

The Impact of Destination Image, Perceived Quality on Tourist Revisit Intention Mediating the role of Tourist Satisfaction in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has identified as a major economic driver for majority of the countries in the world as it has a significant effect on the employment rates, foreign exchange earnings and the infrastructure developments. In this highly competitive market, Sri Lanka can be identified as a fascinating case study as it tackles the complex relationships between the destination image, perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist re-visit intention. Moreover, it is essential to understand the factors that influence the tourists' decision to return to a specific destination due to the high competitiveness of this sector. This study critically aims to identify the impact of destination image, perceived quality on tourist revisit intention mediating the role of tourist satisfaction in Sri Lanka. Data was collected from the international tourists who are visiting the country through a structures questionnaire and a survey measured destination image, perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and the tourist re-visit intention. Data was gathered from both online and offline at hotels, airports and the tourist sites. Siple ransom sampling was used to obtain an unbiased, representative sample. The data were analyzed by using SPSS and AMOS to examine the relationships among the variables. The results showed that the measurement model was reliable and vali and the structural model had a good fit. Destination Image and Perceived Quality had a positive effect on tourist satisfaction and tourist satisfaction strongly influenced tourist re-visit intention. However, destination mage and perceived quality do not directly affect tourist re-visit intention. The study shows that the tourism marketers and policymakers of Sri Lanka need to focus on enhancing the tourist perception about the destination. Hence, Tourist Satisfaction has identified as the main factor that accelerates the tourist intention to return to a particular destination acting as a bridge between the destination image, perceived quality and revisit intention. Therefore, continuous improvements in service and the tourist experience are important for the long-term success of the tourism industry of Sri Lanka...

Keywords: Destination Image, Perceived Quality, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourist Re-visit Intention

1. INTRODUCTION:

Tourism has identified as a major economic driver for majority of the countries in the world as it has a significant effect on the employment rates, foreign exchange earnings and the infrastructure developments (Wei, et al., 2024). Hence, Atmari and Putri, (2021) critically emphasized that the one major component in marketing is the perception that prospective customers have goods and services. In this highly competitive market, Sri Lanka can be identified as a fascinating case study as it tackles the complex relationships between the destination image, perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist re-visit intention (Waas et al., 2020). Moreover, it is essential to understand the factors that influence the tourists' decision to return to a specific destination. Due to the competitive nature oftourism it is crucial to identify the comprehensive approach that recognizes the relationships to several industries from local goods and services to transportation and hospitality (Asnawi, 2021). According to Le and Le, (2020), there are many components that contributes to effective destination management such as establishing a positive image, providing exceptional tourist experiences

and ensuring the tourist satisfaction as these factors enhances the probability of tourist revisits to a particular destination.

The tourism in Sri Lanka has a tremendous expansion after the civil war as it has created a new era of creating the country as a potential world travel destination (Biyagamage, Jayawardena, 2013). Hence, this can be critically proven that the country has reached one million tourists and earning an over one billion dollars in export revenue marking a significant milestone. Hence, the tourism can be developed by promoting the lesser-known areas and diversifying the tourist offering and by implementing sustainable tourism practices. Moreover, Zhang and Niyomslip (2020) critically argued that it is more important to enhance the attractiveness of the destination as it is used as a standard of measuring the tourist satisfaction.

Despite having a rich cultural legacy and the stunning beauty of the country the tourism industry is facing challenges with the destination image, perceived quality and tourist satisfaction as they have an impact on tourists' willingness to return. Hence, Kumar (2018), critically

argued that by developing the infrastructure, health services and security measures have guaranteed the safety and wellbeing of tourists and it is one of the most crucial factors to accelerate the tourism in the country. Moreover, a negative image which originates due to the causes such as environmental deterioration, safety problems and the negative media coverage reduce the tourists' repeat intentions. Furthermore, some obstacles such as the language barriers, lack of information or the poor facilities can contribute to the lower satisfaction levels. Therefore, there is a need to enhance the visual appeal of Sri Lanka's tourism products through ethical photographic portrayal (Herath et al., 2020). Hence, it is important to understand the factors that influence destination image, perceived quality and tourist satisfaction and how these factors combine to form the revisit intentions of tourists. Furthermore, it is crucial to enhance repeat visits as it is essential for the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry.

