

Motivations and Barriers Driving the Pursuit of Tourism Education in Denmark by Nepalese Students: A Case Study



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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to examine the motivations and barriers influencing Nepalese students to seek tourism education in Denmark. This study aims to uncover the subtle forces behind the decisions to pursue tourism education abroad with a particular focus on Nepalese students enrolled in Aalborg University and the University of Southern Denmark. This study deploys the qualitative case study approach with unstructured interviews as the primary data collection mechanism featuring Nepalese students across different stages of tertiary education in selected institutions. The pillars of the Human Capital and Cultural Capital theories provide the foundation upon which the framework of this study is built. This study uncovered that the primary motivating factors driving Nepalese students to pursue tourism education in foreign locations are the high quality of standards offered by these institutions with the problem-based learning approach emerging as the core precedent. Secondly, Nepalese students are motivated by the multidimensionality of the tourism education curricula that integrates sustainability, technology, and real-world applications adopted by the selected Danish institutions that puts them in a better position to thrive professionally. Third, the Danish tourism education institutions' emphasis on practical skills and critical thinking elevates the employability of these students and their capacity to further develop their native country's tourism sector. The study also uncovered that financial constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, and cultural adaptation are the primary challenges faced by Nepalese students in their pursuit of tourism education in Denmark. As compared to Nepal, Denmark is characterized by higher costs of living and tuition fees. Students also encounter sophisticated immigration processes that further complicate their journey to study abroad. Transitioning from a conventional learning environment in Nepal to a more dynamic learning environment in Denmark requires considerable adjustment and this also compounds to the challenges faced by these students. Withal, the supportive and inclusive Danish educational environment facilitates students' academic and social integration amid these challenges. This study uncovered a divergent theme regarding the role played by educational consultants in driving foreign education pursuit. Some participants admitted to benefitting from the guidance of educational consultants while others demonstrated cynicism towards their motivations.

Keywords: *Nepalese students, tourism education, Denmark, educational migration, motivations, challenges, Human Capital Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, problem-based learning, international education.*

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Introduction

The level of skill and knowledge provided in tourism education appears to be unsatisfactory to requirements of the increasingly dynamic tourism sector (Wang et al., 2010). When examined from the lenses of the human capital theory current tourism education syllabuses, more so in developing countries like Nepal, does not provide the proficiency that meets the demand of the tourism industry. This state prevents learners from deriving optimal value from tourism education in these settings (Badal & Kharel, 2019). The operations of the global tourism industry have transformed tremendously primarily because of the increased connectivity of today's world. Several popular tourists' destinations have witnessed more intense activity in terms of the number of visitors and the frequency of visitations because of modern society's streamlined transportation and communication methods. However, the rapid growth realized in the tourism industry has not been matched by the growth of skills possessed by professionals who practice in this sector. Wang et al. (2010) identified this gap earlier on and it continues to grow as noted by Vaidya (2023). There is an overarching consensus among stakeholders that the transformation experienced in the tourism industry should be matched by the depth of skills and versatility of trained tourism professionals expected to spearhead the industry's operations. Disconcertingly, the problem of the unmatched industry needs and skills/training is worse in developing nations, despite them making a huge portion of the world's most popular tourist destinations.

The movement of students from countries whose tourism education offerings are less equipped to meet the tourism industry demands to countries that offer the quality of education that meets this demand has emerged as one of the remedies for the existing gap. This trend is denoted as educational migration and it plays a crucial role in global mobility, as students go abroad seeking specialized skills and knowledge. The intentionality of this remedy is not yet established even though its ability to solve the unmatched skill and versatility problem in today's tourism industry is logically sound. Furthermore, the little research exists to document how subtle factors shape this larger dynamic. In response to the prevailing uncertainty that surrounds this topic, this study focuses on the motivations and challenges that drive the movement of tourism students from Nepal.

to Denmark. The information that will be generated by this study will be instrumental in creating a balance between the industry requirements and the capacity of current tourism education programs to produce skills that can match these demands especially in the developing nations that depend on tourism as a primary income earner. Denmark is recognized as a frontrunner in tourism education due to its cutting-edge teaching techniques and thorough study programs that equip students for the international tourism sector. The aim of this research is to investigate the reasons that motivate Nepalese students to choose tourism courses in Denmark. These factors include both the attraction of Denmark's strong educational system and the motivation from Nepal's educational and economic conditions.

Education quality is known to be determined by several factors. At times quality education is confused for good, comprehensive content delivered in a fashion that brings out the best of the learners. However, as illustrated by Horng and Sai (2010), the quality of education is also influenced by its responsiveness to the developments emerging in its field of interest. From this perspective, a tourism learning program can be deemed to be of great quality if its content and the methods used in its delivery reflect the happenings of the current tourism industry. The tourism education in Denmark is appealing because of its hands-on approach, global perspective, and opportunities for students to interact with a major tourism destination (Horng & Tsai, 2010). This study paves the way for a focused exploration of the reasons for this specific educational migration. It yearns to understand the forces behind the decisions of Nepalese students to seek tourism education outside their country. Migration is a multifaceted process and the role of several factors that can be environmental, individual, or societal are involved. Therefore, when examining the subdomains existing in this phenomenon it is recommended to deploy a broader outlook that accounts for how several unrelated forces could affect the dynamic of interest. In this respect, this research will adopt a multidimensional outlook focused on individual, financial, and academic factors that influence students' choice to study tourism in Denmark. The results of this research are anticipated to contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation on tourism education and how it can be enhanced to meet the demands of the evolutionary tourism sector.

Nepal, with the Himalayas as a scenic backdrop, possesses a natural inclination for tourism that drives its economy (Badal & Kharel, 2019). Tourism has turned out to be one of the leading sources of forex in the economics of the country system. As illustrated by Vaidya (2023), the

country earned 11 billion from tourism alone in the 2022 financial year. Nevertheless, the tourism sector in Nepal's higher education system frequently does not have the same level of depth and range as more developed nations. Most notably, Thapa and Panta (2019) reported that formal education programs for tourism and hospitality in Nepal were limited to a few institutions with stringent enrollment quotas. Again, most of the institutions that offer this education in Nepal are inaccessible by most young Nepalese because of the lack of affordability and unavailability in rural areas where most young people are keen to engage in tourism and hospitality-related work.

The Gorkha earthquake of 2015 which occurred in Nepal affected most of the structural and sociopolitical infrastructure of the country including schools. The 7.8-magnitude earthquake that occurred on April 25, 2015, left many people dead and caused extensive damage. Numerous colleges and institutions collapsed because of the tragedy, interfering with thousands of students' education. Thieme (2017) states that around 8,000 schools were tarnished during the earthquake, and this had a detrimental impact on part of the nation's learning infrastructure. This natural event caused major physical damage and set the tone for uncertainty and instability. This event influenced many learners to look for education opportunities abroad. The disturbance in learning activities and delays in reconstruction attempts obliged these learners and their families to consider foreign education since it appeared to be the more stable option (Joshi, 2022). This pattern was also influenced by the socio-economic adversities worsened by the natural calamity (Welsch, 2018). The emotional toll of the earthquake in the form of trauma and stress also played a major part in this migration, as learners were compelled to pursue opportunities in more stable surroundings.

As illustrated by Nyaupane and Andereck (2007) students from developing nations, like Nepal are influenced to seek tourism education in foreign locations that offer more quality, practical and globally compatible education. Furthermore, students from these backgrounds are more driven to developed nations because of the promise of a better chance for social upward mobility. The Danish education system is poised for all these offerings, and it is renowned for its creative teaching techniques and curriculum that meets industry requirements as revealed by Liburd and Hjalager (2010). This legacy has made this country a preferred location for students from the developing world that want to learn skills that are able to meet the industry's unpredictable demands. A persistent growth has been realized in the nation's international student population

over the past few decades. On a similar note, Danish universities and colleges provide more elaborate tourism learning programs that incorporate theoretical learning with practical exposure and this is a prerequisite for candidates to thrive in the modern tourism industry. However, it is still not established whether this is the primary motivator for students of Nepalese origin to seek education in Danish institutions. It is imperative to examine how the appeal of education quality as combines with other socioeconomic forces to influence individual decisions. This targeted exploration can lead to more accurate interpretations of the dynamics that affect educational migration in the context of these two countries.

Problem Statement

A particular society should have the capacity to make good use of its resources in a way that meets the needs of its constituents to be suitable. The current state of tourism education in Nepal negates it's from realizing its optimal potential in terms of tourism. One of the major contributors to this state is the inability of its education system to produce candidates with the skills required to perform at the level that the country's robust tourism sector requires. This is the larger problem that this research aims to address. It is imperative to understand the forces that drive global migration patterns to develop policies and practices that shape this dynamic in a way that supports the sustainability of modern society. In the context of Nepal and Denmark, questions still exist regarding the movement of students from the former to the latter country in the pursuit of tourism education. Stakeholders in Nepal's tourism sector should understand why young people are moving to Denmark, the implications of this movement and how this trend can be transformed in a way that benefits the country's tourism sector. Withal, the trend of educational migration in the context of Nepalese students moving to Denmark has not been examined to the depth it deserves. This dearth of knowledge forms the core problem necessitating this research. As reported by Timsina (2021), there has been a marked growth in the number of learners from Nepal studying in Denmark. More precisely, an estimated 3,000 Nepalese students had been Danish schools by 2019. According to Horng and Tsai (2010), Danish tertiary learning institutions embody sustainability and cross-cultural management, and this deepens the learning experiences of foreign students. This trend did not emerge only recently. As noted by Horng and Tsai (2010), there were only a few

Nepalese students enrolled in Danish tertiary institutions in 2006 but this number has tremendously grown over the subsequent decade. Horng and Tsai (2010) state that this rise is driven by the desire for improved educational and career prospects overseas which are deemed to be pathways to a more promising future. It is important to understand how this trend manifests in the context of tourism education (Chuang & Zhao, 2019). It is also enhanced by the perceived opportunity to access better socio-economic lifestyles.

The substandard tourism education offered by Nepalese institutions is exacerbated by the lack of training and resources specific to the industry. Several learning institutions in Nepal lack fundamental infrastructure and advanced curriculum content to yield practical learning opportunities or introduce students to modern tourism practices. This condition results in a causes a gap between what students learn in Nepal and what the international tourism industry demands (Thapa & Panta, 2019). Likewise, the nation's education is characterized by bureaucratic obstacles and financial limitations that further complicate this problem. These obstacles require closer scrutiny of the factors behind Nepalese students' preference for countries like Denmark for their tourism education, despite the considerable personal and financial hardships.

This study endeavors to explore these dynamics and generate strategies that can help developing nations like Nepal to retain and properly prepare its future tourism professional. It also aims to examine various issues related to the migration of Nepalese students to Denmark for tourism education. Now, the depth of knowledge regarding the individual reasons that compel these students to choose Denmark is low and this warrants further exploration. Hence, this study looks to deepen the existing knowledge by examining how the blend of socio-economic pressures and individual goals influence this phenomenon.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is therefore to identify the factors that determines Nepal learner's students' interest in seeking tourism education in Denmark. This study peruses information on the factors affecting educational choices from a multidimensional perspective. This study is however indispensable and appropriate given the function of tourism industry in Nepal and the great need

for manned professionalism arising from the specialized nature of tourism. The research also seeks to examine reasons why Nepalese students choose to pursue tourism education in Denmark. Key interest is channeled towards how the curriculum covers sustainable practices, cultural tourism, technology usage, and crisis response. The research will explore how these characteristics can be utilized in the tourism sector in Nepal. This included an assessment of their effectiveness in enhancing sustainability, conserving culture, and promoting technology.

This study also looks to inform educational and policy adjustments in Nepal besides its main objective. The current performances of the professionals practicing in the Nepalese tourism sector does not match the needs of the industry. The findings of this research can inform strategies geared towards aligning the tourism education quality offered with industry needs. This will also contribute to balancing the Nepalese tourism sector performances and global trends. Informing practical recommendations for employing global education to boost tourism development in Nepal and support an educational model that emphasizes sustainable and culturally relevant tourism practices is a major focus point for this study. The significance of their role is not clearly understood in the context of facilitating foreign education pursuit. Understanding the role that educational advisors and their organizations play in Nepal and how they contribute to facilitating educational migration is another focus point. The study will analyze the ethical implications of their actions and their impact on students' decision-making. This comprehensive analysis is intended to provide actionable recommendations and advice for policymakers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders. The aim of these recommendations is to broaden the educational alternatives at the disposal of Nepalese students in Denmark. This will build a stronger connection between academic success and the requirements of the global tourism sector. Ultimately, this research will contribute towards the establishment of informed policies and protocols that boost the tourism education curriculum of Nepal and its tourism sector in general.

On the same note, this study aims to shed more light on the main motivations and barriers encountered by Nepalese students studying tourism in Denmark. It goes beyond the surface to reveal how Danish teaching methods influence students' future career paths. The study will evaluate how Nepalese individuals utilize the knowledge and skills gained in Denmark once they return to their home country. This assessment offers insights on the impact of international education in filling gaps in the tourism industry in Nepal. It also investigates how institutional

support systems help Nepalese students integrate academically and socially in Denmark. Educational institutions in Nepal and policymakers can benefit from comprehending these factors to improve their education systems for better alignment with international standards and the requirements of the tourism sector. This research process commits to uplift the tourism education system in Nepal in the aspects of global relevance and resilience.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the motivations and challenges that drive Nepalese students to pursue tourism education in Denmark.

Research Questions

1. What are the primary motivations and challenges that drive Nepalese students to seek tourism education in Denmark?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is embedded in its contributions towards a better and more contextualized understanding of educational migration patterns between Nepal and Denmark with a focus on tourism education. The study will shed more light on the motivations of Nepalese learners' motivations to study in Denmark and how the educational qualifications they earn in Denmark shape their professional abilities and career paths. In doing this, the study will unearth new subtleties regarding the process of creating educational methods that meet the global demands of the tourism industry is essential. This research provides policymakers with a fundamental knowledge to create policies that enhance the quality of Nepalese tourism education. This will help uplift the performance of the Nepalese tourism sector as predisposed by King and Raghuram (2013).

This research will the learning experiences offered by foreign institutions affect their capacity to thrive in tourism sector roles that depend on cultural sensitivity. This aspect is essential in the context of Nepal since the country's tourism sector is linked to cultural heritage. (Li & Campbell, 2006). On the same note, this research includes the component of educational consultants and how their operations influence educational migration in the context of Nepal. This evaluation seeks to confirm whether these consultants operate transparently and prioritize the needs of students because these conditions are necessary for streamlined multinational education programs, as illustrated by Hermanowicz (2018). The findings of the study will make major contributions to current discussions on student migration in the field of tourism education globally. It will also demonstrate how gaining specialized education abroad can enhance personal and professional development. This research's findings could also set the precedent for other countries facing similar economic and educational situations.

The findings from this research contribute to the larger conversation on global education and its impacts on both host and donor nations and demonstrate how the personal experiences of the international students are affected as well. This study underline important factors that influence the educational paths and future job opportunities for Nepalese students studying tourism in Denmark through the lens of their individual experiences. Again, the impetus for this research is underlined by its commitment to facilitate a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics of educational migration and how it affects both students and the larger educational institutions.

The study's outcomes are expected to benefit policymakers, educators, and other stakeholder groups within the tourism industry by highlighting the key factors affecting the academic paths and future opportunities of international students. From a Nepalese perspective, the findings of this study will be instrumental in sealing the loopholes that prevent its locally trained tourism professionals from reaching their ultimate potential. The significance of this findings is underlined by their contribution towards elevating the performance of not only the individuals practicing in the industry but also elevating the sector's income potential through this immediate income. This will be facilitated through a thorough examination of the impact of global education on individuals' personal and professional growth with a focus on how international education provides the necessary skills and knowledge to help students make a valuable contribution to their home countries' economies.

A discovery of the specific elements in the practices of Nepal's current tourism education providers that push its young talents to foreign countries will be made by this research. Moreover, the findings of this research are expected to highlight the significance of developing welcoming educational settings that cater to the specific requirements of international students, thus improving their academic and social integration. The knowledge generated by this research will help academic administrators and policymakers to offer better support to international students by understanding the issues they undergo and predict how to best handle them in a culturally sensitive way.

Theoretical Framework

This research process will be guided by the pillars of the Human Capital Theory and Cultural Capital Theory (Becker 2009 and Bourdieu 1986). These models offer a sound structure for examining the factors behind Nepalese learners' decisions to study tourism in Denmark and the results of their actions. The Human Capital Theory posits that education is an investment in future economic success because of the premise that gaining specialized knowledge and skills in tourism can improve students' career opportunities and income potential (Becker, 2009). The workings of this theory is reflected in the eventuality that people with higher levels of education are poised to earn more and experience more fulfilling careers. On the same note, the Cultural Capital Theory will be applied to validate the social rewards that students achieve from their international educational experiences and how these rewards help them thrive in both personal and professional settings. This is applied in ordinary settings as the elevated social experiences that people with multicultural knowledge enjoy because of their ability to blend into a wider variety of social circumstances.

The research seeks to fully grasp the connection between the educational programs in Denmark and the changing demands of the worldwide tourism sector by properly applying these theories. Becker (2009)'s Human Capital Theory suggests that individuals invest in education to enhance their prospects for future income and job opportunities. It is important to note that there are exemptions to this theory that would negate its applications to all circumstances. However, its basic principles provide an ideal mini universe to demonstrate the applicability of its intimations.

Understanding why students from countries like Nepal prefer foreign tourism education is quintessential given the fact that the field of tourism and global movement are two interrelated components. Essentially, tourists must migrate from one place to another to seek gratification by learning other cultures or the meanings of geographical attractions. Becker (2009) argued that education provides individuals with skills, knowledge, and competencies that can be compared to forms of capital that are built up in hopes of resulting in career progression and salary increases.

This theory can be used to determine if their education improves the chances of finding jobs in the global tourism industry and proving the value of international education expenses when considering the case of Nepalese students in Denmark. This is a secondary determination related to the primary objective of this research regarding the motivations of students to seek education outside their country of origin. More precisely, this research is aiming to understand if the rewards that come with better education that is offered elsewhere is a motivator for migration. Wang et al. (2010) propose that there is a frequently increasing gap between the learning programs offered and the demands of the tourism industry. This framework will guide the confirmation of whether the curriculum in Denmark meets standards required and how far off the quality of education in Nepal is from these standards.

