

Does Culinary Tourism Act as a Pull Factor in Tourist Destinations in South Coast of Sri Lanka?

L.A.P.C. Perera¹, W.G.S.R. Wijesundara^{1*} and H.R.N. Peiris²

^{1*}*Department of Tourism Studies, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Public Administration, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka*

Tourists by arousing their taste buds towards food dishes and it has been already considered as a motive for the choice of travel destinations. In recent years, a large number of tourists in the world have traveled searching new and unique cuisines in traveling destinations and revisited to familiar destinations for them to enjoy the dishes that they have tasted during their previous trips. Culinary tourists usually select a destination based on the availability of cuisines in the destination. Food or culinary makes a destination unique and therefore, gastronomy is a strategic element in defining the brand image of the destination. Considering that, this study focuses on investigating whether the culinary tourism act as a pull factor in tourist destinations in the South coast of Sri Lanka. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted around the South coast of Sri Lanka with 100 respondents applying a purposive sampling technique. After a comprehensive literature review, confirmatory factor analysis was employed as a technique of data reduction in the variables. Initially, regression analysis, thematic analysis, and descriptive statistics were used to analyse data to achieve the objectives of the study. The results revealed that culinary tourism as a pull factor had a significant and direct impact on the destination choice of culinary tourists in the South coast of Sri Lanka. To develop culinary tourism at a satisfactory level, food consumption patterns of culinary tourists should be properly diagnosed. Further, studies related to culinary tourism with the mediation effect of destination image can be consummated.

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