

REPORT

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Unveiling Sustainable Tourism Behaviour and Future Marketing Direction for Wellness Tourism in Kangra Valley Of Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

Purpose – This study explores the sustainable tourism behaviour of wellness tourists in Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh, India, examining how demographic factors influence these practices.

Design/Methodology/Approach - Using convenience sampling, the survey was distributed to 257 wellness visitors at popular Kangra Valley sites. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation were used to investigate the links between demographic characteristics and sustainable tourist behaviour.

Findings - The findings reveal significant relationships between certain demographic factors and sustainable tourism behaviours. Younger tourists (aged 20-30) are more inclined to engage in environmentally and socially responsible practices. Education level and income also show correlations, albeit weak, with sustainable behaviour such as supporting the local economy and respecting cultural values.

Research Limitations/Implications - The study's reliance on convenience sampling and the specific focus on wellness tourists in Kangra Valley may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope to include a broader range of tourism activities and geographic locations to better understand sustainable tourism behaviour across different segments.

Originality/Value - This research contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism by specifically addressing the behaviours of wellness tourists. It provides valuable perspectives on how demographic factors shape eco-friendly and culturally sensitive practices, offering a foundation for further studies in sustainable tourism and wellness travel.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, Sustainable tourist behaviour, Demographic factors, Kangra valley

INTRODUCTION

Recent decades have witnessed tourism greatly strengthening local economies and evolving to be an essential global economic activity (Reisinger et al., 2019). The process of unbalanced economic growth, development, and distribution has drawn an enormous amount of interest in recent years among vocalists, academicians and people at large; the primary concern of these initiatives is environmental and sustainable practices (Cole and Morgan, 2010). Within the sustainability paradigm of change elaborate an idea of wellness tourism with sustainability as key focus (Lopes and Rodríguez-López, 2022; Quintela et al., 2017; Wray and Weiler, 2013). According to (Voigt et al., 2011a), wellness tourism is the conclusion of every relationship formed by travellers whose principal objective is to preserve or enhance their physical, mental, spiritual, and/or social well-being and who spend at least one night in a facility created with that purpose in mind. The specialised market of wellness tourism has displayed notable growth recently and is projected to continue flourishing within the overall tourism industry (GWI, 2018) showcasing opportunities for the destination managers and marketers to promote a destination in niche segment to gain economic benefits arising from the same. Therefore, analysing socio-economic demographic profile of wellness tourists may assist to create tailored products for certain market segments, leading to increased customer satisfaction and competitive advantage (Mueller and Kaufmann, 2001). Konu, (2010) explains how it's critical to comprehend the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of wellness tourists in order to improve customer happiness and stimulate loyalty by identifying the particular demands of various demographic groups, suppliers may provide more tailored and fulfilling experiences. The current research is undertaken in Himachal Pradesh, India which is home to an enormous variety of medicinal plants and hot springs recognised for their therapeutic effects, as well as the availability of ayurvedic spas, wellness centres, and yoga retreats, give a firm foundation to promote health and wellness tourism (Himachal Pradesh Tourism Policy, 2019). Looking into the past profile of tourists it becomes imperative with a key focus aim to promote sustainable wellness tourism to identify and investigate key and significant demographic profiles to prepare market ready strategies for the hill State of Himachal Pradesh, India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wellness Tourism

Holistic notions of wellness holds the notion and proposes where it embraces every aspect of the spirit, mind, body and environment (Dunn, 1959). Focusing on health and wellbeing, wellness tourism stands out and is rapidly expanding in line with the increased emphasis on healthy living throughout the world (Smith and Puczkó, 2016). The wellness economy includes spas, anti-aging and beauty, wellness lifestyle real estate, fitness and mind-body, healthy food, nutrition, and weight loss, wellness at work, thermal/mineral springs, preventative and personalised medicine, public health, and complementary and alternative medicine (GWI, 2018). Wellness tourism is the result

of all the connections made by visitors who stay at least one night at a location designed with the primary objective of maintaining or enhancing their psychological, spiritual, mental, and/or social well-being. (Voigt et al., 2011b). With more and more health retreats and resorts opening up to accommodate tourists looking for immersive and comprehensive wellness experiences, the wellness tourism industry is booming (GWI, 2021). Economic, environmental, and social sustainability are all integrated into the holistic concept of wellness tourism, which promotes overall sustainable development (Mueller and Kaufmann, 2001).

