

RISHIKESH: “A WORTHWHILE DESTINATION FOR BLEISURE”

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Abstract

This study explores the possibilities of bleisure tourism, or the blending of leisure and business travel, in Rishikesh, India. We examine the perspectives of tourism stakeholders using a mixed-method approach and the Delphi technique to determine the potential for increasing leisure travel in the area. The development of Rishikesh's leisure tourist sector depends heavily on a number of factors, including food experiences, historical sites, religious landmarks, national parks, adventure tourism, and local hospitality. The study also highlights the necessity of taking strategic actions such as enhancing stakeholder collaboration, flight connectivity, cultural revitalisation initiatives, and human resource qualification improvements.

Research on leisure travel, especially in Rishikesh, is lacking compared to the wealth of studies on business travel. Expert opinions on the viability of Rishikesh's participation in the leisure tourism sector are gathered in this innovative study. By analysing the inherent worth of various tourist assets and identifying destination features essential for producing successful bleisure tourism, the goal is to improve understanding of the methods destinations may use to harness the potential of this niche market for travel.

Key words: Bleisure, Business tourism, Leisure Tourism, Rishikesh Tourism, Uttarakhand

Objectives:

- To investigate the phenomenon of bleisure tourism in the region of Rishikesh
- To investigate the symbiotic potential: Examine the prospective synergy between business and leisure activities within the tourist sector of Rishikesh and ascertain the ways in which these activities can mutually enhance one another.
- To ascertain the primary determinants: The purpose of this study is to determine and prioritize the key factors that impact the development and expansion of Rishikesh's leisure tourist industry.
- To Address the Research Gap: This study aims to fill the existing research gap by undertaking a detailed investigation on the phenomenon of bleisure tourism in Rishikesh.

Introduction

The word bleisure was created by the consulting firm "The future laboratory". The term was developed to combine the concepts of business with leisure. The word was coined since most business travellers convert their business trips into vacations. The present existence of the term is a result of the intricate work-life balance.

The term bleisure is used to describe travel that blends business and pleasure without committing to one objective exclusively. To unwind, individuals on a bleisure travel will frequently add extra days to their business trip. Typically, this is because they have travelled to a vacation spot as part of a business trip. The term bleisure can also be used to describe a vacation that turns into a business trip. It could be argued that combining leisure and business activities on a business trip reduces the stress associated with travel. Thus, making the business travel a more enjoyable one. This may also have a favourable effect on the business conducted during the trip. (Tala, 2011)

Traveling for work, more especially for business or commercial reasons, or for other reasons, is referred to as business tourism. It also includes attending events hosted by different businesses or government agencies for the representatives of those businesses. Business tourism encompasses broadly human travel for work-related purposes, more specifically business- or commercial-related trips, or other types of trips, as well as participation in events organized by various economic enterprises or administrative bodies for the representatives of those enterprises. (Nicula & Elena, 2014)

Individual business excursions (delegations) for which participants are willing to travel outside of their home city.

It might be a tourism of reunions and meetings, which includes a variety of events (conferences, seminars, team building, product launches, annual meetings, etc.) of firms or associations to facilitate communication among employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, or other stakeholders.

There could be a variety of trade shows and exhibitions for the petrochemical, chemical, pharmaceutical, and other industries.

Over the past few years, both the quantity and quality of money spent on business trips throughout the world have increased. The global business travel market was worth approximately 700 billion U.S. dollars in 2020, according to data published by Allied Market Research. This value is expected to grow by 188 percent in 2028. ("Global Business Travel Market Size 2028 | Statista." *Statista*, www.statista.com/statistics/752327/value-business-tourism-worldwide/#statisticContainer. Accessed 27 Oct. 2022.)

Diversifying extra services by fostering business tourism is one of the most important strategies for modernising and enhancing the competitiveness of a nation's tourist offering.

If the spatial extent of international tourism activity in each country is largely determined by the distribution and quality of natural and anthropogenic factors that attract foreign tourists, then the development of business tourism, especially when viewed through the lens of economic effects, is directly proportional to the volume, diversity, and quality of additional benefits. Given that basic tourist services are provided at comparable standards to those of rival nations, corporate tourism services can play a crucial role in ensuring a destination's attractiveness. (Furman et al., 2011)

With significant growth potential, business tourism has a significant economic impact on local and regional economies. Some of the main reasons why business travel is so alluring to places are the low seasonality-controlled environmental impact, the higher revenue for lodging and meeting spaces, the high demand for food and drink (lunches, dinners, gala dinners, coffee breaks), and the rise in leisure activities. Furthermore, business travel can improve brand loyalty and the perception of a destination. (Lichy & McLeay, 2018a)

Reasons for extending a business trip to leisure-

Business travel can be a challenging experience for exhausted travelers, but it can also provide opportunities to rejuvenate oneself, explore unique experiences, and connect with local culture and history. By extending work trips into leisure time, travelers can save money on airfare, accommodations, and earn additional loyalty points with their preferred program. This can make their next trip with a companion or family more affordable, as they can focus on personal growth and understanding the perspectives of their coworkers, clients, and investors. Additionally, taking time to unwind and focus on oneself can help achieve a better work-life balance and avoid burnout. By incorporating leisure time into business travel, individuals can enjoy the benefits of a more fulfilling and rewarding experience.

(Pinho & Marques, 2021)(A STUDY ON THE GROWTH AND POPULARITY OF BLEISURE TOURISM AMONGST CORPORATE EMPLOYEES NIU International Journal of Human Rights A STUDY ON THE GROWTH AND POPULARITY OF BLEISURE TOURISM AMONGST CORPORATE EMPLOYEES, n.d.)

Understanding the local culture and history can be a significant economic advantage because it can help you comprehend the perspectives of your co-workers, clients, and investors. Taking the time to tour a museum, visit a cultural site, or sample traditional cuisine is not just for pleasure; it's also for study! It will expand your thinking and provide you with something to discuss with your hosts. (Lichy & McLeay, 2018b)(A Research on Determining the Destination Quality Perceptions and Intentions to Revisit of Bleisure Tourists_ __stanbul Case[#811765]-1349318, n.d.)(Out, n.d.)

Review of Literature

India has the second position globally in terms of bleisure travellers since the boundaries between work and leisure have become more indistinct as a result of technological improvements and changes in employee work practices. Consequently, a new cohort of travellers has arisen, who strategically plan their job-related trips to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between work and leisure. (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/an-influx-of-bleisure-travel-in-india/?source=app&frmapp=yes>)

The practice of business travel has emerged as a significant component of work for several employees, who engage in regular journeys to effectively complete their assignments and responsibilities. The increased mobility resulting from frequent travel has introduced novel transformations in individuals' work environments in contrast to place-based job settings, potentially yielding diverse impacts on individuals. Business travel is frequently portrayed as attractive and desirable in public conversation, as it has become a symbol of social standing and has been promoted in contemporary societies. Several research have examined the correlation between work organisation and working conditions, specifically focusing on the association between business travel and stress. These studies have identified various potential adverse consequences, including anxiety, frustration, exhaustion, and physical or mental health issues.

