Rural allure and realities: Modelling tourist motivations, satisfaction, revisit intentions, and challenges – evidence from the Kashmir Valley of Jammu & Kashmir (UT)

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Journal of Tourism, Culinary, and Entrepreneurship

e-ISSN: 2776-0928

Publisher:
School of Tourism,
Universitas Ciputra Surabaya,
Indonesia

Keywords:
Rural Tourism
Tourist Motivation
Challenges
Satisfaction
Jammu & Kashmir

Received: *July 21, 2026*
Revised: *September 4, 2026*
Accepted: *September 10, 2026*

ABSTRACT

The research endeavors to pinpoint the driving forces that shape tourists' contentment and propensity to revisit the rural regions of Kashmir Valley. Furthermore, it sought to understand the challenges that tourists encounter on excursions to rural tourism and how those challenges impact their overall happiness. While in Jammu and Kashmir (UT), 380 tourists who were interested in rural life were asked to fill out a survey. Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire. This data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in the SPSS 27 program. According to the study's findings, push and pull factors of travel motivation positively affect the tourist's satisfaction, and that satisfaction positively affected revisitation. In contrast, the challenges faced by tourists significantly influence their level of satisfaction, indicating that greater challenges reduce overall visitor satisfaction The study offers practical implications for policymakers and stakeholders in designing strategies for sustainable rural tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism is rapidly gaining recognition for its significance in sustainable development (Ranganai et al., 2023). Numerous strategies exist to diversify rural economies, assist marginalized individuals, and safeguard cultural heritage while promoting environmental sustainability (Indrianto et al., 2024). Since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, the significance of visiting authentic, less congested destinations that promote health and wellness has markedly increased (Kartika et al., 2025). Studies from many nations validate this trend. Although the transportation difficulties encountered by persons in Russia, rural tourism was essential to the country's economy and the psychological health of its citizens (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021). Gogonea and Zaharia (2023) demonstrated that the post-pandemic recovery of rural destinations in Romania was significantly shaped by

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infrastructure quality, governance capacity, and destination classification. A cluster-based study validated this. Yang et al. (2023) revealed that individuals' decisions to participate in rural educational tourism in China are significantly influenced by pandemic-related limitations and the push-pull motivating frameworks. Collectively, these studies illustrate the significance of rural tourism in the context of evolving global events. They also offer a robust theoretical foundation for the present inquiry. Jammu and Kashmir is one of India's most underappreciated rural tourism destinations. It possesses exquisite natural landscapes and a profound cultural heritage.

Sitanggang and Kusumah (2025) examined the relationships among tourist motivation, destination image, visitor–destination image congruity, and revisit intention in Yogyakarta. Their findings indicate that tourists' motivational characteristics and perceptions of destination attributes play an important role in shaping revisit intentions. The study reinforces the argument that tourists' behavioral responses cannot be understood solely through destination attributes; rather, they are also influenced by tourists' underlying psychological motivations and their perceptions of the destination.

Dar et al. (2024) studied homestay tourism in the Kashmir Valley and revealed that cultural integration, authentic host-guest interactions, and homely comfort level significantly influence tourist satisfaction. Bhat et al. (2024) applied Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to understand the dynamic relationship between tourist perceptions, cultural mindsets, and environmental standards that shape socio-economic outcomes in rural destinations. Raina et al. (2025) emphasized the critical importance of incorporating the concept of sustainability in rural development, stressing the need to attain a balance among economic prosperity, civic engagement, and the resilience of sustainable development. Bhat et al. (2024) concluded that Baramulla district has untapped tourism potential in fields like culture, adventure, and spirituality, as a vital opportunity for local empowerment and poverty alleviation.

The purpose of the research is to find out what makes a destination appealing or unappealing to tourists and how these aspects affect their overall experience and likelihood of returning. The research aims to highlight specific issues that arise when tourists visit rural communities. This would assist both academic discourse and real-world government programs aimed at encouraging sustainable rural tourism in violent regions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation

The study of tourists' motivations as a social and psychological phenomenon has long been the primary emphasis of the field. What makes people want to travel is their intrinsic desire, according to Ye et al. (2021). According to Park and Yoon (2009), some of our most fundamental desires include privacy, adventure, independence, and close relationships with

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others. There is a strong correlation between the reasons tourists travel and the decisions they make about what to do while there (Kusumawidjaya et al., 2021; Pereira et al., 2019). Research into consumer behavior advanced the tourist motivation theory. People often feel compelled or stressed out when they travel, which often leads them to seek fulfilment through travel. This concept, say Kim and Ritchie (2012), encourages individuals to fulfil their needs by providing a bonus. Tourism professionals who want to create experiences that visitors will never forget need to have a firm grasp of these psychological factors. That people act in ways that satisfy their desires is a function of their motivation (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Researchers have shown that when people feel motivated, they are more likely to follow through on their travel plans (Adityaji et al., 2023; Kusumawidjaya et al., 2021; Bayih & Singh, 2020; Katsikari et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2017; Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016).

Katsikari et al. (2020) highlights that travel motivation stems from the desire to seek externally what cannot be found internally, shaped by societal and daily life influences. This theory categorizes motivational structures based on physiological safety, social esteem, and self-actualization (Katsikari et al., 2020). Pearce (2005) introduces a five-stage classification for travel motivations, suggesting that experienced travellers have higher needs compared to less experienced ones. Bhat et al. (2024) revealed that in Jammu & Kashmir, motivations for visiting rural areas are strongly linked to cultural authenticity, natural scenery, and opportunities for relaxation, which subsequently influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. Dar et al. (2024) emphasized that homestay tourists in Kashmir are especially motivated by opportunities for cultural exchange and personalized hospitality, reflecting both social interaction and authenticity-driven motivations.

