INVESTIGATING THE EXISTING LEVEL OF TOURISTS' DESTINATION SATISFACTION; A CASE OF TOURISTS' TRAVEL EXPERIENCE IN SRI LANKA

Lakmali A A I *(isharaamarathunga@yahoo.com)*
Open University, Sri Lanka

Warnakulasooriya N B F.
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

Tourists' designation satisfaction on destination attributes plays an important role in marketing tourism products and services. Therefore, determinants of tourists' destination satisfaction are an ongoing debate in academic literature since destination attributes available in different destinations are heterogeneous. Thus, the objective of this research is to provide empirical evidence on tourists' existing level of satisfaction on destination attributes in Sri Lanka. The study applies an empirical model with five destination attributes; Destination attractions, Food & Beverage services, Tourism price level, hospitality, Political and Social factors to determine tourists' destination satisfaction in Sri Lanka. Judgmental sampling technique was utilized to select 251 tourists from seven countries who had recently visited Colombo, Galle and Kandy locations in Sri Lanka. Data were collected via a researcher administrated questionnaire. One sample T test, Mean scores and ANOVA were used to analyze the tourist destination satisfaction. Analysis involved statistical methods such as reliability and validity tests. The results revealed that the tourists are moderately and highly satisfied with destination attributes; destination attractions, tourism price level and food & beverage services, hospitality and social and political factors in terms of the tourists' country of origin. Chinese tourists were more disappointed with destination attractions, food & services, price levels and hospitality than tourists' from other countries. The implications were that tourists who visited Sri Lanka were satisfied with the five attributes used for this study and tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes has an impact of their origin. Therefore, tourism authorities have to strategically identify which factors are seeked by tourists in terms of their origin and improve them.

Keywords: Destination Satisfaction, Destination Attributes, Sri Lanka, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a bundle of products and services offered at one particular location. Therefore, it is considered as one of the most difficult products to manage and market (Fyall and Leask, 2006).Thus, tourists' satisfaction is one of the crucial elements in destination marketing (Dmitrovic´ et. al 2007; Algre and Garue, 2010; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Kozak and Rimmington (2000) revealed that tourists' satisfaction is a result of tourists' experience with products and services. Thus, tourists' satisfaction is an ongoing debate in academic literature since destination attributes available in different destinations are heterogeneous. Therefore, the purposes of this paper are to provide empirical evidence on tourists' existing level of satisfaction on destination attributes and variability of tourist destination satisfaction in terms of tourists' country of origin.

Tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. In recent decades, the interest in tourism development has been increased in many regions including nontraditional tourist destinations such as Russia, China, Brazil and other South American countries. Globally, it has become a key socio economic source of generating

job opportunities, enterprises, foreign exchange earnings and infrastructure development. According to UNWTO (2013) international tourism receipts grew by four per cents in 2012 with a new record of US\$ 1,075 billion worth tourists' travel worldwide. Thus, intensity of competition also has increased among destinations.

In the context of Sri Lanka, tourism is one of the major contributors to the economy and society. In 2012, it has recorde done million tourist arrivals to the country for the first time in history. It was 17.5 percent increase in tourists' traffic. In terms of revenue receipts from tourism it was Rs. 132,427 million (US \$ 1038.3 million) in 2012, as against Rs. 91,926 million (US \$ 838.9 million). This was 44.1 per cent increase in revenue from tourism in Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Statistical Report, 2012).Further, airport studies show that seventy percent of tourists who visited Sri Lanka were first time visitors and majority of them visited Sri Lanka as a holiday destination (Airport Highlight Statistics, 2011).

Despite tourism have the potential to provide many benefits to economy of Sri Lanka; it is highly sensitive to the regional competition arising from countries such as Maldives and India.

Further, Sri Lanka is still depending on signal attribute and promoting as a "Sun and Sand" destination (Miththapala, 2012). Sun and sand destinations can be replaced since there are many destinations with same attribute (Alegre and Garau, 2010). Hence, determining the existing level of tourists' satisfaction has a strategic importance for promoting tourism in Sri Lanka. There are many research studies available on tourists' satisfaction, but availability of in-depth research studies on tourism in Sri Lanka are limited (Samaranayake, 1998). Further, research studies carried out on variation of destination satisfaction in Sri Lanka in terms of country of origin has been inadequate. Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap by addressing two research questions mentioned below.

