IMPACT OF 5A'S ON DOMESTIC TOURISTS' SATISFACTION IN ELLA-SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

At present, rules and regulations implemented by the Sri Lankan government has been instrumental in providing the necessary boost to the domestic tourism sector than previously. Many countries which possess unique natural and cultural resources are making great attempts to brand those destinations related domestic tourism. When considering the domestic tourism destinations in Sri Lanka, Ella is one of the most popular places due to its distinctive image. The level of tourists' satisfaction in travelling to Ella area is mainly depends on five main elements namely, attraction, accessibility, amenities, accommodation and activities of a tourist destination. Considering the timeliness and importance of the phenomenon, this research aims at recognizing how key elements of a tourist destination affected on the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella. This research study employed the quantitative approach in collecting data, distributing self-administered questionnaires among 150 domestic tourists in Western Province who have visited Ella. The domestic tourists were selected based on convenience sampling method. The findings revealed that five elements positively correlate with domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella. Moreover, the above five factors have a positive significant impact on domestic tourist satisfaction and activities can be identified as the most crucial factor. The scholarly attention given to understand the domestic tourists' satisfaction is low in both global and local contexts. Therefore, this research fills the gap in the existing literature. As the managerial implications, stakeholders can increase the level of domestic tourist's satisfaction by improving activities, other basic infrastructure especially transportation, sanitary facilities and so on.

Keywords: *5 A's, domestic tourism, Ella-Sri Lanka, tourist satisfaction*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been recognized as one of the few viable economic opportunities in a large part of the developed countries (Grosspietsch, 2005). Not only the developed countries, but also the developing countries have identified tourism as it also brings social, cultural, environmental exchanges as well as major source of income. According to the Central Bank Report (2018) tourism became the third highest foreign exchange earner to the country. Therefore, to develop the tourism industry and make a significant contribution to the national economy, Sri Lanka has to focus on promoting new tourism trends like domestic tourism. As much as international tourism is playing a key role in promoting tourism in a country, domestic tourism is also helping it. In Sri Lanka, domestic tourism was given lesser importance in the past few years and on the other hand total domestic tourism figures are underestimated even though size and nature of the domestic tourism market has grown. In this background, Sri Lanka has a huge opportunity to become one of the major domestic tourism generators in South Asia while contributing to the growth of tourism by locking the leakage of foreign exchange through outbound (international) tourism activities same as USA and China. Local community's' support is essential to ensure long-term tourism development and domestic tourism would be a major part to achieve this target.

As a tourist destination, Sri Lanka can promote domestic tourism sector successfully because of its unique natural and cultural varied resources. A fresh approach has been taken to promote this sector through Ella destination will be one of the great opportunities to attract more local tourists and to give awareness about this segment. Ella is famous for tourist activities such as climb up little Adam's peak, swim at Diyaluma fall, walk along the rails on the Nine Arch bridge, tea field views at Lipton's Seat and etc. Even though Ella is famous for foreign tourists internationally when it comes to the domestic tourism, there is a decline in the percentage of domestic tourists to Ella which can be due to lack of awareness in the field of domestic tourism in Ella. Hence, this research was conducted to identify the five main elements of a tourist destination and how they influence on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella.

Moreover, the academic research of domestic tourism in Ella falls behind the industry, and it is an under researched area. Very little research on domestic tourism in Sri Lankan context could be found under this market. It is vital to investigate the potential of developing this sector. Thus, this study aims at adding knowledge to the domestic tourism literature by exploring how key elements of a tourist destination affect the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella.

Therefore, an understanding on how the key elements of a tourist destination affect the Domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella and how these elements are

formed regarding tourism development would be a valuable knowledge for the Domestic Tourism Industry particularly for regional domestic tourism projects.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Domestic Tourism

Throughout the past years, researchers expertise in tourism industry have begun to realize the phenomenon of domestic tourism (Ghimire, 2001), particularly in developing countries (Scheyvens, 2002; Rogerson & Zoleka, 2005). "Domestic tourism is considered to be spent within this country by its national residents on business and leisure trips and is not needed by a visa and passport or by the conversion of a currency into other, three types of categories of tourism which can be categorized as visitors, business and holiday tourism of common interest" (UNWTO, 2015).