Wellness Tourism and Sustainable Development

Locals are important stakeholders who have the power to influence tourism development, planning, and support depending on how they see the effects of travel (Lundberg, 2015). The development of tourism should prioritise sustainable development with an ongoing focus on increasing visitor happiness (Sharpley, 2000). Increasing tourism's positive effects while reducing its negative effects is a challenge of sustainable tourism (ETE, 2009). Tourists can have fulfilling experiences and local communities quality of life can be improved by an economically viable and environmentally sustainable industry (Lim and McAleer, 2005). In order to be sustainable, tourism—including wellness tourism—must interact with and support local communities, guaranteeing inclusive and equitable practices (Saarinen, 2006). In a nutshell, wellness tourism is increasingly centred around eco-friendly practices including waste reduction, energy saving, and biodiversity preservation (Ruhanen et al., 2015). Encouraging local suppliers and local economies are essential for the long-term financial viability of wellness tourism (Font and McCabe, 2018).

Socio-economic demographic Factors

Socio-demographic parameters play a direct role in the established descriptive segmentation approach (Mazilu and Mitroi, 2010). Socio-demographic indicators that tourism researchers frequently consider and use age, gender, education qualification, marital status and income (Ma et al., 2018). The identified socio-economic variables are considered worthy and reliable for characterising the tourist industry and making projections for future travel behaviour (Mkwizu, 2018). Tourists' participation in sustainable practices is significantly influenced by socio-demographic characteristics, as they exhibit diverse tendencies towards environmentally friendly and responsible travel behaviours (Lee and Moscardo, 2005).

Gender: - One of the primary factor impacting the choice and desire for travel is gender (Collins and Tisdell, 2002). In a study by Moriarty and Honnery, (2005) it has been found that men mostly travel for work-related goals, but women travel mostly to meet friends and family and prefer shorter vacations than men. Women have been observed engaging more in indoor activities like eating, shopping, and cultural pursuits than outside ones like skiing, whereas males are more inclined to engage in adventurous activities (Xie et al., 2008). Women relate wellness tourism more to spiritual and emotional well-being, while men tend to relate it more to functioning and physical health (Lehto et al., 2006).

Age: - Spence, (2002) asserts that people interest in nature-based activities is directly influenced by age. Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and family structure also influence tourist dynamics as younger travellers frequently prioritise adventure and experiencing tourism, whereas elderly visitors may choose leisure and cultural encounters (Fleischer and Pizam, 2002). Konu & Laukkanen, (2009) reveals that elder wellness tourists place a higher value on health advantages and stress alleviation, whereas younger visitors are driven by novelty and social interaction.

Marital status: - One of the other important demographic variable impacting the vacation choice behaviour highlighted in the tourism literature is marital status (Kattiyapornpong and Miller, 2008). Married couples typically have social and family-related responsibilities which restrict their time for vacations and sports (Downward and Rasciute, 2010). Singles typically have more free time to engage in numerous hobbies, such as playing instruments for fun, singing, dancing, watching TV, and travelling for social events (Lee and Bhargava, 2004). While single travellers concentrate on activities that improve their own physical and mental well-being, married visitors frequently place a higher priority on stress alleviation and family wellbeing (Chen & Petrick, 2013).

Education level and income: - Educational level of tourists impacts their destination choices and types of activities they engage in, as higher education levels are associated with a greater interest in cultural and historical tourism (Richards, 1996). Higher education levels lead to increased environmental consciousness and awareness of sustainable tourism but it does not alter individuals' purchasing behaviour whereas travellers with higher income, ought to prioritise booking hotels that are ecologically friendly, bear the financial burden of lodging there, and encourage other prospective travellers to do the same (Uçgun and Narci, 2022). Tourists from higher income categories are more inclined to seek luxury travel experiences and participate in foreign travel, as opposed to

individuals from lower income groups, who may prefer cheap travel alternatives inside their own nations (Alegre and Pou, 2006).

Occupation: - Travel reasons differ depending on the profession; people in stressful occupations are frequently motivated by a need for relaxation, whilst others in regular employment may be looking for adventure and novelty (Pearce, 2011). The pursuit of transformative experiences by wellness travellers is influenced by their occupation; those in high-pressure occupations tend to see wellness travel as a way to reclaim their physical and emotional well-being (Voigt et al., 2011c). The chosen method of transportation is influenced by one's occupational standing, with higher-status persons more likely to select premium or business-class choices (Papatheodorou, 2001).

