



## **Master Thesis**

**Tourism, Master of Arts**

**Aalborg University, Copenhagen**

**“Tourist Attitude and Perception Towards Proximate Tourism. A study from the Baraha region, Nepal.”**

**Author: Khagendra Karki**

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**Supervisor : Carina Ren**

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This master's dissertation aims to explore the impact of TPB factors "attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavior control" along with destination image and prior experience on travel intention to the Baraha region of Nepal as a proximate tourist.

**Theory and methodology adopted:** A theory of planned behavior (TPB) theory was adopted as a theoretical framework. A mixed-method approach was adopted, and the quantitative method incorporates online survey questionnaires using a 5-Likert scale to measure TPB components, tourists' prior experiences, and the perceived destination image of the Baraha region. A total of 427 responses were collected. Meanwhile, the qualitative component implied email interviews using structured interview questionnaires, which were analyzed via thematic analysis. Meanwhile, structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted to analyze quantitative data.

**Dissertation Findings:** Firstly, quantitative results found a significant positive association between TPB factors and tourist travel intention to visit the Baraha region, with PBC (0.229), destination image (0.221), prior visit experience as a proximate tourist (0.218), tourist attitude towards Baraha region (0.206), and subjective norms (0.157) respectively in a pecking order from high-to-low impactful. Qualitative findings were found to align with the outcomes of quantitative results, highlighting the importance of the Baraha region's favorable image and prior experiences of proximate tourism in shaping the inclination to visit this region. In referring to tourists' perceived behavioral control, tourists were found to express high confidence in managing and navigating their travel logistics, increasing their intention to travel to the Baraha region.

**Limitations and implications:** The majority of the participants involved in the survey project were young adults, with 71% being "20 to 39 years old participants." This has made this research fail to target a diverse range of participants, leading to biased results. This might be the reason behind adopting the convenience sampling method. Lastly, longitudinally designed research by incorporating more tourist destinations would provide more holistic meaning about tourists' impressions and sentiments toward Nepal rather than pinpointing a single destination such as the Baraha region.

**Keywords:** "Proximate tourism," "intention to visit," and "attitudes and behaviors."

### **Dedication**

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Carina Ren, for unwavering guidance and support , to my wife, Ashma Kafle, for interminable encouragement, and to my friends for great motivation during this project.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

*This chapter provides a brief introduction to proximity tourism and the significance of researching this particular field. It also provides a short overview of the Baraha region of Nepal and ends with research questions and answers.*

## 1.1 Introduction & Background

Proximity tourism implies a type of tourism where tourists choose short distances and local destinations over distance travel as a means of environmental conservatism (Salmela et al., 2021). Scholars have identified a growing interest in proximity tourism as an alternative to sustainable travel, with most of the literature exploring ecotourism and the influence of tourists' attitudes on travel destinations (Salmela et al., 2021). Most of the literature increases awareness of the importance of local tourism and motivates people to understand the connection between local and environmental conservations. However, there is a significant gap in the literature related to cultural and socioeconomic factors and their influences on the tourist attitude towards proximity tourism. Existing literature extensively explores the role of proximity tourism in the sustainability of the industry and environmental conservation (Rantala et al., 2020). Given that tourism contributes about 8% of greenhouse gas emissions (World Economic Forum, 2018), the emergence of proximate tourism, which typically understood as a form of travel where travelers visit destinations which is within ones residence (Jeuring & Diaz-Soria, 2017) or in the usual settings (Diaz Soria & Llurdes, 2013).

In proximate tourism, tourists are perceived to create a distance from the long-haul destination, thus allowing them to enjoy the exceptional tourism experience within their proximate location from their residence (Jeuring & Diaz-Soria, 2017). Though the destination's proximity has not been defined in a clear way, spatial research exploring the phenomenon related to environmental benefits is extensively researched (Bertacchini et al., 2019; Rantala et al., 2019). However, the study fails to account for intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors that influence people's desire to visit as proximate tourists are scantily lacking. Moreover, proximate tourists are influenced by the perception of cultural preservation when exploring the surrounding environments and sense greater familiarity with the destination (Bertacchini et al., 2019). According to Salmela et al. (2021), the intersection between culture and socioeconomic influence on tourist destinations presents an opportunity to explore the influence of tourists' attitudes towards proximity tourism. In the context of

long-haul travel, negative environmental externalities such as carbon emissions and unfamiliar cultural encounters are associated, and promoting tourism is viewed as a better form of tourism as it acts as a remedy for adverse climate change and boosts the local economy (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). However, tourists' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards proximate tourism are crucial to grasp, as comprehending these factors is imperative for local communities and destination management organizations to execute their strategies to encourage proximate tourism.

Tourism has become a crucial sector that helps to maintain economic growth and offer better cultural exchange worldwide. The dynamics of tourism and traveling themes keep changing as these are viewed as a continuous process. In addition to that, an increasing number of travel destinations are competing for tourists; therefore, understanding different attitudinal and behavioral factors is highly imperative. In that context, this dissertation limits sticking to a single tourist destination, the "Baraha region of Nepal," which is famous for its natural raw beauty and cultural and heritage sites, to explore and analyze what factors are pivotal that drive tourists' decisions to visit this destination.

In the context of the Baraha region, despite being found to be a tourist hotspot, the reason behind their intention to visit this destination is completely lacking. To date, to the best of the research search history, no single research has been highlighted in this part. Therefore, it feels highly relevant to study the Baraha region as it produces insights about what factors positively influence tourists' intention to visit this place. In recent times, the Baraha region has gained more recognition as a tourist destination not only famous for pilgrimage tourists but also for nature seekers, advertisers, and cultural-heritage tourists (Dhakal, 2024). This region's tranquil environment with a rich civilization history traced back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and its spiritual ambiance make this place a unique mix of multifaceted tourism experiences (Dhakal, 2024). In addition to that, different sorts of tourism experiences, such as bird watching, especially migratory birds, endangered species, and natural beauties that are rarely touched by human artificial development, appeal to visitors seeking tranquillity and prefer deeper affinity with the natural world (Dhakal, 2024).

## **1.2 Research problem**

The term “proximate tourism” relates to a type of travel that emphasizes local places, especially those that are short-distanced from one’s residence, and, more importantly, offers low-carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) means of travel (Salmela et al., 2021). Furthermore, proximate tourism infers the conceptualization of “seeing our everyday environment” but in a novel way (Salmela et al., 2021). Especially in the aftermath of the global COVID-19 pandemic, tourists' behavioral and psychological changes can be seen, in which the practices of proximate tourism have been widely recognized (Baños-Pino et al., 2023). Proximate tourism is viewed as a sustainable form of tourism, especially due to its low involvement of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during commuting and boost of the local economy (Salmela et al., 2021); however, research focusing on proximate tourism in academia is meagrely rare. It has been found that tourism studies have frequently omitted the “mundanity of the exotic” and “exotic within the everyday surroundings” (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017, p.1). While it is evident that exoticism is not necessarily linked to geographical distance, it is possible to perceive oneself as a tourist in a place that is proximate and completely unfamiliar in a distanced destination (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). This means that it is imperative to grasp how tourists perceive meanings of such destinations that are proximate to their residence and how different attributions impact their intention to travel to such destinations. More and more people have recently visited the places “closest to their residence” as tourist spots (Hoogendoorn, 2021). The way this occurs stimulates several questions about what makes someone a tourist and what makes them different from locals when both are doing similar activities and consumption behavior (Hoogendoorn, 2021). What is particularly intriguing about these changes is when “resident tourists” lead to residents breaking their fear of local shame and discomfort to visit such places that are proximate and have been avoided before (Hoogendoorn, 2021). Though traveling to a proximate destination is seen growing in recent times, what motivates tourists to visit such destinations and how different attitudinal and behavioral factors impact travelers to visit proximate destinations is extremely rare. Meanwhile, evaluating these changes in the Nepalese context, to date, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no research has been studied in this aspect. Therefore, this dissertation will conduct the “Baraha region of Nepal” as a study region to evaluate how tourists’ within the proximate region of this destination accumulate their travel intentions based on their attitudinal and other behavioral components.

### **1.3 Research question**



- 1) How important do tourists' attitudes and behavioral attribution play that lead to positive intention to visit the Baraha region?
- 2) How do a perceived image of the Baraha region and past visits of proximate tourism affect their intention to visit this destination?

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

- To evaluate and examine tourists' attitudes and behavioral attributes that create a positive intention to visit and factors that hinder their visit to a nearby destination.
- To understand how tourists' prior experience of proximate tourism and perceived image of the destination impact their intention to travel.

#### **1.5 Motivation of the study**

One of the major motivating factors for researching this paper emerges from the need to comprehend the factors that lead tourists to travel to the Baraha region of Nepal, which is especially due to its natural beauty, heritage, and cultural sites. Despite this destination being popular what factors actually bring local Baraha region people to visit Baraha region as proximate tourist. Since proximate tourism has become more recognized in recent times; therefore, examining tourists' attitudes, behavioral factors, destination image of the Baraha region, and past experiences impact their intention to travel to the Baraha region.

Comprehension of these factors is highly imperative for developing effective marketing and promotional strategies and offering novel forms of tourism experience. Furthermore, the outcomes of this dissertation can help formulate necessary policies and encouragement to counter-balance tourism growth and also maintain a positive image of the destination to proximate tourists. On top of that, this dissertation has attempted to explore one of the under-explored research topics which will attempt to address research gap in the prior literature; therefore, the outcomes from this paper can bring many valuable insights that can help to generalize to other similar tourist destinations.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

*This chapter will provide an in-depth understanding of proximate tourism and travel motivation. After which, the theory of planned will be presented as a theoretical framework. In addition to that, “tourist’s prior experience” and “destination image”, along with TPB’s predictors will be evaluated on travel intentions. This chapter will end by postulating a hypothesis based on the aforementioned predictors.*

### 2.1 Proximity tourism

Tourism is conventionally termed as an activity enabling travelers to enjoy destinations outside their regular environment (Diaz-Soria, 2018). However, in recent times, the notion of proximate<sup>1</sup> tourism has become more widespread (Diaz-Soria, 2018). Diaz-Soria (2018) found comprehending proximate tourism as dilemma by quoting “how rational it is to travel to a place in touristic feelings when a place is close to their homes and they feel accustomed”. Several researchers, such as (Bertacchini et al., 2019; Haartsen, 2018) theorized proximate tourism with linking to the usual environment, about its sense and physical distance. Meanwhile, the official explanation of proximate tourism by the WTO (2014) refers to geographical limits within which tourists act in their normal life routines. However, Govers et al. (2008) acclaimed that understanding proximate tourism only via geographical perimeter might not be adequate. Additionally, Smith (1999) acclaimed that in postmodernism, where societies are globalized, with high levels of consumerism and rapid innovation, it might be challenging to characterize between leisure and work and with normal daily routines and touristic activities. Due to modernization, it has become complex to understand what comes within the part of the normal environment. Nevertheless, it strengthens a reinterpretation of the spatial and temporal realm (Smith, 1999).

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<sup>1</sup>. Proximate tourism refers to traveling to nearby tourist destinations or areas within a short distance that are closer to one’s residence, usually as short trips or day trips. In proximate tourism, tourists typically focus on low-CO2 means of transportation and see everyday surroundings in a novel way (Salmela et al., 2021). Meanwhile, local tourism might involve exploring one’s city or other attractions, which might require any form of transportation and may require a longer stay.

Since travel has become an integral part of tourism, it is not astonishing that the physical distance between where individuals live and where they select as their travel destination has recently gotten a lot of attention (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). The difference between proximate tourism and other long-haul tourist destination are generally evaluated in terms environmental externalities, time saving from transportation, and a sense of familiarity (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). The shortest (Euclidean) distance and other objective measures of physical parameters are frequently implied to consider spatial variations, such as the mode of transportation. (Tao et al., 2021) or how accessible a travel destination is (Zaili et al., 2023). Meanwhile, these techniques usually do not take into consideration the relational and individualized aspects of physical distance. (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Nonetheless, the relativity of distance and closeness plays an integral role in selecting travel destinations, tourist attitudes and perceptions, and their experiences, and determining how proximal distance can be transmuted into real travel experiences. (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Larsen (2015) states that three strata of distance are paramount for linking the objective-subjective facets between “distance” and “proximity.” The first stratum is scrutinized for geographical separation, and the second addresses the linking properties of items across that geographic distance (Larsen, 2015). The second strata also conceptualize a dimension where spatial separation turns substantial (Larsen, 2015). Thirdly, it conceptualizes the interactions across physical parameters, giving connotations for links between locations and enabling tourists to experience distance and proximate in numerous ways (Larsen, 2015). Similarly, Larsen and Guiver (2013) assert that distance is a resource that can be measured by time and expense while crossing physical barriers, and it brings a sense of impression of changing landscapes, experiences, and climate. Moreover, travel might bring a sense of new and transitional experiences, and its qualitative interpretations bring actual experiences of travel destinations. Thus, these aspects are often seen as subjective, with one destination being perceived as far away as compared to another (Larsen & Guiver, 2013). Additionally, zonal feelings also play a pivotal role as individuals being “here or not,” stressing the significance of spatial difference, for instance, “home or away feelings” (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). These factors affect how individuals engage in tourist attitudes and behaviors and interact with unfamiliar others who are geographically and socio-culturally close or remote (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Kastenholz (2010) claims that tourist develop an optimal level of cultural familiarity with the travel destination when it comes to having a positive image of a travel destination that is proximate to their residency. Meanwhile, A study by Rjinks and Strijker (2013) studied how people thought about the proximate destinations within the Netherlands. Individuals who

live close to the Veenkolnniein area of the Netherlands were less enthusiastic about visiting than those who live far away from that region (Rjinks and Strijker, 2013). Similarly, a study by Singh and Krakover (2013) found that individuals traveling in their home country in Israel were found to choose between different versions of themselves while doing tourist activities; these people refused to identify themselves as tourists while visiting proximal destinations. Culturally rooted factors could probably impact how people think their closer environment is enticing for tourists and how their perceptions and attitudes about the destination and one's identity interact with each other (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017).

