
The Impact of Destination Brand Experience on Behavioural Intentions; with Reference to International Tourists Visiting Ella, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Due to the increasing competition, marketers in tourism industry require to be more creative in developing travel destinations as 'brands' and differentiating destinations from each other. In this manner, through positive experiences, existing travelers would make recommendations to 'others' (potential travelers) about such destinations. In line with this argument, current study attempts to determine the impact of Destination Brand Experience (DBE) on Behavioural Intentions (BI) of travelers. Ella, as a Sri Lankan tourist destination, was chosen as the destination for the study due to its high reputation, particularly among travelers from overseas. A self-administrated survey was conducted to collect 202 usable responses from 31 international tourists from different countries visiting Ella. Findings show that (1) sensory (2) affective (3) behavioural and (4) intellectual aspects of DBE of tourists' directly influence BI. Further, among the dimensions of DBE, 'sensory' experience has the highest impact on BI. Accordingly, stakeholders in tourism industry such as local governments, communities and tour operators need to pay attention in order to enhance the brand (location) based experiences for travelers through relevant dimensions of DBE. Particularly, in Ella, overall beauty of nature can be highlighted through picturesque views and weather condition not only to create strong impression of the place but also to value the time of travelers, with the intention of increasing the number of tourists' visits in future.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a growing industry as well as a highly competitive market. Especially in Sri Lanka, the tourism industry is a major contributor to the gross national product (GNP) of the country (TSP, 2017). Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries which deliver a travel experience comprising of transportation, accommodation, food and beverage establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses and other hospitality services for individuals or groups travelling away from home (Macintosh & Goeldner, 2010).

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority has started to focus on enriching the visitor experience through development projects that add value to a healthy and profitable tourism nowadays (TSP, 2017). Since 2009, with the cessation of the civil war, Sri Lanka's economy started to prosper in all economic sectors, particularly in tourism (TSP, 2017). The benchmark of developments in this industry after war was described by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau as 'the first destination in the world to visit' nominated by Lonely Planet magazine (2019; 2013). In the meantime, Forbes Magazine (2015) ranked Sri Lanka among its 'top ten coolest countries to visit', while top global influencers, Nast Traveler, Rough Guides, Lonely Planet, The Guardian and the New York Times (2006) also recognized Sri Lanka as a 'top location to visit'. 2018 was highlighted as the year, when the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau was recognized as 'Asia's leading adventure tourism destination 2018' at the World Travel Asia & Australasia Gala Ceremony.

The present study aims to examine the impact of tourists' destination brand experience (DBE) on tourists' behavioural intention (BI) in respect of the tourist destination in order to emphasize the importance of tourism. The story behind DBE and BI are quite interesting. In 2009, Brakus et al, proposed a new scale for brand experience based on previous experiential marketing literatures (Pine & Gilmore,1999; Schmitt,1999). However, Barnes et al (2014) argued that none of the brands were examined in the study of Brakus et al. (2009), especially destinations. To bridge this gap, Barnes et al, extended the application of brand experience to tourism destinations and developed scale for 'Destination Brand Experience' (DBE). Thereby, DBE is the combination of sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral experiences resulting from a destination as a stimulus. The concept of DBE is compiled by three domains as destination, brand and experience.

Destination plays a major role in tourist visits to a particular country. Buhalis (2000: 97) identifies "tourism destinations as geographical areas and these can be interpreted as amalgams of tourism products and services". Commonly, tourists do not have an intention to

visit a country but to visit a particular destination. For example, India is identified by the destination of Agra (Taj Mahal), France by Paris (Eiffel Tower), Indonesia by Bali (Ancient temples), Australia by Sydney (Sydney Opera House), and so on.