Sustainable Tourist Behaviour

Sustainability is the ability to carry out certain tasks in a way that doesn't diminish resources in an unrecoverable way (Klarin, 2018). Consumption of eco-products, post- and pre-purchase behaviour of eco-products, energy-efficient actions, conservation of natural resources, garbage sorting behaviour, solid waste minimization, food waste reduction, and public transportation use are some of the behavioural variables that have been used to study environmentally sustainable consumer behaviour (Minton et al., 2018). Sustainable travellers frequently show a strong propensity for sustainable consumerism and are becoming more interested in purchasing green tourism goods, such as eco-friendly hotels, cruises, restaurants, airlines, destinations, and resorts (Trang et al., 2019). Engaging with locals and appreciating the environment and natural surroundings are the two main sustainable aspects of the visitor experience (Goodwin and Francis, 2003). New trends for pro-environmental and prosocial initiatives that aim to conserve the natural, cultural, and social environment are a result of growing interest in sustainable tourism practices and knowledge of sustainability challenges (Ramkissoon, 2023). One way to conceptualise sustainability as a feature of tourism is as a shared understanding of what makes for sustainable tourism, which is followed by the adoption of sustainable choices and activities when on holiday, as tourists engage in tourism-related activities, they can be motivated, educated, and trained to adopt sustainable behaviour as a routine or habit (Schatzki, 2001). Travellers who have a deep sense of connection to a location and are actively involved there are more inclined to practise ecologically friendly habits (Hwang et al., 2005). Environmental consciousness and personal values impact consumer attitudes towards sustainability, which in turn impacts the ways in which they travel and make decisions (Miller, 2003). Maintaining tourist locations and making sure that travel will always have positive effects on the economy, ecology, and society depend on sustainable tourism practices (Budeanu, 2007). STB encompasses several dimensions; the following paragraphs elaborates these elements: -

Destination specific pro-environmental behaviour (DSPB): - Pro-environmental behaviour involves tourists using natural resources efficiently and conserving them for future generations (Ramkissoon and Mavondo, 2017). Juvan and Dolnicar, (2017) implies that acting in a way that benefits the environment is a moral obligation for people to solve environmental issues. Travellers who adhere to the guidelines set out by the local government, communities, and other relevant authorities at a destination in order to preserve the environment and the interests of the local populace are considered to be part of the Destination specific pro-environmental behaviour (Arrage and Hady, 2019). These rules are more important to protect and preserve waterbodies, forests, and wildlife sanctuaries from harm caused by overtourism (Bhalla and Bhattacharya, 2021).

Socially responsible behaviour (SRB): - Tourists' expected behaviour at a place is governed by social norms that define SRB at the destination (Su et al., 2020). The SRB dimension anticipates that tourists will create long-term ties with locals and be eager to help the expansion of impoverished and other societal programs while visiting an area (Mihalic, 2016). San Martín et al., (2021) revealed that people's willingness to spend time and money on travel is heavily impacted by their level of social consciousness.

Environmental learning behaviour (ELB): - Expanded travel chances expose people to a more diverse variety of learning opportunities from the destination location (Ballantyne et al., 2011). The learning outcomes include adopting new environmentally friendly habits or increasing the frequency of existing ones following a visit (Ballantyne et al., 2018). Therefore, providing formal and informal environmental education, training, and awareness can improve persons' knowledge of the environment (Lee and Jan, 2019).

Culturally favourable behaviour (CUL): - Tourists visit locations to experience culture, food, and social values which allows residents to learn about foreign cultures and social systems, leading to a better developed local culture (Qiu et al., 2019). Openness and mutual respect may transform cultural interactions into memorable tourist experiences, leading to increased engagement and destination loyalty (Chen and Rahman, 2018). Tourism culture emerges from these exchanges and local involvement through processes of creativity, innovation, and change, which can either precede or result from sustainability (Canavan, 2016).

