

Tourists' Satisfaction and Intention to Revisit: Study with special reference to Southern province of Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the booming sectors in the consideration of destination loyalty and it is one of the world's largest service industries (Hui *et al.*, 2007). Tourist perceptions about a holiday destination can help to determine the destination's success or failure (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000) since loyal customers can produce more sales revenue and minimize marketing costs (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Kozak, 2001).

This research mainly focuses on foreign tourists, since they are the major income generators in tourism industry. Besides, though there was a significant decrease during the first half of 2009 in the tourism industry, it has shown a remarkable growth of 21.5% after the war situation in Sri Lanka during the second half of the same year.

In this context, the current study investigated the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and revisit intention to a destination. Moreover, the key objectives of this study were to identify the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and intention to revisit, to identify the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and recommend destination, to recognize the most effective factors that affect tourists' satisfaction in Southern province and to recognize the limitations for tourists' overall satisfaction.

Methodology

The study was based on the Southern Province of Sri Lanka since it has been rated as the second highest region in which most of the foreign guests have taken the accommodation for nights. Hence, Southern Province tourists were segregated into ten specific destinations by classifying them as 'Destinations up to Galle' and 'Destinations beyond Galle'. Accordingly, a sample of 120 tourists was drawn from above 10 destinations by using the simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire based direct interview method was used to collect the data from selected sample and regression analysis, hypothesis testing, Uni-variant and Bi-variant analysis and tabulation techniques were used to analyze the collected data. Tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty model was tested to achieve the research objectives.

Results and discussion

Gender, age distribution, income distribution and education level of the tourists were analyzed under general information. Results reveal that there is no significant variation in terms of gender of the tourists. A major proportion of the tourists accounts for a middle level of income while secondary education has become the highest proportion as far as education level is concerned. A significant proportion of the sample represents the tourists who are of 36 years old.

Moreover, more than 54% of the sample has revisited Sri Lanka while 77% of them have revisited more than two times. 90% of the tourists have made their plan to stay in Sri Lanka for more than three months in advance and it indicates the less familiarity of the destination.

In addition to this, many tourists found to be interested in travelling with organized groups while internet, word of mouth and tour brochures have been used to get awareness on Sri Lanka. The results indicate that more than 56% of tourists are staying in Sri Lanka for more than two weeks of time.

The independent variable of tourist satisfaction was measured under three sub categories namely, overall satisfaction, met expectation and attribute satisfaction. Results indicate a high level of satisfaction among the tourists who visited the Southern province, Sri Lanka during the period of November to December period in 2010

It has also revealed that the intention to revisit is high positively correlated with tourist satisfaction with a correlation value of 0.807. Moreover, willingness to recommend and tourist satisfaction are also high positively correlated with a correlation value of 0.807. Further, the attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction of the total tourist satisfaction are high positively and moderate positively correlated with intention to revisit with the correlation values of 77.9% and 55.4% respectively.

On the whole, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty are highly positively correlated with a correlation value of 0.878. Further, attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction are positively correlated with destination loyalty by accounting for correlation values of 81.5% and 61.5% respectively.

According to the regression output the fitted models can be expressed as follows.

Intention to Revisit = $-0.409 + 1.032$ Total tourist satisfaction

Willingness to Recommend = $-0.620 + 1.115$ Total tourist satisfaction

Further, the fourth objective was tested using descriptive analysis and results show that traffic, cost, language, infrastructure and facilities have created negative impacts on tourist satisfaction.

Conclusions

The three sub variables namely, met expectation, overall satisfaction and the attribute satisfaction indicated high positive values and it can be concluded that there is a high satisfaction level among the tourists who have visited to Southern province of Sri Lanka during the period considered in the study. Thus, improvement of tourists' satisfaction will lead to increase the revisit intention towards same destination and willingness to recommend the destination to others.

As a matter of fact, tourism industry should recognize the most influencing areas of tourists' satisfaction in order to deliver a superior value towards them and in turn increase the satisfaction level which would ultimately be resulted in a higher national income.

References

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