- What is the degree of tourists' destination satisfaction in terms of tourists' experience with destination attributes available in Sri Lanka?
- How far tourists' destination satisfaction in Sri Lanka varies in terms of tourists' country of origin?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is considered to be the core of marketing strategy. Customer satisfaction refers to the ability of a business to serve its customers according to their expectations and to maintain a long-term relationship with each customer (Arora, 2012). Satisfaction is a function of the closeness between expectations and product's perceived performance (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Innario and Piccolo (2010) has identified customer satisfaction as an indicator of individual's perception on particular attribute. These definitions point out that it is a judgment or perceptual measure of the fulfillment of need. This implies that satisfaction is a feeling towards a product or service.

Tourists' destination satisfaction

A tourist is a temporary visitor to a place. When people leave their usual place of residence and work to have a change from their usual routine for a short time, they are called as tourists. Further, international tourists are the people travelling from one country to another country, crossing the tertiary boarders (Roday, Biwal and Joshi, 2011). Globalization has made it much easier for tourists to find a destination or attraction that best fulfills their requirements. Thus customer satisfaction has never been more important than today. The satisfied customer spreads the gospel, visitor numbers rise and everyone lives happily ever after. The reverse is, of course; also true. The success of any tourist attraction has depended heavily on giving the customer what he or she wants (Strategic Direction, 2006). The higher one's satisfaction level, the more likely he/she is to experience the product again and/or provide positive word-of-mouth advertising to friends and family (Wiberg, 2009)

Further, the past research evidence suggests that tourist satisfaction is measured using different dimensions such as destination attributes, previous experience, motivations, destination image, culture and heritage, novelty seeking adventure etc. The reason behind the measuring of tourists' satisfaction by evaluating different attributes is that tourism is a bundle of tourist products and services offered in one location (Manueir and Camelis, 2013; Trunfio, Petruzzellisand Nigro, 2006). Therefore, it is a combination of many actors, factors, physical and human environment. Therefore, this indicates that there is no universally accepted method of measuring tourist destination satisfaction.

The destination satisfaction is measured on performance of its attributes (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). Pawitra and Tan (2003) found that on the strong and weak attributes in Singapore in terms of Indonesian tourist satisfaction that price level, accommodations, transportation infrastructure are mostly considered by tourists. Trunfio, Petruzzellis and Nigro (2006) suggest that the attitude of foreign tourists in choosing Southern Italian destinations is influenced not only by seaside location and cultural products but also by alternative features, such as natural resources and enogastronomic traditions, which represent the differentiating and value-creating elements of the basic product. Tourist motivation on dine out while they are on holidays are depending on five factors such as indulgence, relaxation and comfort, experience , social reason, discovery and health (Sparks et. al 2003). It goes without saying that safety and security is clearly linked to inbound tourism well-being just to "stay in the game." This is especially important in developing regions that suffer from political instability or governmental inefficiencies, which can often result in high crime rates and stunted economic development (World Travel and Tourism Report, 2013). Further, visitors expressed a low level of satisfaction with quality of food and accommodation available in the area. Visitors felt that much could be done to improve cleanliness and hygiene at the Temple and in the surrounding area in India (Balakishan, 2011).This implies that food, cleanliness and hygiene are the factors considered by the tourists. Asian travellers are more concerned with value for money services, while Western travellers perceive security and safety as major factors, especially after September 11. Both Asian and Western travellers look for food and beverage, hospitality, recreation, supplementary service, accommodation, location, transportation and security and safety of the hotels selected (Poon and Low, 2005). To create the emotional bond with a place three factors are impacting as prior experience at the destination, characteristics of the destination, and tourist involvement (Alegre and Gararu, 2010)

In the context of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka's tourist attractions show a regional breakdown: the south coast for its beaches, the central hills for its scenery and cool climate, the north central area for historical and cultural heritage, and the western areas for more urban landscapes. Natural attractions such as wildlife parks or forest systems are also a part of Sri Lanka tourism attractions and offer a rich diversity across the country (Fernando and Meedeniya, 2009). Therefore, based on the literature, the attributes to measure tourists destination satisfaction are identified as Destination Attractions, Food and Beverages, Price, Hospitality, Political and Social factors.

Destination attractions: Representation of the beauty of nature is one of the attributes which attracts and satisfies tourists (Nelson, 2005). Coastal tourism destinations, traditionally supplying the product sun and beach, have been facing problems resulting from the strong seasonality (Valle, 2011). Further, most of the tourists seek beaches and sunshine, quality of accommodations, quality of urban setting, climate, beautiful sceneries and quality of the environment, cleanliness of public areas in the destinations(E.g. Alegre and Cladera,2009; Wiberg, 2009; Cho 2008; Alegre and Cladera, 2006, Barutcu et al. 2011).