Economically favourable behaviour (ECO):- Local communities often support environmental sustainability initiatives with proper government engagement after economic sustainability is attained (Lee et al., 2013). A destination's economic development is greatly influenced by the tourism industry, which is a dominant sector in employment generation (Akadiri et al., 2019). Additionally, by staying in accommodations, eating locally, and buying locally produced goods and services, tourists support the local economy (Karst, 2022). Travellers are choosing more environmentally friendly options and interacting and learning from local communities, which helps the local economy (Chakraborty, 2021).

Objectives

- To study the socio-economic demographic profile (age, gender, income, education, etc.) of wellness tourists visiting Kangra Valley, H.P.
- To analyse the correlation between various demographic factors and sustainable tourism behaviours among wellness tourists in Kangra Valley, H.P.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to attain the intended outcomes, a methodical research methodology was chosen. A structured questionnaire with two main sections was later developed. The first portion was created to gather information on the age, gender, marital status, level of education, and annual income of the tourists who travel to Kangra Valley for wellness tourism, which includes yoga, meditation, and spa treatments. Using a Likert scale with values ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), the second section's total of 15 questions adapted from (Chandran et al., 2021) were asked from wellness travellers about their sustainable travel habits. With a focus on wellness tourists, a total of 257 visitors were polled using convenience sampling at the Kangra Valley's well-known wellness destinations, including Palampur, Dharamshala, McLeod Ganj, Dharamkot, and Bhagsu Naag. Ferber (1977) emphasised that by ensuring that the results produced are an accurate representation of the population, convenience sampling, one type of nonprobability sampling, may lessen the impact of non-random convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is also one of the acceptable sample methods that should be applied while gathering information from real tourist locations (Madrigal and Kahle, 1994). Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyse the data that had been gathered. In order to get the respondents' demographic details, this study used SPSS, which provides descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages. In addition, Pearson's Correlation assisted this study to understand the relationship between demographic factors and sustainable tourist behaviour. Prior to analysis, the data was cleansed to look for outliers, missing data, and patterns in the distribution of the data. The internal consistency of the data was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic profile of Wellness tourist visiting Kangra valley

In (Table 1) Majority of the tourists who participated in wellness activities consisted of 173 respondents (67.3%) were "male" and 84 (32.7%) were "female" (N=257). 143 (55.6%) falls in the age group of "20-30 years", 73 (28.4%) "31-40 years", 33 (12.8%) "41-50 years", 5 (1.9%) "51-60 years" and 3 (1.2%) above 60 years. 86 respondents (33.5%) were "married", 165 (81.8%) were "single", 5 (1.9%) were "divorced" and 1 (.4%) were "separated" of the sample of wellness tourists of the sample of wellness tourists. Within the sample that was gathered, the majority of respondents were "post-graduates" (n = 129; 50.2%), followed by "graduates" (n = 94; 36.6%), "doctorate" n = 18: 7.0%) and those with only a "high school education or less" (n = 16; 6.2%). "Employee in the private sector" (51.8%) 133 people made up the group with the most involvement in wellness activities, followed by "Govt. employees" 50 (19.5%), "Entrepreneur/Businessman" 48 (18.7%) and "Homemaker" 26 (10.1%). The majority of wellness tourists fall into the following income categories: "Below Rs 5 Lakhs (Below \$6,500)," which makes up 147 (57.2%) of the sample overall; "Rs 5 Lakhs – 10 Lakhs (\$6,500 – \$12,500)" follows with 70 (27.2%), "Rs 10 Lakhs – 20 Lakhs (\$12,500 – \$25,000)" with 35 (13.6%), and "Above Rs 20 Lakhs (Above \$25,000)" with 5 (1.9%).

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics for Socio-demographic Profiles of Wellness Tourists Visiting Kangra Valley

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	173	67.3
	Female	84	32.7
Age	Between 20–30 years	143	55.6
	Between 31–40 years	73	28.4

	Between 41-50 years	33	12.8
	Between 51-60 years	5	1.9
	Above 60 years	3	1.2
Marital Status	Single	86	33.5
	Married	45	81.8
	Divorced	5	1.9
	Separated	1	.4
Education Level	High School or Less	16	6.2
	Graduate	94	36.6
	Post-Graduated	129	50.2
	Doctorate	18	7.0
Occupation	Government employee	50	19.5
	Private sector employee	133	51.8
	Entrepreneur/Businessman	48	18.7
	Homemaker	26	10.1
Annual Income (INR)	Below Rs 5 Lakhs (Below \$6,500)	147	57.2
	Rs 5 Lakhs – 10 Lakhs (\$6,500 – \$12,500)	70	27.2
	Rs 10 Lakhs – 20 Lakhs (\$12,500 - \$25,000)	35	13.6
	Above Rs 20 Lakhs (Above \$25,000)	5	1.9

