

MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION OF FOREIGN TOURISTS TOWARDS HOME-STAY EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Home-stay is a means of accommodating tourists in peripheral regions with a local family, which enable them to explore local lifestyle, culture, nature and other aspects of authentic village life. Though, it is a novel concept in Sri Lankan tourism, there is a rapidly growing industrial need for such supplementary accommodation.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the motivation and satisfaction of foreign tourist towards home-stay experience. Further attention is given to identify the factors affected to select home-stays of the study area, analyze motivational attributes of home-stays and visitor profile.

The methodology of this research comprises with few steps; a) selecting the study area, b) testing the reliability of the research and questionnaires and c) data collection and analysis. The Historic City of Mihintale was selected as the research site. Using random sampling technique, 70 foreign tourists, 10 home-stay owners were selected for the in-depth study. Research techniques like questionnaire surveys, interviews, observations, group discussions were employed to collect data. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were employed for the analysis of collected data.

The overall finding of this study reflects that the majority of tourists have been satisfied with their home-stay experience in the study area. In addition to that there is a huge tendency of tourist to select home-stays as their means of accommodation which have been mainly motivated by the factor of "exploring the local culture".

As this study explores the motivation and satisfaction of tourists to select home-stays in Sri Lanka, it can contribute to promote authentic home-stay experience to accrue more benefits from the tourism industry.

Keywords: *Home-stays, Satisfaction, Motivation*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Community-based home-stay tourism is a form of tourism which is closely related to nature, culture and local customs and is intended to attract a certain segment of the tourist market that desires authentic experiences (Salamiah, Nor'Ain and Muhammad, 2011). In mid 1990s, holidays involving staying with an ordinary family in a private home were identified as a tourism product with the potential to grow in popularity (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'home-stay' as 'a stay at a residence by a traveller who is hosted by a local family'. Rivers' definition (1998) of home-stay is visitors renting accommodation from a local family in order to learn local culture, lifestyle, or language. According to the existing definitions, the fundamental element of home-stay tourism is staying together with host families or adopted families. The guests have the opportunities to interact, gain knowledge, and experience the life style and culture of the host family as well as the local community. This involves the guests eating, cooking, and engaging in many activities together with their adopted families, thus allowing two parties with different cultural backgrounds to interact and learn from each other. Unlike in regular hotels or other accommodation establishments, the home-stay concept allows the guests to participate in the hosts' daily activities. Indeed, this can be considered as an important strength of this particular product; no other tourism product offers a similar experience (Ibrahim and Razzak, 2010).

Tourism is one of the main industries in Sri Lanka which make a prominent contribution to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) recording 8% growth rate. The annual growth rate of tourist arrivals in 2010 was 32% (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2011). The recent past has shown that the rooms required to cope with the abrupt influx of tourists is far from sufficient. To supplement the demand for accommodation at various tourist destinations in the Island, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) has launched the Home-Stay and Bungalow programme adding another exciting segment to present accommodation categories. The objectives of the program are to provide accreditation to the Home-Stay and Bungalow category, broaden the stakeholders base in tourism, expand the benefits of tourism to the community, as well as to support the demand for supplementary accommodation in urban areas, and provide employment and economic benefits to the local community (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2011). Though home-stay is a novel concept of Sri Lankan tourism, it is growing rapidly with the industrial need of supplementary accommodation, especially after the end of civil war.

Globally, there is a wealth of research conducted mainly focusing on host community's participation and motivation (Hamid and Ramachandram, 2002; Kayat, 2003), host providers' perceptions of the programme (Toh, Majid and Aminudin., 2005), economic and sociological issues of home-stays (Shakur and Holland, 2000) and supply side of the home-stay programmes, addressing planning, development and

management issues (Davies and Gilbert, 1992; Hamzah, 2004; Lynch, 2000). Additionally, some scholars have attempted to explore the travel experiences of home-stay tourists (Musa et al., 2009).

