



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Synergy of Cultural Tourism and Social Entrepreneurship on Sustainable Community Development in Nepal

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 25, 2024 Accepted: Aug 12, 2024	The focus of study is to comprehensively understand the dynamics and synergies between cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship, along with their collective impact on community development in Nepal—a country renowned for its cultural heritage. The central goal is to explore the intricate relationship between cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship in the Nepalese context, utilizing a causal-comparative research design. The study targets professionals involved in sustainable community development and social entrepreneurship rooted in cultural tourism, constituting a sizable and diverse population. The data collection involved 390 respondents through a personally administered questionnaire. Analysis of the data was conducted using AMOS software, with reliability assessed through Cronbach's Alpha test and Composite Reliability (CR). SEM had been used to analyse the data. Path analysis was undertaken to test the relationships between dependent and independent variables, while bootstrap analysis examined the mediating role of innovation in the relationship among cultural tourism, social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. The findings indicate a positive and significant impact of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development, with innovation partially moderating this relationship. The implications extend to policymakers and practitioners, offering valuable insights to inform better understanding and potentially influence policy and practices in the field.
<b>Keywords</b>	
Cultural Tourism Social Entrepreneurship Sustainable Community Development Nepal	
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### INTRODUCTION

Nepal, a country of breathtaking landscapes and a rich tapestry of cultures, offers a special experience for travellers. The country's natural beauty and diverse traditions position it as an ideal destination for cultural tourism, offering visitors an opportunity to immerse themselves with the vibrant heritage, local customs, and artistic expressions. Additionally, Nepal is witnessing a positive shift in its developmental landscape through the emergence of social entrepreneurship. These innovative initiatives blended business strategies with a strong commitment to addressing important social and environmental issues, creating a positive impact on local communities (Kummitha et al., 2021). This dynamic combination of cultural exploration and socially-driven enterprise showcases the potential for sustainable community growth in Nepal. The intersection of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship presents a dynamic avenue for fostering sustainable community development, as

exemplified in the context of Nepal. Cultural tourism, characterized by an immersive quest for experiential encounters with the cultural facets of a destination, encompasses heritage, traditions, arts, and local customs. This form of tourism delves into the intangible essence of a community's way of life, contributing to a profound comprehension of its identity and historical roots. By engaging with authentic cultural expressions, cultural tourists facilitate cross-cultural interactions, thereby nurturing a heightened appreciation for diverse heritage resources (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

Tourism offers a point of contact where various cultures can mingle. In these situations, tourism and related market factors can affect how people learn about and comprehend their surroundings, particularly when land is the focus of the visitor's attention (Gossling, 2002). Researchers have given cultural tourism a lot of theoretical credit since it helps ease conflicts between nations, ethnic groups, and locales. It aids in striking a balance between environmental sustainability in tourist destination attractions and management of tourism, heritage protection, social constraints, and some aspects of economic development (Buckley, 2012). Social entrepreneurship and cultural tourism are crucial factors in attracting tourists to destinations with a focus on both economic and cultural development (Naderi et al., 2019). In the tourism industry, cultural tourism stands as a foundational pillar, drawing travellers to explore and engage with the cultural riches of their chosen destinations. These cultural elements, often specific to regions, present unique attractions that drive tourism activities and visitor influx, thereby generating income for local residents (Kalvet et al., 2020). However, concurrently, there exists an imperative to conserve the environment in the vicinity. Despite the vibrant body of literature on tourism, awareness of the social value created by social entrepreneurs remains confined to a few local communities. Unfortunately, the complete potential of this value creation has yet to be fully realized in the pursuit of environmental sustainability. Moreover, the importance of social entrepreneurship in the context of tourism gains heightened significance, given its central role in fostering sustainable development within the hospitality and tourism sector, with the potential to generate social value for cultural tourists (Heidari et al., 2018). Additionally, scholars emphasize the need for assessing the environmental implications of cultural tourism, while contemporary research underscores its cultural and economic advantages for the local community (Spenceley, 2005).

In this context, a comprehensive analytical framework becomes essential for assessing the interplay between cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship (Aquino et al., 2018). This framework facilitates a thorough evaluation of livelihood sustainability, reflecting the multidimensional approach necessary to analyse the intricate dynamics of social entrepreneurship within the tourism sector. This synergy is particularly relevant for Nepal, where the convergence of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship facilitates sustainable community development, highlighting the transformative potential at the intersection of cultural exploration and innovative social initiatives.

The limited literature on tourism-based social entrepreneurship in Nepal empirically establishes a robust link between these initiatives and community development. Positive outcomes include job creation, increased income, support for local suppliers, and funds for educational programs (Sloan et al., 2014). Non-monetary community benefits, such as skills development, environmental awareness, and enhanced community pride, have also been observed (Peredo & Wurzelmann, 2015). Nonetheless, social entrepreneurship ventures in Nepal encounter challenges such as profitability, marketing issues, leadership, and external funding concerns (Laeis & Lemke, 2016). Nepal, with its rich cultural heritage and stunning landscapes, holds significant potential as a tourist destination. However, economic challenges and the imperative for community development pose pressing issues. By examining the synergy between cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship, researchers can uncover innovative approaches that attract tourists while economically and socially empowering local communities. This research is crucial for identifying strategies that preserve Nepal's unique cultural identity, create employment opportunities, and generate income, especially in regions heavily reliant on traditional agriculture.