Food and beverages: Food reflects a country's culture and its people (You and Back, 2007). The cuisine of the destination is an aspect of utmost importance in the quality of the holiday experience (Global Report of Food Tourism, 2012). Poon and Low (2005) stated that Fresh food, Hygiene of food, Variety of Food, Accessibility of Food, and Food promotions are the facts sought by tourists. Du Rand et.al. (2001) identify that food plays a major role in tourism. [It is] primarily considered as a supportive attraction for tourism (Du Rand, 2006). Positive emotions are aroused by sensual arousal. Thus, various service, ambiance, and food related factors all play an important role in arousing sensual stimulation which has a direct impact on emotions and satisfaction (Arora, 2012 p.341). According to Heung (2000) availability of food and beverage variety, food and beverage quality, hygiene of food and beverage, food and beverage value for money are taken into consideration.

Tourism pricing: Tourism price is an important attribute, sought by tourists(E.g. Hartman et al. 2010, Ladhari, 2009; Uzama 2008). The price of food and beverages, price of leisure activities, price of air fare, price of accommodations, price of local transport, price paid in shopping are mostly considered by the tourists when they visit a destination (Uzama,2008; Alegre and Cladera,2009; Belenkiyand Riker, 2013; Masiero and Nicolau 2012; Maunier and   Camelis;2013; Poon and Low, 2005). Cost of tourism in China and competing destinations are the crucial factors that determine the demand for tourism. It is worth noting that Asian travelers are exclusively concerned with the value for money services. Asian travelers tend not to spend much on accommodation as compared to Western travelers (Poon and Low, 2005).

Hospitality: Hospitality is the most influential factor in determining the overall satisfaction level for both Asian and Western traveler (Poon and Low, 2005).Hospitality is increasingly popular as a generic title for different sectors of the hotel and restaurant, and tourism (Ottenbacher, 2009). Western travelers regard security and safety, and as important factors for them to stay in the hotels or revisit the country. Security and safety is a major factor for Western travellers. There is a considerable growing concern for their safety in choosing Malaysia as their destination, especially after September 11 (Poon and Low 2005, Solomon 2007). Thus, tourists evaluate their satisfaction on hospitality while travelling by evaluating

perceived treatment they received, safety, and hospitality of the local residents (Algre and Caldera, 2009).

Political and social factors: Political and social factors have an impact on tourists' destination satisfaction. But the success of tourism would not be established always in a stable environment (Ritcher, 1999).Political factors influence on security of the travelers. Therefore, satisfaction level varies with political situation of a country (Maunier and Camelis,2013). According to Reisinger and Turner (2002) that social factors such as cultural values, rules of social behavior, and perceptions of service are important factors influencing and describing the tourism constructs influencing for social contacts and level of tourists satisfaction. Thus, perception on political system of the country, power and water saving, environmental protection, equal opportunities to different nationalities were assessed to measure the political and social state of a destination (Maunier and Camelis, 2013; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000).

Based on the literature explained above, the hypotheses of the study were developed.

H1: Tourists' experience with attributes (a) destination attractions (b) food and beverages (c) tourism price level (d) hospitality (e) political and social factors in Sri Lanka positively influences the tourists' destination satisfaction.

H2: There is a positive relationship between tourists' country of origin and tourists' level of satisfaction with destination attributes available in Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and data collection

The research design is a conclusive, single cross sectional descriptive in nature. This study attempted to investigate the tourists' existing level of satisfaction in Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and the degree of influence of the tourists' country of origin on tourist destination satisfaction. Therefore, quantitative approaches were adopted to measure the tourist destination satisfaction construct and variation of tourists' satisfaction in terms of tourists' country of origin.

The research questionnaire was initially developed and a pilot survey was carried out on a sample of 60foreign tourists (n =60) from seven countries. Data for this study were collected using an electronic questionnaire online, administrated during 15th November 2013 to 30th November 2013. Results of the pilot testwere used to make improvements to the questionnaire where appropriate. The changes were indispensable for the final questionnaire. Then four hundred (n = 400) questionnaires were distributed among tourists' visiting Colombo, Kandy and Galle locations in Sri Lanka during four weeks period in the month of December 2013 to generate the final sample. Two hundred and fifty one questionnaires were returned (n=251) resulting in average response rate of 63%. Non random, judgmental sampling technique was used to select the participants due to the difficulties. Thus, it is important to note that the data for this study were collected based on tourists country of origin (Assaker, Vinzi and O' Connor, 2011). Therefore, seven nationalities (India, United Kingdom, Maldives, Russia, Germany, France, and China) were selected after screening tourist arrivals statistics published by the Sri Lankan tourist board in 2012. The questionnaire was administrated by tour guides. Further, the researcher also administrated the questionnaire to collect data.