## **2.2 Travel motivation between distance and closeness**

Tourists' reasons for traveling long distances and reviving their mundane lives are connected to how they get motivated, cultural closeness, and otherness (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). An individual might have diverse reasons behind their vacation; however, their way of satisfying their needs and destinations are comparatively common (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Edensor (2001) has found that experiencing novel things and meeting new people are considered a big motivation to travel, though tourism is centralized within their social norms and behaviors. Chiu et al. (2012) assert that people prefer to go on vacation to such places where habits and familiarity are harmonious to them. Meanwhile, Lew et al. (2008) found that some individuals prefer to travel to such places where they have greater familiarity with the destination; meanwhile, some prefers to go such destination that excites them and enable more room for exploring cross-culture and other aspects. When some destinations and tourist activities are under their comfort area of what they actually don't know while others are not, how people perceive a destination impacts how well they anticipate it works in their tourist activities and everyday life (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Some might prefer a long distance to revive mundane life, while some prefer to stay at home or travel to the closest area to their home (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Two factors, "push and pull," are seen as crucial to motivating people's decisions to travel around. These factors comprise a perception of "socio-cultural" and "physical-functional" between a home-based location or simply "here and there" (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). The push factor relates to the individual's current residence, which is perceived as repulsive; on the other hand, the pull factor relates to an individual's perceived sensation of how attractive they find other travel destinations (Jeuring

& Haartsen, 2017). Furthermore, “keep and repel” factors are reasons for inactivity that have to do with how attractive “here” is perceived to be and how unattractive “there” is sensed. Thus, there are many “pull & push” and “keep & repel” factors that motivate individuals to compare their current living space to a tourist destination, as well as how they assess different travel destinations with each other (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). In a similar fashion, such motivations bring individuals to consider proximate places that could be exciting to go on for a vacation, which could be individually or in a group (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Several research within the tourism context have come up with a similar relationship between “distance and closeness.” For instance, Szytniewski et al. (2017) found that people who go on a trip to shop across borders interact with known and new things that are close by. According to Wildish et al. (2016), proximal tourism (i.e., a destination closer to a current residence) can bring novel experiences to individuals despite the location being closer to their residence as it brings a sensation of familiarity and new experiences at the same time. Jeuring & Haartsen (2017) acclaimed that closeness and distance are seen as polarising and social; they can bring individuals together, separate them, comfort and repel, motivate and restrain, and alter their experience and behavior in several ways. The idiosyncrasies of travel are that individuals have distinct views about what is close and distinct (Jeuring & Haartsen, 2017). Similarly, Salazar (2012) found that individuals come up with different experiences and perceptions that might be unique to others; they are mainly shaped by social interactions and are supported by tourist fantasies. Shahrin et al. (2014) found that traveling distance over close depends on the motivation for individuals to travel and the mode of transport they use, as it has both benefits and drawbacks depending on which route travelers choose. McKercher (2008) asserts that the likelihood of traveling between two locations shrinks when the physical distance between them starts to increase. Additionally, tourists are disinclined to devote more time, effort, and finance to visit long distances if they can find comparable advantages while visiting nearby destinations from their residences. Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) found that distance is not considered an obvious factor when selecting a travel destination; in reality, destination selection is a complex phenomenon encompassing diverse tangible and intangible factors. Mckercher & Lew (2003) uncovered that individuals who are unwilling to travel to culturally distanced locations will limit their destination selection to culturally close destinations, which are typically proximate to tourists’ residences. Meanwhile, individuals who prefer to experience culturally distant destinations typically prefer longer routes (Mckercher & Lew, 2003). Individuals who prefer to visit culturally similar locations are apt to seek pleasure-seeking, relaxation, and relief from their mundane life; meanwhile, those individuals who

prefer to visit culturally distant locations seek self-improvement and hunt to learn differently (Xue & Zhang, 2020).

### **2.3 Proximity tourism in shaping local experience**

In recent times, an alternative form of tourism has flourished in repose to the shifts in social dynamics because of the global pandemic Covid-19, military conflicts, environmental and economic issues (Paes-Cesário, 2023). Veritably, Sanchez et al. (2022) affirmed that these issues shifts post-Covid-19 tourist's attitude to shift towards visiting local regions and supporting local businesses. With such circumstances, tourists shifting their higher value to their proximal destination for vacation is an apparent reason, and with effective strategies, local communities can gain economic perks. (Paes-Cesário, 2023). However, one of the major issues with proximal tourism as the conceptualisation of proximity as closer from one's residence is proximate tourist destination (Paes-Cesário, 2023). It is widely seen that many people link proximity and tourism as individuals who are more likely to visit a destination that is closer to their current residence, and they can have relaxation without any trouble of booking accommodation. Sanchez et al. (2022) define proximity tourism as outings that take place within the same day and are closer to their residence, with the aim of familiarising oneself with nearby sites without the need to stay the night. Meanwhile, Rosu (2020, p. 2) used "staycation" to define proximate tourism, simply a blend of "stay and vacation," meaning spending a vacation at their residence or closer to the periphery.

Lately, there has been a growing consensus on the importance of customer experience in every industrial sector, including tourism. This reflects a marketing approach where providing a unique and high level of experience is equally important as buying any products or services (Chang, 2018). In the tourism industry, this has become a new normal for a while (Paes-Cesário, 2023; Sundbo & Dixit, 2020). According to Scott et al. (2017) one of the major aspects of tourism is the experience that its customers can acquire. Tourists satisfaction can alter when it comes to their destination selection and depends on what sorts of experiences that destination is valued for (Paes-Cesário, 2023). It is seen that locals hold greater value, especially via social networks, as posting, sharing, and storytelling of information for prospective visitors; this is because almost every traveler is well-informed and attached to social media sites where everything they do is reviewed and analyzed (Paes-

Cesário, 2023). Jeuring & Haartsen (2017) found that locals can benefit significantly from showcasing their destination via social media as it helps promote and reinforce the dissemination of location to both proximate and distant tourists. Paes-Cesário (2023) says that social sites help to unravel different underexplored sites as they help produce vast amounts of destination-centric content and gather opinions and experiences from many prior visitors, which can be highly impactful for tourists and locales to set up their future trips. Additionally, the recent aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes in tourists' routines and habits as they prefer traveling in their vehicles, closer to their residences or cities, and thoughtful destination selection. (Paes-Cesário, 2023). Simultaneously, when social practices undergo some changes, they can be valuable and connected in some way, like the habits of gaining local experiences; this trend of professional tourism has become prominent in many ways (Paes-Cesário, 2023).

Salmela et al. (2021, p. 55) assert that recent literature on proximity tourism has begun to recognize its potential, especially with its development of touristic-related experiences and marketing for local and other cities tourists. Meanwhile, a plethora of tourism literature has concentrated on developing new experiences and marketing approaches for international tourists. Researchers such as Lourdes & Diaz Soria (2013) have discussed the potential benefits to locals by attracting more tourists by making everyday places “i.e., proximate destination from ones' residence” more valuable and aesthetic for recreational purposes. Jeuring (2016) highlighted the importance of proximity to strengthen its location in local destination marketing and raise awareness of the disregarded aspects of the local tourism economy. Furthermore, Jeuring (2018) found that the proximity term reflects the diversity of the locals' roles in relation to the location as a destination. Such heterogeneity signifies that locals can experience their region or country both as natives and as tourists, making the earlier noted dichotomies between local residents and visitors meaningless and implausible.

## **2.4 Theoretical framework**

Ajzen and Driver (1992) using planned behavior theory (TPB) provided an efficacious approach to predicting travel destinations by taking into factors such as “attitude,” “subjective norms,” and perceived behavioral control.” Similarly, researchers such as

(Japutra et al., 2019; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Seow et al., 2017) had been studied by using TPB to systematically forecast and understand tourist destination selection, which uses visitors' willingness to return as a proximal indicator of the actual behavior. In recent times, researchers from several fields have been investigating the influence of the global COVID-19 pandemic on people's cognitive health and predicting their psychological behavior due to extreme distress caused by the pandemic. (Akhter Shareef et al., 2023). According to Sowislo and Orth (2013) affirmed that long-term physiological change and disruptive influence of cognitive threat bring psychological transformation. While observing various pandemics and epidemics on people's health, various researchers, such as (Bastardo & Van Vugt, 2019; Bratić et al., 2021) have concentrated on understanding human behavior for tourism and travel using different evolutionary psychology and theory. According to Bastardo and Van Vugt (2019), social psychologists are more keen on understanding and predicting human behavior, especially in relation to vacations, leisure, and recreational activities, since it is assumed that humans instinctively react to any situational changes. For instance, Bratić et al. (2021, p. 7) has found some behavioral changes due to the recent pandemic in tourists' traveling habits and patterns: They prefer proximate destinations for travel, prefer to travel by their vehicles and stay in isolated accommodations. Additionally, tourists prefer to travel within the country as they find it distressing to visit internationally (Bratić et al., 2021).

#### **2.4.1 Theory of planned behavior**

To successfully plan and organize tourism activities, destination management organizations and tourism-related stakeholders must understand how tourists' attitudes and behaviors are formed towards nearby destinations. The TPB model has been extensively implied to understand how tourists behave in different settings, such as travel mode (Sutisna & Handra, 2022), destination selection (Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016), sustainable tourism practices (Sujood et al., 2021) and revisit intention (Soliman, 2021). The TPB model is widely applied to explore tourists' attitudes and behavior formation by using three main factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). These three factors influence individuals' intentions, eventually becoming actual behavior (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Firstly, the perception of positive or negative evaluation towards some things is typically termed as attitudes. Secondly, subjective norms refer to



societal pressures or appreciation toward indulging in any specific behavior. (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Thirdly, PBC reflects individuals' controllability and self-belief in their specific behavior to execute it. (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Though these three factors collectively impact certain intentions, PBC could directly impact behavior as controllability or belief is considered behavior. TPB theory offers a needed framework for comprehending tourists' perception and attitude toward proximal destinations, their perceived behavioral control towards selecting destinations, and societal norms or practices towards visiting proximal locations (Chen et al., 2023). Additionally, tourists' prior experiences while visiting might impact their attitudes and intention to revisit (Chen et al., 2023). Integrating prior experiences of proximal location into the TPB model might bring a better understanding of tourists' perceptions and intentions for further visits (Chen et al., 2023).

### *Attitude*

Paes-Cesário (2023) asserts that the judgment of convenience, cost-effectiveness, the aesthetic appearance of a destination, and other alterations in sociocultural settings impacts attitudes toward proximate tourism. Positive attitudes could emerge due to multifaceted nearby attractions and adequately developed infrastructure; meanwhile, negative attitudes emerge from the perceptions of constraints, alternatives, and an urge to travel to distant destinations. Soliman (2021) found that attitudinal factors are divided into cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The first is seen as an analysis and evaluation made during an individual's attitude development. In contrast, the second emotional factor is viewed as a psychological response representing tourists' preference for the destination. (Chen et al., 2023). Thirdly, the behavioral component is a verbal signal of willingness to travel to that destination. In the context of tourists' attitudes, proximal destinations provide enthusiasm and intrigue because they offer hidden treasures right near tourists' residences. (Chen et al., 2023). Additionally, it is viewed as a greener alternative to long-haul trips, which are meant to lower negative environmental externalities, which are significant in the age of sustainability and CO2 minimization (Chen et al., 2023). Thus, the following hypothesis has been postulated.

Ha1: A positive attitude significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.

### *Subjective norms*

Societal pressure emerges from sociocultural standards, which play a crucial role in shaping tourists' intentions of how well local tourism is appreciated and promoted. Soliman (2021) asserts subjective norms as social pressures that individuals encounter to indulge or not to indulge in behavior, which also encompasses an inclination to adjust to such pressure. Subjective norms, according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) are determined by individuals' impressions of how referential people perceive their behavior and whether individuals are driven to conform to such referential ideas and pressures. Positive societal norms could emerge from social members' support and motivations, whereas negative norms emerge especially when social members find proximal locations unattractive and favor long-distanced destinations (Chen et al., 2023). Since the perception of proximal destinations is colored by social settings, which are mainly influenced by personal views, sociocultural expectations, and family-friends pressure (Chen et al., 2023). McKercher (2008) found that tourists feel more connected to their surroundings and foster a sense of pride and familiarity. Similarly, it is believed that visiting nearby destinations enables good stewards of the places they travel by guiding them to make well-informed decisions that are not just beneficial for the environment but also support local communities and the local economy (McKercher, 2008). Thus, the following hypothesis has been postulated.

Ha2: Positive societal pressures significantly impact travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.

### *Perceived behavioral control*

PBC, the third predictor, refers to individuals' judgment of their ability and controllability to do a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1985). PBC reflects a perception of the odds and resources that are vital to complete a behavior. Firstly, the availability of resources is needed for a behavior to be completed, i.e., funds, time value, and other assets. (Ajzen, 1985). Meanwhile, the second alludes to confidence in individuals' ability to enact that behavior. (Ajzen, 1985).

PBC should be supreme when individuals come with plentiful resources and possibilities. (Ajzen, 1985). One aspect of PBC is how convenient or difficult individuals think it is to go and experience a proximal destination, as their sense of agency might be impacted by available modes of transportation, funds, and convenience (Chen et al., 2023). Since nearby destinations are considered easy to reach without a burden of accommodation, travelers are more likely to take spontaneous trips without pre-planning. Additionally, individuals' positive controlled behavior enables them to create responsible, eco-friendly travel choices (Chen et al., 2023). Also, visitors who prefer proximal destinations are focused on exploring their locations more extensively, which brings more control over their actions, and allows them to appreciate their socio-cultural settings, natural assets, and historical value (Chen et al., 2023). Thus, the following hypothesis has been postulated.