Sustainable tourist practices of Wellness tourists

In (Table 2) shows that Descriptive analysis of the main variables of Sustainable Tourist Practices. Total of 5 variables of sustainable tourist practices were analysed and the top among them were: “Environmental Learning Behaviour (ELB)” (M = 3.83), “Economically Favourable Behaviour (ECO)” (M = 3.82), “Socially Responsible Behaviour (SRB)” (M = 3.80), “Destination Specific Pro-Environmental Behaviour (DSPB)” (M = 3.63), “Culturally Favourable Behaviour (CUL)” (M = 3.62).

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for Sustainable Tourist Practices (STPs) Construct

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Destination Specific Pro-Environmental Behaviour (DSPB)	3.63	1.235
Socially Responsible Behaviour (SRB)	3.80	1.496
Environmental Learning Behaviour (ELB)	3.83	1.108
Culturally Favourable Behaviour (CUL)	3.62	1.171
Economically Favourable Behaviour (ECO)	3.82	1.160

Reliability Results

The overall scale's alpha coefficient was 0.971, while the subscales' alpha values varied from 0.801 to 0.938, all of which are over the acceptable level (0.70), as indicated by (Hair et al., 1998). The results are summarised and shown in (Table 3).

Table 3.

Reliability results for DSPB, SRB, ELB, CUL, ECO

Variable	Scale Items	Scale if mean item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted	Overall Cronbach's alpha (α)
Destination Specific Pro-Environmental Behaviour (DSPB)	I reported of any environmental pollution to the destination administration. (DSPB 1)	53.87	0.528	0.974	0.801
	I adhere to tourist regulations while participating in tourist activities at destination (DSPB 2)	53.06	0.839	0.968	
	I properly disposed of my waste at destination and left everything neat and orderly (DSPB 3)	52.88	0.791	0.969	
Socially Responsible Behaviour (SRB)	I am enthusiastic to support the local communities in their growth at destination (SRB 1)	53.05	0.045	0.968	0.903
	I want to support the under privileged in Kangra Valley (SRB 2)	53.15	0.830	0.968	
	I wanted to develop enduring connections with the local people of kangra valley (SRB 3)	53.09	0.832	0.968	
Environmental Learning Behaviour (ELB)	I have learned as much as from the natural surroundings during my trip (ELB 1)	52.95	0.839	0.968	0.902
	I have learned as much as possible from the local natural environment during my trip (ELB 2)	53.03	0.847	0.968	
	I conduct research before to my trip so that I can systematically get ready for it (ELB 3)	53.23	0.823	0.968	

Culturally Favourable Behaviour (CUL)	I have explored the cultural traditions and activities during my trip (CUL 1)	53.11	0.851	0.968	0.868
	I honour the cultural norms of local community members at the destination (CUL 2)	52.93	0.868	0.968	
Economically Favourable Behaviour (ECO)	During my visit, I stayed at establishments that were owned by local people (ECO 1)	53.20	0.805	0.969	0.938
	I preferred to taste the local cuisine during my stay (ECO 2)	52.93	0.880	0.967	
	I bought local souvenirs from the destination (ECO3)	53.13	0.828	0.968	
	I aim to boost the local economy of the destination (ECO4)	53.03	0.876	0.968	

