



CULTURAL TOURISM AND RETAIL SHOPPING: A STRATEGIC CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



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Original Article

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Abstract

Tourism-based retailers typically provide goods and services that enhance tourists' visits to the area, making them more enjoyable and memorable. However, catering to tourists during the off-season does not ensure business survival for many tourism retailers. As a result, they are increasingly seeking ways to enhance their businesses. On the other hand, tourism has resulted in cultural enrichment for travellers and the tourism industry. Authentic culture has given the community a distinct selling point in the globally competitive tourism industry. However, the commodification of culture has jeopardised its authenticity. Thus, cultural tourism-based retail shopping approaches must promote and sustain tourism. This paper proposes a conceptual model for sustainable tourism development by assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of retailing, cultural tourism, and cultural tourism-based retail business strategies. Qualitative research has been conducted through an observational study involving ten tourists and 25 tourism retailers from Sanguem, Quepem, and Canacona Taluka, who were interviewed to assess their attitudes toward retailing and cultural tourism. The findings reveal a SWOC analysis of retailing and cultural tourism, retail business strategies, and ways to integrate culture, retail, and tourism.

Keywords: *Culture Tourism; Residents; Retailing; Strategic Model; Sustainable Tourism Development*

Introduction

Retail shopping is well known from the viewpoints of both tourists and destinations. It's a popular and important tourist attraction [1, 2]. It occasionally influences the destinations that tourists choose [3]. For some, it is the primary reason for travel [4, 5]. This action, which focuses on obtaining everyday essentials, is not just utilitarian [6] but also serves to reinforce social networks, learn about the local way of life, and collect mementoes of the trip. Shopping at retail stores can be a significant source of income for businesses [7]. In the face of fierce competition, it also helps create a positive image and opens up various work prospects [8, 9]. As a result, several locations have made tourist retail shopping the cornerstone of their marketing efforts and tourism policy initiatives [6].

India's retail sector has significantly contributed to its global prominence. It is difficult for a nation like India to concentrate on both ends and produce positive outcomes in the modern day while keeping in mind the sustainability of cultural tourism [10]. Retail shopping, which has historically been associated with urban tourism, is gaining popularity among tourists in rural areas as these towns improve their economies and expand their service offerings. They can be found near urban centres, at destination locations, and along travel routes. However, their unique atmosphere, small scale, and speciality commerce set them apart from urban business and shopping districts [11]. Similarly, cultural tourism holds enormous promise for enhancing the sustainability of tourist destinations [12]. Maintaining tourist sites

helps stimulate the economy and conserve cultural heritage by drawing both local and foreign tourists, and the expansion of cultural tourism increases the economic growth of host countries [13, 14, 15].

Despite the strong connection between retail shopping and cultural tourism, this area has received very little attention in tourism research in terms of substantive themes and questions. The study area's rich cultural legacy and abundant resources are not being fully utilised to strengthen local communities. Therefore, the research question is: How can the author use retailing to leverage cultural resources in the study area for sustainability and livelihoods? The beliefs associated with using cultural heritage resources to enhance community livelihoods in the research region are therefore central to this study. Therefore, a framework for developing sustainable tourism on cultural heritage resources is necessary, particularly with improved government policy. According to this study, one can support a major advancement in appropriately tailored tourism and community development plans in the study area by recognising prospective resources and their uses. The above ought to align with community development, cultural heritage tourism, and public policies centred around cultural resources. The latter will serve as a model and a point of reference for other rural towns on the continent and elsewhere that have achieved sustainability, local economic growth, and abundant cultural heritage resources [16, 17].

Locally owned companies, which employ more than 25% of the private sector, are important engines of the local and regional economies [18]. These companies lack specialised marketing and management knowledge, struggle to acquire it, must execute marketing and service plans within strict resource constraints, and have less ambitious goals than major corporations. In contrast to other rural settings, businesses operating in tourism villages have unique competitive obstacles. To keep the economy growing, stores need to offer goods, services, and experiences that appeal to both groups at the same time. To remain profitable, rural retailers must address these issues simultaneously. Therefore, this paper proposes a conceptual model for sustainable tourism development by assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of retailing, cultural tourism, and cultural tourism-based retail business strategies. The goal of the qualitative study was to understand how a distinctive, sustainable tourism model developed within the framework of diverse cultural tourism-based retailing methods, using SWOC analysis and attractions.

