

EXPLORING THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE VISITORS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A CASE OF LAL SOHANRA NATIONAL PARK, BAHAWALPUR, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT: National parks have an immense value in protecting the natural resources and biodiversity and amusing the tourists with aesthetic beauty. This study was undertaken with the main objective to explore the attitudes and perceptions of the visitors towards sustainable tourism at Lal Sohanra National park, Bahawalpur, Pakistan. For this purpose, a field survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire at the park to 250 visitors' respondents randomly. The United Nations WTO indicators of sustainable tourism (2004) as sustaining tourist satisfaction were also applied to measure the level of satisfaction of tourists. The analysis carried out in SPSS v. 20 by applying descriptive statistics and individual samples T-Test. Results showed that among the visitors, 86.8% were males and 13.2% were females. Majority of respondents (54.8%) have the age of 15 to 30 years. By education, 19.6% respondents were intermediate passed and the majority of the visitors (52.4%) have been completed graduation. The monthly income of these respondents varied as 50.4% have earned 15,000 PKR per month and 31.2% were private employees or owns their personal business (34.4%). They spent considerable amount on their tour (conveyance and food) to the national park as 52.8% respondents have spent 4,000 to 8,000 PKR. Majority of the visitors (76%) were unmarried while 24% were married and most of them (44.4%) were belongs to different areas of Bahawalpur district and come with friends (51.6%) followed by family together (38.8%). They were visiting mostly on weekend/ holiday (52%) by using their personal (48.4%) and hired/ rented conveyance (34%). Although majority of the tourists (90.8%) have replied that they satisfied with the facilities and services provided by park administration. When they inquired about the provision of the additional facilities they answered to the need of better canteen (35%), improvements in play grounds and swings (23.6%) and improved security (18.8%). About 58.8% tourists have expressed their positive views and opinions about the park and 44% replied the national park as a place for sustainable tourism, biodiversity conservation (22%) and a place of recreation and green parks (18.4%). The overall level of satisfaction of the tourists was satisfactory as 53.6% tourists responded that they were satisfied. Results of individuals samples T-Test also verified the positive attitude and views of the tourists toward national park as a place of sustainable tourism and protected natural landscape (*p-value* 0.001). They were also well aware about the environmental issues at the park. Lastly few suggestions were recommended to the concerned authorities to bring more betterment and make it more appealing tourist destination for the visitors.

Keywords: Attitude, Perception, Sustainable Tourism, WTO, Lal Sohanra National Park, Bahawalpur.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is travel for pleasure or business. It is also, the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours. Tourism may be international, or within the traveler's country. United Nations had declared the year of 2017 as the international year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. On this occasion, United Nations World Tourism Organization

(UNWTO) (2017a) defines sustainable tourism comprehensively as; "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of the visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" Sustainable tourism also defined by Hawkins (1998) as "sustainable tourism discourses the necessity of present tourists at the same time as conserving the tourist destinations for future generations". While a national park is a park that is use for conservation purposes. Often it is a reserve of natural,

semi-natural, or developed land that a sovereign state declares or owns. International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN) has devised a definition of a protected area as “An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means” (IUCN, 1994). In 1872, Yellowstone National Park was established as the United States’ first national park, being also the world’s first national park (Mangan, 2013). The largest national park in the world meeting the IUCN definition is the Northeast Greenland National Park, which was established in 1974. According to the IUCN, 6,555 national parks worldwide met its criteria in 2006 and 11 National parks are almost open to visitors (Gissibl *et al.*, 2012). Most national parks provide outdoor recreation and camping opportunities as well as classes designed to educate the public on the importance of conservation and the natural wonders of the land in which the national park is located.

Today, tourism is a major source of income for many countries and affects the economy of both the source and host countries, in some cases being of vital importance (Bhatia, 1986). Thus, tourism can prove more profitable to the economy of many tourist destinations through out of the world (Wahab and Pigram, 1997). Similarly, the global arrival of the tourists at the destinations world over have enhanced from 25 million in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, 674 million in 2000, and 1,235 million in 2016 amounting to nearly 1,220 billion USD and signifies 7% of the world’s exports in goods and services. In 2023, they are estimated to cross the numbers of 1,286 million global tourists, a notable increase of 34% than 2022 (UNWTO, 2017b; UNWTO, 2024). Therefore, the economic role have emphasized (economic benefits and economic impacts) influencing attitudes toward tourism development (McGehee and Andereck, 2004). Traditionally tourism has been considered as a purely economic activity and an industry (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). The beneficial economic impacts of tourism have led the locals to financial prosperity, employment opportunities and better standard of living, but quite a large number of them were apprehensive about its negative outcomes (Bagri and Kala, 2016).

Destination attractiveness is the driving force of tourism and without which tourism would be almost non-existent. A destination is able to meet the needs of tourists, the more the destination is likely to be chosen in preference to competing destinations (Lee *et al.*, 2014). A good perception leads to a positive destination image, leads tourist satisfaction, which in turn results in destination loyalty (Haarhoff, 2018). The visitors’ and residents attitudes and perceptions residents are crucial toward the impacts of tourism. It is liable to be a key planning and policy initiative for the flourishing

development, marketing, and operation of existing and future tourism programs and projects (Ap, 1992). Perception comprises consumers’ motivations, learning, attitudes, and previous experience (Haarhoff, 2018). Attitudes are a combination of knowledge and positive and negative feelings about an event, person or object (Aksoy and Kiyici, 2011; Lubbe, 1998).