In the Sri Lankan context, there is a dearth of in-depth studies on the selected area. Ranasinghe (2013) in his study contends the operators and clients perspectives of home-stays in Sri Lanka. In addition, SLTDA has conducted many commercial, promotional and experimental studies on the same field as their marketing strategies. When promoting home-stay as such novel means of accommodation, it is timely and significant to have an extensive knowledge on the home-stay visitor profiles, their perceptions and satisfaction towards home-stay and motivational attributes, in order to cater the industrial requirements. This study can make a significant contribution to explore the attributes that would motivate tourists to choose home-stays in the study area, overall satisfaction of the visit, and main motivational factor to select the destination.

1.1 Home-stays

The term Home-stay refers to visiting and staying in a house with the host family allowing visitors to engage with the habitual activities of the local family. It is a living arrangement offered by a host or host family that involves staying in their furnished house. The guest of a home-stay would be staying in home-like accommodation with shared living spaces, facilities, and amenities. Home-stay can occur in any destination worldwide; residents of home-stay countries encourage

home-stays in order to develop their tourism industry.

Home-stay accommodation is a term with a specific cultural association such as private homes, interaction with a host or host-family, sharing of space which thereby becomes public (Lynch and MacWhannell, 2000). Lynch (2003) points out that 'home-stay is a type of accommodation where visitors or guests pay directly or indirectly to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place to a greater or lesser degree with a host and/or family who usually live upon the premises and with whom public space is shared to a greater or lesser degree'. Lynch (2000b) further revealed that the family has a key role to play in setting the norms of behavior which impact the guest while staying in the home.

Home-stays are outstanding attractions where home-stay activities develop communities and increase community income while sustaining and maintaining the culture and environment of the local region. Habitual lifestyles of the local residents have become a significant appeal which grabs the attention of tourists. In community-based tourism, the concept of home-stay is applied as a tourism segment that encourages interactions between host families and tourists. On the other hand this act as a development mean to raise awareness based upon cultural exchange and respect for the host's culture, whereby emphasis is placed on providing generosity and hospitality of excellent services (Jamil and Hamzah, 2007). In this way, the concept of Home-stays has gained its popularity as a means of accommodation especially in the

countries such as Sri Lanka, where community based tourism are abound. By means of supplementing the demand of accommodation in Sri Lanka this novel approach has been identified in order to provide clean, comfortable and affordable supplementary accommodation to tourists who visit Sri Lanka.

1.2 Tourists' Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction has an effect on the choice of destination, and the consumption of products and services in the arena of tourism. As a result, it is considered to be an imperative component to maintain competitive business in the tourism industry (Kozak&Rimmington, 2000). Wang, Zhang, Gu, and Zhen (2009) defined tourist satisfaction as “a feeling generated both by cognitive and emotional aspects of tourism activities as well as an accumulated evaluation of various components and features of the destination”. According to Peleggi (1996), tourist satisfaction is an important tool to measure the cultural and heritage sector. Hence, home-stay tourism could be use as a measuring tool of tourist satisfaction by revealing how tourists react to or benefit from the experiences they gain through their associations with traditional places and local culture.

Kozak and Rimmington (2000) had stated the impact of overall satisfaction of

tourists based on the attributes of home-stay destination, which was supported by Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel (1978) by stating that it is important to measure tourists' satisfaction with each attribute of the destination as satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the tourists' travel experience depends on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of each attribute of the visited destination.

It is evident that there is an increased demand for accommodations in private homes or hosted accommodations, especially home-stays or nature lodges, which represent a rapidly growing sector of the tourism industry (Morrision et al., 1996). Hence, understanding the attributes that satisfy guests is utmost crucial for home-stay providers in order to expand their business with better strategies while increasing the attraction of more tourists.

1.3 Motivation

In general, tourist motivation is the combination of needs and desires of tourists that affect the tendency to travel. It is considered as an important indicator which explicate as to why tourists behave in certain ways, though other factors obviously influence tourist behavior. Moreover, it influences the effective component of the image of a place or people, who may assess a tourist destination based on varying motives of travel (Baloglu, 1997).