Generally, if a tourist adores a destination, it generates a positive feedback either by confirming a tourist revisit intention or stimulating willingness to recommend the destination to others (Wongpan & Anon Khamwon, 2016). Destination is also treated as a brand. If marketers wish to differentiate themselves from competitors and create a unique position in the customers' mind, then marketers should definitely build a strong brand for their physical goods, services, retail stores, online businesses, people, organizations, places, and ideas, etc. in the market place. Brand tourism includes imaginativeness and feelings that a country invokes in its visitors. It has a significant effect on the choice of people to travel to a particular destination (Singh & Mehraj, 2018). Therefore, DBE may help destination marketers by assessing the performance of a destination in a holistic manner.

In tourism, the relationship between DBE and (BI) has been studied in two different ways. Firstly, scholars such as, Barnes et al (2014); Wongpan and Khamwon (2016); Kumar and Kaushik (2017); and Singh and Mehraj (2018) discovered that the satisfaction mediates the relationship between DBE and BI in their studies. Secondly, the above scholars tested the model with MICE tourists and tourists who visited the country. Nevertheless, despite the prior findings, there is still an empirical gap. In terms of tourism, a tourists' revisit intention or willingness to recommend is dependent on his or her experience of a particular destination. With reference to Hanna and Rowley (2011) "a destination brand experience occurs when a person experiences a branded place and then gains pleasurable experiences". When tourists experience a destination brand, they often attach an emotional meaning to that place, thus, feeling part of the place (Lindstedt, 2011). Finally, positive brand experiences that occur lead to repeated interactions with the same place and positive feedback about that particular place (Morgan et al., 2011).

Furthermore, countries such as Sri Lanka as an overall travel destination, is a proud custodian of a rich cultural heritage, nature and different types of tourism, including adventure, leisure, pilgrims and history. Each destination of a country has its unique characteristics. Future tourism not only depends on how talented marketers would attract new tourists but also on tourist revisits and the number of positive feedbacks word of mouth that areas generated.

In order to highlight the significant relationship between DBE and BI, the study intends to examine the destination of Ella, one of the favorite tourist destinations in Sri Lanka. At the same time, the researcher has given more importance to the destination brand experience in

terms of measuring the tourists' behavioral intention towards a destination. Among all these brand elements, brand experience emphasized as an important element in accessing consumer behavior in a holistic manner (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Smith & Wheeler 2002). Because, the customer based brand equity is used to assess the brand knowledge via brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality of the brand and brand associations, brand personality attempts to grab the personal traits that consumers see in the brand. Moreover, it confines a real spirit of actual interaction of a tourist with various destination stimuli (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017). They also stated that, "experience may capture the overall feeling not only the liking". It has been noted that, a successful destination brand needs to deliver its promise as per tourist's expectations, of a memorable experience that is characteristically related with that destination (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017).

Therefore, this study is interested in testing the impact of destination brand experience (sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual) on tourists' behavioural intentions.

1.1. Research Problem

Based on the above background and theoretical understanding, the current study attempted to answer the research question: how does the destination brand experience influence (DBE) behavioral intentions (BI) of international tourists who visited Ella, Sri Lanka?

2. Literature Review

Having amalgamated the destination branding literature, the section concludes by highlighting the need for a DBE and BI.

2.1. Destination Branding

Destination branding is an interesting topic related to tourism at present. It is vital in the current destination management practice, because of the expansion of tourist opportunities and thereby, travel locations have resulted in increased substitutability and lack of differentiation amongst some destinations.

From 2000 onwards, literatures on tourism incorporated destinations with branding and a destination branding model. With increasing competition, marketers started to focus on different brand elements to achieve competitive advantage, such as, brand image, brand personality, brand love, brand trust, brand experience and brand attachment; even though brand experience enables assessing consumer behaviour more holistically (Pine & Gilmore 1999; Smith & Wheeler, 2002). Highlighting the importance of a destination brand with

experience, Barnes et al in 2014 developed a model, “Destination Brand Experience,” combining the four identified elements of sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual aspects.