Tourism can be a viable opportunity to improve local residents’ quality of life through providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment, and promoting cross-cultural awareness (Honey and Raymond, 2009). In Pakistan there are bunch of natural beauty that can attract national and international tourists and visitors. Pakistan has inaugurated a national campaign ‘Visit Pakistan’ in 2007 to highlight and promote its tourism potential and exceptional cultural heritage by organizing events during the entire year including fairs, religious festivals, sports events, craft and arts shows, folk festivals and openings of historical museums. In 2009, Pakistan was ranked one of the leading 25% tourist destinations by the World Economic Forum’ Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report for its World Heritage sites existed from mangroves in the south, to the 5,000-year-old Indus Valley Civilization sites of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (Butt, 2018). In 2016, 965,498 foreign tourists have visited Pakistan that were increased to 1.225 million in 2017 and again reduced to 965,500 in 2019. The share of the Tourism in global tourism market was merely 0.8% in 2017 and 2.9% share in country’s GDP which is very low as compare to its tourism potential (Butt, 2018; Elahi, 2022). This is due to the political and social anomalies, less concern on promoting the tourism sites and the security concerns in the country that reduce the interest of international visitors. However, by comparison, Pakistan’s domestic tourism industry is attracted approximately 50 million tourists annually who travel in the country on short span tours generally between May to August to the special destinations of choice i.e. the Khyber Pass, Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore, Swat and Rawalpindi (Butt, 2018). Thus, the main objective of the study was to explore the attitudes and perceptions of the visitors towards sustainable tourism at Lal Sohanra National park, Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Area: Lal Sohanra National Park is situated in Bahawalpur City about 32 km to east on main Bahawalpur-Bahawalnagar highway (Figure 1). It is situated between 29° 12’ and 29° 28’ northern latitudes and 71° 48’ and 72° 08’ eastern longitudes, with an altitude ranging from 125 to 140 meters. It is the Pakistan’s first National Park founded in 1972 and one of the largest national parks of South Asia having diversity in landscapes as it has deserts, forests and ponds as well.

It spans over 216,034 acres (87,426 ha) area. IUCN defined a category system of six different protected areas by observing the objective of the management and according to this system it is fall in Category II (National

Park) and more confined in category V (Protected landscape) and VI (Protected landscape with sustainable use of natural resources) (IUCN, 1994; Somuncu *et al.*, 2009).

