

Analyzing the relationship between destination attributes and satisfaction of tourists who visit Rathnapura district

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Abstract

Rathnapura is one of the leading districts in Sri Lanka. Also well known as gem city in the country with a lot of well-known attractions and lesser-known attractions available in the area. According to the primary survey, even though there is a high volume of arrivals to significant attractions, other areas are not popular among foreign tourists. Therefore, the study was conducted to identify tourists' demographic profile, determine the relationship between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction, identify the most significant destination attribute, and make recommendations to improve tourists' satisfaction. For this quantitative research study, 100 foreign tourists who visit the Rathnapura area were selected as samples. The convenience sampling technique is used by the researcher. Both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed by SPSS version 21. According to the findings, Accessibility, Amenities, and Accommodations create a weak positive relationship with tourist satisfaction. However, Attraction in the Rathnapura area creates strong positive relations with tourists' satisfaction. It is suggested to develop accessibility with good internal transportation, infrastructure, and other services. The accommodation sector needs to be improved further by providing value for money, service quality, and accommodation facilities development. It is also important for public and private promotional activities to develop Rathnapura as a major tourist destination.

Keywords: accessibility, accommodations, amenities, attraction, and tourist satisfaction

Introduction

Physical and administrative boundaries of destination directly affect destination management. Management of tourism products generated destination. On the other hand, the destination can be defined as a central place to decide about taking a trip (World Tourism Organization, 2014). The travel intention of tourists is motivated by destination. Available facilities in the destination are generated decision about the trip in a tourist's mind. Sri Lanka is one of the population destination in the world tourism industry. After the Easter attack, Sri Lanka became the best destination according to the lonely planet website. In the 2019 year, SLTDA identified more than one



million tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka. Rathnapura is one of the main districts in Sri Lanka. Also well known as gem city in the country and lot of well-known attractions and lesser-known attractions available in the area known as Saman Dewalaya, Bopath fall, Rathnapura National Museum, Adams peak, Waulpane limestone cave, Pahanthudawa fall, Silogama Community base tourism village, Sankapala Ancient Temple, Kalthota Duwili fall,. According to the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2018), 211,810 foreign tourists visited Udawalawa National park. The number of visitors is second only Yala National Park. It means a high volume of foreign tourist's interest udawalawa. Also, more than fifteen thousand foreign tourists reached to Sinharaja rain forest. SLTDA Registered tourist accommodation rooms between 500 to 1000 and 3 registered restaurants are available in Rathnapura District (SLTDA, 2019). Despite the high volume of foreign arrivals recorded for the Udawalawa National Park area, other attractions are not very popular among tourists. When considering tourist arrivals to the Rathnapura National museum in 2013 to the 2018 year, the number value is 442. Therefore, the study was conducted to find the answers for "is there a relationship between destination attributes and the satisfaction of tourists who visit Rathnapura District?". The objectives of this study are to identify the demographic profiles of tourists who visit the Rathnapura area, to determine the relationship between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction in the Rathnapura area and to identify the most significant destination attribute and make recommendations to improve tourists' satisfaction.

Literature Review

Destination is a cluster that includes products, services, activities, and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of tourism analysis. Also, destination collaborates with various stakeholders. It builds a network for a large destination by developing its intangible image and identifying its market competitiveness (World Tourism Organization, 2017). According to Chin et al., (2018), tourists highly believe that the quality of accessibility and accommodation quality is vitally linked with tourist satisfaction. Also, highly satisfied tourists will revisit intention to the rural tourism destination. Host community's favorable attitudes enhance the relationship between accommodation quality and tourist satisfaction (Chin, Law, Lo & Ramayah, 2018). Tourists with disabilities respond to the needs of tourists with disabilities, not only in accommodation outlets but also in transportation, museums, recreation areas, restaurants. Also, they were not satisfied with transportation. Accessibility and its infrastructure facilities play a vital role in satisfaction (Dimou & Velissariou, 2016). Study findings confirmed in Gili

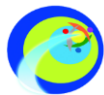


Ketapang Beach attraction and amenities facilities influence tourist satisfaction (Ismail & Rohman, 2019).

Multidimensional factors such as an eclectic range of natural resources, built attractions, culture, activities, amenities, and accommodation should be available in the destination to absorb the attraction of tourists because it should be effectively positioned on the tourist mind (Pike, 2005). A set of products, services, and attractions to create a specific place for tourists, which can be explained as the destination. Attraction and accessibility create a high volume of influence with tourist satisfaction in Chiang Mai as a tourism destination. In Thailand, people's hospitality, friendliness, welcoming characteristics, and its uniqueness, good food, and accommodation prices, transportation and infrastructure mainly affect satisfaction (Suanmali, 2014). Tourist satisfaction in Galle destination, Sri Lanka depends on accessibility, attraction, climate, events, and relaxation. To develop destination brands in Galle, there is a need to enhance natural landscape attraction, activities, and other performance (Kodithuwakku, 2018). Tourist attractions such as cultural, archeological, gastronomy are the main reasons to select the destination. Also, tourist accommodation depends on high tourist satisfaction. Facilities of accommodation and other essential services create a proper loyalty path via satisfaction (Andreea, 2018). According to Sukiman et al., (2013), even though some issues occurred, Accessibility effect with the majority of tourist's satisfaction. Moreover, tourist satisfaction affects available facilities such as shopping while traveling. According to Robustin et al., (2018), Amenities, Attractions and accessibility create a significant affect effecton the satisfaction of tourists and encouragement for destination loyalty.