Operationalization

In order to operationalize the Tourist Destination Satisfaction construct (TDS),an empirical model with five tourist destination satisfaction dimensions was developed based on the literature. The dimensions of tourists' destination satisfaction are Destination Attractions (DA), Food & Beverage Services (FBS), Tourist Price Level (TPL), Hospitality (HS) and Political and Social Factors (PSF).Seven (07) items to measure destination attractions (Alegre and Caldera, 2010; Zouni and Kouremonos, 2008), six (06) items to measure food and beverage services (Alegre and Caldera, 2010; Zouni and Kouremonos, 2008), six (06) items for tourism price (Alegre and Caldera, 2010; Maunier and Camelis, 2013) , four (04) questions to measure the hospitality (Alegre and Caldera, 2010) and four (04) questions for political and social factors (Maunier and Camelis, 2013) were used. All together 27 indicators were generated. Each dimension were measured using non comparative itemized 7 point scale (1 = highly dissatisfied, 2= dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat dissatisfied, 4 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 5 = somewhat satisfied, 6 = satisfied, 7= highly satisfied) and participants were instructed to state their degree of agreement on each statement.

In addition to that, four items (04) for each, generated to measure tourists' demographic characteristics and four travel characteristics. Respondents' demographic data such as respondents' country of origin, age, gender, and occupation were included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, tourists' travel characteristics such as how tourists found out about Sri Lanka, what influenced them to visit Sri Lanka, length of stay and number of visits to Sri Lanka were also included.

DATA ANALYSIS

Validation of Measurement Properties

In the first phase of the analysis, psychometric properties were validated. It is important to ensure that accuracy and applicability of the research instrument (Sekaran and Bougie, 2012, Malhotra, 2007). Therefore, unidimensionality, reliability and validity of the measures should be established.

Sampling Adequacy

Results of table 01 depicts that KMO values of destination satisfaction construct dimensions. KMO values for all the dimensions were higher than the threshold level of p > 0.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that data in the study can be factored easily. In addition, supposition test of Sphericity by the Bartlett test was calculated. According to the Barlett test, null hypothesis, that is all correlation coefficients are not quite far from zero is rejected (p<0.0005). Therefore, the sample adequacy for destination satisfaction dimensions was established.

Table 01 KMO and barttle tests

Dimension	Sampling Adequacy		No of Items
	KMO	Barttle	
DA	0.728	504.718	7
FS	0.705	319.041	6
TP	0.774	340.107	6
HS	0.624	267.039	4
PS	0. 701	169.969	4

Unidimensionality

The factor analysis was conducted to ensure the unidimensionality of the study (Appendix 01). According to the appendix 01, destination satisfaction was measured by Destination Attractions (DA), Food & Beverage Services (FBS), Tourist Price Level (TPL), Hospitality (HS) and Political and Social Factors (PSF). The factor analysis ensures that indicators developed to measure each dimension were unidimential.

Face validity: At first, face validity of the indicators of destination satisfaction construct was obtained. In this study, all the psychometric properties to measure the destination satisfaction construct were taken from preceding literature validated by past research studies. Further, these psychometric properties were tested in allied contexts of tourism in developing and developed countries. Therefore, the measurement properties of destination satisfaction construct dimensions demonstrate strong face validity.

Convergent validity: Table 02shows Composite Reliability (CR) estimation and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for destination satisfaction dimensions (DA, FS, TP, HS and PS). The calculated CR values for destination satisfaction construct dimensions (DA, FS, TP, HS and PS) were greater than AVE values. It indicates that psychometric properties of tourists' destination satisfaction construct dimensions were positively correlated. Thus, destination satisfaction construct dimensions demonstrate a good convergent validity.

Discriminant validity: Discriminant validity was tested to ensure the theatrically un-relatedness of the indicators. Table 02 revealed the AVE estimates and Shared variance (r^2) estimations. Further, Table 02 shows that AVE values of DA construct's dimensions were greater than the shared variance values. Therefore, discriminant validity is supported for DS construct dimensions.

