

## **Impact of Destination Attributes and Travel Motives on Destination Choice (With Special Reference to Free Independent Travelers in Southern province)**

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Free Independent Travelers (FITs) classify as an important travel segment. They are referred to as leisure travelers. In Sri Lankan context although tourism arrivals and leisure tourists are increasing, tourism growth change has been decreasing. So, it is important to identify how destination attributes and travel motives are influenced the travel segment to select the destinations. The study aimed to investigate the impact of destination attributes and travel motives when they select the destinations in Southern province as a holiday choice. The objectives of the study were to identify the profile of independent travelers who are traveling to Southern province, to examine the relationship between destination attributes and destination choice, to examine the relationship between travel motives and destination choice, to identify the most and least destination attributes and travel motive factors influence on destination choice when they select the destinations in Southern province. Primary data were collected through self-administered questionnaires in Southern province. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data from 160 Independent travelers and quantitative data analysis method was used in analysing the data using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple linear regression analysis. Salient findings of the study indicated that the demographic and profile of the travelers were significantly associated with independent travel styles. Destination attributes and travel motives showed a positive significant association on destination choice. Further, it revealed, other than activities, other attributes and travel motives significantly influenced on destination choice and attraction. Pull motives were mostly influence on destination choice of independent travelers in Southern province. Therefore, destination attributes and travel motives could be used in formulating promotional strategies and other policies to best satisfy their needs.

*Keywords:* Free independent travelers (FITs), Destination attributes, Travel motives, Destination choice