Correlation Analysis

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Correlation evaluates the degree of a linear relationship between variables; interval or ratio variables should be taken into account, provided that the variables are normally distributed (Hauke and Kossowski, 2011). The relationship of tourism behaviour with various demographic parameters is examined with the help of Pearson's correlation method in the SPSS environment (Table 4). When dealing with continuous scale variables, Pearson product moment correlation is specified (Islam & Rizwan, 2020). Out of the five demographic parameters, three (age, education level, and annual income) are chosen for this purpose due their ordinal nature of scale – while the other two (qualification and gender) are in nominal scale and thus, are not suitable for correlation analysis. For the linear link to be significant, the correlation coefficient must be greater with small samples—closer to -1 or to 1 whereas a low value of r , or one that is closer to zero, may be meaningful in large samples even when the linear link is weak (Sedgwick, 2012). Results show that only age has a statistically significant (p -value > 0.01) correlation with all the tourism behaviour variables considered in this study (fig.1). The correlation coefficient here mostly ranges between -0.2 to -0.3 which signifies a weak but negative relationship. In other words, younger tourists tend to exhibit a more favourable behaviour by supporting the local economy, keeping the environment clean, and respecting the local traditions and customs. The strongest correlation coefficients are found for the scale items pertaining to Socially Responsible Behaviour (SRB) which means that tourists in age group 20-30 are eager to help the communities and underprivileged in the Kangra valley, as well as are willing to form long-lasting relationship with local populace. The other two demographic parameters show statistically insignificant correlations. The correlation coefficients are less than 0.1 for most of the scale items. An inverse link between two variables is reflected by negative correlation, a fundamental idea in statistics and data analysis (Moore and McCabe, 1989). Nonetheless, we can still draw important conclusions regarding the direction of correlation from the obtained results: although having a very weak correlation, education level (fig.2) is still positively correlated

with favourable tourist behaviour, whereas, the annual income (fig.3.) appears to having a negative relationship. Tourists with higher education level tend to indulge in activities that are beneficial to the local economy and environment. They follow tourist guidelines, dispose trash properly, explore and respect local traditions, prefer local food, purchase souvenirs, and more. However, the tourists with lower education level prefer to stay at locally-owned accommodations which in turn supports the economy, and these tourists also tend to report to the authorities of any environmental pollution. The study has found that annual income has a negative relationship with all the favourable tourist behaviour variables: DSPB, SRB, ELB, CUL, and ECU. It means that the tourists belonging to lower income groups are socially, environmentally, and economically more beneficial to the local population. Interestingly, higher income group tourists are more likely to buy local souvenirs which is only favourable tourist activity that they are indulged in.

Table 4.

Correlation between demographic factors and variables of Sustainable Tourist Behaviour

Variable	Scale Items	Correlation Coefficient		
		Age	Education Level	Income
Destination Specific Pro-Environmental Behaviour (DSPB)	I reported of any environmental pollution to the destination administration. (DSPB 1)	-0.21*	-0.62	-0.113
	I adhere to tourist regulations while participating in tourist activities at destination (DSPB 2)	-0.296*	0.105	-0.069
	I properly disposed of my waste at destination and left everything neat and orderly (DSPB 3)	-0.239*	0.098	-0.053
Socially Responsible Behaviour (SRB)	I am enthusiastic to support the local communities in their growth at destination (SRB 1)	-0.294*	0.038	-0.048
	I want to support the under privileged in Kangra Valley (SRB 2)	-0.262*	0.027	-0.075
	I wanted to develop enduring connections with the local people of kangra valley (SRB 3)	-0.25*	0.014	-0.027

Environmental Learning Behaviour (ELB)	I have learned as much as from the natural surroundings during my trip (ELB 1)	-0.214*	0.085	-0.083
	I have learned as much as possible from the local natural environment during my trip (ELB 2)	-0.243*	0.085	-0.063
	I conduct research before to my trip so that I can systematically get ready for it (ELB 3)	-0.235*	-0.033	-0.096
Culturally Favourable Behaviour (CUL)	I have explored the cultural traditions and activities during my trip (CUL 1)	-0.216*	0.058	-0.102
	I honour the cultural norms of local community members at the destination (CUL 2)	-0.255*	0.048	-0.001
Economically Favourable Behaviour (ECO)	During my visit, I stayed at establishments that were owned by local people (ECO 1)	-0.252*	-0.04	-0.049
	I preferred to taste the local cuisine during my stay (ECO 2)	-0.253*	0.048	-0.1
	I bought local souvenirs from the destination (ECO3)	-0.185*	0.058	0.024
	I aim to boost the local economy of the destination (ECO4)	-0.298*	0.099	-0.013

Fig. 1. (scatterplot b/w age and sustainable tourist behaviour)