According to previous research, it is clearly evident that tourist motivation is a result of internally driven needs of a tourist to escape from the usual environment (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Mannell&Iso-Ahola (1997) have stated that individuals break out from their routine environments and seek for recreational opportunities such as meeting new people, visiting new places, and having new experiences. The significant relationships between tourists' motivation and their satisfaction of destination have been found out through the research done previously. Based on the findings of Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991) there is a correlation between motivation and satisfaction of sightseeing tourists. This correlation indicated the similarity of motivation and satisfaction dimensions which brings tourist overall satisfaction. Although a number of studies have examined tourist motivation involved in travel, a limited number of tourism studies have addressed and examined the constructs of motivation and satisfaction in the same context. Given the literature on tourists' motivation, it is predicted that tourists' motivation will add significant variance of tourists' satisfaction on destination. Understanding motivation is a starting point to understand home-stay tourists and how they satisfy their needs.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the motivation and satisfaction of foreign tourist towards the home-stay experience. Other specific objectives are to identify the factors affected to select home-stays, analyze motivational attributes of home-stay and visitor profile.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research was comprised with few steps; a) selecting the study area, b) testing the reliability of the research and questionnaires and c) data collection and analysis.

The Historic City of Mihintalewas selected as the most suitable research site considering the reasons such as; the peripheral location, number of home-stays available, nature of home-stays and the accessibility. A representative sample of both tourists and home-stay owners were selected for the detailed study. Random sampling technique was applied to select the target sample. It comprised with 70 foreign tourists, 10 home-stay owners. In order to collect primary data, research techniques like questionnaire surveys, interviews, observations, group discussions were employed. A pilot survey was carried out to test the reliability and to make the modifications of the questionnaire. The survey was carried out for a period of six months. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were employed for the analysis of collected data.

Collecting secondary data was the next step of this research. The sources used in collecting secondary data were research articles, annual reports, web dictionaries and other related resources available in web blogs.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourists who visited the Mihintale historic city and the environs depict various characteristics. According to the overall findings of the study those can be classify

into few broader categories as; the visitor profile, overall satisfaction of the visit, main motivational factors to select the destination and attributes affected to select home-stays as their means of accommodation.

The visitor profile of the tourist who visited the study area comprises with few elements as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Visitor Profile

Elements		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	36	51.4
	Female	34	48.6
Age Group	25 or below	08	11.4
	26 - 40	24	34.3
	41 - 55	22	31.4
	56 or over	16	22.9
Country of residents	Belgium	06	08.6
	England	30	42.9
	France	06	08.6
	Germany	12	17.1
	Japan	04	05.7
	Netherland	06	08.6
	Spain	02	02.9
	Thailand	04	05.7
Household income (US \$)	10,000 or below	22	31.4
	10,001 - 25,000	08	11.4
	25,001 - 40,000	22	31.4
	40,001 - 55,000	08	11.4
	Over55,001	10	14.3

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Few specific characteristics can be highlighted in the visitor profile. When gender composition of the visitors is considered, it is a clear elucidation that the male majority (36) tend to experience home-stays. Table 4.1 further reveals that the

highest number of tourist visited and experience home-stays represent by age group of 26 - 40 (34%). Most of the tourists, out of the total interviewed (70) have arrived from the European region; out of which England represents the highest as 43%. Further 11.4% are the arrivals from Thailand and Japan. The whole gamut of the household income depicts that, there is a great tendency of selecting home-stays of tourist which belongs to the income strata of US \$ 10,000 or below and 25,001 - 40,000, which represent by 22 tourists for each category.

In addition to the profile composition, some other important features related to tourist visit can be noticed. According to the field survey it is clearly identified the various motivational factors which are shown in Figure 4.1.

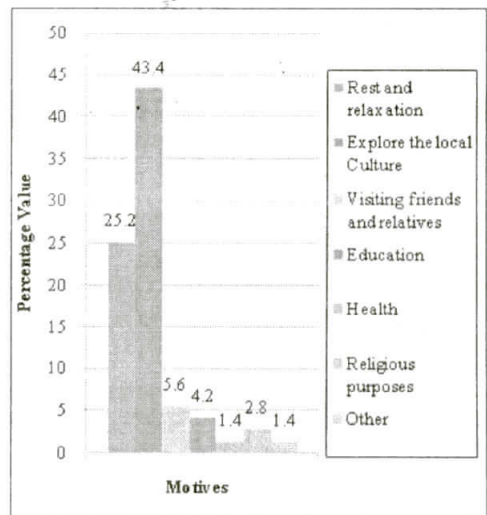


Figure 4.1: Motivational Factors to Select the Destination

Source: Field Survey, 2013

As illustrated in the figure, the majority of the tourist (43%) has been motivated to experience the local culture while 25% have selected the destination with the prime objective of rest and relaxation. Approximately 15% have selected the region based on the motives such as, visiting friends and relatives, education, health, religious purposes and others.