On the same note, Bourdieu (1986)' Cultural Capital Theory posits that education can raise a person's social standing by giving them cultural resources that are respected and important in society. In the context of this research, cultural capital will be represented by the level of exposure that students have to other cultures keeping in mind the limits of this theory. In abstract, the cultural capital theory asserts that individual with more opportunities for cross-cultural interactions have higher cultural capital. This theory will be used to examine how Nepalese students can benefit from unique cultural and social advantages associated with studying in Denmark. Social benefits such as global connections, proficiency in different languages, and cultural competencies increase students' upward social mobility beyond the local learning experienced provided Nepalese tourism education.

The social rewards identified here are linked to better workplace performances stemming from increased adaptability to diverse team compositions in the contemporary workforce. The study will explore how Nepalese students can utilize this form of cultural capital to cultivate a competitive

edge in the tourism sector that is increasingly being associated with global experience and cultural diversity. Moreover, this study will examine whether there exists a disparity between the cultural knowledge claimed to be provided by tourism education and the genuine needs and beliefs of the tourism industry, as per the prescriptions of Wang et al. (2010). More specifically this study will question how Danish tourism education aligns with the needs of Nepalese students and appraise the alignment of its educational programs with the evolving demands of the worldwide tourism industry.

The research informing the background of this study indicated that Denmark is a globally recognized destination for international tourism education. This research would like to understand whether the multicultural learning environments offered by the institutions of higher learning in Denmark contribute to this legacy and how these attributes appeal to foreign students from developing countries. Elements like sustainable practices, technological innovations, and cultural tourism that are essential for graduates' career success will be framed as human capital investments. This will help understand why Denmark is chosen as an educational destination and how its tourism learning programs facilitate the alignment between socio-economic incentives and the practical advantages students receive in terms of skills and employability. In the same breath, this study will investigate how these educational opportunities affect the students' career paths when they return to Nepal and assess whether the knowledge and skills gained overseas align with the demands of Nepalese employers in the tourism industry.

This will be achieved by gauging the perceptions of the students regarding what they believe the future holds for them after completing their studies in Denmark. A countering question to gauge potential differences in the opinion on what their outlook would have been had they opted to stay in Denmark will also be included. This thorough assessment strategy is likely to reveal the hidden subtleties that drive student migration. The information generated from this exploration will inform strategies designed to guarantee that the education students receive not only meets their goals but also meets the overall requirements of the tourism sector. This will ultimately shape tourism education policies and practices in a way that benefits the Nepalese tourism sector and the careers of future tourism professionals. The combination of the Human Capital and Cultural Capital theories provide the ideal framework to build knowledge on how educational migration patterns manifest in the Danish-Nepalese tourism education context.

Literature Review

Foreseeably, ample research exists detailing the factors affecting educational migration, given the prominence of this phenomenon in today's increasingly connected world. This chapter examines existing research literature regarding the factors affecting educational migration within the context of Nepal and Denmark. The review will encapsulate the motivations behind students' decision to relocate abroad in pursuit of education and career development opportunities. At the onset, the review takes the stance of a current dearth in knowledge regarding the contextualized forces influencing educational migration among Nepalese students enrolled in the University of South Denmark and Aalborg University. This literature assessment aims to unravel the interactions between cultural, economic, and educational factors influencing the Nepalese learners to relocate to foreign countries to pursue tourism education.

Global Trends in Educational Migration

The increased connectivity of the modern world driven by advanced transportation and communication technologies is largely responsible for the increased mobility of individuals that has been witnessed in the past 4 decades (OECD, 2021). Academic migration has also been on the rise as part of this transformation. The OECD (2021) reports that there has been a rise in the global enrolment of overseas students, with a peak observed between 2010 and 2021. The report noted an approximate rise of 70% in OECD countries with the figures reaching 4.4 million international students in 2021. The increase is an indicator of the expanding scope of global educational migration with more students looking at international institutions as ideal destinations for higher education.

The reasons students choose to study abroad are varied. Altbach and Knight (2007) explored these motivations, identifying several key drivers. The perception among students is that they can access superior quality and specialization of programs from abroad than what is being offered in their home countries. According to Altbach and Knight (2007), this international education facilitates better career prospects and competitive advantage in the global job market. Aside from the

professional gains, students can derive significant personal and professional growth from the exposure to new cultures and global networks which enrich their personal development and global awareness. These factors combined make international education a compelling choice for many students seeking comprehensive academic and life experiences.

Student migration trends are greatly impacted by differences in economic and educational prospects between nations. The learning environments existing in most developed nations appeal to learners hailing from developing nations in terms of compatibility with quality learning outcomes and better career prospects. A study by Choudaha and De Wit (2014) revealed that academic endeavors are strong influencers for student in developing countries relocating to developed countries. This transformation is driven by both personal and professional goals because of the promise of better career prospects linked to academic qualifications from institutions in most developed nations.

The effects of academic migration cannot be underrated both in the host country and the country of origin of the learners. The justification for this stance is captured in a study by King and Raghuram (2013) that introduces the concept of brain gain versus brain drain. This study states that the general position of learning systems in developed and developing nations are set up in a way that leads to brain gain and brain drain respectively. More precisely, King and Raghuram (2013) indicate that the learning experiences of students attached to universities in developed nations include advantages like more all-rounded curricula with both theoretical and practical knowledge, enhanced cultural knowledge, and learning approaches that build critical thought and overall intelligence. The study compares these learning environments as useful in building brain gain. On the other hand, the learning environment provided in universities in developing nations is characterized by traditional, unidimensional teaching approaches with more emphasis on theoretical knowledge and limited practical knowledge (King & Raghuram, 2013). This learning environment is linked to brain drain because it does not equip the learners with the versatility to thrive in today's ever-changing workplace. From this perspective, King and Raghuram (2013) argue that these fundamental differences in the learning environments prevalent in developing and developed nations lead to migration at the expense of students from poorer backgrounds.

Another study by Marginson (2016) stated that progressions in digital learning modules and the changing geopolitical landscape create novel forces that influence the decision by learners to study abroad or opt for local learning institutions. More precisely, digital learning platforms now offer flexible and diverse learning experiences which can drive learners to go for foreign education rather than local education. On the same note, shifts in global political and economic climates can affect the level of appeal of the quality of education provided by specific nations when viewed as academic hubs. The advancement of teaching and learning methods have advanced to an extent that some of the factors that were identified as barriers to learning are now easily mitigatable by learners (Marginson, 2016). For instance, increased travel costs, language barriers, and high cost of learning materials were important factors that learners had to consider when pursuing foreign education. However, as illustrated by Marginson (2016), advanced technologies such as streamlined access to learning materials, remote learning platforms and knowledge management systems have made it easier for learners to access quality education regardless of their location. The institutions that are progressively making use of these technologies are witnessing surges in both the number and diversity of their student populations. According to Marginson (2016), countries that adopt more dynamic learning approaches tend to fit the image of academic hubs and attract more international students. This development has also been impactful in shaping academic migration trends in recent decades.

A systematic review of literature by Goldenberg and Fischer (2023) documents the growing complexity of academic migration because of global economic imbalances and demographic changes. Goldenberg and Fischer (2023) state that academic migration is becoming a prominent pattern in terms of the general appeal of a country within the global landscape. The specializations that are a key characteristic of modern civilization have been pushed to the limit in that some societies are deploying creative or ingenious strategies to keep enjoying the rewards of specializations despite them reaching these limits (Goldenberg & Fischer, 2023). More precisely, there are countries that look to strategically position themselves to be preferred destination points for international students by adopting education provision modalities that are of better quality and more cognizant of the factors that drive an individual's performance in the modern work environment. This study underlines the impetus for the strategic management of education resources in a way that optimizes the benefits drawn from educational migration by both the host nations and the countries of origin of international students (Goldenberg & Fischer, 2023).

On the same note, another review of literature by Sweileh et al. (2018) provides insights into the prevailing patterns in global migration research. The study reveals major correlations between the overall social wellness and educational outcomes of migrants. Apparently, higher educational qualifications are linked to higher scores in social wellness by people living in foreign locations. The study recognizes that this phenomenon needs further scrutiny before useful generalizations are drawn. However, Sweilah et al. (2018) conceded that migrants feel obliged to further their education in foreign countries because of the association between better jobs and opportunities to higher academic qualifications. The study calls for additional research to better understand how migration affects special migrant populations such as international students (Sweileh et al., 2018).

The State of Global Tourism Education

A wide variety of factors ranging from geographical location, socioeconomic status and infrastructural developments shape the state of international tourism education. As illustrated by Mihalič et al., (2015) tourism education is synonymous with advanced infrastructures and close relationships with the tourism industry and enabled institutions to offer cutting edge programs that integrate modern technologies and methodologies in the developed world. Mihalič et al., (2015) further explain that the learning platforms in developed nations are designed to provide students with practical skills and theoretical knowledge which are essential to their performance in the typical workplace within today's sophisticated tourism industry. On the contrary, developing nations like Nepal offer learning platforms riddled with poor educational infrastructure, non-responsive curricula design and delivery methods, and skewed focus on theoretical rather than practical knowledge. Research conducted by Badal and Kharel (2019) focused on examining the country's preparedness to fulfill the goals of an ambitious project developed by the Nepali government called Visit Nepal 2020 reveals these concerns as well.

These limitations often result in outdated curricula and insufficient practical training, which do not heed to the increasing demands of the global tourism market (Badal & Kharel, 2019). Withal, some developing nations like Nepal offer rich touristic value to global audiences and are therefore, poorly positioned to make the most out of their natural appeals because of the untapped potential of the talent of their tourism workers. Badal and Kharel (2019) protest how the far-reaching effects

that the untapped potential of the country's tourism industry on Nepal's future growth potential. The country welcomes in the excess of 2 million visitors each year, but it does not derive optimal revenue rewards from the high volume of tourists that flock its country. According to Badal and Kharel (2019), having an insufficiently skilled tourism industry workforce is one of the primary reasons Nepal is yet to reach its potential. A consideration of other economic growth perspectives for Nepal other than tourism further underline the impetus for efforts geared towards addressing the unfulfilled potential problem. Apparently, other sectors in the country would need heavy capital investments before reaching the revenue generation capacity that Nepal's tourism sector possesses.

Developments in recent research call for a focused redress of the factors preventing tourist hubs from reaching their potential because of inferior tourism education. For instance, Mihalič, et al. (2015) state that tourism education should be strengthened by combining moral, cultural, and sustainability values. According to this study, curricula should go beyond the conventional business-oriented approaches and be tailored to orient students on how to confront the social, environmental, and economic impacts of tourism with the aim to promote responsible and sustainable practices within the sector. Mihalič et al (2015) also posit that scholastic programs can prepare learners more meticulously to contribute to the development of tourism by embody moral and sustainability values in a way that preserves the integrity of local communities. This process is important for preparing graduate students who can make responsible decisions for the benefit of the industry and the communities it impacts.

From another perspective the Caribbean has been reevaluating its tourism education model to represent its socio-economic realities as opposed to adopting Western-centric educational frameworks. A study by Lewis-Cameron (2015) argued for the importance of adapting tourism education to consider local realities especially in the Caribbean. She argued that Western model of tourism education may not consider the specific socio-economic and cultural context of Caribbean countries. Therefore, she advocates for educational programs founded on the region's unique attributes and challenges. This process is seemed as important in for enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of tourism education and promoting sustainable practices within the local tourism industry. Caribbean tourism education can contribute immensely to the sustainable

development of the sector and ensure that it benefits locals and the entire economy if it aligns its educational content with the regional needs (Lewis-Cameron, 2015).

Čavlek (2015) echoes argument for alignment by arguing for the importance of experiential learning in tourism education. The study indicated that experiential learning is important for bridging theoretical knowledge and practical application in the sense that it involves engaging students in direct experiences that are relevant to their future career in tourism and enhances their practical skills and industry readiness. Students can better understand the complexities of the tourism industry and develop the required competencies that can respond to the challenges of the industry by participating in real-world projects and scenarios. Experiential learning enriches students' understanding and prepares them to adapt and be proactive in their future roles in the tourism sector. Going forward, the future of tourism education must embrace flexibility, and global perspective. This has been noted by Airey (2020) who pointed to the significant growth of the industry, but all this happens with challenges in adapting to the rapid changes in the tourism industry, including the integration of digital technologies and the increasing importance of sustainable practices. Therefore, educators and institutions must continuously improve and evolve their products to prepare students for the future. This includes ensuring that education is relevant and effective in a globally connected and environmentally conscious world.

Human Capital Theory in Educational Migration

A close correlation exists between the dynamics of student migration and the key tenets of the Human Capital Theory. This relationship can be envisioned by examining the descriptions in a study by Potelienė and Tamašauskienė (2013). Here, the concept of human capital is explored through the lens of economic returns to education, emphasizing how higher education can be viewed as a substantial investment decision. Potelienė and Tamašauskienė (2013) calculate the private net present value of higher education, delineating the economic benefits accruing to individuals who invest in their education. The authors highlight that the investment in education, regarded under the human capital theory, includes all expenses aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of individuals. These investments are anticipated to yield future economic returns in terms of increased productivity and, consequently, higher earnings. Furthermore, Potelienė and

Tamašauskienė (2013) provide a practical measure of how long it takes for the benefits of education to compensate the costs incurred in its acquisition. Their study demonstrates that education significantly boosts individual earnings potential after an individual has secured employment or put the skills learned into action to offset the expenses incurred in paying for tuition and other costs related to learning-related accommodations. The study by Potelienė and Tamašauskienė (2013) provides a relatable framework for understanding how the Human Capital theory manifests and provides a foundation for justifying investments made towards educating future professional.

A complementing perspective is provided in a study by Johnes and Johnes (2004) that thoroughly analyzes the role of human capital in economic development. This study states that human capital is vital for elevating the economic benefits that individuals draw from education and training. Johnes and Johnes (2004) further states that the economic rewards of education stretch beyond individual benefits and contribute to communal and ultimately national development. The study also highlights the notion that investment in education acts much like any financial investment because learners incur costs in the present in anticipation of higher future earnings. This perspective justifies the socioeconomic-related motivations behind student relocations from developing countries to foreign countries that are better developed in most cases. The article further examines the complex issues involved in measuring the return on education, including direct financial gains such as increased earnings, and social returns such as improved health and social inequality. The integration of these factors into the analysis indicates comprehensively the importance of education as a driver of socio-economic mobility and a positive factor in the strategic development of human resources in any economy. This model can be useful for policymakers and educators in developing countries because of its insistence on availability of investments in quality education that can yield substantial individual and societal benefits.

A study by Wang et al (2010) indicates contextual relevance due to its investigation of alignment between tourism higher education and the needs of the tourism industry in Australia. It examines in detail the content and nature of tourism degrees and their relevance to the skills and knowledge demanded by the tourism sector Wang et al. (2010) points out the differences in industry requirements and curriculum expectations. His findings suggests a huge gap between the perceptions of academic providers and industry professionals concerning the value of tertiary

degrees for tourism professionals and the relevance of the specific skills and subject areas offered at universities. This variance indicates a misalignment that can impact graduates' employability and effectiveness within the tourism industry. Wang et al. (2010) is an indication that curriculum designers must work with industry representatives to ensure that tourism education is responsive to real-world practices and industry expectations. This collaboration can help enhance employability of graduates and ensure that tourism education effectively contributes to the development of tourism industry by empowering students with the required knowledge and skills. The study by Wang et al. (2010) highlights the significance of educational investments in meeting the ever-evolving industry needs and yielding economic benefits both at the individual level and aggregately contributing to national development.

Academic Tourism and the Cultural Capital Theory

Educational migration and academic tourism are two closely interrelated concepts that merge to become a single component when examined from the perspective of human migration. As one would predict, the advanced progression of communication and transportation technologies that has driven globalization over the past few decades have also been potent in transforming academic tourism. Only a handful of research studies have documented this transformation even though its comprehension is integral to gaining knowledge behind the subtle factors that drive student migration. A better understanding of this transformation is possible by assessing the interactions between cultural capital theory and academic tourism. A study by Karlsson (2005) assesses the interaction between the social and cultural capital of a locations and its ability to generate tourism. According to Karlsson (2005), cultural capital refers to the values and way of life inherent to a place which are characteristic of its uniqueness and general appeal to tourists. The different life modes and the social capital embedded in a location can spur tourism attraction as illustrated by Karlsson (2005). More plainly, the perceptions and beliefs that the people within a location cultivate about the unique features of their locations and how they reflect or express them mainly contributes to the appeal of their environment to outsiders.

The predispositions of Karlsson (2005) have implications on tourism education even though they are mainly related to the culture of tourism. In line with this conceptualization, the people who

originate in a tourist attraction have a major role to play in the realization of the tourism potential of the area because this depends on how well they reflect their reverence and admiration for the tourist attractions. The lack of proper knowledge on how to present the tourist attractions to visitors can affect the level of utility that tourists derive from these locations (Karlsson, 2005). This framework provides a foundation understanding of the cultural and social structures embodied in a location can either facilitate or hinder the development of its tourism sector. This analysis indicates the benefits of leveraging these forms of capital to enhance the productivity and sustainability of tourism ventures.

A study by Rodríguez et al. (2013) builds on this framework by analyzing its economic, environmental, and social dimensions of academic tourism. According to Rodríguez et al. (2013), academic tourism is the migration of students seeking learning opportunities in foreign locations. Apart from being pure human migration, this form of movement can be termed as tourism because foreign learners have that uncommon interest of appreciating and learning the cultures and geographical appeals of their academic destinations. Furthermore, learners reside in their destinations for longer periods and these stays contribute substantially to local economies through consistent and diverse spending patterns (Rodríguez et al., 2013). Academic tourism is increasingly becoming synonymous with sustainability because its environmental footprint is minimal. As illustrated by Rodríguez et al. (2013) students primarily use existing infrastructure and are integrated into urban settings which reduces the need for new constructions that are typical in traditional tourism.

