

**AN ANALYSIS OF MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH
TOURISTS AND THEIR REVISIT INTENTION TO CULTURAL DESTINATIONS;
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KANDY CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE**

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INTRODUCTION

Tourists' expectations are rapidly evolving with driving changes in international tourism. Consequently, unique travel experiences that combine culture, education, entertainment, and authenticity are in high demand (Garrod & Fyall, 2000; Hall & Zeppel, 1990). In order to be more competitive, destinations essentially need to look for ways to ensure memorable experiences for tourists (Neuhofer et al., 2012). One of the significant global tourism segments is cultural heritage tourism, which has potentially appeared as a substantial component of tourists' memorability (Lee, 2015). Cultural tourism destinations are popular among youth tourists as they prefer to explore diverse environments and experience places with historical and cultural values (Moisa, 2006). Youth tourism is one of the fastest-growing markets in the global tourism sector (Preko et al., 2019), representing one-sixth of the global tourist market (Moisa, 2006). The World Tourism Organization defines the term "youth" as individuals who fall between the age range of 15 to 25 years (Demeter and Brătucu 2014).

Despite the fact that the tourism experience is a primary concept in the literature, memorable tourism experiences have received limited attention within the scope of heritage tourism (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Moreover, there is limited attention given to conducting studies on the revisit intention of tourists in terms of memorable tourism experiences (Huong et al., 2022). Further, there is a dearth of literature on the memorable tourism experiences of youth tourists in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this study focuses on examining the relationship between the memorable tourism experiences of youth tourists and their revisit intention, focusing on the Kandy heritage site in Sri Lanka.

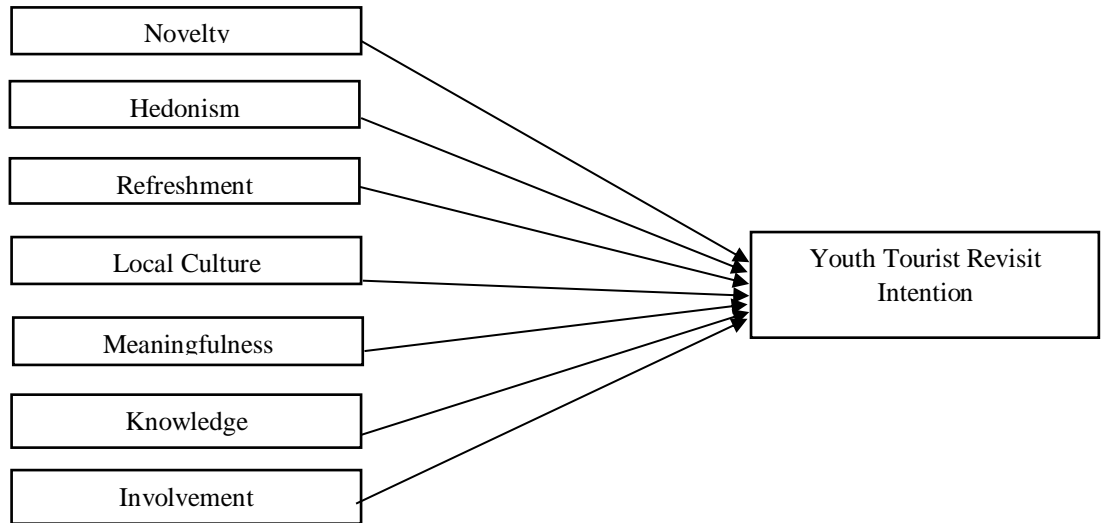
METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach was used to achieve the objective of the study. The Memorable Tourism Experience Scale (MTE), developed by Kim and Ritchie (2013) was employed in this study to examine the relationship between young tourists' memorable tourism experience and their revisit intention (Figure 1). Accordingly, the independent variable of the study is tourists' memorable tourism experience, which comprises the dimensions of novelty, hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, and involvement. The dependent variable of the study is the youth tourist revisit intention. The target population of the study was young domestic and foreign tourists who visited Kandy City from December 2022 to January 2023. The convenience sampling method has been used by the researcher to select the sample from the population. The primary data was collected by the researcher from 363 local and foreign tourists in Kandy through a structured questionnaire, which consisted of 40 compulsory questions, including 8 questions related to demographic data and 25 questions related to the memorable tourism experience. The revisit intention of cultural tourists was measured based on 07 questions presented in the questionnaire. Finally, the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The researcher has used correlation coefficient

analysis to measure the relationship between the memorable tourism experience and the revisit intention of youth tourists.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To achieve the objectives of the study, descriptive and correlational analysis was conducted. Before the analysis, the reliability of the variables was confirmed by employing a reliability analysis. The Cronbach’s Alpha values of all the variables were more than 0.7, which confirmed the consistency of the variables.