Literature Review

Cultural Tourism

The concepts of “culture” and “tourism” have been intricately connected and discussed within various academic and practical contexts for centuries, reflecting their mutual dependence in shaping travel motivations and experiences [19, 20, 21]. Culture has long been identified as a primary driver of travel behaviour, serving as both inspiration and the foundation upon which tourism activities are built [14]. Throughout history, cultural elements, such as heritage sites, artistic expressions, traditional customs, and community lifestyles, have consistently motivated travellers to explore destinations that offer rich and meaningful experiences [22].

Over time, cultural tourism has evolved into a dynamic and comprehensive subfield within the broader tourism industry. Its scope has expanded significantly to include not only tangible heritage resources, such as historical monuments, architectural landmarks, and archaeological sites, but also intangible cultural elements, including traditions, creativity, lifestyle, folklore, performing arts, and everyday cultural practices [23]. This transformation highlights the increasing recognition that culture encompasses both the visible and invisible aspects of human life, each contributing to the unique identity of a destination.

Over the past decade, the thematic range of cultural tourism has expanded further, incorporating various forms of cultural and historical heritage, gastronomy, religious experiences, and festivals, which collectively enhance the diversity and appeal of travel experiences [12, 19]. Modern tourists increasingly seek destinations that offer authentic cultural experiences, where they can participate in local customs, savour traditional cuisines, and immerse themselves in regional celebrations. These interactions enable travellers to appreciate the symbolic, historical, and spiritual dimensions of local cultures, thereby deepening their understanding of the host community and fostering cultural appreciation [15]. Consequently, cultural tourism has become one of the most significant and appealing aspects of global tourism, drawing millions of travellers who wish to explore the heritage and traditions that define different societies. For many travellers,

cultural exploration is either the core purpose of their journey or an integral component of their overall travel experience; it sometimes occurs as a by-product of leisure or recreational tourism [22, 23].

Within this global context, India holds immense potential as a premier cultural tourism destination, owing to its unparalleled diversity, rich historical heritage, and cultural depth. The country is home to a vast array of cultural expressions, from ancient monuments, temples, and architectural marvels to living traditions in art, dance, music, cuisine, and spirituality, that reflect its multi-layered identity. Each region of India embodies a unique cultural narrative, shaped by centuries of civilisation, belief systems, and artistic innovation. If these cultural assets are strategically preserved, promoted, and integrated into tourism policies, India can establish an unparalleled presence on the world tourism map, contributing significantly to both national development and global cultural exchange [24].

Retailing in the Tourism Sector

Retail shopping has increasingly been recognised as a core component of the tourism experience, functioning as both a complimentary activity and, in some cases, a primary motivation for travel. From the tourist's perspective, shopping serves not only as a form of leisure and entertainment but also as an opportunity to engage with the local culture through products, markets, and consumer interactions [25]. From the destination's perspective, shopping contributes significantly to the local economy by stimulating the retail sector and enhancing the overall attractiveness of the destination [3, 26]. For some tourists, shopping constitutes the primary purpose of travel, especially in destinations renowned for their specific goods, fashion, or traditional crafts [4, 6]. Within the broader service industry, research has emphasised the value of developing strong customer–firm relationships as a means of generating satisfaction, trust, and long-term loyalty [27]. In retail contexts, the interpersonal relationship between sales staff and consumers is a key determinant of customer experience and repeat patronage. For instance, Beatty et al. [28] demonstrated that salespeople who understand and respond to their customers' specific preferences and needs can deliver additional value beyond the basic product or service. Similarly, Gwinner KR, Gremler DD & Bitner MJ [29] emphasised that establishing close salesperson–customer relationships enable retailers to differentiate their services, building satisfaction and loyalty based on relational benefits rather than solely on price or product features.

Shopping has become an important part of the travel experience in the tourism industry because it has both economic and experiential value. Many destinations are increasingly recognising that shopping can significantly contribute to tourism revenue, affecting both travellers' spending habits and their satisfaction with the destination, as well as their intentions to return. Although shopping is not always the primary motive for travel, it is a critical aspect of the overall tourist experience, enhancing emotional engagement and creating memorable interactions with the host culture [30]. In some cases, shopping itself becomes a central motivation for leisure travel, especially when destinations promote distinctive retail attractions, such as luxury malls, traditional bazaars, or outlet centres [31].