Ha3: Positive perceived behavioral control significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.

## **2.5 Prior experience**

Enabling tourists to revisit one of the daunting challenges for destinations (San Martin et al., 2013). Rodríguez et al. (2013) found that loyal visitors are likely to revisit and spread positive word-of-mouth to their closest ones; therefore, tourism research specifically focuses on tourist loyalty as a key component for revisit intention. The significance of prior experience and involvement in tourists' decision-making warrants research on how tourists form loyalty to a destination. Scholars such as (Rodríguez et al., 2013; Tan, 2017) Have found that as visitors' previous experiences with a travel destination increase, their willingness to revisit that destination also increases. There are two possible associations between prior experiences of a destination and tourist loyalty. Firstly, the mere explanation effect implies repeated involvement with a certain experience and brings emotional and evaluative reactions. (Rodríguez et al., 2013). Secondly, repeated visits to a destination improve tourists' loyalty towards it as tourist gain more experience, their attitude towards that location gains positively because the perceived risk about the location starts to decrease (Rodríguez et al., 2013). Thus, the following hypothesis has been postulated.

Ha4: Positive prior experience significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.

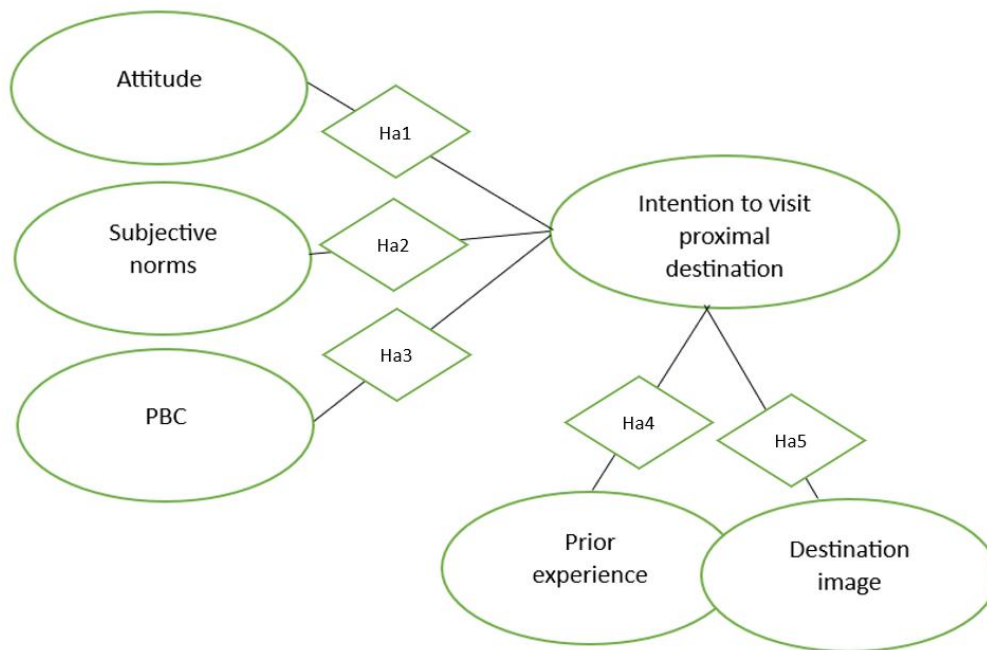
## **2.6 Destination image**

Nassar et al. (2015) found that the impression of destination image comprised of three factors: cognitive “how tourists view a destination,” emotional “how they feel and are affected by the destination,” and behavioral “how both emotional and cognitive image affects their intention to visit.” Similarly, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) has found that destination image is constructed internally (value, inspiration, knowledge, and perceptions) and externally (prior experiences, recommendations, and sources of information). Samiei et al. (2012) found that electronic word-of-mouth positively correlates with the destination image visitors' attitude, eventually leading to positive travel intention. Chaulagain et al. (2019) found that destination familiarity positively impacts destination image and travelers' intention to visit. Meanwhile, Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020) found that destination image has a significant impact on forecasting travelers' intentional behaviors; precisely, the emotional image of a destination plays a more significant role in travelers' intention to visit than cognitive images. Thus, the following hypothesis has been postulated.

Ha5: Positive destination image significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.

## **2.5 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework for this dissertation will follow the following settings:



Source: self-made

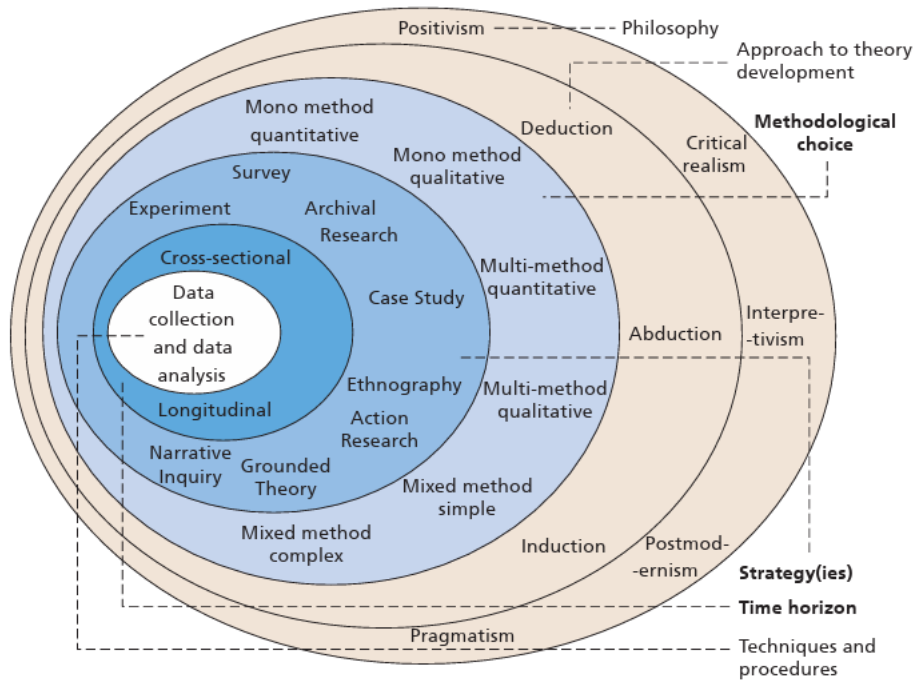
## Chapter 3: Methodology

*This chapter will provide the selection of different methods and justification for using a mixed-method approach. Methods that align with the mixed-method approach will also be provided with clear and precise justification. Lastly, this chapter will provide a data collection approach and data analysis part.*

### 3.1 Introduction

One major quandary that researchers first encounter is whether to choose mixed, quantitative, or qualitative research methods. Therefore, to produce a more concise selection of methods and justification, this dissertation will adopt its research design, philosophy, and theory development approach as per the research onion silhouetted by Saunders et al. (2019, p. 174).

Figure 3.1.1: Formulation of research design



Source: Saunders et al. (2019)

### 3.1 Research philosophy

Pragmatism philosophy undertakes by critically examining theories, conceptualizations, hypotheses, and the outcomes of the empirical research; however, in terms of how the roles function as tools of thinking and acting in a practical context rather than in an absolute abstract system (Saunders et al., 2019). Pragmatism school of thought views reality via practical implications of ideas and knowledge development as a competence to perform effective actions. More importantly, pragmatism-based research begins with a problem and looks to render practical remedies that help to reshape future practices (Saunders et al., 2019). Elkjaer and Simpson (2011) assert that researchers' values and beliefs derive from the reflexive inspection procedure, which typically initiates with doubt and a sense that something seems erroneous or misaddressed and then reconstructs values and beliefs after the issue is resolved. Pragmatists rather concentrate on practical-based findings instead of relying on abstract forms; therefore, it may deviate in the context of how “objectivist or subjectivist” the research findings transpire (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). More importantly, if the research tilts toward pragmatism philosophy, the critical factor for the research design and methodology selection would be concentrated on the research issue that will be accomplished

and the research questions (Saunders et al., 2019). Overall, pragmatism philosophy best suits mixed methods, allowing objective and subjective findings and emphasizing practical implications (Saunders et al., 2019). So, “tourist attitude and perceptions towards proximate tourism” via pragmatist philosophy enables us to bring both quantitative-based and qualitative findings, which corresponds with mixed-method research. In that case, pragmatism is highly applicable to this dissertation. Pragmatism philosophy enables us to reunite “subjective” and “objective” reality in a research paper (Saunders et al., 2019). Since this topic is underexplored, both perspectives of realities would provide a more precise comprehension of it.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

Abductive-based reasoning typically aligns with mixed methods, encompassing inductive and deductive-based reasoning. Typically, the abductive research approach deals with surprising facts or practical implications where such astonishing truth is considered a conclusion rather than a premise (Saunders et al., 2019). Based on such a conclusion, potential premises will be outlined which are deemed adequate to elucidate the conclusion (Saunders et al., 2019). Abductive reasoning swings back and forth between theory and evidence rather than stirring “theory to data” or “data to theory” in deductive and inductive reasoning, respectively (Suddaby, 2006). The typically abductive approach looks for surprising or unexpected events and then produces a reasonable explanation behind the occurrence (Suddaby, 2006). For instance, how well do quantitative findings from tourists’ attitudes, behavioral attributes, destination images, and prior experience on visit intention to Baraha region align or contradict with qualitative findings?

According to Van Manneen et al. (2007), certain plausible theories could predict optimally than others as such theories have a better chance of integrating surprising findings. For instance, the “Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)” has the potential to cope-up with such surprising facts because it focuses on three factors “attitude,” “subjective norms,” and “perceived behavioral control” and every tourist being investigated in this research would have a different level of attitudes, societal pressures, and perceived controlling factors. These factors could lead to surprising facts since every individual has different experiences, brought ups, and knowledge. However, it may or may not be true as it depends on how tourists feel

and perceive proximate tourism. From that perspective, abductive approach is more promising as it incorporates mixed methods and also blends with pragmatist research.

### **3.3 Research Method**

This dissertation aims to derive empirical findings on “tourism attitude and perception towards proximate tourism” using a mixed-method approach. The mixed method may occasionally influenced by practical concerns instead of philosophical contemplations, such as what could work best for the research, what is attainable, what seems more valuable, or sometimes what is most probably funded (McChesney, 2017). Nevertheless, the basic idea supporting the mixed-method approach needs careful consideration because the linkage between research paradigms and methodologies is considered arguable (McChesney, 2017). The ontological aspect of this dissertation is to find the reality of tourists’ behavioral attributions, destination image, and past-visit experience that impact their visit intention to the Baraha region of Nepal. Meanwhile, this dissertation's epistemology integrates a survey questionnaire and interview sessions to comprehend deeper insights into the factors affecting travel intentions.

Therefore, an adequate articulation of research design is imperative, which will enable the researcher to answer the research questions most insightfully. Along with that, an appropriate research design helps to address the nature and source of data collection, the purpose of the collection, and possible ethical issues (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 174). The quantitative method allows a comprehensive picture using an extensive sample of quantitative data, which can sometimes be easily manipulated statistically and bring to the table what occurred (Saunders et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the qualitative method allows dogging subjective realities by deepening into tales, subtleties, and individuals' interpretations or experiences in a rather nuanced way, letting the reader know the reason behind such occurrences (Saunders et al., 2019). However, combining “quantitative and qualitative” into research where it feels highly appropriate as per the research topic brings the best of both perspectives (Saunders et al., 2019). Since tourist attitudes and perceptions towards proximate tourism are still under-studied, the adoption of a mixed-method approach will provide valuable insight because it will help produce both objective and subjective realities simultaneously.



Before delving into mixed methods, it is imperative to comprehend quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. One common technique to recognize the quantitative method of data collection from qualitative is that quantitative relies on numerical-based data, which generates objectifiable realities compared to non-numerical data such as words, photos or videos, recordings, etc, to generate subjective realities (Saunders et al., 2019). From that perspective, quantitative analysis is frequently used in any data-gathering strategy, such as survey questionnaires, and qualitative analysis is frequently associated with interviews as its data collection strategy (Saunders et al., 2019). Though both have distinct characteristics and drawbacks, it might be difficult for researchers to rely on a single research method as opting for one method will negate realities from another research method (Saunders et al., 2019). For instance, the nature of this research topic, “Tourist attitude and perception towards proximate tourism,” can utilize its research design by adding a survey questionnaire, and it is also supported by asking participants to respond to certain open questions or via follow-up interviews. This is because understanding respondents' attitudes and perceptions is possible via quantitative (using the Likert scale to measure tourists' attitudes and opinions) and qualitative (using interviews to get more nuanced findings about their attitudes and perceptions). Therefore, a blend of realities of both methods (i.e., mixed method) seems more potent and realistic to this research.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

As it might be already clear the field of study is the Baraha region of Nepal. Therefore, this dissertation will use residents of the Baraha region who have visited the Baraha region as a study to comprehend their attitudinal, perception, destination image, and prior experience impacting their intention to visit the Baraha region. Studying Baraha as a study region lends nicely to adjusting to the mixed methods because the selected participants for the quantitative data collection can be further requested for qualitative data collection, which is the ultimate desired strategy for this dissertation. The researcher can articulate a thorough grasp of tourists' attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral attribution of proximal tourism in the Baraha region by integrating quantitative approaches such as survey questionnaires and interviews via qualitative methods. Furthermore, the potential to triangulate data from different ranges of respondents, such as tourists with different occupational backgrounds, brings more credibility

and dependability to the research outcomes. These research outcomes will also have practical implications, especially for destination management organizations, policy formulators, and market personnel in the Baraha region and other comparable destinations. Therefore, this dissertation will imply both a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to accumulate findings from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

### **3.5 Sampling technique**

This dissertation will adopt convenience sampling as it allows the selection of participants without any clear protocols concerning the research issue. This sampling technique allows to pick participants in a random order based on their availability or convenience factor for researchers (Saunders et al., 2019). In fact, convenience sampling is widely used, especially via social media channels like Facebook surveys or inquiries (Saunders et al., 2019). It might bring more biased findings because of the ease of getting samples and heavy influence by external factors (Saunders et al., 2019); only those participants who have decent knowledge about the Baraha tourist region and have visited that region at least once will be taken as final participants for this dissertation since the aim of this dissertation is to understand tourist attitudes and perceptions towards proximal tourism instead of focusing on particular demographic segments, which made convenience sampling more promising. Additionally, it enables conducting research faster without burdening the pocket, and the current distance gap between the researcher and study area makes convenience sampling more effective as it can be performed via online media channels as well.