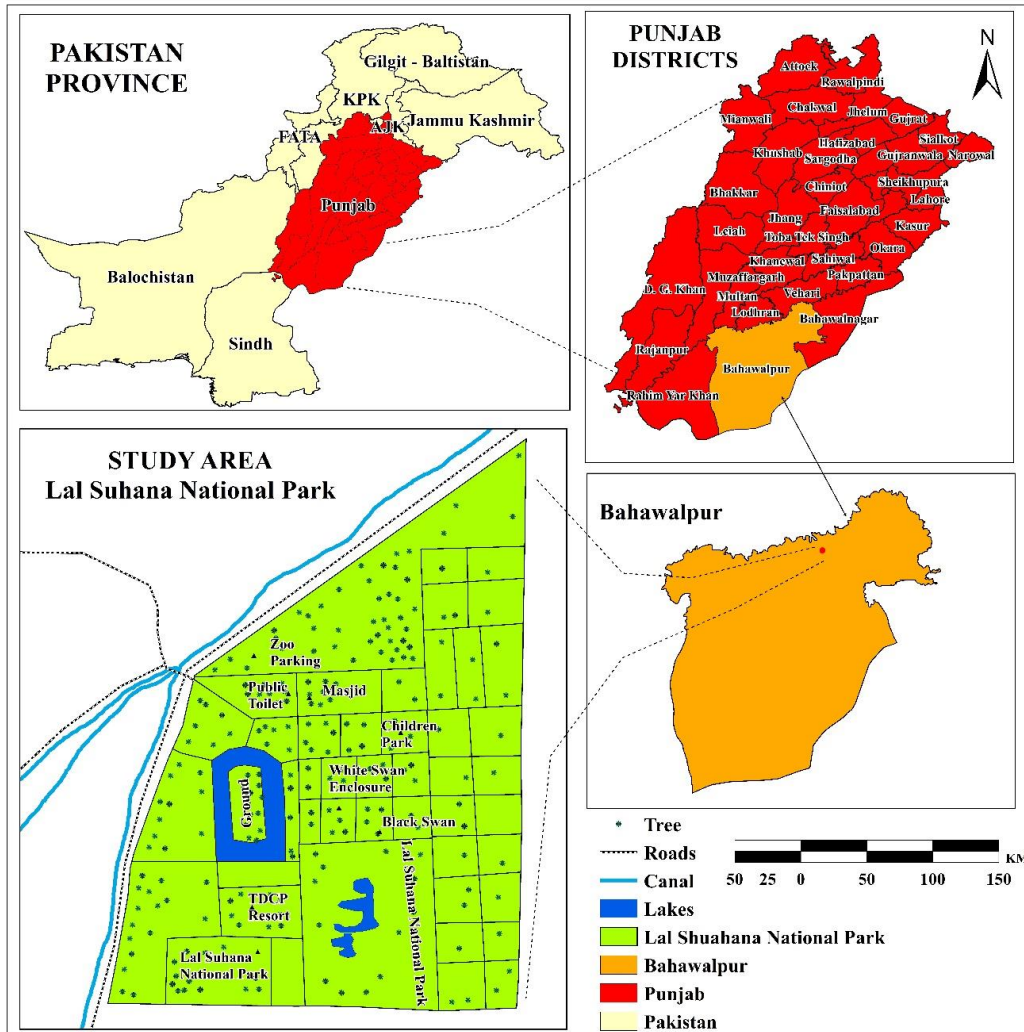


Figure 1: Location of study area in Pakistan

Data Collection: This study relies mainly on primary data that was collected through a field survey in the park during the month of March, 2023 when the weather is pleasant and it is the best period to visit the park. A structured questionnaire was utilized containing twenty five queries related to visitors selected variables of socio-demographics (gender, age, education level, monthly income, occupation and marital status) and attitudes and perceptions of the visitors enlisted in the UNWTO 2004 indicators of sustainable tourism as sustaining tourist satisfaction (Level of satisfaction about park facilities, visitors accompanies, cost of trip, type of transport used for trip, attitude of the visitors in the park, purpose of visit this park etc.) (UNWTO, 2004).

Sampling Procedure: A sample of 250 respondents (25%) were selected out of the estimated 1,000 visitors those were present in the park at the time of field survey by applying simple random sampling technique. Majority of the respondents were male by gender as male were more confident in giving response as compare to the women. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents' visitors and collected back on the spot in a face to face meeting in an ease environment. The authors received the assistance from students of BS Geography, 8th semester of Department of Geography, Government Sadiq Egerton Graduate College in questionnaires distribution and collection.

Data Analysis: The collected data was arranged, tabulated and coded into the computer and IBM SPSS Version 20 software used for statistical analysis. Firstly, descriptive statistics were employed to determine the visitors' socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes and perceptions about the Lal Sohanra National park. Secondly, t-test was applied in order to identify the important factors affecting the tourism activity by visitors' attitudes and perceptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Visitors: Table 1 showed the selected socio-demographic characteristics of the visitors at Lal Sohanra National Park. The visitors' socio-demographics are important indicators to show the visitors' inclination and their background towards tourism. It is found that there are several factors associated to park visitation including socio-economic background, recreational opportunities and attributes of the park that attract people (Cohen and Golinelli, 2009; McCormack and Rock, 2010). Since demographic factors affect needs of the people, their accepting and attitudes and are considered as major factors that shape their attitudes and perceptions towards sustainable tourism development (Bagri and Kala, 2016).

Gender: Table 1 showed that out of 250 visitors respondents, 217(86.8%) were males and 33(13.2%) were females. Gender is an important variable for tourism point of view. Generally, it is known that females are less likely goes for outing and recreation as compare to their male counterparts. Most of them like to go for recreation along with their families and relatives. This is true in case of countries like Pakistan where social and religious bonds are also important in this regards. McGehee *et al.* (1996) find that both male and female visitors are important differently and based on some push and pull motivational factors.

Age of the Visitors: The age of the visitors are showed in Table 1. According to results, 42(16.8%) respondents have the age of 15 or less, majority of 137(54.8%) respondents have the age of 15 to 30 years old, 56(22.4%) respondents have the age of 30 to 45 years, 15(6%) respondents were 45 to 60 years old. It is observed that peoples of different ages (children, younger and elder) came to visit and seeing nature of public places especially in national parks and other local parks and also interact with other people. Children play different games with other children. Aged people talk to their age fellows they spend good time in this way. Youngsters mostly come in the park for jogging and exercise. A study conducted at Ba Be National Park, Vietnam found that most of the participants (84%) were have the ages between 20-49 years that show that young people are more willing to visitation (Huong and Lee, 2017).

Level of Education: Table 1 portrayed the educational level of the visitors by using four categories for the level of education i.e. Under-metric level, metric level; intermediate level, graduation level, and post-graduation level. Among the respondents, 22(8.8%) were Under-Metric, 38(15.2) were Metric passed, 49(19.6%) were intermediate passed, the majority of the visitors respondents 131(52.4%) have been completed graduation and rest of the 10(4%) respondents have done their post-graduation from university. Education level is an important indicator for tourism development point of view and the maturity level of respondents. Education level also reflects people's behavior and sense of understanding. If people are more educated then they behave positively and understand well, on the other hand uneducated community not willing to answer the questions properly. But in Lal Sohanra national park mostly people are educated. Bagri and Kala (2016) also find in their study that educated residents showed positive attitudes towards tourism impacts and were supportive for tourism development. Szell and Hallett IV (2013) also reported that the sample respondents' attained higher educational levels come out to be more conscious of the meaning of conservation efforts of the national parks.