According to the demographic analysis, most of the respondents were male (58.1%) and belonged to the 21-25 age group (70.8%). Moreover, most of the respondents were local tourists (75.2%), and 24.8% of the respondents were foreign tourists, with a significant number from France (5.2%). The majority were students (48.5%). Further, the majority of the tourists were traveling with friends or colleagues, and relaxation was the primary purpose of travel (50.7%).

The youth tourists’ opinions on the dimensions of memorable tourism experience and level of revisit intention were analyzed using descriptive analysis (Table 1.) According to the results, the mean values of the dimensions range from 4.0 to 4.3. The mean value of the revisit intention of the youth tourists is 4.3, which indicates that the youth tourists agree that they are revisiting the destination.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic
Novelty	363	4.159	0.557
Hedonism	363	4.159	0.547
Refreshment	363	4.272	0.529
Local Culture	363	4.272	0.711
Meaningfulness	363	4.181	0.650
Knowledge	363	4.090	0.698
Involvement	363	4.151	0.809

Youth tourist Revisit Intention	363	4.368	0.612
Valid N (listwise)	363		

The findings of the correlation analysis revealed a strong significant positive relationship between tourists' memorable tourism experience and their revisit intention (Table 2).

Table 2

Correlation Analysis

Independent Variable	Correlation with Youth Tourist Revisit Intention
Novelty	0.760**
Hedonism	0.862**
Refreshment	0.663**
Local Culture	0.858**
Meaningfulness	0.827**
Knowledge	0.795**
Involvement	0.833**

N= 363, **P<0.01

According to the results, the correlation co-efficient of "novelty" and youth cultural tourist revisit intention is indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.760 ($p < 0.001$). Similarly, "hedonism" demonstrates a strong positive relationship with cultural tourist revisit intention, with a correlation coefficient of 0.862 ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, the correlation coefficient of 0.663 ($p < 0.001$) suggests a positive relationship between "refreshment" and tourist revisit intention. Furthermore, "local culture" exhibits a significant and strong positive relationship with tourist revisit intention, as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of 0.858 ($p < 0.001$). The strong and significant relationship between "meaningfulness" and cultural tourist revisit intention is also shown, with a correlation coefficient of 0.827 ($p < 0.001$).

Additionally, "knowledge" demonstrates a strong, significant positive relationship with cultural tourist revisit intention with a .795 correlation coefficient ($p < 0.001$). Finally, "involvement" and cultural tourist revisit intention display a strong positive relationship, with a correlation coefficient of 0.833 ($p < 0.001$). In summary, these findings suggest significant positive relationships between memorable, such as novelty, hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, and involvement, with youth tourist revisit intention.

Previous literature also indicated similar findings. For example, Tsai et al. (2022) Chen and Rahman (2018), and Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), have demonstrated the influential role of memorable tourism experiences in fostering revisit intentions.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between youth cultural tourists' memorable tourism experiences and their revisit intention. The results of the study highlight that novelty, hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, and involvement are positively related to youth cultural tourists' revisit intention. Accordingly, this study provides valuable insights for destination managers, who can focus on creating diverse and engaging experiences to attract young cultural tourists. For instance, emphasizing unique and novel aspects of the destination, offering enjoyable and entertaining activities, promoting opportunities for relaxation and rejuvenation, showcasing local cultural heritage, providing meaningful and transformative experiences, imparting knowledge about the destination, and encouraging active involvement can all contribute to enhancing the revisit

intentions of young cultural tourists. By aligning their tourism offerings with these factors, destination managers can capitalize on the preferences and desires of young cultural tourists, thus establishing a competitive advantage and driving sustainable tourism growth in Kandy.

Keywords: Cultural heritage tourism, kandy, memorable tourism experience, revisit intention, young tourists

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