Understanding the dynamics of this synergy can contribute to formulating effective policies and initiatives that balance the interests of various stakeholders, including local entrepreneurs, governmental bodies, and conservation agencies. Ultimately, this research has the potential to pave sustainable pathways for Nepal's economic growth while preserving its invaluable cultural heritage. The study thus aims to explore how cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship collaborate to support sustainable development in Nepalese communities. It will also investigate how cultural tourism preserves and shares local traditions, fostering economic growth in rural areas. Additionally, the study will examine how social entrepreneurship complements cultural tourism by providing financial support, knowledge, and creative ideas for long-term viability.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Cultural tourism and community development

Culture can be defined as the embodiment of a way of life, human values, and the distinctive characteristics of a society, while tourism entails the activity of venturing out to explore and experience the essence of this cultural system (Menon et al., 2021). Cultural tourism is a sub sector of the tourism industry where the tourist's experience is intimately or indirectly connected to various facets of another society's lifestyle, encompassing elements such as religion, folklore, rituals, heritage, arts, and crafts (Richards, 1996). Cultural tourism encompasses exploration and understanding, the unique cultural fabric of a place, including its historical significance, artistic expressions, traditional practices, and local customs.

The prominence of cultural tourism as a primary motivation for travel is steadily increasing, with a focus on cultural attractions and activities (Ristic, 2018). While in the past cultural tourism focused largely on built heritage and artefacts, in recent years, there has been a shift to intangible culture, diverging from its previous emphasis. This encompasses not only the day-to-day living aspects of a community, such as their lifestyle, cuisine, work routines, transportation, and livelihoods, but also encompasses immersive and artistic encounters like weaving, carving, pottery, dance, and music.

Cultural tourism can be the major source of economic benefit in rural local communities of a developing country like Nepal, which is rich in its culture. To ensure that the economic benefits reach local communities, it is crucial to focus on developing tourism at the community level (Aji, 2020). One of the key advantages of cultural tourism is its positive impact on the local economy. Tourists who engage in cultural tourism often spend their money on local products, services, and accommodations, thereby contributing directly to the income of residents. The injection of these financial resources has the potential to invigorate small businesses and entrepreneurial endeavours within the community, thereby fostering the creation of more job opportunities and contributing to a heightened state of economic stability (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2018). For instance, homestays which are operated by locals offer tourists the opportunity to immerse themselves in the living culture of the region. They provide lodging and meals within private homes, facilitating social interactions with host families and enabling firsthand observation of daily cultural customs and practices (Dong, 2020). Examining homestays in three rural Nepalese villages through case studies has revealed several community benefits, such as increased profitability and income diversification, the extension of advantages to various community members involved in providing services or cultural activities, enhanced educational opportunities for children, and the revitalization and fortification of local culture (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Dong, 2020; KC, 2021).

Furthermore, cultural tourism can enhance the preservation and promotion of local traditions and heritage. As communities recognize the economic value of their cultural assets, they are incentivized to invest in their preservation. This includes the restoration of historical sites, the revival of traditional arts and crafts, and the transmission of cultural knowledge to younger generations. These efforts not only safeguard cultural identity but also create opportunities for cultural exchange and

dialogue, fostering a sense of pride and unity among community members (Richards & Munsters, 2013). However, the synergy between cultural tourism and community development is not without its challenges. Balancing the preservation of cultural authenticity with the demands of the tourism industry can be a delicate task. Over-commercialization and unsustainable tourism practices can lead to the dilution of cultural integrity and environmental degradation (Mckercher & Du Cros, 2002). Therefore, responsible and sustainable tourism practices are essential to ensure that the benefits of cultural tourism are equitably distributed and that host communities are actively engaged in decision-making processes related to tourism development (Jamal & Robinson, 2009).

### **Community-based cultural entrepreneurship**

The concept of Social Entrepreneurship revolves around establishing a fresh business venture with the intention of generating social benefits. Social Entrepreneurship is characterized as a stepwise process, starting with identifying a perceived social opportunity, converting it into a viable enterprise model, obtaining the necessary resources to execute the venture, nurturing its growth, and ultimately achieving the enterprise's objectives and vision for the future (Tiwari et al., 2017). It is, therefore, an initiative by social entrepreneurs, who use entrepreneurial methods to address social and environmental issues, serving as catalysts for transformative change (Partzsch & Ziegler, 2011) while also prioritizing their own survival and sustainability (Mair & Marti, 2006). Social entrepreneurs harness their innovative ideas and business acumen to address social, cultural, and environmental challenges faced by local communities. Social entrepreneurship offers inventive and sustainable solutions to address social, cultural, and environmental issues, encompassing elements such as social vision, sustainability, social networks, innovation, and financial returns (Tiwari et al., 2018).