### **3.6 Survey questionnaire**

From the perspective of quantitative data collection, a survey questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire will be delivered online via social media, such as the Facebook Messenger channel. Additionally, the questionnaire is designed based on a 5-Likert scale range. To measure tourist attitudes, opinions, and perceptions in a quantitative way, the Likert scale has different options set by a numerical or linear structure. According to Mcleod (2023), the Likert scale is considered a “psychometric response scale,” frequently used to gather respondents' agreement or disagreement with a questionnaire or statement. The responses gathered using the Likert Scale help to perform inferential statistics as it offers responses in a linear trend (Mcleod, 2023). Survey questionnaires will delivered to the Baraha region's

Facebook page “Online Baraha Municipality group”, which has over twenty-three thousand Facebook members. Questionnaires will be asked of the members of these groups since these group members are the locals who share news, social messages, and travel-related content about the Baraha region. The survey questionnaires are arranged in two categories, firstly participants' demographic profiles such as their age, education, income, etc will be provided. Secondly, core questions related to participants’ attitudes, social pressures, perceived behavioural control, destination image of the Baraha region, and their prior experiences of proximate tourism will be asked.

The options for each statement will be set from strongly disagree to agree (See Figure below) strongly.

Figure 3.6.1: Arrangement of options on a 5-Likert scale.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

### 3.7 Semi-structured interview

In order to obtain findings using a mixed tool, this dissertation will adopt structured interviews as a part of qualitative findings. Structured data are obtained via interviews or focus groups in which more in-depth interpretation will be directed using open-ended questionnaires to interviewees (Saunders et al., 2019). For instance, structured interviews, in this case, allow us to comprehend how tourist attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral patterns are formulated in response to proximate tourism. Since the only way to reach the study region’s “Baraha” participants is online-medium; therefore, an email interview might seem more prominent and effective for acquiring responses using structured questionnaires. Initially, it allows us to record the complex and personal details of visitors' experiences and thoughts, which later enables us to get deeper to accumulate more nuanced findings related to their attitudes and perceptions. Additionally, the researcher can discover many facets of tourist attitudes and perceptions in relation to proximal tourism as it allows for the acquisition

of serendipitous findings because it enables the interviewer to ask flexible, open-ended questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2019). Since the researcher's current location and study region are far apart, an email interview would be best suited for collecting responses using a semi-structured interview.

### 3.8 Baraha region – Study area

Baraha region is one out of four holy places for Hindus to visit where “Lord Bishnu<sup>2</sup>” as a boar fought and defeated monster Hiranakshra, “a win of virtue over evil”; therefore, this place is also known as the guardian of the universe (Sammohan, 2019). Besides this, many shrines hold different goddesses, and there are lots of temples with collectibles from the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Sammohan, 2019). This region lies in the east of Nepal, with approx. 26.83°N and 87.18°E latitude-longitude, at the junction of the Koka and Satpta Koshi rivers (Dhakal, 2024) (see Figure below). Apart from this, the Baraha region has a rich embroidery of natural beauty and cultural heritage sites (Dhakal, 2024).

This region lies in the middle of the Himalayas with stunning scenery that captivates pilgrims, nature lovers, and cultural and heritage tourists (Dhakal, 2024). This region covers an abundance of natural beauties and picturesque views, such as the majestic Siwalik Hills, which lies on the northern side of the “Indo-Gangetic region” (Dhakal, 2024). These hills hold different ranges of plans, evergreen forests, and lively alpine pastures. The rivers and lakes in the Baraha region, along with evergreen forests with high-altitude wetlands, make this region favorable for traveling (Dhakal, 2024). In addition to that, different types of migratory birds, endangered species, and natural beauties that are rarely touched by human artificial development appeal to tourists seeking tranquility and prefer deeper affinity with the natural world (Dhakal, 2024).

Figure 3.8.1: Map of the Baraha region of Nepal.

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<sup>2</sup> Lord Bishnu in Hinduism is believed to be a deity's “universe protector,” a supreme being with a key to protect and transmute the universe. In Nomenclature, Vishnu refers to “all-pervasive” and “who is everything and has inside every living creature”. The conception of incarnation within Hinduism is associated with Lord Vishnu, who prioritizes “Karma.” The Quotation from “(Bhagavad Gita, 2019)” alludes to the role of Vishnu in this way:

*“Whenever righteousness wanes and unrighteousness increases, I send myself forth. For the protection of the good and the destruction of evil, and the establishment of righteousness, I come into being age after age.”*  
*Bhagavad Gita 4.7 – 8*

*The modern-day “Karma hits back” originated via this.*



Source: (Thapa & Bhandari, 2019).

In addition, the Baraha region has a rich cultural and civilization history, with many ethnic groups and diverse lifestyles (Dhakal, 2024). Travelers can find this place a multifaceted destination that offers almost everything, ranging from natural beauty to cultural and heritage sites, adventure activities, and local cuisines (Dhakal, 2024). For travelers looking for immersive experiences, the Baraha region has ticked all those criteria where travelers can engage with the local culture, partaking in traditional music and dance shows, artistic and culinary activities, etc (Dhakal, 2024). In addition, adventurous souls might embark on trekking excursions in Baraha's rugged terrains with a view of breathtaking snow-capped mountains and pristine valleys. Besides, the Baraha region is also famous for river rafting in the Koka and Sapta-Koshi rivers, wildlife safari, and bird-watching activities (Dhakal, 2024). Despite this destination being popular for the wide array of tourism experiences, the views of tourists, especially from "proximate tourists within the Baraha region," are still unexplored. Therefore, the researcher felt that a tourist destination might garner the attention of tourists around the globe despite a considerable lack of recognition and appreciation from its own residents for its pristine local destination. Thus, this dissertation will explore how locals residing within the Baraha region form their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward visiting the Baraha region. This dissertation will also adopt two factors – the destination image of the Baraha region and prior experience of proximate tourism- that impact their intention to visit the Baraha region. Some visual illustrations of the Baraha region can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 3.8.2: Some glimpses of the Baraha region of Nepal.



Source: (Dhakal, 2024)

## Chapter 4: Results and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will present the overall empirical findings of the dissertation, which deployed a mixed-method approach to explore “Tourist Attitude and Perception Towards Proximate Tourism extensively.” Using the “Baraha region of Nepal” as a study region, this approach aims to provide a nuanced understanding of this research topic.

Therefore, this chapter is organized into two sections. The first section will provide insights into this research topic from a quantitative perspective, using data gathered from an online survey questionnaire administered to local travelers residing in Nepal's Baraha region. This first part will provide participants’ demographic profiles, correlation analyses, inferential statistics, and trends and



patterns formation. In addition, this part will also test the postulated hypothesis as mentioned in “section 2.6 conceptual framework”.

In the second section, the qualitative findings were obtained from in-depth interviews with participants from the Baraha region who have recently visited the Baraha region. Since the aim is to find tourist attitudes and perceptions towards proximate tourism, the interview only focused on how these participants formed their attitudes and perceptions towards proximate tourism from a tourist’s standpoint. Using thematic analysis, the researcher uncovered potential themes and insights that enable an in-depth contextual comprehension of the issues explored in the survey. The section was purposefully designed to check how well survey results incorporate the findings by interviewing tourists who participated in the survey project. By doing this, the overall credibility of empirical results will be enhanced, and more findings will be produced by incorporating both objective and subjective realities.

## Section 1 – Quantitative results

### 4.2 Demographic profile – participants’ age and gender

A total of 446 responses were gathered via convenience sampling delivered to participants who reside in the Baraha region of Nepal. During the data filtration, a few participants' responses were incomplete; therefore, they were discarded. A total of 427 responses were finalized after eliminating incomplete ones.

Table 4.2.1 shows demographic—age and gender information for 427 participants. Young participants between 20 and 39 were found to be dominating; 20-29-aged participants were 43% (N=185), and 30-39-aged participants were 28% (N=121). Meanwhile, participation of participants aged “60 or above” was marginally found, i.e., 2% (N=8). The male-female participant was fairly balanced but slightly dominated by female participants;

Table 4.2.1 Participants’ age and gender information

<b>Gender/Age</b>	<b>20-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60 or 60++</b>	<b>Under 20</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Female	90	54	28	12	5	20	209
Male	90	50	19	5	1	13	178
Other	1	3	2				6
Prefer not to disclose	4	14	7	3	2	4	34
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>427</b>

### 4.3 Demographic profile - participants' marital, occupation, and income status

Table 4.3.1 shows participants' marital, occupation, and income status. Out of 427 responses, 43% (185) were found single, and 41% (N=176) were found married. In the context of occupation, 47% (N=201) were found to be full-time workers, and 22% (N=94) were part-timers. Meanwhile, 19% (N=83) were found to be students. Similarly, the majority of the participants, almost 1/4<sup>th</sup>, had a monthly average income below 20,000 Nepalese rupees, i.e., 24% (N=103), followed by 20% (N=85) participants who had income between 20,000 to 39,000. Only 13% (N=56) were found to have an average monthly income of 100,000 or above on an average.

Table 4.3.1 Participants' marital, occupation, and income status

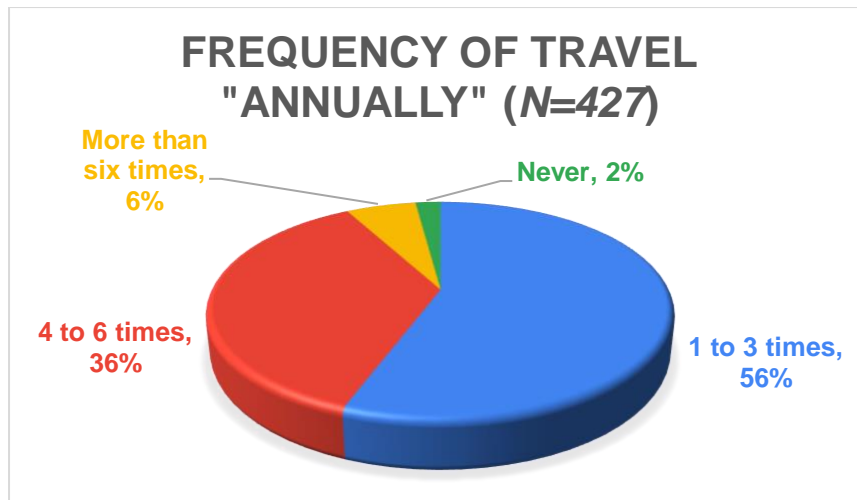
Profile	Categories	Total	%	Grand total
marital status	single	185	43%	427
	married	176	41%	
	divorce	23	5%	
	living together	9	2%	
	prefer not to say	29	7%	
	others	5	1%	
occupation	full timer	201	47%	427
	part timer	94	22%	
	pensioneer	11	3%	
	student	83	19%	
	unemployed	38	9%	
avg monthly income	Below 20,000	103	24%	427
	20,000 to 39,999	85	20%	
	40,000 to 59,999	61	14%	
	60,000 to 79,999	56	13%	
	80,000 to 99,999	66	15%	
	100,000 or above	56	13%	

### 4.4 Participants' travel frequency- annual basis.

The pie-chart 4.4.1 shows 427 participants' travel frequency on an annual basis. Over half of the participants, precisely 56% (N=239), travel 1 to 3 times a year for vacation, followed by 36% of participants travel 4 to 6 times a year for their vacations. Meanwhile, only 6% traveled more than six times in a year.

Pie-chart 4.4.1 Participants' travel frequency- annual basis.

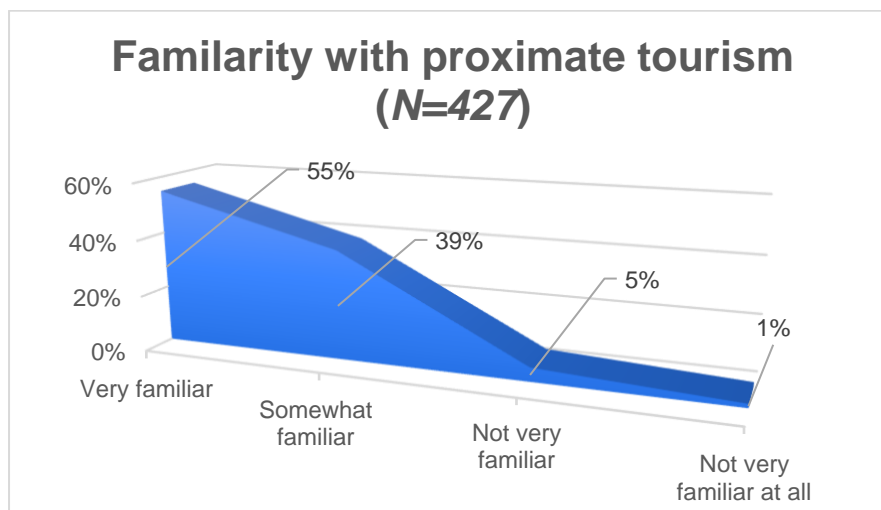




#### 4.5 Participants' familiarity with proximate tourism

This demographic questionnaire was asked to measure the participants' awareness of proximate tourism. The observed participants were found to be aware of proximate tourism. 55% (N=235) were very familiar with it, and 39% (N=167) were somewhat familiar with it.