Monthly Income (PKR): Table 1 showed the total monthly income of the respondents. So, 126(50.4%) respondents have earned 15,000 PKR or less per month income, 74(29.6%) earned 15,000 to 30,000 PKR, 33(13.2%) earned 30,000 to 60,000 and 17(6.8%) respondents earned 60,000 to 100,000 PKR or more per month. Income is basically a reward of anybody services. The quantity of income depends on source or occupation of the person. There are basically three sources of income in our society. First is earning from private sector. Second is from government sector. Third is income from own business. There are also three stages of income low, medium and high income. The income level is not equal of the respondents that were concerned to their sources of income. Therefore, in different areas, people have different income levels. On the behalf of income level people plan to move toward the national parks for visit. The results suggest that low income visitors (15,000 PKR or less) were in majority to visit the Lal Sohanra Park. This indicate that authorities making the tourism affordable for low income strata of the society to promote and developed it. It is noticed that different socio-economic characteristics, cultural and environmental effects have directly influence the tourism (Bagri and Kala, 2016).

Occupation of the Visitors: Table 1 showed the respondents occupation and tells that 37(14.8%) respondents were Government employees, 78(31.2%) were private employees, 86(34.4%) were have own their personal business and 49(19.6%) respondents were linked with other occupations i.e. agriculture, transportation etc.

Occupation is a field of interest of people in which they give their services and earned livings. Occupation and income are inter-related with each other. Occupation can be of any type in government sector or in private sector and also, personal skills and individual business is term of occupation. Government employees mostly visited

national parks and other public places as compared to people concern with another occupation. A study conducted at Ba be national Park (Vietnam) also show that 58.1% visitor respondents were engaged in non-tourism professions like personal business etc. (Huong and Lee, 2017).

Table 1: Selected Socio-demographic characteristics of visitors at Lal Sohanra National Park.

Gender					
Gender	Male	Female			
Frequency	217	33			
Percentage	86.8	13.2			
Age					
Age (Years)	15 or less	15-30	30-45	45-60	
Frequency	42	137	56	15	
Percentage	16.8	54.8	22.4	6	
Educational Level					
Education	Under-Matric	Matric	Intermediate	Graduation	Post-Graduation
Frequency	22	38	49	131	10
Percentage	8.8	15.2	19.6	52.4	4
Monthly Income (PKR)					
Income (PKR)	15000 or less	15000-30000	30000-60000	60000-100000	
Frequency	126	74	33	17	
Percentage	50.4	29.6	13.2	6.8	
Occupation					
Occupation	Govt. Job	Private Job	Personal Business	Others (Agriculture, Transportation etc.)	
Frequency	37	78	86	49	
Percentage	14.8	31.2	34.4	19.6	
Marital Status					
Marital Status	Married			Single	
Frequency	60			190	
Percentage	24			76	

Source: Authors Field Survey (2023)

Marital Status of the Visitors: Results showed that most of the visitors respondents were unmarried 190(76%) and just 60(24%) were married. Marital status comes in term of personal information and figure out that either a person is married or unmarried. There are two probabilities of marital status single and married. The ratio of married person in parks is lower than unmarried people. This is because of the fact that responsibilities of married people are more and they are not able to manage time for tourism. Most of the married persons came out for tourism with their families and siblings while, unmarried people mostly came with friends, colleagues and lonely.

Visitors Destinations: There were many visitors of different areas that came out of the Bahawalpur district to visit the Lal Sohanra National Park. Table 2 showed that almost 111(44.4%) visitors were belonged to different areas of the Bahawalpur district, 23(9.2%) from Multan, 37(14.8%) from Rahim Yar Khan, 18(7.2%) from Alipur

(Muzaffargarh district), 13(5.2%) from Dunyapur (Lodhran district), 9(3.6%) from Karor Pacca (Lodhran District), 17(6.8%) from Bahawalnagar district, 19(7.6%) from Lodhran district and 3(1.2%) visitors from Khanewal district. Figure 2 also demonstrated the number and spatial movement pattern of those visitors. These results clear that, although, mostly visitors visit their nearest green spaces and parks but the attraction of few magnetize attract many from out of the nearby localities.

Visitors' attitudes and perceptions are important as well as they can be elaborated by feedback received from the visitors after touring the national park and helps in assuming and drawing the tourism development policy by the authorities. The survey results of this study will be assessed in the tourism devolvement according to the needs and ratio of the visitors. Tanguay and Rajaonson (2015) asserted that sustainable tourism development has become a major objective for tourist destinations around the world. Furthermore, tourism is considered as a wonder of sustainable living activities works like a

system with distinctive desires at various destinations (Jamrozy, 2007). All potential tourist destinations strive to attract and retain their existing tourists, but this seems to be a challenge to facing nature-orientated and sustainable tourist destinations around the world like Lal Sohanra National Park. However, an understanding of visitor’s attitude and perception could help tourist marketers and tourism department to bring improvement in the destinations. In this regard, the local community

plays an important role in optimizing the local tourism process (Frînculeasa and Chițescu, 2018). National parks and open spaces are always a place of relaxation. Park is an area of natural, semi-natural or planted space set aside for human enjoyment and recreation or for the protection of wild life or natural habitats. People want come to national parks again and again to enjoy the healthy environment, natural scenic beauty and biodiversity of the park.

