

Nepalese Tourism: One-month itinerary

Binod Prasad Chaulagain

Jussi Halme

Author(s) Binod Prasad Chaulagain and Jussi Halme	
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<p>Nepal is a small landlocked country in between India and China. Nepal is also a mountainous country as well as hills and plain. Since backpacking is gaining popularity and to assist backpackers there has been the establishment of various service industries. Backpacker tourism is an independent method of tourism at a low cost . In Nepal, backpacking tourism is also gaining popularity, and backpackers have been using inexpensive means of travel throughout the country. The methods are ranging from accomodation like hostels, lodges, guesthouse etc. and means of transport like public transportation.</p> <p>The main aim of the thesis was to provide information about how do backpacker's see Nepal as a tourist destination? What was their expectations regarding nature based tourism? Additionally, it presents one month experience in Nepal. Finally, this thesis focused on promoting Nepal as a backpacking tourist destination.</p> <p>The research was based on the data collected from the Nepal Tourism Board and also from the quantitative research method (questionnaire Survey).The questionnaire survey was conducted in the major touristic areas in Nepal and information was collected through the interview method.</p> <p>The research was projected to last for four months. During this time, we had a month to visit Nepal where we would collect information from the tourist about their visit and their experiences through our interview questions. In our visit to Nepal we had also interviewed backpackers and talked about their experiences, challenges and recommendations to improve Nepal as a backpacking destination. The results was based on the interview with the backpackers and our own experience, and their recommendations on factors to improve Nepal.</p>	
Keywords Nepalese Tourism, Consumer Behaviour, Tourist Typologies, Motivation and Backpacking	

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1 Introduction

Backpacking is a form of tourism, and is typically associated with budget travel. Backpacking however has been around for centuries, and due to the intensity of the travels, it can be looked as a community. Nepal is a small land-locked country surrounded by China from the north and India from the east, west and south. The country is divided into three regions mountains, the hills, and the Terai. The country is both Buddhist and Hindu, and is the birthplace of Lord Buddha. The aim of our thesis is to examine Nepal's tourism, and the steps that need to be taken in order to improve, popularize, as well as distinguish themselves as a backpacking wonder of the world. Research questions are as follows: how do backpacker's see Nepal as a tourist destination? What are their expectations regarding nature based tourism?

To start with, we looked into the various websites regarding Nepal and the looked through the tourist statistic and guidebook. We also looked through the various comments and suggestions provided by the visitors to make a plan for our tour to Nepal and what are the places to visit. We tried to understand the culture and the way of life of people through various you tube videos. Then we asked our friends/classmates of tourism students in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Porvoo campus to join the tour with us. Because this will be a proper way how do the backpacker feels about Nepal.

Soon it became a turning point for us, three of our friends agreed the proposal and we planned to go to Nepal in December 2016. Our tour lasted for 28 days and Binod, one writer being the host in Kathmandu. Everything we did were up to the plan and there was a change in a plan while we were in Nepal and went for trekking in Poon Hill. This filled the tour with more excitement.

We also thought of gathering data from tourists, and examine their viewpoint on the country based on our questionnaire interviews. Additionally, we will involve secondary-data through our findings on the internet. Our main focus for our method is based on qualitative research especially through our survey responses. Secondly, we will take into consideration the highlights the country has to offer to the tourists dealing with nature especially.

Activities we will elaborate on are bungee-jumping, para-gliding, mountain-biking, rafting, jungle safari, trekking, and rock climbing. All of these unique activities will surely give tourists a remarkable picture of the country. Other highlights, we found necessary to involve are the cultural heritage sights, these are ranging in every part of the country, and are a spectacular sight to see. A few mentionable ones is the Pashupatinath Temple Swargadwari, Lake Gosainkunda, Devghat, Pathibhara near Phungling Mahamrityunjaya Shivasan,

Manakamana temple, and the Monkey Temple in Kathmandu. Additional factors we will include is the cultural diversity backpackers will face when arriving in Nepal, and the proper ways of behaving in the country.

Another aspect we had to consider were the challenges which are as follows:

Since we had visited the eastern hills, western region and plains of Nepal, the results will be based on the experience based on those places. Our interviews were done in the cities of Pokhara and Kathmandu, so their experience will be also on the basis of the places they visited. Thus, our thesis does not cover the entire Nepal. Secondly, the targeted backpackers consist of young adults with the age group 18 – 30 because of which it does not cover all age groups.

The research is commissioned by a travel agency named Mission Eco Trek and Expedition (P) Ltd, which offers travels around Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan. The agency offers tours ranging from day tours to months, and certainly with a eye-opening price. The tours offered for the daily tours include rafting, Kathmandu, and Pohora adventure trips. In addition, tours that they offer in the mountains are Mera, Island, Lobuche, Pokalde, Pisang, and Ramdung peak. Benefits that we are able to offer our commissioner is obtaining knowledge about backpackers, and their main interests when they travel to Nepal. More or less this includes finding their wants in needs. Furthermore, through this knowledge they can create affordable packages towards what the backpackers find most appealing, or alter their services on their website. Lastly, we provide marketing for them, and for Nepal additionally. One way of advertisement is through this thesis and another we informed our interviewee's about this travel agency.

The thesis begins with an introduction, and then moves onto the second chapter which describes Nepalese tourism, facilities, accessibilities, and amenities. Next, we move on to the third chapter involving consumer-behavior, needs and wants, expectations, tourist typologies, motivation, and backpacking. Fourth chapter describes our whole overall research process. Then we end our thesis with a conclusion which wraps up all of our chapters.

2 Nepalese Tourism

This chapter describes Nepal as a tourist destination and explains briefly about its peculiarities. Furthermore, it discusses about major attraction, accessibility and amenities. It also includes the statistical data related to tourism inbound.

2.1 Basic facts about Nepal

Nepal is a country full of diversities. The differences among and between the people, their culture, language, lifestyle, landforms, climate etc. can be found widely. To explore such differences and features, the widely used industry in Nepal is Tourism. Not only the source for exploration, it is also an important source of foreign exchange and revenues for a developing country Nepal. (Sharma, 2012)

Nepal is a small mountainous country which is full of natural beauties. It is one of the popular destination for mountaineers, rock climbers and for the people looking for adventures. It also has abundant cultural heritage sites. Additionally, high Himalayas, religious and historical sites of Nepal are worth visiting. For broad minded travellers who value for an experience that is genuine and mesmerizing, Nepal is the desirable destination for broad minded people. Mountaineering, trekking, rafting in eye-catching surroundings are just three things Nepal is popular for. Nepal is one of the last places on earth you can spot the Asian rhinoceros and the Royal Bengal Tiger. For travellers, Nepal's greatest attraction is its humble people. The traditions and great hospitality offered by its many different groups of people are a major part of that makes Nepal so better. Further, Nepal is also the country of Mt. Everest- the highest mountain in the world and the birthplace of Lord Gautam Buddha-Lumbini. There are various significant religious pilgrimage sites in every part of the country for the followers of various group and religions. (Embassy of Nepal, 2016)

Nepal is full of rich ancient cultures, the most dramatic scenery and unique experience. It comprises from steamy jungle and Terai to the icy peaks of the world's highest mountains. Various activities as Elephant Polo and a micro light flight through the Himalays show are popular. Nepalese are always welcoming either they are from remote mountain villages or medieval hill-town including the ancient cities of Kathmandu valley. In order to experience the strong and unique flavors of Nepalese cuisine, prepared with love and a depth of flavor many people visit Nepal. More festivals than the days of the year are celebrated which cannot be found in any of the nations of the world. (MOFA, no date)

Nepal is a small landlocked country located in between China and India. It has the total area of 147,181 sq. km. On its north lies China and India on its east, west and south. Kathmandu is the capital of Nepal. Nepalese Rupee (NPR) is the currency. (Dhoju, R. 2011) There are 123 various languages spoken in Nepal. Nepali is the official languages in Nepal. The majority of the languages are Nepali (57%), Maithili (10%), Bhojpuri (7%) Tharu (4%), Tamang (5%) and Newari (3%) (Anon, 2017). Nepal is a multireligious country which houses Hindu (81.3%), Buddhist (9%), Muslim (4.4%), Christian (1.4%) and others (0.9%) (ImNepal.com, 2017).