Methodology

The research site was identified as the Rathnapura area. The researcher used a quantitative research approach. The total population was tourists who visited the Rathnapura district in the last quarter of the 2019 year. Samples included 100 foreign tourists who participated in tourism-related activities in the Rathnapura area. Also, a convenience sampling technique is used. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data collected from questioners was based on five-point Likert scale levels. Accessibility, Attraction, Amenities, and Accommodations are identified as independent variables, and Tourist satisfaction is identified as the dependent variable. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS version 21.



Conceptual Framework

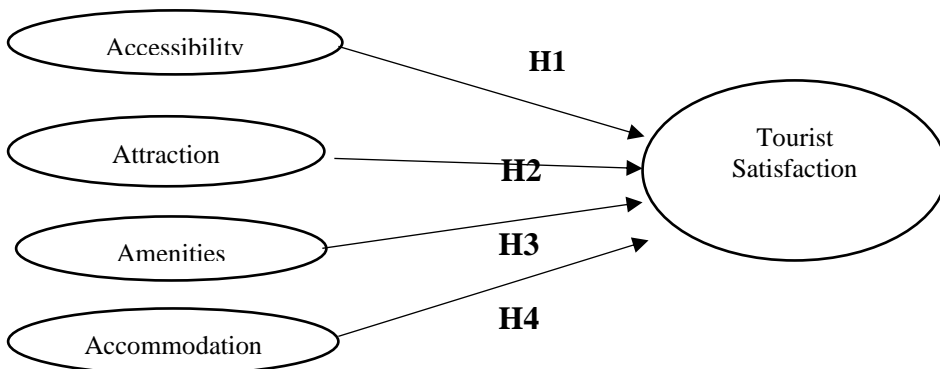


Fig 1. Conceptual Framework

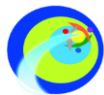
Results and Discussions

According to tourists' demographic profile, most of 52% of them are from European countries. 14% of both American and Asian country tourists and 11% from Australia. There were 44% Male respondents and 56% Female respondents. 58% are in the 20 – 29 age group. 30 – 39 age group represented 18% of tourists. The rest are more than 40 years old. 68% of the tourists are married. 48% are graduated and 11% had postgraduate levels. The rest of them are undergraduate, diploma, and secondary school level. 82% came for the first time to Sri Lanka and the rest were more than once.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO and Bartlett's Test
Accessibility	0.724	0.713
Attraction	0.755	0.796
Amenities	0.796	0.692
Accommodation	0.812	0.785
Tourist Satisfaction	0.838	0.801

KMO and Bartlett's test is used to measure the validity of this questionnaire. Acceptance range for this test minimum of 0.5. Based on Table 01 values, all variables are valid. Generally, less than 0.6 Cronbach's alpha values are considered low and when considering study findings, all variables are reliable. Pearson's coefficient of correlation value, 0 is perfect independence, +0.3 weak positive, +0.7 is a strong positive. According to Table 02, there is a weak positive relationship between Accessibility and Tourist Satisfaction, between Amenities and Tourist Satisfaction, and between Accommodation



and Tourist Satisfaction variables. However, it illustrates a strong positive relationship between Attractions and Tourist Satisfaction. This means the attractions available in the Rathnapura area can be used for further destination development.

Table 2. Correlation and Hypothesis test

Variables	r	P value	Significant or Not	Accepted Hypothesis
Accessibility - Tourist Satisfaction	0.375	0.000	Significant	H1
Attractions - Tourist Satisfaction	0.700	0.000	Significant	H2
Amenities - Tourist Satisfaction	0.677	0.000	Significant	H3
Accommodation -Tourist Satisfaction	0.671	0.000	Significant	H4

ANOVA table is an integral part of the SPSS coefficient output because it shows whether independent variables have affected the independent variables. ANOVA table significance value is less than 0.05 (Field, 2009). According to the study results, the accepted hypothesis are:

- H₁: There is a significant relationship between Accessibility and Tourist Satisfaction.
- H₂: There is a significant relationship between Attractions and Tourist Satisfaction.
- H₃: There is a significant relationship between Amenities and Tourist Satisfaction.
- H₄: There is a significant relationship between Accommodation and Tourist Satisfaction.

According to the Model summary, R Square is 0.587. Researchers used R Square to calculate the variance percentage of the dependent variable from independent variables. When a tourist sample is considered, the researcher was able to find that there was 58.7% of the variance in the Tourist satisfaction (dependent variable) interpreted by the independent variables (Accessibility, Attraction, Amenities and Accommodations).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study is conducted to find “is there a relationship between destination attributes and tourists' satisfaction who visit Rathnapura District.” Also, one study objective is to determine the relationship between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction in the Rathnapura area. According to findings, Accessibility, Amenities, and Accommodations create weak positive relationships with tourist satisfaction. However, attractions in the Rathnapura area create strong positive relations with tourist satisfaction. Also, available attractions in the Rathnapura area high significant with Tourist satisfaction.



There needs to be the development of accessibility facilities in the Rathnapura district, such as road networks, good internal transportation facilities, road maintenance, parking facilities. It is recommended that responsible authorities develop infrastructure and other services in the area to develop as a significant tourism destination. The majority of tourists are interested and aware of the Udawalawa National park and Sinharaja Rain forest. However, lesser-known attractions need to be promoted in the international tourism market. Destination Management Companies, Travel agencies. can take responsibility. The accommodation sector needs to improve by providing value for money, service quality, and accommodation facilities development. Also, the public sector can arrange training sessions for private accommodation providers to develop service quality. Other facilities (amenities) need to be improved.

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