

Factors Affecting Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka

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Abstract - Tourism is one of the enormous and emerging sectors in the world economy which contributes about 10% to the global gross domestic product. The progress and the instigation are inevitably determined by the level of satisfaction of the tourists in a destination. As an island, Sri Lanka has great opportunities to promote tourism. Hikkaduwa is one of the eye catching areas which can mesmerize both international and domestic tourists. Sri Lankan tourism industry is in a backward position in promoting domestic tourism and only few studies had been conducted to measure the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Sri Lanka. Under this backdrop, it is prudent to answer what are the factors which maximize the Western province tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka. The general objective of this study is to identify the Western province domestic tourists' perception towards the satisfaction gained from Hikkaduwa as a tourist destination. Furthermore, the study attempts to investigate the relevance of 5A's concept on domestic tourists' satisfaction.

The operational methodology for this study is a factor analysis which has three stages. First stage is the Exploratory Factor Analysis to identify the major factors that influence the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa. Second stage is the Confirmatory Factor Analysis to confirm the identified major factors from the Exploratory Factor Analysis. Finally, the Structural Equation Model to identify the relationships between the identified factors in the model.

The Descriptive analysis of collected results has shown that majority of the Western province domestic tourists have prior experience in Hikkaduwa. According to the Factor analysis, the study found that Accommodation, Amenities, Attractions, Accessibility and Activities influence

the domestic tourists' satisfaction. Moreover, the study revealed that Accommodation, Amenities, Attractions, Accessibility and Activities have a significantly positive impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa. However, the activities impact 95% on domestic tourists' satisfaction and it is the most crucial factor.

Finally, this study suggests to introduce low budget tour packages, publication of an accommodation guide and tourist guide map in native languages and maintain the quality of the accommodations. Additionally, improving activities in the destination would help the stakeholders to increase the satisfaction level and the future growth of the domestic tourism industry in Hikkaduwa.

Keywords— *Domestic Tourism, Tourists' Satisfaction, 5A's, Factor Analysis*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important strand in the economy of Asia and Pacific countries. Most of the counties have adopted many strategies to expand tourism in their countries [1]. To get multiple socioeconomic benefits from tourism, all nations must introduce low cost business models which are diversified [2].

“Domestic tourism comprises the activities of a resident visitor within the country of reference, either as part of a domestic tourism trip or part of an outbound tourism trip” [3]. “A domestic traveler is any person residing in a country who travels to a place within the country, outside his or her usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” [4]. Pierret [2] reviewed that according

to the UNWTO estimations the global level domestic tourism records 73% of total overnights, 74% of arrivals and 69% of overnights at hotels, 89% of arrivals and 75% of overnights in other (non-hotel) accommodations.

Sri Lankans also like to experience the cultural and natural richness of their own country. Hence it is very important to pay attention to the domestic tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is one of the leading factors which assists to deal with the competitiveness of the tourism industry [5]. When evaluating the tourist satisfaction, a priority should be given to the factor of Accommodation. According to the capacity available in 2017 by resort regions, the South coast region had 35.23% accommodations out of the total capacity and it is recorded as the highest accommodation capacity in 2017 [6]. Therefore the domestic population is also mainly attracted to the South coast zone extends from Wadduwa to Tissamaharama. The finest Southern beaches are Tangalle, Beruwala, Mirissa, Bentota, Unawatuna and Hikkaduwa. The largest proportion of nights local guests spent was reported from the South coast as 31.73% [6], because of these beautiful beaches.

According to the details of domestic visitors by location in 2017, the number of local visitors arrived to Galle was 67,248 and the revenue from that area was Rs.1,810,015 [7]. Hikkaduwa is one of the most famous areas in Galle in Southern region. Uysal [8] defined that the attractiveness of the tourist destinations always draws the tourists and the reason for this attractiveness is the appealing sources in those areas. Likewise, the natural attractions like beach, corals and also the cultural attractions like Seenigama Muhudu Viharaya, Tsunami Honganji Viharaya, and Naga Viharaya are some of the great diversions in Hikkaduwa for the domestic travelers. This area is very distinctive for eco-tourism which benefits for the locals as well as the environment. The sustainable tourism destination management is responsible to improve the tourist satisfaction by providing a high service quality [9].