Dimension	Convergent Validity		Discriminant Validity					
	CR	AVE	DA	FS	TP	HS	PS	No of Items
DA	0.700	0.657						7
FS	0.714	0.648	0.284$^{^2}$ 0.227	0.648				6
TP	0.730	0.690	0.402$^{^2}$ 0.308	0.440$^{^2}$ 0.339	0.690			6
HS	0.728	0.638	0.341$^{^2}$ 0.205	0.186$^{^2}$ 0.141	0.329$^{^2}$ 0.194	0.628		4
PS	0.746	0.650	0.133$^{^2}$ 0.063	0.195$^{^2}$ 0.058	0.068$^{^2}$ 0.073	0.198$^{^2}$ 0.270	0.650	4

Table 02 Convergent and discriminant validity

Reliability

Table 03 shows the Crobach Alpha (α) value estimation for each dimension of destination satisfaction. Reliability estimation (α) for all the dimensions of tourists' destination satisfaction construct was found as higher than the threshold level (α > 0.7). Therefore, it can be concluded that adequate internal consistency exists with destination satisfaction dimensions.

Table 03 Construct reliability

Dimension	Cronbach Alpha	No of Items
DA	0.824	7
FS	0.794	6
TP	0.803	6
HS	0.742	4
PS	0.748	4

Sample profile

The first phase of the data analysis shows the sample profile of the study. Table 04 shows demographic characteristics of the respondents such as tourist country of origin, gender, age and four travel characteristics such as how tourists' find out Sri Lanka as a holiday destination (holiday brochure, recommendations, internet and advertisements), what factors influenced them to visit Sri Lanka (recommendation, to explore something new, previous experience and on the way to some other destination) number of previous visits to Sri Lanka and how many days they stayed in Sri Lanka.

Table 04 Demographic and travel behavior characteristics of the sample

Demography/ Travel Behaviour		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Country	India	92	36.7
	United Kingdom	57	22.7
	Maldives	24	9.6
	Germany	30	12
	France	26	10.4
	Russia	12	4.8
	China	10	4
Gender	Male	144	57.4
	Female	107	42.6
Age	20 -29	45	17.9
	30- 39	71	28.3
	40- 49	72	28.7
	50-59	40	15.9
	60-69	23	9.2
Find out about SL	Holiday broacher	29	11.6
	Internet	18	7.2

	By recommendations	197	78.5
	Advertisements	7	2.5
Influence to Come	By recommendations	114	45.4
	To explore something new	89	35.5
	Previous experience	46	18.3
	On way to…	2	0.8
No. of previous visits	No Previous Visits	155	61.8
	One	35	13.9
	Two	33	13.1
	Three	11	4.4
	Four	9	3.6
	Five	3	1.2
	Six	4	1.6
	Seven	1	0.4
No. of Days Stayed	2 days	6	2.4
	3days	7	2.8
	4days	16	6.4
	5days	4	1.6
	6days	1	0.4
	7days	8	3.2
	9 days	19	7.6
	10 days	61	24.3
	12 days	44	17.5
	14 days	54	21.5
	15days	1	0.4
	19days	8	3.2

Tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes

This model consists of five multiple independent variables. They are Destination Attractions (DA), Food Services (FS), Tourism Price (TP), Hospitality (HS), Political and Social factors (PS) and one dependent variable; Tourists' Destination Satisfaction (TDS). Table 05 shows the results of the one sample T test employed to investigate the satisfaction with destination attributes.

Table 05 One sample T test

Item	Test Value = 4					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
DA	41.593	250	.000	1.69266	1.6125	1.7728
FA	47.909	250	.000	1.84927	1.7732	1.9253
TP	44.806	250	.000	1.81076	1.7312	1.8904
HS	33.205	250	.000	1.50299	1.4138	1.5921
PS	20.154	250	.000	1.07968	.9742	1.1852

The table 05 shows that t values of the dimensions of the destination satisfaction construct at the test value of '4 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' which is the neutral point of the seven point scale. Referring to table 04.6Destination Attractions (DA) = 41. 59, Food and Beverages (FS) = 47.90, Tourism Pricing (TP) = 44.81, Hospitality (HS) = 33.205, Political and Social factors (PS) = 20.15 at the significant level of 0.000 (p≤0.005). Thus, mean values of all dimensions exceed the neutral point. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, **tourists' experience with attributes (DA, FS, TP, HS and PS) in Sri Lanka positively influences the tourists' destination satisfaction.**

Measuring tourists' existing level of satisfaction

The table 06 shows the tourists' existing level of destination satisfaction. Referring to table 06, 106 (42.2%) tourists were having a moderate level of destination satisfaction while 145 (57.8%) tourists were having a high level of satisfaction. The mean ranges were shown in table 07 as low level of satisfaction "less than 3.59', moderate level of satisfaction "3.59 to 5.59" and high level of satisfaction "5.6 to 7". This concludes that majority of the tourists are in the range of satisfied to highly satisfied range. Further, some tourists have neutral or moderate level of satisfaction while no respondent has indicated the low level of destination satisfaction.