Some recent studies have underscored different motivational factors that drive tourists to engage in rural and cultural tourism, also in a post-pandemic perspective. Douglas et al. (2024) underscored that the direct significant cultural vacation motivational dimensions such as learning, escape, uniqueness, and relaxation, impact the choice of the destination and activity preferences differ among destination types. Similarly, Qian and Anuar (2024) highlighted key motivational factors underpinning rural tourism for the case of Anhui, China, and emphasized the role of sustainable approaches, safety, infrastructure and brand building in increasing the appeal of rural tourism. According to Ramukumba et al. (2024), visitors are mainly drawn to rural regions in South Africa because of their natural surroundings and chances to interact with the local way of life. In their study of Namibian domestic travel, Ngondo et al. (2024) identified important pull factors like destination features and a variety of activities, as well as push factors like the desire for engaging and participatory experiences. In addition, Ab Dulhamid et al. (2023) investigated the reasons behind outdoor recreation in both urban and rural areas, identifying key motivators like relaxation, social interaction, physical wellness, and environmental engagement. Together, these results highlight the

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complexity of traveler motivations and the demand for focused, situation-specific approaches to improve rural and cultural tourism. Additionally, recent research shows that, especially in South Asia, there has been a notable shift in the motivation of tourists towards rural destinations in the post-COVID-19 era. The pandemic has changed how people travel, and the main motivators now seem to be safety, wellness, and sustainability. By incorporating social media influence and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), a study conducted in India by Azhar et al. (2023) expanded the Theory of Planned Behavior and found that, in the post-pandemic environment, tourists' intentions to travel to rural areas were significantly positively impacted. Furthermore, post-COVID tourists are favoring sustainable, digitalized rural tourism models that encourage resilience and health-conscious practices, according to a comparative review conducted in Malaysia and Turkey by Sakal (2021). When taken as a whole, these studies show that rural tourism has become more significant, especially among South Asian tourists looking for meaningful, safe, and nature-based experiences in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Driving Motivation: Push and Pull

The two motivational frameworks, commonly used in the travel industry, were first proposed in Theory of Push and Pull Motivations (Dann, 1981). To comprehend the motivations behind tourists' travels, researchers have consistently depended on push and pull variables (Michael et al., 2017; Wijaya et al., 2018). One of the socio-psychological aspects of tourism is the "push factor," which originates in the home environment and serves to motivate visitors to travel. Yousaf et al. (2018) identified these motivations as the "inner drives" that push people to travel for reasons like recreation, overcoming the isolation that comes with modern life, needing rest and adventure, and escaping from responsibilities. On the other hand, attractions that draw in tourists are known as "pull reasons," and they are associated with cognitive and external factors that are present at the target areas. These variables include things like infrastructure, facilities, climate, geography, services, and current prices. Tourists' choices of destination and mode of transportation are influenced by both aspects (Wulandari et al., 2019). Several studies have looked at this topic and shown that these two reasons to travel do, in fact, contribute to tourists' happiness (Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021).

Tourist Satisfaction

According to El-Adly (2019), the term "tourist satisfaction" describes the degree to which visitors leave a location feeling good about their time there. According to Sturgeon et al. (2015), contentment is a result of both mental and emotional processes. Stickdorn et al. (2018) state that to understand the customer's emotional relationships with the product supplier, one must consider factors other than only the evaluation and its context. According to preliminary

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research, the reasons why service providers are in business are the ones that dictate what tourists do while on vacation. Polychronidou and Chapsa (2022) also discovered that the happiness of tourism business employees affects the happiness of tourists.

An essential area of study in consumer and market research, tourist satisfaction developed out of customer loyalty, which is defined as the pattern of actions exhibited by a client when they provide a positive review of a service or product after using it and then either continue to buy it or suggest it to others (Nugroho et al., 2023). Extensive research is currently underway in the hospitality and tourist sectors to determine the effect of satisfaction on the likelihood of a customer returning. If we want to know what motivates visitors to act in a certain way, we need to know how happy they are (Ross, 1993; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Overall satisfaction correlates positively with the likelihood that tourists will return, according to research by Natalia et al. (2025). Researchers have shown that visitors' likelihood of returning to a place drop dramatically if they are dissatisfied with either the location itself or the activities offered there (Wang et al., 2025; Kusumah, 2024). It is difficult to reflect the relationship between tourist satisfaction and readiness to return due to the abundance of indicators used to assess it in different aspects (Nugroho et al., 2023). Thus, the connection between tourists' overall satisfaction and their likelihood of returning is the only one this article explores. Looking at the tourist satisfaction model and the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention from a comprehensive perspective, there is a lack of research on the factors that influence tourists' willingness to revisit. This category includes studies that examine tourist motivation and destination image, among other things. Additionally, the results that are available only provide occasional confirmation of the mediating effect of a single variable. Little is known about how visitors' intentions and perceptions of the place affect their enjoyment and, by extension, their likelihood of returning.

Tourist Revisit Intention

The intention of tourists to return is a prevalent topic of examination in tourism literature (Zhang et al., 2023). Revisit intention denotes a tourist's assessment of their overall experience at a destination, the likelihood of their return, and their propensity to recommend the destination to potential tourists (Gallarza et al., 2019). It is believed that repeat tourists stay longer, do more fun things, are happier with their experience, and tell others about their visit, all of which cost less to market than first-time visitors (Maghrifani et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023).

Similarly, de Torres et al. (2026) investigated the determinants of local tourists' revisit intentions to Carabao Island by examining tourist experience, satisfaction, and perceived risk. Their findings underscore the importance of positive tourist experiences and satisfaction in encouraging tourists to revisit a destination. The study further suggests that the quality of the