Empirical research supports the notion that shopping represents a major component of tourist expenditure. Studies have shown that travellers typically allocate up to one-third of their travel budgets to retail purchases, highlighting their economic significance within the tourism industry [32]. This makes shopping not only a popular leisure pursuit but also a vital source of income for host communities and businesses. Consequently, tourist shopping has become a focal area of investigation for tourism scholars, with attention given to understanding consumer motivations, cultural influences, and destination branding strategies. Often, however, tourism retailing remains informal and underdeveloped, particularly in rural or small-scale markets. Frazier and Niehm [33] noted that these retail settings frequently lack strategic direction and rely significantly on personal relationships and social interactions instead of formal marketing frameworks. While this relational nature can help promote authenticity and trust, it also poses challenges for scalability and competitiveness. Therefore, for tourism retailers, there exists a strategic opportunity to formalise and strengthen these relational dynamics to attract and retain loyal local shoppers as well as repeat tourists, thereby enhancing both customer satisfaction and long-term business sustainability.

Methodology

Nature of Study

To investigate the role of retailers in promoting Goa's culture within the context of the tourist experience, the study employed participant observation as a research method. While the validity and reliability of qualitative research have been debated in the literature, Bailey [34] recently declared that qualitative research has finally achieved recognition in the academic domain, as commercial qualitative research demonstrated its success.

Method of Data Collection

Observation is a systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in a social setting [35]. Observations enable the researcher to describe situations using the five senses, providing a written snapshot of the problem under study.

Period of the Study and Sampling Design

The unobtrusive observations were conducted during the researcher's visit to the tourist destination. The observations spanned a few hours, accompanied by informative conversations with 10 tourists and 25 tourism retailers. The discussions were conducted in English and the state's local language, i.e., Konkani, though the level of proficiency varied among vendors and tourists. The goal of the fieldwork was to observe and record the verbal and non-verbal interactions between souvenir vendors and tourists, as well as the interactions among retailers, and to conduct informal conversations with tourists about their overall experiences with the souvenir vendors. A similar approach was adopted by Milman [36] in investigating the role of the Maya-descent souvenir vendors in sustaining the socio-cultural heritage of Chichen Itza. A study of tour guides' interpretation of the historic centre of Macao included in-depth interviews and on-site observations of the guides, as well as surveys of tourists [37]. Du [38] also used observations and interviews with tourists, shop owners, designers, and craftspeople to examine the souvenir supply near the WHS historic Centre in Macau.

Results & Discussion

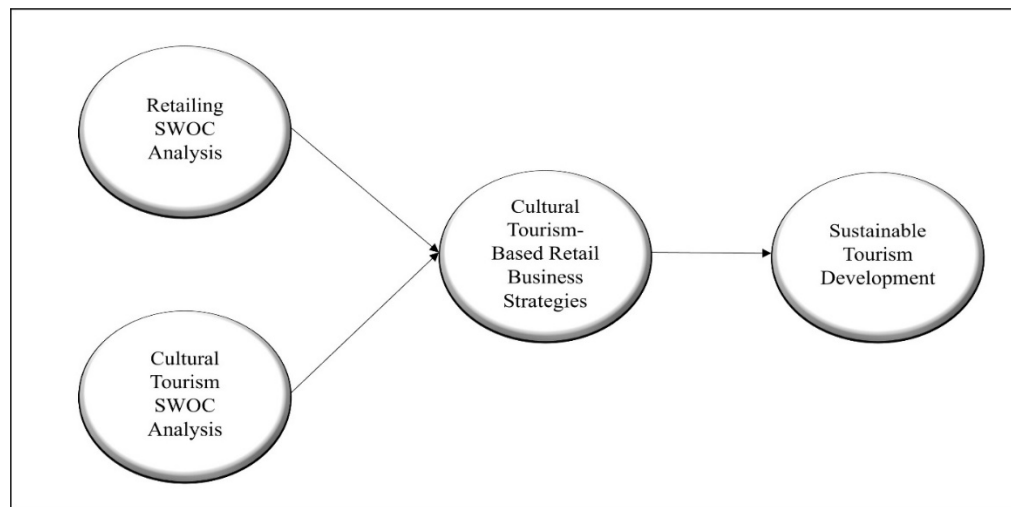
The state of Goa is abundant and rich in people, culture, and festivals. Being an immensely multicultural state, the festivals and people are numerous. Quepem, Sanguem, and Canacona talukas are part of the South Goa district in Goa, with their headquarters located in the respective towns. This taluka has a population of 191,512 out of 640,537, accounting for 29% of the district's population [39]. Of the population of 191,512, the majority, i.e., 64%, live in rural areas. Konkani is the predominant language in Goa. Having had a multicultural past, the people, culture, and festivals have been accordingly affected. The Portuguese were renowned for their outstanding church-building efforts, and their desire to spread their faith was a significant motivation. However, the early Hindu and Muslim settlers were eager to populate the land with their descendants. Therefore, what is evident in modern-day society is a direct result of their desire.

