

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

A.A.I. Lakmali¹
N.B.F. Warnakulasooriya²

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 analysis the tourist destination satisfaction. Further, analysis involved statistical methods such as reliability and validity tests. The results revealed that tourist are moderately and highly satisfied with on 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. The implications were tourists who visited Sri Lanka were satisfied with the five attributes used for this study. Further, tourists' country of origin has impact on tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes. Therefore, tourism authorities should be strategically identified that what are the destination attributes seek by tourists' in terms of their country of origin and improve them.

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

1. 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

¹ A.A.I. Lakmali is an Academic Coordinator at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Email: isharaamarathunga@yahoo.com

² N.B.F. Warnakulasooriya is a Professor at the Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. Email : neville@sjp.ac.lk

and market. Thus, tourists' satisfaction is one of the crucial elements in destination marketing (Dmitrovic' et. al 2007; Alegre & Garau, 2010; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Kozak & Rimmington (2000) pointed out 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, 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 tourist 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 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 cent 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 recorded one 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 per cent 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).

Developing tourism is one of the major economic development strategies in Sri Lanka. The major agendas of tourism development in Sri Lanka are 1) create an environment conducive for tourism promotion 2) attracting the potential inbound tourist markets and 3) create awareness and positive perception globally. The outcome of this is to achieve a target of twenty five million tourists within five years time period (Tourism Development Strategy, 2011). Despite tourism having 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. Moreover, success of any tourist attraction has depended heavily on giving the customer what he or she wants (Strategic Direction, 2006). But, 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 & Garau, 2010). Moreover, the higher the 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). 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 tourist satisfaction in Sri Lanka are limited (Samaranayake, 1998). Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap by addressing two research questions mentioned below.

- What is the degree of tourists' existing destination satisfaction level based on tourists' experience with five destination attributes available in Sri Lanka?
- Does tourists' level of destination satisfaction in Sri Lanka vary in terms of tourists' country of origin?

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

2.1. 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 & Keller, 2009). Innario & Piccolo (2010) identified customer satisfaction as an indicator of individual's perception on a 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.

2.2. 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 tourists. Further, international tourists are the people travelling from one country to another country, crossing the tertiary borders (Roday, Biwal & 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 the 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 suggest 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 measuring tourists' satisfaction by evaluating different attributes is that tourism is a bundle of tourist product and services offered in one location (Manueir & Camelis, 2013; Trunfio, Petruzzellis & 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 & Rimmington, 2000). Pawitra & Tan (2003) found that on the strong and weak attributes in Singapore in terms of Indonesian tourist satisfaction and they identified that price level, accommodations, transportation infrastructure are mostly considered by tourists. Trunfio, Petruzzellis & Nigro (2006) suggest that 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 holiday depends 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 (Balakrishnan, Nekhili, & Lewis, 2011). This implies that food, cleanliness and hygiene are the factors considered by the tourists. Asian travelers are more concerned with value for money services, while Western travelers perceive security and safety as major factors, especially after September 11. Further, both Asian and Western travelers concerned about food and beverage, hospitality, recreation, supplementary service, accommodation, location, transportation and security and safety of the hotels selected (Poon & 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 & Garau, 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 & Meedeniya, 2009). Furthermore, Cooray (2009) has stated that seventy five percent of the tourists who visited cultural/heritage destinations in Sri Lanka were satisfied. More than eighty percent of the tourists, who have visited ancient heritages, responded as they are interested with upcountry locations such as Kandy, Gampola, Dambadeniya. The tourists particularly enjoyed the architecture, which together with the traditions of the villages and jungles create an attractive physical environment and atmosphere. The shopping facilities were