Tourists normally consider the tourist satisfaction as a key element that can be used to measure a tourism service [10]. Under this backdrop, it is prudent to answer what are the factors which maximize the Western province tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka.

The general objective of this study is to identify the Western province domestic tourists' perception towards the satisfaction gained from Hikkaduwa as a tourist destination. Furthermore, the study attempts to investigate the relevance of 5A's concept on domestic tourists' satisfaction.

II. LITRETURE REVIEW

a. Tourist Satisfaction

As customer satisfaction is a term which relates to marketing, it is one of the principal measures for marketers as well as for the businessmen.

There is no doubt that consumers expect to gain their satisfaction through consuming various goods and services. To maintain the consumer satisfaction a good or service must be different or unique from other products. If a particular product or service is divergent from other products or services which are in the same market, it can give satisfaction to the consumers and also maintain its market demand [11].

Customers highly repurchase products depending on the quality, expectations and satisfaction gained by them. But they lower the repurchasing when competition, differentiation and experience is high and when switching costs and difficulty of standardization is low [12].

Customers usually differentiate the actual gains with the expected gains of any product. They would be well satisfied and purchase the same product again, if the actual gains are higher than the expected gains. Nevertheless, if the actual gains are lower than the expected gains, customers would be dissatisfied [13]. To magnify the customer satisfaction, the quality of the product and plentifulness is important [14].

Tourist satisfaction is identified as one of the crucial assessments that can be used to measure the tourism service. Tourists' intentions on revisiting the destinations are sharply connected with the factor, "satisfaction". Therefore it is one of the foremost elements which assists any destination to increase their profits and to capture an out spread market share.

Hence, when interpreting about the satisfaction it is very expedient to spotlight on the various definitions on satisfaction within the tourism literature. In some cases satisfaction can be defined as the consequence of customers'

judgment on the service quality which they recognized [15]. But in compliance with some other papers, satisfaction and service quality are headed towards different directions [16], [17]. The reason for this is, the presence of discrete elementary handling mechanisms to assess the satisfaction and service quality [18].

As specified by Kozak and Rimmington [19] tourists mainly select their destinations, utilize goods and services at the destinations, and tend to revisit those destinations according to the satisfaction they gain. Therefore, tourist satisfaction is very essential in promoting destinations.

According to Bowie and Chang [20], tourist satisfaction depends on the service quality of the destination. Therefore, in order to retain the competitiveness of destinations and to raise them, the tourism development authorities and tourism operators should take necessary steps to improve the satisfaction [17].

Individual satisfaction is derived by contrasting the anticipated and underwent experience of a good or service [21]. Yuksel and Rimmington [22] pointed out that the competition, product differentiation, customers' consumption can be increased by the tourist satisfaction.

According to Baker and Crompton [23], tourist satisfaction is the conceptual conclusion gained through various facilities and services in the destination as well as the standard of travelers' experience.

b. Accommodation

Accommodation services are essential in order to improve the tourist satisfaction. In tourism accommodation is considered as the second home for tourists.

Gnanapala [24] identified that the facilities in the accommodation like room services and maintenance, quality and standards of bathrooms, night life and entertainments, shopping facilities and recreation facilities positively influence the satisfaction level of travelers. Tourists are greatly satisfied when their accommodation is pretty and attractive, modern and fashionable, having a pleasant and friendly staff, having an eye catching view etc. [25], [26]. The language proficiency, friendliness and efficiency of the staff in the accommodation also enhance the satisfaction level of tourists [27].

A factor that strongly influence for the satisfaction of a customer is the price that the customer has to pay [28]. Accordingly, apart from the facilities, there are some other factors in the accommodations which improve the satisfaction of the tourists. Jeyamugan [29] reveals that reasonable price for accommodation, safety of visitors and emergency preparedness positively impacts on tourists' perception which in turns derives a higher satisfaction. The food safety should be in an equal level from street food vendors to high class food restaurants [30]. Consequently, the accommodations should also be clean, safe and secured [31].

c. Amenities

The amenities act as a motivational factor which make the tourists to revisit a place [29]. Amenities include the hygiene and sanitation factors and infrastructure facilities too. These amenities should be developed in order to develop the tourism industry.

According to Jeyamugan [29] hygienic food preparation, cleanliness of destinations, safe drinking water, availability of health services has a positive correlation with tourist satisfaction.