Community-based cultural entrepreneurship has emerged as a dynamic force, empowering local communities while preserving and promoting their unique cultural heritage. Community-based enterprise has been developed in different parts of Nepal, and such enterprise utilizes market and different non-marketing strategies to uplift the social and economic situation of local people by aiding in social value for the community members (Antinori & Bray, 2005). A primary benefit of community-based cultural entrepreneurship lies in its capacity to convert cultural heritage into a sustainable income source and economic diversification. Communities across the globe are leveraging their traditional crafts, performing arts, culinary customs, and festivals to craft genuine and marketable experiences. These initiatives not only generate income but also play a pivotal role in rejuvenating cultural traditions that might otherwise fade into obscurity (Butler & Hinch, 2007).

Moreover, this approach often has a positive impact on educational opportunities for community members. Cultural enterprises frequently involve training and capacity-building programs, enhancing skills and knowledge related to cultural practices. Younger generations, in particular, stand to gain from these educational initiatives, which help ensure the transmission of cultural traditions and skills (Richards & Munsters, 2010).

While community-based cultural entrepreneurship offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges. Balancing commercial success with cultural authenticity can be complex, and sustainable practices are essential. Additionally, ensuring that the benefits reach all community members and that the cultural enterprises remain community-driven is critical to preserving cultural integrity (Jamal & Robinson, 2009).

### **Relationship between cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable community development**

Pradhan et al., (2021), conducted research and found that community-based cultural tourism offers a pathway to foster sustainable development especially in small communities, situated in rural areas of Nepal. The research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural tourism and entrepreneurial practices of mountainous zone, far-western and mid-Nepal (Kathmandu valley). The

results indicated that culture is an important part of Nepalese tourism, because even the adventure activities like trekking involve routes that have cultural significance and local community involvement. In order to fulfil the objective of this research, a qualitative exploratory approach was utilized, centring on gaining insights into individuals' perspectives. Interviews were conducted with experts (18 experts in total) from the tourism industry in Nepal, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To gather participants for the interviews, a combination of purposive sampling method and snowball technique was employed. Katelieva & Muhar (2022) demonstrated that social and community factors play a vital role for the sustainability and success of tourism offers based on a shared (intangible) cultural asset, where cultural heritage is seen as a part of groups' culture. A comprehensive total of 19 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, who were identified as cultural experts in Austria. The research found out that social entrepreneurship and cultural tourism can be fostered through complementing, cooperating, social bonding, leading and influencing the members of the community, which ultimately leads to sustainable development.

Aji (2020), conducted research on social entrepreneurship in community-based tourism in Pentingsari tourism village of Indonesia. The research concluded that in the context of developing tourism, human capital plays a crucial role in addressing community needs through training and education. Enhancing the knowledge of community members is vital for ensuring the sustainability of community-based tourism. Human capital, along with globalization and natural resources, is recognized as one of the key factors contributing to economic growth. Recognizing the tourism potential of these traditions fosters awareness within the community that they can monetize their talents as tourism attractions. This awareness not only motivates the community to preserve these cultural legacies as their specialties but also inspires other members to acquire specific skills that can be utilized as tourist attractions. Human capital forms the foundation for the success of social entrepreneurship in tourism, empowering community members to realize their tourism potential and generate income from it.

Thananusak & Suriyankietkaew (2023), conducted research on Sapphaya social enterprise, a national award-winning Community Based Tourism Enterprise (CBTE) in Chai Nat, Thailand. The study revealed that leadership and local engagement are key drivers for developing a successful and sustainable CBTEs. The research provides insights into how a CBTE can generate value by revalorizing its cultural heritage and local assets to achieve sustainable community-based tourism and increase local engagement with multiple stakeholders. In a nutshell, the research demonstrates how cultural tourism-based enterprise can achieve success and attain sustainability by engaging with the future generation.

Castanho et al., (2023), conducted research the pilot projects implemented in the Azores Territory (a Portuguese anonymous region) to find out, if sustainable development is possible through nature based rural tourism and culturally based creative tourism. The study concluded that Creative tourism initiatives in the Azores offer multifaceted advantages. Firstly, they play a crucial role in preserving the region's rich cultural heritage, encompassing traditional crafts, music, and culinary traditions. This preservation effort not only safeguards the Azores' unique identity but also positions it as an exceptional tourist destination. Secondly, these initiatives diversify the tourism offerings, attracting a broader spectrum of tourists through creative experiences like craft workshops, music sessions, and culinary adventures. Moreover, creative tourism significantly boosts the local economy by encouraging visitors to invest in locally crafted goods and services, thereby enhancing the financial well-being of communities. Simultaneously, these initiatives create fresh employment prospects, particularly within the arts and cultural sectors, contributing to reduced unemployment rates. Lastly, by actively involving local communities in planning and executing these initiatives, the Azores fosters a sense of ownership and pride, ultimately leading to improved community development and cohesion.

