Exploring Spiritual and Religious Aspects of Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case of Spiritual Tourism

Shah Rukh Khalid[1], Bakhtiar Ali [iD][2]

[1] Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan.
  Email: shahrukhkhalid1992@gmail.com
[2] Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan.
  Email: bakhtiar.buic@bahria.edu.pk

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The existing literature on "spiritual tourism" remains notably limited, despite its significant impact on tourist well-being and the sustainable development of the tourism industry. Many scholars and practitioners recommended various categories of tourism such as ecotourism, soft tourism, green tourism, and responsible tourism so on, as contributors to sustainable tourism development. Experiences show that the use of unsophisticated means and instruments for achieving sustainability of tourism development are overwrought attempts. Therefore, these forms of tourism cannot solely be trusted as a way forward to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry, worldwide. A new balance with rational domination of mind over body, head over heart, and the individual over world is required; to achieve goals

of sustainability. Previous research often treated "religiosity" and "spirituality" as interchangeable, yet the distinctive nature of spiritual tourism, a pivotal avenue towards sustainability, necessitates further investigation. This paper aims to delve into the intricate interplay of spiritual and religious factors influencing tourists' pursuit of pleasure and their subsequent pro-environmental behaviors. Employing a purposive and snowball sampling approach, this exploratory research engaged international tourists, Non-Governmental Organizations, the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), and tour operators through interviews. The outcomes shed light on how the dynamic interplay of religious and spiritual factors significantly mold tourists' behavioral intentions, ultimately impacting their active involvement in pro-environmental and pro-social activities. This study makes a valuable contribution to the field of tourism by distinguishing between religiosity and spirituality, a nuanced perspective that has been relatively underexplored. Furthermore, it offers fresh insights for tour operators and tourism managers, encouraging them to incorporate spiritual and religious dimensions when crafting tour packages. It's worth noting that the study's limitation lies in its relatively small sample size. In essence, this research bridges a crucial gap in the understanding of spiritual tourism, emphasizing its role in enhancing sustainability within the tourism sector and advocating for further exploration in this area.

Corresponding Author's Email: bakhtiar.buic@bahria.edu.pk

1. Introduction

Tourism is the world's one of the largest sectors and as an economic activity, it has faced the same problems encountered by "economy", as a discipline. The tourist areas face the dilemma in determining the values of using or not using a particular space. The local population begins to suffer due to urbanization and overuse of resources with efforts to attract a large number of tourists. Understanding how institutional, structural, and behavioral transformations

can contribute to rebalancing tourism on a global scale needs further investigation (Sharpley, 2020). Research on the concept of "sustainability" emphasized nature stewardship, thus more value has been assigned to its environmental dimension. For research on sustainable tourism development, an interdisciplinary approach is warranted to facilitate researchers' beliefs and attitudes for developing a more coherent body of theory and to advance sustainable tourism research on more scientific grounds (Liu, 2003). Background debate on "sustainability" can be traced from the famous Essay on the Principle of Population (Malthus 1846), which outlines the difference in the pace of population growth and capacity to produce food. The concept of sustainable tourism development was introduced to encounter the damages caused by mass tourism. Sustainable tourism development aims to consider the needs of present and future generations while maintaining the long-term quality of cultural, social, and environmental health of local communities.

Religious and secular motivations are pervading forces for visits to sacred sites (Yousaf & Huaibin, 2014). On the one hand, commercialization of religious sites and excessive tourism has fomented damage and destruction of religious sites. On the other hand, sustainability of sacred site is only possible through gaining and spending revenue on their maintenance. Religious tourism refers to the current pattern of visitation, where visitors travel to pilgrimage for performing religious duties as well as for recreational purposes. A spiritual person can be religious but a religious person may not be spiritual (Kurt, Sinkovics, Sinkovics, & Yamin, 2020). Post industrialization, cross-cultural initiatives, and scientific rationalism have shifted focus from traditional religiosity to spirituality (M. Smith & Kelly, 2006; Timothy & Olsen, 2006). In today's consumer market, spirituality is marketed as a commodity or as a vogue of "spiritual smorgasbord" or "spiritual promiscuity" (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). In contemporary western cultures, secularization and social deviation from strict adherence to traditional religious practices stimulate the search for spirituality through tourism.

