motivation is moderately significant.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study has covered the under-researched aspects of religious tourism to study what motivates travellers to visit the religious site of Pashupatinath. It performed descriptive

analysis of the variables, as well as ANOVA-Test and t-test; it revealed that the secular motivation as the strongest factor (mean value of 1.981) motivating one to visit the religious site followed by religious and construct motivation. The study results have raised a question against the general belief that the people travel religious sites only for the religious purpose.

Of them, 42.8 per cent of respondent mentioned that the reason to travel the religious site was "to see the place," 28.3 per cent for the purpose of spending leisure time, and 19.7 per cent for a religious purpose.

An ANOVA test was run so as to analyse the perception of to travel the religious site in terms of marital status and age group but the test confirmed that there is no significant relation between marital status and age group as to what motivate one to visit religious sites.

The present study results share similarity with Terzidou, Scarles and Saunders (2018) in which the researcher has examined the various motivation factor for visiting religious site within the Greek Orthodox context, and found that the motivations are institutionally constructed. Though motivations may initially be institutionally constructed, the present research has revealed that all three factors contributed significantly to contribute to the motivation to religious site travel. Similarly, a study of Bozic, Spasojevic, Vujicic, and Stamenkovic (2018), based on Vujan Monastery (Serbia) concludes that Religious tourists can be motivated, not only by pure religious motives, but also to visit sacred places due to educational purposes (learning about historic and cultural value, interesting stories). Secular tourists have cultural and education motives when visiting sacred sites, they travel to learn something, to follow the trends, while comparing the present study with these studies it concludes that although the Pashupatinath temple is a historic temple popular among the Hindus but it is significantly important for its architecture as well as cultural and educational value.

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Appendix

General information of Respondent

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Respondent by Nationality	USA	14	9.2
	Bangladesh	9	5.9
	Bhutanese	7	4.6
	British	10	6.6
	Chinese	20	13.2
	French	10	6.6
	German	8	5.3
	Indian	20	13.2
	Japanese	10	6.6
Others	44	28.8	
Respondent by Age	15-25	81	53.3
	26-35	42	27.6
	36-45	20	13.2
	Above 45	9	5.9
Respondents by Gender	Male	103	67.8
	Female	49	32.2
Respondent by Education Level	School	7	4.6
	Intermediate	8	5.3
	Bachelor	86	56.6
	Masters	40	26.3
Phd	11	7.2	
Respondent by Occupation	Student	79	52.0
	employee/ job holder	33	21.7
	self-employed	31	20.4
	Unemployed	4	2.6
	Others	5	3.3
Respondent by Marital Status	Married	39	25.7
	Unmarried	101	66.4
	Divorced	12	7.9
Visit background/ study	Yes	103	67.8
	No	49	32.2
How did you hear about this place?	Magazine	6	3.9
	Newspaper	9	5.9
	Internet	72	47.4
	Friends/family	51	33.6
	T. V.	11	7.2
	Others	3	2.0

Plan made by respondent	Self-organized		
	Organized by the travel agent	70	46.1
	Organized by the tour operator	40	25.3
	Organized by a club or association	23	15.1
	Organized by others	14	9.2
Reason of the respondent to travel	Religious purpose	5	3.3
	Religious purpose	30	19.7
	Leisure time spent purpose	40	25.3
	A part of the package	13	8.6
	To see the place	65	42.8
How longer you Plan to stay in Pashupatinath territory?	Others purpose	4	2.6
	One day	30	19.7
	Two days	72	47.4
	More than two days	50	32.9