According to the World Statistics Pocketbook, Gross Domestic product of Nepal in 2014 is 19489 (Million US \$). The total population is projected to be 28.851 million. The economy of Nepal depends upon the services and other activity by 52.4% of Gross Value Added apart from agriculture (32.5%) and industry (15.1%). Life expectancy at birth is 70.5 years for female and 67.6 years for male. (World Statistics Pocketbook 2016 edition, 2016, 144). The total literacy rate in Nepal is 63.9% of the total population. Out of which, 76.4 % of male are literate and 53.1% of female are literate (Cia.gov, 2017).

According to statistics from Nepal Tourism Statistics 2015, a total of 407412 foreign tourists entered in Nepal by air in the year 2015. The government of Nepal is trying to promote Nepal in the international market and attract various tourist by various projects like Nepal Tourism Year 2011. As a result, in the year 2011, a total of 545221 international tourists entered the country by air which was 22,1 % growth as compared to the year 2014. To reduce poverty, raise the level of employment opportunities and for social equity, tourism industries play a very important role in developing country like Nepal. (Nepal Tourism Statistics 2016, 9 - 10)

Table 1: Tourist arrival and average length of Stay

Year	Total		By Air		By land		Average length of Stay
	Number	Growth Rate (%)	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
2005	375398	-2.6	277346	73.90	98052	26.10	9.09
2006	383926	2.3	283819	73.9	100107	26.1	10.2
2007	526705	37.2	360713	68.5	165992	31.5	11.96
2008	500277	-5	374661	74.9	125616	25.1	11.78
2009	509956	1.9	379322	74.4	130634	25.6	11.32
2010	602867	18.2	448800	74.4	154067	25.6	12.67
2011	736215	22.1	545221	74.1	190994	25.9	13.12
2012	803092	9.1	598258	74.5	204834	25.5	12.16
2013	797616	-0.7	594848	74.6	202768	25.4	12.6
2014	790118	-0.9	585981	74.2	204137	25.8	12.44
2015	538970	-0.32	407412	75.6	131558	24.4	13.16
2016	753002	40	572563	41	180439	37	13.4

(Nepal Tourism Statistics 2016, 9-10)

According to Nepal Tourism Statistics 2016, it shows growth in number of total tourist visiting Nepal from year 2005 till 2012 that increases from 375398 to 803092 along with the average length of stay to be 12,16 days in 2012. Then after 2012, the number of tourist visiting Nepal decreases and came to 538970 in 2015 but the average length of stay increases to 13.16. (Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2016)

The number of tourist travelling by air, percentage wise (around 74%) then it seems to remain constant with only slight change from the year 2005 – 2015. Similarly, during those years, the people travelling to land also remain constant (around 26%). It is clear that most of the tourist visiting Nepal travel via aerial route. In 2016, number of tourist increases by 40% than in 2015, from 538970 to 752563 and average stay being 13.4 days. In the year 2015, the table shows a drastic decrease in number of tourist from every country, which is because of the earthquake that destroyed a lot of heritage sited in Nepal.

Table 2: An overview to the visitors' arrivals by country

Rank	Country	2015	2016	% change
1	India	75124	118249	57.41%
2	China	64675	104005	60.81%
3	USA	53897	53645	-0.47%
4	Srilanka	43117	57521	33.41
5	UK	29730	46295	55.72%
6	Thailand	32338	26722	-17.37%
7	Japan	14465	22979	58.86%
8	Australia	14816	25507	72.16%
9	France	10885	20863	91.67%
10	South Korea	18112	25171	38.97%
	Others	181811	252045	38.63%
	Grand Total	538970	753002	39.71%

(Nepal Tourism Statistics 2015, 24-25)

According to the table above, India (118249) has the highest amount of tourist arrivals by country in the year 2016. The reason behind this is that Nepal has open borders with India in its east, west and southern part and there is no legal requirement of visa for Indian tourist. This table shows the top 10 countries with the number of tourist arrival where China is second, USA is third, UK on fourth and South Korea on tenth. There is a 57.41% increase in Indian tourist in the year 2016 compared to 2015. Overall, there is an increase of 39.71% in 2016 from 2015 that depicts that Nepal has been rising after the devastating earthquake in 2015 and the number of tourist has been increasing.

2.2 Major attractions of Nepal

Nepal is a country with various religious society. The majority of people here believe Hinduism and Buddhism. The Pashupatinath Temple is located in Gaushala, Kathmandu which is one of the main Hindu religious sites. It is capable of attracting many tourist and pilgrims. Some other famous and religious sites include Swargadwari (Pyuthan district), Lake Gosainkunda (Rasuwa district), Devghat (Chitwan district), Pathibhara near Phungling Mahamrityunjaya Shivasan (Palpa district), Manakamana temple (Gorkha district). (Nepal, E., 2016)

Buddhism is another main religion of country Nepal. The World Heritage site Lumbini, which is also the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, is very famous attraction point for tourist. Other major Buddhist sites are Swayambhunath popularly known as the monkey temple, and

Baudhanath in Kathmandu. Muktinath is a religious place for both Hindus as well as Buddhists. (Nepal, E., 2016)

Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal is the diverse in terms of temples and very rich in culture heritage. There are 7 world heritage sites i.e. Kathmandu Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar square, Pashupatinath temple, Baudhanath Stupa, Swayambhunath Stupa, and Changunarayan Temple. Visitors can experience various collections of historical, artistic and archaeological importance due to presence of museums that has been refreshing things from past to present and galleries over here is capable of displaying arts work. Nepal which is also popularly known for being land of festivities and celebrations, visitors can experience culturally and religiously different people respecting and collaborating each other values and beliefs. (MOFA)

Nepal, land of Himalayas is very famous for mountain climbing. The country Nepal consists of eight peaks whose altitude is above 8,000m that also includes the highest in the world, Mt. Everest also known for Sagarmatha. The Himalayas of Nepal has become a great platform of mountaineering activity after when the country opened its peak to mountaineer in 1994. (Embassy of Nepal, 2016)

The best way to experience the diversified natural beauty and various cultural ethnicity is to walk through them that have been the motto of Nepal trek. Passing along with forests of rhododendron, small villages with hospitable people, birds, animals, temple, monasteries and magnificent landscapes visitors can encounter people of different cultures and values offering a glimpse of traditional rural life mixing the feeling of love and care in it. (Embassy of Nepal, 2016)