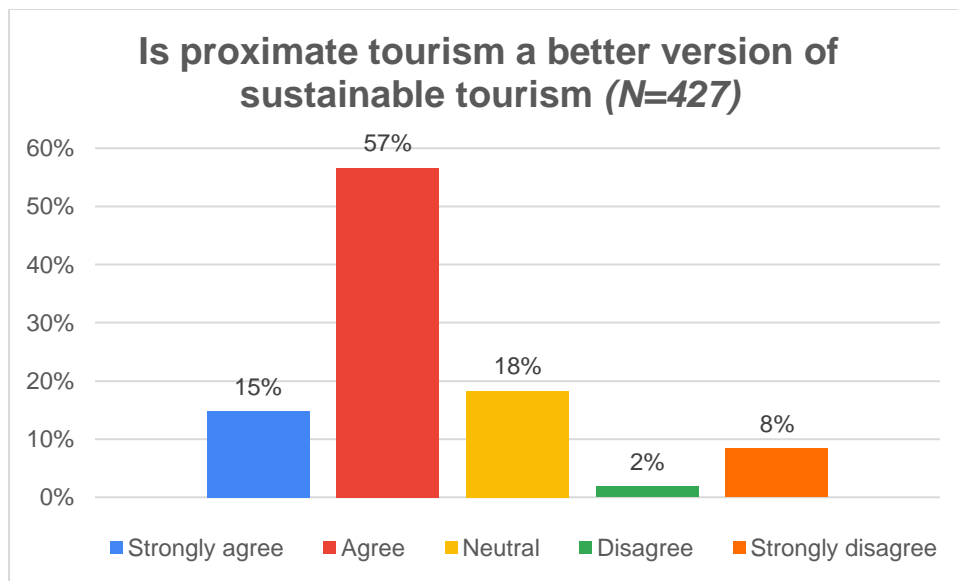
Chart 4.5.1 Participants' familiarity with proximate tourism



#### 4.6 Is proximate tourism better form of sustainable tourism

The researcher asked a survey questionnaire about participants' percieveieness of proximate tourism in context of sustainability: "In my perspective, proximal tourism, as compared to distanced, are better for the environment, culture, and economy". It was found that 72% out 427 participants agreed proximate tourism holds sustainability concerns, in which ; 15% stronlgy agreed and 57% just agreed on it. Meanwhile, 8% (N=34) were completely against it.

#### 4.6.1 Is proximate tourism better form of sustainable tourism



#### 4.7 Survey questionnaires – central tendency statistics

Table 4.7.1 shows each survey questionnaire's central tendency statistics, which help us understand the overall inclination of participants' responses on a 5-Likert scale ranging from strongly agree, denoted by 5, to strongly disagree, denoted by 1. The observed mean value shows that each survey questionnaire's response on average is tilted towards agreeableness, i.e., towards option 4." The observed median value of "4" for each adopted questionnaire shows that 50% of responses were ticked on "agree -4, and strongly – 5". These statistics show that 427 participants' responses to each survey questionnaire were found left-skewed, i.e., towards agree and strongly agree on the 5-Likert scale. However, questionnaire number 15, "I believe that promotional materials and marketing campaigns accurately represent the beauty and offerings of tourist destinations in the Baraha region," was found right-skewed, which means the overall promotional and marketing campaigns implied by Baraha region are below-par as participants perceived these campaigns inadequate, leading to diminishing the perceived image of the Baraha destination. This is also supported by the observed standard deviation of "1.32", where the participant's responses are highly scattered from its mean value of "2.33". Therefore, all adopted survey questionnaires except "questionnaire no 15" were found positively responded.

Table 4.7.1 Survey questionnaires – central tendency statistics

Var. Survey questionnaires	Avg	med	S.D
----------------------------	-----	-----	-----

ATT	1. I feel a strong sense of enjoyment and satisfaction when visiting proximate tourist destinations in the Baraha region of Nepal.	3.59	4	1.21
	2. I believe that visiting nearby tourist spots in the Baraha region would significantly enhance my overall experience by allowing me to experience cultural immersion and scenic beauty.	3.63	4	1.17
	3. I feel like interacting as a proximate tourist destination in the Baraha region because it is exciting and fun.	3.64	4	1.13
SN	4. My friends and family strongly support my decision to visit nearby tourist spots in the Baraha region.	3.63	4	1.17
	5. I often hear positive remarks or encouragement from those around me about visiting the Baraha region.	3.63	4	1.18
	6. I often seek recommendations and advice from people I trust regarding my visits to nearby tourist spots in the Baraha region.	3.67	4	1.16
PBC	7. I am confident in planning and arranging a trip to proximate tourist destinations in the Baraha region.	3.71	4	1.15
	8. I'm confident that I have the required time, resources, and opportunities to visit different destinations within the Baraha region.	3.70	4	1.16
	9. I feel whether or not to visit tourist destinations in the Baraha region is entirely up to me.	3.74	4	1.12
PE	10. My past encounters as a proximate tourist helped me better explore the local community and sustainability.	3.73	4	1.16
	11. I was highly satisfied with my previous tourism experiences in my visit to the Baraha region.	3.76	4	1.13
	12. Based on my past experiences, I am inclined to revisit the Baraha region.	3.76	4	1.13
DI	13. When I think about the Baraha region, I associate them with positive feelings and visualization.	3.70	4	1.12
	14. I perceive tourist spots in the Baraha region to be more attractive and appealing than other destinations.	3.60	4	1.15
	15. I believe that promotional materials and marketing campaigns accurately represent the beauty and offerings of tourist destinations in the Baraha region.	2.33	2	1.32
ITV	16. I'm planning to visit the Baraha region in the near future.	3.73	4	1.17
	17. I will make an effort to visit the Baraha region on my next trip.	3.79	4	1.15
	18. I prioritize visiting the Baraha region over other potential travel destinations I have planned.	3.74	4	1.16

*Note: "ATT – Attitude, SN – Subjective norms, PBC – perceived behavior control, PE – Prior experience, DI – Destination image" – Independent variables. And "ITV- intention to visit"- Dependent variable.*

## 4.8 Correlation matrix

Table 4.8.1 shows the correlation matrix between these adopted factors. Tourists' perceived behavior control was found to be positively and strongly correlated to their intention to visit the Baraha region. However, all factors were found to be strongly and positively correlated with tourists' intention to visit the Barah region, but the destination image was found to be comparatively less strong but positive. This might be because of the low mean and median value observed in the survey questionnaire -15, which is under the destination image. Similarly, a strong and positive correlation ( $R= 0.919$ ) was observed between tourists' prior experience of proximate tourism and their perceived behavior control. This implies that individuals who have prior experience with proximate tourism are better at controlling their travel decisions and activities in a positive way. Meanwhile, tourists' attitudes towards the Baraha region as proximate tourism and the perceived image of the destination have a strong and positive relationship; however, it was found to be the least strong among the entire analysis.

Table 4.8.1 Correlation analysis

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
1. Attitude	1					
2. Subjective norms	0.872	1				
3. PBC	0.864	0.899	1			
4. Prior experience	0.867	0.882	0.919	1		
5. Destination image	0.699	0.758	0.760	0.786	1	
6. Intention to visit	0.850	0.866	0.890	0.881	0.787	1

*Note:  $\leq 0.1$  – negligible correlation, 0.1 -0.3 9– weak correlation, 0.4 to 0.69 – moderate correlation, 0.7 and above – strong correlation. Meanwhile, 1 – perfect correlation (Akoglu, 2018, p. 92).*

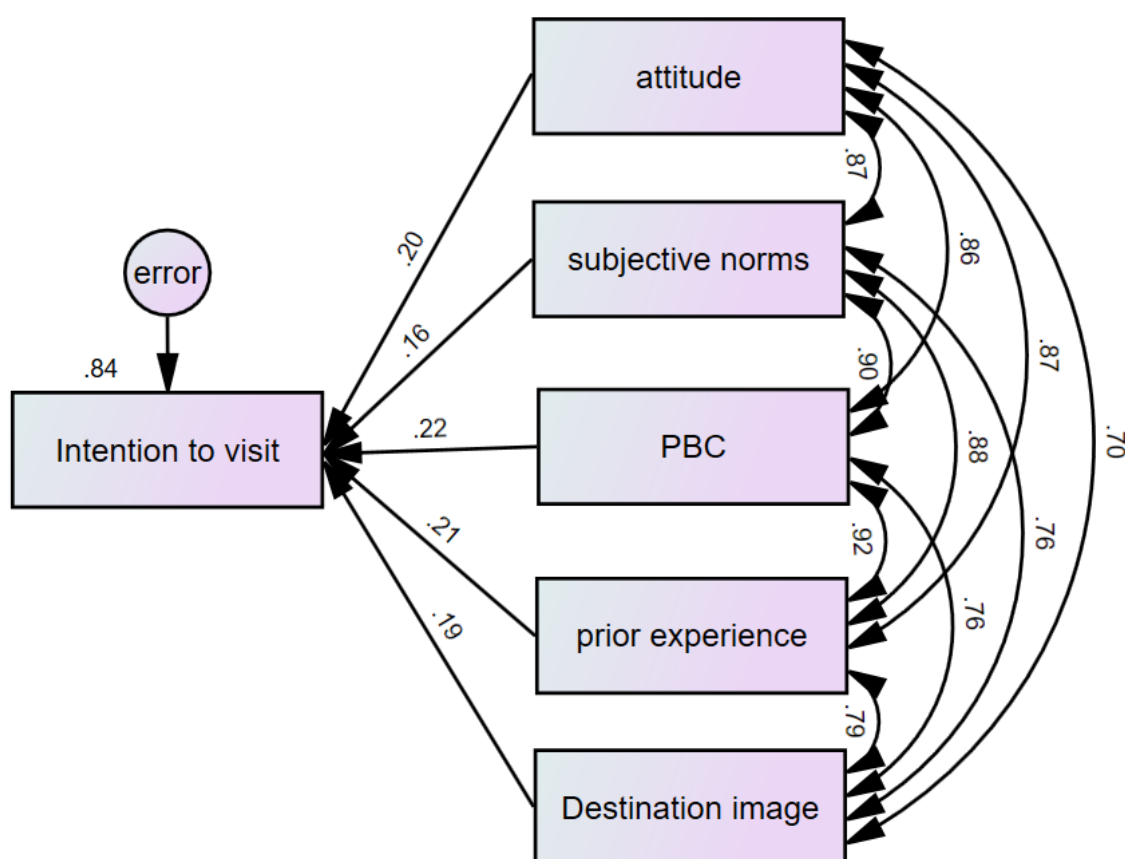
## 4.9 Structural Equation Modelling

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a widely implied and comprehensive statistical tool for measuring complex associations between observed and latent covariates (Stein et al., 2012). It integrates multiple regression and factor analysis, measuring direct and indirect impact between both

direct and indirect influence between adopted variables within the conceptual framework (Stein et al., 2012). In the context of SEM, exogenous variables are termed predictor variables, which are viewed as causes and assumed to impact the dependent variable, “i.e., endogenous variables” (Stein et al., 2012). This model SEM is practically more applicable to this dissertation as it allows simultaneous assessment of multiple relationships while simultaneously enabling the test of the theory or models that encompass several interconnected exogenous and endogenous variables. In this dissertation, tourists’ attitudes and perceptions towards proximate tourism and their travel intention to the Baraha region of Nepal, SEM enables to test the hypothesized association as mentioned in the “2.6 Conceptual framework”. Doing that will test the adopted theory of planned behavior and, more importantly, test these hypotheses, which enables the path to answer the research questions.

Chart 4.9.1 found an R-squared value of 0.84, indicating the SEM model's high predictability. It indicates that 84% of changes in variance in intention to visit the Baraha region are determined by the adopted exogenous variables, i.e., “attitudes, subjective norms, PBC, prior experience, and destination image.” The individual exogenous factors influence tourists' intention to visit the Baraha region. Though the adopted exogenous factors were found to positively and significantly affect tourists' intention to visit the Baraha region, individuals' perceived behavioral control ( $B=0.229$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.00$ ) was found to be the most impactful, followed by prior experience of proximate tourism ( $B=0.21$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.00$ ). Meanwhile, subjective norms ( $B=0.16$ ,  $P\text{-value}=0.002$ ) indicate a low impact but statistically significant among all the observed covariates. This implies that social pressures or normative influences from individuals' close ones affect tourists' intention to visit the Baraha region; however, not as impactfully as other factors.

Chart 4.9.1 Structural equation modeling – regression analysis.



Regression Coefficients

			Estimate	S.E	C.R	P,V
Intentiontovisit	<---	PBC	0.229	0.058	3.948	***
Intentiontovisit	<---	priorexperience	0.218	0.057	3.815	***
Intentiontovisit	<---	Destinationimage	0.221	0.038	5.844	***
Intentiontovisit	<---	subjectivenorms	0.157	0.051	3.091	0.002
Intentiontovisit	<---	attitude	0.206	0.045	4.619	***

Note: Significance level “0.05”.

#### 4.10 Model fitness

Table 4.10.1 shows the structural equation model's overall fitness for this dissertation. The Chi-square minimum discrepancy function (CMIN) value was observed to be 0.00, indicating that the overall model is fit enough to reject the null hypothesis with high confidence. Similarly, the root mean squared error approximation (RMSEA) value of “0.00” indicates that RMSEA is significantly lower

than the significant level. This shows that the model with adopted exogenous variables perfectly captures the association with the endogenous variables. In addition, the R-squared value of 0.84 indicates that endogenous variables “attitudes, subjective norms, PBC, prior-experience, and destination image” has a high predictability power on tourists’ intention to visit Baraha region. Only 16% is captured by the error terms, which indicates that there is still 16% fluctuations in tourists’ intention to visit Baraha region is determined by other factors which are external to this model.

