

IDENTIFY THE TRAVEL DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES THAT ATTRACT INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS TO VISIT KANDY 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 stepped into the international tourism market in the 1960, however because of North and East separatist war, Covid 19 and economic crisis in Sri Lanka tourism showed a fluctuation demeanor. Thus, Sri Lanka unable to identify the attributes which are attract tourists to travel in destination. Kandy is a charming city in central Sri Lanka's lush the mountains, noticed for its rich cultural legacy and visual beauty. The city is home to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Temple of the Tooth Relic, which holds a relic of Lord Buddha's tooth. As the World Heritage Site Kandy tourism zone is one of the traditional and powerful competitors in tourism market. When investigating the competitive tourist market, tourism planners would benefit greatly from identifying crucial travel destination qualities when selecting their prospective destination. Therefore, the purpose of this study was identify the travel destination attributes that attract international tourists to visit Kandy tourism zone. Sixteen important destination attributes were identified by the literature review. International tourists, who visit the Kandy 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 Kandy tourism zone. Factor analysis was used to identify the important destination attributes in Kandy, which were formulated according to the three ways influences. The results show that, landscape in Kandy, culture & religious value, hospitality, health, safety and relaxation are more important attributes in Kandy. Also, the findings revealed that landscape, climate, culture, religion, and service are more significant to Kandy's overall image.

Keywords: Sri Lankan tourism, Kandy tourism zone, Destination attributes, International tourists, Tourist satisfaction

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