However, community tourist business is a complex picture driven by marketability, participatory, crisis mitigation and sustainability, with sustainability being the major issue (Priatmoko et al., 2023). Although, CBT (community-based tourism) initiatives are frequently praised by the tourism sector, NGOs, and authorities, they are often limited in number and face challenges in terms of long-term sustainability (Akunaay et al., 2003). In the context of Nepal, fluctuating government policies and infrastructure development directly affects the synergy of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship. The sociocultural impacts of tourism, particularly in developing countries, raise concerns within the global tourism industry that often offers inexpensive travel packages to remote and exotic locations (Salzar, 2011). Tourism significantly influences the shaping of cultural practices and landscapes, and cultural change is evident as tourism serves as a catalyst for transformative experiences. While challenges exist, there are also instances of successful outcomes in the tourism sector that demonstrate positive impacts on communities and destinations.

In summary, Cultural tourism has emerged as a distinct form of consumption, explicitly recognizing the interconnection between culture and tourism (Richards, 2018). Tourism emerges as a potent catalyst for positive transformations within marginalized rural communities of developing countries, exemplified by Nepal. The potential of tourism to offer employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and economic gains has garnered significant attention (Zeppel, 2007). Similarly, Social entrepreneurship can play a crucial role in fostering the growth and long-term viability of cultural tourism initiatives by offering support, funding, and expertise to local entrepreneurs and organizations engaged in cultural tourism, thereby promoting sustainable development and empowering communities (Hall, 2008). The coming together of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship forms a strong partnership that helps communities develop in a sustainable way. By using the economic opportunities and cultural exchanges that come with tourism, along with the creative and socially-minded approaches of social entrepreneurship, Nepal can make progress in areas like reducing poverty, preserving culture, protecting the environment, and creating a better life for its people. This synergy presents a promising pathway to foster sustainable community development in Nepal. By harnessing the economic opportunities and intercultural exchanges facilitated by cultural tourism, coupled with the innovative approaches of social entrepreneurship, Nepal has the potential to achieve inclusive growth, poverty reduction, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Local experience and expertise play a pivotal role in attracting tourists while preserving cultural values. With the right strategies and collaborations, the fusion of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship can create a transformative impact, fostering the overall well-being and empowerment of Nepal's communities for a brighter and more sustainable future.

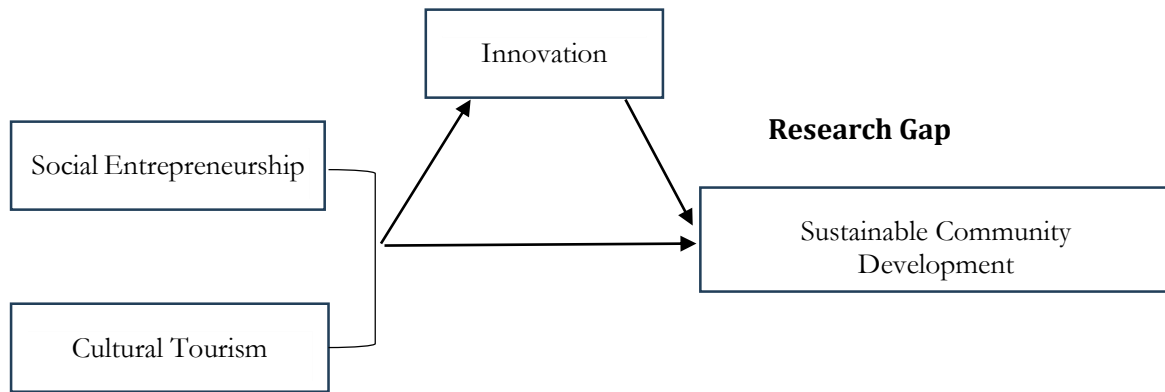
### **Cultural capital theory**

Cultural capital theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu in 1986, posits that cultural assets, such as traditions, heritage, and cultural practices, can be transformed into social and economic capital. It emphasizes the role of culture in shaping individuals' social and economic outcomes. Cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship both involve the utilization of cultural capital to generate economic benefits and promote community development.

### **Resource-based view (RBV) theory**

The RBV theory is an economic theory that underscores the significance of resources and capabilities in achieving competitive advantage. It suggests that valuable, rare, and non-substitutable resources, when effectively managed, can lead to sustainable competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). This theory can help you understand how the effective management and exploitation of cultural resources contribute to the success of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

The exploration of the synergy between cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship in Nepal presents a promising avenue for research; however, a notable research gap emerges in the context of understanding the mechanisms through which these two domains intersect and their precise impact on sustainable community development. While cultural capital theory and the RBV theory offer valuable insights into the utilization of cultural assets and resources, there is a need for empirical research that specifically investigates how these theories manifest in the Nepalese context. Existing literature often tends to focus on individual aspects, such as the economic benefits of cultural tourism or the social impact of social entrepreneurship, without holistically examining their interplay and the comprehensive community-level outcomes. A research gap thus exists in providing a nuanced understanding of how cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship collectively contribute to community development in Nepal quantitatively. Furthermore, while there is a flourishing interest in the field of cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship worldwide, the literature specific to Nepal remains relatively limited. Nepal, with its rich cultural heritage and vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, offers a unique context for the examination of this synergy. Therefore, further research is warranted to fill this regional research gap and provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice, particularly in developing economies like Nepal. Such research could involve in-depth case studies, surveys, and interviews that holistically examine the complex interactions, challenges, and opportunities within the realm of cultural tourism, social entrepreneurship, and community development in Nepal.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has attempted to examine the relationship between cultural tourism, social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. A causal-comparative research design has employed to scrutinize the relationships between the aforementioned constructs. The study population comprises professionals actively involved in sustainable community development and social entrepreneurship based on cultural tourism, a group characterized by its infinite size. The determination of the sample size utilized Cochran's (1977) formula specifically designed for an infinite population as:

