

Identify the Travel Destination Attributes that Attract International Tourists to Visit Galle Tourism Zone

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International tourism has become the world's largest export earner in developed and developing countries including Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka entered the international tourism market in the 1960, however because of North and East separatist war and Southern political violence tourism showed a fluctuation demeanor. Hence, Sri Lanka unable to identify the attributes which are attract tourists to travel in destination. Sri Lanka is one of Asia's richest treasure troves of both natural and man-made wonders especially with seven World Heritage Sites. As the World Heritage Site Galle tourism zone is one of the traditional and powerful competitors in tourism market. When considering the competitive tourism market, identification of important travel destination attributes when choosing their prospective destination would be of great value to tourism planners. Therefore the objective of this study was identify the travel destination attributes that attract international tourists to visit Galle tourism zone. The research model was formulated and it postulates that international tourists' perception of important attributes in Galle impacts on their decision making in three ways as directly, indirectly - through influencing Galle overall image and indirectly - through influencing international tourists' overall satisfaction level with their trip to Galle, impact on international tourists' future decision on destination selection. Ten important destination attributes were identified by the literature review. International tourists, who visit the Galle tourism zone are the target population of this study. Sample size was 100 and structured questionnaire was distributed to participants who were randomly selected international tourists in Galle tourism zone. Factor analysis was used to identify the important destination attributes in Galle, which were formulated according to the three ways influences. The results show that, landscape in Galle, culture & religious value, hospitality, health, safety and relaxation are more important attributes in Galle. Also results concluded that, landscape, climate, culture & religious and service are more important to overall image of Galle.

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