2.2. The Destination Brand Experience (DBE)

Destination Brand Experience is a new conceptual model in destination branding as in the context of tourism. A DBE occurs when a person experiences a branded place and then gains pleasurable experiences (Hanna & Rowley, 2011). Furthermore, it offers a holistic view which combines the four components of, sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual. These components capture the real essence of an actual interaction of a tourist with various destination stimuli. It may also capture the overall feeling and not the mere liking (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017).

2.3. Behavioral Intentions

According to scholars Zeithaml et al (1996), Behavioral Intention is a configuration of attitude interaction, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, which reflects one’s own desires that are formed by way of beliefs, knowledge or previous information, which are used to measure the actual behaviour of the tourists. It ensures tourists’ willingness towards products or services.

Intention to behave comes from theory of reasoned action (TRA) and theory of planned behaviour (TPB). It reveals that the actual behaviour can be predicted from intention which is directly related to the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975; Ajzen,1991). These TRA and TPB theories explained the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. The intention is also assumed as the immediate antecedent of behaviour or behavioural intention is the immediate antecedent of actual behavior (Ramjit,2018).

2.4. The Destination Brand Experience (DBE) and Behavioural Intentions (BI)

Though DBE is a new concept within the context of tourism, it is a well-established model that inform an experiential marketing perspective. DBE is recognized as an important element in tourists’ behaviour.

a. Sensory Destination Brand Experience (Sensory DBE) and Behavioral intention (BI)

Sensory DBE is defined as an interaction of tourists’ senses with the destination stimuli. It

focuses on the five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell), and each tourists' physical experience based on visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory and tactile experiences at a particular destination. It may occur due to the sound of beautiful greenly environments, the fragrances of a garden, weather conditions, taste of a cuisine or the overall beauty of nature (Barnes et al., 2014). This dimension includes four indicators; beautiful views, strong impression, interest, and value for time. Sensory DBE is related to the Ella town itself since it is surrounded by beautiful hills of the central highlands and is covered in rolling green tea estates, tall trees of cloud forests, and interesting natural formations together with perfect weather conditions. The town is a delight to be in as it maintains its originality and rural feel.

H₁: Sensory destination brand experience (Sensory DBE) significantly influences the behavioural intention (BI) of an international tourist who visits Ella

b. *Affective Destination Brand Experience and Behavioural Intention (Affective DBE)*

Affective DBE is defined as the experience is connected to tourists' feelings, sentiments and emotions towards destinations. This experience helps to understand the nature of stimulations that can trigger emotions and encourage tourists to automatically participate in a particular destination (Barnes et al., 2014). This dimension includes four indicators; feelings and sentiments, relaxation, happy mood and strong emotions. The selected destination, Ella, is a calm and greenly environment which allows tourists to experience nature, and thus, a small town with enormous avenues for entertainment.

H₂: Affective destination brand experience (Affective DBE) significantly influences the behavioural intention (BI) of international tourists who visit Ella

c. *Behavioural Destination Brand Experience and Behavioral Intention (Behavioral DBE)*

Behavioral DBE is defined as the experience which one may gain from physical interaction with the destination. It may be induced by the destination's geographical structure, hiking, opportunities for adventure tourism, enjoyment resulting the presence of waterfall, and so on. Additionally, its behaviors and lifestyle focuses on showing tourists alternative ways of doing things, alternative lifestyles and interactions; further the changes in lifestyle and behavior are often more motivational, inspirational and emotional in nature (Barnes et al., 2014). This dimension includes four indicators; physical activities, sceneries, relationships and positive behaviour. Ella is generally famous for adventurous tourism mountaineering trekking; rock climbing and; trails to waterfalls.

H₃: Behavioral destination brand experience (Behavioral DBE) significantly influences the

behavioural intention (BI) of international tourists who visit Ella.

d. Intellectual Destination Brand Experience and Behavioral Intention (Intellectual DBE)

Intellectual DBE is defined as the intellect with the objective of creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage tourists creatively (Barnes et al., 2014). This dimension includes four indicators; creative thinking, curiosity, problem solving and purchasing. Ella, its places, history, architectures, culture, cuisine and other ways of creating more enjoyment in Ella, and so on.