To address these challenges, business organizations are currently searching for locations that may not be conducive to their company operations, but can nevertheless be utilized for extended leisure vacation purposes. (Ye & Xu, 2020)

Millennials who travel for work often choose to prolong their trip for a few days in order to explore and immerse themselves in local experiences. In response to this trend, hotels have started charging less for an additional night, and eateries have started planning "after-work" gatherings. These events are specifically aimed at young individuals employed in corporate settings who want opportunities for leisure activities outside of regular working hours. (SOFRONOV, 2018)

Attracting and retaining talent, especially among specific generations, can be effectively achieved through this approach. The 2024 Trends Report by Hilton Worldwide reveals that 24% of international business travellers want to accompany a companion, such as a friend or family member, on their business trip this year. More than one-third of individuals belonging to Generation Z and Millennials are expected to prolong their journeys in order to enjoy free time. (<https://www.event.com/en/blog/hospitality/bleisure-travel>)

There is extensive documentation supporting the notion that integrating leisure activities into business travels can yield favourable outcomes for employees. Granting employees the opportunity to prolong their business travels for recreational purposes can enhance job contentment, alleviate stress, and enhance overall welfare. These advantages have the potential to result in heightened productivity and enhanced employee retention. bleisure travellers demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction and focus as compared to individuals who do not engage in bleisure travel. The statement highlights the interconnectedness between work, leisure, and happiness. (Lichy & McLeay, 2018c)

The traveller has the option to participate in prearranged business meetings, conferences, or seminars that are relevant to their professional responsibilities. The traveller can utilise their free time to investigate nearby points of interest, such as historical sites, museums, landmarks, or natural marvels. One possible approach for individuals to engage with the local culture is through the exploration of traditional cuisine, participation in cultural performances, or visits to local markets. The traveller may partake in various outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, snorkelling, or skiing, depending on the chosen destination. The traveller may also allocate time for relaxation and rejuvenation, engaging in activities such as sunbathing by the pool, indulging in spa treatments, or engaging in leisurely walks within the urban environment. The Transformation Economy idea posits that firms should take into account various crucial aspects while developing and providing transformative experiences. These variables include the customisation of experiences to align with individual requirements and preferences. Offer avenues for acquiring knowledge, honing abilities, and fostering individual advancement. Business enterprises have the potential to integrate educational elements, workshops, or activities that facilitate the acquisition of novel knowledge, views, or capacities by their consumers. These endeavours frequently take place within a nurturing community or social framework, wherein individuals can establish connections with like-minded others who possess comparable interests or

objectives. Businesses can facilitate opportunities for customers to interact with individuals who share similar interests and exchange ideas.(Sundbo & Sørensen, n.d.)

In his study, (Andersson, 2007) examines the dynamic characteristics of tourism within the framework of the Experience Economy. The article explores the transformation of tourism experiences, wherein individuals are no longer passive recipients of attractions but rather engage in immersive and personalised encounters. Andersson examines the impact of technology, including social media and mobile applications, on the formation of tourist experiences and the promotion of active participation. In addition, the paper underscores the need of crafting impactful and enduring encounters for tourists, accentuating the prospective economic and social advantages for locations and enterprises. In general, the essay offers valuable perspectives on the evolving dynamics of tourism within an economy that is progressively centred around experiential offerings.

Empirical research indicates that bleisure travellers place the most emphasis on aesthetic and entertainment experiences. Recent research has indicated that the presence of entertainment and engaging activities, such as the exploration of local cultural and historical sites, as well as the consumption of local food and distinctive cuisine, play a significant role in influencing the decisions of business travellers to prolong their stays for additional durations.(Batala & Slevitch, 2024)

Bleisure travellers prioritise the most of their journey to engage in extensive exploration of the destination. Wellness tourism enterprises have the opportunity to leverage this prevailing pattern by providing a diverse range of wellness-oriented activities. Consequently, there is a heightened need for exercise programmes, meditations, yoga sessions, and spa therapies.(*Expedia_travel-Trends-Report_rgb_us-1*, n.d.)

Based on a variety of theoretical viewpoints, including the social capital theory, expectancy theory, boundary-less career theory, and experiential learning theory, the classification of bleisure tourist motivations into five different categories provides a conceptual framework for understanding the reasons behind people's choices to combine business and leisure travel.

Experiential learners are driven by a strong inclination to acquire novel experiences and knowledge throughout their travels. Based on the experience learning theory, they perceive travel as a chance for individual advancement, cultural integration, and proficiency enhancement. Individuals actively pursue various activities, such as participating in local workshops, engaging in cultural tours, or attending language classes, in order to augment their comprehension and admiration of the place.

Escapers are driven by the desire to break free from the monotony or pressures of their daily routine or work. The aforementioned incentive is consistent with the social capital hypothesis, which places significant emphasis on the significance of social connections and emotional welfare. Escapers desire tranquilly, revitalization, and respite from the obligations of employment. Individuals may place a higher emphasis on engaging in leisure activities, such as spa treatments, beach lazing, or beautiful hikes, as a means of relaxing and rejuvenating.

Working vacationers drawing inspiration from the boundary-less career idea, perceive bleisure travel as a means to integrate their professional obligations with recreational activities. Their objective is to optimise efficiency while also relishing the advantages of exploring unfamiliar locations. During the daytime, these travellers have the option to arrange business meetings or participate in conferences, followed by leisure activities such as sightseeing, dining out, or attending cultural events during their leisure time.

Altruistic knowledge-sharers are motivated by a strong inclination to make a positive impact on the local community or to impart their experience to others. Utilising principles from social capital theory, individuals who are selfless and willing to share information actively pursue chances to participate in volunteer work, mentorship, or the exchange of knowledge while travelling. Individuals have the opportunity to engage in community service initiatives, establish partnerships with local entities, or facilitate workshops or seminars as a means of disseminating their expertise and insights to a wider audience.

Research-Active Trailblazers are engaged in bleisure tourism are driven by a fervent enthusiasm for the pursuit of

exploration, revelation, and advancement. Research-active trailblazers, who are based on the experiential learning theory, view bleisure travel as an opportunity to engage in research, acquire valuable insights, and challenge the limits in their area of interest. To develop their professional aims and contribute to their field, individuals may delve into specialised subjects, visit esteemed research institutions or industry conferences, and participate in fieldwork or data collection endeavours. (Lichy & McLeay, 2018c)

Currently, bleisure is a buzzword in the travel and tourism business, as bleisure has led to the emergence of niche sectors with limitless prospects. Bleisure is a combination of business and leisure that involves a professional trip that is extended for personal reasons, such as spending time with family or simply to unwind after a hard work week. Individuals' motivations can be viewed as a force that drives them to satisfy their psychological needs or strive toward accomplishing a goal. (Walia et al., 2021)

According to Stastica, Global business travel market is going to jump from 695.9 billion US dollar to 2001.1 billion US dollar market. (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/752327/value-business-tourism-worldwide/#statisticContainer>)

(Source: (INDIA TOURISM STATISTICS 2020, n.d.; INDIA TOURISM STATISTICS 2022 Government of India Ministry of Tourism Market Research Division, n.d.; India Tourism Statistics at a Glance-2021, n.d.))