Although research focus tends to be on international tourism due to the export income generated (Neto, 2003), a range of benefits emphasize the advantages of domestic tourism as well. Domestic tourism is wildly acknowledged for including a redistribution of national income, typically metropolitan areas, to poorer, usually rural and isolated ones (Neto, 2003; Pearce, 1990). Hence domestic tourism can offer opportunities for wealth transfer to and sustainable development of poor regions, and without having to rely on further expansion of international mass tourism and its associate issues (Seckelmann, 2002).

Domestic tourism has been a largely under-researched aspect of tourism economies in the developing countries (Ghimire, 1997). According to Rogerson and Zoleka, (2005) the lack of research is partly a result of the emphasis accorded by national governments and policy makers to the foreign exchange earnings derived from international tourism flows (Scheyvens, 2002). Keyser, (2002) said that "this research discrepancy is due to the fact that domestic tourism, as occurs within the country of residence, is difficult to track than the international tourism and does not require crossing international boarders in entry points into a country where tourists are counted."

2.2. Key Components of a Tourist Destination

Leiper, (1995, p.86) stated that "tourism is entirely about tourism destinations". Different researchers have defined a tourism destination in several ways. For instance, Medlik, (1993) defined a tourist destination as a geographical location to which a person is travelling. Dickman, (1997) has developed a framework to identify the tourist's perception

on visiting a particular tourist destination. Accordingly, there are key components of a tourist destination known as the 5A's namely Attraction, Accommodation, Accessibility, Amenities and Activities. He further stated that "To some degree, a tourist destination must have all of these five components,

but they do not need to be equally matched with the same quality and consistency with each potential destination."

2.2.1. Attractions

The attractiveness of a tourist destination has been described as one of the key determinants of the competitiveness of a specific destination (Mikulic, Kresic, & Prebezac, 2016). The opinions of visitors about the destination's perceived ability to satisfy their needs is reffered to as the attractiveness of a tourism destination (Vengesayi , Mavondo, & Reisinger, 2009). If a destination is more capable of meeting the needs of tourists, perceived attractiveness of the destination also resulted with high degree. Moreover, that particular destination is expected to be selected in preference to competing destinations (Kim & Lee, 2002). "The most ideal destination attractions are those that are rare, inimitable and only available at a particular destination or at very few destiations" Vengesayi, Mavondo, & Reisinger, (2009, p.624).

According to Jin, Weber and Bauer (2012) attractiveness is measured in terms of potential of a particular destination to offer tourists a delightful experience and guarantee the feeling of well-being during a vacation. Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin , & Stokburger-Sauer, (2016) stated that it is related with the perception of a tourist concerning the potential of a location to satisfy expectations in terms of tourism. According to Richards, (2002) attractions are the motives for tourists to make a visit at a particular destination and provide tourist's experience. According to Camilleri, (2018) the main purpose of a traveler to travel to a destination is to see what the destination has offer them in terms of what they can see, do and experience in that particular destination. According to Middleton, (2001) tourist destination attractions include natural resources, human attractions and hospitality.

2.2.2. Accessibility

Rodrigues (2017) stated that accessibility refers to the mode of travel that facilitates tourists to arrive and move around their destination. According to Arpornpisal, (2018) accessibility means the ease that allows visitors or travelers to reach places easily, safely and comfortably.The tourists sites must provide the transpotation system consisting of transportation routes, vehicles and stations. The transort operators have the aim in transporting people and goods to the destinations". Toth & David, (2010) stated that "transportation is one of the essential prerequisites for the life of tourism and can be described as a key component linking visitors to destinations to be accessed."