H₄: Intellectual destination brand experience (Intellectual DBE) significantly influences behavioral intention (BI) of international tourists who visit Ella.

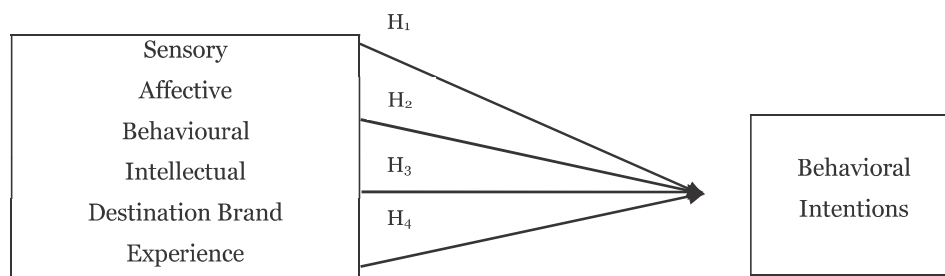


Figure 1: The Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

Destination of Ella was incorporated under the study since it is considered to be one of the favorite tourist destinations in Sri Lanka. Ella is a small town, located in Badulla District, surrounded by beautiful tea estates, waterfalls and mountains. The constructions of conceptual model were operationalized by items which utilized a five-point Likert.

The focus of this study were international tourists who visited Ella as their tourist destination. Hence, the international tourist who must be 18 years of age or older, visiting these locations as tourists and non- residents of Sri Lanka and respondents who can understand English. ata pertaining to this study were collected using a self- administrated questionnaire. The author herein identified a limitation of defining the study population so as to adopt a probability sampling technique. Therefore, a judgmental sampling method was selected in retrospect. The total number of responses collected using the field survey amounted up to 215.

Based on the initial screening of the data set, there were 13 incomplete responses, and these responses were removed, which resulted in 202 completed responses for the final analysis. The sample consisted of respondents from 31 countries, of whom 21.8% (n=44) represented England, 18.8% (n=38) Germany, 8.9% (n=18) France and Spain, and 7.4 % (n=15) Netherlands.

After data collection was completed, raw data were screened to delete responses that were not suitable for analysis. Initially the data were checked for incomplete responses (missing value analysis), and then a data imputation method was used for responses. In the next step, responses were checked for outliers, normality, skewness and kurtosis and effects on normality and these results confirmed the data distribution was normal. Data were analysed using Univariate and Bivariate techniques to test the hypotheses.

4. Data Analysis

Data preparation procedure was tested prior testing the main constructs. This refers to the act of preparing disparate data sources into refined information assets that can be used effectively for the study purpose. It is necessary to manipulate and transform raw data so that the information content enfolded in the data set can be exposed, or made more easily accessible. Under data preparation process, missing data and imputation, unengaged responses, outliers, factor analysis, reliability and validity are tested in order to confirm that collected data are suitable for further study analysis.

Table 1 herein explains reliability and convergent validity. Convergent validity can be established when the scores of the same concept obtained using two different measuring instruments are highly correlated (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001). Moreover, convergent validity is achieved when the standardized factor loadings are higher than the minimum recommended value of 0.50(Hair et al., 2010). Anderson and Gerbing (1988) explain that factor loadings of scale items, measuring a construct must be statistically significant in order to achieve convergent validity. Nusair and Hua (2010) used and applied the average variance extracted (AVE) method in their researches to establish convergent validity. AVE is the amount of variance that is captured by construct or factor in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error (Fornell & Larcker 1981). The AVE should exceed 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010) for a construct. AVE values for all dimensions exceed 0.50, which reveal the existence of convergent validity among dimensions. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was undertaken to eliminate the inter-dependency of the independent variables (Kothari 1995). According to table 1, tolerance values for all independent variables are greater than zero (>0) and VIF values are less than 5. Therefore, tolerance and VIF indicate the absence of multicollinearity (is not serious) in this study. Assessment of the degree of consistency

between multiple measurements of a construct is known as reliability (Hair et al., 2010). The CAC for all variables were greater than 0.8, and it reveals of a good reliability.