$$n = Z^2 p^*q / em^2 = 384$$

However, a total of 390 respondents were included in the data collection process, utilizing a seven-point Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on the research conducted by Pradhan et al., (2022). The reliability of the collected data was assessed using both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. To evaluate the goodness of fit for the proposed model, several indices were employed, including CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI, and RMSEA. Convergent validity was

tested using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and comparison between AVE and CR, while Mean Square Error (MSE), the square root of AVE and internal construct correlation were applied to assess discriminant validity. Path analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between dependent and independent variables. Additionally, bootstrap analysis was employed to assess the mediating role of innovation in the relationships among cultural tourism, social entrepreneurship, and sustainable community development.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Test of reliability**

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using both Cronbach's Alpha value and Composite Reliability. The Cronbach Alpha values are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha value of constructs**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent Constructs	
Cultural tourism (CT)	0.914
Social entrepreneurship (SE)	0.927
Mediating Construct	
Innovation (INO)	0.921
Dependent Construct	
Sustainable community development (SCD)	0.925

Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs (.914, .927, .921, and .925, respectively) exceed the recommended cut-off point of 0.70, as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Thus, the reliability of all constructs is deemed acceptable, indicating that the instrument is reliable for the study's purposes.

**Convergent and discriminant validity of all constructs**

**Table 2: Values of CR, AVE, MSV, Square Root of AVE, and Inter-construct correlation**

	CR	AVE	MSV	INO	CT	SE	SCD
Innovation	0.921	0.662	0.095	0.814			
Cultural Tourism	0.914	0.604	0.095	0.308	0.777		
Social Entrepreneurship	0.929	0.652	0.069	0.240	0.228	0.808	
Sustainable Community Development	0.927	0.647	0.069	0.216	0.220	0.263	0.804

The composite reliability values for all constructs (.921, .914, .929, .927 respectively) surpass the established cutoff point of 0.70, as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Consequently, the instrument utilized for data collection demonstrates sufficient reliability for further analysis. Additionally, the AVE values for each construct (.662, .604, .652, .647 respectively) exceed the threshold of 0.5 suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Furthermore, each construct's value of Composite Reliability (CR) surpasses its respective AVE, in line with Fornell and Larcker's (1981) guidelines. This outcome strongly supports the convergent validity of the constructs. Moreover, each construct's AVE surpasses the Mean Shared Variance (MSV) (Chin, 1998), and the square root of AVE

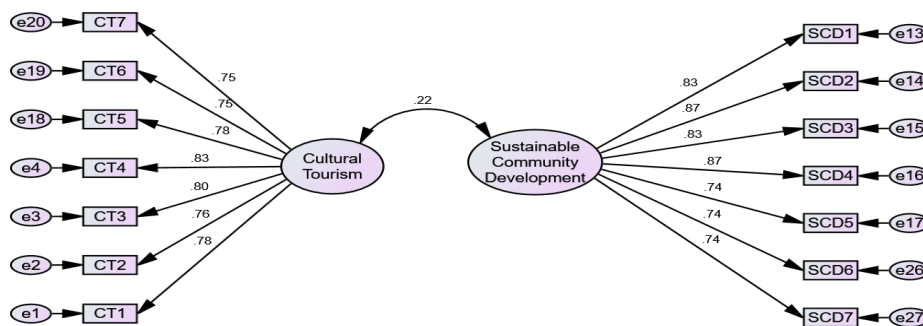


for each construct exceeds the inter-construct correlation (Chin, 1998). These findings provide robust evidence of the discriminant validity of the constructs. Hence, both convergent and discriminant validity are established, confirming the data's suitability for path analysis using structural equation modelling.

**Relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development**

The measurement model is used to examine the goodness of fit indices. The first order constructs of cultural tourism and sustainable community development model is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Association between cultural tourism and sustainable community development**



The first order constructs of cultural tourism and sustainable community development model show the goodness of fit with the data in Table 3.

**Table 3: Model Fit Measurement of Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Community Development**

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	References
Chi-square	143.33			
DF	76			
P-Value	0.000			
CMIN/DF	1.886	< 3	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999
GFI	0.951	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
AGFI	0.932	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
CFI	0.981	> 0.95	Good fit	Bentler & Bonett, 1980
RMSEA	0.048	< 0.05	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998

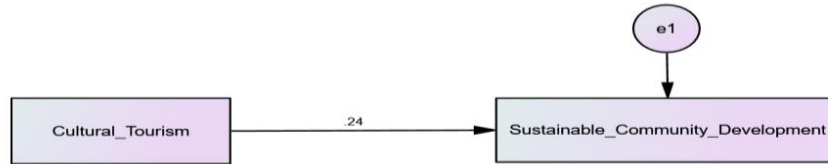
The chi-square value with degrees of freedom (76) is 143.330. The relative chi-square ratio, at 1.886, is less than the recommended threshold (< 3), indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, the GFI at 0.951 exceeds the suggested threshold (> 0.90), confirming a good fit based on Byrne (2010) and Hair et al., (1998). The Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value, at 0.932, also surpasses the suggested threshold (> 0.90), indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). Furthermore, the CFI value, at 0.981, exceeds the suggested threshold (> 0.95), confirming a good fit

as per Bentler and Bonett (1980). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value for the proposed model, at 0.048, is lower than the recommended threshold (< 0.05), which asserts a good fit according to Byrne (2010) and Hair et al., (1998). Therefore, all indices collectively affirm the goodness of fit of the proposed model.