The connection between the scope of the research by Rodríguez et al. (2013) and this study is not clear, but its examination is still relevant because it touches on points that are relevant to this examination. For instance, academic tourists foster cultural exchange and environmental awareness which support sustainable development within the host community. This is perhaps more applicable to examining the standing point of Denmark as a tourism education destination, but it can also be applied to Nepal in case it reaches its potential in providing quality tourism education to the extent that it attracts students from other locations. The link between the concepts of cultural capital theory and academic tourism manifests from their symbiotic interactions. From one perspective, the culture of the host nation also benefits from having people with different cultural backgrounds since they enrich the holistic culture of their new residence. As illustrated by

Rodríguez et al. (2013) foreign students bring economic rewards to the nations they study in through their investments in learning and the consumption of services and products that are essential to their residence.

On the same note, these students build their cultural capital by learning new cultures and transferring their beliefs to the locals. At the end of the road, the countries of origin of these students also benefit through the increased earning potential that is linked to foreign education. Also, this process benefits students by elevating their personal development, employability and upward social mobility and benefits the host communities through increased demand for products and services. A win-win situation emerges for both the host communities and the students.

The studies by Rodríguez et al. (2013) and Karlsson (2005) illuminate how nations can harness their unique cultural offerings to promote tourism that is economically beneficial and culturally enriching in their attempt to sustain and expand the cultural capital of the individual and the community. This synthesis underlines that academic tourism is a profound intercultural exchange that enriches global understanding and cooperation. Rodríguez et al. (2013) appreciate the positive outcomes linked to academic tourism but also raise concerns regarding the looming inequality that may be created by a continuation of academic tourism if a favorable balance is not achieved. According to this study, the developing nations that are characterized by poor learning infrastructure, poor living standards and little appeal to foreign students may be disadvantaged if unregulated academic tourism continues.

An element of brain gain, and brain drain emergence in Rodríguez et al. (2013)'s concerns. More precisely, the more advanced countries that offer good learning environments and high standards of living appeal to larger crowds of foreign students and therefore, they have a good chance of benefiting from talented or intelligent students flocking their learning institutions (Latukha et al., 2022). On the contrary, the less developed countries with poor living standards and poor education quality offerings will become unattractive and gradually lose their most talented students to the developed nations.

Otegui-Carles et al. (2022) highlights some of the recent developments that have been unfolding in the field of academic tourism in the recent past by highlighting that solo academic travel has been a prominent feature. Solo travel in this context refers to a means for personal and professional

development and a critical factor in fostering gender equity within academic communities. According to Otegui-Carles et al. (2022), the focus on solo travel underscores the need for more inclusive policies supporting diverse forms of academic mobility and catering to the unique needs of academic tourists whose lengthy stay presents economic and cultural gains to their destinations. Solo academic tourists can be compared to explorers who are determined to learn new things in never experienced environments. Otegui-Carles et al. (2022) projects them to a woke international student and say that the manifest of this identity as an embodiment of the tremendous changes that have occurred in the field of academic tourism. Withal, there is little evidence that the emergence of solo academic tourists can addressing the more pressing concerns of brain drain and gain that emerged from the studies of Latukha et al. (2022) and Rodríguez et al. (2013).

On the same note, Shang et al. (2023) points to the potency of academic tourism in contributing to sustainable development goals by promoting eco-friendly practices and raising environmental awareness. Academic tourism has the potential to drive positive environmental change by providing learning institutions in the host country an opportunity to serve as agencies in advancing global environmental objectives. However, it is not yet clear as to whether the proliferation of academic tourism can contribute towards creating a learning environment that can produce the level of skills required to push industries to higher standards in terms of the performance of new trainees. The way Shang et al. (2023) describe academic tourism does not establish a relationship between this phenomenon and the decisions to study abroad. This study does not portray academic tourism from the perspective of an individual. This trend is also noted in the other studies [(Latukha et al. (2023) and Rodríguez et al. (2013)]. Hence, a need for an exploration of academic tourism from an individual level arises. Studies that examine academic tourism from this perspective can provide direction on whether academic tourism affects the decisions of international students to seek education outside their countries of origin.

The Quality of Tourism Education in Denmark and Nepal

Denmark

Denmark is one of the most developed nations in the world. The country's performance in terms of the standards of living and economic development is rivaled by only a few states. It will not be surprising to assume that it offers better quality education as compared to Nepal. This assumption is backed by existing research literature. A focused review of existing literature reveals that glaring differences exist in the quality of education provided in developed and developing nations (Meged & Holm, 2022). These differences have been predicted to be instrumental to the migration of students from developing to developed nations in the pursuit of quality education. In the context of this research, it is imperative to examine these differences in Denmark and Nepal. Beginning with Denmark, a study by Meged and Holm (2022) highlights the superior quality of education provided by Danish learning institutions. More precisely, Danish institutions offering tourism education tend to incorporate sustainable practices and their broader implications to global environmental consciousness within the industry into their teaching approaches. In doing so, they offer international students more updated knowledge that is seamlessly transferable into the working environment. The incorporation of sustainability elements in tourism education is not a necessarily a mark of quality. However, the inclusion of sustainability practices within the curriculum represents a more progressive and proactive strategy of helping future trainees keep abreast with the latest developments in the industry. As illustrated in the study by Meged and Holm (2022), the inclusion of sustainability practices in the delivery of tourism education is important because of the close relationship between conservation and tourism. Most tourist attractions across the globe are natural and often times depend on the health of the ecosystem. If unsustainable practices were upheld in the tourism industry, the longevity of the attractions would shrink tremendously. Therefore, it is important to integrate tourism education and sustainability practices and this strategy has benefited Danish institutions of higher learning in appealing to international tourism students. Meged and Holm (2022) state that Danish institutions train students to be future leaders in eco-friendly tourism practices by prioritizing sustainability both in curriculum design and as a core ethos. This proactive strategy aligns with global trends demanding more responsible tourism operations. Therefore, these institutions prepare students to meet the increasing international demand for sustainable tourism professionals more effectively.

Uplifting and maintaining the quality of education requires a multidimensional plan that integrates strategies to improve the content delivered, the mechanisms used in delivering the content, and the platforms for learners to practice their newly acquired skill. An education program may have the best learning content and deploy the best teaching mechanisms. However, if it lacks the platforms to allow students to practice what they learn, its chances of success will be limited. A holistic model that takes account all the three dimensions of education is the critical ingredient for uplifting the quality of education delivered. In this regard, Clausen and Andersson (2018) rubberstamp the superior quality of Danish tourism education by examining how the use of problem-based learning (PBL) enhances student preparedness and career prospects. According to Clausen and Andersson (2018), the PBL model enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed by students to thrive in the ever-changing tourism sector by fostering a strong link between theoretical knowledge and practical use. This approach is highly effective in equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to address complicated issues and chart new possibilities in the novel tourism workplace (Clausen & Andersson, 2018). The tourism sector is predominantly service-oriented, and this requires that workers have advanced soft skills. A traditional lecture-style teaching model can be effective in quipping learners with hard skills that are also important for success in the workplace. However, the dynamic nature of the activities undertaken in the tourism industry makes soft skills more valuable than hard skills. As explained by Clausen and Andersson (2018), the problem-based learning model can help tourism students to effectively learn and hone these soft skills. This method of learning provides sufficient opportunities to apply and test the knowledge gained from the content covered in the curriculum and by doing so it allows students to assess how well they have mastered important skills. Clausen and Andersson (2018) admit that the problem-based learning approach is highly effective in equipping tourism learners with the versatility they need to thrive in the industry. Most notably, this approach can be useful in helping learners to be adaptive to various interpersonal interaction situations that are a commonplace in the industry. Most tasks involved in the typical tourism job involve interacting with people either in person or through communication technologies. Countries that primarily depend on tourists, like Nepal receive high volumes of visitors from various parts of the world. On most occasions, one cannot fully master how to communicate with people from various parts of the world because of language barriers and the differing cultural backgrounds. Being adaptive and versatile is very important in such situations. The problem-based learning model equips students with the level of

versatility that can be helpful in mitigating the different challenges that they may encounter when working with visitors from a different cultural background (Clausen & Andersson, 2018). Students in post-graduate education programs who have working experience prefer programs that mimic the problem-based learning strategy.

While there is a consensus regarding the effectiveness of the problem-based learning strategy in equipping tourism students with the skills required to thrive in the industry, some uncertainty exists regarding its effectiveness in educating international students. Another study by Hammershøy (2015) states that although international students may face challenges with interactive and group-oriented learning approaches that are widely adopted in Danish educational facilities, they also experience substantial advantages from the inclusive and captivating teaching techniques commonly found in Danish tourism education. The problem-based learning model as described by Clausen and Andersson (2018) involves group-based learning activities with regular interactions among students. The design of this teaching strategy aims to build the knowledge and skills of students by giving the opportunities to teach and learn from each other. This strategy may be effective when working with students from similar backgrounds and speaking the same language. However, its application may be more challenging when dealing with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and speaking a different language. Figuratively, foreign students who have just relocated to study abroad tend to isolate themselves or not express themselves freely as they adjust to the new environment, language, and norms. If an educator has a class with several students coming from different cultures and not speaking the same language, he or she may have a difficult time when deploying the problem-based learning approach. The communication barriers that exist will not allow students to showcase the level of expression and willingness to interact that is required for the success of this teaching method. Regardless of the difficulties encountered in applying this strategy, its effectiveness in producing skills that meet industry demands outweigh these shortcomings. Hammershøy (2015) indicates that interactive learning can be used as a strategy to empower foreign students to adopt to the new culture and learning environment more swiftly because of the increased interactions it requires. As a result, most Danish institutions utilize this strategy, and it has shown its effectiveness in improving the academic performances of international students and meticulously prepares them for the global workforce by enhancing their interpersonal and collaborative skills (Hammershøy, 2015).

The position regarding the quality of tourism education provided by Danish institutions is preserved in a study Timsina (2021) that explores the direct application of theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges. This study documents how Danish universities integrate theoretical and practical learning processes by allowing learners to engage in consultancy projects to address actual industry needs. This approach has been witnessed enhance students' practical skills and boost their confidence ahead of participation in the workforce upon graduation. Timsina (2021) details the commitment by the Danish tourism education sector to maintain excellence by spearheading educational innovation. Danish institutions prioritize sustainability and practical applications to ensure that their students are well-prepared to meet the current industry standards and equipped to lead and innovate in their future career and because of this it is considered an educational hub cultivating tourism professionals ready to tackle global challenges (Timsina, 2021)

Nepal

Research focusing on the quality of education in Nepal projects notable shortcomings for the nation's learning infrastructure and the teaching mechanisms adopted in most of its learning institutions. More prominently, a study by Jaishi (2016) states that a significant discrepancy exists between the demands the Nepalese tourism sector and the education provided by its learning institutions. According to this study, the lack of qualified faculty, inadequate infrastructure, and curricula that are not aligned with global standards are primary barriers to the capacity of Nepalese tourism education to fulfill the learning needs of its student population. This sentiment reflect an all-rounded gap in the Nepalese education system that may take longer periods of time to be at par with the ideal education systems of the modern world. The main problem for tourism education in Nepal is the lack of consensus regarding the ideal content to be used on learners. Jaishi (2016) indicates that there is a high level of disintegration amongst tourism education providers in Nepal. The country does not have an umbrella institution to oversee what is being taught and how the teaching is done for tourism education.

As a result, several education providers have emerged with differentiated learning content and methodologies whose effectiveness in producing the right skills is unchecked. The primary danger of the current situation is that there is no consistency in the outcomes of the current tourism

education in the country and this makes it almost impossible for policymakers and other stakeholders to identify good practices from bad practices in terms of training future practitioners in the country's illustrious tourism sector. A significant portion of the country's gross domestic product comes from the tourism sector, and the vitality of this sector has heightened the focus of young population in tourism. Jaishi (2016) reveals that most young people in Nepal are attracted to pursue careers in the tourism sector because of the employment and earning prospects linked to the industry. However, the quality of education that is accessible to these young people prevents them to get the full rewards of the industry.

Jaishi (2016) describes the tourism sector as the business of pleasing people. As simple as it may sound, it is not an easy feat to make people feel warm and welcome especially if they come from a different cultural background and speak a different language. A set of finesse skills and versatility are critical ingredients for any individual to thrive in this context. The ineptness of Nepalese institutions of higher learning specializing in tourism training to deliver quality education serves as motivation to seek education in foreign countries where educational institutions are perceived to better prepare them for a competitive global job market (Jaishi, 2016). Another study by Ghimire (2009) backs this sentiment by pointing towards the systemic failures in policy implementation and the underdevelopment of tourism infrastructure as the major contributors to the ineptness of tourism education in Nepal.

Furthermore, Thapa and Panta (2019) point to the gap in practical training and international exposure that exist in Nepalese tourism education despite their vitality in satisfying the demands of the global tourism industry. According to Thapa and Panta (2019), the lack of practical engagement and global perspective in Nepalese tourism education programs influences students to seek education in countries with more established and globally acclaimed tourism education systems. The concerns raised by Jaishi (2016) are still echoed in the study by Thapa and Panta (2019) regarding the lack of a proper oversight on matters related to tourism education in Nepal. Apparently, the country is yet to establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to check the quality of learning materials and curricular designs for tourism education. Most of the learners that are keen on pursuing tourism education in Nepal are from rural areas where the sector is better pronounced. However, as illustrated by Thapa and Panta (2019), these learners have limited access to formal tourism education at the tertiary level. In some circumstances, some of them resort to

informal types of learning because they interact with tourists and tour guides as they reside near protected areas. Thapa and Panta (2019) attribute the inaccessibility of formal tourism education to the limited number of government or public institutions offering programs in this field. Most education centers providing tourism education programs are private and seemingly too expensive for most learners from rural Nepal. The current state makes it difficult to regulate the development and delivery of tourism education curriculum because the private institutions that provide these programs are not obliged to coordinate their services with education regulatory bodies.

As illustrated by these research studies, there are major gaps between the quality of education provided in Denmark and Nepal. Danish institutions provide a tourism education package with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are refined to meet the demands of the ever-evolving tourism industry. Approaches like the problem-based learning (PBL) adopted by Danish institutions provide learners sufficient opportunities to put their newly acquired knowledge to practice and this boosts their confidence and readiness to serve in a dynamic tourism industry. The proactive nature of the curricular design and knowledge delivery mechanisms of Danish institutions are integral to the elevated quality of tourism education the country offers. On the contrary, Nepalese learning institutions are riddled by numerous challenges that prevent them from providing the quality of education that the country's vibrant tourism sector deserves. Poor infrastructure, coupled with inert curricula and teaching methods prevent the country's learners from acquiring skills that meet the demands of the tourism sector. This variation creates a justification for Nepalese students to seek tourism education in foreign locations.

Motivations for Students in Developing Countries to Study Abroad

Sufficient research evidence to facilitate a fundamental understanding of the motivating factors for students to migrate from developing nations to developed nations exists. Rahimi et al. (2018) examines the influencing factors driving South Asian students to pursue higher education in tourism and hospitality in Britain. According to this study, economic factors, and the endeavor for professional and personal development strongly influence this migration. The allure of gaining internationally recognized academic qualifications is a key driver behind student migration. The earnings made in tourism by professionals are stratified according to the quality of services they

are capable of offering. Some of the learners that have earned good quality education are able to provide services of better quality as compared to their counterparts who have undergone subpar quality training. Taking this into consideration, learners from Nepal may be influenced to seek tourism education in countries with more developed learning facilities like Britain and Denmark to get globally acclaimed tourism degrees or diplomas. Such qualifications are believed to elevate the employment prospects of students and yield better career outcomes. Rahimi et al. (2018) also underline the role of societal and familial expectations in shaping these educational pursuits. Parents often view overseas education as a pathway to upward social mobility for the family in addition to the individual gains they present to the students. Foreign education is deeply intertwined with broader social expectations in the perspective of students hailing from developing nations.

Another study by Nikou and Luukkonen (2023) state that students from developing countries are not solely motivated by academic or career enhancements but also by the personal and professional development opportunities that these foreign learning experiences provide. More precisely, learning abroad is perceived by students to be a strategic move to accumulate cultural, social, and symbolic capitals as illustrated by Nikou and Luukkonen (2023). These outcomes are also believed to be increasingly valuable in the modern dynamic tourism workplace. Individuals who have undergone training in a multicultural learning environment are better positioned to offer quality services in the tourism industry because they understand the cultural cues that affect the quality of interactions with visitors. This is another motivator for Nepalese tourism students because it empowers them to not work more effectively in providing tourism services but also perform well when working independently in roles related to hospitality. This perspective is significant as it points to a transformation in student motivations from traditional academic pursuits to a broader, more integrated approach that includes building networks, enhancing employability, and personal growth through cultural exchange. Nikou and Luukkonen (2023) contribute to the ongoing discourse on the value of student mobility and its role in shaping global citizens by examining the broader impacts of international study experiences

In an earlier version, Gribble and Tran (2016) pointed towards the necessity for educational programs to integrate real-world experience and global exposure into the course contents and teaching processes utilized in delivering tourism education. Gribble and Tran (2016) argued that

such integration significantly boosts the employability of graduates in the competitive international job market in addition to making the learning experience richer and more relevant. The message in this study complements earlier realizations that the differences in the quality of the education offered in developed and developing nations could be a motivator in educational migration at the benefit of developed nations. From the perspective of students coming from developing nations like Nepal, foreign education is a mark of elevated skills. Most employers in the country's tourism sector value these qualifications because they associate them with the ability to interact with multicultural visitors more proficiently and a better familiarity with the professional standards that are essential to quality hospitality service delivery.

The findings of Timsina (2021) further confirm the notion of quality differences promoting student migration from developing to developed nations in the pursuit of better training and career prospects. According to Timsina (2021) international students often encounter stark realities that challenge their expectations like unrecognized qualifications and menial jobs when seeking jobs in other locations with only their domestic qualifications. International students feel compelled to further their education in foreign countries upon arrival to be more relevant and qualified for good jobs in their new destinations as well. This can also be a powerful factor because working abroad is another ideal opportunity available to students from developing nations including Nepal. Developed countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Scandinavian countries, and France among others are known to provide better wage rate as compared to developing nations. Since the domestic qualifications possessed by students are not recognized or valued in these countries, foreign students from developing nations may feel obliged to pursue academic qualifications in these countries as a way of increasing their chances of getting decent jobs. This study demonstrates how its international education is influenced by the students' aspirations and their prevailing socio-economic conditions. A new dimension detailing the strong urge to pursue education in foreign locations even for individuals who do not originally intend to study abroad emerges from the findings of Timsina (2021).

