



STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESTINATION PROMOTION FACTORS AND TOURISTS ARRIVALS TO SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Destination promotion creates the flow of tourists’ arrival to a certain destination. In the Sri Lankan context, both government and private organizations are involving to conduct promotional campaigns for the purpose of tourist arrivals increment. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify how the selected destination promotional factors “advertising, personnel selling, public relations, and sales promotion” conducted by both public and private organizations effects on destination performance through tourist arrivals. Study objectives were to examine the relationship between destination promotion facts and foreign tourists’ arrivals, to examine the most significant promotional factor affect with foreign tourists’ arrivals and to make suggestions to improve tourists’ arrivals via promotion factors. The research method was the quantitative method. The study population was total tourists who arrived in Sri Lanka in the first quarter of the year. Selected 100 foreign tourists were selected as a study sample by using simple random sampling. Both primary and secondary data were used by the researcher. Five points Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. Websites, research articles, journal articles, etc were used as a secondary data source. According to the study findings, Sales promotion, Advertising is created a strong positive relationship with tourists’ arrivals. Public relations and personnel selling also created a weak positive relationship with tourists’ arrivals to Sri Lanka. Therefore advertising and sales promotion via social media and the web will be suitable for future destination promotion activities.

Keywords: Promotion, Destination marketing, Tourism

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka is a tropical island surrounded by the Indian Ocean which has rich tourism resources and has been considered one of the attractive tourist destinations in the world. Due to three-decade ethnic conflict, the Sri Lankan tourism sector was badly hit till 2009. After the ethnic conflict, the voice of Sri Lanka was broadcasted all over the world by relevant public and private organizations.

Table 01: Tourists arrivals to Sri Lanka by annually

Year	Arrivals
2016	2,050,832
2017	2,116,407
2018	2,333,796
2019	1,913,702

Source: (SLTDA, 2019)



According to the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, there were considerable tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka. Promotions are integrated into marketing communications. Companies should carefully coordinate promotional tools to deliver a clear, consistent, and complete message about the organization and its brand (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Promotion generates communication flow from a destination marketing organization to tourists. In the tourism sector destinations, promotional tools should include a clear, consistent message for tourists (Kaldeen, 2020). Promotion is an essential part of tourism marketing.

Destination Promotional activities are used to improve tourist arrival. These activities are conducted by Destination Marketing Companies. In the Sri Lankan context, the liable national tourism promotion organization is SLTPB. It has a sizable promotional budget. Also, DMOs created web-based promotion activities to attract and motivate tourists to visit Sri Lanka. According to the above explanations, the promotional activities should be effective enough to attract the expected tourist arrival to justify the expenditure on promotional activities.

Therefore, this study was conducted to identify how the selected destination promotional factors “advertising, personnel selling, public relations and sales promotion” conducted by both public and private organizations effects on destination performance through tourist arrivals?

Study Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between destination promotion facts and foreign tourists’ arrivals.
2. To examine the most significant promotional factor affect with foreign tourists arrivals.
3. To make the suggestions to improve tourists’ arrivals via promotional factors

Study problems

1. What is the relationship between destination promotion facts and foreign tourists’ arrivals?
2. What is the most significant promotional factor affect with foreign tourists’ arrivals?
3. What are the suggestions to improve tourists’ arrivals via promotion factors?

2. Literature Review

Destination marketing enhances the popularity of the destination and retains popularity for the future success of the destination. Furthermore, destination marketing can be separated into two terms such as destination and marketing. Those two words define that it is a continuous process. This process identifies and satisfies the needs and wants of the person who wants to travel to their destination (Sharma, 2013). Destination marketing activities should be smooth for attracting tourists to the destination. National organizations that are responsible for destination marketing and promotional activities should follow efficient promotional activities. Destination marketing organizations should develop adequate strategies to promote and market destination, suggest marketing opportunities and support develop proper exploration claims for previously suggested opportunities (Vagionis & Loumioti, 2011).