Rafting is one of the best ways to explore the thrill of water resources of Nepal. There are numbers of rivers in Nepal that offers outstanding rafting or canoeing experience. The Trisuli River also known for wild combination of rapids is one of the most popular of Nepal's raftable rivers. Secondly, the Karnali River is capable of providing some of the challenging rapids in the world. Rafting agents here are responsible for providing the adventurous and breathtaking fun on water tides and waves. They also provide with life jackets, camping and the basic accepted training, needed by world- class rafting. Cannoning, an extremely popular sport in Europe is now available in Nepal. Upper Bhotekoshi is a famous site for Cannoning these days. (Embassy of Nepal, 2016)

The thrill of a bungy jump can be experienced in Nepal. Nepal's first bungy jumping site is situated 160m over the Bhotekoshi River which is in the top of the list among some other sites. Recently, swings over the jumps have been introduced. (Dhoju, R. 2011, 50)

One of the adventurous ways to explore the Kathmandu Valley is biking. Mountain biking in Nepal offers an experience to explore the living heritage throughout the valley. These days it has been very popular in cities like Pokhara, Lumbini, Palpa, and Kathmandu. Various miserable roads and trails can be found in Nepal to meet the mountain biker's wildest fantasy. (MOFA)

National parks and wild life conservations located especially in Terai region of Nepal is worth at attracting various visitors from all over the world. A visit to one of these park emphasizes on ascertaining variety of thrill and experiences by means of foot, dugout canoe, jeep and elephant back riding. It is also the best way to sight a one-horned rhino or two at every elephant safari. A Royal Bengal tiger may be a surprise by his rare and majestic appearance. (MOFA)

Kathmandu, capital city of Nepal offers a roster of stone walls to experience the fun of cliff-hangings. Rock climbing is growing as one of the popular sport in Kathmandu valley and Pokhara. Some other places are Nagarjun, Balaju, Shivapuri and Budhanilkantha where rock climbing has been in practice. (MOFA)

Paragliding in Nepal on recent days have been very popular. It is very famous in Pokhara these days. A trip of paragliding gives the best experience to explore the scenery on earth. We are able to share air space with Himalayan griffin's vultures, eagles, kites and fly over villages, monasteries, temples, lakes and jungle through paragliding. It is worth experiencing the valley from the sky. (Dhoju, R. 2011, 90)

2.3 Amenities

There are various categories of accommodation facilities available in Nepal like tourist class hotel, Lodge, resorts, star hotels (1 – 5 star hotels) as well as homestays. Accommodation can be easily found in major touristic area according to the budget. Following are the number of accommodation facilities available in Nepal according to the class.

Table 3: Classification of accomodation

Hotels class	Number of Hotels
5 star	9
4 star	6
3 star	10
2 star	10
1 star	4
Tourist Class	13
Resort, lodges, camp, Hotels	81

(Adventuresnepal.com, 2017)

There are also various car and bike rental services in major touristic area. There are also a number of restaurants where tourist can taste the local or some international foods. Also there are various travel and tours agencies where you could choose your preferred packages.

2.4 Accessibility

The Tribhuvan International airport is the one and only international airport in Nepal. So, every tourist visiting through air route gets in Kathmandu first. There are various airlines operating their services to Kathmandu from various other airports. Therefore, getting to Nepal through air is much more convineint. As stated below, 407412 tourist visited Nepal through air (Nepal Tourism Statistics 2015, 13). There is no direct flight available for the tourist travelling from America, Australia and Europe. There will be at least one stop either in Middle East or Asia. For visitors travelling from New Zealand and Australia, it is preferable to travel from Singapore, Hong Kong or Bangkok. From North America, it is convenient to travel through India or Bangkok or Hong Kong. From Europe, travelling through Turkey or Qatar will be feasible. (Getting Nepal, 2017)

If tourist use the land route then there are various several entry points from India (in the west Dhangadhi, Nepalgunj and Mahendranagar, in the east Birganj, Kakarbhatta and Sunauli). There are also the bus facilities to Nepal from most of the major cities in India like Calcutta, Delhi, Patna, Darjeeling and Varanasi. From Tibet there is only one entry point through Kodari. (Getting Nepal, 2017)

For travelling to various parts of Nepal there are various local bus services, tourist bus services and domestic flights. There is also the possibilities to reserve the vehicle through various agencies. Tourist can even rent a car or motor bike to travel around as well as use various organized tours. (Getting Nepal, 2017)

3 Consumer behaviour, Tourist typologies and Backpacking

This chapter describes the consumer buying behaviour and their needs, wants and expectation. It will also give brief introduction to the tourist typologies as well as backpacking.

3.1 Consumer behaviour

The business of providing services for people on holiday like hotels, restaurants, and trips is known as tourism. In other words, it is an organized journey to a certain location for recreation and learning. It is the hospitality industry. Everybody enjoys watching beautiful places. High mountains, fast flowing rivers, green forests, tranquil lakes and old temple are the spots that attracts people towards Nepal. These days' people do not like to stay in a particular place forever.

The study of consumer behaviour is a fairly new field of study. The concept examines individuals, groups, or organizations, and their process of selecting goods and services based on their needs and wants. Actually, consumer behavior can be approached in two different ways: positivist and interpretivist perspective. Positivist perspective is mostly used; since it thinks people are rational decision-makers. Concepts of consumer behaviour involve perception, learning and memory, motivation, attitudes, and attitude change and interactive communication. Understanding the customer, and his or her wants and needs is ideal when dealing with consumer behaviour. Additionally, while applying consumer behaviour it is ideal to take into consideration Maslow's pyramid diagram. From bottom to top it illustrates psychological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Without these ideologies consumer behaviour remains inexistent, and therefore has no form or basis (Kumra, Rajeev. 2011).

Drastic changes are developing in the competitive consumer market. Companies are facing the challenge of standing out in this combative market, and deregulation, privatization, and globalization are the main factors. Therefore, new products are constantly being rushed because of the recessionary pressure; which leads to the products quality lacking tremendously. In today's world, products are being rushed due to company's eagerness for revenue, and consumers are pressured into buying the latest technologies for example, and other products viewed at as vital in today's modern society (Kumra, Rajeev. 2011).

Consumer associates itself with the use and removal of products, as well as how the product itself is studied. To a marketer, the product is the cornerstone due to the fact of the need to encourage consumption." In our case, during our Nepal trip we more or less focused our study of consumer behaviour on what is the primary focus when someone is traveling to

Nepal. Through a variety of survey responses, and previous knowledge we found that most travelers are seeking cultural and nature aspects when visiting. As explained in the previous section (Kumra, Rajeev. 2011).