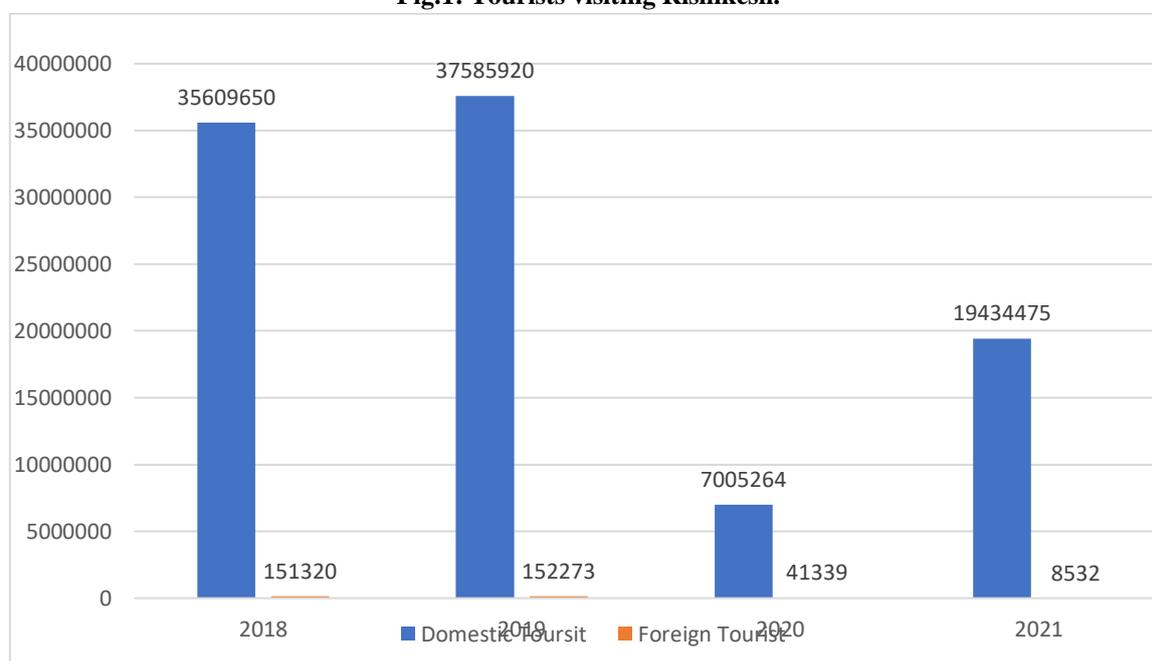
The resumption of scheduled international flights at the end of March and the relaxation of Covid-19 test requirements in February 2022 have resulted to a month-to-month increase in foreign tourist arrivals. However, the figures are still well below 2019 levels.

According to a survey by the travel and hospitality technology platform OYO, corporate travel in India has increased after an almost two-year pause caused by the Covid outbreak. According to OYO's midyear report on business travel, persistent momentum is now noticeable in business travel, and business activity across all industries have increased since January 2022.

(“India Business Travel: Business Travel Picks up Momentum After Covid Pandemic: Report - the Economic Times.” *The Economic Times*, economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/sme-sector/business-travel-picks-up-momentum-after-covid-pandemic-report/articleshow/92738143.cms. Accessed 29 Oct. 2022.)

Tourists visiting Rishikesh.

Fig.1: Tourists visiting Rishikesh.



(Source: (INDIA TOURISM STATISTICS 2020, n.d.; India Tourism Statistics at a Glance-2021, n.d.))

With the aforementioned information provided by India's tourism statistics, we can conclude that the number of tourists who favour Rishikesh is growing year. Although no such information is accessible, it is unknown why they visited Rishikesh. We might presume that most tourists came for religious or recreational reasons. (Durgapal & Singhal, 2018)

Requirements for bleisure

The style has grown in popularity over time, particularly among younger generations. According to the Global Business Traveler Association (GBTA), 37% of North American-based business travellers prolonged a business trip for leisure in 2017, an increase from 36% in 2016.

According to a second survey by Hilton Hotel & Resorts, seven out of ten business travellers between the ages of 25 and 30 desire to extend work trips for mini vacations. Another GBTA statistic reveals that during the leisure portion of their most recent bleisure trip, 44% of business travellers travelled with someone else. (<https://www.gbta.org/>)

Provide exceptional service to business travellers-

Fast internet & Meeting rooms

Business travellers seek for specialised business travel services. As they need to upload and download data, as well as communicate through video conversations, they seek out a fast and free internet connection.

To boost internet access, the Rishikesh government established the first Internet exchange in Dehradun, Rishikesh, on November 1, 2021. The eleventh internet exchange of the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) This measure will enhance the Internet and broadband service quality in the hilly state. (*ITPolicy_2016_2025*, n.d.) (<https://smartcity.eletsonline.com/Rishikesh-gets-first-internet-exchange-in-dehradun/>)

Business traveller options include coworking space and conference rooms if a guest has to host a meeting or simply wishes to work in a proper environment. Most accommodations also provide a standard desk in the room.

Generally, bleisure guests are more drawn to lodgings located near significant business centres. Travel convenience is also desirable to this population, as they wish to integrate leisure activities into their busy schedules.

Create deals tailored to business travellers-

business-audience-specific deals

Packages are ideal for business travellers who spend at least two nights in the same location. You can provide extras like breakfast and dinner menus. As they intend to save time for leisure activities, food discounts may come in handy.

Additionally, it is essential to realise that business travellers may not be interested in recreational activities. This means that hoteliers can offer adjacent recreational activities to encourage these guests to extend their stays. For instance, a hotel may offer business travellers a 10 percent discount on extra stays.

Leverage local entertainment events-

Leisure Pursuits

Bleisure travellers have limited time for leisure pursuits. Your hotel can serve as a consultant to help guests select the finest activities at their destination.

You can provide tours and local attractions near your hotel. Since you are familiar with the location, you may provide guests with off-the-beaten-path recommendations.

In addition, you can utilise local entertainment prior to the guest's arrival. You may promote surrounding attractions on your website and social media, for instance. Do not forget to indicate your hotel's proximity to nearby attractions, as bleisure travellers do not want to waste time commuting.

Improve personalized experience

Tailored itineraries and recommend activities

Successful hotel brands cater to the needs of its guests. By analysing the data, you collect, such as the age of the group and the reason for the trip, you will be able to customise your guests' experience.

Additionally, you can call them beforehand and inquire about their preferences about room service, transportation, meals, etc.