Destination marketing explains one of the advanced levels of general marketing because the product is intangible in tourism. Mostly, tourism products act as experience. Tourism marketing offers a series of experiences (Kaldeen, 2019). It drives product and service. Total-experience and attitude are the products for tourists. It also covers all aspects and components of the product (Soteriades, 2012). By using previous records carefully,



destination promotion organizations should find possible market opportunities to promote destinations in the world tourism markets. The procedure should be improved annually.

Generally, promotion is a considerable part of the marketing mix. Without promotions, the product cannot be succeeded in the target market. Promotion acts as a vital role in the marketing mix. It is an important part of marketing any product or service to achieve the expected level of sales and to ensure awareness of the product by potential target customers (Hasan, Rahman & Hussain, 2015). Especially in the tourism industry, the destination cannot be offered for the tourist without promotion. If the strength of tourism promotion is high, the development of tourism can be achieved at the expected level. Promotion coordinates all seller initiated efforts to set up information and channels and sell product and services or promote an idea (Belch & Belch, 2003). Tourism promotion acts as a vital role in the tourism marketing process. It encourages customers to travel to a specific destination by providing relevant information about destinations. Tourists are encouraged by the destination promotion plan. At present, the planned program acts as an important fact to develop the tourism sector and get a greater share of tourism. (Sahbaz & Keskin, 2012). Tourism promotion is so important today and it is an important fact to develop tourism and to get a greater share of the tourism sector. Because of this reason, it is important to introduce tourist places as planned and programmed. Promotional activities of tourism help to get the attention of potential customers. Also, the strength of promotional activities helps to change the buying behavior of tourist and tourist perception.

Destination promotion is the front view of destination marketing. It provides all aspects of information about the destination and its attribution to the target audience. It communicates clear information and enhances customers to visit particular destinations (World Tourism Organization, 2007). According to the World Tourism Organization (2017), destination promotion is a process. Promoters should identify who is the target audience or market. As per the consideration of the destination life cycle, promotional objectives should be determined.

Components of promotions explain the promotional mix. A mix of promotional elements is used as a way of communicating product or service attribution to potential customers. Sometimes, the role of intermediaries acts as contributors to effective promotions (Cuellar-Healey, 2013). In the tourism sector, destinations include attractions, accommodation providers, and service providers such as travel agents. In a successful destination, service providers communicate the destination and its service attribution to the potential customers. The promotional mix is the body of the promotion. Elements of the mix generate interrelation with each other. The promotional mix includes four elements such as advertising, personnel selling, public relations, and sales promotion. Promotion is one of the variables through which information regarding products or services is being communicated to customers to change their attitude and behavior (Mubarak & Issath, 2019). Marketers are concerned with the effective utilization of promotion-mix to increase sales and market share (Patwa & Patwa, 2013). During web promotion, the number of times that visitor logs onto the website creates an impact on the effectiveness of web promotional activities (Tsang & Tse, 2005). When considered, web promotion for social media views must increase. Web promotion can define as effective promotion whether the tourist arrivals to the destination should increase by web promotion. Also, the tourism promotion mix element affects the mental image of foreign tourists. The advertisement was the most significant fact among the promotion mix to affect with tourist mind the Jordanian as a tourist destination (Aldebi & Aljboory, 2018).



3. Methodology

This study was conducted to determine the selected destination promotional effects on destination performance through tourist arrivals by using a quantitative method. The study population was Tourists who visit Sri Lanka in the first quarter of 2020. Selected 100 foreign tourists were selected as the study sample. A simple random sampling technique was used by the researcher. Both primary and secondary data were used to achieve the study objectives. Primary data collected from a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and secondary data was collected from published books, e-journals, research articles, etc. advertising, personnel selling, public relation, and sales promotion are identified as independent variables, and tourist’s arrival identified as the dependent variable. To analyze collected data SPSS was used.

4. Result and discussion

According to the demographic characteristics of the respondents, in the year 2020 first quarter, 43% came from European countries. 29% came from Asian countries, 13% came from Middle East countries and the rest came from other regions. 51% of them were male and the rest were females. The majority of respondents were in the young age group. 54% were in the 20-30 years group, 33% were in the 31-40 year group and the rest were more than 41 years old. Also, 52% were married. 81% came to Sri Lanka because of leisure and recreation 69% came to Sri Lanka for the first time.