Table 1: Assessment of the Measurement Model: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variables	Dimensions	Statements	FL	SE	AVE	CAC	VIF
DBE	Sensory DBE	S1	.736	0.542	.813	.786	1.671
		S2	.748	0.560			
		S3	.696	0.484			
		S4	.707	0.500			
	Affective DBE	A1	.558	0.311	.570	.769	1.385
		A2	.619	0.383			
		A3	.586	0.343			
		A4	.206	0.042			
	Behavioral DBE	B1	.521	0.271	.691	.580	1.915
		B2	.745	0.555			
		B3	.309	0.095			
		B4	.777	0.604			
	Intellectual DBE	I1	.806	0.650	.729	.652	1.783
		I2	.797	0.635			
		I3	.653	0.426			
		I4	.204	0.042			
BI	RVI	RVI1	.721	0.520	.665	.776	
		RVI2	.635	0.403			
		RVI3	.666	0.444			
		RVI4	.241	0.058			
	WR	WR1	.830	0.689	.855	.853	
		WR2	.854	0.729			
		WR3	.823	0.677			
		WR4	.560	0.314			

All dimensions and indicators of destination brand experience were analyzed via univariate

analysis and were evaluated by the central theorem of mean and standard deviation in order to understand the nature of destination brand experience on tourist's behavioural intention. Table 2 specifies the overall view of DBE and DBE is a highly attributed variable on tourists' behavioural intention. The mean value is 3.9502 and the standard deviation is 0.5434.

Table 2: The overall view of DBE and its Dimensions

Description	Dimensions				Independent Variable
	Sensory DBE	Affective DBE	Behavioral DBE	Intellectual DBE	DBE
	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X
Mean	4.271	3.5953	4.0087	3.9257	3.9502
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.5507	0.6097	1.1115	0.5326	0.5434
Standard Error of Mean	0.03875	0.0429	0.0782	0.03747	0.03823
Lower Limit of Mean (3-1.96σ _x)	2.9241	2.9159	2.8467	2.9266	2.9251
Upper Limit of Mean (3+1.96σ _x)	3.0760	3.0841	3.1533	3.0734	3.0749

Table 3 indicates the overall view of the dependent variable of Behavioural Intention (BI) and its dimensions of Revisit Intention (RVI) and Willingness to Recommend (WR). The mean value is 3.9319 and the standard deviation is 0.634. All dimensions of variable BI are highly attributed in BI.

The study conducted multi regression analysis and adopted a Stepwise Regression method in order to understand the impact of destination brand experience on behavioural intentions. Regression analysis describes the way in which one variable is related to another and derives an equation (model), which can be used to estimate the unknown value of one variable (dependent) on the basis of the known values of the other variables (independent).

Table 3: The overall view of BI and its Dimensions

Description	Dimensions		Dependent Variable
	RVI	WR	BI
	Y ₁	Y ₂	Y
Mean	3.6931	4.1708	3.9319
Standard Error of Mean	.0458	.0484	.0446
Standard Deviation (SD)	.6511	.6883	.634

Lower Limit of Mean ($3-1.96\sigma_x$)	2.9102	2.9051	2.9126
Upper Limit of Mean ($3+1.96\sigma_x$)	3.0898	3.0949	3.0874

Table 4 shows the model summary for the dimensions of DBE and BI. Based on the results, the impact of DBE on BI, adjusted R^2 is 0.523. The fitted regression model explains 52.3% of the variation in BI. Therefore, the model is adequate. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.670 is not too far from 2. Hence, data are independent. Further, it specifies the results of linear regression, in which the significance level is at 0.05. The Co-efficient of Determination (R^2) is 0.533 and indicates moderate relationship between DBE (sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual) and BI.