In another dimension Nelson (2010) revealed that the decision to study abroad is both a career-oriented and personal choice. Apparently, economic hardships, political instability, and limited educational opportunities that are characteristic of some developing nations including Nepal are major push factors for educational migration. Nelson (2010) states that the transformative capacity

of international education for foreign students who encounter complex identities and societal expectations is higher and this serve as a key motivation to follow this path. Additional motivation for foreign education could also include the expectations to succeed and contribute to the welfare of their families and communities back home. (Nelson, 2010). The earning potential of young people from developing countries like Nepal increases tremendously once they get international education. Therefore, family members can also play a part in convincing these young people to seek foreign education with the belief that it will open new doors for economic prosperity both for the young person and the family at large. This dynamic indicates that the decision to study abroad is both a personal endeavor and a socio-cultural obligation influenced by global educational aspirations and local socio-economic conditions.

A study by Sánchez et al. (2006) found that motivations such as the desire for personal growth, career advancement, and improved educational quality are common across different nationalities. However, the intensity and combination of these factors can be different vary significantly based on cultural and national contexts. On the same note, a study by Yue and Lu (2022) revealed that intrinsic motivations such as personal interest and the pursuit of knowledge identified as major influences on the decision to study abroad. Furthermore, the study stressed that self-motivated students perform better academically and adapt better to new cultural environments. However, motivations to study abroad are not limited to intrinsic factors alone. The external socioeconomic factors detailed earlier are powerful drivers of student migration as well. According to Yue and Lu (2022), the choice to pursue education abroad is influenced by several internal and external factors. However, most explorations regarding the factors influencing this movement ignore the potency of intrinsic factors.

A different perspective is regarding the motivations that drive student migration is offered by Thapa and Panta (2019) who state that the lack of tourism development in Nepal can be detrimental the sector's overall health and its capacity to support professional growth through effective education. This study suggests that the stagnation in tourism development might also influence students' perceptions of viable career opportunities in Nepal, and this could be a contributor to students' decisions to seek tourism education elsewhere. Also, Shrestha (2021) examines the socio-demographic profiles of Nepalese students studying abroad and identifies several factors

that influence their decisions to study overseas. The most prominent ones include economic conditions, educational aspirations, and social networks.

The motivational factors examined thus far are also reflected in a systematic review by Nikou and Luukkonen (2023) that assessed the push-pull factors affecting international students' decisions to study abroad. According to this study, the main push factors for foreign education included the lack of quality education and limited career opportunities in home country. On the same note, Nikou and Luukkonen (2023) identified the main pull factors to be better educational infrastructure, career prospects, and personal recommendations. This study also recognizes factors such as safety, quality of life, and the presence of support networks to be important in the decision-making process of studying abroad. Relocating to study abroad gives learners from Nepal an opportunity to earn more money and live a high-quality life and this can be a powerful motivator for their decision to seek tourism education in Denmark. This assertion complements the position of Yue and Lu (2022) regarding the importance of intrinsic factors in foreign education purists by students from the developing world. Understanding these motivational factors can help various stakeholders in the tourism education industry to develop practices that cater to the diverse needs of international student populations.

Impact of the 2015 Nepal Earthquake on Students' Educational Migration

Nepal experienced a major natural calamity in the form of an earthquake that caused major damage on its infrastructure and lead to the loss of many lives. Destruction of the country's educational infrastructure in the affected region was one major consequence of this natural disaster. Following the earthquake, some learners in the country experienced hardship accessing quality education because most institutions in the affected areas were destroyed or severely damaged. This development is said to have led to an influx in the number of students seeking to pursue education abroad. In the aftermath of the earthquake, there was a noticeable surge in applications for Objection Certificates (documentation Nepalese students must have to study abroad) as illustrated by Thieme (2017).

The economic impact of the earthquake influenced families to seek rapid remedies for the losses they had incurred and one such remedy was encouraging young people to pursue foreign education because of its association with better jobs and income potential. Australia, the United States, and Canada were among the major destinations chosen by Nepalese students as these destinations offered educational stability and opportunities for part-time employment and post-graduation work prospects (Joshi, 2022). The psychological impact of the earthquake was ALSO hard to ignore since the trauma and stress accompanied with this major natural disaster forced many students to search for a fresh start in a new environment. Studying abroad was considered as an avenue for these students to escape the reminder of the devastation and to rebuild their lives in a positive setting. This migration trend demonstrates the importance of emotional and psychological factors in the decision-making process for learners after the earthquake (Welsch, 2018).

The Influence of Educational Consultants

The operations of educational consultants and agencies have left a footprint on student migration patterns in Nepal. Bista's (2017) study explores the role of educational consultants or intermediary recruiters in facilitating the higher education preparation of Nepalese students in the United States. The study reveals both the advantages and disadvantages of employing instructional agents. Students reported that these agents were provided significant assistance in college application, English proficiency exams, and the complex visa process, therefore, they are essential facilitators in the transition to studying abroad. However, the study also identifies some ethical concerns associated with these intermediary recruiters. For instance, the fees charged by these agents often exceed the standard rates established by the Educational Consultancy Association of Nepal (ECAN). The incorporation of fees in the services of educational consultation brings about new challenges.

This indicates conflict of interest where agents prioritize profits over students' best interests. For instance, the agents may be too concerned with convincing a student to travel abroad for education even when their current condition and preferences are not matched by the learning programs provided in these locations to earn money from the fees charged for these services. Also, some agents were reported to partake in dubious practices such as providing misleading information and

assistance in preparing fraudulent documents. These behaviors put the participating pupils at risk as well as the integrity of the educational process at risk. A legal structure that guarantees the accountability and openness of educational consultants is crucial, as noted by Bista (2017). This would safeguard the interests of students and maintain the ethical standards of international education recruitment. The study acknowledges the importance of consultants in providing valuable support to students, but also emphasizes caution, monitoring, and regulation of their operations to prevent exploitation and ensure that their services genuinely contribute to the educational aspirations of Nepalese students studying abroad.

The arguments of Bista (2017) are echoed by Tamang and Shrestha (2021) in their comprehensive examination of student migration from Nepal with special attention on the motivations and aspirations of students seeking higher education opportunities abroad. It identifies economic factors combined with pursuit of quality education as major drivers for these students to seek study in developed countries. The research utilized narrative inquiry to delve into the personal stories of students, revealing a pattern of motivations that includes not only the desire for superior educational opportunities but also significant economic benefits and enhanced career prospects. The article explores the importance of educational consultants in shaping these migration decisions. In addition to providing information, educational advisers also exert influence and ease the intricate procedures associated with applying to international colleges. These consultants have taken a strategic position in helping learners to achieve the goal of studying abroad and earning an income in the process. The process of relocating to Scandinavian countries like Denmark is perceived to be a difficult process because of the stringent immigration documentation that is often required by these countries. Academic consultants project themselves as masters of passing through this relocation process and this image is often effective in soliciting money from learners looking to make this transition. However, the study identifies the ethical concerns of these consultants such as their influence over the students' choices and the transparency of their operations (Tamang & Shrestha, 2021). The paper argues that while these consultants offer valuable support, they are also risky in the sense that their services may sometimes exploit the aspirations of students for profit.

The Challenges Encountered in the Pursuit for Foreign Education

Moving to a foreign country is a difficult task especially to individuals coming from developing nations characterized by low exposure among ordinary citizens. Therefore, the journey to study abroad is characterized by the predicaments that may discourage Nepalese students from acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills required to thrive in the tourism industry. For instance, Shrestha (2021) argues that while students are motivated by prospects of obtaining quality education and better opportunities, they face many challenges including going through complex bureaucratic processes for visas and admissions, managing financial burdens due to high tuition and living costs, and overcoming language barriers and cultural differences once abroad. Taking these factors into account when making the decision to study abroad can influence students to opt for courses offered in domestic institutions. Shrestha (2021) argues that family and community support, and the influence of peer networks that motivates and provide practical assistance for studying abroad is important in the migration process. The study highlights the aspirations and expectations of student migrants and the wider social dynamics that influence educational migration from Nepal to developed countries. It contributes to the understanding of how transnational educational aspirations are influenced by local circumstances and global opportunities.

Recent research findings by Khanal and Gaulee (2019) provide a holistic understanding of these challenges by categorizing them into three phases which are pre-departure, during the study, and post-study. The pre-departure challenges include obtaining accurate information, maneuvering the complex admission procedures, and securing required travel documentation and financial resources. This is the phase when educational consultants can be useful. In most occasions, the decision to move abroad is dependent on one's belief regarding overcoming the obstacles that are encountered in this phase. Upon arriving, the students also face major obstacles such as language barriers, financial difficulties, and the daunting task of cultural adjustment in the host countries. It takes some time for students to get accustomed to the new way of doing things in their new locations. After their departure, the challenges transform into uncertainties about future career prospects and visa issues that impact their prospects of remaining in the host country or even securing employment on returning home. The paper illustrates that foreign education imposes considerable stress and requires good support systems both from home and host institutions for

students to enjoy the rewards that come with this endeavor (Khanal & Gaulee, 2019). Policy interventions are particularly useful in mitigating these challenges and improving the learning experience of international students. There is also a need to heighten the level of support that foreign students receive with respect to dealing with the psychological pressures that characterize relocation.

Tamang (2018) contributes to the topic by examining the numerous challenges Nepalese students face when pursuing higher education abroad. He identifies the hurdles across three key phases: pre-departure, during studies, and post-study. Initially, students grapple with a lack of accessible, accurate information about studying abroad, compounded by the financial strain of application and testing fees. Once abroad, language barriers and cultural differences become a challenge that affect their academic performance and social integration (Tamang, 2018). Post-study, Tamang points to the difficulties the students face in transitioning back to Nepal where they encounter a disconnect between their acquired skills and the local job market. The returnees also struggle with the recognition of their international qualifications. Tamang's comprehensive analysis argues for a robust support system that assist student as they prepare to study abroad and throughout their educational experiences.

The article by Khanal and Gaulee (2019) reviews the challenges that international students face, especially those from Nepal, from the preparatory stages through to their post-study experiences. Cruz identifies a series of obstacles that begin even before departure and more especially, difficulties in accessing reliable pre-departure information and preparing necessary documentation for visas and university applications. Like the previous research by Tamang (2019) the initial phase is characterized by student unpreparedness in their academic and social expectations in the destination countries. Nepalese students encounter language barriers, cultural differences, and financial issues all of which can impact their academic success and well-being once they reach their destination. Khanal and Gaulee (2019) that these challenges are exacerbated by a lack of adequate support services from educational institutions. The problems continue after the completion of their studies as the students face the daunting task of maneuvering restrictive visa policies to remain in the host country or returning to Nepal. In most cases, foreign students have student visas as the main immigration documents to validate their stay in foreign countries. The situation changes after they have completed their studies because the applicability of the student

visa becomes obsolete. Again, there is the struggle to find employment that matches their qualifications and international experiences. This article underlines the need for a comprehensive pre-departure training, enhanced support services at educational institutions, and better career guidance for returning students to mitigate these challenges.

Recent studies have identified the numerous challenges that foreign learners encounter in their pursuit of education. For instance, Sweileh et al. (2018) uncovered that international students encounter several challenges that adversely affect their health and well-being. Most notably, the stress associated with adapting to new culture and academic environment and limited access to healthcare services create recurring mental health issues. In typical circumstances, an individual relies on the support of family and close friends when undergoing psychological turmoil. However, moving abroad means that the close friends and family are not at the disposal of the individual and this heightens the mental health struggles that international students encounter.

Sweileh et al. (2018) makes a case for institutions to provide good support systems to address the unique challenges of foreign students. Another study by Goldenberg and Fischer (2023) examined international students' academic and social integration challenges. According to Goldenberg and Fischer (2023), language barriers, unfamiliar educational systems, and social isolation are the most prevalent challenges that students encounter upon relocation. These problems have an adverse effect on the wellbeing and academic performance of the students. It is not yet clear how the challenges experienced after arrival in the destination of studying affects the decision to seek foreign education. These are problems that emerge after a student has arrived and it may be difficult for one to fully envisage how these problems will occur and the magnitude to which they may unfold in a way that influences their decision. These challenges are also contingent on the circumstances that an individual finds him or herself in after arriving in the foreign locations. There are instances where foreign students might not encounter these problems and there are incidents where they may encounter them. Therefore, the uncertainty of the occurrence of these challenges makes it complicated to include them as part of the motivators or factors that affect the decision to study abroad in the first place.

It is vital to have enhanced language support services, mentorship programs, and culturally inclusive practices with educational institutions to help these international students to transition

and integrate well (Goldenberg & Fischer, 2023). This point is backed up by Medved et al. (2013) who indicate that language barriers can be a major detriment to the academic progression of foreign students, especially in reading and writing course-related materials. The challenges that have emerged in this review are primarily related to the process of relocating and adapting to the new environment in terms of language and culture. Most of these challenges do not fit the description of push factors that compel students to seek foreign tourism education. There is an opportunity for this research to create new knowledge for this field by examining whether challenges act as push factors behind Nepalese tourism students' migration to Denmark.

Methodology

Research Approach

The research approach selected for this study is expected to suit the core objective understanding why Nepalese students choose to study tourism in Denmark and the challenges they encounter during the process. In this regard, the inductive method is selected because it facilitates the origination of theories and justifications based on collected data. This approach is a good fit for this research process because of its effectiveness in deducing meanings from the opinions shared by participants. Thomas (2006) indicates that the inductive approach liberates researchers to engage directly with the data collected and recognize patterns emerging from the participants' views regarding the topic of interest. This feature allows researchers to make more accurate and contextualized inferences from the data collected. This approach is appreciated in contexts where there are no supporting theories or where the findings do not fully complement existing theories. This approach also complements the exploratory dimension which is integral to this research process. As much as this research is examining a widely studied topic and grounded in known theories, the context within its focus is relatively under-researched and this justifies this preference.

This research deploys the constructivist model when assessed from the epistemological and ontology lenses. According to Cresswell and Poth (2018), the constructivist model posits that reality is constructed through human interaction and interpretation. This model complements this research process given the fact that it is exploring a context with minimal previous research. Even though the field of educational tourism has been studied extensively in the past, not much attention has been channeled towards understanding how it unfolds in the Danish-Nepalese context and from the perspective of students. This study takes the stance of relativism in terms of ontology. This position allows this research process to accommodate the multiple and relatively unknown contexts of the research's participants. On the same note, the research takes the position of interpretivism in terms of epistemology. This position enables this process to properly unearth new insights that may be concealed if interpreted with a positivist perspective. The constructivist model will empower this research process to meet its core objective by generating accurate and objective evidence.

Specific Methodology

The qualitative case study design is the specific methodology deployed in this research. The selection of this methodology is justified by its effectiveness in facilitating a thorough and detailed understanding of the contextual factors shaping the phenomenon under scrutiny. As illustrated by Baxter and Jack (2008), the case study design is best suited for examining sophisticated phenomena mostly when there is uncertainty regarding the boundaries of the topic of interest. This feature aligns with the nature of this study because the magnitude and the extent to which motivations and challenges influence Nepalese students' endeavor to study in Denmark universities are relatively unknown. Baxter and Jack (2008) further recommend the case study approach because it provides a comprehensive understanding and allowing for the analysis of different viewpoints. Since this methodology is coupled with the qualitative approach it becomes more practical for this research to understand how both individual and collective experiences influence educational decisions and results.

Participants

Nepalese students enrolled in tourism-related learning programs at Aalborg University and the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) are the target population of this research. From the onset, the researchers agreed that learners represent an uncommon demographic group whose experiences may present valuable insights into the state of foreign education in the field of tourism. The target population is fundamental to achieving the main objectives of this research because they have the potential to facilitate a unique analysis of cultural and educational factors affecting decisions that reflect broader patterns in global academic migration.

Interviewee	University	Year of graduation
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1	Aalborg University (AAU)	2022-2024
2	University of Southern Denmark (SDU)	2021-2023
3	University of Southern Denmark (SDU)	2023-2025
4	University of Southern Denmark (SDU)	2018-2020
5	Aalborg University (AAU)	2021-2023
6	Aalborg University (AAU)	2023-2025

Location

The location of this study is in the two selected tertiary institutions which are Aalborg University and SDU. The excellent tourism education and their appeal to international students are the primary reasons for the selection of these institutions. These two institutions have played a major role in making Denmark a perfect environment for learning globally acclaimed tourism education. Apart from this, the institutions offer a more convenient and practical platform for the researchers to complete this process with little logistical challenges. Both Aalborg University and the University of Southern Denmark provide the researchers with genuine networks already. This network was vital in the respondent recruitment process and response rate. This location promises to facilitate an effective appraisal on how various institutional settings impact the experiences of foreign students. This location is best position for collecting objective and highly relevant information regarding the topic of interest.

Sampling

Given the uniqueness of the target population for this study, the purposive sampling was selected to guide the participant recruitment process. The application of this sampling technique led to the selection of 6 participants who met the profile that the researchers intended to work with. As illustrated by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), the purposive sampling technique involves the selection of respondents based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The decision to select this approach was also due to the convenience and logistical factors at play. It would be difficult to engage the respondents who meet the criteria used for this study with the application of other random sampling techniques. The targeted population was of Nepalese students taking part in tourism education programs in Denmark. This is a niche population in this area. This sampling method is supported by the necessity to investigate certain predetermined criteria that are in line with the research goals. This sampling technique ensures that the data collected reflects a variety of opinions even when working with a specialty group. This technique also complements qualitative research that is characterized by the need derive depth and insight from cases rather than generalizability from a larger population (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Purposive sampling ensured that the study targets participants with the most pertinent and profound insights.