Table 4.10.1 Model fitness

<i>CMIN</i>	<b>Model</b>	<b>NPAR</b>	<b>CMIN</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>CMIN/DF</b>
	Default model	21	0	0		
	Saturated model	21	0	0		
	Independence model	6	3467.92	15	0	231.20
<b>HI</b>						
<i>RMSEA</i>	<b>Model</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>LO 90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>P.CLOSE</b>	
	Independence model	0.74	0.72	0.76	0	
R-squared value	0.84					

Note – Significance level “0.05”.

#### 4.11 Survey questionnaires reliability test

This dissertation uses Cronbach’s alpha as a statistical test to measure the reliability of the adopted survey questionnaires. Cronbach alpha enables the measurement of internal consistencies of a set of items, “i.e., scale implied in a questionnaire,” which analyses how closely the responses on an implied set of items act as a group (Saunders et al., 2019). According to Dennick & Tavakol (2011, p. 53) Cronbach's alpha test evaluates the extent to which the implied items produce a similar concept and interconnectedness of the items. While reporting the Cronbach’s alpha value of between “ $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$ ” is considered acceptable, “ $0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$ ” is considered good, and above 0.9 is considered excellent (Bobbitt, 2021). Meanwhile, values between “ $0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$ ” is considered questionable, and any value below 0.6 is considered poor (Bobbitt, 2021). Taking these criteria as a response, the observed Cronbach’s alpha value in Table 4.11.1 shows all questionnaires implied in the survey

project were found reliable except questions implied within “destination image”. The items implied within destination image variables have questionable reliability, which indicates that the questionnaire might not have well-correlated effects, especially since some questions “Question No. 15” might not be too relevant when connecting to tourists’ intention to visit the Baraha region.

#### 4.11.1 Survey questionnaires reliability test

<b>Reliability test</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
attitude	0.823
subjective norms	0.726
PBC	0.713
Prior experience	0.779
Destination image	0.643
intention to visit Baraha region	0.845

## Section 2: Qualitative results

### 4.12 Introduction

Through the study, we will explore the attitudes and behavior of tourists regarding proximate tourism and how they perceive it in the Baraha region in Nepal. The research intended to discover the role of tourists’ attitudes, subjective norms, PBCs, prior experiences of proximate tourism, and destination image in relation to travel intentions to the Baraha region. An email interview was taken with tourists recently visiting the Baraha region. A total of four participants were finalized for the interview session using structured questions designed to yield deeper comprehension of the same variables. See the interviewee’s demographic profiles.

Table 4.12.1 Interviewee’s demographic profiles

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Response received</b>	<b>Age and gender</b>
Participant -1	Student – Bachelor pass	Bachelor	13 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	24 – male
Participant - 2	Restaurant manager – master pass	Master	11 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	33 – male
Participant - 3	Fitness Trainer – Bachelor	Bachelor	12 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	31 - male
Participant - 4	Tour operator	Bachelor	14 <sup>TH</sup> MAY	29 - female



The integration of quantitative and qualitative methods aims to develop a robust understanding of how the aforementioned factors collectively and individually influence tourists' visit intention to the Baraha region. Furthermore, integrating qualitative and quantitative data enables triangulation, which fortifies the reliability and validity of this dissertation's findings. On the other hand, the comparison of qualitative and quantitative provides a test for the consistency and alignment of the findings, in which qualitative ones can supplement any failure of quantitative results. Thematic analysis was adopted for the analysis part. Thematic analysis is a frequently implied approach to gathering qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2019). Braun and Clarke (2006) assert thematic analysis as a fundamental approach to qualitative assessment. This analysis focuses on seeking common themes or patterns in collected data by using codes to produce relevant themes and patterns in a research subject. This dissertation's thematic analysis is best suited to other counterparts for two reasons. Firstly, thematic analysis allows us to comprehend the features behind human attitudinal levels and perceptions. Secondly, thematic analysis can be implied irrespective of concern for the research philosophy rather than focusing on aligning to a theoretically suitable methodological tactic; therefore, it fits the mixed method of research. The selection of themes was discovered after reading participants' email interviews more than three times; the "codes" that enabled the themes for these qualitative findings are presented in Appendix "1.2 Interview results".

#### **4.13 Attitudes Towards Proximate Tourism**

The answers I got from participants regarding their attitudes towards proximate tourism reflected various emotional states. The attitude of both participants, 1 and 2, was optimistic and highly responsive as they talked about the feasibility of traveling in the Baraha region. Participant 1 said: *"I am filled with tremendous excitement and enthusiasm whenever I think about going to the Baraha region as a tourist who is close by."* Similarly, Participant 2 found similar sentiments: *Traveling to the Baraha region as a proximate tourist fills me with anticipation and excitement. I personally enjoy it to my fullest.* They did so by focusing on the impressive nature, wealth of culture, and undoubtedly on the pleasant past experiences as the most important peculiarities. On the other hand, Participant 3 expressed concerns about fatigue and boredom towards proximate travel and preferred longer-distance trips, which have a diverse experience compared to proximate ones. Participant 3 replied: *"When considering traveling as a proximate tourist to the Baraha region, I must admit I feel rather conservative and a little bored. Personally, I prefer traveling, which means longer time and distance full of different cultural and scenic tastes."* Likewise, participant 4 lauded the previous participants' enthusiasm for proximity tourism, noting the great pleasure and wonder in new destinations and the sense of culture and environmental benefit the proximity provides. Several subject matters presented

are, for instance, the enigmas of the natural gift, the history sensitivity, and the sake of reduced travel destinations. Participant 3's skepticism notably introduced a contrasting perspective, indicating the diverse range of attitudes toward proximate tourism. Other than Participant 3, the overall attitude towards the Baraha region was found to be positive.

#### 4.14 Subjective Norms

The participants reported various social circle-related issues in their decision-making on trips while planning to visit to Baraha region. Participants 1 and 2 received positive feedback on their trip plan from their friends, who advised and supported their idea, which also helped increase the anticipation of their trip. However, the case is different for “Participant - 3” friends are torn; some admire and support them, and others remain indifferent or skeptical about engagement in the adventure. Participant 3 found that: *“My friends' reactions to my visits to the Baraha region vary. Some express genuine interest and curiosity, but many others seem indifferent or skeptical. While a few may encourage others to visit, many are more reserved in their enthusiasm.”* Meanwhile, Participant 4 noted that the friends continuously supported and were excited about the Baraha area, which was a big encouragement. Social influences, peer recommendations, and cultural norms emerged as significant factors shaping participants' travel intentions. Participant 4 exactly quoted: *“When I share my plans to visit the Baraha region with my friends, their reactions are consistently positive and supportive. In fact, some friends have encouraged me to take it deeper by focusing on blogging and posting on social media sites. They express genuine enthusiasm for my travels and often offer words of encouragement and advice.”*

#### 4.15 Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Participants expressed varying levels of confidence when it came to overcoming potential problems during the journey. Participant 2 and 1 illustrated a high level of confidence emanating from their past experiences of risk-taking and being proactive when it came to solving problems. As Participant 1 said: *“From my point of view, my ability to go to nearby locations such as the Baraha region is strongly impacted by a variety of issues, including accessibility, infrastructure, and safety, but I can easily control as it is closer to my residence.”* Participant 2 said that similar controlling behaviors: *“While I'm generally confident in my ability to navigate such challenges, occasional concerns about transportation or accommodation can arise. However, I believe in proactively addressing these issues proactively and being resourceful, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable travel experience”.*

On the contrary, Participant 3 demonstrated more cautious optimism in acknowledging potential barriers, though they expressed partial confidence in overcoming them. Participant 4, on the other hand, illustrated an immense level of confidence, which appears to be derived from frequent traveling and adaptability to surroundings. The factors affecting PBC included accessibility, affordability, safety concerns, affordable fares, and transportation. Participant 4 showed a positive dominant behavior, while others were concerned and fluctuated among different confidence levels, highlighting the importance of perceived control in travel decision-making.

#### **4.16 Prior Visits to Proximate Tourist Places**

Participants' historical experiences of proximal tourism continually shape their attitudes and intentions of returning to the Baraha region. The first, second, and fourth participants expressed their most enjoyable moments and the things that allowed them to experience the place deeply, strengthening their urge to return. For instance, participant 1 said: *“My relationship to the area has been strengthened as a result of each event, which has been genuinely beneficial. Due to the fact that my previous experiences have provided me with cherished memories and a desire to explore more, my decision to return to the Baraha region is positively influenced by those encounters.”* Aligning with Participant 1, Participant -4 perceived similar experiences as: *“My past experiences have greatly influenced my decision to revisit the Baraha region in the future. The warmth and hospitality of the local people, coupled with the breathtaking beauty of the landscape, have left a lasting impression on me. I am eager to return to the region and continue exploring all it offers”.*

Participant 3's lack of experience with the place earlier was an obstacle to future visitation intentions, and it demonstrated the role of past experiences in shaping travel intentions. Participant 3 noted, *“I have not previously visited proximate tourist spots in the Baraha region or similar regions. While I'm open to new experiences, my lack of familiarity with the area makes me reluctant.”* These experiences' impact was seen as a demonstration of the importance of familiarity and positive recollections in influencing travel intentions.

#### **4.17 The Baraha Area's Destination Image**

People feature the Baraha as a destination that greatly respects the environment, culture, and hospitality. Key attributes include natural beauty and numerous festivals that bring life to the streets, and there is something for everyone who visits. This neighborhood's mesmerizing local ambiance and

originality were brought to the front as the key features defining the destination of choice. The destination image did become a significant factor that affected travel intentions. The participants expressed they wanted to return to explore more of that region, and the trip's outcome yielded a positive image. For instance, participant 1 found: *"The Baraha region has a unique place in my heart, and the visions that I have of my destination are packed with breathtaking landscapes, vibrant cultural history, and kind people"*. Similar to this, Participant 2 said: *"My perception of this destination is filled with images of stunning views, the vibrant culture within a small boundary, and warm hospitality."* Meanwhile, Participant 3 was found skeptical and concerned with value for money while traveling: *"I remain cautious about forming overly optimistic impressions without firsthand experience. Though It might be good for the locals, it should also excite me because I need to have a value for my money."*

The data shows different feelings, personal viewpoints, self-efficacy, and representation of the destination among the participants, which indicated the complexity of behavior in the proximity of tourists. From the overall observation, some participants were energized and assured, whereas Participant 3 significantly lacked trust and decisiveness due to personal experiences and social factors. This might be due to low travel experience in proximate tourism. Thus, the results are consistent with the well-known tourist behavior theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, meaning that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control mediate behavioral intentions. In addition to this fact, the study showed other subtleties and dimensions in respondents' replies, which pointed out the complex nature of proximate tourism. Learning from these results could contribute to formulating strategies and regulations for destination marketing and fostering sustainability in neighboring tourism areas like the subregion of Baraha.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

*In this chapter, the precise interpretation of the empirical results, along with theoretical results, will be provided. In addition to that, a comparison of this dissertation's findings will be evaluated with prior researchers' findings. Lastly, this chapter will end by providing the results of the postulated hypothesis.*

This chapter discusses the overall findings gathered from the quantitative and qualitative interviews using structured questionnaires. It aims to extensively comprehend tourists' attitudes and perceptions towards proximate tourism and their intention to visit, using the Baraha region as a study region. The online survey questionnaire delivered to 427 participants from the Baraha region was analyzed in two phases: demographic profiles and inferential statistics. In addition, email interviews using structured questionnaires were conducted with four participants who also reside in the Baraha region.

The survey project was mostly dominated by young tourists, especially those between the ages of 20 and 39, who accounted for 72% (out of 427 participants). Female-to-male participation was fairly balanced, with a ratio of 1.174. In the context of travelers' travel frequency, it was found that individuals residing in the Baraha region usually go on vacation one to three times a year, which is 56%, and four to six times, 36%. It indicates that tourists' craving for traveling is high; however, it would have been more meaningful if the survey had used the types of tourism themes they preferred the most. Despite that, this dissertation has found that tourists are highly familiar with the conceptualization of proximate tourism. In fact, it was found that proximate tourism has the audacity to remark itself as a prime version of a sustainable form of tourism as it offers fewer transportation issues, economic benefits to locals, and preserves cultural integrity.

### 5.1 Destination image and travel intention

The quantitative analysis discovered a substantial positive correlation between destination image and intention to visit (0.881), indicating that the Baraha region as a proximate destination not only has a favorable perception of tourists but also leads them to a significant positive impact on travel intention to this destination ( $B = 0.221$ ,  $T = 3.09$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ). The qualitative data corresponds with these findings as participants perceived a positive image of the Baraha region as a destination. All participants,

except participants, frequently mentioned “raw natural beauty” and “rich cultural beauty” as alluring factors of the Baraha region. For instance, Participant 1 says: “The Baraha region has a unique place in my heart, and the visions that I have of my destination are packed with breathtaking landscapes, vibrant cultural history, and kind people.”

## **5.2 Prior proximate tourism experience and travel intention**

In the context of tourists' prior experience and its impact on visit intention, this dissertation's disclosure of prior experience of proximate tourism had the highest correlation (0.919) with travel intention to the Baraha region. The regression analysis between these two factors using SEM found similar findings to tourists' prior experience with proximate tourism ( $B = 0.218$ ,  $T = 3.815$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ), indicating a significant impact on their travel intention to visit the Baraha region. The qualitative data aligns perfectly with these findings and sheds deeper insights. Participants with prior experience in proximate tourism expressed “high expectations” for the Baraha region and deeply appreciated its “well-conserved natural raw beauties and cultural integrity”. For instance, participant-4 alludes to the following: “From exploring ancient temples to trekking through lush forests, I have had the opportunity to immerse myself in the region's rich cultural tapestry. My past experiences have greatly influenced my decision to revisit the Baraha region in the future.” Aligning with this, Participant 2 shared: “My past experiences positively influenced my decision to revisit the Baraha region, as they have left me with cherished memories and a desire to explore further.” These findings support that prior experience of proximate tourism augments tourists' intention and higher expectations to visit the Baraha region.