Table 5, the Coefficients table, provides information on each predictor dimension. This provides the necessary information to predict BI from Sensory DBE, Affective DBE, Behavioral DBE and Intellectual DBE.

Table 4: Model Summary for Dimensions of DBE and BI

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		Durbin-Watson
					Sig.	F Change	
1	.670 ^a	.449	.446	.47192	.000		
2	.712 ^b	.507	.502	.44746	.000		
3	.723 ^c	.523	.516	.44103	.010		
4	.730 ^d	.533	.523	.43783	.050		1.670

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sensory DBE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sensory DBE, Intellectual DBE

c. Predictors: (Constant), Sensory DBE, Intellectual DBE, Behavioral DBE

d. Predictors: (Constant), Sensory DBE, Intellectual DBE, Behavioral DBE, Affective DBE

e. Dependent Variable: BI

The p-value for all four dimensions of DBE is less than 0.05 (< 0.05). Hence, dimensions of DBE contribute significantly to the model. The regression equation for this model: Thus, for every unit increase in dimensions of DBE, tourists BI will increase by 46.7% (Sensory DBE), 11.2% (Affective DBE), 14% (Behavioral DBE) and 18.5% (Intellectual DBE). Subsuming all the results, reflect a very strong evidence to believe that, there is a significant positive impact of tourists Destination brand experience (DBE) H₁; H₂; H₃; and H₄ on their behavioural intention (BI). Comparing among all independent dimensions, sensory brand experience (H₁) has more impact on tourists' behavioural intention and affective brand experience (H₂) has a lower impact on tourists' behavioural intention.

Table 5: Coefficient Summary for Dimensions of DBE and BI

Dimension	Behavioural Intention		Sig
	Unstandardized	Standardized	
	Coefficients	Coefficients	
	B	Beta	
Constant	.039		
H1 : Sensory DBE	.537	.467	.000
H2: Affective DBE	.064	.112	.050
H3: Behavioral DBE	.166	.140	.034
H4: Intellectual DBE	.192	.185	.003

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on univariate analysis tables, subsuming all the dimensions and indicators of DBE, all reveal a high level of acceptance towards Ella. Sensory DBE and Behavioral DBE are quite higher than other two dimensions of Affective DBE and Intellectual DBE. In support of the present study's findings, Singh and Mahraj (2018); Kumar and Kaushik (2017); Barns et al, (2014); all claim that dimension of Sensory DBE has a high level of acceptance towards the destination. In contrary to previous findings the present study findings reveal that not only SBE but also BBE has an equal level of acceptance among the selected international tourists in the context of Ella, Sri Lanka since Ella town itself is surrounded by beautiful hills of the central highlands, covered in rolling green tea estates, tall trees of cloud forests, and interesting natural formations and perfect weather. The town is a delight to be in as it maintains its originality and rural feel. Also, Ella is generally a place famous for adventurous tours - mountaineering; trekking; rock climbing and trails to waterfalls.

Further, subsuming all the dimensions and indicators under BI, all reveal a high level of acceptance towards Ella despite WR being quite higher than RVI and WR being the most influenced dimension under BI. The findings of the present study suggest that the Sensory DBE, Affective DBE, Behavioral DBE and Intellectual DBE aspects of DBE significantly influence BI and that Sensory DBE has a high impact on BI. However, in contrary to the present study, Barnes et al., (2014) emphasized that, except Sensory DBE ($\beta=.521^{**}$) none of the other DBE components were significant in determining BI. Kumar and Kaushik (2017) expressed that Behavioral DBE and Intellectual DBE were insignificant ($\beta=.086$, $\beta=.018$) on BI. Other than destination branding experience model, Arasi et al (2017) tested the model in food and beverage industry and revealed that except Sensory DBE, Affective DBE, the other two dimensions of Behavioral DBE and Intellectual DBE ($\beta=-.0173$, $\beta=.27$) were not significant in determining BI.