For a destination to be viable to tourists there must be some method to get to the country, the region or to various attractions. This does not mean to have a first class and mass transportation system available to everywhere, but it does mean that access must be made possible to tourists to reach to a particular

destination. Access relates to transport but it can be walking trail or cycling as well (Camilleri, 2018). The geographical proximity of the selected tourist destination which is relates with the time required to reach to it and the level of comfort are also significant on the flows of tourism and on the types of product which tourists purchase (Middleton, 2001).

2.2.3. Accommodations

Arpornpisal (2018) stated that tourist accommodation means places where visitors want to stay. The reason for this is in some trips tourists may stay overnight in the attractive places. To facilitate these tourists, there should be the arrangement of lodging inside the tourist attractions as well. In addition to that he also said that lodges should not be located too far from the tourist sites. According to Camilleri (2018) in some cases accommodation play a vital role in attracting tourists to a destination. Therefore, he further stressed that it is important for tourist destinations to offer a wide array of accommodation facilities, in terms of price ranges and other facilities involved. These facilities can be easily classified as a services or self-catering establishments. Hotels, bed and breakfasts, and travel inns are included under service accommodation and when considering self-catering accommodations, it comprise of campsites, caravans and holiday rentals of villas, apartments and so on (Camilleri, 2018).

Accommodations mainly consist of two types namely, half-board accommodation and full-board accommodation. Dickman (1996) mentioned that the tourist accommodations should locate closer to the tourist sites. Camilleri, (2018) also stressed the same idea as the tourists other than the business travelers, those who travel to a destination on their vacation will generally want to stay as close as possible to the major centers where more of the tourist activities are available. For a case in point, travelers want to stay near the seaside or in close proximity to the mountains, country towns, health spas, major cities and so on. In a destination if the major attraction is the sea, tourists want to stay as close to the sea (Camilleri, 2018). Despite the fact that location is generally considered as the most critical factor with regard to the profitability of an accommodation unit, other factors, such as price and facilities also play a significant role in hospitality sector (Camilleri, 2018).

2.2.4. Amenities

As Arpornpisal (2018) stated amenities means that when traveling to any location, what tourists want to obtain is convenience while traveling.. The agencies related to tourism must provide the facilities and fundamental infrastructure in the tourist attractions such s electricity, water suppy, roads, and communication systems". Furthermore, Dickman (1997) stated that amenities include basic facilities and infrastructure for tourists. These basic facilities and infrastructure comprise of public utilities, electricity, water supply,

telephones, toilets, and other needed facilities for tourists such as hospitals, banks, post offices and emergency services wihich are important as well.

Non-productibility, irreversibility, high-income elasticity and non-substitutable are some of the important characteristics of amenities (Green, 2001). Non-productibility means the use of the amenity is restricted to a specific territory which helps distinguish a particular territory from another territory. Furthermore, irreversibility means the consumer value of the amenity is sensitive to change over time and it is impossible to restore the value once it has been destroyed. For an instance, the benefits derived from a wilderness area. Once damage is occurred it is very difficult to reverse it. High income elasticity means amenities are positively and strongly correlated with income. As a result, the growing demand for living in high amenity areas, the cost of living in those places may also be high. At the same time, people may choose to live in high amenity areas; even though the wages may not be as high when compared with the other areas or the opportunities for employment are not as great. Non-substitutable means they are unique in sense. For instance, a wildlife area is unique and cannot be substituted with another type of amenity or even with another wildlife area (Green, 2001).

2.2.5. Activities

Dickman (1997) stated that activities means what the tourist can do during the rest and travel in such places in order to make their travel and rest time more intersersting and enjoyble. Dickman (1997)also stressed that these tourist activities should be various and match the demand of tourists as well.

Tourist activities are important elements at present, since tourism does not only mean traveling to visit ancient sites, temples or the beauty of nature, but tourists may also have the opportunity to take part in different activities (Arpornpisal, 2018). He also stated that these tourist activities are the experiences that will remain in the tourist's memory.

