

FACTORS INFLUENCING FOREIGN TOURISTS' SATISFACTION: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

H.M.R.W.K. Wijekoon^{1,*} and T.M.O.K.K. Bandara²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ruwaniwijekoon27@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Tourist satisfaction plays a key role in shaping the success and sustainability of Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Satisfied tourists are willing to revisit and recommend others to visit, thereby creating new tourist attractions and promoting the destination. Therefore, satisfying tourists is crucial to the long-term success of tourism. The problem addressed by this research is the lack of specific knowledge about the factors that significantly affect overall tourist satisfaction in the Central Province, despite having many diverse attractions and being an area visited by a large number of tourists. By properly identifying the factors affecting this, Sri Lanka's tourism industry will be able to improve further, creating opportunities to move towards becoming a developed country. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that affect the satisfaction of foreign tourists in Central Province, a region where a large percentage of foreign tourists visit Sri Lanka. Through the literature review, five factors were identified as independent variables: Accommodation Services, Food & Beverages, Price Levels, Safety & Security, and Transportation Services, with foreign tourist satisfaction as the dependent variable. Primary data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire survey with 250 respondents. The samples were formed using convenience sampling. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. According to the findings of the study, except for Food & Beverages, the other four variables—Accommodation Services, Price Levels, Safety & Security, and Transportation Services—significantly affected the satisfaction of foreign tourists in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Based on these results, it is recommended to improve food and beverages, enhance advertising, invest in training programs for professional staff and guides, promote unique attractions, improve public transport options, establish tourist feedback mechanisms, and diversify the sample and time for future research. This study provides necessary information for the improvement of the tourism industry for the socio-economic development of Central Province, as well as Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Accommodation services, foreign tourists' satisfaction, price levels, safety & security, transportation services