Consequently, "knowledge of consumer characteristics plays an extremely important role in many marketing applications, such as defining the market for a product or deciding on the appropriate techniques to employ when targeting a certain group of consumers." Companies are beginning to realize the cruciality of obtaining proper data of each customer for proper targeting of each consumer. Each consumer has their own set needs and desires, and from the suppliers they need to fulfill each consumer's needs. Each consumer is unique; you can't forget to take into consideration cultural diversities as well in the development of your product for each region. Developing products that offend one's culture can devastate a supplier from ever appealing to a section of consumers. For instance, marketers are required to be careful in their advertisements to not offend religion, culture, etc. In many cases, companies have been devastated in their marketing attempts, and lost a substantial amount on their revenue or reputation as a company. One example, Malaysian Airlines were atrocious in their competition marketing attempt. Shortly, they attempted a competition where they asked their audience to answer the question "What and where would you like to tick off on your bucket list, and explain why?" Conclusively, "Malaysia Airlines showed a crude lack of empathy and sensitivity towards the situation, and people were quick to call them out. The links to the competition were canceled, and people were asked to describe destinations and activities on their "to-do" list instead." (Peluso, Alessandro M. (ProQuest Ebook Central, 2011)

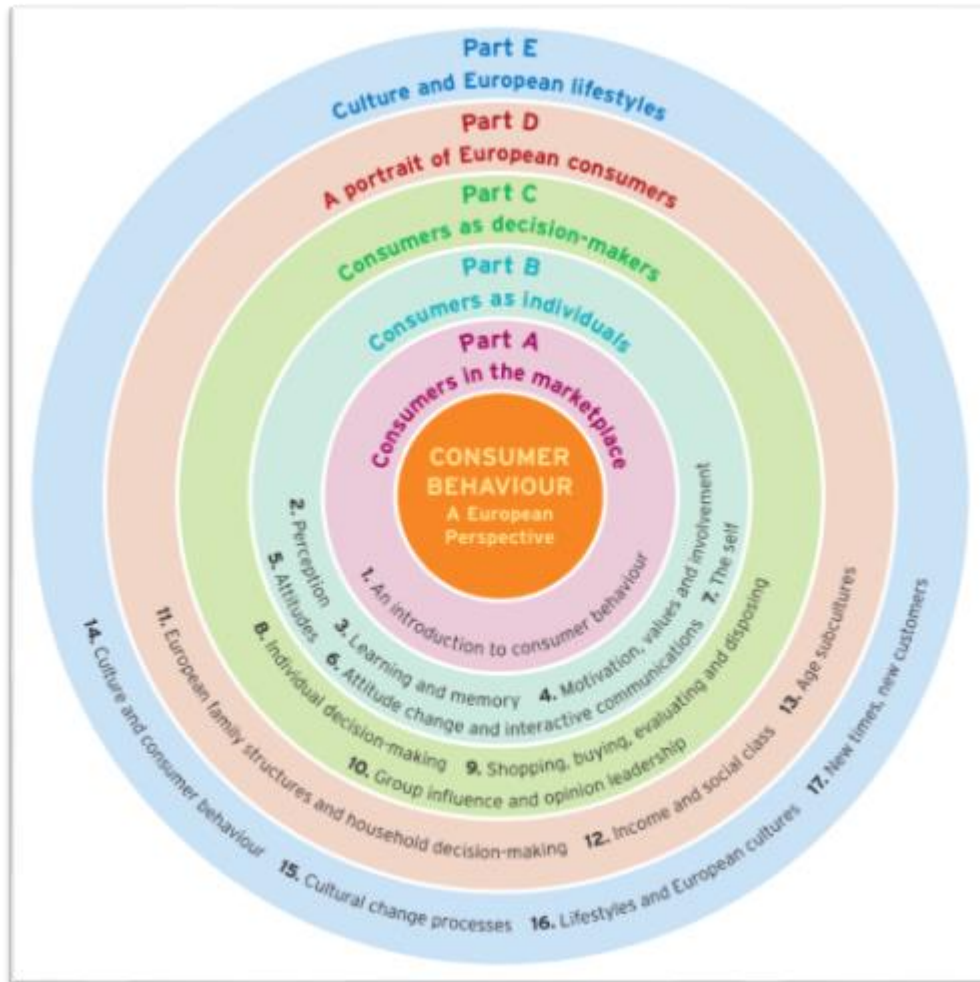


Figure 1: Consumer behaviour A European Perspective (Peluso, Alessandro M. ProQuest Ebook Central, 2011)

As we know consumer satisfaction is the key role in a company staying alive, and obtaining constant income. Companies, aren't spending a chunk of their earnings on customer satisfaction for no reason. Now the question to be addressed what truly is customer satisfaction? Customer satisfaction is the ability to satisfy a customer's wants and need during any circumstances without the firm sacrificing too much. Research study states that a customer will not be unsatisfied if given equal, or exceeding their "normal" psychological standard of customer service. Main drivers of customer service are personality orientation and personality involvement. Personality orientation was proven to be an influence in customer's evaluation of the product. While, personality involvement was proven to show how much do customers really put into an evaluation of a product. Customer satisfaction can be measured in various ways. For example, surveys; which was the path we chose during our trip to Nepal. This gives us accurate data to collect on how the country can improve overall as a tourist destination, and assist them on being able to fix these issues. (Peluso, Alessandro M. ProQuest Ebook Central, 2011)

Our method of applying consumer behaviour is through our observation method, and involvement of the characteristics we discussed earlier with consumer behaviour. Furthermore, through observing tourists as well as locals we will establish a basis of a customer's attraction in the country. Through our observation we will study the ways Nepal is operating as a tourist destination, and the methods that they use to grab tourists into their country. Lastly, we will incorporate interviews for both unsatisfied and satisfied customers to further our understanding. Overall, we expect accurate responses due to the fact of not all of our interviews being traditional. We will engage in regular everyday conversation with customers, and ask questions without them feeling alarmed that they are getting interviewed. (Peluso, Alessandro M. ProQuest Ebook Central, 2011)

3.2 Tourist Typologies

Tourist is any person who travel away from home for more than a day i.e. 24 hours. People may be either a tourists or travellers. Tourist represents those people who travel with the fixed package provided by a tour operator whereas traveller represent to an individual who makes their own arrangement for travelling to a destination.

Tourist typologies depends upon the purpose of the visit. Understanding the typologies and their concern may help us to understand the consumer behaviour, improve our product, pricing, make better distribution channel. According to their purpose and based on their shared characteristics tourist can be classified into the following groups.

Table 4: Tourist Typologies

Tourist typologies		
Plog's Psychocentric-Allocentric Model (Lohmaan and Netto, 2016, 157-160)	Allocentric	Always want new experiences and adventures. Self-confident and outgoing. Interested to meet new people to explore their culture. Select their area and make travel arrangement by themselves.
	Psycho-centric	Often unadventurous, conservative and inhibited. Less keen to know about new places and traditional. Select familiar places for their safety. Need to be undisturbed, relax and love serenity. Always prefer similar type of activities and food. Very worried about their safety.
	Mid-centric	Tourist that fall in between allocentric and psychocentric

		<p>Less adventurous</p> <p>Loves to get new experience</p>
Cohen's Tourist Categories (Sharma, 2005, 152-156)	Organized mass tourist	<p>Mostly include packaged tour with planned itineraries, guided tours and stops.</p> <p>Conventionality more than originality</p> <p>Less adventurous and want to be within his own living environment</p>
	Individual mass tourist	<p>Planned partially by others</p> <p>Tourist can purpose their own itineraries and can plan about timing</p> <p>Uses travel intermediary for major arrangements</p> <p>Traditionalist and conventionality and stays in their own comfort zone.</p>
	The explorer	<p>Plans their own tour and tries to go to strange places (other than tourist attractions)</p> <p>Want to be a part of local and safe in that environment</p> <p>Loves originality and partially affiliate with locals</p>
	The drifter	<p>Plans alone</p> <p>Interested in living with locals and goes to non-touristic areas</p> <p>More on originality than conventionality</p> <p>More into locals and their culture, food, habits and shelter.</p>
Henley Centre Model of Holidaymaking (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2012, 11-14)	Bubble travelers	<p>More into packaged tours</p> <p>Limited budget and knowledge</p> <p>Less curiosity and observes various culture</p>
	Idealized experience seekers	<p>More confident with lots of experiences</p> <p>Flexible and comfortable</p> <p>Goes for tours prepared for individuals</p>
	Seasoned travelers	<p>Experience seeker, Adventurous and prefer independent tours.</p> <p>Loves to experiment and explore various places and environments.</p>
	Complete travelers	<p>Engage deeply into foreign culture, food, experience and heritages.</p> <p>Holidays are specially well planned.</p>