2.3. Tourists' Satisfaction

Over the past, researchers in consumer behavior and tourism have given much attention on customer staisfcation in order to examine behavioral outcomes and to gain insightful managerial implications in manageing tourist's experience (Mingfang, 2010). Tourism satisfaction is the tourist's comparison in between their initial expectation and perception (Chiu, Zeng, & Cheng, 2016). Xu and Li, (2016) stated that when tourists have positive judgements about their travel experience, it will lead to occur tourists' satisfaction while negative reviews of their travel experience will lead to occur tourists' dissatisfaction. Therefore, when a particular tourist destination meets the expectations of their tourists, it reveals their satisfaction. "In general, tourists' satisfaction assessment is based on a correlation directly propotional with the quality of the services provided at

a destination throughout the course of the tourist perception, whereas the tourists' satisfaction is assessed as a crucial factor in the development of leisure activities and tourism activities (Huyen Le, Binh Le, Chinh Le, Hieu Le, & Ngo, 2020, p.1994). According to Thanh Vu, Dung, and Dat (2020) tourists' satisfaction is the assessment of individual's subjective consumption based on all factors relevant to experience, such as accommodation, attraction, activities and cuisine.

Gaining tourists' satisfaction is important in assuring repeat visits and dissemination positive word of mouth about the destination (Nasir, Mohamad, Ghani, & Afthanorhan, 2019). Similarly, according to Kozak, Bigne and Andreu (2004) tourists' satisfaction is a crucial factor in destination marketing because it influences the selection of a destination, the consumption of goods and services, the number of reperat visits, word-of-mouth publicity and destination loyalty. Therefore, monitoring satisfaction of toutists is an important task for destination authorities/planners to get feedbacks of tourists and identify problems that affect on tourists' dissatisfaction which may have negative impact on future visits (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Consequently, Yoon and Uysal (2005) stated that evaluation of tourists' satisfaction relating to a particular tourist destination can help destination managers to alter their efforts to enrich tourist's travel experince and to develop and effective marketing strategy.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study aims at identifying the Western Province domestic tourists' perception towards the satisfaction gained from Ella. This study was carried out in a natural and spontaneous environment where there was an undisturbed flow of procedures. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from domestic tourists in Western Province who have visited Ella. Consequently, the sample consisted with 150 domestic tourists selected through convenience sampling basis by the researcher.

The research was conducted in three stages. Initially, a literature survey was conducted in order to collect comprehensive information on the research topic by using different articles. Next, to ensure the quality and the applicability of the questionnaire a few expert reviews were conducted. At the same time, a pilot survey was conducted with 25 respondents to make sure the appropriateness of the research instrument including the validity and reliability of it. Based on the results of the pilot study, necessary changes to the final questionnaire were done. Finally, to gather data, a field survey was conducted. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to analyze the collected data.

4. DATA PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS

After receiving the data from the respondents, first the data cleaning through recognizing mising values and outliers were carried out. There were very minimum amount of missing values, as the questinnaire was improved based on the outcomes of expert reviews and pilot study. Identified missing values were treated by substituting median (Little & Rubin, 2002). As Aguinis, Gottfredson and Joo (2013) recommended box plots were used to identify the presence of outliers and in this study, only five cases were identified as outliers and decided to omit from the database.

Skewness and Kurtosis values were used to test the normality of the data. As Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2013) suggested univariate skewness and kurtosis respectively ±2.00 and ± 7.00 as appropriate. The results were within the accepted ranges specifying that data were normally distributed.

As the researchers have gone through rigorous literature review in conducting this study and the research instrument was developed based on the well-established literature, content validity is already satisfied. Construct validity was tested using convergent validity and discriminant validity. Accordingly, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) values are greater than 0.5 and all the values of the Bartlett's test of Sphericity are less than 0.05. Therefore, it concludes that convergent validity of above variables satisfies the conditions of convergent validity.