The infrastructure facilities like parking facilities and space, telecommunication facilities, banking services, money exchange, signs and indicators also show a positive relationship with satisfaction [32], [33].

Gnanapala [24] identified the factors such as banking services, internet and IDD facilities, customs and airport services impact greatly for the tourists' perception and satisfaction.

d. Attractions

The uniqueness of a place attracts more visitors. Therefore if there is a variety of natural and cultural attractions the tourers will attach to visit that place again and again. Also the tourist satisfaction increases if the people who live in that destination are warm welcoming and if there is a variety of food and beverages.

When evaluating the natural attractions and cultural attractions Jeyamugan [29] identified some motives which enchant the tourists such as pleasant climate, heritage ambience, being harmonious with nature, historical sights, archeological sites and monuments, natural features, convenient location

etc. Among them the pleasant climate, historical sights and convenient location have a better relationship with tourist satisfaction.

Quality food and beverages also plays an enormous role to attract travelers. According to Gnanapala [24], the tourists' perception and satisfaction has a positive correlation with the factors such as quality and taste of foods, quality and taste of beverages, variety of foods, reasonability of food prices, food serving methods and ability to eat tourists' favorite foods.

Among the factors like variety of cuisines, variety of restaurants, traditional food, availability of children foods, availability of foods for elderly people, tastiness of food served, temperature of food served, portions of food and presentation of dishes, a less interaction is shown by the variety of cuisines and variety of restaurants to the factor food and beverages [29].

e. Accessibility

Destinations should have accessibility. Because it is significant to attract tourists to the destination places. For that it needs some factors like good road network to reach the destination, affordable traveling cost, adequate information and documents about the destination, able to reach the destination without traffic congestions etc.

As stated by Baker and Crompton [23] the time and cost taken to transport to the destination is one of the foremost factors that influence for travelers' satisfaction.

Jeyamugan [29] identified some factors which affect for tourist satisfaction that directly connects to accessibility as road networks, rail networks, taxi services, ease of access, uncongested roads etc. There he has concluded that taxi services are less interactive with accessibility.

Tourists' perception and satisfaction can be measured by using the variables such as the quality, friendliness and responsiveness, communication skills, site explanations and ability to provide relevant information by tour guides [24].

f. Activities

If any destination has much of activities to engage in, then the tourists tend to visit that place very often. Therefore tourist satisfaction depends also on activities in the destination.

Relaxing and restful, availability of leisure activities, beach would be uncrowded, comfort for sunbathing in the beach [29] are some special activities in a destination. Nevertheless, Jeyamugan [29] examined that among the above factors only the relaxing and restful shows a positive relationship with the tourist satisfaction.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a cross-sectional design to gather primary quantitative data through a structured questionnaire. The methodology is focused on identifying the factors that influence the Western province domestic tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa coastal area. The study adopts a convenience sampling technique to generate a sample of 485 domestic tourists in Western province.

The operational methodology adopted for this study is a factor analysis which has three stages. First stage is the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the major factors that influence the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa. Second stage is the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to confirm the identified major factors from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Finally, the Structural Equation Model (SEM) to identify the relationships between the identified factors in the model. Further, the study includes the following hypothesis testing.

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Accommodation (ACC) has a significantly positive effect on Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS).
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Amenities (AME) have a significantly positive effect on Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS).
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Attractions (ATT) have a significantly positive effect on Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS).
- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Accessibility (ACE) has a significantly positive effect on Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS).

- Hypothesis 5 (H5): Activities (ACT) have a significantly positive effect on Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS).

IV. RESULTS & DISSUSIONS

a. The demographic profile of the respondents

Districts, Gender, Ethnic Group, Marital status, Age, Economic Activity Status, Educational Level and Sector, were the demographic factors collected from the respondents which were taken into the consideration for the further analysis. The demographic factors are clearly described in the subsections given below.

Colombo district recorded the majority of the sample with 204 respondents (42.06%) while the Gampaha and Kalutara districts recorded 151 and 130 respectively.

According to the study 223 were females and 262 were males. The majority was males, representing 54.02% proportion of the sample and females represented 45.98%.

The most of domestic tourists were Sinhalese (62.27%). Other ethnic groups in the selected sample were Sri Lanka Moor (95, 19.59%) Sri Lankan Tamil (70, 14.43%), Indian Tamil (11, 2.27%) and Burgher (1.44%).