The main objective of the research is to investigate how the destination image and perceived quality affect the tourist revisit intention with an emphasis on how the tourist satisfaction functions as a mediator in the context of Sri Lanka. This study is significant to numerous stakeholders such as the academics, policymakers, tourism operators and the destination management organizations. Hence, by identifying the factors that influencing the tourist revisit intention is important as it helps to create focused marketing campaigns and to enhance the tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The views and the actions of the tourists are mainly influenced by the destination image, and it can be mainly identified as the cognitive and affective representation of the destination in the minds of the prospective travellers (Sudarmiatin, 2019). Hence, destination image has a long-term effect on the tourism sector as it determines not only the original destination decision but also it represents the trip reviews and the future (Christina and Qu, 2007). Moreover, according to Jebbouri et al., (2022) destination image is identified as the process through which the people create views about destination to visit a particular destination. It includes the ideas, feelings, perceptions and the information collected through variety of sources such as the firsthand experience, social media and the travel related materials. Hence, Sanjaya and Aruan (2021), critically argued that the tourists commonly actively participate in variety of cultural activities, attractions and the tours which mainly influences the total experiences and the satisfaction levels. Hence, this critically represents that the shared experiences are basically what determines the level of satisfaction. A favourable perception of the destination can greatly enhance the tourist satisfaction and it encourage a stronger desire to return (Jebbouri et al., 2022). The impression that the tourists get of a particular destination is greatly influenced by their experiences in which engage their physical and emotional senses and it is mainly linked to their memories (Atmari and Putri, 2021).

Another important factor that affects the tourist revisit intention is the perceived quality and it is identified as the

subjective evaluation of the services and the facilities provided by a destination to the travellers. It includes a variety of elements such as the accommodation, transportation, hospitality and the attractions (Travar et al., 2022). According to Palacio and Martin (2003), the destination image is mainly formed by the cognitive and the emotional interpretation. Travellers who believe that the tourism offerings of a particular destination have excellent quality then it is more likely to has a positive attitude towards the destination and it indicate the higher satisfaction levels resulting in accelerating the tourist re visit intention. Hence, on the other hand, regardless of the reputation of the destination and unfavourable opinions about the quality may discourage the tourists from going back. Moreover, to increase the tourist satisfaction, Sri Lanka need to enhance the specific features about the destination (Waas et al., 2020).

Furthermore, tourist satisfaction as a mediator it connects the perceived quality and the tourist intention to return as well as the destination image and the tourist re-visit intention (Kim, 2014). Hence, both the cognitive and the psychological elements of the destination image where the cognitive components concentrate on the knowledge and objective characteristics while the affective components mainly emphasize the feelings like the calm and the excitement. Furthermore, the degree to which the tourists are satisfied mainly depend on their experiences and how much their expectations are meet. Moreover, a major factor in determining the tourist satisfaction is mainly the initial expectations on the quality of the services that they received from a particular destination (Mohammad & Som, 2010). Moreover, Uslu et al., (2024), critically argued that the destination image has a positive impact on the tourist satisfaction. Hence, when travellers are happy, they are more likely to become loyal tourists of ta particular destination by spreading the positive word of mouth about their wonderful experiences as it is a crucial component in destination marketing (Le and Le, 2020). Hence, the expectations and the experiences determine how satisfied tourists about a particular destination.