For example, many bleisure tourists travel with their significant others. You can construct itineraries and recommend activities for couples. You may also include a list of neighbouring restaurant ideas that may appeal to your bleisure guests. Given that most bleisure tourists do not spend a significant amount of time researching a destination, the personalised experience you provide will be quite valuable.

Homestay a new personalised place

The greatest way to enjoy the renowned Himalayan hospitality of Rishikesh is through a homestay. A Homestay involves staying in someone's house as a paying guest for a short length of time, with the family and local community providing budget-friendly accommodations and services. In accordance with the old Vedic tradition of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' or 'Guest is God,' the people of Rishikesh are simple and hospitable; they greet their guests with open arms and provide individualised care and services.

In this paradisiacal state of India, there are numerous registered Homestays where one may explore a rural area with wonderful natural settings, enjoy local cuisine and culture, and discover secret spots, all with the assistance of locals.

<https://Rishikeshtourism.gov.in/homestay/details.php?pgID=home-stay-list>

(ECO056-JP-ANA-Bleisure-Business-and-Leisure-5-Ver20190212, n.d.)

Offer recreational services-

Sauna, Spa & Swimming pool

Bleisure guests seek relaxation at the hotel as well. Properties with relaxation amenities (such as saunas, spas, and swimming pools) may provide leisure services to enhance their guests' stay. For example, a spa-seeking business traveller is also likely to book massage services. There are also yoga and Pilates courses and a fitness facility for those who like to exercise.

Additionally, hotels may form partnerships with travel firms and entertainment venues. For instance, your hotel may form a partnership with a nearby movie theatre to offer ticket discounts to its guests.

Providing leisure services enhances the property's auxiliary earnings. It also creates chances in the secondary market, as bleisure tourists may not book all trip components in advance. (Saxena Bindu Roy Rtd Dean, n.d.; Ye & Xu, 2020)

In the beautiful state of Rishikesh, the mountains, rivers, untouched pathways, expansive alpine meadows, and snow-covered slopes 'Call Out' to adventure enthusiasts. The state's rough terrain and rushing glacial rivers make it the premier adventure destination in India. Further boosting the appeal of the challenges in Rishikesh is the unpredictability of the weather, which clashes with the adventurers to make the experience even more unforgettable. Unquestionably, the state is a prime destination for adventure tourism in India, as it offers a variety of thrilling and unique activities.

The state is home to some of India's most interesting and gorgeous treks. The cryptic, primarily flower-strewn hiking routes offer unparalleled bizarre views and add to the allure of picking an adventurous activity here. As there are treks of various levels of difficulty (Easy, Moderate, Difficult, and Tough), the state provides great freedom in selecting a journey.

<https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/Rishikesh/adventure-tourism.html>

(Sundbo & Sørensen, n.d.)

Easy access appropriate sales channels-

User friendly applications and OTAs

You must sell your hotel through channels frequented by business tourists. You may already utilise your website and OTAs, the go-to sources for most passengers, including bleisure guests.

Consider forming a partnership with business travel brokers to distinguish your hotel stay from the competition. Most businesses use these specialists anytime they need to organize events and business travels.

Increasing your hotel's visibility among corporate personnel can yield a substantial return on investment, especially if you capitalize on the hotel's leisure services.

(Andersson, 2007; Puerta López et al., 2023)

Methodology

An online mixed-method approach using the Delphi technique was used to accomplish the study's goal. Mixed-methods research is becoming more and more well-known as the third main paradigm, methodology, or research technique. Delphi was originally intended to be a method for predicting the likelihood of future occurrences. As per (Harding & Whitehead, n.d.) delphi may be too considered as mixed-method approach.

Expert opinions are gathered using a collaborative approach called the Delphi technique.

1. Determining the panel of experts
2. Assess each person's interest in serving on the panel.
3. gathering personal opinions on the issue at hand and incorporating them into broad assertions.
4. examining the data from the panel.
5. assembling information on a fresh survey and sending it to each panellist for approval.
6. evaluating the fresh data and updating the panel members on the responses' distribution.
7. Invite each panellist to review the information and evaluate their position in light of the group's remarks. Although the length of their comments is limited to make responses brief, individuals are asked to justify their diverse positions when their answers substantially depart from the group average.
8. analyzing the feedback and informing the panel of the minority supporting comments. Panel members are asked to reevaluate their position and, if it deviates from a specified range, to offer a succinct explanation.

This is done via a questionnaire. In this procedure, the panel of experts was presented with a questionnaire, and their responses were recorded. The group established a consensus; hence no additional rounds of the Delphi technique were conducted. (The Design MUP.GAY TUROFF of a Policy Delphi, n.d.; Woudenberg, n.d.; Yousuf, 2007a, 2007b)

Eligibility for the panel

The following qualifications were necessary for an expert to serve on the panel:

- The person must be a hospitality professional, businessperson, entrepreneur, scholar, or academician.
- Preferred age range: 25 to 65 years old.

Data analysis

1. Profession

A total of 40 experts were emailed invitations to participate in the Delphi poll; of them, 35 accepted the request. Too busy/unable (n = 2), not interested (n = 2), or no explanation stated (n = 1) were given by the panelists who declined participation (n = 5; 12.5%). Thus, 87.5% experts comprised the final panel.

The panel included Academicians (8), Entrepreneurs (15), Businessmen (7), Hoteliers (5).

Most respondents were aged 36 to 45.

Rishikesh is filled with the hypnotic beauty of the North. When asked, every expert confirmed that they had been to Rishikesh.

There are three airports in Uttarakhand: Dehradun, Pantnagar, and Pithoragarh.

By air, Rishikesh (nearest airport Dehradun 14km) is well connected to Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Lukhnow; however, flight frequency is poor. The airport's landing strip is too small. Dehradun is the sole airport with connectivity to the other two airports.

The Dehradun and Rishikesh train station is poorly connected to the rest of India. Despite being a tourist attraction, no tourist trains exist. More trains are serving the nearby Saharanpur railway station.

Frequent bus service to New Delhi is provided by a variety of bus types. The fact that bus seats are readily available makes them more beneficial for tourists. (DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS OF UTTARAKHAND, n.d.-a; *INDIA TOURISM STATISTICS 2020*, n.d.)

Rishikesh as Bleisure destination

Tourism generates the most revenue for Rishikesh. Another important factor is agriculture. Basmati rice, wheat, soybeans, groundnuts, coarse cereals, pulses, apples, oranges, pears, peaches, litchis, and oil seeds are among the most widely grown crops in the state. The biotechnology, pharmaceutical, automotive, IT, and ITES sectors are all expected to rise. Higher education, banking, information technology, and tourism make up the majority of Rishikesh's service industry. In addition, Rishikesh has seen great success in the real estate sector.

Rishikesh is well-known for its paper mills. Due to the vicinity of hill regions, businesses like as mineral water plants, wooden furniture factories, tea and other cash crop plantations, dairy farms, and milk processing enterprises can be easily established.