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overall destination experience can influence post-visit behavioural outcomes. These findings are particularly relevant to the present study, which conceptualizes tourist satisfaction as an important mechanism through which tourists' motivations and destination experiences may influence their intention to revisit. So et al. (2025) discovered that tourists' behavioral intentions encompass desires to return, share their experiences with others, demonstrate brand loyalty, and exhibit price sensitivity. When tourists have good experiences that include great service and attractive destination features like beautiful beaches, local food, scenic landscapes, warm hospitality, and a rich cultural heritage, they often want to go back. On the other hand, poor service and a lack of destination features make people less likely to want to go back. Islam and Boro (2019) say that Mongolian regions have many great local food traditions that both foreign and domestic tourists can enjoy. Khasawneh & Alfandi (2019) contend that favorable travel intentions are associated with a higher likelihood of return, increased spending at the destination, a willingness to pay extra for tourist services, and greater loyalty to the destination. de Torres and Ulayao (2025) examined revisit intentions among local mountaineers at Mount Guiting-Guiting, highlighting the role of tourist experience, satisfaction, and perceived risks. The study demonstrates that positive experiences and favourable perceptions of destination conditions can influence tourists' intention to revisit, offering relevant insights for nature-based destinations such as the Kashmir Valley. In general, visitors are more likely to return to a place if they have a good time there (Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019; Sharafuddin et al., 2022). A big part of marketing to tourists is getting them to come back, which makes a place more appealing. It's cheaper to keep customers and get them back than it is to get new ones. Loyal travelers are more likely to tell friends, family, and others about tourist spots. Khasawne and Alfandi (2019) say that destination planners need to keep customers coming back for their marketing strategies to work. Tourism developers and marketers evaluate their marketing strategies and management practices by examining tourists' intentions to return, their willingness to recommend others, and the cultivation of positive word-of-mouth.

Post-COVID Shifts and Rural Resilience

Globally, COVID-19 reshaped tourism flows, directing demand toward rural, nature-based, and less-crowded destinations.). Research indicates that tourists increasingly sought rural spaces for well-being, nature immersion, and reduced exposure to crowds (Bimonte & Punzo, 2022). Other Studies show that rural tourism offered psychological relief and mental well-being benefits during lockdowns (Gabriel-Campos et al., 2021). Local governments in Eastern Europe that endorsed community-led initiatives actively pursued rural tourists to enhance the economy (Gogonea & Zaharia, 2023). The travel restrictions during the epidemic heightened awareness among individuals in rural South Asia on their significance to the economy and society (World Tourism Organization, 2023). The United Nations Tourism Rural

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Development Impact Report in 2024 indicates that rural tourism continues to be a catalyst for inclusive growth, particularly when associated with community-based initiatives. The epidemic exacerbated existing issues and opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir. Reduced international flights resulted in an influx of visitors, exacerbating the strain on already burdened ecosystems and local infrastructure (Raina et al., 2025). Tourists' motivations shifted toward open landscapes, wellness experiences, and cultural authenticity, but gaps in healthcare access, sanitation, and safety became more visible. The growing reliance on rural tourism in the pandemic's aftermath reaffirms the need for sustainable, resilient frameworks that integrate local community participation.

Challenges in Rural Tourism

The potential of rural tourism is being hindered by infrastructural limitations, environmental concerns, and government regulations. The lack of adequate connectivity, housing, and internet access has been highlighted as a major hurdle to sustainable development in several global studies (Gogonea & Zaharia, 2023). The infrastructure and government in Romania have failed to adapt to the changing needs of rural tourism, leading to uneven development in this sector. Ranganai et al. (2023) examined rural tourism in Zimbabwe and found that big data and analytics can improve tourism quality management by identifying visitor needs, supporting decision-making, and enhancing service delivery. However, the study also highlighted challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, poor marketing, lack of government support, and insufficient community involvement. These findings indicate that both destination quality and structural challenges can shape tourists' experiences and tourism development, providing a relevant basis for examining tourist motivation, satisfaction, revisit intentions, and challenges in the Kashmir Valley. Gabriel-Campos et al. (2021) found that due to a lack of cooperation among stakeholders, Russian tourism does not do enough to encourage individuals to be resilient in the long run. Limited road access, inadequate sanitary facilities, seasonal fluctuation, and a lack of digital infrastructure are some of the challenges that rural tourism in India faces (Raina et al., 2025). The already precarious environmental situation in Jammu and Kashmir is making matters worse. Bhat et al. (2024) found that Baramulla's rural tourist potential is mostly untapped due to infrastructure obstacles and a lack of promotional techniques.

Gaps in the Literature and Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

While substantial progress has been made in understanding rural tourism motivations and challenges, notable gaps remain. First, most studies analyse motivations and challenges separately, with limited focus on their interplay and how they collectively shape satisfaction and future intentions. Second, while international literature has addressed post-COVID shifts,

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few empirical studies examine how these dynamics manifest in conflict-sensitive rural destinations like Jammu and Kashmir. Finally, there is limited integration of policy perspectives, such as the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, with empirical data on tourist experiences. Addressing these gaps, the present study investigates push–pull motivations, challenges, and their influence on satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the rural tourism context of Jammu and Kashmir.

In light of the foregoing literature assessment, the following is the stated goal of this research:

H_1: Push factors of travel motivations positively influence tourists' overall satisfaction

H_2: Pull indicators of travel motivations positively influences tourists' overall satisfaction

H_3: Tourists overall satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on future behavioral intention to revisit rural destinations

H_4: Challenges faced by tourists have a significant impact on overall Tourist Satisfaction

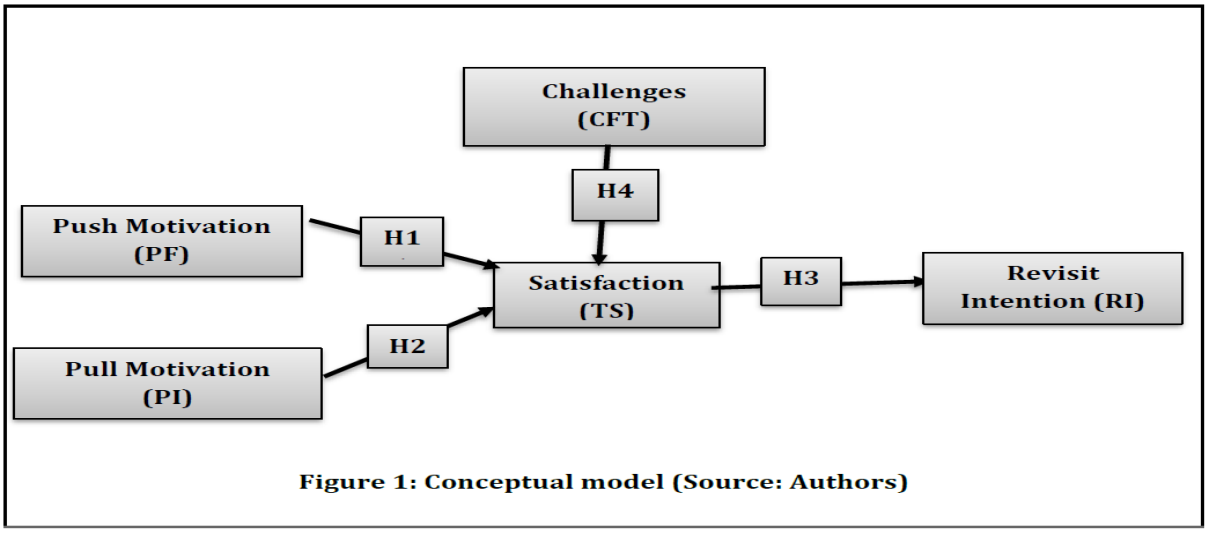


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Instrument and Data Collection