also well liked and local people were regarded as friendly. In 2011, tourism in Sri Lanka was promoted in three dimensions such as authenticity, compactness and diversity of Sri Lanka using eight types of experiences such as beaches, heritage, scenic, wildlife, festivals, essence, bliss, sports and adventure. Further, beauty and diversity of scenery, warmth and hospitality of the people were also identified as attractions to many visitors (Kirialle, 2011). Moreover, Airport report (2011) indicated that tourists' first preferences of visiting Sri Lanka are sun and beach followed by historic sites. Furthermore, around fifty nine per cent of the foreign tourists perceived Sri Lanka as a beautiful country, while fifty seven per cent tourists mentioned Sri Lankans as being 'nice people' by providing more evidence on destination attractions and hospitality. Therefore, destination attractions and hospitality can be identified as main destination attributes to measure tourists' satisfaction in Sri Lanka. Further, Airport Statistical Report (2011) identifies that fifteen per cent of the respondents perceived it as being 'A Country with Political Problems and Violence'. More than one third of the respondents had been approached by three wheel drivers, beggars, street and beach vendors, touts and beach boys about which most of the respondents commented unfavorably. Furthermore, tourists were also concerned about the environmental pollution. Some respondents were unhappy about the variation of foods and standard of the hotels. Thus, this indicates that periodic investigations are carried out on tourist perception on different destination attributes. But, this periodic information is not utilized to derive a conclusion on their contribution to in depth studies on overall satisfaction (E.g.: Samaranayaka, 1998). Furthermore, tourists have criticized the political state, food services and some social issues in Sri Lanka. Travellers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction at different stages of complex and multifaceted travel experience is likely to influence their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with travel and tourism services (Neal and Gursoy, 2008). Thus, this shows that destination attractions, food and beverages, prices, hospitality' and political and social factors are crucial ones affecting on tourists' satisfaction. 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 & Cladera, 2009; Wiberg, 2009; Cho, 2008; Barutcu et al. 2011).

Food and Beverages: Food reflects a country's culture and its people (You & 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 & 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) identifies 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). 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 & Cladera, 2009; Belenkiy & Riker, 2013; Masiero & Nicolau, 2012; Maunier & Camelis, 2013; Poon & Low, 2005). Cost of tourism in China and competing destinations is the crucial factor that determines 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 & Low, 2005).

Hospitality: Hospitality is the most influential factor in determining the overall satisfaction level for both Asian and Western traveler (Poon & Low, 2005). Hospitality is increasingly popular as a generic title for different sectors of the hotel and restaurant, and tourism (Ottenbacher, Harrington, & Parsa, 2009). Western travelers regard security and safety as important factors for them to stay in the hotels or revisit the country. Security and safety is a major factor for Western travelers. There is a considerable growing concern for their safety in choosing Malaysia as their destination, especially after the September 11 (Poon & 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 & Camelis, 2013). According to Reisinger & Turner (2002) social factors such as cultural values, rules of social behavior, and perceptions of service are important factors influencing and describing the tourism constructs influencing 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 & Camelis, 2013; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000).

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

H₁: There is a high level of tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes such as Destination Attractions (DA), Food Services (FS), Tourism Price (TP), Hospitality (HS), Political and Social Factors (PS) in Sri Lanka.

H₂: Tourists' satisfaction on Sri Lanka varies in terms of tourists' country of origin.

3. Methodology

3.1. 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 60 foreign tourists (n = 60) from seven countries. Data for this study were collected using an electronic questionnaire administrated online during 15th November 2013 to 30th November. Results of the pilot test were used to make improvements to the final survey 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.

3.2. Operationalization

Tourists' destination satisfaction (TDS) was operationalized by using multi attributes such as Destination Attractions (DA), Food & Beverage Services (FBS),

Tourist Price Level (TPL), Hospitality (HS) and Political and Social Factors (PSF). Then, indicators were developed to measure each dimension of the TDS construct. DA was measured using eight (08) indicators, FBS was measured using six (06) indicators, TPL using six (06) indicators, HS was measured by four (04) and PSF were measured by five (05) indicators. Therefore, initially there were twenty nine (29) indicators developed to measure the tourists' destination satisfaction (Appendix I). Each dimension was 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. Two items such as "Easiness to access to the destination attractions" in destination attractions and "equal opportunities for different nationalities in Sri Lanka" in political and social factors were removed from the instrument after factor analysis was conducted using pilot survey data and the instrument was redefined for final study. Finally 27 indicators were generated to measure the destination satisfaction construct.