Locals in this area are amiable, interactive, and incredibly joyful. Though they belong to different faiths and come from different cultural and religious backgrounds, they all emphasise ethical living. Canacona and Quepem talukas share an excellent contribution to the state in terms of beach destinations, as many famous beaches, such as Palolem Beach, Agonda Beach, and Cabo de Rama Beach, attract tourists. Although the image evoked by these talukas is that of their lush and scenic beaches, the inhabitants, flora, and fauna, as well as the natural waterfalls, are other notable attractions for tourists. The rich culture and heritage are other major attractions of these talukas besides beaches and natural habitats.

Most of the area is rural, which showcases its rich religious culture and traditions. The newly built Buddha statue, Cabo De Rama Fort, Shree Shantadurga Temple, Fatorpa, Shri Chandreshwar Bhootnath, at Quepem, Bubble Lake, at Sanguem, and Shri Mallikarjun Temple, at Canacona, are the major tangible cultural attractions in these talukas. In addition, rural traditional dances, music, and festivals such as Dhalo, Shigmotsav, Dusshera, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Veerbhadra, Golf, Talgadi, Ramtamel, Zatrotsav, and others are also celebrated to a large extent. Due to such attractions, many tourists and locals can interact and share their knowledge and experience. Many local retailers also sell their locally grown vegetables and spices to tourists. Local retailers allow tourists to reach their destination in the local areas. Although tourism has not fully flourished in these talukas, local people still find the industry a good opportunity for their livelihood, which, in one way or another, helps them to survive. The participant observations yielded several

noteworthy findings that helped propose a conceptual model of sustainable tourism development, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Sustainable Tourism Development



Source: Collected by Author

SWOC Analysis of Retailing

Retailers' strengths lie in their location on all the walkways of tourist attraction places, which helps tourists purchase necessary items at one stop. The stalls are typically made of wood boards, often placed by the vendors. Some vendors used ropes tied between wooden poles to display items such as T-shirts, blankets, cloth items, and souvenirs. The vendors represented a diverse array of demographics, including age, gender, family structures, and origin. Some vendors were established in the 1970s and 1980s, while others were relatively young. The distribution between males and females was equal. In some instances, more than one generation was observed in the stalls, such as parent and child. The vendors coordinated with each other and maintained a cordial relationship. Even if the selling items are the same, they are presented attractively and offer visitors reasonable prices and high-quality products.

The weaknesses, for instance, include too many stalls that offer similar products and services, such as a line of shoe stalls, clothing stalls, and sweet stalls, among others. A well-experienced and knowledgeable person is a valuable asset that helps increase sales. Since the vendors are mostly from rural and local areas, they often lack industry market experience, which can result in lost sales to other competitors. A brand name matters and speaks on your behalf, ensuring the store is trustworthy and offers high-quality products. The retail store lacks a well-known brand name, which may deter visitors from trusting it. Therefore, it would take a considerable amount of time and consistency for visitors to trust products and services. In addition to lacking a well-known brand name and reputation, the store's small size limits its capacity to host only a few customers, leading many to choose nearby shops instead. You cannot address this issue because a larger store would incur higher costs.

The best opportunities for retailers in tourism markets are demographic increments, where retailers can target specific demographic groups based on age, gender, and the types of tourist activities visitors engage in. Additionally, retailers can leverage their geographic location. It was observed that many retailers with no fixed retail business often take geographic advantage by expanding their operations to different locations. A few local retail stores have begun using technology to market their products, including by accepting online payments and leveraging social media. The challenges or threats they face include rental costs, exchange rates, changing trends, low product demand, and the acceptance of new technologies. This creates numerous issues for the retailer, as it relies entirely on the tourism industry and requires a satisfactory standard of living.