Table 2. Source destinations of the visitors.

Destination	Bahawalpur	Multan	Rahim Yar Khan	Alipur	Dunyapur	Karor Pacca	Bahawalnagar	Lodhran	Khanewal	Total
Frequency	111	23	37	18	13	9	17	19	3	250
Percentage	44.4	9.2	14.8	7.2	5.2	3.6	6.8	7.6	1.2	100

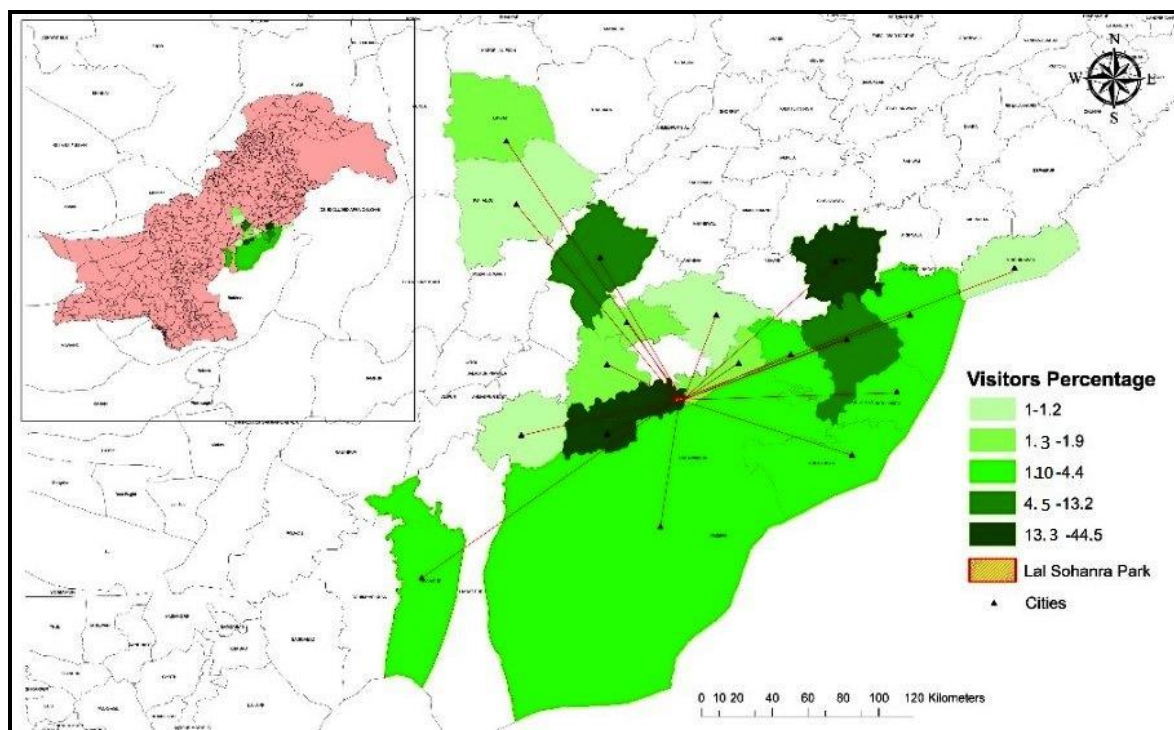


Figure 2: Visitors movement flow from their destination to Lal Sohanra National Park

Other factors of visitors’ attitudes and perceptions about Lal Sohanra National Park

Attitude of the visitors in the park: Table 3 displayed the visitors attitudes towards the Lal Sohanra National park that among the visitors, 7(2.8%) were have very bad attitude regarding the facilities, environment and aesthetic value of the park, 133(53.2%) were have normal attitude, 63(25.2%) were have very good and 47(18.8%) were also good in attitude towards the park. These results showed the attitude of the visitors in general is good and

encouraging towards the attraction and development of the national park. The attitude and interaction of the people to others are considered the factors which determine the good repute of the national parks and open spaces. The visitors that come to visit the national parks have different behavior and attitudes based on their previous experiences and knowledge. People views about other people are good, normal, bad and very good. Visitors have a direct physical impact on the tourist sites by their numbers, visit time length and behaviors i.e.

parking of cars and patterns of sitting and walking (Shackley, 1998). Ariya *et al.* (2017) noted that destination attractiveness is based upon the proximity of

attraction sites was more valuable to tourists, followed by quality of park route signs and quality of road systems respectively.