## **5.3 Tourists' attitude, subjective norms, PBC on travel intention**

The strong positive correlation value of tourists' attitude towards the Baraha region and travel intention (0.850) is supported by the SEM regression values of ( $B = 0.206$ ,  $T = 4.619$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ), implying that positive attitude leads to a significant impact on tourists' visit intention. The qualitative data also supports that tourists find positive sentiments and expectations accompanying their intention to visit the Baraha region during their travels. The comments from participants such as Participant 2 acknowledge that: “The prospect of immersing myself in the natural beauty and rich culture of the area is truly thrilling.” Similarly, the responses from Participant 4 allude to the following: “The prospect of immersing myself in the vibrant atmosphere of the Baraha region, with its picturesque landscapes and diverse attractions, is truly enticing”. The positive sentiments from qualitative findings

support the significant correlation discovered between attitudes and travel intention in the quantitative results.

Though found less impactful in the context of subjective norms, they still significantly play a crucial role in tourists' intentions to travel to the Baraha region. The correlation value of (0.866) suggests a strong positive correlation towards travel intention to the Baraha region. It was found that normative pressures, especially from tourists, friends, and family, significantly impact articulating positive and significant ( $B = 0.157$ ,  $T = 3.091$ ,  $P = 0.002$ ) pressure to travel Baraha region as a proximate tourist. However, the observed P.value of “0.002”, which is statistically significant, is still a 0.2% chance that the obtained result could be due to random variation. When assessing these findings with qualitative data, the interviewee sheds similar sorts of perceptions. For instance, Participant 4 says: “Some friends have encouraged me to take it deeper by focusing on blogging and posting on social media sites”. The role of positive word-of-mouth was found crucial. However, it can also act as a “double-edged sword” because the multiplier effect of negative pressures can directly produce a negative impact on tourists' travel intentions.

Lastly, the perceived behavior control was found to have the most significant impact on tourists' intention to visit the Baraha region as a proximate tourist ( $B = 0.229$ ,  $T = 3.948$ , and  $P = 0.00$ ), which also corresponds to a correlation value of (0.890). From a statistical standpoint, individuals can control their travel-related decision-making processes compared to previous times, leading to a 22.9% increase in their travel intention to visit the Baraha region. The qualitative data also provides similar findings, as tourists expressed high confidence in managing and navigating their travel logistics, increasing their intention to travel to the Baraha region. For taking as a reference, interviewees replied: “I'm generally confident in my ability to navigate such challenges; there are occasional concerns about transportation or accommodation that can arise. However, I believe in proactively addressing these issues and being resourceful, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable travel experience.”

The conversation fosters a clear understanding of the significance of the findings in relation to the achievement of the research objectives. It goes through how these findings align with existing tourism behavior theories and presents new findings and patterns in this research that the previous researchers did not identify. Therefore, identifying the intricacies during the study reveals that the ethnic diversities and backgrounds of tourists should be considered as a factor in a tourism analysis. While some respondents exhibited great enthusiasm and showed excellent attitudes, some approached the tourist experience with hesitation and suspicion, demonstrating highly varied attributes towards the population of tourists.

Fundamentally, the study shaped tourists' multilayered perception of proximate tourism in Baraha. Dividing the participants' reaction to the idea into two folds, some participants exhibited enthusiasm

and zeal. At the same time, some of them embraced it carefully, but some were too skeptical about it. Perceived behavioral control and past experiences were found to be central elements in the development of travel intentions. Also, the perceived destination image of the Baraha region has led to a strong motivation and interest in tourists to visit this region.

#### 5.4 Relation to Tourist Behavior -TPB theory

The research results align perfectly with the applied analytical approaches, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior. The participants' perceived behavior control, attitudes, and subjective norms match with the theory structure, particularly with the interaction between the motivation of the individual, social influences, and the image of the destinations, which form the basis of behavior. As the TPB model reveals, it is regarded as the combination of visitation intention to nearby tourist spots, normative beliefs formed in social interactions, and control over travel that develops people's intentions (Azjen, 2020). The attitudes of participants, constructed by factors like destination attractiveness and experience, agree with the TPB scheme of utilizing attitudes to give better results. In relation to the postulated hypothesis in “conceptual framework – 2.6”; the result of the hypothesis via using structural equation modeling is given as follows:

Hypothesis	Results	Remarks	Pecking order
Ha1: A positive attitude significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.	(B= 0.206, T= 4.619, P= 0.00)	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>4th</i>
Ha2: Positive societal pressures significantly impact travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.	(B= 0.157, T=3.091, P=0.002	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>5th</i>
Ha3: Positive perceived behavioral control significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.	(B= 0.229, T= 3.948, and P = 0.00)	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>1st</i>
Ha4: Positive prior experience significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.	(B = 0.218, T = 3.815, P = 0.00)	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>3rd</i>



Ha5: Positive destination image significantly impacts travelers' intention to visit their nearby destination.	(B= 0.221, T = 3.09, P = 0.00)	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>2nd</i>
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## 5.5 Comparing with prior scholar's findings

This dissertation's findings support the results of Chen et al. (2023). Chen et al. found that tourists who prefer short-haul destinations have a positive attitude towards proximate tourism because of its low negative externalities, “i.e., carbon emissions.” Though this dissertation was not extensively focused on proximate tourism from an environmental sustainability perspective, tourists' attitudes towards proximate tourism were found to positively impact both studies. Similarly, this dissertation completely aligns with the claims of McKercher (2008). McKercher found that tourists feel more connected to their surroundings and foster a sense of pride and familiarity. Similarly, it is believed that visiting nearby destinations enables good stewards of the places they travel by guiding them to make well-informed decisions. This dissertation has also found that subjective norms positively and noticeably impact travel intention toward proximate destinations. The findings of PBC support the outcomes of Chen et al. (2023). Since nearby destinations are considered easy to reach without a burden of accommodation, travelers are more likely to take spontaneous trips without pre-planning. Additionally, individuals' positive, controlled behavior enables them to create responsible, eco-friendly travel choices (Chen et al., 2023).

In the context of tourists' prior experience, I found similar findings to Rodríguez et al. (2013). Rodríguez et al. found that repeated visits to a destination improve tourists' loyalty towards it as tourists gain more experience; their attitude towards that location gains positively because the perceived risk about the location starts to decrease. Lastly, this dissertation supports the findings of Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020). Afshardoost and Eshaghi found that destination image significantly impacts forecasting travelers' visit intention to a certain destination.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

*In this chapter, the overall summary of the dissertation's results will be supplied. More importantly, this chapter will provide the answers to the adopted dissertation questions. Lastly, this chapter will end by providing this dissertation's limitations, further research recommendations, and managerial implications.*

By exploring the impact of TPB factors on travelers' intention to visit the Baraha region of Nepal, this dissertation has integrated both a survey questionnaire and qualitative interview findings to provide an answer to the research question: "How important do tourists' attitudes and behavioral attribution play that leads positive intention to visit the Baraha region?" To measure tourists' attitudinal and behavioral attributions, this dissertation has employed TPB predictors "attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In order to predict the paramountcy of tourists' attitudes and behavioral attributing factors, we found tourists' perceived behavioral control as a more prominent factor for developing a positive intention to visit. This means individuals' control of their travel decision-making was decisive in deciding whether or not they wanted to visit the Baraha region. Similarly, their attitude towards Baraha as a proximate tourist destination was found to be positive and had a noticeable impact on visiting the Baraha region. However, Social norms were found to be positive and substantial but not as important as individuals perceived control ability and attitudes. It was also found from qualitative insights that findings similar to those of tourists articulated a sense of excitement and expectation driven by a favorable attitude towards visiting the Baraha region. It was found that tourists' positive attitude towards the Baraha region was mainly derived from its natural beauty and cultural heritage sites. Tourists were found to be more confident in their ability to control logistical challenges and other decision-making processes when it comes to visiting the Baraha region. This means the sense of local shame and hesitation to visit the Baraha region as a proximate tourist was negligible. Similarly, positive word of mouth from friends and family (subjective norms) affected tourists' decision-making processes.

Similarly, to answer the second research question, "How do a perceived image of the Baraha region and past visits to proximate tourism affect people's intention to visit this destination?" the tourists found the perceived destination image of the Baraha region favorable, leading to a positive and significant effect on the intention to visit this destination. Out of the overall predictors implied in this

dissertation, the perceived image of the destination was found to be the second most impactful after PBC. Similarly, tourists with prior experience of proximate tourism were found to have a favorable and noticeable impact on tourist intention to visit the Baraha region. Similarly, through qualitative insights, the perceived destination image did become a significant factor that affected travel intentions to visit the Baraha region. Tourists expressed that they wanted to return to explore more of that region, and the trip's outcome yielded a positive image in revisitation. Similarly, prior experience in proximate tourism was found to be decisive and yield a positive and noticeable effect on travel intention to visit the Baraha region. In fact, a tourist's prior experience as a proximate tourist has a strong correlation with one intention to visit the Baraha region, which depicts better familiarity and confidence while visiting the Baraha region because it enables them to lower uncertainties and augment their perceived control behavior over the travel decision-making process. Based on the qualitative insights, the major reason behind the positive and significant influence of prior experience as proximate tourism on visit intention to the Baraha region was mainly derived from its emotional attachment, hospitality, and natural beauty.

## **6.1 Research limitation and further study recommendation**

This master's dissertation has produced many insights that were never exposed, especially in the context of tourists' attitudes and behavioral attribution toward proximate tourism. Still, this paper has some limitations. Firstly, the sampling process adopted by this dissertation was convenience sampling, which is considered one of the biased sampling techniques as it holds no specific criteria or guidelines for participation selection. This could be the significant reason that 71% of the survey participants were between 20 and 39 years old. In another way, this dissertation has failed to collect diverse responses from different generations of people. Secondly, this dissertation was limited to a cross-sectional study as this type of research lacks the ability to conclude the relationship between causality and effect because the responses were gathered at a single point in time. Lastly, using other tourist destinations in Nepal, such as Pokhara Kathmandu, would have provided a better picture of the overall impression of the Baraha region than other destinations. Moreover, it was doable, but the fear of gathering enough responses made the researcher reluctant to move forward.

Thus, upcoming researchers adopting longitudinally designed research by incorporating more tourist destinations would provide more holistic information about tourists' impressions and attitudes toward Nepal rather than pinpointing a single destination. Nepal's geographical area is comparatively smaller, which makes it highly feasible for tourists to visit multiple destinations.

### **6.3 Managerial Implications**

The results suggest an array of motifs of tourist decision-making procedures and demonstrate that personal characteristics such as individual choices, social factors, and location perceptions cannot be neglected. Recognizing these factors is a prerequisite for tourism stakeholders in the Baraha area to create holiday-making-based programs and tactics to bring in and retain tourists. The study outcomes can generate awareness among tourism stakeholders, allowing them to be aware of the needs and feelings of residents concerning tourism development. Community inclusion in the decision-making processes and implementation of tourism outputs assures residents, creates a sense of ownership, and empowers them, leading to more excellent support of tourism initiatives. The investigation sheds detailed light on how distinct people's attitudes and behavior towards proximate tourism can be used to show the various factors in their travel intentions. In addition, the study showed how improving the destination image and strategic marketing techniques could help benefit from the region's specific attributes and dramatically increase the number of incoming tourists.

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## Appendix

### 1.1 Survey results

attitude	subjective norms	PBC	prior experience	Destination image	Intention to visit
4.333333	4.666667	4	4	5	4.666667
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1.333333	2.333333	1.666667	2.333333	1.333333
5	5	5	5	5	5
3.666667	4.333333	4.333333	4	3.666667	4.666667
3.666667	4.333333	4.333333	4	3.666667	4.666667
5	5	4.666667	5	5	5
3.666667	3.666667	3	3.666667	3.666667	3.666667
4.666667	4.666667	4	4.666667	4.666667	5
4.666667	4.666667	4	4.666667	4.666667	5
2.666667	4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	5	5
3.666667	4.333333	3.333333	4.333333	4	3.333333

3.333333	3	3	3	3	3
5	5	5	5	5	5
4.333333	4.666667	5	5	5	5
1	1	1	1	1	1
5	5	5	5	5	5
4.666667	4	4.333333	4.333333	3.666667	5
5	5	5	5	5	5
3.333333	4	3	4	3	3
4.333333	4	4	4	3.333333	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
3.666667	4	3.333333	4	3.666667	3
4	4	5	4.333333	3.333333	4
3.666667	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	3.666667	5
4.666667	4.666667	4	5	4.666667	5
4.333333	4.333333	5	4.333333	4.666667	4.666667
4.666667	4.333333	4.333333	4.333333	5	4
4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667
4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667	4	5
4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667
4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667

3.333333	4	4.333333	3.333333	3.666667	2.666667
3.666667	4.666667	5	4.666667	4	4
5	4.333333	3.666667	4	3.666667	4.666667
4.333333	4	4	4.666667	3.333333	4.333333
5	5	5	5	4	5
4.333333	4	4	4	4	4
3.666667	4	4	4	3.666667	3.333333
4.333333	4	4	4	3	4
3.666667	3.666667	4.333333	4	4	4
5	4.666667	5	5	4.666667	5
4	5	5	4.333333	3.333333	4.333333
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
4.666667	4.333333	4	4	3	4
3.666667	3.333333	4.666667	4.333333	3.333333	3.666667
4.333333	4.666667	5	4.666667	3.666667	4.666667
4	4.333333	4.666667	5	3.666667	4.333333
5	5	4.333333	4.666667	4	4.333333
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4.666667
4.333333	4.666667	4.666667	4.666667	3.666667	4.666667
4	4	4	5	3.333333	4.333333
5	5	4.333333	4.333333	3.333333	4.666667
4	4	4	4.333333	4	5