Table 06 Tourists' existing level of satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	Number of Tourists	Valid Percent
Low	0	0
Moderate	106	42.2
High	145	57.8
Total	251	100.0

Table 07 Mean value range

Mean Value Range	Level of Satisfaction
1- 3.59	Low
3.6 – 5.59	Moderate
5.6 - 7	High

Variation of tourists' destination satisfaction in terms of tourists' country of origin

The table 08 depicts results of one–way between groups analysis of variance for Tourist Destination Satisfaction (TDS) construct. ANOVA was performed in order to identify the mean differences in tourists' existing level of satisfaction by the country of origin of the respondents.

The result of ANOVA, F statistic is 15.45 at significant level of .000 (p≤0.05). This indicates that there is a significant difference in mean scores among seven nationalities. Further, Chinese tourists reported the lowest mean scores for TDS construct, supporting the notion that Chinese nationalities may have lower destination satisfaction levels than other

sample groups. Further, tourists from UK reported the highest satisfaction scores. Further, Chinese tourists reported the lowest mean scores for DA (4.94), FS (5.05), and TP (4.31), HS (4.57) and PS (4.5) whereas tourists from UK reported the highest satisfaction scores for DA (6.28) and FS (6.02). All the countries other than China had indicated higher satisfaction level. Maldives has highest satisfaction mean score for TP (6.35). . Hence H_2 is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is a significant difference of tourists' destination satisfaction on each destination attributes i.e. Destination Attractions (DA), Food Services (FS), Tourism Price (TP), Hospitality (HS), Political and Social factors (PS) and overall tourists' destination satisfaction (DS) in terms of tourists' country of origin.

Table 08 Comparison of existing level of satisfaction across the different nationalities (ANOVA)

Item	Mean Satisfaction Scores								F	Sig. (p ≤ 0.05)
	India	Maldiv.	UK	Fran.	Rus.	China	Germ.	Total		
DA	5.42	5.86	6.28	5.55	5.81	4.94	5.59	5.69	19.75	.000
FS	5.92	5.85	6.02	5.54	5.81	5.05	5.81	5.85	5.56	.000
TP	5.82	6.35	6.15	5.13	5.79	4.31	5.78	5.81	36.19	.000
HS	5.55	5.86	5.42	5.53	5.85	4.57	5.36	5.50	3.16	.000
PS	5.35	4.52	5.08	5.04	4.75	4.50	5.01	5.07	4.87	.000
TDS	5.62	5.69	5.79	5.36	5.60	4.68	5.51	5.59	15.45	.000

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chang (2008) stated that many researches deemed that consumers' emotional responses are linked to satisfaction and dissatisfaction judgments. By obtaining quantitative estimates on the importance of each attribute with tourist satisfaction levels provides statistically valid assessment across different locations. Further, it provides useful information for decision making parties regarding tourism development (Enright and Newton, 2005).Thus, objectives of the study were to investigate the tourists' existing level of satisfaction in Sri Lanka and to examine whether destination satisfaction vary in terms of tourists' country of origin. The research findings indicated that the tourists who visited Sri Lanka, are satisfied with the five attributes such as destination attraction, food & beverage services, tourism pricing, hospitality and political and social factors. Further, majority of the respondents are highly satisfied on destination attributes while others are moderately satisfied. The travel experience is a multifaceted and fusion experience (Neal and Gursoy, 2008). Therefore, implication of this study was tourists' level of satisfaction with each attribute have to be considered when formulating tourism strategies.