Data Collection Process

For this study, unstructured interviews were used as the main method of data gathering. All the six participants selected for this study were taken through these unstructured interviews. The justification of selecting unstructured interviews as the main data collection tool lies in the greater flexibility they provide. As illustrated by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), unstructured interviews facilitate a thorough exploration of participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and insights and eventually yield rich qualitative data. The subject matter is centered on people's viewpoints and opinions. The motivations of people to seek foreign education are widely varied and they cannot be understood comprehensively or documented appropriately using structured and rigid data collection tools. It is imperative for the researcher to be given a high level of autonomy when studying such phenomena and this was the primary reason behind the selection of

unstructured interviews. Additionally, this data collection approach is best suited in examining dynamic issues such as motivations, experiences, and outcomes in educational settings because it gives the researcher the liberty to prompt for personalized responses that may not be anticipated at the beginning of the research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This feature also makes it easy for the researcher to tailor the interview in a way that meets the preferences of the interviewee with the aim of drawing more authentic and richer feedback regarding the topic of interest.

Interview Guide Development

An interview guide was developed based on the theoretical framework established in the literature review and the research questions. This guide included a combination of open-ended questions that prompted detailed responses and follow-up questions that encouraged deeper reflection and elaboration from the participants. The following major areas were intended to be covered by the questions:

- The motivations for selecting Denmark as a study destination
- Experiences with the Danish educational system and its teaching methodologies,
- Perceptions of how the education received aligns with career aspirations,
- The role of educational consultants and advisors in decision-making processes

Interview Conduct

Interviews were conducted in English, as it was the medium of instruction in the courses attended by the participants and commonly used in their academic and social interactions. Every interview lasted fifteen to thirty minutes, which provided sufficient time to discuss every issue in detail

without being tiresome. The interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient for the participants or via online platforms like Zoom and Messenger if in-person sessions were not feasible to ensure maximum comfort and participation willingness.

Data Recording and Management

The researchers took detailed notes and summaries during each interview to capture the data accurately. The researcher employed a structured approach to notetaking to ensure that all relevant information and subtleties in the responses were captured. Immediately following each interview, these notes were expanded into a comprehensive account of the conversation, while the information were still fresh in the researcher's memory. This method ensured the capture of accurate and detailed data while respecting the participants' preference not to be audio-recorded.

Data Analysis Preparation

Several steps were taken before the data analysis began. The first step was to collect and compile the responses of all the research respondents. Secondly, a snap review of the responses was undertaken with the intention to identify patterns emerging from the responses. After that, notes were coded manually to mark the themes and patterns that were earlier identified in a way that adheres to the objectives of research. This marked the end of the preparation process. This undertaking is important in facilitating a seamless data analysis that is likely to unearth all relevant findings.

Data Analysis

The study employed the thematic analysis method to interpret participant responses to identify themes related to the research's questions and objectives. As illustrated by Bazeley and Jackson (2013), the thematic analysis approach is an effective method for examining qualitative data in depth because it facilitates the seamless identification of patterns emerging from an unstructured

dataset. The examination of challenges and motivations that influence the decision of Nepalese students to seek tourism education in foreign locations was expected to generate varied opinions. This data analysis strategy makes it possible to identify common patterns from large, unorganized, and widely varied inputs. This approach also complements the research approach used for this study in terms of epistemology and ontology. Thematic analyses allow researchers to make new interpretations from large unstructured data sets and this goes in line with the constructivist approach selected for this process. After the thorough interview notes were first transcribed, the data was entered into software designed for qualitative data analysis. The selected platform facilitated automated organization, analysis, and in a way that unearths insights into the dataset.

The steps involved in thematic analysis included:

1. Preliminary review to familiarize with the responses of the participants which involved repeated reading in a way that facilitates overt observations to be noted.
2. The initial codes were sketched and applied across the dataset to categorize data into stratified groups.
3. The third step involved a focused review of the responses to identify themes by collating the codes that has been created earlier. The review was focused on finding linkages between the research questions and the responses of the participants.
4. Next, there was a secondary reviewing of themes. Refinement of the discovered themes was the main goal of this review section to guarantee the accuracy of the analysis.
5. This was followed by the definition and final naming of the theme which marked the end of the analysis.
6. The final step was interpreting the findings and compiling the results of the data analysis process.

Validity and Reliability

Many techniques were used to improve the study's validity and reliability. The triangulation technique was utilized initially to enhance the credibility of the findings by providing a more detailed and balanced view of the topic of interest. According to Carter et al. (2014), this technique is effective in eliminating biases and ensuring that the research's findings are objective. Secondly, the researchers resorted to peer debriefing by engaging colleagues with the purpose of securing external checks on the research process. As illustrated by Creswell and Miller (2000) this undertaking offers a critical perspective on the analysis, ensuring robustness and depth in the study's outcomes. It is important to make room for adjustments to the design of the research process just in case some aspects that affect the accuracy of the findings made emerge. Individual researchers may make a misstep when designing the data collection, and analysis process in a way that negatively affect the accuracy of the findings. This justifies the inclusion of peer debriefing to give room for any alterations that will guard the validity and the reliability of its findings. Member checking was the third strategy applied to ensure validity and reliability. This technique gives participants the opportunity to review the findings and confirm the interpretations made by the researchers (Harper & Cole, 2012). These three strategies ensured that the data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted accurately and in a way that adheres to the initial goal of the project.

Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the topic of interest of this research, it was greatly important to preserve the ethical integrity of the process. To make sure this is accomplished, a variety of steps were taken. Most importantly, the participants were thoroughly briefed about the study's objectives, methods, as well as its potential risks, and benefits. The intention of sharing this information was so that all participants fully understood their involvement and could make an informed decision about their participation. Each participant signed a consent form before the interview to ensure that they were taking part in the process voluntarily.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), voluntary participation and a thorough understanding of individuals rights and the entitlement to withdraw from the study without repercussions is the

hallmark of adherence to the principle of confidentiality. Additional measures were also deployed to enforce the same. The information shared by the participants is of sensitive nature and it may affect the images linked to the institutions and countries under examination. It was crucial to protect the participants' privacy considering this. Additionally, this was crucial in motivating students to give sincere and genuine answers. For instance, all data collected was anonymized, and identifying details were carefully managed to prevent any breaches of confidentiality. Secondly, the information gathered was safely kept in password-protected files that the research team alone could access.

The principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were also followed to ensure that participants were treated with respect and that the research was conducted to maximize benefits, minimize harm, and the selection of participants was fair and equitable (World Medical Association, 2013). The data management plan included provisions for securing digital and physical data to guarantee data integrity. These measures ensured that the privacy of the participants was protected throughout the research process.

Limitations

Despite the clever steps taken to make sure the research process achieves its goal, there are a few limits that apply to it. Most notably, the small sample size limited the scope of the study in a way that may affect the generalizability of the findings to other populations or educational contexts. To offer a more comprehensive view of the topics examined, future study may benefit from a larger and more varied sample. It could also be better to focus on foreign students not only the ones that are pursuing a specific degree. Figuratively, the factors that may be influencing students specializing in a certain field may be similar or dissimilar to the factors influencing students of another specialty in seeking foreign education. Broadening this scope could yield a better understanding of these factors.

Secondly, the study's reliance on self-reported data can introduce biases such as social desirability or recall bias because the respondents may have presented their experiences in a manner, they perceived to be more favorable or may not have accurately recalled all details of their experiences.

Triangulating these self-reported accounts with additional data sources, such as academic records or interviews with educators, could help mitigate these biases and provide a more robust understanding of the phenomena studied (Patton, 2014).

The study's qualitative nature limits its ability to quantify the prevalence of certain issues or trends even though it facilitated the achievement of deeper insights into individual experiences. Thirdly, the cultural and contextual specificity of the research setting may limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts. The special academic and socioeconomic conditions in Denmark and Nepal mean that the partakers' experiences may not be directly comparable to those of students in different countries or regions. Comparative studies involving multiple countries or regions could help identify commonalities and differences in educational migration experiences. This undertaking may enhance the generalizability of the findings, as illustrated by (Yin, 2013). Another peripheral limitation is that the study was conducted during a specific period. This implies that the findings may not fully capture ongoing or future trends given the rapidly changing global educational and migration landscapes. Longitudinal studies that track changes over time could provide a remedy for this shortcoming as illustrated by (Bryman, 2016).

Results and Analysis

Introduction

A review and analysis of the study's findings are presented in this chapter. The goal of the project was to examine the motivations and barriers that influence Nepalese students to seek tourism education in Denmark. In this regard, this part contains interpretations of the data collected by comparing the responses of the participants to topic-related research literature reviewed beforehand. A critical appraisal of the points of agreement between the findings and literature as well as the points of variation is also included in this chapter. This discussion is integral in demonstrating the usefulness of the knowledge created by this research. It paves the way for the adoption of the findings of this study into policies, student welfare practices, and the overall design of the methods and processes used in the delivery of tourism education in both Denmark and Nepal.

Educational Quality and Innovation

The findings of this study indicate that Nepalese students are attracted to Danish institutions because of their high educational standards and innovative teaching methodologies. The participants' responses confirm that the quality of education offered in Danish institutions as a key factor influencing their decision to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark. For instance, Participant 1 stated, *"From a young age I have been passionate about exploring new places, understanding different cultures, and learning new languages. This interest in travel naturally led me to consider a career in tourism where I could combine my love for exploration with professional growth"*. apart from the pursuit of quality education, the love for traveling and exploration emerges as one of the main motivators for tourism students to seek education abroad. Most of the participants conceded that they are positively inclined towards foreign education because it complements their enthusiasm for travelling and experiencing new cultures. There are numerous variations in the cultural practices and geographical features between Nepal and Denmark. These differences motivate Nepalese students to travel to Denmark to satisfy their curiosity by reveling in the cultural

and geographical appeals of Denmark. This is one of the main themes emerging from the analysis of the interviewee's responses.

Withal, the superior quality of the tourism education offered in Denmark remains the primary motivation for Nepalese students to migrate to Danish universities. The capacity of education to produce the skills required to perform well in the tourism sector is a major factor influencing the decision of students from Nepal to seek tourism education in Denmark. Integrating progressive and more proactive teaching mechanisms like the PBL symbolizes the capacity of Danish institutions to offer such quality of education. Students benefiting from this depth of training are poised to offer top quality services to tourists and in return generate more income through commissions and rewards. This justifies why they seek education in external institutions.

This response is in line with research literature about this topic. For instance, Clausen and Andersson (2018) indicated that the problem-based learning (PBL) approach that is embodied by Universities in Denmark is highly effective in enhancing practical skills and critical thinking. This approach is known to facilitate a deep engagement with complex issues in a way that allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-life scenarios. This method also encourages students to think critically and solve problems collaboratively, skills that are essential in the dynamic field of tourism. Participant 1 also highlighted the practical benefits of this approach by saying that *"the problem-based learning (PBL) approach at Aalborg University was especially attractive. This method, which focuses on real-world problems and collaborative learning, promised a dynamic and engaging educational experience that aligned well with my learning style."* The inclusion of the quality of education as a primary motivator for seeking tourism education in a foreign location is because of its consistent appearance among most of the respondent. However, there are other factors regarding the learning environment and key features of what student life entails at Aalborg University that were also influential in this decision based on the feedback of the respondents.

For instance, some Nepalese learners were attracted to Aalborg University because of the supportive structure and the conducive learning environment it provides. One of the participants confirmed that she was attracted to this institution because it had financial support programs that could help her sustain her expenditures throughout the period of study especially in terms of paying

for tuition. Participant 1 highlighted the support from Aalborg University, which included various funding and scholarship options, as a key motivation for choosing Denmark. She revealed that, *"I remember that while studying in the third semester at Aalborg University, I had my wish project about tourism in Amsterdam. The supporting fund from the university was 10,000 DKK, which was a huge amount to proceed with my interest work"*. This financial support underscores the commitment of Danish institutions to provide practical opportunities that enhance learning experiences.

The availability of these scholarships is a critical factor when making the decision to study abroad given the fact that some of the students coming from developing countries come from households with lower income brackets. The lack of sufficient funds is one of the most critical barriers to accessing education among learners from developing countries including Nepal. As illustrated by Thapa and Panta (2019), tourism education remains relatively inaccessible to Nepalese students, especially those hailing from rural areas because it is largely provided by private universities that charge higher tuition fees and have limited student finance support programs. Taking this into perspective, the student finance assistance programs offered by Danish institutions emerge as a major motivation for Nepalese students to enroll in them. These programs pave the way for students to study and complete their learning programs even though they may experience financial difficulties.

Other participants also expressed their predilection towards the learning environment provided by Danish institutions because of the multicultural composition of its student body. Some students were attracted by the opportunity to interact with people from other cultures and be more adventurous in terms of meeting and learning from new people. This sentiment reflects a perceived advantage regarding the learning environment provided by Denmark's international learning institutions especially for tourism students. This trend further supports the theme of tourism students preferring to study in an environment with new cultural offerings due to the desire to meet and interact with people with diverse perspectives and beliefs. Studying abroad in institutions with a diverse student population offers students advantages both from personal and professional perspectives. From a personal perspective, Nepalese students get to gratify their enthusiasm for traveling and meeting new people. From a professional perspective, Nepalese students get to learn cross-cultural communication skills that are valuable in the world of hospitality and tourism.

Mastering cross-cultural communication is of great significance for tourism education students because of the vitality of this skill to do well in the tours and hospitality sector. This unique advantage offered by Danish institutions was also considered by students who made the decision to seek education abroad. The quality of education offered in Danish institutions of learning is also uplifted by the design of their instruction strategy. As illustrated by Liburd and Hjalager (2010), the instruction designs adopted by these institutions aim to meet industry standards by providing students with the practical and theoretical knowledge in a balanced combination. This tactic guarantees that graduates are ready to take on the demands of the labour market. This alignment with industry needs is a significant factor in the appeal of Danish education to international students (Liburd & Hjalager, 2010).

The results also indicate that Nepalese learners appreciate the learning environment provided by institutions in Denmark. Participant 1 reflected on her experience with the Danish educational system and stated that the *"the university mostly focuses on group studies and sharing global knowledge. I used to share the tourism situation of my country Nepal and used to discuss how to bring forward the tourist approach in a global way."* This interactive approach contrasts sharply with the more traditional, lecture-based methods common in Nepal. The participant elaborated on the benefits of PBL at Aalborg University saying that it allows her to engage deeply with complex issues in a collaborative setting. This hands-on approach not only enhances analytical skills but also fosters a practical understanding of how theoretical knowledge can be applied in real scenarios. This learning style also gives Nepalese learners the ideal opportunity to learn from students of other cultures and uplift their knowledge as global citizens in readiness to serve visitors from various parts of the globe.

Similarly, Participant 2 emphasized the role of technological innovation in their educational experience, stating that *"the technological skills and project management experience I am gaining here align directly with my goal to digitize and modernize Nepal's tourism industry."* The emphasis on technology in Danish tourism education equips students with the skills needed to drive innovation and efficiency in the tourism sector. By incorporating cutting-edge technology into the curriculum, students are better equipped to handle the demands of a sector that is changing quickly. The preference for hands-on learning experiences and the integration of sustainability reflects broader trends in global tourism education. This is backed up by the research conducted

by Hsu (2018) who noted that the worldwide tourism industry increasingly demands professionals who are not only knowledgeable about theoretical concepts but also adept at applying these concepts in practical settings. The Danish model of education aligns well with these industry trends with its emphasis on sustainability and practical applications. This connection is essential for preparing students for possibilities and problems that arise in the actual world of the tourist industry. Existing research underlines the importance of technology education on efficient service industry within the modern tours and travel industry.

Technology plays a fundamental role in streamlining service delivery and complements the intention of tourism service providers to achieve their sustainability goals. Nepalese students who prefer to study tourism abroad recognize this value and demonstrate the willingness to learn in an environment that bolsters their capacity to utilize various technologies efficiently and be at the forefront of the effort by the Nepalese tourism industry to embody sustainable practices. The modern hospitality system is characterized by rapidly changing technologies like automated booking services and virtual reality marketing pitches meant to help visitors get a comprehensive view of the services they will receive before making the decision to tour a certain location. It is imperative for tourism students to understand the core design and justification of the application of these technologies. Studying in an environment where such technologies are extensively examined and applied is an effective mechanism of boosting their proficiency in utilizing these technologies before encountering them in the actual workplace.

For some Nepalese students, the effects of the 2015 earthquake play a major role in their decision to study overseas. The 5th participant emphasized how the earthquake caused significant disruptions to their schooling, prompting them to look for more reliable educational possibilities in Denmark. *"The aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal greatly influenced my decision to pursue my education in Denmark," he said. Due to the significant damage to my school and the insecure academic atmosphere, the earthquake seriously disrupted my education. I made the decision to pursue my education overseas because my family and I felt it would offer a more stable and safer environment. Denmark's excellent educational system and the chance to acquire skills that would be helpful in reviving Nepal's tourism sector made it particularly alluring.* This answer serves as an example of the larger trend of educational migration that is being caused by the post-natural disaster need for stability and high-quality education. Additionally, it illustrated how

learning can be impacted by outside variables that are frequently beyond our control and emphasized the significance of a robust educational infrastructure in reducing the long-term effects of such occurrences.

Basically, one of the main reasons Denmark attracts Nepalese students is its creative teaching methods and strong educational standards. International students find the full learning experience offered by the problem-based learning approach, industry standards integration, and emphasis on technology and sustainability appealing. The real-world obstacles and opportunities in the tourist sector are enhanced by the participants' experiences, which demonstrate the transforming power of this educational approach and their faith in the process as appropriate preparation. The tactics designed to take international tourism education to the next level can be informed by these findings. From the perspective of both the host nations and the countries of origin of foreign students, they also highlight the ways in which teaching methods impact international education.

Career Aspirations and Professional Development

The findings of this research indicate that the alignment of Danish education with career aspirations to be a major motivator for Nepalese students to pursue tourism education at the tertiary level in Denmark. Participant 3 said that *"after the completion of my Bachelor Degree in International Sales and Marketing I was looking for specializing my knowledge in Finance and Economics which did not come true due to lack of credit in the course I did. For that reason, I started looking for other alternative courses that suit my personality and interest, and I found Tourism as my priority of interest in the study."* This shift reflects an overarching preference among students in this industry for learning programs that align with their interests and offer them good chances of attaining realistic career development goals.

