



**IMPACT OF TOURIST PERCEPTION ON HOTEL  
BRAND CHOICE;  
THE INTERMEDIATE ROLE OF BRAND  
LOYALTY  
(SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOUR & FIVE STAR  
HOTELS  
IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA)**

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Bopage Y.W  
UWU/HTE/15/007  
Department of Tourism Studies

## ABSTRACT

Branding is one of the most dominant trends in the hotel and catering industry. Various studies show that brand loyalty results from many factors. Among them, perception is one of the factors that play a significant role in rapid and active share in brand loyalty which influence the brand choice of the people. This study seeks to contribute to the literature on tourist perception on hotel brand choice; the intermediate role of brand loyalty using quantitative approach to bridge the gap between service industry brand loyalty and brand choice in Sri Lankan context. Primary data is collected by using purposive sampling method and surveying sample of 120 foreign tourists who visit 4 and 5-star hotels in Southern Province. The main objectives of the study identify the relationship among tourist perception and brand choice and ascertain the intermediate role of brand loyalty. The data has been analysed by implying descriptive statistics, regression, correlation and Baron and Kenny Approach for mediator analysis with the support of SPSS. According to the findings, brand image represents the highest mean value of the dimension and demonstrates that the brand image as the most influence on brand loyalty. There is a strong positive relationship between the tourist perception and brand loyalty but the mediator effect is partially insignificant. To achieve the highest level of loyalty from the tourist and to build up strong brand loyalty among tourist, hoteliers can arrange more marketing strategies like follow-up (email) marketing. This study is limited with cross-sectional data and this study conducted based on the four and five-star hotels and it can be applied to another type of classified hotels or restaurants.

**Keywords:** Tourist Perception, Brand Loyalty, Brand Choice, Brand Image