In addition to that, three items (03) were generated to measure tourists' demographic characteristics such as respondents' country of origin, age, gender. Furthermore, four items (04) were included in the questionnaire to measure the 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.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Validation of Measurement Properties

In the first phase of the analysis, psychometric properties were validated. It is important to ensure accuracy and applicability of the research instrument (Malhotra, 2007; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

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.

Unidimensionality: Unidimensionality of each construct was assessed individually using exploratory factor analysis. Therefore, before conducting the factor analysis, sampling adequacy and Sphericity were employed in order to assess the ability of factorization. According to factor analysis, 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 unidimensional.

Reliability: Table 01 shows the Cronbach 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 ($\alpha > 0.7$). Therefore, it can be concluded that adequate internal consistency exists with destination satisfaction dimensions.

TABLE 01
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

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

TABLE 02
Results of Sampling Adequacy Sphericity and Convergent Validity

Dimension	Sampling Adequacy	Sphericity Bartlett's Test		Convergent Validity		No. of Items
	KMO Test	Chi. Square	Sig.	CR	AVE	
DA	0.728	504.718	0.000	0.700	0.657	7
FBS	0.705	319.041	0.000	0.714	0.648	6
TPL	0.774	340.107	0.000	0.730	0.690	6
HS	0.624	267.039	0.000	0.728	0.638	4
PSF	0.701	169.969	0.000	0.746	0.650	4

Discriminant Validity: Discriminant validity was tested to ensure the theoretically un-relatedness of the indicators. Table 03 revealed the AVE estimates and Shared variance (r^2) estimations. Further, Table 03 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.

TABLE 03
Discriminant Validity

Variable	Shared Variance					AVE	No. of Items
	DA	FS	TP	HS	PS		
DA	0.657					0.657	7
FBS	0.284 ^{^2}					0.648	6
	0.227	0.648					
TPL	0.402 ^{^2}	0.440 ^{^2}				0.690	6
	0.308	0.339	0.690				
HS	0.341 ^{^2}	0.186 ^{^2}	0.329 ^{^2}			0.638	4
	0.205	0.141	0.194	0.628			
PSF	0.133 ^{^2}	0.195 ^{^2}	0.068 ^{^2}	0.198 ^{^2}		0.650	4
	0.063	0.058	0.073	0.270	0.650		

4.2. Sample Profile

The first phase of the data analysis shows 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 my way to some other destination) number of previous visits to Sri Lanka and how many days they stayed in Sri Lanka.

4.3. Measuring Tourists' Existing Level of Satisfaction

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 average satisfaction of the respondents as follows.

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

(Table 04 continued)

(Table 04 continued)

No. of Days Stayed	2 days	6	2.4
	3 days	7	2.8
	4 days	16	6.4
	5 days	4	1.6
	6 days	1	0.4
	7 days	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

TABLE 05
Mean Scores for Dimensions of Destination Satisfaction Construct

Dimension	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic
DA	3.43	7.00	5.6927	.64474
FBS	3.33	7.00	5.8493	.61153
TPL	3.17	7.00	5.8108	.64026
HS	3.25	7.00	5.5030	.71711
PSF	1.60	6.60	5.0797	.84873

According to the results presented in Table 05, mean scores and standard deviation values of destination satisfaction construct dimensions were as follows; for DA (5.69,0.64), for FBS (5.84, 0.61), for TPL (5.81, 0.64), for HS (5.50,0.71) and for PSF (5.07,0.84). This indicated that mean values of all the dimensions of the destination satisfaction were over 5 on the measurement scale. Further, the standard deviation scores show high variation in tourists' perception on hospitality and political and social factors. Therefore, this indicates that tourists from different countries had different opinions on hospitality and political and social factors in Sri Lanka.

Further analysis on tourists' existing level of satisfaction was conducted based on overall satisfaction mean score responses (Table 05). Thus, Table 06 depicts breakdown of overall tourists' satisfaction on destination attributes into three categories such as "Low", "Moderate" and "High" based on the mean scores.

