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## **Service Quality and Its Impact on the Level of Tourist Satisfaction in Marine Based Recreation**

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### **Introduction**

Recreation is about activities, pastimes, and experiences which are freely chosen. They are usually undertaken in free time and produce feelings of well-being, fulfillment, enjoyment, relaxation, and satisfaction. Outdoor activity is leisure pursuits engaged in the outdoors, often in natural or semi-natural settings out of town. Recreation and leisure are important for living with challenges, taking risks, and experiencing new things. The water based recreation can be identified as an important part of outdoor recreation. Though it is found to be somewhat dangerous and adventurous, it is capable of entertaining people in an unprecedented manner. Every tourist has his own preferences in engaging water based recreational activities. All of these preferences need to be given attention in order to satisfy them. Tourists 'satisfaction within water based recreation is determined by a number of factors. Out of those factors service quality is considered to be prominent factor. Service quality generally depends on reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, responsiveness. While service quality is designated by the above factors, level of satisfaction derived from service quality is critically influenced by the following factors such as age, gender, education level, monthly income.

The study is significant and beneficial for the country. Currently tourism industry is growing fast in the country and it is required to provide a quality service. Recreation and leisure are important for living with challenges taking risk and experiencing new things. The water based recreation can be identified as an important part of outdoor recreation. Though it is found to be somewhat dangerous and adventurous, it is capable of entertaining people in an unprecedented manner. Marine recreational activities, which are dependent on nature and the quality of the aquatic environment, are influenced by some key factors including wind, sunshine and location. The geographical conditions, particularly the location and local climate transform the direction of main currents in the sea, which directly affect the quality of marine based sports. Therefore, visitors to choose a particular place as a tourism destination, the attractiveness of the above factors must be appealing enough to encourage tourists to visit and to be satisfied. From the perspective

of the leisure experience, the process of engaging in leisure activities depends on a person's sensory, perception, mind, behavior along with the surrounding environment interaction. In the present study, the impact of service quality on tourist satisfaction has been evaluated in Bentota Sunshine Water Sports Center which is known to be more reputed water based recreational area in the country. It offers a number of activities and experience for both local and foreign tourist. In this aspect, a few studies have been conducted to evaluate the effect on location and local climate for the tourist satisfaction in marine based sports. In fact, no well documented evidence is found in such studies in Sri Lanka. As the level of satisfaction demand from these activities and experience not well documented, the extent to which visitors receive satisfaction from the services offered by recreational center.

### **Objective**

The main objective of the study is to identify the association between tourist satisfaction and service quality with using geographical features in the Sunshine water sports center (SWSC).

### **Methodology**

The methodology Applied in this exploratory study under the three headings such as sources of data sample and data analysis. This study was done subject to the following hypothesis which was formulated with the help of responsive conceptual frame work. According to that H1-There is a significant relationship between the five dimensions of service quality and selected geographical features for tourist satisfaction. In research method, there is deductive research approach. The Data collected from Questionnaire was developed for the tourist's satisfaction and service quality in Sunshine water sports center, Benthota. Service quality questionnaires were designed to focus on five major factors. (1) Reliability (2) Assurance (3) Tangibility (4) Empathy (5) Responsiveness. Five questions to tourist satisfaction and five General questions were designed in the questionnaire. The primary data was collected using stratified sampling in simple random method under quantitative approach. Therefore, the target group of this study was the tourists to in sunshine water sport center Bentota. In the research, sample is represented by the tourists who are arriving to SWSC. On each weekend, more than one hundred and fifty foreign tourists are coming to this water sport center. Considering current visitor arrivals one hundred and twenty tourists were selected as the sample. In this case, stratified sampling and simple random sampling was as following. According to stratified sampling within 2 days, the tourists to sunshine water sport center Bentota were administered the questionnaire and used as the sample. Pilot survey had been carried out to test the suitability of the questionnaire to the particular site. In this case 20 questionnaire were given to the tourists. According to the reliability test, positive value (Cronbach's Alpha .89) could be obtained. Then the questionnaires were prepared in order to distribute among sample. Any question that utilized a Likert scale was coded with a number system. If the respondent circled five answers, according to objectives, satisfaction questionnaire has been visited by numerous researchers studying collegiate visitor satisfaction. In analyzing data researcher used, chi square and Cramer's V analysis tool in SPSS 21.0 statistical tool was used to present and analysis the data. Hypothesis is

formulated to investigate relationship between tourist satisfaction and service quality. In this case as statically tool, chi-square test was used by the researcher. By employing Cramer's V association of factors at service quality on tourist satisfaction was measured.

## Findings

Sunshine Water Sports Centre, out of the foreign tourists, both male and female tourists are same in numbers. In this survey data out of the 60 percent male respondents, 6.7 percent are disagree with overall service quality 29.1 percent are neutral and the rest of male reaching 16.6 percent are agree with the overall service quality. Out of 60.0 percent of total female respondents, disagree over service quality is expressed by 2.5 percent of females. 25.8 percent are neutral and remaining 21.7 percent agree with service quality. A highest score explained among 21-30 age groups participations in foreign tourists. None of the tourists were recorded above 60 age group. According to survey data, a highest percentage of foreign tourists are recorded in Europe region. North American tourists were the lowest among the observed tourist's groups. Hypothesis were formulated to investigate relationship between tourist satisfaction and service quality, relationship between tourist satisfaction and geographical features. In this case as statistical tool, chi-square test was used by the researcher. By employing Cramer's V association of factors at service quality on tourist satisfaction and geographical feature on tourist satisfaction were measured. For the convenience of recognition. Couple of hypothesis based on positive idea and negative idea were formulated. According to that when the degree of freedom is 16 and related value stands is 66.74 as Asymp. Sig at .000 and there is a significant relationship between status of the service quality and tourist satisfaction. Cramer's V value .373 it means there is a strong relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction and it is positive relationship. The degree of freedom is 16 and related value stands is 46.42 and Asymp. Sig at .000 and there is a significant relationship between status of the geographical features and tourist satisfaction. According to Cramer's V value. 311. It means there is a strong relationship between geographical features and tourist satisfaction and it is positive relationship.

## Conclusion

This study was conducted in reference to the Sunshine Water Sports Centre, Bentota. The findings reveal how to influence five dimension of service quality and geographical features for tourist satisfaction of in this study area. As far the relationship between independent variables and tourist satisfaction are concerned, it has been provided by this empirical study that there is clearly a positive relationship. In the other words, there are positive effects to tourist satisfaction from service quality and geographical features in Sunshine Water Sports Centre. In order to prove this, the researcher statistically tested how each tourist satisfaction is associated with the independent variables; five dimension of service quality and geographical features. All statistical tests which were scientifically undertaken clearly provide that there is a positive correlation between each independent variables and dependent variable. All of these chi square tests are significant. Based on the findings, the researcher made a conclusion that five dimensions and service quality (individually and together) are positively associated with tourist gender, age, region, and income. Further out of factors in service quality, most prominent factor influencing on

tourist satisfaction is tangibility. Other factors: responsiveness, empathy, reliability, assurance affecting factors satisfaction respectively. Based on the findings, the researcher made a conclusion that geographical features and service quality (individually and together) are positively associated with tourist gender, age, region, and income.

**Keywords:** Environmental Factors; Marine Based Tourism; Service Quality; Tourist Satisfaction

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