The average yearly revenue of small and medium-sized businesses in Rishikesh is approximately Rs 4 lakh. And there are over 42,000 of them, the majority of them are dispersed clusters of hotels, resorts, tourist services, food production facilities, and vehicle workshops.

In cities such as Dehradun, Haridwar, Rudrapur, Kashipur, and Pantnager, the state is frequented by business travellers. In these and many other regions of Rishikesh, the scope of Bleisure activities is expansive. (DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS OF RISHIKESH, n.d.; S.kant, n.d.)

Strategic matrix of tourism products in Rishikesh (As per the experts)

According to the responses 40% of visitors come for religious reasons, 37% for business, 11% to get away from the city, and 12% to take advantage of the hills, weather, and local culture. This suggests that those more interested in business and spiritual experiences than in leisure and the beauty of the outdoors are the main draws of Rishikesh.

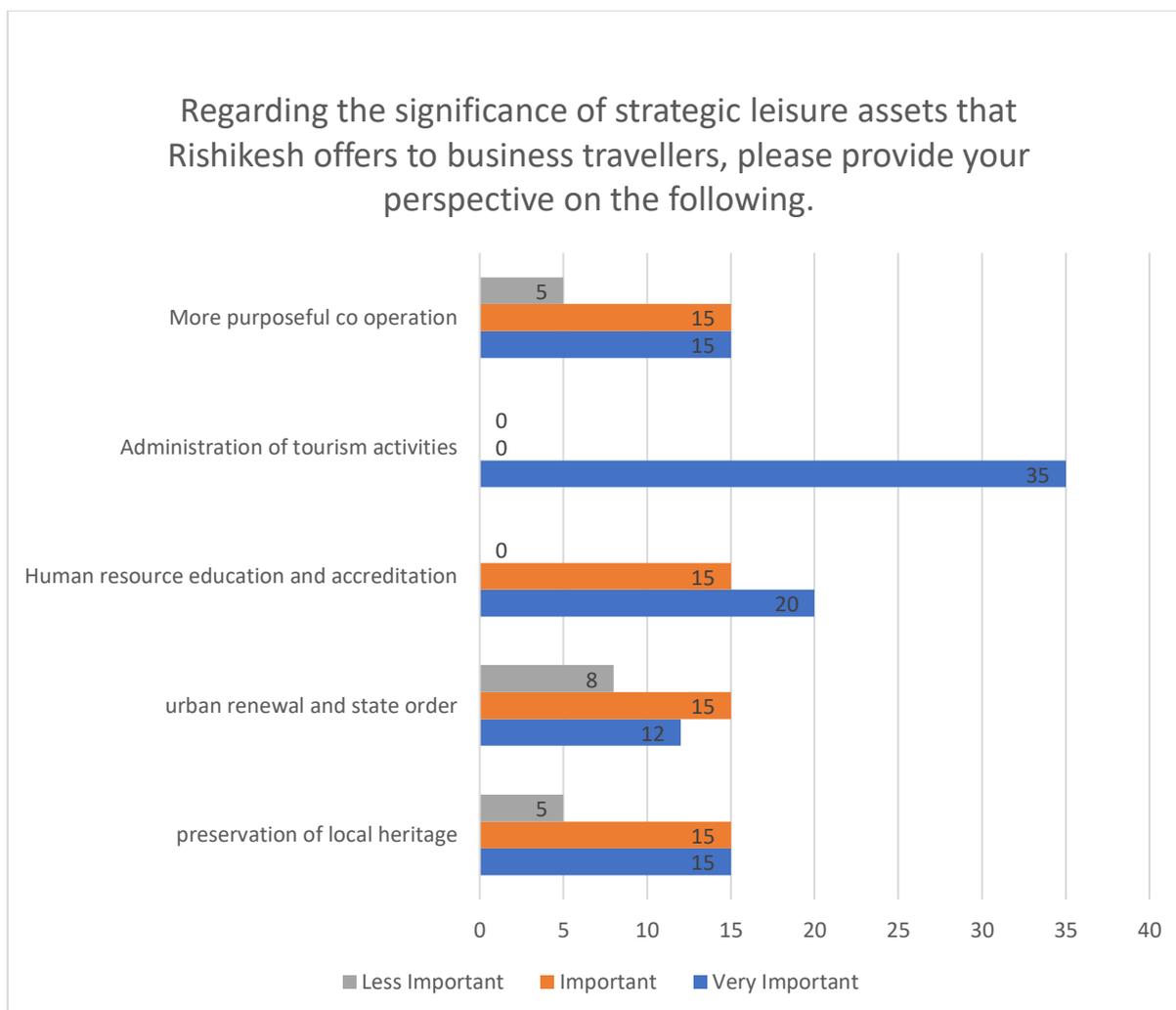
Rishikesh is known as a Himalayan hill resort area with abundant tourism resources, such as hillside summer getaways in places with breath-taking lakeside beauty and views of the year-round snow of the Himalayas, Hindu pilgrimage sites, etc. In particular, the construction of hotels and holiday residences by the English during the colonial period and the development of routes over mountainous terrain contributed to the expansion of hillside summer resorts. In recent years, an ever-increasing number of Indian visitors have travelled to Rishikesh for bleisure activities. There is a disproportionately large number of visitors from the greater Delhi metropolitan area, despite the fact that the majority of tourists come from the North and Southwest regions of India. It is believed that middle-class individuals engage in these activities during their spare time. With the expansion of hill resorts. Rishikesh valley and adjacent places, Lansdowne, and the Haldwani-Ramnagar region have become popular domestic tourism destinations. Rishikesh, which is surrounded by tourism resources, has seen a rise in the building of guest accommodations by state residents and hotel capital. Consequently, a certain ripple effect can be observed on the local economy for both local residents and merchants in the neighbourhood in terms of employment at lodging accommodations, the demand for essential services, and the want for supplies.

According to the preceding data, we may deduce that the majority of the respondents to Rishikesh are there for religious or business reasons. Thus, we can conclude that Rishikesh has the potential to become a destination for bleisure travellers from the nearby national capital region. (Bleisure Tourism' Impacts on Employees' Motivation and Quality of Life, n.d.; Lichy & McLeay, 2018b; Yu et al., 2021)

Round 1

Crucial resources provided to corporate travellers.

Figure 2: Strategic leisure assets



According to the experts' responses, business travelers to Uttarakhand have clearly prioritised a number of critical recreational assets. All experts consider the administration of tourism activities as very vital, making it the most important component. This agreement emphasizes how important efficient and effective management is to guarantee a positive travel experience.

Accreditation and human resource education are also highly prioritised; all respondents rated them as very important or important. This emphasizes how crucial qualified staff with accreditation are to upholding industry standards in the travel and tourism industry.