Internal consistency reliability is used to assess the reliability of a summated scale where several items are summed to form a total score. According to the standard; to have internal consistency reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha value of the test should be higher than 0.7 and it is ensured in this study.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Attraction	3.7783	0.85704	-0.268	-0.857
Accessibility	3.7414	0.76381	-0.324	-0.395
Accommodation	3.7778	0.83426	-0.425	-0.222
Amenities	3.8867	0.72849	-0.104	-0.513
Activities	3.7866	0.75790	-0.417	-0.400
Tourists' satisfaction	3.9283	0.75103	-0.442	-0.591

Table 2: Validity & reliability tests

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's test of Sphericity	Cronbach's Alpha
Attraction	0.785	0.000	0.841

Accessibility	0.785	0.000	0.817
Accommodation	0.703	0.000	0.811
Amenities	0.770	0.000	0.916
Activities	0.844	0.000	0.856
Tourists' satisfaction	0.820	0.000	0.848

4.1. Sample Profile of the Study

Sample of this study is domestic tourists in Western province who have visited Ella. In the sample, the majority is represented by males (68.7%) who are in the age group of 31-40 years (38.4%). Further, the highest number of respondents is graduates (35.0%) who does executive level jobs (32.3%) earn in between Rs.50, 000-100,000 monthly (33.0%).

4.2. The Impact of 5A's on Domestic Tourists' Satisfaction in Ella

The main aim of the study is to identify the Western province domestic tourists' perception towards the satisfaction gained from Ella. Correlation analysis was used to test the related hypothesis statistically.

Table 3: Correlation of independent variables and dependent variable

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Attraction	0.729	0.000
Accessibility	0.753	0.000
Accommodation	0.724	0.000
Amenities	0.132	0.000
Activities	0.800	0.000

Source: Survey Data

According to Table 1, the key elements of a tourist destination except amenities have a strong positive correlation with the tourists' satisfaction. Furthermore, Sig. value of all independent variables are less than 0.05, it can conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between independent variables and dependent variable.

Table 4: Model Summary Table

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.
0.850	0.723	0.713	0.000

Source: Survey Data

According to the findings, the model became significant and customer satisfaction is explained by attraction, accessibility, accommodation, amenities and activities is 71%.

Table 5: Coefficients Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0.243	0.246		0.986	0.326
Attraction	0.161	0.073	0.182	2.202	0.029
Accessibility	0.121	0.086	0.123	1.398	0.164
Accommodation	0.148	0.066	0.165	2.241	0.027
Amenities	0.091	0.046	0.089	1.990	0.048
Activities	0.451	0.075	0.455	6.040	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Tourists' Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data

According to Table 4, constant value is 0.243 which means when independent variables are zero; still tourists' satisfaction has a value of 0.243 in statistical terms. On the other hand, there is a moderate positive impact (β= 0.451, p<0.05) of activities on tourists' satisfaction and it can be identified as the element which has the highest impact on tourists' satisfaction in Ella.

Accordingly, the model can be built as,

$$\text{Tourists' satisfaction} = 0.243 + 0.161(\text{attraction}) + 0.148(\text{accommodation}) + 0.091(\text{amenities}) + 0.451(\text{activities}) + \text{\textepsilon}$$

5. DISCUSSION

This study mainly focused on examining the factors affecting on the domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella, Sri Lanka. Results show that the attraction, accessibility, accommodation and activities have a strong positive impact on tourists' satisfaction. Moreover, activities show the highest impact on tourists' satisfaction.

Referring to the literature, similarly, Robustin, Sularso, Suroso and Yulisetiarini (2018) show that there is a positive and significant effect of attraction on tourists' satisfaction. Futhermore, he stated that tourist attraction is the prime reason for visitors to visit a specific destination. In addition to that, according to Gunn (1988) attractions of a specific destination are magnets that invite visitors to visit that particular destination. But when considering about the findings of this study, activities has the highest impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella. This might be due to the activities such as hiking, camping and so on which can be considered as a few activities which are popular among tourists.