**Structural relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development**

Path analysis is applied to show the structural relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development. The path diagram shows the impact of cultural tourism on sustainable community development in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: The Impact of Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Community Development**



The path model shows the hypothesized relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development. Thus, the hypothesized association is presented in Table 4.

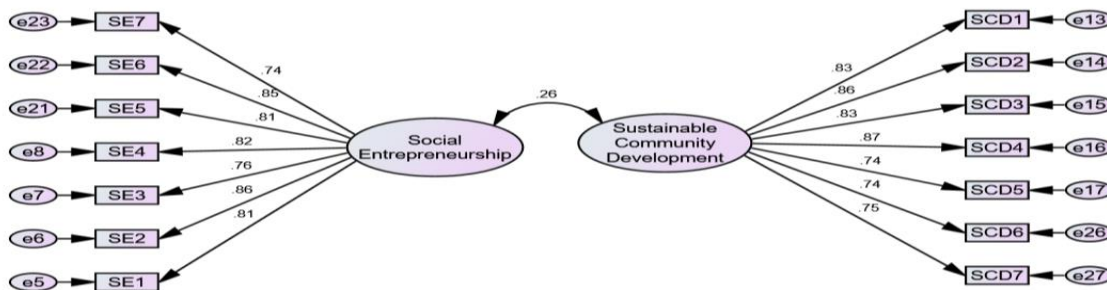
**Table 4: Hypothesized relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development**

Hypothesized Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SCD	<---	Cultural Tourism	0.236	0.043	4.787	***

Cultural tourism has a positive and significant impact on sustainable community development as the p-value is less than .001. It shows that the enhancement of cultural tourism helps leverage sustainable community development in Nepal. It confirms that the policy favour and investment in cultural tourism development, the Nepalese government can develop the different communities of Nepal sustainably.

**Relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

The measurement model is used to test the goodness of fit indices. The model has used the first order constructs of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development which is presented in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

The first order constructs of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development model is considered good fit with the data presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Model fit measures of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	References
Chi-square	157.251			
DF	76			
P-Value	0.000			
CMIN/DF	2.069	< 3	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999
GFI	0.946	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
AGFI	0.925	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
CFI	0.979	> 0.95	Good fit	Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
RMSEA	0.049	< 0.05	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998

The Chi-Square value with degrees of freedom at 76 is 157.251. The relative Chi-Square ratio, calculated at 2.069, is less than the recommended threshold (< 3), indicating a good fit according to Byrne (2010) and Hu & Bentler (1999). Additionally, the GFI at 0.946 exceeds the suggested threshold (> 0.90), confirming a good fit based on Byrne (2010) and Hair et al. (1998). The AGFI value, at 0.925, also surpasses the suggested threshold (> 0.90), supporting the claim of a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). Furthermore, the CFI value, at 0.979, is greater than the recommended threshold (> 0.95), indicating a good fit as per Bentler & Bonett (1980). The RMSEA value for the proposed model, at 0.049, is lower than the recommended threshold (< 0.05), which confirms a good fit according to Byrne (2010) and Hair et al. (1998). Therefore, all indices collectively affirm the goodness of fit of the proposed model.

**Structural relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

Path analysis is used to show the structural relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. The path diagram shows the impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: The Impact of Social Entrepreneurship on Sustainable Community Development**



The path model shows the hypothesized relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. Thus, the hypothesized association is presented in Table 6.

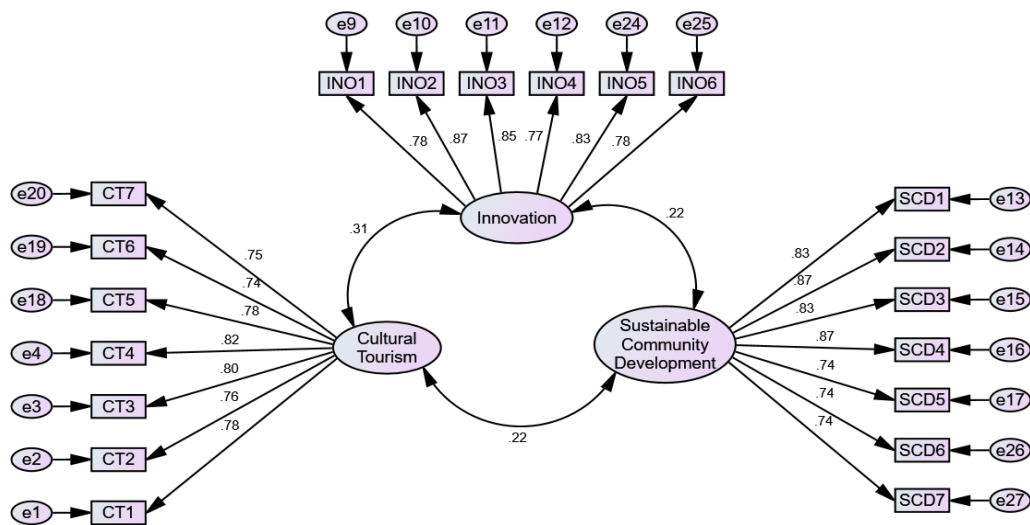
**Table 6: Hypothesized relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