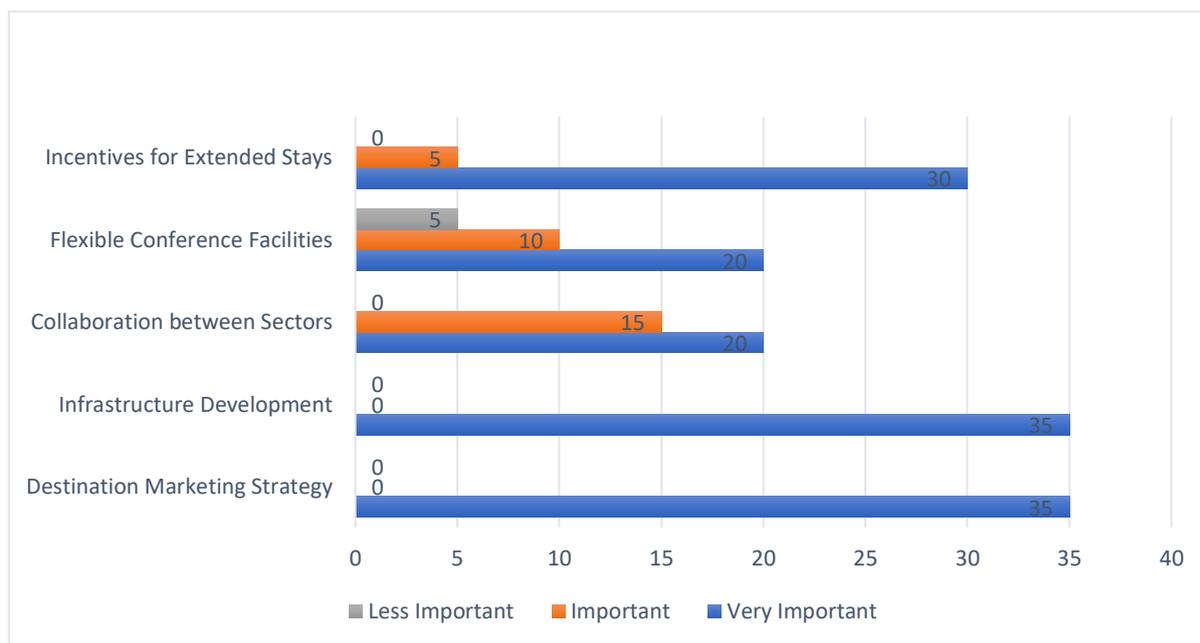
The majority of experts agree that protecting the area's cultural legacy is a valuable asset. This suggests a significant recognition of Uttarakhand's rich cultural and historical heritage as a major draw for tourists.

Responses to urban renewal and governmental order are more variable, but they are still deemed significant. This implies that although improvements in governance and infrastructure are required, experts may have differing views on how important they should be.

Round 2

Strategic assets on offer to business travellers.

Figure 3: Strategic business assets



The professional answers highlight a number of crucial actions that Uttarakhand should take to improve the state's business-leisure tourism partnership. The most crucial of them are, without a doubt, the establishment of the required infrastructure and the execution of a strong destination marketing plan. The establishment of a welcoming and useful atmosphere for both business and leisure travellers depends on these actions.

Furthermore, the organisation of business-leisure hybrid events and the incorporation of technology are emphasised as globally significant. For travellers who wish to combine business and pleasure, these actions are essential to delivering a smooth and enriching encounter.

Strong support was also shown for incentives for longer stays, which were deemed very important by the majority of experts. This strategy can encourage guests to extend their visits, which is advantageous for the tourism and commercial sectors.

The importance of community involvement, cross-sector collaboration, and sustainable practices underscores the necessity of an inclusive and comprehensive approach to tourism development. Even though they aren't as important, flexible conference rooms are still important, which shows how important it is to have adaptable venues that can meet a range of company demands.

Overall, the analysis shows that improving the synergy between business and leisure tourism in Uttarakhand requires a comprehensive plan that focusses on infrastructure, technology, marketing, hybrid events, and collaboration.

Data Analysis

The analysis process and data collection process occur concurrently using the Delphi technique, as the development of forms for subsequent rounds is based on the conclusions drawn from the initial rounds. In order to augment the workload, the initial round consists of open-ended inquiries.

In order to ensure thoroughness and offer a logical interpretation of the data, each author of the study examined the responses of the participants.

Data from the second and third phases were included in the quantitative data, which was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis.

Upon completion of the data collection and analysis process, it is anticipated that a consensus can be reached regarding Rishikesh's potential to attract more tourists and the strategies that must be implemented to resolve existing weaknesses more effectively.

Round 3

Products that could entice tourists to visit Rishikesh for business.

Table 1 Strategic structure for tourism offerings in Rishikesh.

	Consolidated	Complimentary	Emerging	Need development
Urban break	70%	–	20%	10%
Business /MICE	40%	–	10%	50%
Food	40%	–	60%	–
Exploration of cultural and natural environments	75%	–	15%	10%
Religious tourism	80%	20%	–	10%
Weather	65%	35%	–	
Adventure tourism	60%	–	30%	10%
Wellness Tourism	90%	–	–	10%

Source: Experts observation

Table 1 The planned arrangement of Rishikesh's tourism attractions presents a variegated environment, with various locations at varying phases of development. The fact that urban break tourism is mostly concentrated suggests that it is already well-established and needs little further expansion. Like this, there is some room for additional offerings despite the extremely consolidated nature of religious tourism, which reflects its deep roots in Rishikesh's identity.

By contrast, the Business/MICE sector exhibits a considerable need for growth, as indicated by the identification of half of the experts as an area requiring expansion. This points to a chance to improve and increase services and amenities to draw conferences and business travellers.

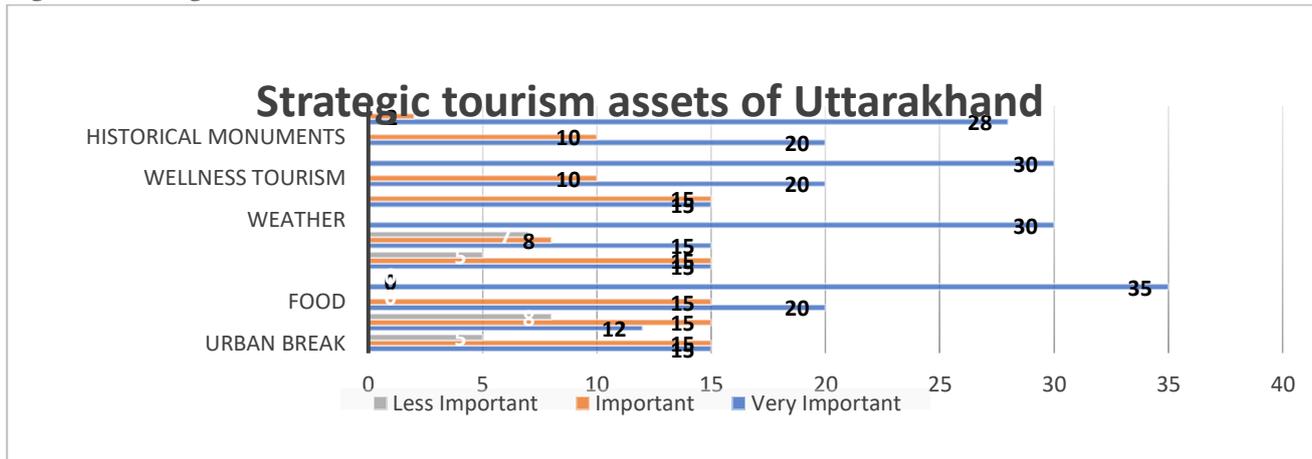
Food tourism is a unique industry that is both established and developing, indicating a dynamic growth area that does not require quick development. This suggests a solid base and continuous growth, which makes it a desirable target for tourism initiatives.