Table 4.2: Attributes Affected to Select Home-Stays

Ranking Scale: Not very important = 1
Extremely important = 5

	1	2	3	4	5
Host Family					
Live with a host family	-	8	10	12	40
Host family live in separately	32	8	12	10	8
Members of host family	40	8	10	6	6
Children in host family	42	4	8	10	6
Bathroom					
Attached or detached	10	2	16	12	30
Type of lavatory	12	6	8	12	32
Hot / Cold shower	12	2	10	14	32
Bedroom					
Air conditioning / fan	14	4	10	14	28
Comfortable mattress and bed	-	8	16	16	30
Sleeping on floor / bed	-	2	22	20	26
Amenities	16	4	22	8	20
House					
Luxuriousness	12	6	10	26	16
Constructed materials	14	12	12	16	16
Spaciousness	-	6	6	30	28
Meals					
Have / not with host family	10	4	18	16	22
Type of dishes	-	6	4	18	42
Eating habits	2	6	6	22	34
Activities					
Visit cultural / religious attractions	-	-	12	18	40
Visit village houses	-	14	14	12	30
Learn Sinhala language	-	4	20	8	38
Learn local cooking	2	4	10	12	42
Volunteer teaching	36	6	14	2	12

Source: Field Survey, 2013

As presented in Table 4.2, there are various attributes affected to select home-stays as a means of accommodation in the study area. When the most important attributes of each category are considered, the respective ranking values can be categorized as follows. When the nature of the host family is considered staying with the host family is extremely important for 40 tourists out of total 70. Number of members and children in the host family is not a significant attribute to select the home-stays. As physical attributes bathrooms, bedrooms and the nature of the house are the prominent attributes which affected in selecting home-stays. Type of dishes is the extremely important factor for 42 tourists when meals are considered. There are various activities wish to be done by home-stay visitors. Out of which learn local cooking and visit cultural/ religious attractions represents the highest as 42 and 40 respectively.

As the finishing phase, it is significant to consider about the overall satisfaction of the visit which is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

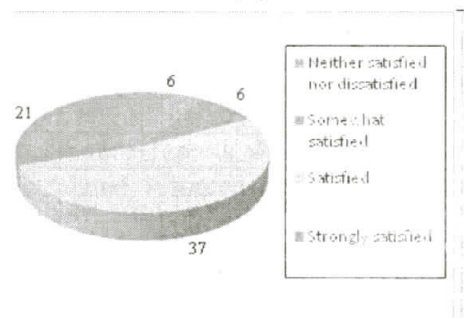


Figure 4.2: Overall Satisfaction of the Visit

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Considering the overall level of satisfaction, 37 tourists representing the majority have satisfied with the visit while 21 have mentioned as strongly satisfied about their experience.

5. CONCLUSION

When considering the motivation and satisfaction of foreign tourists towards home-stay experience of the Mihintale historic city a few special conclusions can be drawn. As the study area is a well know cultural, religious and historical tourist attraction of Sri Lanka, the majority of tourists have been satisfied with their home-stay experience in the region. Additionally, there is a huge tendency of tourist to select home-stays of the region as their means of accommodation. The key motivational factor which motivated them is the factor of "exploring the local culture". As this is a completely peripheral region, majority of the tourists have selected the destination with the prime objective of rest and relaxation, visiting friends and relatives, education, health, religious purposes and others. Since the study area has a rich resource base, unique cultural heritage and untapped tourist resources which can be utilized to develop the region it is timely and significant to give adequate attention to promote and develop home-stays as a novel means of accommodation.

As discussed in the literature review, there is a dearth of research in home-stay concept of Sri Lanka. Since this is a novel field into Sri Lankan tourism research arena, there are much more untapped aspects to be explored. Visitor perception on Home-stays, home-stays and regional

development, home-stays as a tool for poverty alleviation are few of them. As a new trend in tourism industry, this novel concept can create a new aura of improving tourism research in Sri Lanka.

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