Further, the different nationalities have different level of satisfaction on destination attributes. In the context of Sri Lanka, the highest overall satisfaction level exists among UK tourists while the lowest overall destination satisfaction is possessed by Chinese travellers. Further, tourists' satisfaction levels in Sri Lanka vary in terms of their satisfaction with certain attributes and vice versa. Kamata, Misui and Yamauchi (2009) in their study stated that the attractiveness diverges as openness of the destination or cost depending on the origin of each consumer. Further, supporting to the fact regarding UK tourists, European travelers such as French, English, and German individuals travel in mostly outside of their own countries (Alegre and Cladera, 2006).Supporting this notion, this study indicated that majority

tourists who come to Sri Lanka seek destination attractions and tourism pricing irrespective of nationality. Tourism product is a combination of many products and services. Therefore, as a result of one or two factors overall satisfaction can be deter (Neal and Gursoy, 2008; Algre and Garue 2009). Further, the study reveals that the importance of destination promotion institutes to identifying the importance of attributes which vary according to the nationality. Previous destination satisfaction surveys have identified that some are specific and some are generic (Kozak and Rimmington., 2000; Poon and Low, 2005). E.g: tourism pricing is considered to be the most influencing attribute in Sri Lanka for all nationalities while hospitality is for mostly Chinese tourists. Therefore, tourism pricing should be in affordable standard but all of them will not accept that pricing procedure.

The demographic characteristics indicated that most of the tourists visiting Sri Lanka are from Asian countries like India and Maldives. Further, the majority of the tourists are male tourists (Neal and Gursoy, 2008; Li and Cai, 2011) and majority were in the age range of 30 to 49.In contrast to this study, majority of tourists belonged to the age range of 24 to 35 (Li and Cai, 2011).The majority was first time visitors (Algre and Gararu, 2009) and the word of mouth recommendation is the strongest mode of tourism promotion. Therefore, this indicates that in depth studies on tourists' demographic variables, travel characteristics with destination attribute satisfaction have to be established to promote Sri Lanka as a destination.

The significance of this study is mainly to the tourism business organizations and tourism policy makers since it is important to understand the determinants of tourists' existing level of satisfaction in Sri Lanka. Tourists' satisfaction is also significant on generating positive word of mouth recommendation. Understanding what makes experiences satisfactory and pleasant is a significant challenge for tourism managers who seek to design and deliver a memorable experience that encourages people to recommend their destination and want to revisit (Mounier and Camelis, 2013).

The evidences advocate that destination managers should segment tourists according to their tendency to seek variety in their choice. Moreover, this study has measured the tourists' satisfaction in Sri Lanka based on their country of origin. Therefore, in future, tourists' existing level of satisfaction can be extended and investigated as a comparison of the satisfaction levels of Asian tourists and European tourists. Furthermore, in depth investigation of each nationality can be carried out. Further, the study was limited to five dimensions identified on literature. The future research opportunities would be to identify the attributes specific to Sri Lanka.

The limitations of the study are relating to the scope of the study which represent the satisfaction levels of seven nationalities. There is a trend of increasing tourists from Middle East countries and South American countries, which is not addressed as the sampling procedure was based on the most highly visiting seven nationalities. Further, the study was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Therefore, psychological and behavioral implications on destination attributes are not captured to the study. The study was carried out at the moment of departing or just after finishing their tour. Therefore, post purchase evaluation and its' impact was not included in the study. Further, the number of respondents was selected based on researcher judgment by observing the tourist arrival statistics in 2012. Therefore, number of tourists from Germany, Russia, and China were very low compared with respondents from India. Another limitation is that there is a lack of formally recorded sources of past research studies on tourism industry in Sri Lanka. This has limited the

opportunity of getting a good insight on tourism market in Sri Lanka specially on identifying destination attributes.

REFERENCES

Alegre, J. and Garau, J., (2010) "Place Attachment in Sun and Sand Destinations," *Quality Technology and Quantitative Management*, [online] Available at: <http://www.popsci.com/popsci37b144110vgn/html> [Accessed 22 November 2013].

Alegre, J. and Garau, J.,(2010) "Place Attachment in Sun and Sand Destinations," *Quality Technology and Quantitative Management*, [online] Available at: <http://www.popsci.com/popsci37b144110vgn/html> [Accessed 22 November 2013].

Balakrishnan, M. S., Nekhili, R. and Lewis, C., (2011) "Destination Brand Components", *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality*, [e -journal] 5 (1). Available through: Emerald Insight <http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Belenkiy, M., and Riker, D. (2013), "Modeling the International Tourism Expenditures of Individual Travelers," *Journalof Travel Research*,[e- jornal] 52; 202. Available through: Sage publicatios <www. Sagepublications.com> [Accessed: 21 November 2013].