Drawing explicit boundaries between religion and spirituality is prominently strenuous task. Spirituality, in its secular and unconventional forms, is gaining strength at the expense of religiosity. In contemporary world, people are not only searching for mental and physical health improvements but also pay attention to their emotional and spiritual nourishment. Tourists' search for self transcendence and self development somehow connected to the desires of escapism and hedonism. Existential philosophers believe that pleasure takes one away from God and one's true self, while travel –as being an occasion to test one's spirit and discovering one's true essence- bring them back (M. K. Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Cultural differences may influence one's construction and redefinition of self. In western cultures, one's true essence seems connected to ideal individualism while in east "self" is defined through collective approach. Tourist's self is not a rigid entity rather than categorized as actual self image, social self, ideal social self and ideal self. Many travelers from West aspire to visit spiritual centers located in other societies and cultures in search of their "true" selves. In the future, research is needed to explore important dimensions of spiritual experiences in the context of tourism; specifically sustainable tourism (Lestar & Böhm, 2020; Zhang, Shi, & Lee, 2021).

Tourists are struggling to find "happiness" in their lives which can be provided through religion or spirituality (Singh, 2009). Spiritual tourism perceived to be a source of happiness and letting go of materialistic pursuits. Crisp (2001) considers that concept of well being is of great importance in moral philosophy, especially utilitarianism. Utilitarian philosophers were in favor of Aristotle's view. Aristotle viewed happiness not as an ultimate target based upon subjective feelings rather a morally good action contributing to the benefits of large number of people. Extensive research on "quality of life" in tourism's perspective shows relevancy of utilitarian philosophy with tourism development. Sustainable tourism advocates development of destinations which can create maximum benefits for greater number of people, within limits of earth's resources. In this way, sustainable tourism increasingly embraces utilitarian philosophy in well being.

This study would offer new insights for tourism managers and policy makers for the sustainability of tourism development. Consideration and promotion of merely religious aspects of tourism may not broaden potential tourists' base. As compared to a pilgrim, a spiritual tourist embarks on traveling to spiritual sites with inner growth intentions. Pakistan has a golden opportunity to redesign, repackage and renovate tourist destinations with spiritual attractions;

for attracting a gigantic number of domestic and international tourists. This study would assist tour operators in designing and marketing spiritual tourist packages; through the identification of factors contributing to their well-being and determining their intentions to visit a place and their pro-environmental behavior. Accordingly, this study sets out to bridge the gap in tourism literature by exploring spiritual and religious factor affecting tourists' well being and how all these factors would eventually contribute in sustainability of tourism development.

2.   Literature Review

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors, seen as a driver of peace and development, promoting harmonious co-existing of people from all over the world (Beijing declaration, 2016). Word "tourism" is derived from the verb "tour" which means "to travel". (Wall & Mathieson, 2006) defined tourism as the "temporary movement of people to the destinations located outside their permanent residency and work place". It involves the mechanism of tourists' activities at destinations as well as facilities and services provided to meet their needs. A tourist is defined from spatial, temporal, and motivational perspectives (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2015). Spatially, a tourist travels a certain distance or cross-specific borders. From a temporal point of view, a tourist has to stay for the minimum length of time at least one night. Travelers staying more than one year are regarded as migrants rather than tourists. Travel motivations are sometimes complex and mixed, therefore critical to determine.