Hypothesized Relationship		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SCD	<--- Social Entrepreneurship	0.280	0.044	5.756	***

Social entrepreneurship had a positive and significant impact on sustainable community development. It implies that advancement in the social enterprise leverage to the community development in Nepal. It means enterprises developed on the base of community problems so as to solve those problems then the sustainable development of community is possible.

**Mediating effect of innovation in the relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development**

The measurement model used is to test the goodness of fit indices. The first order constructs of cultural tourism, innovation and sustainable community development model are presented in Figure 6.



The first order constructs of cultural tourism, innovation and sustainable community development model show goodness of fit presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Model fit measures of innovation, cultural tourism and sustainable community**

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	References
Chi-square	283.155			
DF	167			
P-Value	0.000			
CMIN/DF	1.696	< 3	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999
GFI	0.935	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998

AGFI	0.918	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
CFI	0.977	> 0.95	Good fit	Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
RMSEA	0.042	< 0.05	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998

The chi-square value with degree of freedom (176) is 283.155. The relative chi-square ratio 1.696 is less than the suggested threshold (< 3) indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The GFI value of 0.935 is greater the suggested threshold (> 0.90), that shows a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). The AGFI value of 0.918 is greater the suggested threshold (> 0.90), that confirms a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). The CFI value 0.977 is greater than the suggested threshold (> 0.95), presenting a good fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). RMSEA value 0.042 is lower than the suggested threshold (< 0.05), that acclaimed a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, all indices prove the goodness of fit of proposed model for further analysis.

The result of the mediation test of innovation between cultural tourism and sustainable community development is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Mediation test of innovation using a bootstrap analysis with a 95 % confidence interval**

Relationship path					Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence Interval		P-value
							Lower bound	Upper bound	
SCD	<---	CT			0.157 (3.482)				0.000
SCD	<---	INO	<---	CT		0.050	0.016	0.116	0.000

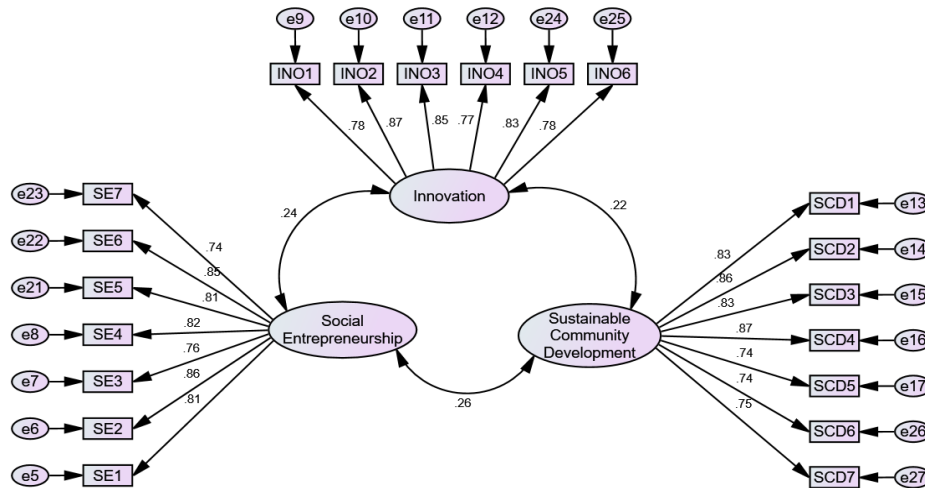
*Unstandardized coefficients reported, Values in parenthesis is t-value, Bootstrap sample = 5000 with replacement.*

The coefficient of indirect impact of cultural tourism on sustainable community development has 0.050. The lower and upper bounds confidence interval does not cross the zero (0.116 - 0.016 = 0.100) and the intersection (cultural tourism and sustainable community development) shows two-tailed significance (P = 0.000). Thus, innovation mediates the relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development.

The indirect impact of cultural tourism on sustainable community development has a positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.050$ , P-value = 0.000). Similarly, the direct impact of cultural tourism on sustainable community development has a positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.157$ , P-value 0.000). Thus, innovation partially mediates the relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development.

**Mediating effect of innovation between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

The measurement model is used to test the goodness of fit indices. The first order constructs of social entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable community development model are presented in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Relationship among social entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable community development**

The first order constructs of social entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable community development model show goodness of fit with the data in Table 8.