Table 3: Attitudes and perceptions of the visitors about the Lal Sohanra National Park

Attitude of the Visitors in the Park						
Attitude	Very Bad		Normal	Very Good	Good	
Frequency	7		133	63	47	
Percentage	2.8		53.2	25.2	18.8	
Visitor Accompanies						
Accompany	Family		Friends	Other		
Frequency	97		129	24		
Percentage	38.8		51.6	9.6		
Purpose of Visit this Park						
Purpose	Recreation	Seeing Nature	Weekend/ Holiday visiting	Friends/Partner Conversation/ Talk	Business	
Frequency	43	64	130	13		
Percentage	17.2	25.6	52	5.2		
Type of Transport used for Tour						
Transport	Public		Personal	Hired vehicle		
Frequency	44		121	85		
Percentage	17.6		48.4	34		
Cost of Tour (PKR)						
Cost	3,000 or less	4,000-8,000	8,000-10,000	+ 10,000		
Frequency	16	132	60	42		
Percentage	6.4	52.8	24	16.8		
Facilities you want in this Park						
Facilities	Walking track	Canteen	Lights	Security	Swings/Play land	Botanical/ Zoological garden
Frequency	36	71	12	47	59	25
Percentage	14.4	28.4	4.8	18.8	23.6	10
Satisfied with the Security of this Park						
Satisfaction	Yes		No			
Frequency	227		23			
Percentage	90.8		9.2			
Main Purpose of the Lal Sohanra Park						
Purpose	Sustainable tourism	Nature protection	Biodiversity conservation	Resort	Recreation & green parks	
Frequency	110	19	55	20	46	
Percentage	44	7.6	22	8	18.4	
Opinion and Views about this Park						
Opinion & view	Negative	Positive	Very positive	Don't know		
Frequency	22	147	58	23		
Percentage	8.8	58.8	23.2	9.2		
Rating of the Facilities and Overall Service Received						
Rating	Significantly lower	Moderately lower	Fair	Significantly higher	Moderately higher	
Frequency	9	22	115	71	33	
Percentage	3.6	8.8	46	28.4	13.2	
Level of Satisfaction						
Level	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Much	Normal	Dissatisfied	
Frequency	134	60		54	2	
Percentage	53.6	24		21.6	0.08	

Source: Authors Field Survey (2023)

Visitors accompanies: The results clear that 97(38.8%) visitors were come with family, 129(51.6%) visitors come with friends and 24(9.6%) were come other colleagues and business partners. People with same nature, same behavior attract each other and organize themselves in groups according to their specializations. In human community, people are grouped into different categories. For example, group of friends with same nature, or group of people with same cost in a community. So, they at least did like to accompany the people and relatives those have interaction with one another to visit the national park or open space. A study found that the majority of visitors (96%) stayed at the park for only one day trip with their family or friends (Chandara, 2015).

Purpose of visit this park: Table 3 showed the visitors purpose to visit of this park so, 43(17.2%) visitors have recreation, 64(25.6%) visitors seeing nature, 130(52%) visitors come on weekend/ holiday visiting and 13(5.2%) visitors come with friends/partner or business conversation/ talk. It is mentioned that National parks are complex element of a city or countryside. They can serve score of different uses, may be specialization in their function, or can simply provide visual appearance of residence. Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect ground water, improve the quality of the air breath, provide vegetative buffer to development and to provide habitat of wildlife.

Type of transport used for tour: Transportation is source of travelling that has different kinds. Very first and most reliable transportation is personal transport. Second is public transport that is also suitable and less costly. Third is hiring some conveyance on rent that is comparatively expensive. In tourism, mostly people used their personal conveyance where some use public transport and other hire conveyance on rent. Results showed that 44(17.6%) visitors have used public transport, 121(48.4%) visitors have used their personal conveyance and 85(34%) visitors have used hired/ rented conveyance. It is found that improved transportation can developed sustainable tourism so it is suggested that governments and organizations should provide and improve transportation, as well as tourism facilities for visitors (Øian *et al.*, 2018; Butler, 1980).

Cost of tour (PKR): Cost of trip or function do matter very seriously especially for low income/ middle income people/ families. That cost could be of travel expenses, food expenses, living expenses and others. Table 2 showed that the cost of the trip where 16(6.4%) visitors have spent 3,000 or less and most of them were local visitors of nearby villages, 132(52.8%) visitors have spent 4,000 to 8,000 PKR, 60(24%) visitors have spent 8,000 to 10,000 PKR and 42(16.8%) visitors have spent over 10,000 PKR. The last two classes of visitors were

come other districts (Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh etc.). In our society there is the tradition of contribution system for any group activity including tourism. In planed trips some people calculate expenses before going on but also some calculate their expenses on the spot. But in family trips it is possible that all expenses are beard by the head of family while on touring. While destination cost can also influence destination choice, tourists perceive positive value when the benefits received while traveling are greater than the costs invested in travel (Ariya *et al.*, 2017).

Facilities you want in Lal Sohanra National Park: National parks have had greater importance in urban beautification. Light, greenery, art, design, and play areas are the components that make the parks more beautiful and attractive. Community facilities enhance the lives of the residents in numerous ways. Parks provides green spaces and rooms to move people in crowded city neighborhoods. Libraries, community centers, and performance spaces open doors to knowledge and ideas, culture and enjoyment.