The term tourist evolved from the Latin word "Torus", which means touring for pleasure or culture exposure and returning to permanent residency or starting point (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2015). Word "pilgrim" is derived from the Latin word "peregrines" which means "newcomers", travelers, strangers, or wanderers. The terms "pilgrim" and "tourist" can be differentiated based on either traveling for sacred or secular motives. In pilgrimage and religious tourism, tourists visit sacred sites compelled by their religious beliefs. Pilgrimage remained the most basic and one of the ancient motives for traveling. In medieval times, religion was a compelling force for traveling in Europe, and; the majority of travelers were pilgrims to sacred sites and visitors to saintly souvenirs (Timothy & Olsen, 2006).

The word "spiritual" is complex and multivalent, thus described differently by various scholars, under the influence of their specific beliefs. According to this approach, spirituality is regarded as "soul", "self"," self-identity", "Psyche" (Greek concept), and "anima" (Roman concept) (Singh, 2009). Spirituality is broadly conceptualized as incorporeal and one's search for a meaningful life. Some philosophers argue that a spirit is the essence of human beings, therefore, the search for meaningful life will inevitably be taken by all humans (Willson, McIntosh, & Zahra, 2013). Spirituality is directly or indirectly related to reality beyond individual's self concept. Spirituality is a source of "sensational" and "inspirational" enlightenment (Walach, 2017). In Judaism, self confession of "Who am I" and "What I am going to be" is foundation of formal religion, revealed to Abraham, Moses and Hebrews prophets. For Christianity, its roots can be traced through self acknowledgement of rabbi Jeshua as "son of God" and Paul's experience to be converted as "missionary" or "clergy". Life and experiences of Holy prophet (S.A.W.W) provides in-depth understating of Islam. Awakening experiences of Gautama Buddha is core of Buddhism.

In travel and tourism sector, spiritual aspects of subjective experience have been receiving increasing attention (Beraldo et al., 2019). Complexity in defining spirituality hindered our potential to conceptualize and realize benefits of spiritual experiences. Spirituality seems to originate from human consciousness and perceives to be connected with religious affiliation. Spirituality encourages sense of meaning of life, inner wholeness, harmony and unity with others, nature and universe. More generally, spirituality regarded as building relationship with God as a response to God's call, thus viewed as a subscription to religiosity. Despite all the above mentioned facts, spirituality is a subjective phenomenon associated with self transcendence and super conscious awareness .Tourists spiritual experience found to enhance self awareness, bond with others and fervid consciousness. Nature and culture proved to be significant motivators for spiritual tourists (Wang, Blasco, Hamzah, & Verschuuren, 2023). Association between nature, religiosity, spirituality and tourism provides a unique lens to investigate the worth of spiritual tourism.

In 1934, Brunton's "A Search in Secret India" publication gave rise to the concept of spirituality as a stimulator of tourism. In November 2013, UNWTO's conference was held at Ninh

Binh city of Vietnam entitled "spiritual tourism for sustainable tourism development" (Cheer, Belhassen, & Kujawa, 2017). It was a maiden attempt of UNWTO for formal accretion of spiritual tourism as a category of tourism. Spiritual tourism is one of the critical and reflective manifestations of present-day spiritual movement and religion. Spiritual tourism can be thought of as an individualistic journey for searching for meaning in life and revisiting one's connection with the world (Zhang et al., 2021).

It is journey to "self knowledge" and doing what is right and worth doing. Religion is manifestation of a system of shred beliefs and involvement in public worship. Spirituality is more self-centered, personal and inner path; striving to discover essence of one's being. Spiritual tourist, within divine context, defined as "a person visiting a place with spiritual or self-growth motives, unbound to religious compulsion" (Kurt et al., 2020). As nature of spirituality tourism is more subjective, thus contradicts with rationality and objectivity. In spiritual tourism, self becomes object of search and external attractions become secondary in nature. Spiritual tourism as a healing element has capacity to fix routine boredom. "Experiment" as an element of spiritual tourism offers an opportunity for seeking experiences substitute to unsustainable behavioral patterns. Quests for self knowledge and self discovery drive individual to take on spiritual voyage. Retreat or escapism as spiritual tourism's experience proffers tourists with chances to get rid of socio-geographic pressures and ensures emotional and psychological repairing along with ritual renewal (Norman, 2015). Spiritual tourism must surely consider spiritual consequences of non religious activities, even within non-religious context.