TABLE 06
Mean Value Range

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

Table 07 shows the number of the tourists belonged to each satisfaction levels. Referring to Table 07, 106 (42.2%) tourists were having a moderate level of destination satisfaction while 145 (57.8%) tourists were having a high level of satisfaction. This concludes that majority of the tourists are in the range of satisfied to highly satisfied. Further, some tourists have neutral or moderate level of satisfaction while no respondent has indicated the low level of destination satisfaction.

TABLE 07
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

4.4. Tourists Satisfaction with Destination Attributes

Table 08 shows the results of the one sample t test employed to investigate the tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes.

As shown in Table 08 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 08 destination attractions (DA) = 41.59, Food and beverages (FBS) = 47.90, Tourism price level (TPL) = 44.81, Hospitality (HS) = 33.205, Political and social factors (PSF) = 20.15 at the significant level of 0.000 ($p \leq 0.05$). Thus, mean values of all dimensions exceeded the neutral point of 4. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes such as destination attractions, food and beverages, tourism pricing, hospitality, political and social factors available in Sri Lanka was greater than assumed tourists' satisfaction mean score ($\mu = 4$). Therefore, it can be concluded that tourists have a high level of satisfaction

with destination attributes such as destination attractions, food and beverages, tourism pricing, hospitality, political and social factors available in Sri Lanka.

TABLE 08
One Sample T Test

Item	Test Value = 4						
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Values	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
DA	41.593	250	0	5.69	1.69266	1.6125	1.7728
FBA	47.909	250	0	5.85	1.84927	1.7732	1.9253
TPL	44.806	250	0	5.81	1.81076	1.7312	1.8904
HS	33.205	250	0	5.5	1.50299	1.4138	1.5921
PSF	20.154	250	0	5.07	1.07968	0.9742	1.1852

4.5. Tourists' Level of Destination Satisfaction in terms of Tourist Country of Origin

The correlation analysis indicated that there is positive association of DA($r = 0.657, p < 0.01$), FS($r = 0.632, p < 0.01$), TP($r = 0.669, p < 0.01$), HS($r = 0.647, p < 0.01$), PS($r = 0.569, p < 0.01$) with TDS. This indicated that there is positive association between dimensions of tourists' destination satisfaction (DA, FS, TP, HS, PS) and tourists' destination satisfaction. Table 08 depicts results of one – way ANOVA 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 ($p \leq 0.05$). Hence H_2 was rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a high level of tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes available in Sri Lanka such as Destination Attractions (DA), Food & Beverage Services (FBS), Tourism Pricing Level (TPL), Hospitality (HS), Political and Social Factors (PSF) and overall tourists' destination satisfaction (TDS) irrespective of their country of origin .

Further, as shown in Table 09, Chinese tourists reported the lowest satisfaction mean scores for TDS construct, supporting the notion that Chinese nationalities may have lower destination satisfaction levels than other sample groups. Moreover, tourists from UK reported the highest satisfaction scores. Further, Chinese tourists reported the lowest mean scores for DA (4.94), FBS (5.05), TPL (4.31), HS (4.57), PSF (4.5) whereas tourists from UK reported the highest satisfaction scores for DA (6.28), FBS (6.02). All the countries other than

China had indicated a higher satisfaction level. Maldives have the highest satisfaction mean score for TPL (6.35).

TABLE 09
Tourists' Level of Satisfaction across the different Nationalities (ANOVA)

Item	Mean Satisfaction Scores							Total	F	Sig. ($p \leq 0.05$)
	India	Maldives	UK	France	Russia	China	Germany			
DA	5.42	5.86	6.28	5.55	5.81	4.94	5.59	5.69	19.75	0
FS	5.92	5.85	6.02	5.54	5.81	5.05	5.81	5.85	5.56	0
TP	5.82	6.35	6.15	5.13	5.79	4.31	5.78	5.81	36.19	0
HS	5.55	5.86	5.42	5.53	5.85	4.57	5.36	5.5	3.16	0
PS	5.35	4.52	5.08	5.04	4.75	4.5	5.01	5.07	4.87	0
TDS	5.62	5.69	5.79	5.36	5.6	4.68	5.51	5.59	15.45	0

