

**Tourists' Experience Mapping after visiting a Post-conflict Destination
Using TripAdvisor.com reviews: the Case of Jaffna, Sri Lanka**

Samarathunga WHMS^{a,b}, Li Cheng^b

^aDepartment of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, 50300, Sri Lanka

^bDepartment of Tourism and Landscape Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu, Sichuan,
610064, P.R. China

Corresponding author: manoj.susl@gmail.com

Abstract

Although tourists' experience is a popular research paradigm, studies on identifying tourists' experience after visiting a post-conflict destination is of rare. The present study is central to a post-conflict destination, Jaffna, which was remoted to the rest of the world for nearly three decades due to the armed conflict between Sri Lankan government forces and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam carders. Jaffna, being an infant tourist destination, now increasingly being frequented by both local and international tourists. Modern tourists, who heavily rely on the social media, generate new trends for the millennium travels. The tourist experience is now being popularly published in social media web sites by the means of E-word of mouth. Therefore, with the aim of understanding tourists' experience after visiting a post-conflict destination, the present study adopts an exploratory case study method to analyze tourists' reviews on Tripadvisor.com. Two hundred fifty one reviews were selected from key thirteen tourist destinations in Jaffna during the second and third quarters of year 2018. The data were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis to identify the main themes that were common in the data set by using N-vivo 11 by QSR International. The thematic analysis process recognized four distinct characteristics of the tourists' experience in visiting Jaffna: attractions, tourists, destination attributes and political. Finally, the study forwards implications and management recommendations to develop tourism in Jaffna.

Keywords: E-word of mouth, qualitative content analysis, social media, thematic analysis, tourist experience