SWOC Analysis of Cultural Tourism

The tradition of Goa is wealthy and possesses a unique legacy of different cultures, which helps strengthen the tourism industry. In Goa, tradition and customs have affected almost every aspect of its lifestyle. One can see the typical Portugal

customs and style of constructing houses and churches. People are free to practice the religion of their choice, and they respect the existence of other religions as well. At the same time, they move ahead with the world and are in sync with the latest trends and beliefs. The laid-back attitude and easy-going lifestyle are largely due to the inherent affable nature of the Goans and the traditions and customs that are quickly adaptable. Different empires have ruled the place, and from time to time, their customs and practices have been moulded according to their beliefs and thought patterns. This evolution has led to the flexibility of Goa's traditions and customs and so has this taluka. However, the lack of a local strategy for tourism and the quality certification of tourism products has hindered the states in preserving their culture, thus proving to be one of the most significant weaknesses, among others. Other weaknesses, such as the insufficiency of financial resources for promoting cultural tourism, hindrance by central and state authorities, and the poor condition of cultural and historical heritage, are also brought to notice. Additionally, there is a lack of professionals in the conservation and preservation of ancient buildings, churches, caves, and other religious sites.

Goa's cultural tourism can be enhanced by developing a legal framework with an emphasis on specialised tourism, improving cultural and artistic institutions, providing high-quality services, and increasing awareness about Goan culture. Tourism is a very fragile and sensitive industry and thus needs peace more than any other industry. Tourists would visit the place only if it is unique in nature and provides an authentic experience. Dependability is another significant challenge faced by the tourism industry. The host communities rely heavily on tourists. The major problem is that tourism activities are highly exposed to the seasonality of nature. In the area where the heritage sites are inscribed as World Heritage, most people in the destination heavily depend on tourism activities. Local communities rely on tourism jobs, including roles such as working at churches, serving as local and foreign tour guides, operating travel and tour agencies, managing car rentals, hotels, cafés, and restaurants, and traditional music houses, as well as providing accommodations through pensions and offering local food and beverages to guests, among others. Another challenge could be globalisation, which is now seen as a virus that destroys the indigenous cultures of the local communities of the destination. Here, foreign tourists stay for about two or three days to explore the site's different cultural and natural heritages. However, during their stay in the area, tourists introduce their new culture to the destination's youth. In general, in developing nations, adopting the cultures of developed countries is viewed as a modern lifestyle.

Cultural Tourism-Based Retail Business Strategies

This section summarises the strategies that can be used by tourism retailers selling to tourists. These strategies were identified through interviews/observations with retail business operators from the selected areas of the study. They reflect business operations in various small communities with varying levels of tourism activity.

- **Knowing and targeting tourists:** It is essential to know tourists' demographics more than their names and addresses, which include gender, age, income, origin, family size, and lifestyle. Knowing your target tourists and tailoring your approach to a specific type will ultimately lead to promoting your product more effectively. Thus, such tourists will spend more than other types of tourists.
- **Convenient Location:** A retail business location near tourist sites is always an excellent opportunity to attract many tourists. A busy street teeming with people and activity is usually more intriguing and exciting than an empty street. Proximity to visitor activities and events is crucial for retailers to reach this market effectively.
- **Store Appearance:** Examine visitors' first impressions of your business. Visitors may not be familiar with your store, so they may quickly form an impression of your operation. Consider the first things you see, hear, smell, or feel upon approaching your store. An authentic store appearance, such as using bamboo and sticks for a roof, selling traditionally grown products, and offering hospitality, could be a wonderful example to catch the tourist's eye.
- **Learn through experience:** Past experiences could be another great strategy to improve your retail business, such as choosing the names of retail shops that will make travellers stop, extending the tourist season into shoulder periods, offering an authentic experience of local areas, conducting different weekly events, offering tours of your community, and giving customers a hands-on experience. Many intangible cultural activities can also be shown and give tourists a sense of belongingness at the site, which will also bring a memorable experience to them.