According to Pearce's Travel Categories tourists can also be classified in tourist, explorer, traveler, missionary, holidaymaker, overseas students, jet settler, anthropologist, businessperson, hippie, migrant, international athlete, conservationist, overseas journalist and religious pilgrims (Scribd, 2017)

Stanley Plog has conducted a study in 1974 with 16 airlines and travel companies in USA. The main aim of the study was to expand the travel market and focused on how to get more people use airline for their travel. As a result, he discovered allo-centric, Mid-centric and Psychocentric behaviour of people. (Lohmaan and Netto, 2016, 157-160)

Henley Centre Model of Holidaymaking is as a result of the research conducted in UK regarding the changing desire and need of UK holidaymakers. For this they created a model of holiday taking on the basis of empirical observation. It shows that the leisure travel people want more of what they have been doing which make them more confident and adventurous. For individual tourist, the model identifies four various phases of holiday making depending upon the experiences and level of affluence. (Pizam and Mansfeld, 2012, 11-14)

Cohen's (1972) on the other hand identified the elements that the tourist seek which are novelty, familiar and strangeness. As a result of his studies, he was able to discover the range of possible demand combination from those who prefer familiarity and from those who prefer novelty. Because of these reasons, he identifies the four main types of tourist which are the individual mass tourist, individual mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter. (Sharma, 2005, 152-156)

Abraham Maslow has classified the human needs from lower order to higher order needs. He maintained the hierarchy which starts from the bottom with physiological needs and moves upward. Rest of the needs are safety needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Every human has some needs and needs can be categorized which leads to human behaviour and activities. These needs are the major motives that makes tourist to choose the destination. (Cook, Yale and Marqua, 2006, 44 – 46)

According to Maslow physiological and safety needs are the lower order needs. Physiological needs are food, water and shelter which are also the basic human requirement. Here, tourist look for easily available food outlets and proper rest while travelling and wanted to relax and escape from day to day life. After achieving the first level people move upward which leads them to safety needs in which tourist look for their and their belongings safety and security as well as protection. (Cook, Yale and Marqua, 2006, 44 – 46)

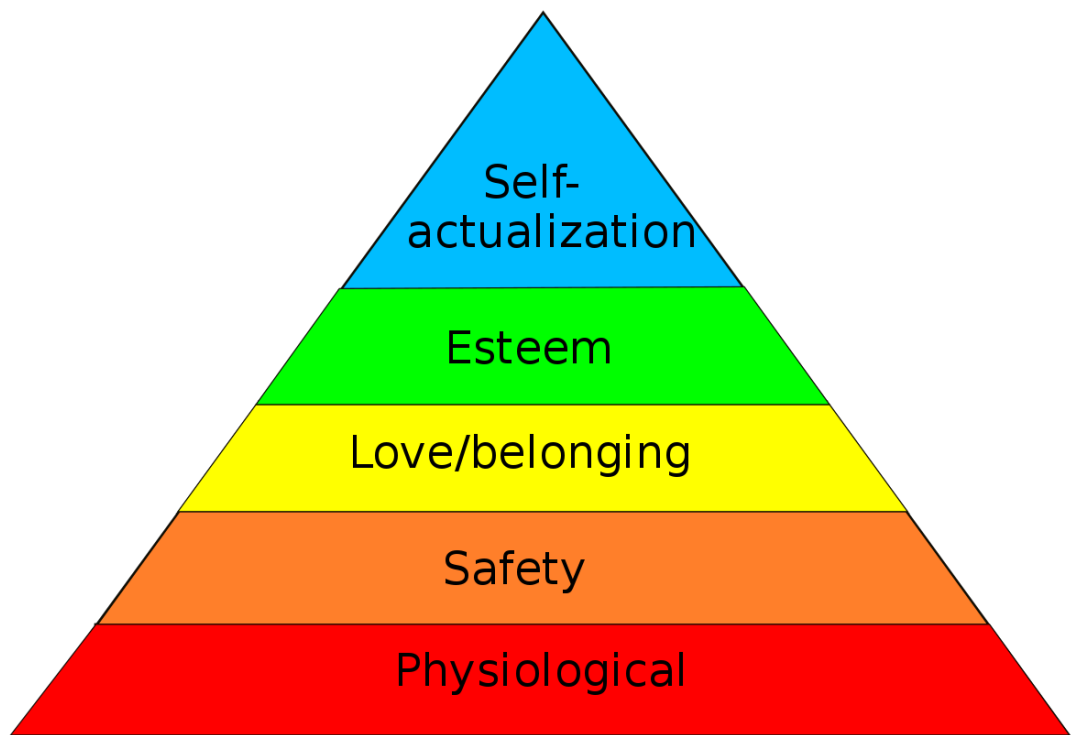


Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Cook, Yale and Marqua, 2006, 44 – 46)

After meeting the lower order needs, tourist look for higher order needs which includes belongingness, esteem and self-actualization needs. In belongingness need tourist look for friendship, love affiliation which develops a sense of belongingness and being social. In esteem need tourist look for self-respect, success and desire for respect. It may be also because of prestige and external awards. The fifth need is self-actualization needs which comprises of self-development tours like educational tours and understanding of various languages and culture. It helps them to understand themselves and find the inner peace and harmony. (Cook, Yale and Marqua, 2006, 44 – 46)

Thus, Maslow has identified the various need of human and identifying and utilization of those needs in proper place helps to attract tourist and their behaviour. Human behaviour changes according to human needs which Maslow has explained properly through Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

3.3 Backpacking

Backpacking is a form of an individual travel in which the backpackers arranges everything by himself and manages his tours. Backpacking has been growing immensely and has become a trend. It is a social phenomenon which is being supported by a network of tour operators and affordable hotels. Major reason behind this growth in backpacking is due to

the changes in life expectation and flexibility of working lifestyle. (Laws and Thyne, 2012, 97 – 98)

According to "The Backpacking Phenomenon", Pierce said that backpacking is an approach to holiday taking and travelling. Furthermore, he has found out following characteristics that differentiate backpacker from travelers:

- A preference for budget accommodation
- An emphasis on meeting other travellers
- An independently organized and flexible travel schedule
- Longer rather than very brief holidays and
- An emphasis on informal and participatory holiday activities (Pearce, 1990)

Backpacking is divided into two section: gap-packing and flash packing. Gap- packing is understood as the travel made by young school students between the gap of secondary studies or further education. It has been very popular among the youngster to utilize their time during the gap of their studies. Flash packing are bourgeois with wanderer's lifestyle and capturing the experiences with modern technology. (Smith, MacLeod and Robertson, 2011, 20)

Backpackers is different from tourists as backpacker's experience lifestyle and culture of the destination participating with the local people. They love being with the local and experience their way of life. Whereas tourist travel for pleasure and relaxation. Backpackers are more flexible and can change their plan easily and involves in in depth study of the host country. (Backpackingtravelpages.com, 2017)

Backpacking is a independent style of travelling where a traveler is able to extend their length of stay and extensive travelling through rational budgeting. Here, the backpacker is able to plan his travel like travelling, accommodation, routes of travelling and food in a very affordable manner. Thus, backpacking is also known as low cost travelling experiencing extreme adventure, being with local and enjoying culture and tradition.