Spiritual and religious tourists travel in search of inner peace and meaning in life. A spiritual tourist apparently visits a geographical place but inherently he in on an inner journey to know himself (Sharma, 2020). Goal of a spiritual tourist is to know and find balance between positive and negative thoughts and emotions. Inclusivity of certain places as spiritual tourism destinations more probably expand tourists' base; through welcoming potential tourists from multiple religions. Moreover, such spiritual tourism destinations could be renovated, marketed, and offered to tourists from around the globe. In the context of Pakistan, religious tourism is found to be less effective and unresponsive according to the behaviors and needs of international tourists (Haq & Jackson, 2006). Conversely, spiritual tourism has a golden opportunity to attract solo and group tours from around the world.

3.   Methodology
3.1.   Sampling and Data Collection
Study employed qualitative research design. Interviews were conducted with international tourists, Non For Governments Organizations, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and tour operators. 22 interviews were conducted through snowball sampling and purposive sampling (Batle, Garau-Vadell, & Orfila-Sintes, 2020; Kim, 2014; McKercher, Law, & Lam, 2006). Interviews were ended at the point of saturation. Snowball sampling is used because it is cost effective, reliable and retains the anonymity of respondents. All interviews were tape recorded with the permission of respondents. Data was analyzed through thematic and content analysis.

4.   Analysis and Discussion
Results are presented in the form of themes.

4.1.   Spirituality and Well-being
Spiritual values influence a tourist's wellbeing. Spiritual values often encompass beliefs, practices, and principles that provide individuals with a sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to something greater than themselves. When tourists engage with spiritual experiences, such as visiting sacred sites, participating in religious rituals, or exploring nature's beauty, it can contribute to their overall wellbeing by fostering a sense of peace, inner reflection, and personal growth. Participants also expressed their views about spirituality and well-being:

"Yes, spiritual values can positively influence a tourist's wellbeing by providing a sense of peace, purpose, and connection to something greater than themselves."(Tour Operator)
"Traveling is not just about experiencing new locations and activities for many individuals; it's also about discovering meaning and purpose in life."(Manager PTDC)

"Yes, when tourists travel to tourist sites that have cultural beliefs or faith in various matters. Sharing and learning allows tourists to absorb, accept and respect the spirituality of local people when visiting. For example, Bali has Hindu culture. Balinese people place food offerings on the roadside for worship. Most of the tourist walking by will avoid stepping on the food or kicking it."(Tour operator)

Most of the participants perceived religion and spirituality as complementary to each other. Therefore, their responses show that tourist's religious and spiritual encounters can promote their emotional and psychological well-being, enhance cultural understanding, and offer a transformative and enriching travel experience. However, the extent to which spiritual values influence an individual's wellbeing may vary based on personal beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and individual preferences. Spiritual values and knowledge can indeed influence a tourist's behavior. When individuals have a strong spiritual foundation or understanding, it can impact their travel choices, activities, and interactions while visiting different destinations. These influences may manifest in seeking out religious or sacred sites, participating in spiritual practices or rituals, engaging in mindful and contemplative activities, prioritizing nature and environmental conservation, respecting local customs and traditions, and promoting a sense of inner peace and well-being during their travel experiences.