This study shows that accessibility has a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction. It means that infrastructure including roads, car parks etc., transportation

facilities like availability of public transportation and operations like travel routes, service frequency and cost incurred are in a satisfactory level. This positive impact is also proved by (Al-ababneh, 2013; Eusebio & Vieira, 2011). Moreover, the findings of Robustin, Sularso, Suroso, and Yulisetiarini, (2018) study also consist with the findings of this study. When considering acoomoodation, it also shows a postive impact on tourists' satisfaction. This means, accommodations in Ella are safe and also the infrastructure are in a good quality. Similarly, Henderson, (2006) also proves that accessibility is an important factor in attracting tourists to a particular destination.

In addition to that, amenities also show a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction. It means that the availability of clean and comfortable toilets and other sanitary facilities, the availability of hotels and inns, the availability of food stalls are factors that decide the satisfaction of visitors (Robustin, Sularso, Suroso, & Yulisetiarini, 2018). Amenities refers to all facilities that function to fulfill the needs of tourists who are staying at a particular destination (Yoeti, 2003). If these facilities can meet the need of travelers, then it will result in tourists' satisfaction. The results of this study is consistent with the findings of (Robustin, Sularso, Suroso, & Yulisetiarini, 2018). Activities also show a postive impact on tourists' satisfaction and it can be identified as the component which shows the highest impact on tourists' satisfaction in Ella. Similarly, Arpornpisal, (2018) proved that tourism elements (attraction, accessibility, accommodation, amenities and activities)   influence on the tourists', decision making.

In Sri Lankan context, Sammani, Ranasinghe and Tennakoon (2020)conducted a research study to identify the religious tourism development potentials at Anuradhapura UNESCO world heritage city. In that study, they found that attractions, amenities, activities and ancillary services have an impact on religious tourism development in Anuradhapura.

6. CONCLUSION & CONTRIBUTIONS

When considering the tourism industry, Sri Lanka pays much attntion on international tourism, even though domestic tourism continues to grow during the past decades. Moreover, it received lesser scholarly attention thoroughout the past. Therefore, this study focused on "identifying the factors affeting on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella, Sri Lanka". The study found that attraction, accessibility, accommodation, amenities and activities are positively correlate with demestic tourists' satifcation and activities can be identified as the elements which have the highest impact on demestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella.

As there are a few prior studies available based on domestic tourism in Sri Lanka, this study provides valuable insights to promote and develop Ella as a domestic tourism hub. The results of this study will be useful for organizations in the tourism industry such as hotels, restaurants etc. as this will serve as a guideline in understanding the importance of satisfying tourists. Furthermore,

since Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority is not doing their best in promotional activities to promote Ella as a domestic tourism region. Therefore, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority should take necessary steps to implement more promotioanl methods. On the other hand, government should pay their attention on improving the basic infrastructure especially public transportation, accommodation and sanitary facilities to meet specific needs of domdetic tourists.

As per the findings of this study, activities have the highest impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella. Therefore, tour operators, hotels and other related parties can pay their attention on developing activities such as hiking, camping etc. in Ella. Particularly, they can offer tour packages including hiking, camping like activities inherent to Ella area.

On the other hand, attraction showed the next highest impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction in Ella. To improve the attraction of Ella, government can implement regulations in terms of garbage disposal, natural resources utilization etc. In addition to that, the following sustainable development practices is one of the best strategies that all stakeholders should obey in order to protect and improve the existing natural beauty of Ella.

Accommodation also showed a significant positive impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction. Considering that, hotel owners and other accommodation providers can improve their accommodation facilities. Particularly, at present tourists like to spend their nights in more comfortable as well as nature based surroundings. As Ella is a beautiful destination, hotel owners can get the advantage from that and they can create hotel rooms in a unique way. This will lead to attract more toursist to Ella as they are more towards in getting unique experiences nowadays.

The government and other related parties have to take necessry steps to improve amenities such as sanitory facilities, washrooms, parking facilities in Ella area as amenities also showed a positive significant impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction.

In addition to that, when considering the theoretical implications, this study can be used to fill the existing gap in the literature. As the scholarly attention given to understand the factors affecting the domestic tourists' satisfaction is very low in both the global and local contexts, this research fills the gap in the existing literature.

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