As per the frequency of age group of respondents mentioned in Table 2, respondents who ranged from age 25-29 years were recorded with a frequency of 92 out of 485 (18.97%) and this age group was the most responsive group to the survey. It can be identified 364 (75.05%) respondents ranged from age 20-44. It depicts that this sample is a combination of young and matured population. When considering about the marital status of respondents, the majority of the respondents were married and it was 301 out of 485 (62.06%), then 152 (31.34%) responses were collected from the respondents who are never married. The respondents who are divorced was 18 out of 485 (3.71%), and other categories of marital status were recorded with fewer frequencies as 9 and 5 out of 485 and they are widowed and separated respectively.

Regarding the economic activity of the respondents, majority of the respondents (310 out of 485, 63.92%) are employed. Other 64 (13.20%) respondents were students, 47

respondents were un-employers (9.69%) and 28 and 36 respondents out of 485 were respectively engaged with other household work and pensioners.

The highest education level of the majority (227 out of 485, 46.80%) highest education level was G.C.E. O/L and 134 (27.63%) respondents with G.C.E A/L qualifications. Other respondents were with the qualification of grade 5 and below, grade 6-10 and degree and above categories were recorded with the frequencies of 27, 11 and 86 respectively.

“A visitor (domestic, inbound and outbound) is classified as a tourist (or overnight visitor), if her/his trip includes an overnight stay” [3]. Therefore accommodation is an essential segment of the tourism. 103 of the sample have chosen boutique villas as their accommodation place. Most of the respondents had visited Hikkaduwa more than two times. 27.84 percent of them had visited Hikkaduwa for the third time and 29 respondents had visited more than five times previously. 58 of the sample had responded it was their first visit to Hikkaduwa.

b. Factor Analysis

The exploratory analysis carried out in the literature review identified 24 factors that affect domestic tourists' satisfaction. This indicates that the results obtained from EFA for the 24 observed variables are reliable. CFA was conducted to verify the factor structure of the identified set of variables as shown in Figure 1.

Observed Variables	Components					
	ACC	AME	ATT	ACE	ACT	DTS
Enough accommodations around the destination (ACC 1)	0.838					
Accommodation prices are affordable (ACC 2)	0.777					
Facilities in the accommodations are in best condition (ACC 3)	0.848					
Accommodations are safe and secured (ACC 4)	0.693					
Proper sanitary facilities in destination (AME 1)		0.804				
Adequate parking spaces in destination (AME 2)		0.706				
ATM facilities are available around the destination (AME 3)		0.756				
Proper medical treatments and other emergency services are available (AME 4)		0.751				
Natural attractions in destination (ATT 1)			0.825			
Cultural attractions in destination (ATT 2)			0.800			
People who live in destination are warm welcoming (ATT 3)			0.524			
Variety of food and beverages in destination (ATT 4)			0.717			
Good road network to reach the destination (ACE 1)				0.627		
Traveling cost is affordable (ACE 2)				0.716		
Adequate information and documents about the destination are available (ACE 3)				0.809		
You can reach the destination without traffic congestions (ACE 4)				0.759		
Suitable atmosphere to relax on the beach & has boat ride facilities (ACT 1)					0.724	
Destination is safe to swim and do other water sports (ACT 2)					0.818	
Purpose is to attend the cultural events at the destination (ACT 3)					0.693	
Purpose is to visit Hikkaduwa National Park (ACT 4)					0.820	
You can gain the maximum satisfaction from this destination for the amount you spend (DTS 1)						0.707
This destination is having the best facilities (DTS 2)						0.817
The most satisfied destination among the other destinations in the country (DTS 3)						0.707
You are recommending this place to any other person (DTS 4)						0.791

Fig. 1: Rotated Component Matrix of the Accepted Model

According to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, this study has a high sample adequacy, as the KMO value is 0.923. Therefore, degree of common variance of KMO value is perfectly predicted; confirming the acceptance of the modified model. The resulting six components explain 66.389% of total variance and were labelled as follows to explain all factors related to the underlying features of factors under each category. To measure the reliability of latent constructs, the Cronbach Alpha test was carried out, and it was more than 0.9 for each of the six components. Accordingly, it indicated that the results were highly reliable [34].