4 Research methodology

This chapter gives a brief introduction about the qualitative and quantitative research methods that are used in research. It also explains the data collection methods that we have used. The last part of the chapter discusses about the reliability and validity of the data.

4.1 Research methods

Research methods can be explained as the methods used for conducting the research. There are various methods to present and analyse the data which depend upon the purpose and objective of the research. So, it is very important to know the proper method of research to gain the set objectives and aim of the research. There are basically two types of research methods.

Qualitative research method refers to those types of research which consists of explaining a specific situation by the proper use of research tools like observation, interviews and surveys. They are generally analytical research. It helps to identify the problem and helps to discover the ideas and solution to the problem. The data collection methods may be semi-structured or unstructured depending upon the nature and purpose of the research. Individual interviews, participative or observations and group discussion are some of the common methods used in collecting data's. (R. Murray, 2011, 1-7)

Table 5: Pros and cons of Qualitative research method

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individualistic approach and helps to describe relationship in brief.• Using further investigation, it can validate the information provided by quantitative research.• It helps to minimize the gap between practice and research.• It provides in-depth, personalized and proper examination of specified problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lengthy and costlier method of data collection.• No objectivity and bias by the author which may lead to improper conclusion.• Depends mostly on accessibility and honest and valid information by the sample population.• Easier to sample.• May not have enough knowledge and skills about the methods.

(Source: R. Murray, 2011, 1-7)

As the name suggests, quantitative research methods quantify the data by converting them in number and statistical definition. This method helps to quantify the problem in numerical data which later can be changed into useful statistical purpose. This method converts every opinion, behavior, attitudes and other variables into numbers by selecting a proper sample size from a population. Such numerical values are then accessed, processed and analyzed to find the appropriate result. They are structured data collection and may involve surveys

like paper or mobile or online surveys, telephone or face to face interviews, systematic observation etc. (R. Murray, 2011, 1-7)

Table 6: Pros and cons of Quantitative research methods

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation plays a very important role • It helps to develop hypothesis which help in speculation of outcomes. • Helps to reduce or eliminate bias. • Forecast correlation between objects. • It is a systematic data collection methods and analysis. • For assessment and validity, it is appreciated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only can be used when results can be quantified. • Method is subjective so results varies with the method taken. • Lack of personal thought by the researcher. • It does not evaluation the various decision based on culture and social interactions.

(Source: R. Murray, 2011, 1-7)

4.2 Data Collection

Our data collection method consisted of survey interaction with tourists during our stay in Nepal. We chose our questions carefully making sure each question provided us useful data. Additionally, our interview candidates were also chosen with variety, and different interview styles. We integrated casual conversation in a bulk of our interviews, before asking questions. Themes and individual questions can be seen in appendix 1.

Secondly, we also approached interviewees, and got straight into the questions. The interview was a bulky twenty questions, but we never struggled for responses because of the length. Lastly, the focal point of our interview was to understand the needs the customers wanted while they visited Nepal which included activities, price, culinary experience and many more. We interviewed 10 tourists in the cities of Kathmandu and Pokhara. We interviewed every tourist for around 30 minutes.

4.3 Reliability and Validity

As always to be considered as a key component of a thesis is reliability and validity. Reliability refers to "The quality of being trustworthy or of performing consistently well" (Oxford Dictionaries | English, 2017). In research findings have no value without proper validity, and are therefore useless. As well as the findings need to add value to the subject at hand, and make the essay stronger as a whole."

Validity refers to "the quality of being logically or factually sound; soundness or cogency" (Oxford Dictionaries | English, 2017). Taken both components into consideration we conducted twenty interviews as we found out a reasonable number of interviewees to gather adequate data. Furthermore, after conducting the interviews we were able to conduct our final findings, and be able to properly finalize our data.

Referring to our own experience during our interviews, we found our data to be very reliable. We received an abundance of responses with interviewees explaining the pros and cons of backpacking in Nepal. A factor we put emphasis on was how can Nepal improve as a backpacking destination.

5 Findings

This chapter discusses about our finding which includes the interview results and the experience of our friend. Here we tried to explain Nepal as a backpacking destination on the basis of our friend's experience and the tourist who were interviewed.

5.1 Interview Results

We interviewed 10 tourists in the major cities of Nepal, Kathmandu and Pokhara. In our interview, there were 7 male respondents and 3 female respondents, all in between the age group 18-30. Most of our interviewees were from Europe (4 were from United Kingdom, 2 from Germany and 1 from France) and rest were from USA, Israel and Ukraine. Out of them 4 of them were unemployed, 3 were employed and 4 were students. One of our respondent is employed and student. All of our interviewees have visited Nepal for the first time.

All of our interviewees have previous experience about backpacking. Out of them, 5 said that they have an experience of travelling one country and 4 of them have been to India. Rest 5 has an experience of two or more countries. Some of the countries, they have been as a backpacker were Poland, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Australia, Europe and South America.

They choose Nepal for their backpacking was because of culture, mountains, nature. One of them said that it was his dream from his childhood to visit Nepal. One was for charity and volunteer purpose. Most of them even said that it was highly recommended online.

Most of them were in Nepal for 30 days or more. Out of 8 interviewees, 3 of them were there for more than 2 months. Two of the interviewees were there for 2 weeks and 23 days respectively.

As per their response, every one of them have been to Kathmandu and Pokhara. Other places were Chitwan (Sauraha and Chitwan National Park), Annapurna Circuit, Jomsom and Beni. Everyone loved the place they have visited because they were quiet, good food, beautiful natural sceneries, people and their culture and tradition. Some of them have also stated that Pokhara is their favourite because of its beauty, nature and less pollution.

6 out of 10 said that, they did not require help from any agency while travelling in Nepal because every information needed was provided by the hostel or hotel where they have stayed. Out of 4, one needed agency for insurance issues as she was sick and three of them needed agency for arranging their trekking, tour to Chitwan National Park and paragliding.

All of them experienced a very different culture than their home. As per their response, people were very friendly and nice, good hospitality. They live very simple life and less dependent on technology. Organic food, untouched nature, more spiritual, self-sufficient were other attributes. Apart from these, they were worried about standard hygienic food, pollution in the cities.

Everyone were satisfied with the information provided in the internet and they found it reliable as well. Most of them even said that it is easier as the hotel or hostel and the people will also provide good information after you are in Nepal. Some of them had a problem to find out the prices for accommodation as it was not listed in the reception. They appreciate face to face because it helped them a lot during their tour.

Some of the interviewees said that it is very difficult to find the information about the public transport. At the same time, they also agree that it very easy to get the information as they could get it from the hostel or hotel or from another backpacker. All of them used the public transport for their travel. Some of them had the difficulties with the timing as they were not standard.

Since hotels were expensive, most of them preferred to accommodate themselves in guest house, hostels and home stay. They found guest house homelier and hostels as they could meet other backpacker and share their experience. Some of them were not satisfied with the hostels for their poor services. Another problem was for the western style of toilet in accommodation and lack of toilet paper.

Most of them were satisfied with the culinary experiences in Nepal as they said food were cheaper and great with varieties of option. Some of them even cooked their own food in Nepalese style during their home stay. Restaurant foods were over priced with VAT and service charges.

Most of our interviewee, enjoyed the bar and pub culture in Nepal as there were good bars. Almost every bar was expensive and closes too early.