"Yes, spiritual values and knowledge can influence a tourist's behavior by promoting awareness, respect, and mindfulness towards oneself, others, and the environment."(NGO Manager)

"People who place a high importance on spirituality, for instance, could be more likely to look for travel experiences that support their views and ideals, such visiting holy places or taking part in meditation retreats."(PTDC manager)

"Yes, when tourists get proper religious knowledge there will be a process of understanding and learning. These processes result in tourists behaving as they understand and see fit, such as when tourists visit Thai temples. It is customary for Buddhists not to sit higher than a monk. Tourists therefore choose to follow the Buddhists. But there may not be homage, due to different religions and cultures."(Tour operator)

Participants highlighted the importance of awareness about religious and spiritual values of host community in determining tourist's behavior at destination. Spiritual and religious factors not only influence tourist's behavior at destination but also affect his decision to visit or revisit a destination.

4.2. Religious beliefs and Well-being

A tourist's religious beliefs can indeed influence their feelings of well-being at a tourist destination. For individuals who hold strong religious beliefs, being able to practice their faith or visit religious sites can contribute to a sense of spiritual well-being and fulfillmen.

"A visitor's sense of well-being at a vacation spot may be affected by his or her religious beliefs. Some people find solace, belonging, and tranquility by visiting a religious or spiritual location, which can improve their quality of life."(PTDC manger)

"Religious knowledge can also affect a visitor's behavior. Tourists visiting sacred sites may be more respectful of their behavior, clothes, and cultural beliefs."(NGO manger)

"Most tourists when visiting tourist attractions, they will do some research to find information before going to that place. The tourists have different religions and have different beliefs. Most of the time, it does not cause tourists to feel against the beliefs of that community when deciding to visit."(Tour operator)

Religious beliefs may shape the choice of destinations, the sites they visit, the activities they engage in, and the overall perception and interpretation of the cultural and historical aspects of the place. It can also impact interactions with locals, participation in religious ceremonies or rituals, and the overall sense of connection and spiritual fulfillment during the visit. Access to religious services, religious landmarks, or cultural activities related to their

faith can enhance their overall experience and make them feel more connected to the destination. On the other hand, if a tourist's religious beliefs are not respected or if they encounter challenges in practicing their faith, it can negatively impact their well-being and overall satisfaction with the destination. Therefore, acknowledging and accommodating diverse religious beliefs can play a significant role in creating a positive experience for tourists.

4.3. Tourism Development and its Effects

Tourism development can improve environmental protection efforts through sustainable tourism initiatives that promote conservation, education, and responsible tourism practices.

"Tourism development can have both positive and negative impacts on environmental protection efforts. While tourism can provide economic incentives for conservation and environmental preservation, it can also lead to various environmental challenges if not managed properly."(PTDC manager)

"Of course, when wanting to achieve sustainable tourism, the protection of resources and the environment at tourist destinations is a key, such as limiting visits or limiting the number of tourists visiting natural attractions. There is time for nature to rest."(Tour operator)

"Tourism development's planning, management, and regulation can either help or hurt environmental protection. Tourism can encourage conservation and environmental protection. Ecotourism, which promotes sustainable and ethical travel to natural places, can fund conservation activities and teach tourists about environmental protection."(NGO officer)

Analysis revealed pros and cons of tourism development with respect to environmental protection efforts.

4.3.1. Positive Impacts

Economic incentives: Tourism can generate revenue and provide economic benefits to local communities, creating incentives for them to protect and conserve their natural resources. This can lead to the establishment of protected areas, wildlife reserves, and sustainable tourism practices.

Conservation funding: Tourism can generate funds for conservation efforts through entrance fees, taxes, and donations. These funds can be used to support environmental research, habitat restoration, and the protection of endangered species.

Awareness and education: Tourism can raise awareness about environmental issues and educate visitors about the importance of conservation. This increased awareness can lead to greater support for environmental protection efforts both locally and globally.

4.3.2. Negative Impacts

Overdevelopment and habitat destruction: Unplanned or poorly managed tourism development can lead to overbuilding of hotels, resorts, and infrastructure, resulting in the destruction of natural habitats, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity.