Adventure tourism and the exploration of cultural and natural environments are both largely established, but there are also developing aspects. This implies that although these fields are well-established, they are still developing and have the potential to provide fresh, cutting-edge experiences.

The categorization of landscape tourism is associated with the potential prospects that extend beyond the urban area of Rishikesh. In addition to the usual eateries and metropolitan scenery, the entire Northern region offers a diverse array of culinary options and prospects for tourism. The regional setting presents a significant opportunity to augment the appeal of Rishikesh.

Stakeholders have regarded business tourism as a potential emergent tourist product.

Figure 4: Strategic tourism assets of Uttarakhand



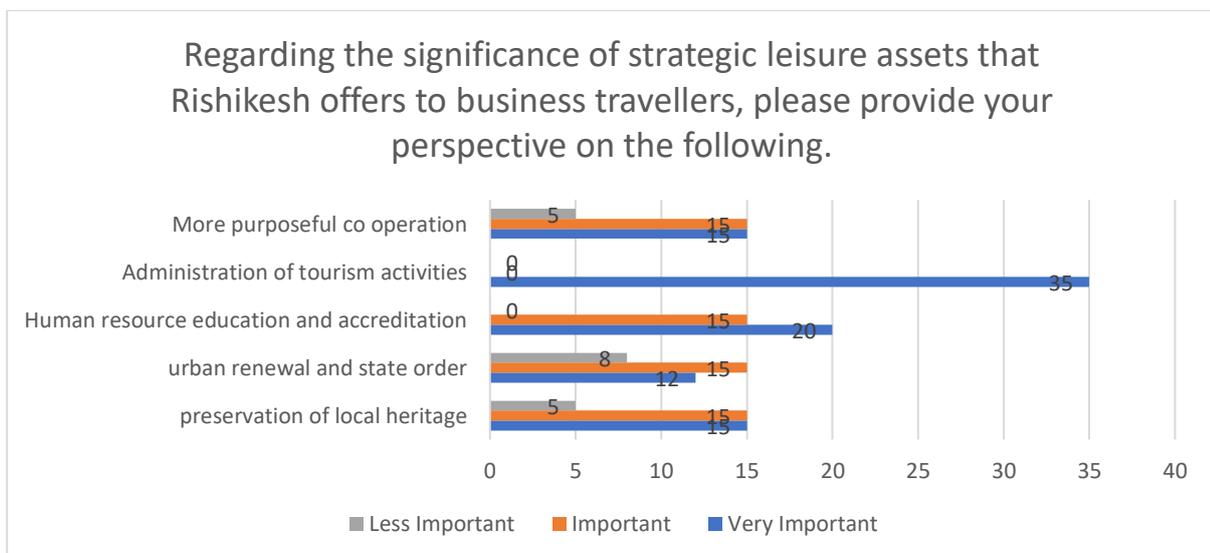
When asked how to enhance the relationship between business and leisure tourism in Rishikesh, the experts provided the proper establishments of following tourism products.

Round 4

Strategies to enhance the linkage between corporate and recreational tourism.

Enumerates the primary measures suggested to augment the potential of bleisure tourism. All parties involved emphasised the necessity of enhancing the training and qualifications of human resources. Enhancing the provision of services in a proficient manner, together with the inherent hospitality of the local population, can serve as a distinguishing characteristic of Rishikesh and, as a result, a significant component in gaining a competitive edge. The experts unanimously recognised three crucial areas of concern: the enhancement of local history, urban renewal, and public safety, as well as the increase in aircraft connections.

Figure 5: Strategies to enhance the linkage between corporate and recreational tourism



The figure 5 depicts how important different approaches are for improving the connection between business and leisure travel in Rishikesh, as seen by business visitors. There is general agreement that the most important strategy is the management of tourism-related activities. This suggests that there is broad agreement regarding the necessity of efficient management and coordination in order to enable smooth travel experiences.

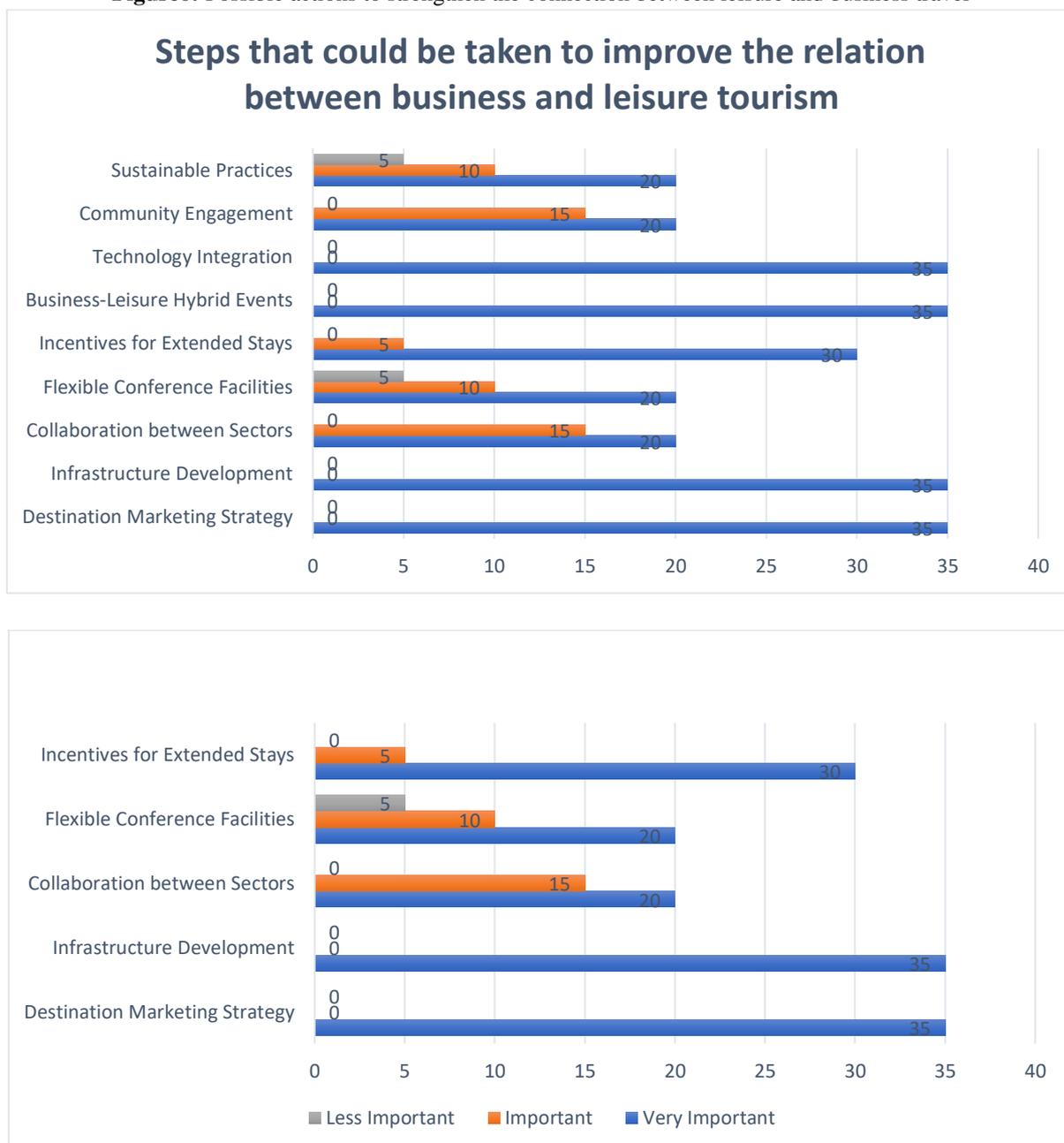
Education and certification in human resources are also highly prized, highlighting the significance of having a workforce