Visitors when asked about the essential improvements in the available facilities at the park, 36(14.4%) visitors were want improvement in walking track, 71(35%) visitors were want better canteen, 12(4.8%) visitors said that they want improvement in lights, 47(18.8%) visitors wants improvement in security, 59(23.6%) visitors said that improvement in play areas and swings and 25(10%) visitors were want to have a botanical/ zoological garden.

Parks play an imperative role as an avenue and a nature resource site for leisure and recreational needs of the people (Yahaya and Mohd, 2013). Destination image can also significantly impact on tourists' choice and key construct in destination selection. Safety and security inside the park was rated by tourists as outstandingly striking. It is recommends that for park managers to sustain park attractiveness, security and uniqueness and imperative attributes in meeting tourists' needs and wants (Ariya *et al.*, 2017).

Satisfaction with the security of the park: Controlling authorities always try to entertain the visitors with their best services. They want that their visitors give them positive feedback. Parks supports complex draw tourism dollars for the community, as they generate overnight stays as well as patronage for restaurants, retail stores; gas stations etc. parks festivals and special events also draw visitors from around the regions.

Majority of the tourists 227(90.8%) have replied that they satisfied with the facilities and services provided by park administrative authority whereas 23(9.2%) were not satisfied with the security provided for the safety of tourists. Personal security is also major concern in UNWTO sustainable tourism indicators 2004 (UNWTO, 2004) and a study conducted in Macedonia concluded it

very good (70.29%) (Dimoska and Petrevska, 2012). Safety and security are some of the aspects which are highly prioritized by the tourists when they decide to choosing a destination (Philemon, 2015).

Main purpose of the Lal Sohanra Park: The main purpose of Lal Sohanra national park is to providing open space for the locals as well as demotic tourists. Lal Sohanra Park is a protected public land that is proven to improve water quality, protect ground water, improve the quality of the air breath, provide vegetative buffer to development and to provide habitat of wildlife.

When the visitors were asked about the main purpose of Lal Sohanra National park, most of the them 110(44%) replied as a place for sustainable tourism, 19(7.6%) visitors said nature protection, 55(22%) said biodiversity conservation, 20(8%) relied as a tourist resort and 46(18.4%) replied it as a place of recreation and green parks. In sum, majority of the responses of tourists have answered that the national park should deal as sustainable tourism with minimal negative impacts. The concept of sustainable tourism development has arisen accordingly with the aim of reducing the negative impacts of tourism activities (Øian *et al.*, 2018). Local residents' perception of social and environmental impacts from tourism is more significant than their perception of economic impacts to support the tourism development (Huong and Lee, 2017).

Opinion and views about this park: The Lal Sohanra national park is graced with reasonable land area and natural beauty. In this length of area any kind of service can be provided so easily. The canal is passing near it that is plus point of this park, the boating facility is amazing there, greenery is fair there but after some little effort it will become better too. But there is need of a well decorated restaurant for the domestic and foreign level of tourism. Wildlife habitat is also well maintained by the organization of this park. But adding some more wildness and animals would be its plus point too. Visitors' opinion and views about this park were asked so just 22(8.8%) visitors shown negative opinion about the park facilities and the visitors security, majority 147(58.8%) have positive views and opinions about the park, 58(23.2%) have very positive views and rest of 23(9.2%) were not expressed their views and opinions. These results show overall the positive response of the tourists about the national park. The analysis of its attitude and perception on the tourism phenomenon in a certain region can determine the way of efficient management of the tourism patrimony by the local public authorities in order to achieve the competitiveness of the proposed tourist destination (Frînculeasa and Chişescu, 2018). Mostly the tourists have understanding the want to save and care the nature, suitable geo-touristic values and the way they are displayed (Widawski *et al.*, 2018).

Rating of the facilities and overall service received:

There are several categories to calculate the services that are provided by the management of parks or public places. To conduct a survey of or start taking feedback from visitors who came in the national park. There are several levels to calculate the rate of services and these are: significantly lower, moderately lower, fair, good, significantly higher and moderately higher (Table 3). This step is important for the development of the parks. Results showed that 9(3.6%) visitors have rated the facilities and services at the park as significantly lower, 22(8.8%) have ranked these moderately lower, 115(46%) have replied fair, 71(28.4%) have said these as significantly higher and 33(13.2%) have ranked it moderately higher. The response of the tourists is highly valuable towards the different facilities and services provided at the national park and essential for the development of sustainable tourism too (Dimoska and Petrevska, 2012). In this context, on a global scale, UNESCO (2024) has initiated a new programme named 'World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme' characterize a new way of discussion and collaboration between various stakeholder with rigorous planning and integration to conserved natural and cultural at a destination level. Simultaneously, it promotes sustainable tourism and protects the heritage.