- **Products and Prices:** Ask the visitors what products they need, tangible (souvenirs, handicrafts, etc.) or intangible (dance and music, performing arts, food, etc.) in nature. More focus can be given to locally made and unique products, thereby tying visitors to the community. Many retailers conduct simple yet effective market research to understand the product and pricing strategies of their competitors. They regularly ask visitors who purchase their products and want to see them in the store. Having the right products at an affordable price is frequently cited as the key to success. Furthermore, listen to your current and potential customers and study national trends to identify products and services that could complement your business.
- **Strengthen ties with the community:** One effective way to promote cultural products at tourist attractions is by building partnerships with local communities. Collectively, a group of businesses can market more effectively than a single business. Collaborate with local groups to develop events, joint advertising campaigns, brochures, and other activities to attract visitors.

Sustainable Tourism Development

Goa has remarkable natural, cultural, and historical resources for developing rural, eco-, and cultural tourism. This sector attracts a large number of domestic and international tourists. Currently, many mountain and rural areas lack development options other than this type of tourism. The sustainable development of alternative tourism may revitalise some of Goa's most remote areas. The author has seen an increasing number of tourists visiting the state, especially the study area, which has led to the establishment of many new businesses. Some establishments in this area include retail shops, agencies, family-owned hotels, guesthouses, and sports clubs that provide services (refer to Figure 1).

These talukas are not limited to the magnificent churches and their spectacular topography; they are also endowed with the indigenous culture and traditions of the local communities. Most informants agreed that each practice, culture, rule, and norm is unique and indigenous to its respective community. For instance, the music and dance styles, the hospitality practices of the communities during annual festivals and religious and cultural events, the ways of life of the communities, the destination's history, and the names of each specific place in the town are all tied to the Biblical symbol and interpretation. These are all signs of sustainable tourism development practices. Indigenous communities often have general rules for the sustainable management of their destination.

Discussion

The conceptual framework in this study shows how the SWOC analyses of retailing and cultural tourism work together to develop retail business strategies based on cultural tourism, which in turn support sustainable tourism development. This integration underscores the growing interdependence between retail and cultural tourism in shaping sustainable destination economies. In many emerging destinations, retail is not merely a supplementary economic activity but a vital cultural interface where visitors engage with local identity and craftsmanship [40, 41]. For instance, experiential models, such as the Craft Bazaars organised by Dastkari Haat Samiti, and the Dilli Ka Gaurav Fair organised by the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC), demonstrate how local crafts, storytelling, and heritage-based retailing enhance tourist experiences while sustaining the livelihoods of artisans. Such practices exemplify how strategic linkages between retail and cultural tourism can create immersive experiences that extend visitor stay, enhance destination competitiveness, and generate equitable community benefits [42, 43].

Conducting SWOC analyses of both retailing and cultural tourism provides a diagnostic foundation for identifying synergies and constraints within a destination's tourism ecosystem. The retailing SWOT typically highlights strengths such as unique craftsmanship and local authenticity, weaknesses such as limited digital visibility or inconsistent quality, opportunities in the form of expanding cultural tourism demand, and challenges like competition from mass-market products or supply chain constraints [44]. The cultural tourism SWOC, on the other hand, shows that heritage resources and community-based traditions are strong points, while infrastructure and seasonality are weak points. It also shows that niche markets like heritage circuits are good opportunities, while overtourism and cultural commodification are bad challenges. When synthesised, these analyses can reveal actionable intersections, such as aligning retail production cycles with tourism seasonality or leveraging cultural events to drive artisan market visibility that informs sustainable business strategies [45].

The resulting cultural-tourism-based retail strategies operationalise these insights through initiatives such as cultural retail corridors, heritage-themed marketplaces, immersive craft experiences, and digital-physical hybrid platforms. These strategies reframe retailing from a transactional exchange to an experiential form of cultural participation. Recent studies highlight that such models can strengthen local resilience and authenticity by embedding tourism growth within the social and cultural fabric of communities [41, 42, 43]. For example, integrating live demonstrations, co-creation workshops, and narrative branding enables tourists to engage meaningfully with cultural heritage, thus deepening their appreciation and willingness to support sustainable products. However, these strategies must be carefully designed to avoid heritage commodification, a risk in which cultural expressions are oversimplified or commercialised for tourist consumption, thereby eroding their intrinsic value [46].