This study employed a quantitative research design using a structured, self-administered questionnaire to investigate the determinants of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in the rural tourism destinations of the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Kashmir (UT), India. The questionnaire was developed following an extensive review of the tourism literature and consisted of six sections. The first section collected respondents' socio-demographic information, while the second section captured travel characteristics. The third section measured tourists' travel motivation, comprising six push motivation items and six pull motivation items. The fourth section assessed the challenges encountered during rural tourism

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experiences using five items. The fifth section measured tourist satisfaction through five items, whereas the sixth section evaluated revisit intention using four items, resulting in a total of 26 measurement items.

All construct items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The measurement scales were adapted from previously validated studies to ensure content validity and comparability with earlier tourism research (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Luvsandavaajav & Narantuya, 2021; Osiako et al., 2022; Bhat et al., 2024). Minor modifications were made to the wording of selected items to reflect the rural tourism context of the Kashmir Valley while preserving the original meaning of the constructs.

Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity and contextual relevance. The internal consistency of the measurement instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. As presented in Table 1, the overall reliability coefficient was 0.928, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the instrument was suitable for the subsequent statistical analyses.

The target population comprised domestic and international tourists aged 18 years and above who visited rural tourism destinations in the Kashmir Valley during the study period. Since no comprehensive sampling frame of tourists was available, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted. The minimum sample size was determined using Cochran's sample size formula, and a total of 380 valid questionnaires were obtained, satisfying the required sample size for statistical analysis.

Data were collected from tourists visiting selected rural tourism destinations across the Kashmir Valley, including Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Doodhpathri, Yusmarg, and Gulmarg. Questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher, who remained available throughout the survey process to clarify respondents' queries whenever necessary, thereby improving the completeness and accuracy of the collected data.

To capture seasonal variations in tourist behaviour, data collection was conducted during two distinct tourism seasons. The first phase was carried out during the winter season (November 2024-February 2025), while the second phase was undertaken during the summer season (April-July 2025). Collecting data across both peak tourism seasons ensured that tourists experiencing different climatic conditions and tourism activities were adequately represented.

Following data screening, incomplete and unusable questionnaires were excluded from the analysis, resulting in 380 valid responses. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and study variables. Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships among

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travel motivation, perceived challenges, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention. Multiple regression analysis was subsequently performed to assess the influence of travel motivation and perceived challenges on tourist satisfaction and the effect of tourist satisfaction on revisit intention.

The reliability of the measurement instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. As shown in Table 1, all 380 questionnaires were included in the reliability analysis, with no cases excluded. The overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.928 for the 26 measurement items indicates excellent internal consistency. This demonstrates that the questionnaire items consistently measured the underlying constructs of travel motivation, perceived challenges, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention, confirming the suitability of the instrument for subsequent statistical analyses.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Case Processing Summary		
		N
Cases	Valid	380
	Excluded[a]	0
	Total	380

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.928	26

Study Area

The Kashmir Valley, situated in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, India, was selected as the study area because of its significance as one of the country's most prominent tourism destinations. Renowned for its exceptional natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, traditional rural settlements, and diverse climatic conditions, the Valley attracts a substantial number of domestic and international tourists throughout the year.

The region provides a wide variety of rural tourism experiences, including village-based tourism, agritourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism, making it an ideal setting for examining tourists' motivations, satisfaction, revisit intentions, and perceived challenges. Furthermore, the coexistence of increasing tourist demand with infrastructural limitations, environmental concerns, and socio-cultural transformations offers an appropriate context for investigating sustainable rural tourism development.

The survey was conducted across selected rural tourism destinations in the Kashmir Valley during both winter and summer seasons to ensure representation of diverse tourist experiences under varying seasonal conditions. The geographical distribution of survey sites enabled the study to capture a broad spectrum of visitor perceptions across different rural tourism settings. Consequently, the Kashmir Valley provides an appropriate empirical context

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for understanding the determinants of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in rural tourism destinations (Kumar, 2018; Wani, Nagaraj, & Malik, 2022.