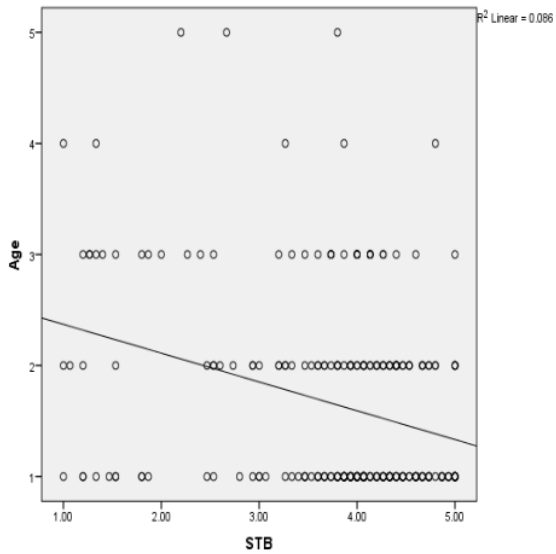


Fig. 2. (scatterplot b/w education and sustainable tourist behaviour)

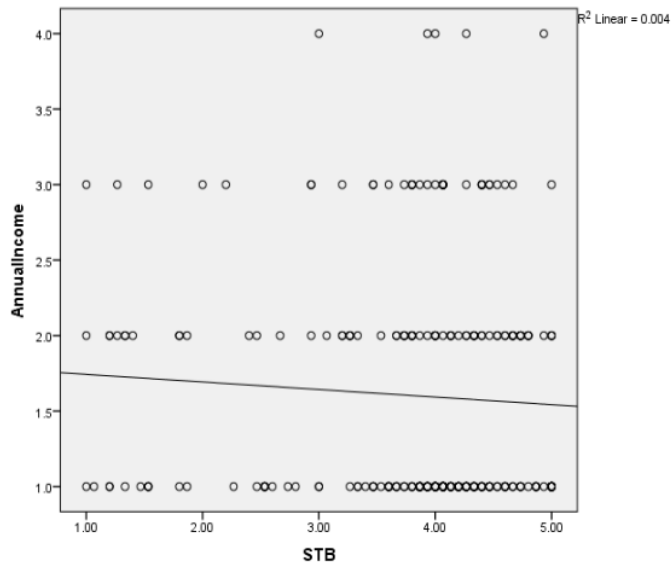
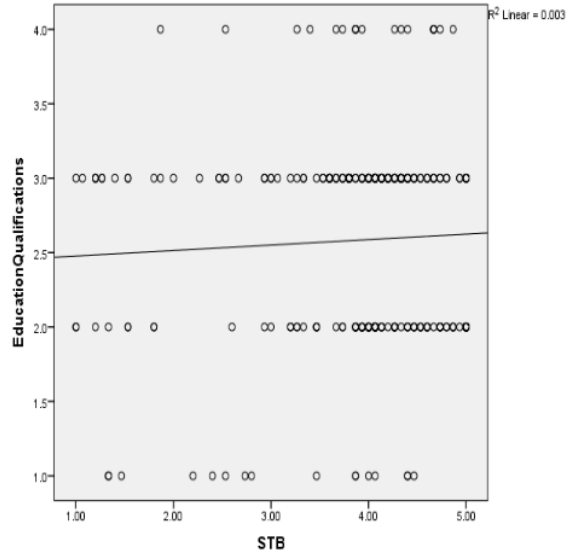


Fig. 3. (scatterplot b/w annual income and sustainable tourist behaviour)

DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed a wide-ranging socio-demographic profile of wellness tourists to Kangra Valley. Most respondents were young, falling within the age bracket of 20-30 years, with males dominating. This type of demographic structure identifies wellness tourism in Kangra Valley as being very attractive to youngsters for rejuvenation and relaxation in a natural atmosphere. Learning objectives include developing exciting environmentally related activity or prolonging the lengths of already started activities post-visiting. This is in tandem with the study by [Mody et al., 2018](#), who found that younger travellers are more environmentally-related and focus on the sustainability of this travel decision. The levels of education and visitors' income were much

higher, with the main shareholding postgraduate degrees and being in the lower to medium income groups. It goes on to suggest that people with better education and moderate incomes would engage more in sustainable tourism practices, very possibly due to their heightened ability to understand and appreciate environmental and cultural values. It has been previously shown that higher-educated visitors are more likely to participate in more ecologically friendly tourist activities. Education enhances knowledge about environmental problems, which in turn influences travel behaviour (Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008).