5. 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 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 & Newton, 2005). Thus, objectives of the study were to investigate whether there is a significant difference in tourists' existing level of satisfaction in Sri Lanka and to examine whether tourists' destination satisfaction varies in terms of tourists' country of origin. Yoon and Uysal (2005) stated that tourists' destination satisfaction plays an important role in planning marketable tourism products and services for a destination. Further, the assessment of destination satisfaction ought to be a basic parameter used to evaluate the performance of destination products and services. Alegre and Garau (2010) stated that tourist's feeling of place attachment is created by identifying symbolically or emotionally with a time a tourist spent in particular location. Thus, Destination Attractions, Food and Beverage services, Tourism Pricing, Hospitality and Political and Social factors seem to be more important from the point of view of tourists during the time they spend in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the factors which strongly contribute for tourists overall satisfaction should be carefully monitored (Maunier and Camelis, 2013). Moreover, analyzing the antecedents of customer satisfaction provides insight on the process of creating satisfaction at both the construct and

indicator levels. Therefore, to plan and deliver a delighted travel experience in Sri Lanka, these attribute level satisfactions can be used. Further, it can be used to understand how well tourism products and service providers at a particular destination are able to recognize and respond to the needs of its customers and which attributes destinations offer need to be improved. Hence, tourists' comments, complaints and suggestions are a valuable source of information for improvements and innovations.

Further, mean scores of tourists' overall satisfaction was categorized into three categories as "Low level of Satisfaction" "Moderate level of Satisfaction" and "High level of Satisfaction". The findings show that there are no responses received under "Low level of Satisfaction". 42.2 per cent of the tourists were moderately satisfied and 57.8 per cent of tourists had a high level of overall satisfaction. This implies that tourists who visit Sri Lanka are either moderately or highly satisfied with five destination attributes utilized in this study. Rayan (1991b) cited in Buhalis (2000) stated that for the survival of tourism in a particular destination, carefully monitoring tourist satisfaction levels and using those information as a part of the criteria for success are more important than increasing the number of tourists. Thus, this points out that for the survival in the existing business, the overall satisfaction level can be used as a criterion for improving quality in tourism experience delivery. Therefore, this study indicates that improvement in destination attractions, food and beverage services, tourism pricing, hospitality, and political and social factors is required for future success of tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Therefore, implication of this study was that tourists' level of satisfaction with each attribute has to be considered when formulating tourism strategies.

Further, the second objective was to investigate whether tourists' satisfaction on Sri Lanka varies in terms of the tourists' country of origin. The results indicated that, 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 travelers. Further, tourists' satisfaction levels in Sri Lanka vary in terms of their satisfaction with certain attributes and vice versa. Kamata, Misui & 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 the fact regarding UK tourists, European travelers such as French, English, and German individuals travel mostly outside of their own countries (Alegre & Cladera, 2006). Supporting that, this study indicated that majority of 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 deterred (Neal & Gursoy, 2008; Alegre & Garue, 2009). Further, the study reveals that the importance of destination promotion institutes to identifying the importance of attributes vary according to the nationality. Previous destination satisfaction surveys have identified that some are specific and some are generic (Kozak & Rimmington., 2000; Poon & Low, 2005). E.g: tourism pricing

considered to be the most influencing attribute in Sri Lanka for all nationalities while hospitality is for mostly for 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 & Gursoy, 2008; Li & 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 (Alegre & Garau, 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 continuously established in order 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 & Camelis, 2013).

The evidence advocates that destination managers should segment tourists according to their tendency to seek variety in their choice. Moreover, this study measured tourists' satisfaction in Sri Lanka based on their country of origin. Therefore, in future, tourists' existing level of satisfaction can be further investigated as a comparison of the satisfaction levels among 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. Thus, future research opportunities available to identify other attributes specific to Sri Lanka.

The limitations of the study are relating to the scope of the study which represents the satisfaction levels of seven nationalities. There is a trend of increasing tourists from Middle East countries and South American countries. This is not addressed due to the fact that 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 could not be captured in 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. Further,

limitation is the lack of formally recorded sources of past research studies on tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Thus, it has limited of getting good insight on tourism market in Sri Lanka specially on identifying destination attributes.

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