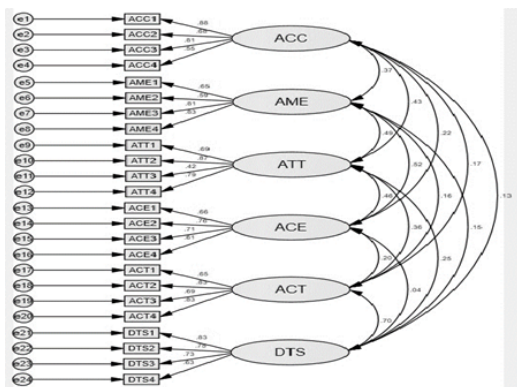


Fig. 2: Output from the Accepted Model of CFA

As shown in Figure 2, all factor loadings for the observed variables are averagely above 0.5. Higher loadings of variables suggest that tourists' perception towards satisfaction is influenced by Accommodation (ACC), Amenities (AME), Attractions (ATT), Accessibility (ACE), and Activities (ACT). For a model to be valid, the CMIN/DF value must be in the range of 1.0-3.0 [35]. Therefore, the accepted model is considered as the best fit model extracted from the CFA, with a CMIN/DF value of 1.838 and RMSEA value of 0.065. This indicates that the model has achieved the absolute fit. In addition, the model is identified as a valid model through achieving uni-dimensionality with factor loadings averagely greater than 0.5 for all observed variables.

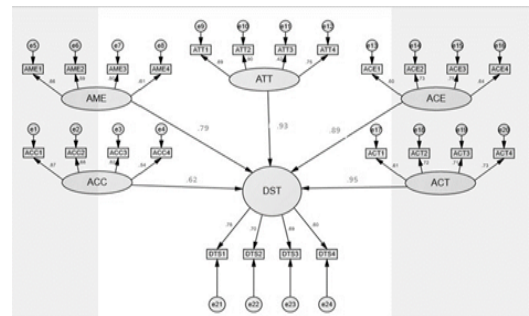


Fig. 3: Output from the Accepted model of SEM

The SEM was employed in order to identify the conceptual relationship as expressed in the aforementioned hypotheses. In the model CMIN/DF value of 2.528 and RMSEA value of 0.42. Hence the model is absolute fit because the CMIN/DF is within 1-3 and RMSEA value is less than 0.8. [35]. As shown in Figure 3, Accommodation (ACC), Amenities (AME), Attractions (ATT), Accessibility (ACE), and Activities (ACT) have a significantly positive relationship with Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS). As per the coefficient values, Accommodation (ACC) is impacting 62% for the Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS). Amenities (AME) are impacting 79% for the Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS). Attractions (ATT) are impacting 93% for the Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction (DTS). Accessibility (ACC) is impacting 89% for the Domestic Tourists Satisfaction and Activities (ACT) are impacting 95% for the Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction. According to the SEM, activities have a comparatively higher impact towards domestic tourist' satisfaction in Western province. As shown in Figure 3, the significantly positive relationships confirm that all the developed hypotheses are acceptable.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This study mainly focuses on 5A's that influence Western province domestic tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa. Literature Review identified five major variables that affect the Western province domestic tourists' perception. The EFA and CFA identified that all five variables in 5A's influence the Western province domestic tourists' perception and satisfaction in Hikkaduwa. The identified major latent variables

are Accommodation, Amenities, Attractions, Accessibility and Activities. The study found that Accommodation, Amenities, Attractions, Accessibility and Activities have a significantly positive impact on Western province domestic tourists' satisfaction in Hikkaduwa. However, the activities impact 95% on domestic tourists' satisfaction and it is the most crucial factor.

Finally, this study suggests encouraging the travel agents to introduce low budget tour packages for domestic tourists, publication of an accommodation guide, preparation of domestic tourist guide maps in Sinhala, Tamil and English languages, maintain the quality and hygiene of the accommodations and media promotional campaigns. In addition to that developing the destinations with more activities for domestic tourists would help the tourist industry service providers and governing authorities to increase the satisfaction level of domestic tourists in Western province and the future growth of the domestic tourism industry in Hikkaduwa. If domestic tourism industry is more stable, the tourism industry of Sri Lanka would not be terribly affected under any collapse in the international tourism.

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