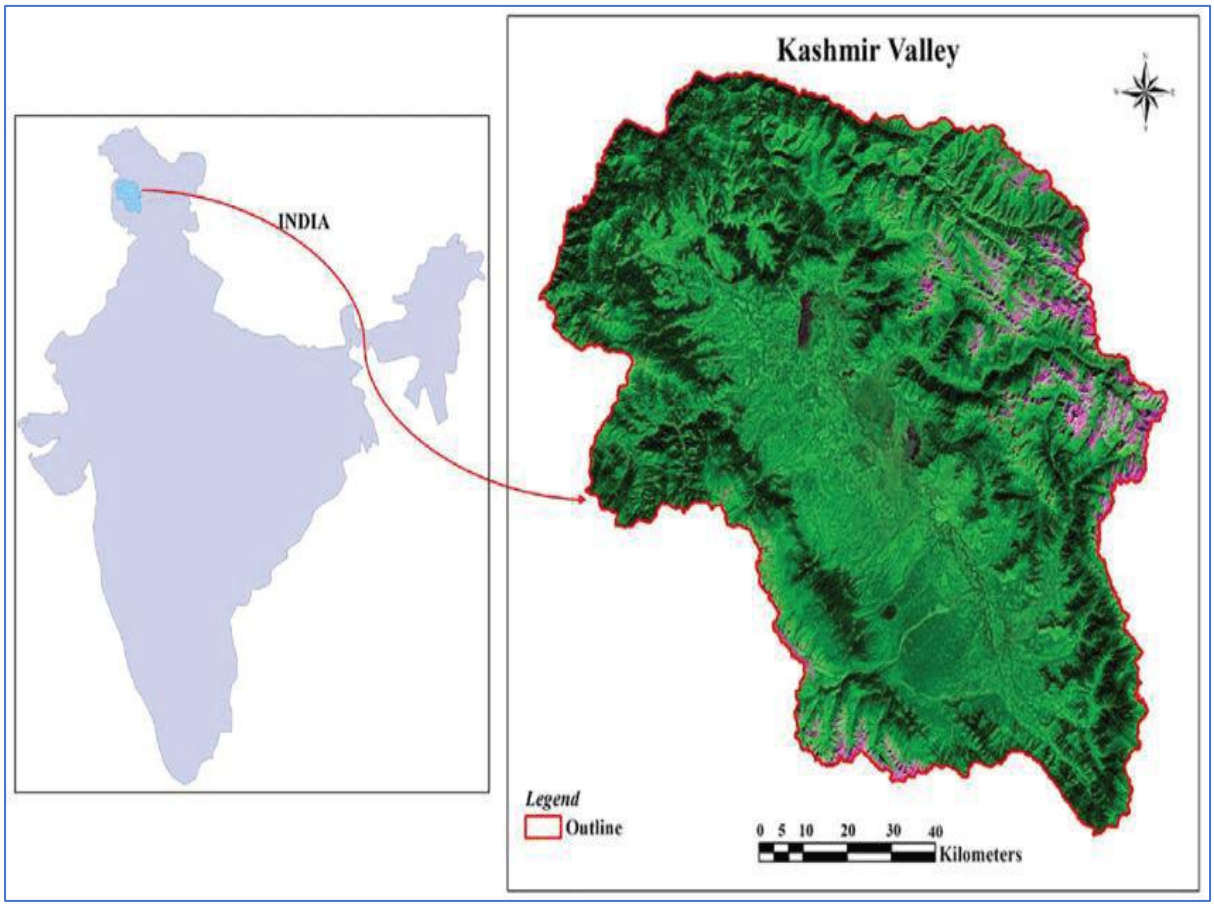


Figure 2. Map of Kashmir Valley
Source: Dar et al. (2024)

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile (Respondents)

Table 2. Demography

Variable	Values	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	247	65%
	Female	133	35%
	20-26	76	20%
	26-32	133	35%
Age	33-39	95	25%
	40-46	57	15%
	Above 46	19	5%
Marital Status	Married	228	60%
	Single	152	40%
	Diploma or below	57	15%
	Graduate	190	50%
Education	Postgraduate or above	133	35%

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Table 2 comprises demographic profile of the respondents. In terms of gender distribution, 65% of participants are male, whilst 35% are female. Most of the respondents (35%) were in the age bracket of 26-32 years old. This was closely followed by (25%) in the age bracket of 33-39 years, then 20% in the age 20-26 years, and 15% in the age 40-46. the least percentage 5% were in the age bracket of above 46 years old. The travellers' marital status reveals that 60% were married, with the remaining 40% being single. In addition, the educational levels of the tourists indicate that 15% had a diploma or lower, Graduate 50%, Postgraduate or above 35% respectively.

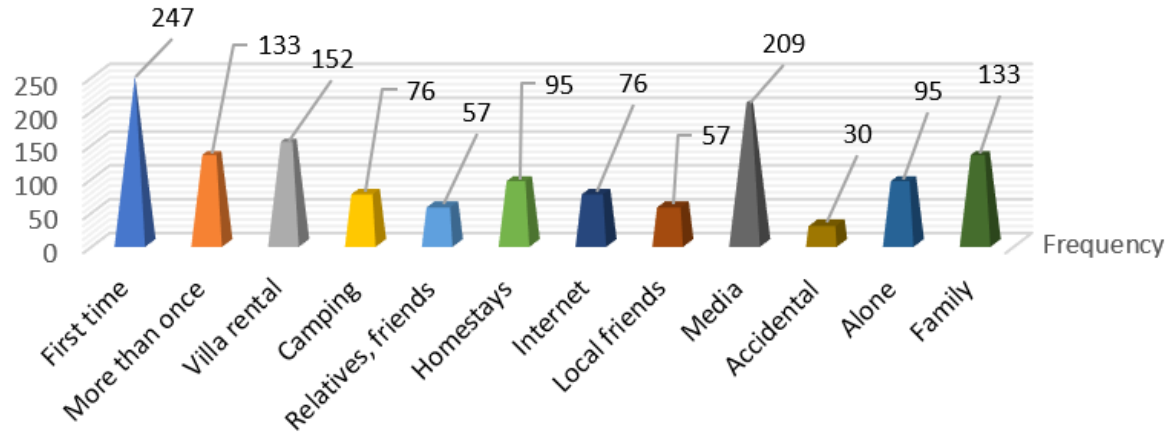


Figure 3. Demography
Source: Authors Own Completion (2025)

Table 3. Travel Pattern

Variable	Values	Frequency	%
Travel times	First time	247	65
	More than once	133	35
Residence location	Villa rental	152	40
	Camping	76	20
	Relatives, friends	57	15
	Homestays	95	25
Familiarity with the destination	Internet	76	20
	Local friends	57	15
	Media	209	55
	Accidental	30	10
Travel companions	Alone	95	25
	Family	133	35
	Friend	152	40

The travel patterns of tourists are shown in Table 3. Out of the 380 tourists who were surveyed, 243 only went to the designated areas of Jammu Region once, while 137 went there more than once. Many tourists that visited the province stayed in villas, while another large percentage camped or stayed in homestays. Internet research (15.5%), personal connections (21.3%), news reports (48.2%), and pure luck (15%) were the ways in which tourists learned

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about their preferred locations. The statistics showed that the most common periods to travel were on weekends (26.8%), weekdays (31.1%), holidays (24.2%), and free time (17.9%). In addition, 36.1% travelled with friends, 33.4% with relatives, and 30.5% travelled alone.