The relationship between the destination image, perceived quality and the tourist satisfaction directly affects the tourist re-visit intention as it is a major outcome variable for the sustainability and the competitiveness of a particular destination. Hence, Zabkar, et al., (2009) critically argued that the tourist revisit intention critically identifies the tourists' propensity to return to a destination in the future and it is a powerful predictor of destination loyalty and the long-term success. Activities related to sustainable tourism depend on tourists returning, which demonstrates their loyalty, and it reduces the expenses in comparison to attracting new tourists. Repeat business encourages environment and cultural preservation and in addition to supporting the tourism industry's financial sustainability (Le and Le, 2020). The desire of tourists to return indicates that they value the destination's future economic development potential in addition to its aesthetic appeal (Leou and Wang, 2023). Hence, Tulasi et al., (2024) critically argued that to guarantee the long-term viability and the expansion of the tourism industry, Sri Lanka need to understand and successfully manage these issues. Moreover, to Sri Lanka to increase its appeal as a

travel destination and to develop persistent tourist loyalty, it is imperative that these intricate relationships and they need to be comprehended (Atmari and Putri, 2021; Gayeta and Ylagan, 2022; Setiawan et al., 2020; Wei et al., 2024).

Furthermore, according to Hasan et al., (2019), successful marketing strategies should actively manage travellers' expectations and happiness within the particular destination and it provides to build long term relationships and to enhance the business profitability. To guarantee high levels of tourist satisfaction and the return visits, the destination managers need to work to provide memorable experiences that go above and beyond for the tourists (Yuan and Marzuki, 2024). Also, a major factor in determining the tourist loyalty is mainly the tourist satisfaction. Hence, Sri Lanka can enhance its destination image, boost the likelihood of return visits, and accomplish sustainable tourism growth by putting the needs of tourists first and consistently raising the calibre of its tourism related products and services (Wang and Li, 2023). According to Zhang and Niyomslip (2020), critically argued that the attracting of repeat tourists is crucial for the enhancement of the tourist attractions.

According to Biyagama and Jayawardena (2013), the relationships between destination image, perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist re-visit intention are especially significant in the context of Sri Lanka, a nation with a rich cultural legacy and a variety of natural attractions. In Sri Lanka, the geographical concentration of tourists at a small number of well-known destinations is a problematic issue (Marasinghe et al., 2020). Sri Lanka has seen tremendous growth in its tourism industry and has become a popular travel destination following a period of disputes (Samaranayake et al., 2013). Many types of travellers are served by the nation's varied attractions (Kannu et al., 2022). Hence, significant export income could be mainly produced by the Sri Lankan tourism (Samaranayake et al., 2013). However, Sri Lanka must carefully manage its destination image, improve the perceived quality of its tourism products, and put the demands of its tourists' first to maintain this growth and guarantee the long-term competitiveness of its tourism business. Improving infrastructure is identified as a one strategy to address the issues facing Sri Lanka's tourism sector (Kumar, 2018). Furthermore, it is critical to remember that the tourism sector can be greatly impacted by the emergencies like the COVID-19 epidemic. To stay in the market and to beat the competition, the companies need to establish a strong brand identity with their customers (Tahir et al., 2024). For the tourism industry to be broaden with many products and more tourists, it must also prioritize health and well-being, rural experiences, and traditional indigenous medical practices like Ayurveda (Fernando, 2021). Prioritizing tourist satisfaction and enhancing the calibre of tourism related goods and services will enhance the perception of Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and to encourage more tourists to return to the country (Bandara, 2019; M. T. et al., 2021; Perera et al., 2023; Waas et al., 2020).

3. RESEARCH GOAL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

It is suggested that this study mainly look at the factors (destination image, perceived quality, tourist satisfaction) that influence the tourist re-visit intention, and it have been identified as research gaps in the current body of literature and this research is carried out to identify their impact on the likelihood of returning tourists to Sri Lanka.

4. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

H1: Destination Image effect positively towards tourist satisfaction

H2: Perceived Quality effect positively towards tourist satisfaction

H3: Tourist Satisfaction effect positively towards tourist re-visit intention

H4: Destination Image effect positively towards tourist re-visit intention

H5: Perceived Quality effect positively towards tourist re-visit intention

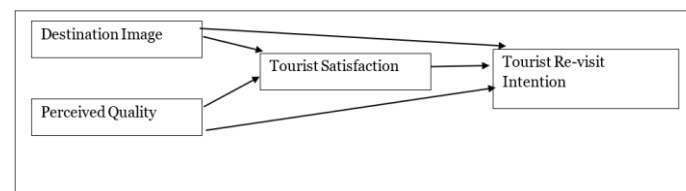


Figure 1: Proposed study's framework

5. STUDY METHODOLOGY

Data from a representative sample of international tourists who are visiting the country will be gathered using a structured questionnaire survey as part of a quantitative research strategy to thoroughly investigate the suggested relationships. Hence, using recognized scales and the measurements from the body of the current literature the questionnaire has been designed to determine how the tourists view the destination, its perceived quality and their degree of satisfaction and their intention to return (Palacio and Martin, 2003). Hence, the different sections of the questionnaire will focus on different constructs of interest. Moreover, to evaluate the destination image, a multi-dimensional scale that accounts for cognitive, affective and the conative elements will be used. Hence, a scale that evaluates the tourists' opinions on many facets of the travel experience which includes the lodging, transportation, attractions and the services will be utilized to evaluate the perceived quality. Moreover, a scale that weighs the overall satisfaction of tourists with their trip to Sri Lanka as well as their elements of the experience will be utilized to evaluate the tourist satisfaction. Hence, a scale evaluating travelers' propensity to return to Sri Lanka in the future and their desire to suggest the destination to others will be used to evaluate the tourist re-visit intention (Waas et al., 2020). Moreover, demographic questions are also included in the questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents on the nationality, age, gender, educational level, income level, purpose of visit and other prior travel experiences. Hence, a pilot study has been conducted to evaluate validity, reliability and the clarity prior to conducting large-scale research. Hence, the data has been gathered at during different places such as the hotels, airports, and

different tourism destinations by utilizing both offline and online techniques.

To guarantee that each subgroup is appropriately represented within the study sample frame, the simple random sampling technique has been selected for this research. It increases the effectiveness of generalizing the study's findings and offers better coverage to the public. In this method each element of the target population is already known and has a similar probability of being chosen. This method is more important as it ensures the representative, unbiased sample that facilitate accurate statistical analysis and generalizable results. Hence, statistical tools like SPSS and AMOS have used for data analysis to identify the relationship between the relevant constructs.

6. RESULTS

In this study the survey research approach was utilized where a questionnaire was developed to gather information from the international tourists who are visiting the country. Hence, the probability sampling has been utilized in this research. According to the finding of the research following results have been obtained from the research.

	C R	A V E	M S V	Max R(H)	TS A F	D E S T	PQ U A L	TR VIN T
TS AF	0. 99 7	0. 98 0	0. 60 8	0.99 7	0. 99 0			
DE ST	0. 95 1	0. 60 1	0. 27 4	0.95 3	0. 43 9	0.7 75		
PQ UA L	0. 97 4	0. 82 6	0. 36 5	0.97 6	0. 60 4	0.5 23	0.9 09	
TR VIN T	0. 99 5	0. 96 8	0. 60 8	0.99 6	0. 78 0	0.3 40	0.4 97	0.98 4

Table 1: CR, Discriminant and Convergent Validity

Before obtaining the structural model for hypothesis validation, the measurement model was tested to assess the composite reliability, discriminant and convergent validity using the Gaskin Plugin Tool. The table 1 shows that the composite reliability values for all constructs are above the recommended threshold of 0.7 supporting a good internal consistency of the constructs (Ramli and Badarulzaman, 2023). Hence, the average variance extracted values for each construct has achieved 0.5 and it confirms that all the constructs have achieved the convergent validity criteria (Ng et al., 2022). Hence, AVE values of all constructs are higher than the maximum shared variance and it represents all constructs meet the discriminant validity criteria. Therefore, the measurement model demonstrates the excellent model-fit criteria as it includes the reliability, convergent validity and the

discriminant validity and this critically identified that it is suitable for the structural modelling to validate the hypothesis.

