

TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS, PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION WITH CULINARY TOURISM IN SRI LANKA

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Culinary tourism is one of the boosting segments of tourism that highly affects tourist visitation. Tourists travel all around the world to taste different cuisines. This study was conducted using the mixed-method research approach. An online questionnaire survey was conducted using 127 respondents. Multiple regression analysis was applied to examine the effect of tourists' expectations on tourists' satisfaction and especially reveal the mediating effect of perceived performance on the relationship between tourists' expectations and tourists' satisfaction. The results of the qualitative analysis are grouped into themes and the themes included staff performance and satisfaction with food. Further, it disclosed that Sri Lankan cuisines can be promoted around the globe by combining elements of other traditions of different countries. Therefore, the results showed that culinary tourists expect a wide choice of food with different flavours and textures. Tourists value a favourable atmosphere to consume food and the presentation of food matters too. This information would be particularly useful for destinations interested in promoting culinary tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Culinary tourism, perceived performance, tourist expectations, tourist satisfaction