3	3	3.333333	4.666667	4.666667	3.666667
5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4.333333	4	4	3	4.333333
4.333333	4.666667	4.666667	4.333333	5	4.333333
4	4.333333	3.666667	3.666667	4	4
3.666667	4.666667	3.333333	4.666667	4	4.333333
1	1	1	1	1	1
4	4.333333	4.333333	4	3.666667	4.666667
3.333333	3.666667	4.666667	4.666667	3	4
4	4	4	4.666667	3.333333	4.333333
4	4	4	4.666667	3	4.333333
4	4	4	4.333333	3	4
4.333333	5	4.666667	5	3	4.333333
4.333333	4.333333	5	5	3.666667	4
4.666667	5	5	4.666667	3.333333	4.666667
4	4	4	4	3	4
3.666667	3.666667	3.333333	3.666667	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	4	3.666667	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
5	5	5	5	3.666667	5
4	5	4.333333	4.666667	3.333333	3.666667
4.333333	5	4.333333	4.666667	3.333333	4.333333



4.666667	4.333333	5	4.666667	3.666667	4.666667
5	5	5	3	3.666667	4.333333
4	3.666667	4.666667	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667
3	4	3.666667	4	4	3.333333
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	3.666667	4	3.333333	3	4
3.333333	3.333333	4	4	3.333333	4
1.333333	2	2	2	2	2
1.666667	2	2	2	2	2.333333
4	4	4	4	4	4
1	1	1	1	1	1
3	4	5	5	5	5

4.333333	3.666667	4.666667	4.666667	2.666667	4.333333
3.666667	3.333333	4	4	3.333333	4.666667
4.666667	4.333333	4.333333	4.666667	2.666667	5
4	4.666667	4	4.666667	3.333333	4.666667
4.333333	4	4.666667	4.666667	3.333333	4.666667
4.666667	4.333333	4.333333	5	3	4.333333
3.666667	4	4.333333	4.333333	3.333333	4.666667
4.333333	4	4.666667	4.333333	3.333333	4.666667
4	4.666667	4.333333	4.666667	3	4.333333
4	4	4	4	3.333333	4
4.333333	4	3.666667	3.666667	4.666667	5
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1
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3.666667	4	4	4	3.666667	4
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2.666667	4	2.333333	3	3.666667	3.333333
3.333333	5	4.333333	3.333333	2	3.333333
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4.333333	5	4.666667	4.666667	4	4.666667
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3.333333	3.666667	3.666667	4	4	4
2.666667	2	2	2	2	2
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4	4	3.666667	3.666667	3.666667	4
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5	5	5	5	5	5
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1.333333	1	1	1	1	1
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3.666667	4	4	4	2.666667	4
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4.333333	4.666667	4.666667	4.666667	3.666667	3.666667

1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1

## 1.2 Interview results



## Interview answers

<b><u>Positive aspects of Baraha region</u></b>		
<b><u>Challenges faced</u></b>		
<b><u>Prior experience</u></b>		
<b><u>Image of the destination</u></b>		
<b><u>Participant 1 interview answers.</u></b>		
1. "I am filled with a tremendous amount of excitement and enthusiasm whenever I think about going to the Baraha region as a tourist who is quite close by. I feel a sense of eagerness and expectation overcomes me whenever I consider the prospect of discovering the natural splendour and cultural abundance of the area. My travels to this Baraha region have provided me with an abundance of positive experiences, ranging from spectacular vistas of the sceneries, local cuisines, meetings with local communities that have provided me with an intensive cultural experience. The warmth and hospitality of the people have made an indelible mark on me, and as a result, each journey has been an experience that I will never forget."		A t t .
2. "Every time I tell my friends about my trips to the Baraha region, they always respond with a pleasant reaction. People are really interested in hearing about my travel experiences, and they frequently express a desire to travel to the same location themselves. Not just that, they also encourage to me and my other close friends to go there in group. My excitement for exploring the region is further fueled by their encouragement and support. As for conquering challenges while travelling, I have a good deal of confidence in myself. In the past, I have encountered a variety of obstacles, ranging from difficulties with language to problems with transportation, and as a result, I have acquired the ability to adapt and efficiently overcome problems."		S . N
3. "From my point of view, my ability to go to nearby locations such as the Baraha region is strongly impacted by a variety of issues, including accessibility, infrastructure, and safety. Despite the fact that I am normally confident in my abilities to overcome such obstacles, there are times when concerns regarding the availability of transportation or accommodations can dampen my enthusiasm. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that it is important to be resourceful and proactive in order to overcome these issues, which will ensure that the travel experience is seamless and enjoyable."		P B C
4. "I can confirm that I have had the opportunity to travel to other nearby tourist destinations in the Baraha region on several occasions. My relationship to the area has been strengthened as a result of each event, which has been genuinely beneficial. Due to the fact that my previous experiences have provided me with cherished memories and a desire to explore more, my decision to return to the Baraha region is positively influenced by those encounters. I am really enthusiastic about the possibility of additional development and enhancement in the tourism offerings of the region, and I am looking forward to obtaining a direct experience of these offerings."		P . E
5. "The Baraha region has a very unique place in my heart, and the visions that I have of my destination are packed with breathtaking landscapes, vibrant cultural history, and kind people. An experience that is really immersing and unforgettable is provided to guests by its one-of-a-kind combination of natural beauty and cultural		D . I

<b><u>Participant 2 interview answers.</u></b>	
1.	“Traveling to the Baraha region as a proximate tourist fills me with anticipation and excitement. I personally enjoy it too my fullest. And everytime I feel overwhelmed more compared to previous time. The prospect of immersing myself in the natural beauty and rich culture of the area is truly thrilling. My past experiences in the region have been overwhelmingly positive, filled with memorable encounters and breathtaking scenery. From tranquil lakes to majestic mountains, the Baraha region offers a plethora of experiences that leave a lasting impression.”
2.	“My friends always react positively when I share my experiences of visiting the Baraha region. They are intrigued by the stories and photos I bring back, often expressing a desire to visit themselves. Their encouragement and enthusiasm only add to my own excitement for future trips. When it comes to overcoming hurdles during travel, I feel confident in my abilities. I've encountered challenges in the past, but I've learned to adapt and find solutions effectively.”
3.	“From my perspective, factors such as accessibility and infrastructure play a significant role in my ability to visit proximate destinations like the Baraha region. While I'm generally confident in my ability to navigate such challenges, there are occasional concerns about transportation or accommodation that can arise. However, I believe in being proactive and resourceful in addressing these issues, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable travel experience.”
4.	“Yes, I've had the opportunity to visit proximate tourist spots in the Baraha region on multiple occasions. Each visit has been a unique and enriching experience, deepening my appreciation for the region's beauty and culture. My past experiences positively influence my decision to revisit the Baraha region, as they have left me with cherished memories and a desire to explore further. I believe that continued development and improvement in the region's tourism offerings will only enhance the overall experience for visitors like myself.”
5.	“The Baraha region holds a special place in my heart, and my perception of it is filled with images of stunning views, vibrant culture with a small boundary, and warm hospitality. What sets it apart is its unique blend of natural beauty and cultural authenticity, creating an unforgettable experience for visitors. These qualities contribute to its positive image as a destination worth exploring, and I look forward to returning to the region again soon.”

<b><u>Participant 2 interview answers.</u></b>	
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3. "From my perspective, factors such as accessibility and infrastructure play a significant role in my ability to visit proximate destinations like the Baraha region. While I'm generally confident in my ability to navigate such challenges, there are occasional concerns about transportation or accommodation that can arise. However, I believe in being proactive and resourceful in addressing these issues, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable travel experience."	P B C
4. "Yes, I've had the opportunity to visit proximate tourist spots in the Baraha region on multiple occasions. Each visit has been a unique and enriching experience, deepening my appreciation for the region's beauty and culture. My past experiences positively influence my decision to revisit the Baraha region, as they have left me with cherished memories and a desire to explore further. I believe that continued development and improvement in the region's tourism offerings will only enhance the overall experience for visitors like myself."	P . E
5. "The Baraha region holds a special place in my heart, and my perception of it is filled with images of stunning views, vibrant culture with a small boundary, and warm hospitality. What sets it apart is its unique blend of natural beauty and cultural authenticity, creating an unforgettable experience for visitors. These qualities contribute to its positive image as a destination worth exploring, and I look forward to returning to the region again soon."	D . I

<b>Participant 3 interview answers. (Found sceptical – while reading)</b>	
1. “When considering traveling as a proximate tourist to the Baraha region, I must admit I feel rather apprehensive and a little bored. Personally, I prefer traveling means longer time and distance full of different cultural and scenic tastes. While the idea of exploring new places is intriguing, I also harbor concerns about the practicalities and potential challenges that may arise. My past experiences with travel, both proximate, have been mixed, with some memorable moments and instances of discomfort and inconvenience. Honestly, I felt bored as I could recognize so many faces, which made it seem like a family function rather than a trip.”	A t t .
2. “My friends' reactions to my visits to the Baraha region vary. Some express genuine interest and curiosity, but many others seem indifferent or skeptical. While a few may encourage others to visit, many are more reserved in their enthusiasm. As for my confidence in overcoming travel hurdles, I must confess it fluctuates. While I strive to approach challenges with a positive mindset, there are times when I feel daunted by the prospect of unexpected obstacles.”	S . N
3. “From my perspective, several factors influence my ability to visit proximate destinations like the Baraha region. Accessibility, affordability, and safety are paramount concerns, as is the availability of suitable accommodations and transportation options. While I recognize the potential benefits of visiting such destinations, I remain cautious about the practicalities and potential drawbacks. My confidence in combating barriers is somewhat limited, as I tend to err on the side of caution rather than taking risks.”	P B C
4. “I have not previously visited proximate tourist spots in the Baraha region or similar regions. While I'm open to new experiences, my lack of familiarity with the area gives me pause. However, I'm intrigued by the prospect of exploring the region and discovering its unique offerings. Whether my experiences will influence my decision to revisit the Baraha region in the future remains to be seen as I approach travel with a degree of skepticism and caution when it comes to proximate visit like Baraha.”	P . E
5. “Limited information and second hand accounts shape my thoughts on the Baraha region. While I acknowledge its potential as a tourist destination, I also harbor reservations about its suitability for visitors like myself. The images I perceive are a mix of scenic landscapes, cultural attractions, and concerns about infrastructure and amenities. While I can appreciate its appeal to some, I remain cautious about forming overly optimistic impressions without firsthand experience. Though It might be good for the locals, it should also excite me because I need to have value of my money.”	D.I
“In conclusion, while I recognize the potential benefits of proximate tourism in the Baraha region, I find the idea with a degree of caution and skepticism. My past experiences and inherent personality traits influence my attitudes and perceptions, leading me to adopt a more conservative mindset when it comes to travel. While I'm open to new experiences, I prefer to approach them carefully and thoughtfully, rather than rushing in without due diligence. Ultimately, my decision to visit the Baraha region will depend on a variety of factors, including practical considerations, personal preferences, and external influences.”	

<b><u>Participant 4 interview answers.</u></b>	
1. "The thought of traveling as a proximate tourist to the Baraha region fills me with a sense of joy because I love shorter travel like day trippers. I have always been drawn to the idea of exploring new destinations, particularly those with rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. The prospect of immersing myself in the vibrant atmosphere of the Baraha region, with its picturesque landscapes and diverse attractions, is truly enticing. My past experiences with travel have been overwhelmingly positive, and I approach each new adventure with an open mind and a spirit of curiosity. Sometimes, I feel lucky that I reside in such a rich destination in terms of culture, food, and scenery. Also, you do not need to worry about environmental pollution while driving, which also saves money, and you can save time and enjoy that time in the Baraha region."	A t t
2. "When I share my plans to visit the Baraha region with my friends, their reactions are consistently positive and supportive. In fact, some friends have encouraged me to take it deeper by focusing on blogging and posting on social media sites. They express genuine enthusiasm for my travels and often offer words of encouragement and advice. Many of them have visited the region themselves and speak highly of their experiences, which only adds to my excitement. As for overcoming hurdles during travel, I feel confident in my ability to navigate any challenges that may arise. I approach each trip with careful planning and preparation, ensuring that I am equipped to handle whatever comes my way."	S . N
3. "I believe several factors can affect my ability to visit proximate destinations like the Baraha region. Accessibility, affordability, and safety are all important considerations, as is the availability of suitable accommodations and transportation options. However, I am confident in my ability to overcome any barriers that may arise. I have traveled extensively in the past and have developed a knack for problem-solving and adaptability. I believe that with careful planning and resourcefulness, I can ensure a smooth and enjoyable travel experience, regardless of any obstacles that may present themselves."	P B C
4. "Yes, I have visited proximate tourist spots in the Baraha region on multiple occasions, and each visit has been a truly memorable experience. From exploring ancient temples to trekking through lush forests, I have had the opportunity to immerse myself in the region's rich cultural tapestry. My past experiences have greatly influenced my decision to revisit the Baraha region in the future. The warmth and hospitality of the local people, coupled with the breathtaking beauty of the landscape, have left a lasting impression on me. I am eager to return to the region and continue exploring all it offers."	P . E
5. "When I think of the Baraha region, I am filled with images of stunning natural landscapes, vibrant cultural festivals, and welcoming communities. The region has a unique charm and beauty that sets it apart from other tourist destinations. Its rich history and cultural heritage are evident everywhere you look, from the ancient temples to the bustling marketplaces. What makes the Baraha region truly special is its authenticity and warmth, which leave a lasting impression on visitors. I believe these qualities help create a positive image of the Baraha region as a destination worth exploring, and I look forward to returning soon to experience its wonders firsthand. All in all, I feel this region is a perfect solution for proximate tourism. More importantly, it encourages the local economy, and also there is no adverse environmental effect. You can use a bike or even walk, which makes your body fit	D.I