It focused on some key visitors' sustainable behaviours, such as environmental education, economically supportive behaviour, and social accountability actions. The highest mean scores were obtained for ELB and ECO, which indicates some disposition on the part of the visitors to learn more and engage with the local environment and the economy. SRB also got good grades indicating high willingness on the part of tourists to make positive contributions to host communities and alleviate poor populations in the Kangra Valley. According to Font and McCabe, (2018) wellness tourists are more likely to undertake sustainable activities because their values health and well-being, which often includes a broader concern for the environment and social responsibility. Age has been pointed out as among the essential elements that affect sustainable tourism behaviour. Thus, visitors aged between 20 and 30 years were more willing to contribute to sustainable behaviours such as buying from local enterprises, maintaining clean environments, and respecting cultural heritage. This is because the young generation is more environmentally and socially responsible. Bushell and Sheldon, (2009) note that the young generation is increasingly embracing activities geared toward preserving environmental and cultural sustainability.

The study revealed minor but positive correlations between the level of education and sustainable behaviour, suggesting that with increasing educational achievement, there might exist a predisposition toward sustainable tourism.

Meinhold and Malkus, (2005) assess the relationship between education and environmental actions of adolescents; in their study, the researchers established a positive relationship whereby higher levels of education correlated to increased possibility of engaging in sustainable behaviours. In contrast, though, income did not have any significant relationship, thus indicating that financial status might not be a prime driver for wellness tourists into this region to engage in sustainable behaviours. In this context, Gatersleben et al., (2002) tests a variety of factors that determine ecologically significant consumer behaviour and tests the consensus on the negative association of sustainable behaviour with higher income because of increased consumption and utilisation of resources. The results underline the need for concentrated measures in improving sustainable tourism practices.

For example, tourism environments could serve as a means for information programs on environmental and local cultural protection. Drawing from these insights, the tourism sector, governments, and local communities could initiate activities that would more closely align with the requirements and preferences of the wellness tourist segment, particularly the young and highly educated segments. In tourist development processes, considerations should be given to the local populations. Making people partners and stakeholders in tourism activities will help ensure that tourism growth goes hand in hand with the socio-economic and cultural objectives of the community. Support visitors to buy from local enterprises and take part in community-based tourism for the creation of long-term relationships and mutual benefit for visitors and residents alike.

CONCLUSION

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The results indicate that socio-demographic factors, such as age and education, have a significant connection to sustainable tourism practices among wellness visitors in Kangra Valley. With decreasing age and increasing education, there is a corresponding increase in commitment toward performing both ecologically and socially responsible behaviours. Wellness tourists in Kangra Valley engage in high levels of sustainable practices, mainly in terms of environmental education and economic benefit to local businesses. This is an indication of improved understanding and preference for wellness tourism with a catch of sustainable tourism practices. This offers a chance to the policymakers and tourist planners to promote sustainable tourism through education and community involvement programs. It involves developing such programs that inform visitors about the importance of sustainability and also encourages them to participate actively in local community activities. Wellness tourism has huge potential for inducing sustainable development in areas like Kangra Valley. The promotion of wellness tourism with practices sustainable in nature will help stakeholders improve the economic, environmental, and social well-being of local people with the delivery of rewarding visitor experiences.

These discussions and findings identify the junctures important to demographics of demographics and sustainable tourist practice, providing valuable insights into the long-term development strategies of wellness tourism in Kangra Valley and places similar to it in nature.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER STUDIES

The investigation is confined to only the Kangra Valley, which, being a wellness tourist destination, may have some qualities not found elsewhere. As a result, the findings may not be immediately transferable to other wellness tourism destinations with unique environmental, cultural, or economic settings. The study focusses mostly on

quantitative data, which may leave out more qualitative insights into wellness travellers' motives, experiences, and obstacles. Such findings may give a more comprehensive knowledge of sustainable tourism practices.

Longitudinal studies would allow researchers to observe changes in sustainable tourist habits over time, as well as get a deeper understanding of the dynamics and causal linkages between demography and sustainable practices. Extending the research to include comparisons of other wellness tourism locations can aid in the identification of region-specific elements as well as general trends in sustainable tourist behaviour. This technique can also highlight great practices and issues specific to each location. Future studies might benefit from including qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to acquire a better understanding of wellness tourists' motives, attitudes, and impediments to sustainable tourism practices. These recommendations seek to increase the knowledge and breadth of sustainable tourist habits, notably in the wellness tourism industry, and to guide policies for supporting sustainable development in tourism destinations.

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