This preference is also demonstrated in the response of participant 1 that, *"my education in tourism from Aalborg University will be a cornerstone of my career and personal aspirations. I have gained the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to pursue a meaningful and impactful career in tourism with a special focus on promoting and developing sustainable tourism in Nepal"*. This response resonates with previous research findings regarding tourism education student's

preference for programs that are tailored to amplify their career development goals. Hsu (2018) stated that a focus on crisis management is highly relevant in today's global tourism industry that is characterized by frequently emerging challenges from natural disasters, political instability, and health crises. Hsu (2018) noted that international tourism education provides students with a competitive edge through specialized skills and global perspectives. This characteristic is well embodied by the Danish tourism educational sector through the integration of technology and real-time data analytics. This feature equips students with the necessary tools to drive innovation and efficiency in the tourism sector. The emphasis on practical skills and real-world applications is critical for employability and a key motivator for Nepalese students seeking tourism education in Denmark based on the findings of this research. On a subtler note, most of the participants declared their intention to use the new skills and qualifications gained from foreign education to develop the tourism sector of their country of origin. One of the main drivers of Nepal's economy is tourism. The income gained generated from tourism activities make up a big percentage of the country's gross domestic product. Many Nepalese students recognize the vitality of this industry both as an income generator for their country and a symbol of their warm and hospitable culture. They also recognize that the full potential of their country's tourism sector is yet to be reached. From this perspective, Nepalese tourism students view foreign education as a precursor to elevating the quality of tourism services in their home country because of its track record in producing the skills required to provide tourism services of greater quality.

The ability of tourism education programs in Denmark to sharpen the students' employability skills goes beyond the design of curriculum content as illustrated by the response of Participant 1 where she admitted that *"key moments and influences in my decision included interactions with mentors and industry professionals who shared their experiences and insights. A memorable conversation with a seasoned travel consultant during a career fair and a professor's inspiring lecture on the transformative power of tourism played pivotal roles in shaping my career path."* This proactive approach reflects the Danish education system's commitment to preparing students for the intricacies of the global tourism industry.

This research noted consistencies in the responses of the participants regarding the connection between tourism education in Denmark and elevated employability skills. For instance, Participant 5 indicated that *"we often work directly with tourism businesses to implement technology solutions*

that improve efficiency and customer satisfaction, providing me with real-world experience and technical skills that are directly applicable to my career goals". This response also complements the assertions of existing research regarding the value of the integration of academic knowledge with industry practices in ensuring that students are well-prepared for the professional world upon graduation.

The synchronicity between tourism education in Denmark and sustainable practices within the industry is another aspect that attracts Nepalese students to Danish institutions. For instance, Participant 6 stated that *"I intend to work in Nepal's tourism industry in the near future and education will undoubtedly play an important part. Similarly, networking with classmates, teachers, and stakeholders would undoubtedly be beneficial in achieving professional success".* This focus on sustainability is a significant motivational factor for Nepalese students looking to study tourism education in Danish institutions. They envision this aspect of Danish tourism education as a critical ingredient for effective preparation to address one of the most pressing challenges in the global tourism industry today. The experiences of these participants highlight the comprehensive nature of Danish tourism education. The program is intended to be both practical and forward-thinking. By using this instructional design, students are guaranteed to be both educated and able to apply what they have learnt in practical situations. This method is essential for preparing students for the kinds of professional issues they would encounter in the travel and tourism sector. (Hsu, 2018).

This research also reveals that the synchronicity between Danish tourism education and the career aspirations of Nepalese students extends beyond individual goals to cover far-reaching industry demands. Most notably, the skills and knowledge acquired in Denmark are highly relevant to the needs of the tourism industry in Nepal. The respondents expressed confidence that these competencies would position them as valuable assets in their home country's tourism sector and enable them to contribute to its growth and modernization. Participant 5 revealed that, *"the practical skills and technological proficiency I've developed here are critical components I intend to bring to my future entrepreneurial ventures in the tourism sector".* This response reflects a strong connection between the education received and the professional goals of the students. The motivation to acquire a new skill is heavily influenced by the perceived usefulness of that skill. Learners at the tertiary level of education enrolled in courses or programs that uplift specific skills

that they deem useful to their careers are more inclined to enjoying learning activities as compared to others who cannot envision how the specific knowledge, they absorb will benefit them in accomplishing certain tasks.

Furthermore, the Danish education system's focus on nourishing students' practical skills and their proficiency in real-world applications fosters a direct connection between academic knowledge and professional application. This finding is consistent with the assertions of existing research by Liburd & Hjalager (2010) who noted that this combination enhances students' ability to meet industry demands effectively. The participants' experiences underline the importance of an education system that is closely aligned with industry standards and practices. The modern tourism industry transforms at a rapid pace and this condition has made it even more important to acquire practical skills more frequently. In the past, some skills could remain valuable for a long period of time in the tours and hospitality sector and this longevity would give trainees or novice workers with sufficient opportunities to learn and master the skills through practicing in real-life situations encountered at work. However, the paid shifts in technology has reduced the longevity of valuable skills. A skill can be very useful today and be less useful in a few months' time in the tourism sector. This increased dynamism makes it important to master and be able to apply skills as fast as possible because of the short-term nature of their usefulness.

A closer examination of the responses of the participants from the lens of career development and aspirations conform that the capabilities of Danish tourism education to elevate the employability skills of Nepalese students is a significant motivating factor in their decision to study in Denmark. Danish tourism education institutions place a strong emphasis on technology, crisis management, sustainability, and real-world applications. With this emphasis, students acquire the abilities and information required to be successful in the international tourist sector. Besides, the experiences of the participants demonstrate the strong preference impact of this instructional design because it meticulously prepares them for the dynamic challenges and opportunities that characterize the modern tourism sector. These insights gained from this analysis can be useful in the design of future curricular design of tourism education in Nepal and other developing nations.

Cultural and Educational Adaptation

The findings of this study identify cultural and educational adaptations as major challenges that Nepalese students encounter in their pursuit of tourism education in Danish institutions. Most notably Participant 5 revealed that, *"adapting to the Danish culture, which is more direct and informal, took time and effort, especially in understanding subtle social cues and norms"*. This response confirms the existence of a common experience among international students who must navigate cultural differences in the process of adjusting to new academic environments.

The adaptation challenges experienced by Nepalese students also transcend to the structure of learning in the new environment. As per the findings of this research, the Danish educational system is characterized by an interactive and student-centered approach, and this is relatively new to Nepalese students who are more familiar with the traditional, lecture-based methods adopted by Nepalese learning institutions (Timsina, 2021). Participant 6 reflected this challenge by saying that, *"there was a pre-set curriculum but no fixed text materials. The text materials consisted primarily of research papers and journals and extracting information from them proved difficult."* This shift requires students to develop new learning skills and adapt to different instructional styles to thrive in this new environment. The findings resonate with the assertions of existing research. For instance, Shrestha (2021) stated that cultural and educational adaptation is a common challenge for international students, and it affects their academic performance and social integration. The transition from a lecture-based learning environment to an interactive, project-based approach requires significant adjustment. This adaptation process is vital for Nepalese students to fully engage with the Danish educational system and optimize their learning outcomes.

Cultural adaptation difficulty was moderately consistent in the responses of the participants. Participant 5 stated that, *"finding my community was challenging as well, as the cultural differences made it difficult to form connections easily, often making me feel like an outsider."* From a different perspective, Participant 3 said that *"being in the international environment where the students from other countries do not feel to include you was the first challenging part while studying Master's in Tourism in Aalborg. For example, to be in the international group while doing class activities or the semester project was not possible if the teachers were involved. Secondly, coming from different study backgrounds and cultural backgrounds, exploring new*

topics were both exciting and challenging at the same time" These responses are also in line with existing research that feelings of isolation remain common among new international students who are obliged to adapt to a new social scene as well as manage their academic responsibilities effectively (Shrestha, 2021). Withal, the research also noted that the Danish educational environment tries to mediate this challenge by fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere that cultivates inclusivity and aims to help international students develop a deeper understanding of cultural variations that are ever present in the field of tourism. This is reflected in the response by Participant 3 that, *"the supportive and collaborative learning environment in Denmark was another key factor."* This is also echoed by the response of Participant 1 where she states that *"universities in Denmark have supportive things for personal growth and the very adventurous"* This supportive environment helps students overcome initial challenges and thrive academically and socially.

The cultural differences between Nepal and Denmark and how they manifest in the two societies also created a unique challenge for Nepalese students. This challenge is best demonstrated in the response of Participant 1, who revealed that, *"Denmark is full of Hygge which means people are so cozy and reserved. Compared to my country we are very open and social. we love to have more friends and try to gather all the neighbors and know for each other."* The Danish institutions have put measures to ensure that the learning experiences of international students are not adversely affected by cultural differences, However, the effectiveness of these measures only manifests after international students spend more time in the institutions. Therefore, new students must endure the adversities that these variations impose. This trend was noted among the participants in that the students who had spent more time in Danish Universities appeared to be more adaptive to the cultural differences between their country of origin and Denmark as compared to the new students.

The results of this study suggest that adaptability is a process that contributes to students' overall growth and development. According to the responses, Nepalese students learn to adapt and be resilient by negotiating the cultural and educational contrasts they face in their new surroundings. According to Shrestha (2021), the global employment marketplaces a high emphasis on resilience and adaptation. This is consistent with previous findings. According to Participant 1, for example, *"despite these challenges, each hurdle provided valuable lessons and contributed to my personal and academic growth."* For international students, this flexibility is a huge advantage because it

enables them to thrive in a variety of professional settings. The difficulties in adjusting to new cultural and educational norms also emphasize how crucial support networks are for overseas students. Effective support systems can ease the transition process and help students overcome initial difficulties as reflected in the response of Participant 1 that, *"the support from the university, fellow students, and the local community played a crucial role in overcoming these obstacles"*. This research confirmed the vitality of these support systems in helping students adjust to their new environment and achieve academic success. These findings also confirm a common theme that exists among tourism enthusiasts that tourist activities are also linked to specific challenges. In abstract, one might assume that tourism experiences only consist of positive experiences. However, tourists also experience undesirable moments especially when they are new in an unfamiliar territory. This trend is also identified in the experiences of Nepalese tourism students in Danish institutions.

This analysis confirms that cultural and educational adaptations present a major challenge to Nepalese students seeking tourism education in Denmark. Their migration into an unfamiliar educational system and culture requires significant effort and resilience. Additionally, for overseas students, this mix of problems presents worthwhile learning opportunities for both professional and personal growth. The Danish education system supports the efforts of international students to adapt to the new environment through its inclusive and interactive approach. This design was instrumental in helping students from Nepal to overcome challenges and thrive in their academic and social endeavors albeit the desirable outcomes are achieved after spending more time in the Danish universities. The interactive and student-centered approach of the Danish educational system presents initial challenges but ultimately fosters critical thinking, global networking, and personal growth. The insights gained from this analysis can be useful in elevating the experiences of international learners by adopting more supportive learning environments and sharing effective adaptation strategies.

Financial and Bureaucratic Challenges

The other set of challenges encountered by Nepalese students in the pursuit of tourism education in Denmark consists of financial constraints and bureaucratic barriers. It is usually expected that

students moving from low-income settings to high income and high expenditure societies will struggle financially especially if they also come from low-income households. The purchasing power of these students is lower than the typical purchasing power of ordinary citizens in the more affluent nations. This difference can be challenging for students to adjust to settings where they must spend a lot of money on items or services, they would get for a cheaper rate in their home country. The potency of these challenges is highlighted in the response of Participant 1 that, *"managing finances while studying abroad was another significant challenge. Due to the comparatively high cost of living in Denmark, considerable planning is needed when creating a budget for housing, food, travel, and recreational activities. Finding part-time work to support myself while balancing academic responsibilities added an extra layer of complexity."* This reflects the broader experience of many international students who must balance academic responsibilities with financial pressures. Students from developing nations are do not possess the purchasing power needed to live comfortably in the often-expensive environments that exist in developed countries. As reflected in these responses, the high cost of living in Denmark adds to the financial burden faced by Nepalese students.

The challenges of pursuing tourism education abroad are also compounded by bureaucracies that characterize traveling to developed nations. Participant 5 admitted that *"the complexity of the Danish immigration process was overwhelming, with the extensive paperwork and strict compliance requirements."* Nepalese students must endure the burden of restrictive documentation processes and high costs of living in their pursuit of foreign tourism education. This result aligns with previous research conducted by Rahimi et al. (2018), which emphasized the administrative and financial obstacles encountered by international students who feel compelled to look for part-time work to cover their daily costs. The responses of the interviewees indicated that it was difficult for them to sustain a quality of life that is perceived to be normal by the average Danish citizen because of the increased expenses they had to make just to afford items and services of common things. Some of them felt like getting a job on top of their learning commitments was necessary to sustain the expensive lifestyle of Denmark.

The experiences of the interviewees indicate that the increased financial obligations and the bureaucracies encountered during migration and registering for the new environment can distract students from achieving their academic objectives and pave the way for mental health challenges.

Navigating these bureaucratic hurdles can be particularly challenging for students who are already adapting to a new educational and cultural environment. It may take more time and energy to handle these procedures than is necessary for their social and academic experiences. Participant 5 had this to say when talking about his experience with the Danish immigration process, "*the extensive paperwork and strict compliance requirements for visas and residence permits were a constant source of stress.*" This theme is constant in the experiences of other participants as well. Participant 4 said that "*the process of obtaining and renewing visas was particularly stressful, with strict deadlines and requirements that sometimes conflicted with academic schedules*". While reflecting on the same, he expressed the need to address these bureaucracies by saying that "*Improving the efficiency and clarity of immigration procedures would greatly benefit international students, reducing the stress and time spent on bureaucratic requirements.*" Denmark has a strict immigration policy especially to people who come from outside Europe. One misstep in the process of getting the ideal documentation can lead to denial of entry. Nepalese students feel extra pressure when applying for these documents because the denial of entry would mean an end to their endeavor to get globally acclaimed tourism education.

Despite the challenges stemming from high costs of living, some participants found ways to cope with financial pressures. Participant 1 said, "*I learned to budget very carefully and make the most of student discounts and other resources available to international students.*" Her proactive method of managing finances helped her to get through some of the finance-related stressors she encountered. Withal, the current state indicates that there is a need for better financial support systems for international students in Danish institutions. The urgency of this need is highlighted by participant 5's view that, "*Universities should consider offering more scholarships and financial aid options specifically for international students.* Students may concentrate more on their education and some of the financial responsibilities would be lessened as a result." This opinion echoes the assertions of existing research regarding the importance of financial support for international students. Nikou and Luukkonen (2023) indicate that the availability of financial resources to international students is a major influence on their decisions to seek foreign education. The learning institutions featured in this study provide financial assistance to international students and this element is particularly appreciated by these students because of the high cost of tuition and living expenses in Denmark as compared to their home countries.

It is vital for these financial assistance programs to be expanded because of their value to international students especially those coming from low-income households. This section of the report highlights how financial and administrative obstacles might be significant barriers for Nepalese students interested in studying tourism in Denmark. The difficult climate brought forth by the high cost of living and tuition demands fortitude and cautious money management. Nepalese students face additional difficulties due to bureaucracies in the immigration and school administration processes. The interviewees' observations highlight the need for additional bureaucratic process streamlining and financial support measures to improve the experience of international students. The knowledge gained here will be very helpful in developing these assistance mechanisms. The availability and dependability of these services might sometimes influence the decision to pursue tourism education overseas.

Role and Impact of Educational Consultants

Educational consultants play an important role in facilitating access to foreign education for Nepalese students. In this context, educational consultants play a somewhat different role from the conventional consultants. Ideally, these consultants are supposed to provide guidance to students on the specific course to select based on their strengths and weaknesses and the implications of their selections on their future career prospects. However, the educational consultants examined here present the image of travel facilitators with an extensive understanding of the immigration documentation processes as well as the technicalities that will determine if an individual's application to study abroad succeeds or fails to go through. The role of educational consultants in the decisions of Nepalese students to study tourism in Denmark marks one of the unique findings of this study. The responses of the participants revealed mixed perspectives on the significance of educational consultants.

On the one hand, some respondents felt that educational consultants have little or no impact on the decision to seek tourism education in Denmark. For instance, Respondent 6 had this to say when asked whether these consultants played a role in his decision; *"not at all. It was my solitary decision based on my individual investigation. There is no influence from educational consulting and consultants. Students must make their own effort and should not rely on a third party."* In this

response, there is a conspicuous skepticism towards the role of educational consultants. Initially, existing research had predicted that academic consultants are at times perceived as profit hunters who do not necessarily value the interests of the students (Bista, 2017). The immigration process from Nepal to Denmark is perceived by many Nepalese students as difficult and precarious. It requires a seasoned individual with a good understanding of this process to guarantee a successful application for a student visa in Denmark. Academic consultants take advantage of this situation to stay relevant and promote their business interests.

On the other hand, some participants recognize academic consultants as important players in their decision to study abroad. For instance, Participant 4 said *"my decision to study tourism in Denmark was greatly aided by educational consultants. They helped with the application process, gave me thorough program information, and helped me with the visa application. The process was considerably simpler and less stressful thanks to their guidance and assistance"*. The mixed feelings regarding the role of consultants as both facilitators and potential sources of bias justifies the urgency for students to critically evaluate the advice they receive from these individuals. The experiences of the participants in this study echo the recommendations made by Bista (2017) who highlighted the need for greater transparency and regulation when it comes to academic consultants. This is justified by the fact that educational consultants still play an important role even though their intentions can be driven by profits. They understand the immigration documentation process very well and this knowledge helps their clients to achieve the goal of studying in Denmark.

This best practice was followed by some of the interviewees. For instance, Participant 1 said, *"I did much research before deciding to study tourism in Denmark. I went to some education consultancy to learn better about universities. However, I could mention that they have helped me through the process by providing Information and Awareness about various universities and tourism programs in Denmark."* There are other interviewees who appreciated the role of these parties. This is showcased in the response of Participant 2 when asked about his interactions with them *"When I was considering pursuing graduate-level education. I had no idea what the laws and regulations were. I tried to compile all the data via friends and the internet. I was able to obtain most of the information, but there were still a few minor issues with lodging and visa costs. I thus went to a few respectable educational advisors, and they provided me with a list of*

universities that they could assist me in getting into." This encouraging experience implies that hiring educational consultants can be a wise choice when making decisions.