The above contradictory findings reveal that the experiences at a destination can vary from person to person and that it clearly depends on the place they visited. The major contradiction between the findings of the present study and the findings of the previous studies is the selection of the destination. Destination brand experience occurs when a person experiences a branded place and then gains pleasurable experiences (Hanna & Rowley, 2011). If the feeling is positive toward the place they visited, then positive brand experiences occur, and they would lead to repeated interactions with the same place and give positive feedback about the place (Thomas & Veloutsou, 2011). Repetitive behaviours (revisit) and positive feedbacks are the desired results that destination marketers want to attain.

5.1. Managerial Implications

Findings of this study provide useful and meaningful insights which can be used by various stakeholders of the tourism industry. The study found an impact of destination brand experience (DBE) on behavioural intention (BI).

There were a number of issues noticed at Ella during the data collection stage that would hinder the attraction of tourists and engender negative emotions and unfavourable perceptions on the destination: (1) poor quality of souvenirs; (2) shortage and maintenance of resting areas (sanitary facilities); (3) poor hygiene; (4) lack of navigation boards; (5) High rated transport (tuk) and less transport (subways); (6) inconvenience and insecure situation caused by street dogs; (7) number of baggers. This may lead to a sense of dissatisfaction and negative word of mouth about the destination. The study revealed that the sensory destination brand experience is highly influential on the behavioural intention towards Ella. Tourists are keen on sensing a place; therefore, if the relevant authorized parties take necessary actions against these negative issues, the country can definitely attract more

tourists and allow them to sense this destination. This will lead to their revisit intention and willingness to recommend the destination.

Although, the current study states the above, among 202 international tourists, 34% belongs to the age category of 18-27, while 31% represent the age category of 28-37. Hence, as per the findings, 63% of tourists were married and half of them (50%) belong to the age groups of 28 to 37. The second highest number of tourists are single in marital status and are of ages 18-27. Based on the details, it is confirmed that, the international tourists, mostly in the young age group are very much interested in mountaineering, trekking, rock climbing and other outdoor pursuits, and that they have found Ella as an attractive destination. Thus if the authorized parties promote adventure tourism and build better facilities, Sri Lanka can certainly attract more international tourists. The current study findings indicate that, many tourists who really interested in experiencing behaviorally, that is what adventure tourism meant at Ella

Most of the international tourists prefer to travel to Ella by train. The Railway Department already facilitates four train services (Podimenike, Udaratamenike, Express Train and the Night Mail) to Ella. However, the poor maintenance of these trains may cause a negative image on Sri Lankans' hygiene. Moreover, the local passenger trains are few, poorly maintained, carriages attached to freight trains, takes more time to reach a particular destination and are overcrowded with about half locals and half tourists. If the Railway authority considers these issues, they would be capable of increasing the revenue in comparison to that of today, since most tourists who travel to Ella prefer to experience the rail adventure when doing so. Similar to other studies, this study also has limitations. The following sections acknowledge and describe those limitations, so as to avoid and limit them in future studies. In terms of the sampling framework, the study utilized a judgmental technique to collect data and did so within a limited time frame. Also, it considered international tourists who were 18+ years old and were visiting Ella under the categories of tourists, non-residents of Sri Lanka and respondents who can understand English since the language of study used on the questionnaire was in English. However, these samples were chosen since international tourists tend to have a wider range of experiences than the local tourists. The sample size was 202 and it fulfilled the sample requirement for this study. However, if increased, the study will be more effective.

As a future direction, the author wishes to propose the dimension of willingness to recommend to be taken under study in order to measure the behavioural intentions of tourists towards a destination, instead of revisit intention since it would be more beneficial. In general, tourists are experience and novelty seekers. Tourists always look forward to experience a new destination. Therefore, tourists would recommend a destination if they have

a great experience at the destination they visited. Therefore, studying this most preferred and vital dimension of tourists' willingness to recommend in terms of measuring tourists' behavioural intention would be more beneficial to the tourism industry.

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