Pollution and waste: Increased tourist activity can contribute to pollution, including air and water pollution, improper waste management, and increased carbon emissions from transportation. These can have negative impacts on local ecosystems and contribute to climate change.Damage to fragile ecosystems: Irresponsible tourism practices such as excessive foot traffic, wildlife disturbance, and illegal activities can harm fragile ecosystems, disrupt natural processes, and threaten biodiversity. To ensure that tourism development improves environmental protection efforts, sustainable tourism practices should be promoted. This includes implementing regulations, promoting eco-friendly infrastructure and transportation, supporting local communities, educating visitors about responsible behavior, and involving local stakeholders in decision-making processes. By adopting sustainable practices, tourism can contribute to environmental protection and conservation while providing economic benefits to local communities.

5. Conclusion

In a nutshell, religious and spiritual factors can play a significant role in determining tourists' visiting intentions and their pro-environmental and pro-social behavior, with certain values, beliefs, and aspirations guiding their decisions and actions.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

Experiences show that the use of unsophisticated means and instruments for achieving sustainability of tourism development are overwrought attempts (Liu, 2003). Therefore, these forms of tourism cannot solely be trusted as a way forward to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry, worldwide. Emerging market place for spirituality and broader transformation towards the quest for transcendence in life; travel and tourism have become an integral practice. Spirituality as being an essential part of the human condition is a worthy topic for scientific research. Spiritual tourism when planned and developed based on responsible use of natural and cultural resources, can create job opportunities, generate income, reduce poverty, swift product diversification, restrain exodus migration, and contributes to psychological empowerment. Religiosity and spirituality are most neglected segments in the field of tourism development. Our study provides new insight into tourism literature by exploring spiritual and religious factors and their contribution in sustainability of tourism development. Our study is one of the few studies that considered "religiosity" and "spirituality" as distinguishable concepts.

For individuals who are deeply rooted in a particular religious faith, visiting religious sites and destinations holds great importance. These individuals may be motivated by pilgrimage or the desire to experience spiritual enlightenment. Religious teachings often emphasize stewardship of the environment and caring for others, which can lead to pro-environmental and pro-social behavior among religious tourists.

Spirituality encompasses a broad range of beliefs and practices that connect individuals to something greater than them. Spiritual experiences in natural settings or sacred places can foster a sense of connectedness to nature and promote environmental stewardship. Spiritually-oriented tourists may seek destinations that offer opportunities for reflection, meditation, and self-discovery, ultimately influencing their intentions and behavior towards pro-environmental and pro-social actions. Overall, the interplay of religious and spiritual factors can shape tourists' visiting intentions and their subsequent engagement in pro-environmental and pro-social behaviors. Recognizing and understanding these factors can help tourism stakeholders design experiences and initiatives that align with visitors' values, leading to a more sustainable and socially responsible tourism industry.

5.2. Policy Implications

Our study offers valuable implications for tourism managers and policy makers. Tour operators should consider spiritual and religious factors for marketing their tour packages around the globe. That would increase the influx of domestic and international tourists. Policy makers should initiate 5 years tourism plans centered on spiritual tourism development. Government and private sector should join hands on promotion and development of tourism development in Pakistan. Social media can play a critical role by presenting positive image of Pakistan for attracting potential tourists. Advertisements with religious and spiritual stimulus will not only attract Muslim tourists but also Buddhists and Sikhs from all over the world. Through effective marketing strategies tourism sector can attract and retain a large tourist base.

5.3. Future Research Recommendations

Despite the significance of the study, it has few limitations. The first limitation is sample, future research should consider larger sample consisting of people with different country origins. Future studies should consider spiritual and religious realities in tourism through quantitative approach.

References

Batle, J., Garau-Vadell, J. B., & Orfila-Sintes, F. (2020). Are locals ready to cross a new frontier in tourism? Factors of experiential P2P orientation in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism, 23*(10), 1277-1290. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2019.1604639

Beraldo, L., Gil, F., Ventriglio, A., de Andrade, A. G., da Silva, A. G., Torales, J., . . . Castaldelli-Maia, J. M. (2019). Spirituality, religiosity and addiction recovery: Current perspectives.