Some of the interviewees were there for specified purpose like hiking, trekking and has a pre-planned destinations and activities to do. So most of them stick to their plan rather than going for extra activities like bungee, paragliding and safari. One out of ten went for canoe ride, boating and swimming.

Out of ten, four of them said that they did not had any challenges as a backpacker. One of them had a problem with the food and price. He did not find the price of food budget friendly. Two of them even said that they find it very difficult to know the food are hygienic or not. One of them even had to survive the food poisoning during the starting of the trip. One of them even found out that there were different prices of food for foreigners and local. Since the prices vary and with the lots of sellers, they were not sure whether the prices were real or not.

When we asked for any suggestions for improving Nepal as a backpacking destination. Most of them had the issues with the pollution in Kathmandu, so they suggested for clean cities and awareness to people who throw waste in nature in the touristic areas. Some of them even suggested to improve the transportation. They wishes to have more amount of buses to the destination and standard timing. They also suggested to improve the hygiene of the food.

All of them said that they had a great experience in Nepal. Beautiful landscapes, amazing food and very friendly people were their comments. They said that the unique culture and the people make it more fun to visit. Some of them even said that it's good to visit non touristic area so that you can really see how things go there and to explore it.

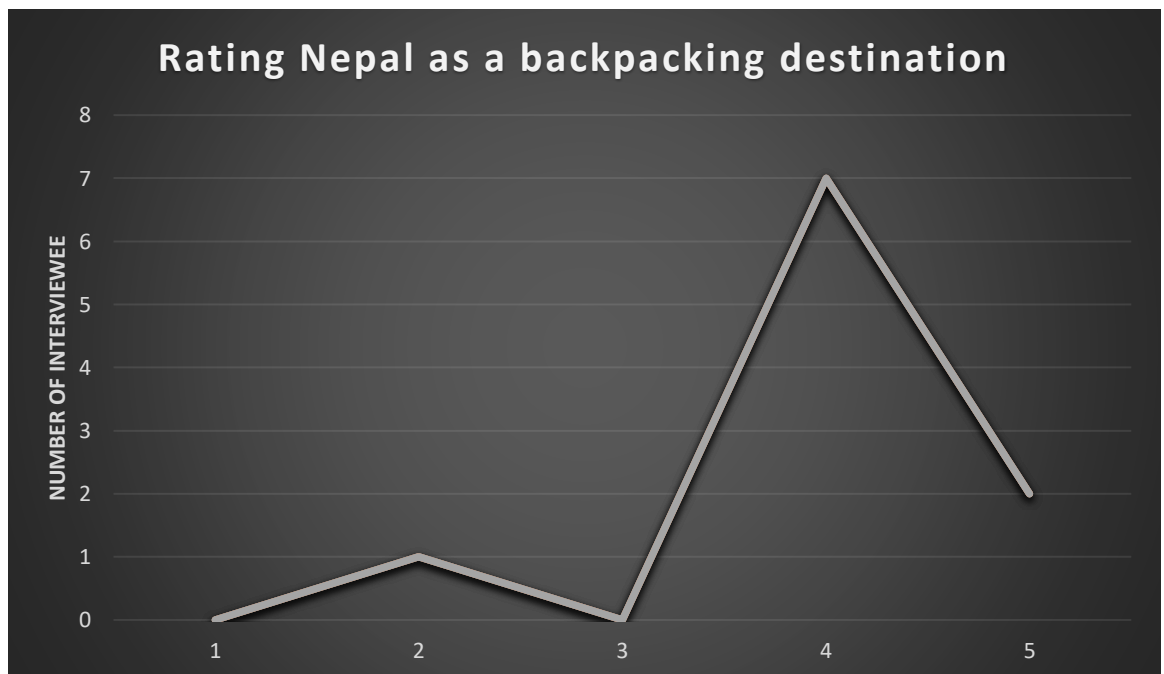


Figure 3. Rating Nepal as a backpacking destination

When we ask them to rate Nepal as a backpacking destination, two of them rated 5, seven rated 4 and one rated 2.

All of them were happy of their visit and what Nepal has to provide. So, some of them even promised to come back and all of them said that they will suggest about Nepal to their friends. Some of them found it good for trekking, some for meditation, its beautiful landscapes, meeting the locals, easy to travel, budget friendly and for the amount of activities for the tourist that it can offer.

5.2 Experiences from own group trip

Our experience in Nepal was a thrill itself and a trip to remember for a life time. Our trip started off with exquisite customer service on the Turkish Airlines. We flew a connection flight to Istanbul, Turkey; which was a tremendously large airport. We were amazed of the size of the airport, but still we could find it to our gate with ease. We then boarded to Nepal, and enjoyed a relaxing flight to Kathmandu with an abundance of sleep. Kathmandu was a profoundly large and beautiful city, and the culture of the country was recognized instantly. A negative impact of the journey was noticed immediately, Kathmandu was smothered in dust and pollution. This caused all of us to develop a runny nose and constant cough of mucus for most of the journey. We visited most of the tourist highlights of Nepal, including the monkey temple; which was incredible. Hundreds of passive monkeys walked around the temple with us as we fed them peanuts and other edibles.

The trip was then continued with a nervous, but yet adventurous trip to the mountains. The roads felt like a rollercoaster ride with a gut wrenching feeling that maybe the car will fall off the road and we will plummet thousands of meters to our death. Nevertheless, once we reached our destination to start to trek it all played out as planned. We started our trek with a 4am hike up this magnificent mountain, and once we conquered this obstacle it was outstanding. We watched the sun set over the Himalayan mountains with the sun beaming on the mountains in a breath-taking manner. We stared in awe at the beauty we were foreseeing in front of us and simply enjoyed each second with each other.

Next pit stop of our journey was Pune Hill which was a lengthy hike, we spent around a week on this journey. This trip involved plenty of challenges, for starters extensive hiking each day ranging from six to even 15 hours. As well as climbing 3600 steps after already having hiked 5 hours, so this was no easy task. On our return from Pune hill, several faced food poisonings as well as altitude sickness, and we resorted to renting a nearby vehicle for the rest of the journey. After several days of trekking and sleeping in freezing temperatures we finally reached the peak of Pune Hill and marveled at the view surrounding us. We gazed at eight Himalayan mountains, as well as one of the largest Himalayans, Annapurna.

Next, we arrived in Pokhara; which is one of the biggest cities in Nepal, and was much cleaner than any other city we had visited before. There we did various activities which include para-gliding, swimming in the Pokhara lake, boat ride, and celebrating new years in a spectacular festival with locals. All in all, it was one of our favorite parts of our trip, and we highly recommend visiting this city. Our trip was finalized with a jeep safari visit to Chitwan, and it was a great bang to trip. We stood on the jeep as we attempted to allocate different creatures in the jungle. We were able to spot a One Horned Rhino, but didn't get a proper view of the animal. Our main goal was spotting the tiger, but we were unfortunate in our conquest; which was a disappointment, but we shook it off. All in all, this trip was a memorable one that we all will remember for the ages.