with the necessary skills in the tourism industry. This emphasis on certification and education implies that drawing in business travellers requires improving service quality.

Another crucial tactic that is both essential and highly important is the preservation of the local heritage. This demonstrates the value of preserving cultural and historical resources, which can enhance the traveller experience and draw in business travellers looking for genuineness.

More deliberate collaboration, urban regeneration, and state order demonstrate a wider range of viewpoints. Although these tactics are widely acknowledged as crucial, opinions on how vital they are varied. This implies that although a lot of people perceive the advantages of better infrastructure and increased cooperation, there can be different opinions about how these things should be implemented right now.

Figure6: Possible actions to strengthen the connection between leisure and business travel



In order to strengthen the link between leisure and business travel, venues could incorporate marketing techniques that emphasise both, provide flexible travel packages that combine leisure and business travel, and upgrade amenities and

services to meet the demands of both groups. Experiences can be made more coherent by working together with various stakeholders, including local attractions and event organisers. Better infrastructure for seamless transitions and tailored itineraries that combine business with leisure activities in the area are also crucial. The visitor experience can be enhanced by advertising local attractions in combination with company activities, and by using traveller data and feedback to improve these strategies.

Table2: A tourism promotion aimed at enticing Millennial business travellers.

	Consolidated	Complimentary	Emerging	Need development
Night activities for millennials	70	-	10	90
Boutique hotels that offer tailored and customer-focused services and cultivate strong connections with the local community.	30	-	20	50
Propose comprehensive packages that highlight the various off-site recreational amenities available in the local vicinity.	20	-	10	70

Source: Experts observation

Table 2: Outlines the primary service offerings recommended by tourism experts to enhance the appeal of Rishikesh , specifically targeting the Millennial demographic. The experts surveyed placed significant importance on the provision of lodging. They demonstrate an understanding of the desires and requirements of the younger generations. Given the experiential nature of Millennials and their need to interact with others, a vibrant and engaging nightlife caters to their social needs. Regarding this matter, parties were nearly in agreement that Rishikesh possesses a unified nightlife.

Millennials prioritise tailored experiences, personalised services, and customer-centric approaches when it comes to accommodation. They have a preference for autonomous hotels rather than large hotel chains, situated in trendy and lively neighbourhoods that embody the local culture. Smaller hotels have the potential to enhance the self-esteem of Millennials through the provision of increased attention. In this context, the majority of the experts surveyed held the belief that this service is still in its nascent stage. Nevertheless, considering the inherent warmth and kindness of the Portuguese population as a whole, and specifically the residents of Rishikesh, it is highly likely that this service will soon progress to the point of consolidation classification. Experts acknowledge that convenience plays a crucial role in addressing the time constraints faced by business travellers. In light of this objective, it is advisable for hotels to actively promote various activities and attractions in the vicinity. Based on the prevailing impression of the majority of respondents, it is evident that this offer has not yet been consolidated.

Conclusion

This study examines the perspectives of tourism specialists regarding the potential of Rishikesh as a destination for bleisure tourism and the methods that should be implemented to enhance its growth. The results of this study provide further insights to the little existing knowledge on this subject and contribute to a deeper comprehension of how countries

may effectively utilise this industry, identify valuable tourist assets, and examine specific qualities of destinations. The primary objective is to offer tourism experiences that are highly regarded, centred around distinct services and supplementary activities. This is intended to incentivize business travelers to spend more money on recreational pursuits and help ensure that the economic benefit is distributed fairly across local communities. Rishikesh possesses a distinct edge in this context, as the city has successfully cultivated a highly favourable reputation as a destination for both leisure and business activities. Therefore, tourism policies must be strategically formulated to optimise the utilisation of both segments, integrating them into one entity and thereby capitalising on the existing synergies. The study's findings indicate that experts are cognizant of the city's potential to enhance the bleisure tourism sector. The city's features, including its distinctive cuisine, historical centre, and the warm friendliness of its people, were highlighted by stakeholders as being conducive to the growth of bleisure tourism. The key variables that business travelers need to extend their stay in order to engage in more leisure activities have been found in different sources. (Economist, 2019; Expedia, 2018). Hence, Rishikesh can provide bleisure travellers with an aesthetic and entertainment experience. The results of our study also reveal certain measures that can be implemented to improve bleisure tourism. These measures include enhancing the qualifications of human resources, expanding number of flights from major cities, promoting urban renewal and local culture, and encouraging better cooperation between stakeholders in the tourism industry.

The findings drawn from the Rishikesh case offer a framework that can be applied to other places: the development of bleisure in cities should be predicated on the evaluation of unique services (like venues, lodging, and support services), local tourist attractions (like natural resources, culture, and heritage), accessibility and connectivity to the outside world (especially via air connections), hospitality (including the hospitality of the local population and skilled technical staff), and the destination's marketing and promotion strategies.

The bleisure travel industry is experiencing significant growth, there is a substantial opportunity to attract and engage this valued audience.

The probability of engaging in bleisure to venture beyond their designated business destinations for recreational purposes. business trips are for conferences, destinations have the chance to promote leisure travel by emphasising activities and experiences that will attract return visits.

One notable characteristic of bleisure travellers is their reduced time allocation for research compared to leisure trips. Consequently, marketers are presented with a condensed path to buy, allowing them to strategically target and influence consumer behaviour and purchases through the use of call-to-action messages.

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