The significance of the efforts of academic consultants is not limited to getting through Denmark's stringent immigration process alone. These individuals can be instrumental in helping students adapt to their new locations more seamlessly by providing insights regarding financial support and other wellness and support services at their destination. The usefulness of their services was also appreciated by one of the participants who benefited from their financial advice. Participant 1 revealed that *"educational consultants offered advice on financial planning, including tuition fees, living expenses, and potential funding sources. They provided me with information about grants, scholarships, and part-time jobs that are accessible to foreign students in Denmark. It is imperative for the services of educational consultants to be regulated to maximize the benefits of their services to international students as well as avoid the detriments of their unethical conduct."*

This view is also supported by one of the participants who said that *"there should be stricter regulations and oversight to ensure that educational consultants provide accurate and unbiased information. This would help students make more informed decisions about their education"* (Participant 1). In order to safeguard students' interests and guarantee that the counsel they receive is in their best interests, this approach is consistent with more general requests for regulatory changes. It is important for the governments involved in this academic migration to standardize and regulate the services of educational consultants. There is no denying the vitality of their roles in facilitating the seamless relocation of students to Denmark, but the lack of standardization makes it difficult to tame rogue individuals who may manipulate Nepalese students' intention to study abroad for their selfish gains.

It is evident that educational consultants play a role in the decision to pursue foreign education by Nepalese students even though their role is dependent on the students' perceptions. Mixed opinions emerged regarding the role played by these parties where some students admitted benefiting from the guidance and support provided by consultants while others raised concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest from them. These findings underline the impetus for of students' autonomy in making the decision to study abroad. It is imperative to devise regulations and processes to ensure

that the role of educational consultants is kept in check to optimize their positive impact and negate their negative influences. The findings of this study could be useful in devising these interventions.

Self-Initiative and Independent Decision-Making

This study also made an intended discovery regarding the self-initiative and independent decision-making demonstrated by students from Nepal studying in Denmark as key factors in the success of their education journey. The reflections of the students demonstrated the existence of substantial self-initiative and independence in managing their educational pursuits in Denmark. Most of the interviewees took proactive steps in organizing their relocation arrangements and getting the logistics needed for a fruitful learning experience. Students enjoyed a great degree of autonomy that empowered them with essential life skills and resilience. This is highlighted in the response of participant 1 who said, *"I did much research before deciding to study tourism in Denmark."* The theme of self-initiative resonates with existing educational research that emphasizes the importance of autonomy in fostering student engagement and success. The Self-Determination Theory argues that autonomy is critical to self-motivation and psychological well-being. The participants' efforts to manage their educational paths reflect a drive toward fulfilling their need for competence and autonomy, pivotal elements that enhance their capacity to learn and adapt effectively (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As per existing research, autonomy is linked to higher academic motivation and satisfaction. This implies that the independence exercised by these students could contribute positively to their overall educational experience in Denmark. However, the ability of Nepalese students to cultivate resilience and self-initiative is also dependent on the existence of support systems. The financial assistance and wellness programs that are provided by Danish universities are important to the resilience of international students. These learners know at the back of their mind that the existing supportive structures ensure that their most basic needs will be taken care of regardless of the difficulties they may be facing. Even though these students demonstrate resilience and self-initiative, it is imperative for institutions to provide sufficient support networks to guide international students. Enhanced advisory services, comprehensive informational resources, and structured peer support systems can help ensure that students'

decisions are well-informed and that their transition to a new educational system is smoother (Timsina, 2021).

This is also echoed in the statement of one of the participants that "*Universities should have more structured support systems in place for international students, especially during the initial stages of their transition. Some of the tension and uncertainty would be reduced by doing this.* (Participant, 5) The analysis of self-initiative and independent decision-making underscores the importance of balancing autonomy with adequate support. The experiences of Nepalese students in Denmark highlight the benefits of self-reliance while also pointing to the need for institutional support to enhance their educational experience. Perhaps this is a component that should be adopted in Nepalese institutions of higher learning specializing in tertiary education. Future studies could explore this area with a more extensive and diverse sample to validate these observations and potentially quantify the impact of self-initiative on various student outcomes. Educational institutions can better facilitate the success of international students in their academic and personal endeavors by understanding the dynamics of self-initiative and the necessary support systems.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study has made several useful findings that can contribute towards optimizing the learning experiences provided by international institutions of learning specializing in tourism education to students from developing countries. The primary motivations for studying abroad revolve around the perception that developed countries like Denmark provide better educational opportunities and career prospects as compared to developing nations like Nepal. The journey to pursue foreign tourism education is characterized by substantial obstacles including adapting to a new culture and understanding a foreign educational system. The findings from this review underline as the importance of implementing supportive measures to help international students overcome challenges. It is crucial for educational policy makers in Nepal and Denmark to consider these factors to elevate the learning experiences of international students and maximize the rewards of academic migration in the context of Nepal and Denmark.

The phenomenon of educational migration in the Nepalese-Danish context is influenced by various factors. Most prominently the quality of education and the innovativeness of the teaching mechanisms deployed by Danish institutions of higher learning are major influencers behind Nepalese students' decision to study in Denmark. Secondly, Nepalese students are attracted to Denmark because its learning environment aligns with their career aspirations and presents them abundant of professional development opportunities. Nepalese students are attracted to the learning environments provided these institutions especially the presence of students from other parts of the globe with different cultures and ethnicities. This gives them good opportunities to elevate their cross-cultural communication skills that are vital for success in the modern tours and travel industry. From an individual perspective, foreign tourism education is also seen as an ideal opportunity to gratify the enthusiasm for traveling and experiencing new cultures that is embodied by most students in this field. Furthermore, most Nepalese students envision foreign tourism education as a prologue for the elevation of the domestic tourism industry that is yet to reach its full potential.

The study also uncovered that cultural and educational adaptation form a formidable challenge to Nepalese students in the pursuit of tourism education abroad. During the initial stages of their stay

in Denmark, these learners endure social isolation and the lack of opportunities for meaningful relationships outside school. However, this challenge subsides as time unfolds as students learn to adapt to the new environment and take advantage of the supportive structures at their disposal. This challenge is also compounded by the high cost of living and expensive tuition fees charged by Danish institutions as well as the several bureaucracies they encounter during the relocation process and securing admission into learning programs. A novel unintended theme of the cultivation of self-initiative and autonomous decision-making also emerged during the analysis of the participants' responses.

Nepalese students are strongly motivated to study tourism in Denmark because of the quality and innovation of the Danish learning environment. The practicality and problem-solving dimensions of Danish tourism education programs complements the global tourism industry trends and meticulously orients students for relatable work situations. Danish tourism education closely aligns with the career goals of Nepalese students by providing them with advanced technological skills, project management experience, and knowledge in crisis management, sustainable tourism practices. These skills and knowledge gained from this learning model enhances the employability of Nepalese students and equips them to contribute to the development of their home country's tourism sector. Students who have gone through this education are better positioned to make use of the latest technologies in the tours and hospitality sector and interact more seamlessly with people from different cultural backgrounds. These qualities are of great significance given the fact that most visitors coming into Nepal maintain diverse different cultural practices.

The study also uncovered that adapting to the Danish educational system and culture presents significant challenges to Nepal's tourism students. Withal, Danish learning institutions' embodiment of inclusive and interactive learning environments mediate against the adversities imposed by these challenges. The shift from a traditional teaching and learning system to an interactive pressures Nepalese student to adjust rapidly. Optimistically, this transition obliges international students to cultivate resilience by mitigating diverse cultural contexts and developing critical thinking skills. Financial constraints, admission and immigration process-related bureaucracies present another major challenge for Nepalese students. The high cost of living and tuition fees, as well as lengthy immigration processes create a challenging environment that predispose these students to mental health struggles, albeit on the short-term. The perceptions of

educational consultants vary among Nepalese students. While some students find consultants helpful in navigating the application process, others are skeptical of their motivations. The insights gained here demonstrate the impetus for the regulation of educational consultants with the aim of optimizing the benefits of their services to students and negating potential adversities related to their operations.

Theoretical Implications

The insights gained from this process contribute to the theoretical frameworks of Human Capital Theory and Cultural Capital Theory and how they are applied in the Danish-Nepalese tourism education context. The Human Capital Theory posits that individuals invest in their education to increase their productivity and earnings potential (Strober, 1990). According to this report, Nepalese students see their education in Denmark as a strategic investment that will improve their chances of finding employment after graduation. Higher salaries and better job prospects in Nepal and abroad are anticipated for the specialised skills and advanced knowledge acquired through Danish educational programs. The results also complement the Human Capital Theory's assertion that education increases human capital by creating the capacity to generate economic returns. Furthermore, the study justifies the notion that the inadequacies of the local educational systems often drive investment in education abroad. Nepal's lack of advanced educational infrastructure and limited access to quality education motivates students to seek opportunities abroad. This migration reflects the pillars of Human Capital Theory where the perceived benefits of foreign education outweigh the costs and challenges associated with studying abroad.

The results of this study also complement the assertions of the Cultural Capital Theory. This theory posits that cultural knowledge and skills are vital gaining social mobility and professional advantages Bourdieu, P. (1986). The study illustrates how Nepalese students acquire and leverage cultural capital through their educational experiences in Denmark. The exposure to advanced pedagogical practices, interaction with diverse cultures, and immersion in an international educational environment equips international learners with valuable cultural capital. Their social

standing and career prospects in Nepal and the international labour market are improved by these experiences. The results show that students' cultural capital is greatly enhanced by an international education. These students have an advantage over others because of their capacity to work in diverse cultural settings, comprehend international tourism patterns, and implement creative ideas they have learnt overseas. Their cultural capital is also enhanced by the resilience they develop during the process of cultural adaptation.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study identified essential issues that affect the learning experience of international tourism students for both the host and origin countries. These insights could be instrumental in informing strategies to elevate the quality of tourism education provided globally for both developed and developing nations. The results of this study have indicated the need for significant enhancements in the standard of tourism education in Nepal to attract and retain talented students. The design of curricula and teaching methods, the infrastructure of educational institutions, and the integration of technology and sustainable practices in the dissemination of knowledge are important areas that require targeted interventions. The results confirm how important it is for Denmark and other host nations to have extensive support networks for overseas students.

This support shields international students from mental health problems stemming from the struggle to adapt to a new culture and new learning methods. The such as problem-based learning and sustainability practices embodied by Danish tourism education institutions could be an ideal precedent for the Nepali tourism education fraternity. Adopting such models could elevate the quality of tourism education in Nepal and sharpen its competitiveness in international tourism education. It is also important for tourism education stakeholders to create a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that regulates the development and dissemination of tourism education curricula. The current state of tourism education in the country is characterized by disintegration and a lack of consensus regarding the specific skill sets that should be targeted by educators as indicators of preparedness of students to provide quality services to tourists. A regulation framework could bring much needed standardization and facilitate the adoption of strategic plans geared towards elevating the quality of education provided by Nepalese institutions of higher

learning with a specialty in tourism. This undertaking is of great significance because tourism is a major contributor to the country's revenue generation. It is also imperative for Nepalese institutions offering tourism education to expand the student finance assistance programs availed to their students. Despite tourism being a primary economic activity in Nepal, several students lack access to quality tourism education because of its high cost.

The findings of this study encourage Danish tourism education institutions to tailor their admission and integration processes to accommodate the needs of international students. Enhanced financial support systems for international students and proper regulation for educational consultancy industry are recommended. The Nepalese tourism education fraternity should also institutionalize regulations for these consultants because it has emerged that some of them can be manipulative towards students even though they still play an important role in facilitating seamless transitions from Nepali education to Danish education. Additional financial aid and support programs also have the potential alleviate the financial burden and enhance their academic success as well as streamlined relocation and admission processes. Enhanced informational resources and structured peer support systems can help ensure that students' decisions are well-informed. This study provides insights for policymakers in the endeavor to improve the efficiency immigration procedures for international students. By simplifying paperwork and compliance requirements in a way that reduces the stress and time spent on bureaucratic processes.

This study presents a meticulous scrutiny of the dynamics affecting educational migration in the context of Nepal and Denmark, with a focus on tourism education at the tertiary level. The main discovery is that the quality of education and the promise of better career paths offered by Danish tourism education institutions are major motivators to Nepalese students. Danish Universities have diverse student populations coming from different parts of the globe. This feature provides Nepalese students with what can be termed as a cultural melting pot in terms of opportunities for interacting with people from different cultures and developing a global mindset. The multicultural communication skills that can be gained from these surroundings are important to tourism students because they sharpen their proficiency to interact more effectively with foreigners that are a commonplace in the tours and hospitality sector.

On the same note, the cultural and learning adaptation process encountered in this pursuit forms the main challenge for these students. High costs of living and the bureaucracies characterizing the relocation and admission processes also compound the challenges faced by Nepalese students in Denmark. Danish institutions offer supportive structures to shield international students from the pressures stemming from these challenges. It is imperative for Nepalese institutions to adopt such practices because of their significance in facilitating a seamless learning experience. Educational consultants also play a significant role in the decision to pursue tourism education abroad in this context even though the authenticity of their operations is still a debatable point. It is imperative to establish comprehensive regulation for these consultants to ensure that rogue operators do not manipulate Nepalese students for their selfish gains. Furthermore, a monitoring and evaluation mechanism looking to standardize and uplift the quality of tourism education offered in Nepal is needed to address the disintegration and uncertainty that characterize the country's current learning system. The insights gained from this study could be instrumental in informing strategies aimed at uplifting the quality of global tourism education and the learning experiences of international students.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Interview Introduction

Interviewer: "Good day! Ourselves Reeta and Pooja From Aalborg University. We are conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, we want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?"

If Yes Proceed

1. Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

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2. What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

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3. What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

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4. Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

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5. Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

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Interview Conclusion

Interviewer: Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me today. Your insights are invaluable to our understanding of the unique experiences of Nepalese students in Denmark. Is there anything else you would like to add or emphasize that we haven't covered?"

Interviewer: Once again, thank you for your time. If you have any further thoughts or if you are interested in the findings of this study once it is complete, please feel free to contact me. Have a great day!

Appendix 2: Participant Responses

Participant 1

Interview Introduction

Interviewer: "Good day! My name is From Aalborg University. I am conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, I want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?"

Hi guys,

Firstly, thank you for the question. I have no problem at all for sharing my opinions with you. Just don't misuse it. Yes, you may proceed with your research. I am ready to participate and help.

If Yes Proceed

1. Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

Yes, I had many motivations that led me to pursue my degree in Denmark. In fact, I think many people around the world dream of getting a quality education in one of the safest and most well-facilitated countries, like Denmark. The support from Aalborg University, with its various funding and scholarship options, really motivated me to choose this public university. I will highlight some of my prior decisions before Denmark and my experience while I was at Aalborg if that works for you.

For me, pursuing a tourism degree in Denmark, specifically at Aalborg University in Copenhagen, was driven by a combination of personal interests, academic aspirations, my background study, and key influences. Several factors played a role in my decision such as:

Passion for Travel and Culture: From a young age, I have been passionate about exploring new places, understanding different cultures, and learning new languages. This interest in travel naturally led me to consider a career in tourism, where I could combine my love for exploration with professional growth.

Educational Reputation: Another fact about Denmark is that it is renowned for its high-quality education system, innovative teaching methods, and emphasis on sustainability. If I have to share one of my own experiences, I remember that while studying in the third semester at Aalborg University, I had my wish project about tourism in Amsterdam, And the supporting fund from the

university was 10000 Dkk, which was a huge amount to proceed my interest work, this has motivated me to complete the study with full necessities and my supervisor was also incredible throughout my study there. , this made me so happy that the reputation of the university was always supportive. I am so happy when I recall those movements.

Aalborg University, with its problem-based learning approach, stood out to me as an institution where I could gain practical and theoretical knowledge in tourism, while also developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Global Perspective: Aalborg University mostly focuses on group studies and sharing global knowledge. I used to share the tourism situation of my country Nepal and used to discuss how to bring forward the tourist approach in a global way. I studied with friends from Mexico, Switzerland, and Germany. I enjoyed the collaboration with the international students and felt lucky get share their experience and international knowledge. It's always interesting when you get to know the global perspective. Therefore, I think Studying in an international environment was a significant factor in my decision too. Denmark's progressive and inclusive society, along with its position as a hub for international students, provided the perfect setting for me to gain a global perspective on tourism. This exposure was crucial for understanding the diverse and dynamic nature of the tourism industry.

Sustainable Tourism: I will tell you some of the interesting experiences while I was at Aalborg University. During the time of my thesis data collection, I got to know how Denmark has a very smart vision for sustainable tourism. I interviewed various managers from different hotels like Crown Plaza, Kur Hotel, Saint Thomas Hotel, and many other tourism offices. This study helped me gain innovative insights and knowledge about smart technology and greening businesses for sustainable tourism. Moreover, I Think Denmark's commitment to sustainability, especially in the tourism sector, really resonated with my values. I was particularly inspired by the country's efforts to balance tourism development with environmental conservation and community well-being. This alignment with my values motivated me to learn how to contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry.

Influential Experiences and Mentors: Key moments and influences in my decision included interactions with mentors and industry professionals who shared their experiences and insights. A memorable conversation with a seasoned travel consultant during a career fair, and a professor's inspiring lecture on the transformative power of tourism, played pivotal roles in shaping my career path. The professors at Aalborg are also from different countries and have the full experience in the tourism sector. My professor Carlos helped me to get the connection with the expertise of tourism development in the hotel. He was the best mentor at that time. Therefore, I think the university consists of the best mentors with influential experiences.

Personal Growth and Adventure: The adventurous tour in my first semester at Stevens Klint was very enjoyable. There is a saying that practical movements are more memorable than theoretical ones. I have many Adventurous memories with Aalborg University. Universities in Denmark have supportive things for personal growth and the very adventurous. Moreover, we had

one department that was there just to help and guidance for the startup of the business and the motivation how to get the funding for the students to get started with the vision. For me, the prospect of living and studying in a vibrant city like Copenhagen was itself a motivation. I saw it as an opportunity for personal growth, adventure, and the chance to immerse myself in a new culture. The city's rich history, dynamic urban life, and emphasis on design and innovation made it an attractive destination for both academic and personal development.

In summary, my decision to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark was influenced by a blend of personal passions, the educational excellence of Aalborg University, the desire for a global and sustainable perspective, and the inspiration drawn from mentors and unique experiences. This journey has been both academically enriching and personally fulfilling, reinforcing my commitment to contributing positively to the tourism industry.