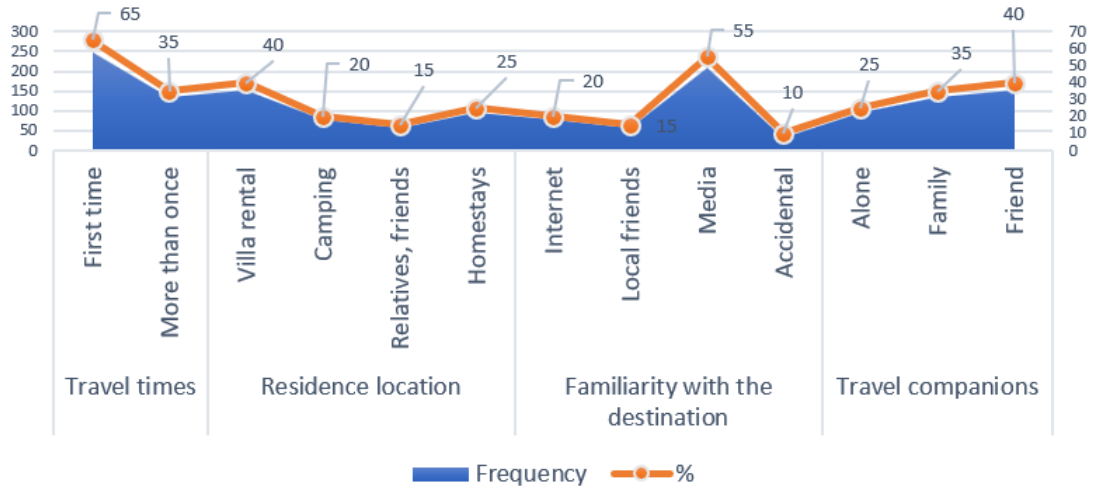


Figure 4. Travel Pattern
Source: Authors Own Completion (2025)

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Push Factors (PF)	**Mean**	**Std. D**
I am attracted to rural areas for adventure and exploration	3.62	0.869
Spending quality time with family and friends motivates me to visit rural areas	3.61	1.015
I visit rural destinations to relax and escape from my daily routine	3.55	0.980
I am motivated to experience peace and tranquillity in rural areas	3.55	0.961
I visit rural destinations to reduce stress and rejuvenate	3.53	0.967
Rural tourism helps me develop personally and learn new things	3.18	1.145
Pull Indicators (PI)	**Mean**	**SD**
Natural beauty of rural areas attracts me to visit	3.42	1.140
Cultural heritage and local traditions motivate my visit	3.32	1.074
Festivals and local events inspire me to visit rural areas	3.31	1.046
Unique rural experiences not available in cities draw me	3.25	1.042
Scenic landscapes and photography opportunities attract me	3.23	1.081
Local cuisine and traditional food motivate me to travel	3.06	1.201
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	**Mean**	**SD**
Services and facilities in rural areas are satisfactory	3.71	1.050
My expectations regarding rural tourism have been met	3.64	1.026
I am satisfied with my overall rural tourism experience	3.44	1.118
I feel that rural destinations provide good value for my time and money	3.21	1.147
Rural tourism experiences were enjoyable and fulfilling	3.08	1.228
Revisit Intention (RI)	**Mean**	**SD**
I am willing to encourage others to visit rural areas in Jammu & Kashmir	3.44	1.062
I intend to revisit rural destinations in Jammu & Kashmir	3.42	1.140
I plan to explore more rural destinations in Jammu & Kashmir in the future	3.36	1.226
I would recommend rural destinations in Jammu & Kashmir to friends and family	3.32	1.145
Valid N (listwise) 380		

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; Source: Primary survey data (2025)

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Interpretation of Descriptive Statistics

A concise analysis of the descriptive statistics is conducted utilizing the mean and standard deviation data from Table 2. The push factors were substantial, with an average score of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 0.99. These push factors are ranked by their mean scores. Among the push factors, "I am attracted to rural areas for adventure and exploration" emerged as the most influential motive (mean = 3.62, SD = 0.869). This suggests the importance of novelty, excitement, and experiential engagement in shaping tourists' interest in rural destinations. "Spending quality time with family and friends motivates me to visit rural areas" was the second highest-ranked item and emerged as a significant motivating item (mean = 3.61, SD = 1.015). As respondents perceive rural areas as favorable settings for fostering social ties and shared experiences. Respondents also strongly supported the elements of psychological well-being and escape. As evidenced by items like "Relaxing and escaping from daily routine" (mean = 3.55, SD = 0.980), "Experiencing peace and tranquillity" (mean = 3.55, SD = 0.961), and "Reducing stress and rejuvenation" (mean = 3.53, SD = 0.967), rural tourism plays a vital role in fulfilling tourists' need for mental relaxation and emotional renewal. On the other hand, the mean score for learning new things through rural tourism and personal growth was the lowest (mean = 3.18, SD = 1.145). This result demonstrates that not everyone agrees that personal growth and learning are the main reasons people go to rural destinations.

The descriptive statistics for several pull factors that encourage visitors to visit rural destinations are graded based on their average values. The total mean score of 3.44 suggests that respondents strongly believe that pull indicators have a major influence on their travel decisions. Among the factors, "Natural beauty of rural places attracts me to visit" scores highest (mean = 3.42, SD = 1.140), emphasizing the importance of environmental beauty in attracting tourists. This research indicates that destination qualities like open spaces, picturesque surroundings, and pristine natural settings primarily influence rural travelers. The second-ranked indicator, "Cultural heritage and local traditions motivate my visit" (mean = 3.32, SD = 1.07), highlights that tourists are motivated by the opportunities to experience indigenous cultural heritage and traditional lifestyle elements unique to rural areas. "Festivals and local events inspire me to visit rural areas" ranks third (mean = 3.31, SD = 1.04), reflecting a notable role in stimulating interest in rural destinations, highlighting the importance of community-based cultural activities in destination appeal. Unique rural experiences rank fourth (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.04), followed by "Local cuisine and traditional food motivate me to travel" (mean = 3.6, SD = 1.201), indicating that gastronomic appeal may not be a principal motivator for travel in the investigated scenario. In general, these results show that environmental and cultural factors are the main things that draw people to a place and affect how they behave when they are there.