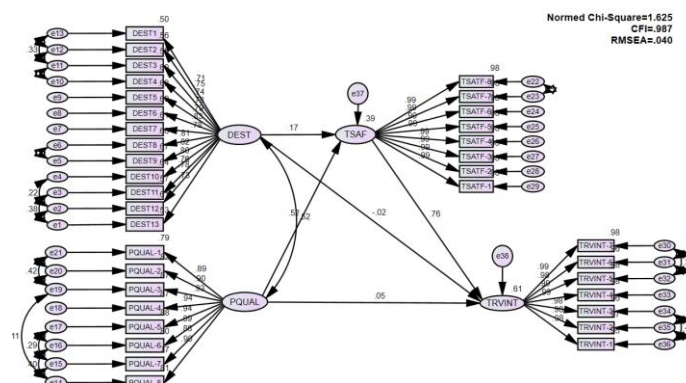


Figure 2: Structural Model

The figure shown above represents the structural model obtained at a CMIN/df value of 1.625, with a significance value of less than 0.05. GFI appears to be slightly less than 0.9; however, the value shows an acceptable fit. The other key indices (TLI=0.985, CFI=0.987, and RMSEA=0.040) are higher than the thresholds of 0.9, confirming that the structural model is a good fit model for the hypothesis testing (Zhao et al., 2024)

			Estimate (β)	S.E.	C.R.	P
TSAT	<--	DEST	.290	.087	3.333	**
TSAT	<--	PQUAL	.540	.053	10.120	**
TRVINT	<--	TSAT	.738	.041	17.949	**
TRVINT	<--	DEST	-.029	.067	-4.270	.670
TRVINT	<--	PQUAL	.047	.046	1.032	.302

$R^2 = 0.61$, CMIN/ df = 1.625, GFI = 0.885, TLI = 0.985, CFI = 0.987, RMSEA = 0.040

Table 2: Hypothesis Table

According to the statistics, the destination image (DEST) positively and strongly affects the tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.290$, CR = 3.333, $p < 0.001$). This critically represents that the higher destination image enhances the tourist satisfaction. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is critically accepted. Moreover, the influence of the perceived quality (PQUAL) positively and significantly affects the tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.540$, CR = 10.120, $p < 0.001$). This critically portrays the alternate hypothesis H2 is accepted. Hence, the tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship on tourist re-visit

intention (TRVINT) positive ($\beta = 0.0.738$, $CR = 17.949$, $p < 0.001$). This critically represents that the H3 is accepted as the tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship on tourist revisit intention. Moreover, on the other hand the relationship of DEST on TRVINT is critically identified as insignificant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the H4 is rejected. Furthermore, the relationship of perceived quality on tourist revisit intention is also significant and therefore, the H5 is rejected.

7. CONCLUSION

According to the findings, it is crucial for the destination marketers, tourism stakeholders and policymakers in Sri Lanka to enhance the strong destination perceptions as it ensures the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector. Hence, these findings align with the previous research as it highlights the tourist satisfaction as a major determinant of behavioural intentions where a positive destination image can indirectly foster revisit intentions through enhanced satisfaction (Atmari and Putri, 2021). Hence,

However, the direct impact of the destination image and the perceived quality on the tourist revisit intention is not significant as it critically identifies the tourist satisfaction act as a full mediator in these relationships and it has identified in the prior studies. This critically highlights the importance of the tourism stakeholders to prioritize the efforts that they directly enhance the tourist experience as it is mainly impacted by the tourist satisfaction which has identified as a stronger predictor of the repeat visitation than either destination image or the perceived quality independently. This critically identifies the importance of a holistic approach where marketing and service delivery are intrinsically linked to enhance the positive emotional responses the memorable experiences. This is further supported by the significant impact of the perceived quality on tourist satisfaction identifying that the tangible aspects of the tourist offering are crucial in enhancing the overall tourist experience. Therefore, effective management strategies need to focus on continuous improvement for the enhancement of the tourism sector in Sri Lanka.:

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