**Table 8: Model fit measures of innovation, social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development**

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	References
Chi-square	305.510			
DF	167			
P-Value	0.000			
CMIN/DF	1.829	< 3	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999
GFI	0.926	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
AGFI	0.907	> 0.90	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998
CFI	0.975	> 0.95	Good fit	Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
RMSEA	0.046	< 0.05	Good fit	Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998

The Chi-Square value with degree of freedom at 167 is 305.510. The relative Chi-Square ratio 1.829 is less than the suggested threshold (< 3) indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The GFI value of 0.926 is greater the suggested threshold (> 0.90), indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). The AGFI value of 0.907 is greater the suggested threshold (> 0.90), indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). The CFI value of 0.975 is the suggested threshold (> 0.95), acclaimed a good fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The RMSEA value of 0.046 is lower than the suggested threshold (< 0.05), that is considered a good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, all indices prove the goodness of fit. The result of the mediation test of innovation between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Mediation test of innovation using a bootstrap analysis with a 95 % confidence interval**

Relationship path					Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence Interval		P-value
							Lower bound	Upper bound	
SCD	<---	SE			0.214 (4.772)				0.000
SCD	<---	INO	<---	SE		0.039	0.011	0.093	0.001

*Unstandardized coefficients reported, Values in parenthesis is t-value, Bootstrap sample = 5000 with replacement.*

The coefficient of indirect impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development has 0.039. The lower and upper bounds confidence interval does not cross the zero (0.093 - 0.011) = 0.082) and the intersection (social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development) shows two-tailed significance (P = 0.001). Thus, innovation mediates the relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. The indirect impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development has a positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.039$ , P-value = 0.001). Also, the direct impact of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development has a positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.214$ , P-value 0.000). Thus, innovation partially mediates the relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development.

**DISCUSSION**

In examining the relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable community development, the study reveals a positive and significant correlation. Nepal, with its distinctive cultural landscape, boosts unique cultures within each community. Consequently, the development of cultural tourism becomes instrumental in elevating the living standards of the people, offering opportunities for income generation, and contributing to lasting community development. This finding aligns with similar conclusions drawn in studies by Pradhan et al., (2022), Katelieve and Muhar (2022), and Aji (2020). The consistency in findings can be attributed to the universal principle that each country possesses its unique culture, and fostering and developing cultural tourism have the potential to enhance sustainable community development across various contexts. Similarly, the study found positive and significant relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustained community development. As social enterprises are developed based on community problems with the purpose of solving those social issues. The reduction in community issues help develop community sustainably. Therefore, the study findings are consistent with the findings of the study of Thananusak and Suriyarkietkaew (2023) and Chundu et al., (2022). The establishment of social ventures solve the community problems and help raise the living standard of the people across every context. Thus, the findings of the study are similar.

The study also found that innovation plays partial moderating role in the relationship between cultural tourism, social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. The study finding is similar to the findings of Cashtanho et al., (2023) and Kuo et al., (2022). It may be so because cultural tourism and social enterprises both requires innovation. New idea generation and new product development is prerequisite for cultural tourism and social enterprises and development of cultural tourism and social enterprises contributes to sustainable development of community everywhere. Similarly, both the theories; Cultural Capital Theory and Resource Based View used for the study are confirmed by the findings of the study. As cultural capital theory states

that the cultural assets can be converted into social and economic capital if they are used in innovative way. However, resource-based view also suggested to utilise valuable, rare and non-substitutable resources for gaining competitive advantages. As the findings of the study focused on the innovation in cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship that help to build rare, valuable and non-substitutable assets. Thus, the study confirms both the theories in Nepalese context.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The development of cultural tourism and support for social entrepreneurship are crucial elements in fostering sustainable community development. This suggests that, with government support through policy enhancement, effective implementation, increased budget allocations, and empowerment of local communities for cultural heritage preservation, sustainable community development can be achieved. Policies favouring both local and foreign tourists to visit various communities, observe cultural activities, and engage with cultural products contribute significantly to sustainable community development. Furthermore, the creation of enterprises addressing social issues and providing solutions not only generates income opportunities for the local community but also enhances living standards, thereby facilitating sustainable community development. Cultural tourism and social entrepreneurship contribute to sustainable community development through innovation. The introduction of novel cultural products and the generation of new ideas and services by social enterprises contribute to income generation, thereby fostering sustainable community development. The implications of this research extend to policymakers and practitioners. Policymakers can use the insights provided by this study to revise policies that support responsible cultural tourism and community-driven social entrepreneurship. The study highlights variables that policymakers can address in policy reform to support local communities in developing cultural tourism and establishing social enterprises based on community problems and solutions. Practitioners are encouraged to continuously improve cultural products and services to promote cultural tourism and social enterprises.

This type of study is relatively scarce in Nepal and other underdeveloped countries. Future researchers are encouraged to focus on similar studies in underdeveloped nations to provide valuable research-based insights. Given that this study is based on a limited number of tourists and social entrepreneurs in Nepal, further research is necessary to generalize the findings. Additionally, the inclusion of variables such as environmental factors and community empowerment would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the synergy involved in sustainable community development.

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