Boylu,Y., Tasci, A.D. A., and Gartner, W. C., (2009) "Worker and consumer face-off on cultural distance and satisfaction," *Tourism Review,* [e -journal] 64 (4). Available through: Emerald Insight <http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Dmitrovic, T., Cvelbar, L.K., Kolar, T., Brencic,M.M., Ograjensek, I. and Zabkar,V., (2007) "Conceptualizing tourist satisfaction at the destination level", *European Journal of Marketing*, ,[e- jornal] 33 Nos 11/12, pp. 1203-27. Available through: <http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html>. [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Fernando, K., and Meedeniya, A., (2009), "Recent changes in tourism trends in Sri Lanka and implications for poverty reduction," [Online]. Available through: <http://www.cepa.lk/AR2009/docs/ADB_Povnet_tourism%20Paper.pdf>. [Accessed 08 October 2013].

Hartman, K. B., Mayer, T., and Hurley, H., (2010) "An examination of culture cushion: antecedents and consequences," *International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*,,[e-journal]. Available through: Emerald Insight<http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Iannario, M. and Piccolo, D., (2010) "A New Statistical model for the Analysis of Customer Satisfaction", *Quality Technology and Quantitative Management*,[online] Available at: <http://www.popsci.com/popsci37b144110vgn/html> [Accessed 01 August 2013].

Jani, D. and Han, H., (2013)," Personality, social comparison, consumption emotions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: how do these and other factors relate in a hotel setting?", [e -journal]. Available through: Emerald Insight <http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Kozak, M., and Rimmington M.,(2000), "Tourist Satisfaction with Mallorca, Spain, as an Off-Season Holiday Destination," *Journal of Travel Research*,[e- journal] 38: 260-69. Available through: Sage publications <www. Sagepublications.com>[Accessed 16 December 2013].

Masiero,L., and Nicolau, J. U., (2012), "Tourism Market Segmentation Based on Price Sensitivity: Finding Similar Price Preferences on Tourism Activities," *Journalof Travel Research*,[e- journal] 51: 426. Available through: Sage publications <www. Sagepublications.com>[Accessed 21 November 2013].

Maunier, C., and Camelis, C., (2013), "Toward an identification of elements contributing to satisfaction with the tourism experience," *Journal of Vacation Marketing*,[e- journal] 19; 19. Available through: Sage publications <www. Sagepublications.com>[Accessed 23 October   2013].
Pantouvakis, A., (2013), "Travelers' behaviour intentions depending on their beliefs: an empirical study," *International Journal of Quality and Services Science*, [e -journal] 5 (1). Available through: Emerald Insight <http://www.emeraldinsght.com/1756-669x.htm> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Michael, J. E., and Newton, J., (1995) Determinants of Tourism Destination Competitiveness in Asia Pacific: Comprehensiveness and Universality. [Online] Available from: <http://www.estig.ipbeja.pt/~aibpr/Ensino/EngDesenvTur/.../AsiaStudyCase.pdf>.[Accessed 01 August 2013].

Miththapala, S., (2012) Emerging Tourism Trends. Daily Mirror.[Online] 18th September 2012. Available from: www.dailymirror.lk . [Accessed: 10 August 2013].

Pawitra T. A., and Tan K.C., (2003), "Tourist satisfaction in Singapore – a perspective from Indonesian tourists. Managing Service Quality",[e- journal]13-5. Available through: Emerald Insight <http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Pritchard, M. P., and Havitz, M. E. (2006). "Destination appraisal. An analysis of critical incidents," *Annals of Tourism Research,* 33(1), 25-46.

Reisinger, Y., and Turner, L., (1999), "A cultural analysis of Japanese tourists: challenges for

Richter, L.K., (1999), "After Political Turmoil: The Lessons of Rebuilding Tourism in Three Asian Countries," *Journal of Travel Research*,[e- journal] 38: 260-41.). Available through: Sage publications <www. Sagepublications.com>. [Accessed 23 October 2013].

Samaranayake, H.M.S., (1998) *Development of tourism in Sri Lanka and its impact on the economy and society*,1st Ed. Sri Lanka Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Sri Lanka.

Schiffman , L. G. and Kanuk, L.L.,(2007). *Consumer Behaviour*. 9th ed. New Delhi: Rajkamal Electric Press.

Trunfio, M., Petruzzellis, L., Nigro,C. (2006), "Tour operators and alternative tourism in Italy Exploiting niche markets to increase international competitiveness ," [e- journal] 18 -5. Available through: Emerald Insight<http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].

Uzama, A., (2008), "Marketing Japan's travel and tourism industry to international tourists", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management,* [e –journal] 21:3. Available through: Emerald Insight <http://www.emeraldinsght.com.html> [Accessed 10 August 2013].