



**IMPACT OF DESTINATION PERCEPTIONS AND
DESTINATION PROMOTIONAL MIX ON MILLENNIAL
TOURISTS' REVISIT INTENTION**

**(SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WHALE AND DOLPHIN
WATCHING TOURISM IN SRI LANKA)**

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Name of the candidate: K.P.M. Kumari

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ABSTRACT

In the last few decades, marine mammal based tourism has experienced rapid growth in popularity. Watching whales in particular have enjoyed phenomenal growth and is one of the fastest growing tourism products in the world. Whale and Dolphin watching is an international industry worth more than US\$2 billion globally and is currently the greatest economic activity reliant upon cetaceans. This research mainly focus on impact of destination perception on millennial tourists revisit intention, with special reference to the Whale and Dolphin watching tourism in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is situated within the international whaling commission's protected zone in the Indian Ocean. Therefore Sri Lanka became a major spot for watching whales and dolphins. Tourism has become an important global economic and leisure activity due to its growing acceptance and benefits. Therefore, countries engage in numerous marketing and promotional activities to attract more tourists and improve their satisfaction and re-visitation. If a destination can identify and satisfy the needs and wants of tourists, these tourists will probably make repeat visits and spread positive word of mouth publicity. Researchers have discussed the close relationships among the psychological variables, such as motivation, attitude, perception, and satisfaction. Therefore, it is worthwhile to use these variables to study about the tourists' behavior. The main objective of this paper is to identify the relationship between the tourists' perception and revisit intention and discuss its influence on destination management. The study adopts questionnaire survey by 150 respondents through convenience sampling. Correlation analysis, regression analysis and mediation analysis are employed to find the association between the variables. The result of the proposed model confirms that there is a positive correlation and linear relationship between the tourists' revisit intention and independent variables (destination related factors that affect for the perception of the tourists). The study concluded that the tourists who visit Sri Lanka are satisfied and willing to behave positively revisit and recommend about the whale watching tourism. However, the tourists are dissatisfied with several destination related factors, therefore, the relevant and responsible authorities should take necessary actions to improve those factors. Also suggested that intensive publicity is must for the promotions. There should be proper promotional plan and the promotion should be differing than that of the other types of tourists due to the characteristics of millennial tourists. Promoting whale watching tourism with guided tour packages is the powerful marketing tool. Community and employee awareness programs should be conducted and it will increase the positive attitudes towards whale watching tourism. Service providers would do well by training staff such as tour guides, service operators in the hospitality industry. In addition to basic technical training of tour guiding, tour guides need to master foreign languages such as Spanish, German, French, etc. Tourist guides also need to be better trained especially in the field of whale watching tourism so that the information given is accurate and in more languages.

Key words: *Whale and Dolphin watching, Promotional mix, millennial tourist, destination perceptions, re-visit intention*