Nepal as a tourism destination is constantly growing, but due to the unfortunate occurrence of the earthquake that took place in 2015 it plummeted. Nevertheless, Nepal is on the rise again as a top trekking destination for the true trekkers, and they keep coming. But who can blame them with Nepal offering beautiful mountain views, and a remarkable nature experience they will keep coming. Tourists aren't only coming for the nature because Nepal has many other things to offer. For example, the weather in Nepal is phenomenal even during the winter, and who doesn't love 20-degree weather in the middle of the December. Culture is also rich in Nepal with their outstanding hospitality, unique cuisine, religion, and people's behavior. Hospitality in Nepal was incredible you feel like a god when you enter someone's home everything can be managed. Cuisine, included plenty of rice of course, and their main dish Dahl Bhat; which we ate typically twice a day. Spices were rich in Nepal, and were delicious when blended with several for a sauce for example. Street food we ate regularly were momo's, which you can get in vegetable, buffalo, or chicken all are scrumptious. You can't forget the unique religion people come for when they come to Nepal. The gods in their religion play a big role in their everyday life, and we were able to marvel at several beautiful architectures created for them, and of them.

Following are some of the pictures that we took during our tour to Nepal.



Image 1. Boudhanath stupa

This picture was taken by us while we were returning from the Sundarjal, Shivapuri National park. This is the view of Boudhanath stupa at Night taken from a roof top restaurant. Boudhanath is listed in UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

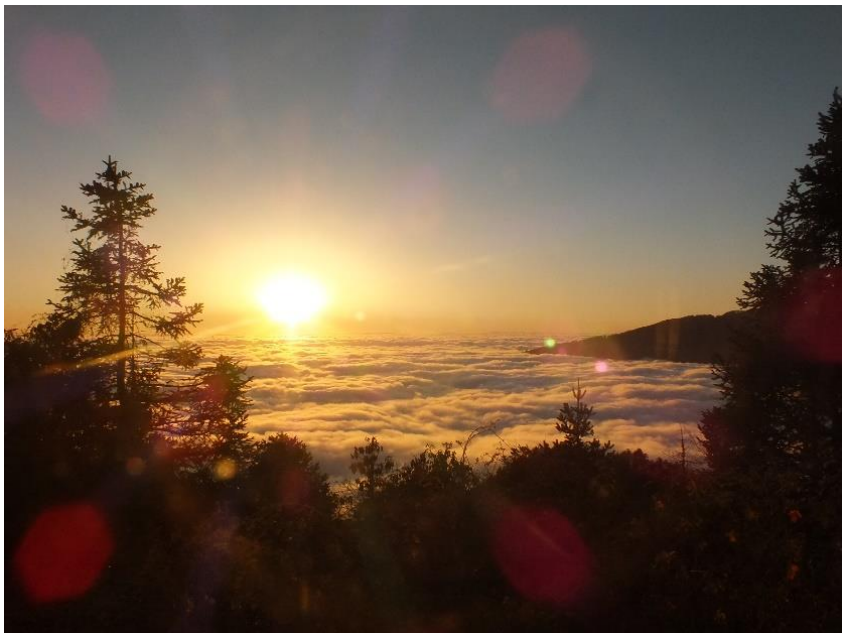


Image 2. View on the route to Kalinchowk

This picture was taken when we were on the way to our first destination out of Kathmandu valley. Kalinchowk is a religious place for Hindu situated at a height of 3842m from sea level in Dolakha District of Nepal.



Image 3. View of Annapurna during our trek to Poon Hill

This picture was taken when we were on our 4 days trek to Poon Hill. When we were walking up hill we spotted this picture and felt like capturing. Eventhough we were tired of walking the beauty of trekking and nature was all around us.



Image 4. Poon Hill Summit

This is the summit of Poon Hill. There were a lot of people on the summit that day. Also there was a group of students who were there for trekking. It is at the height of 3210 m from the sea level. A lot of tourist both domestic and international trek to this hill because you can see a range of himalayan from the summit.



Image 5. Treacking Break and lunch

This picture was taken before we reach Ghorepani. We took rest in this place and ate our lunch before moving futher to our trek to Poon hill.



Image 6. Lumbini

Lumbini is a Buddhist pilgrimage site in Rupandehi District of Nepal and one of the UNESCO World Heritage Site 1997. It is very popular this place has various monastries and monument. Most of all, it is the birthplace of Buddha.



Image 7: Elephant bathing in Chitwan

This picture was taken before we headed for Jungle safari. We got some time so we went to watch elephant bathing. We had fun to see people bathing the elephant.

6 Conclusion and Discussion

In conclusion, through our findings we have discovered the endless possibilities, Nepal as a backpacking and nature-based tourism destination have to offer. Recapping on our previous discussions, Nepal offers from life-thrilling activities like paragliding, bungee jumping, safari rides to unforgettable views of their beautiful landscapes. As well as a dive into the Nepalese culture, food, temples and many more. Additionally, we considered amenities and accessibility which is a factor always to consider. Amenities like public transportation were difficult at times to find throughout Nepal, but through the hotels they were able to access reliable information, and gain all of the knowledge they needed. Also, Nepal is very accessible through many airlines, but direct flight may be hard to find.

Realizing that every country has their pros and cons, we focused on gaining feedback through interviewing backpackers. During our interview, we received mainly positive feedback, with only two negative responses. The negative responses were mainly due to the challenge of finding time tables and allocating buses in Nepal. Overall our survey process was very positive, through our ten interviewees we had chosen.

Analyzing our research question, backpackers see Nepal, as an outstanding backpacking destination because of all it has to offer. Backpacker's expectations are very high when coming to Nepal regarding the nature based tourism, and they seem to be very satisfied after leaving the country, and craving more.

Our own learning process involved research, interviewing as well as our own experience in the country. Involving our professional development, we see a drastic difference in the way we approach a variety of things. Assessing our own work, we found it simple due to the fact we are used to working together, and never had a problem being flexible to one and other's schedule.

Lastly, including our own experience during our trip was a must. From hiking in the Himalayans to wandering around the city we had an amazing trip with plenty of thrill involved. Overall, with our experience, we would heavily recommend Nepal as an unforgettable destination to visit and truly a gem.

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Interview Questions

Backpacker Tourism in Nepal

We are International Tourism students from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Porvoo Campus, Finland. We are writing thesis in Nepalese tourism- Backing tourism. We would greatly appreciate you taking part in our questionnaire. Thank you very much for your participation.

1) Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

2) Age:

☐ >18 ☐ 18 – 30 ☐ 31 – 44 ☐ 45 – 60 ☐ 61 +

3) Country of residence:

4) Occupation:

☐ Unemployed

☐ Employed

☐ Student

☐ Self employed

☐ Others

5) Have you visited Nepal before?

☐ Yes, if yes how many times

☐ No

☐ First time

6) Have you backpack anywhere else?

7) Why did you choose Nepal? Who recommended you?

8) How long are you going to stay in Nepal?

9) What places have you visited? What is your favorite place?

10) Why that place is your favorite place in Nepal?

11) As a FIT have you ever require any agency need while you were travelling in Nepal and why?

12) What kind of difference in culture you could notice that from your country?

13) How easy is it to find the information about Nepal as a backpacker? What was the source of your information? Is the information you found on the internet reliable?

14) Was the public transportation convenient? How did you find the information about the bus timing and buses that takes you to your preferred destination?

15) What kind of accommodation did you prefer? Was the accommodation up to your expectation?

16) Were you satisfied with culinary experience in Nepal? Would you like to elaborate?

17) What would you say about the bar and pub culture in Nepal?

18) Did you do any extra activities like bungee, paragliding, safari, etc?

19) What were your challenges as a FIT in Nepal till now and how can we overcome these challenges?

20) How can Nepal improve as a backpacking destination?

21) Overall experience

22) Rate Nepal as a backpacking destination

1 2 3 4 5

23) Would you recommend Nepal for your friend? If yes, why would you recommend?