2. What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

I had many hurdles that I faced during my study period. I believe you guys have some like what I faced. However, I'll try to mention the major significant challenges that I faced during my time. Some of the most notable ones included are.

Cultural Adjustment: Denmark is full of Hygge, which means people are so cozy and reserved. Compared to my country we are very open and social. We love to have more friends and try to gather all the neighbors and know for each other. Denmark was different for me. Moving to a new country involves adjusting to a different culture, social norms, and lifestyle. The Danish way of life, including understanding local customs, social etiquette, and even humor, required a period of adjustment so adaption all was the part of challenges to me. The initial cultural shock was a challenge, but over time, it became an enriching part of my experience.

Language Barrier: Of course, the next language difficulty. As I remember during my study time, I found it very tough to find the right article written in English. Most of the AAU library has Danish articles so it was one of the barriers at that time. Although many Danish friends speak excellent English, however, the Danish-speaking environment was challenging at first. Understanding official documents, following lectures that occasionally included Danish terms, and engaging with local communities required extra effort and sometimes led to moments of frustration for sometimes.

Homesickness and Social Integration: Being away from family and friends back home was emotionally challenging. Building a new social network in a foreign country required stepping out of my comfort zone. While the international student community at Aalborg University was supportive, integrating into broader Danish society took effort and time.

Financial Management: Being a student, we were only allowed to work 80 hours per month which was not even enough for the living expenses. Managing finances while studying abroad was another significant challenge. The cost of living in Denmark is relatively high, and budgeting for accommodation, food, transportation, and leisure activities requires careful planning. Finding part-time work to support myself while balancing academic responsibilities added an extra layer of complexity.

Climate and Weather: As you can see these days, how the weather is reacting. There are not any indications of having summer, ha-ha, the weather was so challenging for me at that moment. especially the long, dark winters, was challenging. The lack of sunlight during winter months affected my mood and energy levels, and I had to find ways to cope with the seasonal changes, such as engaging in outdoor activities, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and staying socially active. I used to miss my country so much.

Administrative and Bureaucratic Hurdles: The most challenging fact about Denmark is that they keep changing the rules and regulations out here, I feel like they make it so difficult for immigrants all the years such as Navigating the administrative requirements of studying abroad, including visa applications, residence permits, and health insurance, was a complex process. Ensuring compliance with all regulations and deadlines required diligence and often involved dealing with bureaucratic procedures that were very freaking to me.

Despite these challenges, each hurdle provided valuable lessons and contributed to my personal and academic growth. The support from the university, fellow students, and the local community played a crucial role in overcoming these obstacles. Ultimately, the experience of studying tourism in Denmark has been incredibly rewarding, equipping me with resilience, adaptability, and a global perspective that will benefit my future career.

3. What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

When deciding to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, several aspects of the tourism program and the overall educational environment stood out as particularly appealing:

Innovative Teaching Methods: Denmark's educational system is renowned for its emphasis on innovative and student-centered teaching methods. The problem-based learning (PBL) approach at Aalborg University was especially attractive. This method, which focuses on real-world problems and collaborative learning, promised a dynamic and engaging educational experience

that aligned well with my learning style. Compared to my country, I found that just sitting in front of the laptop and using the AAU Moodle, was all that you could get all the Accessories for study materials. The university is so perfect with its teaching materials and its technologies.

Focus on Sustainability: Denmark's commitment to sustainability in various sectors, including tourism, was a significant draw. The tourism program at Aalborg University emphasizes sustainable tourism practices, preparing students to contribute to the industry in ways that promote environmental conservation, cultural integrity, and economic viability. This focus resonated with my personal values and career aspirations.

Supportive Learning Environment: The supportive and collaborative learning environment in Denmark was another key factor. The approachable faculty, emphasis on teamwork, and resources available for student success, such as academic advising and career services, promised a nurturing environment conducive to both academic and personal growth.

Personal Growth Opportunities: Finally, the chance for personal growth and development was a significant motivator. The experience of studying abroad, facing new challenges, and immersing myself in a different culture promised to be transformative, helping me develop resilience, adaptability, and a broader worldview. I got to get connected with much expertise during the period which was a huge plus for me. I am still with them on LinkedIn and waiting for the right opportunities too.

Quality of Life: Finally, Denmark consistently ranks high in terms of quality of life, safety, and social welfare. The prospect of living in Copenhagen, with its vibrant culture, rich history, and high standard of living, was incredibly appealing. The city's blend of traditional charm and modern innovation provided an ideal backdrop for both study and leisure.

These aspects collectively made the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark exceptionally appealing, ultimately influencing my decision to pursue my degree at Aalborg University in Copenhagen. The combination of academic rigor, practical experience, and a supportive, innovative environment created the perfect setting for my studies and future career in tourism.

4. Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

I did much research before deciding to study tourism in Denmark. I have not much to talk about the influences of my educational consultant. I went to some education consultancy to learn better about universities. However, I could mention that they have helped me through the process by providing **information and Awareness** about various universities and tourism programs in Denmark. They introduced me to Aalborg University and highlighted the unique aspects of its tourism program, such as the problem-based learning approach and focus on sustainability. This information was crucial in helping me make an informed decision at the end. They have helped us through the whole process and the **Application Guidance**: The application process for studying abroad is a bit complex, we had to go through different immigration processes, required academic documentation, government No Objects letters, and many more. Consultants guided me through each step, from selecting the right program to preparing and submitting my application.

Navigating the visa application process and other administrative requirements can be challenging. Consultants provided detailed guidance on the necessary documents, deadlines, and procedures for obtaining a student visa for Denmark. I had also a week of preparation for the mock interview sessions and tips on how to present myself confidently and professionally. This preparation was instrumental in helping me succeed in any interviews and showcase my suitability for the program. Finally, **Financial Planning and Scholarships**: Educational consultants offered advice on financial planning, including tuition fees, living expenses, and potential funding sources. They informed me about scholarships, grants, and part-time job opportunities available to international students in Denmark. This information was crucial in managing the financial aspects of studying abroad.

Overall, educational consultants helped simplify the complex process of studying abroad. Their expertise, personalized guidance, and unwavering support significantly influenced my efforts and contributed to my successful admission to the tourism program at Aalborg University in Copenhagen. Their assistance not only made the process smoother but also enhanced my confidence and preparedness for this exciting academic journey.

5. Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

My education in tourism from Aalborg University will be a cornerstone of my career and personal aspirations. I have gained the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to pursue a meaningful and impactful career in tourism, with a special focus on promoting and developing sustainable tourism

in Nepal. I am excited to apply what I have learned to create positive changes in the industry, contribute to sustainable development, and continue growing both professionally and personally.

Looking towards the future, my education in tourism from Aalborg University in Copenhagen will significantly influence both my career and personal aspirations, particularly in promoting my home country, Nepal. The skills, knowledge, and experiences gained during my studies will shape my professional journey and personal growth in several key ways:

Promoting Tourism in Nepal: As Nepal is my birthplace, I am deeply committed to promoting its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and unique travel experiences. My specialized education in tourism will enable me to work with local tourism boards, travel agencies, and NGOs to develop and market sustainable tourism practices. By highlighting Nepal's stunning landscapes, diverse cultures, and adventure opportunities, I aim to attract more international visitors and support the local economy.

Sustainable Tourism Development: My education has equipped me with a strong foundation in sustainable tourism practices. I plan to apply this knowledge to help Nepal balance tourism growth with environmental conservation and cultural preservation. This involves developing eco-friendly tourism initiatives, promoting responsible travel behaviors, and working on community-based tourism projects that empower local communities.

Entrepreneurial Ventures in Nepal: Inspired by my studies, I aspire to start my own tourism-related business in Nepal, such as a sustainable travel agency or an eco-friendly lodge. By focusing on sustainability and offering unique, culturally immersive experiences, I aim to cater to conscious travelers while contributing positively to local communities and preserving Nepal's natural and cultural heritage.

Networking and Collaboration: The connections I have made with classmates, professors, and industry professionals will be invaluable throughout my career. These relationships will provide opportunities for collaboration on projects, research, and initiatives that advance sustainable tourism practices. Being part of a global network of tourism professionals will keep me informed about industry trends and innovations, allowing me to stay at the forefront of the field.

Innovative Approaches to Tourism: I was very impressed with the smart and sustainable technology implementation of Denmark. Therefore, the exposure to innovative and cutting-edge approaches during my studies will inspire me to continuously seek out and implement new ideas in my work. Whether it's leveraging technology to enhance the travel experience or developing creative marketing strategies to promote lesser-known destinations in Nepal, my education will drive me to innovate and improve the tourism sector.

In summary, my education in tourism from Aalborg University will be a cornerstone of my career and personal aspirations. It has provided me with the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to pursue a meaningful and impactful career in tourism, with a special focus on promoting and developing

sustainable tourism in Nepal. I am excited to apply what I have learned to create positive changes in the industry, contribute to sustainable development, and continue growing both professionally and personally.

Participant 2

Interview Introduction

Interviewer: "Good day! My name is From Aalborg University. I am conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, I want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?"

If Yes Proceed

1.Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

Firstly, I was fascinated by the cultural, social, and environmental impacts of tourism and want a career in tourism planning, development, management, or marketing. Similarly, I chose the tourism and hospitality course because it offers a diverse and exciting career path that combines my love for travel, people, and service. This field provides endless opportunities to explore different cultures, destinations, and experiences while honing skills in customer service, communication, and problem-solving. I am drawn to the industry's dynamic nature, where every day presents new challenges and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Studying tourism and hospitality allows me to pursue my passion while making a positive impact on the lives of travelers around the world.

2.What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

In a very beginning I felt hard to co-operate with different people from different countries and background while doing projects because everybody had a different style and thoughts secondly, I felt a bit difficult to understand the course structure because I came from those country where we had not use to study practically.

3.What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

International and diverse environment as well as affordable education fees for tourism program attracted me to decide. Moreover, great career opportunity after study also helped me to decide.

4.Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

When I was planning to go for higher studies. I was completely unaware of all the rules and regulations. I tried to gather all the information online and through friends. I was able to get most of the information but still I was facing small obstacles related to visa, fees, accommodation. I was bombarded with all these educational consultancies to contact them after visiting a study fair in my city. I realized I still had some ground to cover, and time was slowly running out. So, I approached couple of decent educational consultants, and they gave me the options of universities that they can help me get into. To be honest, all those universities were crap. I realized that they have tie up with those universities and educational consultancy will not charge me. I played along with them. I got admitted into 3-4 universities from different educational consultants. All these educational consultancies gave me a list of documents that I need to have before applying for universities and for visa purposes.

5.Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

My fascination with diverse cultures, a desire to create memorable experiences, and a passion for service drew me towards the dynamic field of tourism and hospitality. This industry provides a unique blend of travel, interaction, and management, offering an opportunity to explore the world, connect with people from all walks of life, and make a meaningful impact on their journeys. The tourism sector is a driving force behind economic growth, cultural exchange, and social progress. It captivates me with its multifaceted nature, encompassing everything from destination marketing and tour operations to hotel management and event planning. I am eager to delve into the intricacies of this industry, learn from experienced professionals, and contribute to its continued growth and evolution. Moreover, the tourism industry is renowned for its focus on visitor's satisfaction, personalization, and creating lasting memories. This aligns perfectly with my values and aspirations, as I am passionate about providing exceptional service and exceeding expectations. I am confident that my empathetic nature, attention to detail, and ability to build rapport with guests will enable me to excel in this field. By choosing tourism and hospitality, I am

embarking on a path that will not only lead to a fulfilling career but also empower me to make a positive impact on the world through travel, cultural exchange, and the creation of unforgettable experiences.

Participant 3

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Interview Introduction

Interviewer: "Good day! My name is From Aalborg University. I am conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, I want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?"

If Yes Proceed

1.Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

After the completion of my Bachelor Degree in International Sales and Marketing, I was looking for specializing my knowledge in Finance and Economics which didn't come true due to lack of credit in the course I did. For that reason, I started looking for other alternative course that suits my personally and interest and I found Tourism as my priority of interest in the study.

2.What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

First, being in the international environment where the students from other countries do not feel to be include you was the first challenging part while studying Master's in Tourism in Aalborg. For example, to be in the international group while doing class activities or the semester project was not possible as long as the teacher were involved. Secondly, coming from different study background and cultural background, exploring new topics were both exciting and challenging at the same time

3.What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

...For me an international environment was the most appealing when I made decision to choose Denmark as a study destination. However, as I already mention, the expectation did not meet as international students didn't seem to collaborate with Nepali students. Another aspect for choosing Denmark was the opportunity of study job while studying that would help me to enhance my skill along with my education

4. Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

Studying Master's in Tourism was my own decision and there were no educational consultant involved while making such decision.

5. Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

If I look my education as a Master's in Tourism, I haven't felt I will be able to enhance my career here in Denmark without Danish language and network. But I plan to travel to my own country or other country where Tourism industry are in the higher priority, I might end up doing some business in the related field where my knowledge from my Master's degree in Tourism could lead me towards successful journey or get priority to be selected in the work due to my education and experience from another foreign country.

Participant 4

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Interview Introduction

Interviewer: "Good day! My name is From Aalborg University. I am conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, I want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?"

If Yes Proceed

1. Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

I chose to study tourism in Denmark because of its great education system, focus on sustainable tourism, and the chance to experience a new culture. Hearing good things from other Nepalese students who studied there also influenced my decision.

2.What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

The most significant challenges I faced were adapting to a new culture, dealing with language barriers, and managing the high cost of living in Denmark. Additionally, being far from home and adjusting to a different education system were also difficult.

3.What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

I was attracted to Denmark's tourism program because of its focus on sustainable tourism, the high quality of education, and the chance for practical, hands-on learning. The welcoming and innovative educational environment, along with the opportunity to meet students from around the world, made it even more appealing.

4.Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

Educational consultants were very helpful in my decision to study tourism in Denmark. They provided detailed information about the programs, helped with the application process, and guided me through visa procedures. Their advice and support made the whole process much easier and less stressful.

5.Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

My education in tourism will help me improve Nepal's tourism industry. I want to promote sustainable tourism, create jobs, and introduce new ideas. This will support Nepal's growth and make it a better place for tourists to visit.

Participant 5

Interview Introduction

Interviewer: Good day! My name is _____ from Aalborg University/Southern Denmark University. I am conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, I want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?

Participant 5: "Yes, I consent."

1. Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

Participant 5:

"The decision to pursue my education in Denmark was significantly influenced by the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The earthquake caused immense disruption to my studies, as my school was severely damaged, and the academic environment became unstable. My family and I decided that continuing my education abroad would provide a more stable and secure setting. Denmark was particularly appealing due to its high-quality educational infrastructure and the opportunity to gain skills that would be valuable in rebuilding Nepal's tourism industry."

2. What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

Participant 5:

"The complexity of the Danish immigration process was overwhelming, with the extensive paperwork and strict compliance requirements. This was a constant source of stress. Additionally, finding my community was challenging as well, as the cultural differences made it difficult to form connections easily, often making me feel like an outsider. Adapting to the Danish culture, which is more direct and informal, took time and effort, especially in understanding subtle social cues and norms."

3. What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

Participant 5:

"The practical skills and technological proficiency I've developed here are critical components I intend to bring to my future entrepreneurial ventures in the tourism sector. We often work directly with tourism businesses to implement technology solutions that improve efficiency and customer satisfaction, providing me with real-world experience and technical skills that are directly applicable to my career goals."

4. Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

Participant**5:**

"Educational consultants played a significant role in my decision to study in Denmark. They provided essential guidance on the application process and helped navigate the complexities of the Danish educational system. However, they also presented challenges, such as high fees and sometimes conflicting advice. Despite this, their support was invaluable in ensuring I met all the requirements and deadlines."

5. Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

Participant**5:**

"My education in Denmark has equipped me with a wealth of knowledge and skills that I believe will be instrumental in my future career. The practical experience and technological know-how I have gained will be vital in my efforts to rebuild and enhance Nepal's tourism industry. Moreover, universities should consider offering more scholarships and financial aid options specifically for international students. This would help alleviate some of the financial burdens and allow students to focus more on their studies. I am confident that the competencies I have acquired will enable me to make significant contributions to the tourism sector, both in Nepal and internationally."

Participant 6**Appendix 1: Interview Guide****Interview Introduction**

Interviewer: "Good day! My name is From Aalborg University. I am conducting a study on the motivations and challenges that Nepalese students face when deciding to pursue tourism education in Denmark. The insights you provide today will be incredibly valuable in understanding these factors and potentially guiding future students and policy decisions. Before we proceed, I want to assure you that all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No personal identifying information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Do you consent to participate in this interview, and may I record our conversation for accuracy?"

If Yes Proceed

1. Can you describe the motivations that led you to pursue a tourism degree in Denmark, highlighting any key moments or influences that shaped your decision?

I previously worked in the tourism industry in Nepal, and it sparked an interest in the field. Because there are so few educated individuals in Nepal's tourism business, I wanted to further my education in this discipline and then work in the tourism industry when I returned.

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2.What were the most significant challenges you faced in your journey to study tourism abroad in Denmark?

Expectation against Reality. I had some practical experience in the field, but the theoretical aspect was quite different. Aside from this, there was a preset curriculum but no fixed text materials. The text materials consisted primarily of research papers and journals and extracting information from them proved difficult. It eventually grew accustomed to and began to cope with this approach of teaching and learning.

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3.What aspects of the tourism program and the educational environment in Denmark were most appealing to you when you were making your decision?

The first AAU Campus site was in Copenhagen. As a result, it was much easier to commute than traveling hundreds of kilometres to AAU in Aalborg. Second, this was a topic of interest.

4.Could you share how educational consultants influenced your effort to study tourism in Denmark?

Not at all. It was my solitary decision, based on my individual investigation. There is no influence from educational consulting and consultants. Students must make their own effort and should not rely on a third party.

5.Looking towards the future, how do you think your education in tourism will influence your career and personal aspirations, whether in Nepal or elsewhere?

I intend to work in Nepal's tourism industry soon, and education will undoubtedly play an important part. Similarly, networking with classmates, teachers, and stakeholders would undoubtedly be beneficial in achieving professional success.