Level of satisfaction: People come to the national parks with their friends and family for entertainment, relaxation and for fun. From the whole day's exhausted work people want serenity in their mind and body so they visit park. The more parks you visit the more people you meet. Every park has a personality; you have just to find out one that's right your family. Parks are the places where people feel relax and happy, when they meet their friends and other people. Table 3 showed the visitors level of satisfaction in general, when they were asked 134(53.6%) visitors responded that they were satisfied, 60(24%) visitors said that they feel very satisfied, 54(21.6%) visitors said that they feel normal and only 2(0.08%) visitors responded that they dissatisfied when they come to the park. It is found that most of the visitors that visited the national parks wanted resort as a study indicated that 80.7% recommend it for coming tourists, Besides, 83.5% indicated there experience of visit that make an inspiration for them to visit the park again (Haarhoff, 2018). A survey results in Macedonia also verified the positive level of satisfaction about the provided services and facilities in promotion of sustainable tourism (Dimoska and Petrevska, 2012).

T-Test Results

Overall View of Tourists: The tourists' overall view about the protected area of Lal Sohanra National Park was measured through individual T Test. Results showed a mean score of 4.27, T 3.539, df 59.161 with an alpha

value of 0.001 which is very significant at the 95% level of confidence (Table 4). It showed a significant response of tourists and local visitors as a symbol towards the promotion of sustainable tourism. A study results also showed that that tourists have greater knowing about the

status of the protected area, shown higher gratitude of the existence of the park and are intended to pay higher entry fee in the park to support conservation works when compared to local residents (Szell and Hallett IV, 2013).

Table 4: Overall View of Tourists – Individual Samples T-Test.

Overall view	Mean score	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
What is your overall view about the protected area of the Lal Sohanra National Park?	4.27	3.539	59.161	0.001*	0.803

Note: *significant at 95% level of confidence

Awareness and Concern Levels of Local Residents/ Tourists: The Individual Samples T-test showed that there are significant levels concern of local residents and tourists about the awareness of the importance of the Lal Sohanra National Park and the environmental issues at the park in general. Table 5 showed the awareness and concern levels of the tourist and the local visitors. The mean score of 4.36, T 3.457, df 62.288 with an alpha value of 0.001 at 95% level of confidence demonstrates a very significant response of the tourists. This verifies that tourists were well aware about the importance of the Lal Sohanra national Park in nature conservation point of view. The concerns regarding the environmental issues in general at park also has a mean score of 4.33, T 3.525, df

55.701 with an alpha value of 0.001 at 95% level of confidence. This also displayed a very significant response of the tourists and local visitors towards the knowing of deep concerns about the environmental issues at the national park. On average, tourists are significantly more concerned with environmental issues than local residents. It is also observed that local visitors/ residents living in the proximity of the protected area have a greater knowledge of the park’s natural features and resources, but they do not seem to be as aware of the importance of national park in nature conservation and are not as concerned with environmental issues as tourists are.

Table 5: Awareness and Concern Levels of Tourists – Individual Samples T-Test

Concerns level	Mean score	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Awareness of the importance of Lal Sohanra National Park in nature conservation	4.36	3.457	62.288	0.001*	0.684
Concern regarding environmental issues in general at the park	4.33	3.525	55.701	0.001*	0.795

Note: *significant at 95% confidence level

Conclusion and Suggestions: National parks have an immense value in protecting the natural resources and biodiversity and amusing the tourists. National Park Lal Sohanra through its length and wildness is perfect place to visit and the first national park of Pakistan. Findings of the study concluded that the tourists (local and visitors) were male and young by age. Most of them came with friends and families for recreation and relaxation. The majority of the visitors was unmarried and was well qualified of graduation level. They were engaged in personal business and private employment and mostly came from different parts of Bahawalpur district. They showed a great affection and positive attitude towards the national park and its resources and came on weekends for recreation, seeing nature and relaxing. They were used personal conveyance and the hired/ rented transport. They were well enjoyed and satisfied with the available facilities at the park. But they also expressed their concerns about the missing facilities (canteen, play areas/

swings) and security. They were agreed that the national park is vital as a place for sustainable tourism and the biodiversity conservation. It also a famous tourist resort for the whole region as many tourists came here for far away areas for recreation and visit. So it must be treat as a place of enormous significance regarding the provided facilities and promotion as a junction of sustainable tourism.

Based on the findings of this research, some policy oriented suggestions were made for better management of sustainable tourism at Lal Sohanra National Park. These are;

1. It is recommended that the National Park Lal Sohanra service undertake assessment of its current outreach program people of color and low-income earn within the catchment area. This assessment should evaluate the success of these programs in raising awareness of Lal Sohanra as sustainable recreational resources.

2. There is also need of provision of additional facilities for the aged persons, given the sizable share in Lal Sohanra National park and the overall trends towards an aging population in the surroundings of Lal Sohanra.

3. It may be appropriate for the provision of multi-lingual signage at destination that many people or tourists may be obtain that that there is park nearby or in this area through a specific sign or marks. Park signs and marks should be easy accessible and should contain valid information.

4. There should be need of giving concern on the prospective of security and protection. So, this should be very important to claim that issue and the visitors must insure that they are safe and secure here.

5. The matters of cleanness, proper sittings, pavement of pathways are lake in National Park Lal Sohanra. Visitors came to see and want to sit in relaxed mode. So, they must be conveniently provided in Lal Sohanra Park too.

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