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The descriptive analysis of tourist satisfaction suggests that visitors are generally pleased with their experiences of rural tourism. Rural services and facilities had the highest means (mean = 3.71, SD = 1.05), indicating that people thought basic infrastructure and service provisions were adequate. The next category is fulfilling expectations (mean = 3.64, SD = 1.03), showing that tourists' expectations and actual experiences were consistent. People were largely pleased with rural tourism (mean = 3.44, SD = 1.12). On the other hand, value for time and money (mean = 3.21, SD = 1.15) and pleasant and fulfilling experiences (mean = 3.08, SD = 1.23) received lower mean ratings, showing that experience quality and perceived value can still be improved. The data demonstrate that, while tourist satisfaction is high, increasing experience richness may enhance it even further.

Finally, Revisit Intention (RI) ratings indicate that people are moderately dedicated to their tasks. Respondents strongly agreed that they wanted to return (M = 3.42, SD = 1.140) and that people should be encouraged to visit rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir (M = 3.44, SD = 1.062). The slightly lower means for further exploration (M = 3.36, SD = 1.226) and recommendation to family and friends (M = 3.32, SD = 1.145) indicate that future conduct is acceptable but not particularly likely. The findings usually indicate that increasing the experience elements may result in greater satisfaction, which may raise the likelihood of returning and recommending.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Matrix for Satisfaction, Push Factors and Pull Factors (N = 380)

Variables	Tourist Satisfaction	Push factors	Pull factors
Satisfaction	1.000	0.661***	0.613***
Push factors	0.661***	1.000	0.858***
Pull factors	0.613***	0.858***	1.000

Note: ***p < 0.001 (1-tailed)

The correlation matrix demonstrates robust and statistically significant associations among the three core constructs: tourist satisfaction, push motivational factors, and pull destination attributes. Tourists' evaluations are significantly influenced by both internal motivations and external features of the destination, as shown by the strong positive correlation between satisfaction and push factors ($r = 0.661$, $p < 0.001$) and the moderately strong positive correlation between satisfaction and pull factors ($r = 0.613$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, there is a very good correlation between push and pull variables ($r = 0.858$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the internal motives of tourists closely match their views of the attractiveness of the place. This high degree of interdependence implies that motivational drivers operate synergistically rather than independently in influencing tourist behaviours and experience assessments. Collectively, the findings affirm that satisfaction is multidimensional, emerging from the combined influence of psychological travel motives and the perceived

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quality of destination attributes, thereby highlighting the integrated nature of tourist decision-making processes.

Table 6. Regression Analysis (Push Factors and Tourist Satisfaction)

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Remarks
H_1	PF---TS	.582	.437	293.195	.000	Supported

Note: *p < 0.05. PF: Push Factors, TS: Tourist Satisfaction

The first hypothesis tested whether push factors of motivation have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction. The results indicated that push factors significantly predicted tourist satisfaction, F (1, df) =293.19, p<0.001, which indicates that the push factors can play a significant role in shaping tourists satisfaction level (b=.582, p<.001). The favorable and statistically significant impact of the push factors on tourist satisfaction is demonstrated by these findings. In addition, the model accounts for 37.6% of the variation in the tourist satisfaction, as shown by the R^2 value of.437. Summarized in Table 6 are the results.

Table 7. Regression Analysis (Pull Indicators and Tourist Satisfaction)

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Remarks
H_2	PI---TS	.460	.376	227.52	.000	Supported

Note: *p < 0.05. PI: Pull Indicators, TS: Tourist Satisfaction

The second hypothesis examined whether pull indicators of motivation have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction. To test second hypothesis, tourist satisfaction was regressed on the predictor pull indicators. The findings showed that pull indicators had a strong impact on the levels of satisfaction among tourists ($\beta = 0.460$, $p < 0.001$), as pull indicators was found to be a significant predictor of tourist satisfaction ($F (1, df) = 227.52$, $p < 0.001$). There is a strong and positive correlation between pull indicators and tourist satisfaction, as shown by these results. In addition, with a R^2 value of 0.376, the model indicates that pull indicators accounts for 37.6% of the variation in tourist satisfaction. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 7.

Table 8. Regression Analysis (Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.445[a]	.198	.196	.83495

a. Predictors: Satisfaction...
b. Dependent: Revisit Intention

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As in Table 8, the regression analysis indicates a moderate positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and revisit intention (R = 0.445). The R^2 value of 0.198 suggests that tourist satisfaction explains 19.8% of the variance in revisit intention, while the adjusted R^2 of 0.196 confirms the model's predictive power. These findings highlight tourist satisfaction as a meaningful predictor of revisit intention.

Table 9. Summarized Regression Analysis Table (Satisfaction and Revisit Intention)

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Remarks
H_3	TS---RI	.612	.198	93.315	.000	Supported

Note: *p < 0.05. TS: Tourist Satisfaction, RI: Revisit Intention

The third hypothesis tested whether tourist satisfaction has a significant impact on revisit intention. The findings showed that tourist satisfaction had a substantial impact on visitors' revisit intention level (b=.612, p<.001), with a significant prediction of revisit intention (F (1, df) =93.315, p<0.001). The favorable and statistically significant impact of the tourist satisfaction on revisit intention is demonstrated by these findings. And with a R^2 value of.198, we can see that 19.8% of the revisit intention variance is explained by the model. The results are summarized in Table 11.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Challenges in Rural Tourism

Item	Mean	Std. D
Language barriers or lack of local information make visits difficult	3.54	1.012
Lack of medical and emergency facilities is a major concern while visiting rural areas	3.61	1.046
Lack of trained guides and hospitality staff affects my rural tourism experience	3.55	1.060
Limited financial resources restrict the growth of rural tourism	3.55	1.189
Inadequate marketing and promotion of rural destinations limit tourist awareness.	3.53	1.104
Valid N (listwise)		

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; Source: Primary survey data (2025)

The findings of the table 10, indicates that the language barriers and lack of local information were the most prominent challenge (M = 3.54, SD = 1.012), followed by inadequate medical and emergency facilities (M = 3.49, SD = 1.046) and lack of trained guides and hospitality staff (M = 3.44, SD = 1.060). The limited financial resources restrict the growth of rural tourism (M = 3.39, SD = 1.189) and inadequate marketing and promotion (M = 3.38, SD = 1.104) were also identified as notable challenges. Overall, the results highlight information, infrastructure, human-resource, safety, and promotional gaps as key constraints affecting rural tourism experiences.