Current Drug Research Reviews Formerly: Current Drug Abuse Reviews, 11(1), 26-32. doi:https://doi.org/10.2174/1874473711666180612075954

Cheer, J. M., Belhassen, Y., & Kujawa, J. (2017). The search for spirituality in tourism: Toward a conceptual framework for spiritual tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 24*, 252-256. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.07.018

Collins-Kreiner, N., & Wall, G. (2015). Tourism and religion: Spiritual journeys and their consequences. *The changing world religion Map: Sacred places, identities, practices and politics*, 689-707. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9376-6_34

Crisp, R. (2001). Well-being.

Haq, M., & Jackson, A. (2006). The recognition of marketing of spiritual tourism as a significant new area in leisure travel.

Kim, J.-H. (2014). The antecedents of memorable tourism experiences: The development of a scale to measure the destination attributes associated with memorable experiences. *Tourism management, 44*, 34-45. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.02.007

Kurt, Y., Sinkovics, N., Sinkovics, R. R., & Yamin, M. (2020). The role of spirituality in Islamic business networks: The case of internationalizing Turkish SMEs. *Journal of World Business, 55*(1), 101034. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2019.101034

Lestar, T., & Böhm, S. (2020). Ecospirituality and sustainability transitions: Agency towards degrowth. *Religion, State & Society, 48*(1), 56-73. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2019.1702410

Liu, Z. (2003). Sustainable tourism development: A critique. *Journal of sustainable tourism, 11*(6), 459-475. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580308667216

McKercher, B., Law, R., & Lam, T. (2006). Rating tourism and hospitality journals. *Tourism management, 27*(6), 1235-1252. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.06.008

Norman, A. (2015). Religion, Pilgrimage, and Tourism: critical concepts in religious studies.

Sharma, N. P. (2020). Meditation tourism, Buddhist philosophy in practice: A case study of Lumbini, Nepal. *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality, 11*(1), 37-59.

Sharpley, R. (2020). Tourism, sustainable development and the theoretical divide: 20 years on. *Journal of sustainable tourism, 28*(11), 1932-1946. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1779732

Singh, S. (2009). Spirituality and Tourism An Anthropologist's View. *Tourism Recreation Research, 34*(2), 143-155. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2009.11081586

Smith, M., & Kelly, C. (2006). Wellness tourism. In (Vol. 31, pp. 1-4): Taylor & Francis.

Smith, M. K., & Diekmann, A. (2017). Tourism and wellbeing. *Annals of tourism research, 66*, 1-13. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.05.006

Timothy, D. J., & Olsen, D. H. (2006). *Tourism, religion and spiritual journeys* (Vol. 4): Routledge London.

Walach, H. (2017). Secular spirituality–what it is. Why we need it. How to proceed. *Journal for the Study of Spirituality, 7*(1), 7-20. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/20440243.2017.1290028

Wall, G., & Mathieson, A. (2006). *Tourism: change, impacts, and opportunities*: Pearson Education.

Wang, S., Blasco, D., Hamzah, A., & Verschuuren, B. (2023). Tourists and 'philosophers': Nature as a medium to consciousness and transcendence in spiritual tourism. *Annals of tourism research, 99*, 103543. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103543

Willson, G. B., McIntosh, A. J., & Zahra, A. L. (2013). Tourism and spirituality: A phenomenological analysis. *Annals of tourism research, 42*, 150-168. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.016

Yousaf, S., & Huaibin, L. (2014). Branding Pakistan as a "Sufi" country: the role of religion in developing a nation's brand. *Journal of Place Management and Development, 7*(1), 90-104. doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-08-2013-0020

Zhang, Y., Shi, K. X., & Lee, T. J. (2021). Chinese girlfriend getaway tourism in Buddhist destinations: Towards the construction of a gendered spirituality dimension. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 23*(1), 1-12. doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2386