Translating these strategies into sustainable tourism development requires striking a balance between economic gains, socio-cultural preservation, and environmental responsibility. A sustainable model ensures that revenue from cultural retailing supports local artisans, promotes resource-efficient production practices, and upholds cultural integrity. The National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in India stresses similar principles, advocating for community participation, inclusive value chains, and circular economies in tourism-linked retail enterprises [47]. Overall, the model demonstrates that the fusion of retail and cultural tourism, when informed by comprehensive SWOC analyses, provides a strategic pathway to achieving sustainable tourism. It bridges cultural heritage preservation, economic empowerment, and environmental stewardship. To ensure long-term success, however, these strategies must incorporate adaptive governance, digital innovation, and participatory management frameworks that respond dynamically to changing visitor behaviours and market conditions. When grounded in authenticity and inclusivity, cultural-tourism-based retail strategies can thus become a powerful instrument for sustainable destination transformation, strengthening local identity while promoting equitable and resilient tourism economies [48]. Tourists prioritise overall service quality and meaningful interactions with businesses, while locals seek deep, personalised relationships with retailers [33]. Rural and cultural tourism destinations are increasingly attracting visitors who seek immersive, authentic experiences that extend beyond conventional retail offerings, including personalised service, cultural engagement, and a strong community identity [49, 50]. Despite this potential, many retailers lack structured frameworks for serving tourist clientele effectively; even in mature markets such as Japan, tourism-focused strategies are only beginning to emerge [51]. By strategically integrating storytelling, craft demonstrations, and immersive experiences, retailers can enhance visitor satisfaction, extend dwell time, and generate positive word-of-mouth, thereby strengthening both business performance and destination competitiveness [52].

Implications

Retail shopping plays a pivotal role in tourism-orientated communities, where tourists and local residents often have distinct expectations. Identifying these differences enables retailers to design tailored service strategies that influence outcomes such as repeat patronage, store loyalty, and long-term sustainability. Tourism retailers, particularly small-scale businesses, are well-positioned to provide flexible, personalised services that leverage local culture, attractions, and natural features. At the same time, balancing economic opportunities with the preservation of community values remains critical. Retailers who adopt a community-centred approach, aligning business practices with local traditions, supporting artisan livelihoods, and maintaining strong connections with residents, can achieve long-term sustainability while creating distinctive, value-rich experiences for tourists.

Conclusion

The present study recognises the substantial economic impact of cultural tourism and emphasises the essential role of service delivery and tourist segmentation in enhancing the effectiveness of retail tourism. The author focuses on the perspectives of local retailers and tourists regarding retail service, as well as the SWOT analysis of retailing and cultural tourism. The discussion includes implications and recommendations for strategies that could improve tourist loyalty and ensure the sustainability of retail businesses. Despite the expansion of cultural tourism, a gap remains in the literature regarding the challenges and opportunities associated with operating a retail-orientated tourism business in rural markets. Numerous rural communities require economic activities that complement the evolving nature of agriculture.

Retailing based on cultural tourism can offer unique customer experiences and attractions, including interactive food and farming activities, authentic products crafted by local artisans, and events centred around local or regional natural features. Additionally, there is a lack of literature on communities that serve a dual market, where retailers must accommodate both local patrons and tourists. Furthermore, in small tourism communities, such as the one examined in this study, it is uncommon to identify distinct retailers that exclusively serve tourists or those that primarily focus on local clientele. To thrive, retailers must cater to both groups. Consequently, further research is essential to comprehend the distinctive elements of retail service quality in cultural tourism contexts and to develop strategies that facilitate effective service delivery to both local customers and tourists.

This study is limited to a single small tourism community, which may affect the generalisability of the findings to other rural or cultural tourism contexts with differing socio-economic, cultural, or geographical characteristics. Therefore, future research could adopt a comparative or multi-site approach across diverse rural and cultural tourism destinations to examine how varying community structures, tourist profiles, and retail practices influence service quality, tourist satisfaction, and long-term business sustainability. Additionally, exploring digital and experiential innovations in cultural tourism retail could provide insights into how retailers can effectively engage dual markets in evolving tourism environments.

Credit authorship contribution statement: Ravindra Gaunker: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualisation.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agencies.

Acknowledgement: The author wishes to inform you that no funding agencies support this research.

Informed Consent Statement: The data was anonymised and aggregated, posing no risk to individuals or communities. The data analysis does not impact any person's privacy, rights, or well-being. Ethical considerations regarding data handling and analysis were strictly followed to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines and standards.

Data Availability Statement: The data will be made available upon request. For requesting data, please write to the corresponding author.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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