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Table 11. Regression Analysis (Challenges and Tourist Satisfaction)

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R^2	F	p-value	Remarks
H_4	CFT---TS	.509	.482	354.115	.000	Supported

Note: *p < 0.05. CFT: Challenges Faced by Tourists, TS: Tourists Satisfaction

The fourth hypothesis examined whether the challenges faced by tourists have a significant impact on overall tourist satisfaction. The regression analysis revealed that challenges faced by tourists significantly predict tourist satisfaction ($\beta = .509$, $F = 354.115$, $p < .001$). The model explains 48.2% of the variance in tourist satisfaction ($R^2 = .482$), indicating that the challenges faced by tourists are an important predictor of their overall satisfaction. Since the relationship is statistically significant ($p < .001$), fourth hypothesis is supported.

Discussion

The Tourist Motivation, Satisfaction and Revisit Intention Correspondence

The study's findings revealed that motivation has two components: push and pull. Since Dann (1981) developed the pull and push motivation theory, as a study tool for travel and tourism, the two component categories have dominated tourism literature. This category has been used in studies on tourism behavior by Michael et al. (2017) and Wijaya et al. (2018). The study's findings revealed that both push and pull variables of travel motivation have a favorable impact on tourist satisfaction, which increases the possibility of returning. Furthermore, the study's findings showed that the problems that tourists face have a significant impact on their contentment. When the strengths of the two motive groups were compared, pull motivations were shown to be responsible for more rural recreational visits than push motivations. As a result, we can conclude that external features at destination sites have a greater influence on tourist visits to rural areas than internal aspects in domestic visitors' home settings. The study by Mehmetoglu and Normann (2013) verified that both pull and push factors impact the choice of destinations made by tourists. Here is where every traveler's adventures begin. Tourist marketers that focus on market segmentation must have a firm grasp of what drives tourists (Dolnicar, 2020). Researchers have discovered a strong correlation between the presence of both push and pull motivating factors and overall levels of pleasure. The results of the logistic regression and ANOVA tests, which were used to examine the two correlations, supported the conclusions. Motivation was discovered to have a positive and considerable impact on satisfaction, with push and pull motives having slightly varying degrees of influence. Satisfaction had a substantial impact on return visits. These findings support the preceding study's claims. According to Bayih & Singh (2020), push and pull factors connect positively with visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Identifying the many motivations for visiting particular sites, as well as the varying levels of visitor enjoyment,

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allows for the development of efficient niche marketing strategies, assuring the destination's long-term economic survival through tourism. Tourists measure their enjoyment by comparing their experiences to their expectations, as satisfaction is inextricably related to motivation. Their expectations provide context for their journeys. Pestana et al. (2018) underlines the necessity of understanding tourist motivations, happiness, and loyalty for successful tourism marketing. These criteria influence venue selection, product use, and repeat visits (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). According to Sharafuddin et al. (2022), travelers who plan to return are more likely to suggest their experiences to others.

5. CONCLUSION

The current study indicates that motivation affects satisfaction, which in turn impacts return visits. Travelers who experienced greater satisfaction throughout their journey were more inclined to return. Enterprises within the travel and hospitality sectors will experience increased revenue as a consequence. Customers are more likely to select products from competitors when their satisfaction is diminished. The results of this study have important real-world consequences for tourist officials, residents, and companies involved in rural tourism in the Kashmir province. To take advantage of cultural and experiential incentives, stakeholders should advertise heritage sites, traditional events, and local crafts to draw in tourists looking for genuine experiences. Tourists that value sustainability and relaxation for themselves and the planet's health may be attracted to areas that provide eco-tourism trails, wellness retreats, and nature-based activities. Homestays and guided village tours are two examples of community-based projects that bring tourists and locals together in meaningful interactions, which helps to address social and emotional issues. Economic opportunities, cultural and environmental assets, and the growth of sustainable tourism can all be improved via the application of these measures. In addition, everyone involved should work together to upgrade the infrastructure, which includes things like remote connectivity and lodging, and to use digital marketing to reach more people. To successfully attract and satisfy diverse tourists, it is essential to possess a comprehensive understanding of the incentives relevant to particular tourist populations or destination categories. To foster a sustainable tourism demand that aligns with expectations, tourism marketers, recreational site operators, and other stakeholders must effectively address the relevant tourist motivators. Consequently, their dedication is guaranteed.

Limitations and Future Research

This research provides valuable insights into the motivations for tourist trips, although its limitations highlight specific areas need more research. To address the cross-sectional nature of this study, long-term research might examine how tourists' motivations fluctuate with

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seasonal or socioeconomic contexts. Secondly, to augment the quantitative findings, qualitative methodologies such as focus groups or in-depth interviews may uncover nuanced cultural or socioeconomic factors influencing travel decisions. Third, examining the impact of social media and digital marketing on tourist motivations may provide a modern perspective on developing travel. preferences. Ultimately, a comparison analysis of the Jammu region with other rural tourist destinations in India may uncover unique potential and challenges that could inform targeted tourism development strategies.

Although the present study employed Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses to examine the direct relationships among the study variables, SEM could provide a more comprehensive analytical approach. SEM enables the simultaneous assessment of both measurement and structural models, accounts for measurement error, and facilitates the examination of direct, indirect, mediating, and moderating relationships among latent constructs. Future research should employ SEM to validate the proposed conceptual framework and to explore the complex mechanisms through which travel motivations and perceived challenges influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. These focused research directions offer significant opportunities for the enhancement of tourism practice and scholarship, expanding upon the limitations and findings of the present study.

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