KMO test measures how suitable data is for factor analysis. KMO & Bartlett’s test is used to measure the validity of this questionnaire. The acceptance range of this test minimum of 0.5 and that values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb. For this study, the researcher has used Cronbach’s alpha coefficient to find reliability. Questionnaires collected from tourists are tested by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. According to the survey data, the variables Public relations, Personnel selling, Sales promotion, Advertising, and Tourist arrivals illustrated more than 0.79 value. Table 02 emphasizes that these variables are reliable. Also, KMO and Bartlett's Test values of above mention variables are higher than 0.74 and all variables are valid.

Table 02: Reliability and Validity

Variables	No of Respondents	No of Items	Reliability Statistics- Cronbach's Alpha	Validity- KMO and Bartlett's Test
Public relation	100	05	0.794	0.745
Personnel selling	100	05	0.857	0.810
Sales promotion	100	05	0.865	0.811
Advertising	100	05	0.932	0.888
Tourist arrivals	100	05	0.936	0.840

Source: (Survey data, 2020)

A correlation coefficient can quantify the strength of the linear relationship. It was used to quantify between two variables. Further, correlation analysis measures statistically the extent and nature of the relationship between two intervals or variables. Based on table 03 values, the Pearson Correlation value of the variables can determine public relations and personnel selling created a weak positive relationship with tourists’ arrivals to Sri Lanka. Therefore Sales promotion, Advertising is created a strong positive relationship with tourists’ arrivals. This



means those two are highly significant with tourist arrivals. The sufficient, reliable and valid electronic advertisement via social media, advertising campaigns, adequate information regarding the destination provided via advertisement, the opportunity for the participants to various advertising campaigns, etc which conducted by both public and private organizations are highly significant with tourists arrivals to Sri Lanka. Previous experience participating in Sri Lankan destination promotion campaigns, E promotions, discounted package prices, budget tourism products, product varieties, and its attractive promotions also significantly affected foreign tourists' arrivals to Sri Lanka.

Table 03: Correlation and Hypothesis test

Variables	Pearson Correlation	P- value	Accepted Hypothesis
Public relation & Tourist arrivals	0.428	0.000	H1
Personnel selling & Tourist arrivals	0.442	0.000	H2
Sales promotion & Tourist arrivals	0.776	0.000	H3
Advertising & Tourist arrivals	0.870	0.000	H4

Source: (Survey data, 2020)

Accepted hypotheses are,

- H1 – There is a significant relationship between Public relation & Tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka
- H2 – There is a significant relationship between Personnel selling & Tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka
- H3 – There is a significant relationship between Sales promotion & Tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka
- H4 – There is a significant relationship between Advertising & Tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to examine how the selected destination promotional factors “advertising, personnel selling, public relations, and sales promotion” conducted by both public and private organizations, affect destination performance through tourist arrivals. Also, the Study Objectives were to examine the relationship between destination promotion facts and foreign tourists' arrivals, to examine the most significant promotional factor affect with foreign tourists' arrivals, and to make the suggestions to improve tourists' arrivals via promotion factors. According to the findings, there was Sales promotion, Advertising has created a strong positive relationship with tourists' arrivals. Public relations and personnel selling created a weak positive relationship with tourists' arrivals to Sri Lanka.

Based on the findings, Advertisement and sales promotions are suitable marketing strategies to develop a destination marketing process to promote Sri Lanka as a remarkable destination in the world. Therefore the majority of young tourists are highly addicted to social media and the internet. Sri Lankan destination promotion organizations (both public and private) need to focus on these facts and promotions and advertisements should increase via



social media. Also, cost-effective promotional methods will help to create future potential tourist markets also. Personnel selling via the internet are also another fact to be developed in the future. Because websites and social media are underpinning the increase in personnel selling.

Presently, the Sri Lankan government makes a flat form to participate in international travel fairs for local travel agents. This is best practice and this potential needs to develop further. Because of travel & trade, fair participation benefits will come in the future.

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