



10th INTERNATIONAL TOURISM RESEARCH CONFERENCE (ITRC - 2025)

KNOWLEDGE | INNOVATION | POLICY | SYNERGY

TRANSFORMING TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



D A C SURANGA SILVA MUBARAK KALDEEN SAMPATH SIRIWARDENA PRATHIBHANI BANDUSENA

10th International Tourism Research Conference-2025

"Transforming Tourism for Sustainable Prosperity"

Organized by

Sustainable Tourism Unit, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo

> 1st October 2025 Colombo, Sri Lanka

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS













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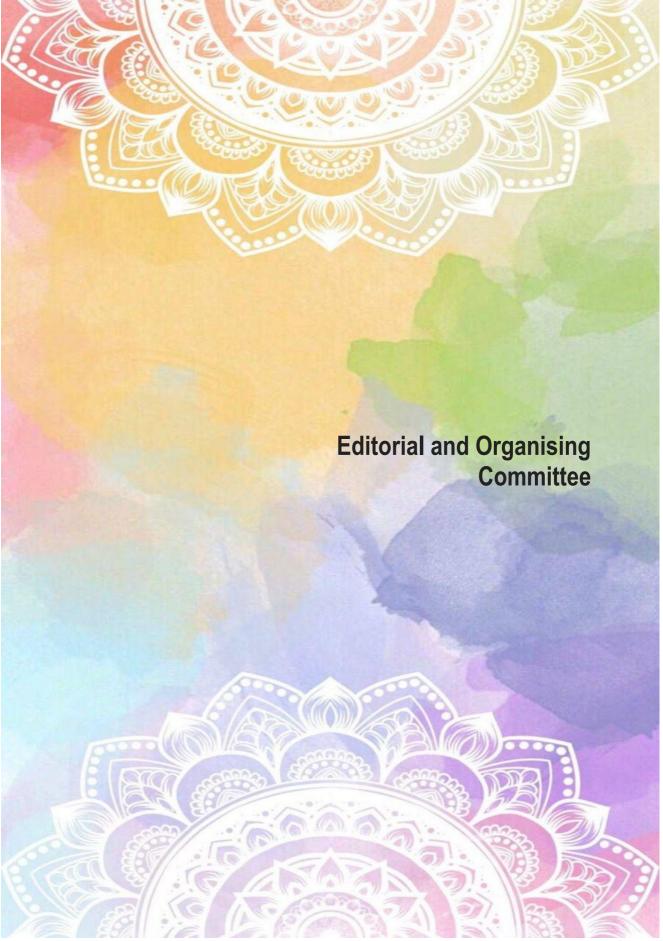
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International Tourism Research Conference-2025

"Transforming Tourism for Sustainable Prosperity"

[THE BOOK OF ABSTRACTS]

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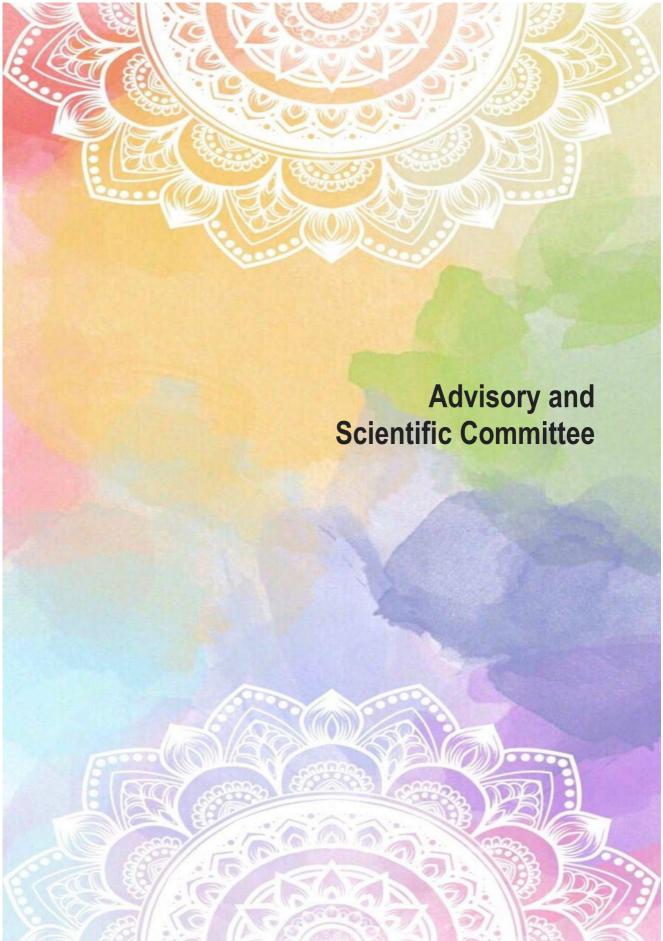
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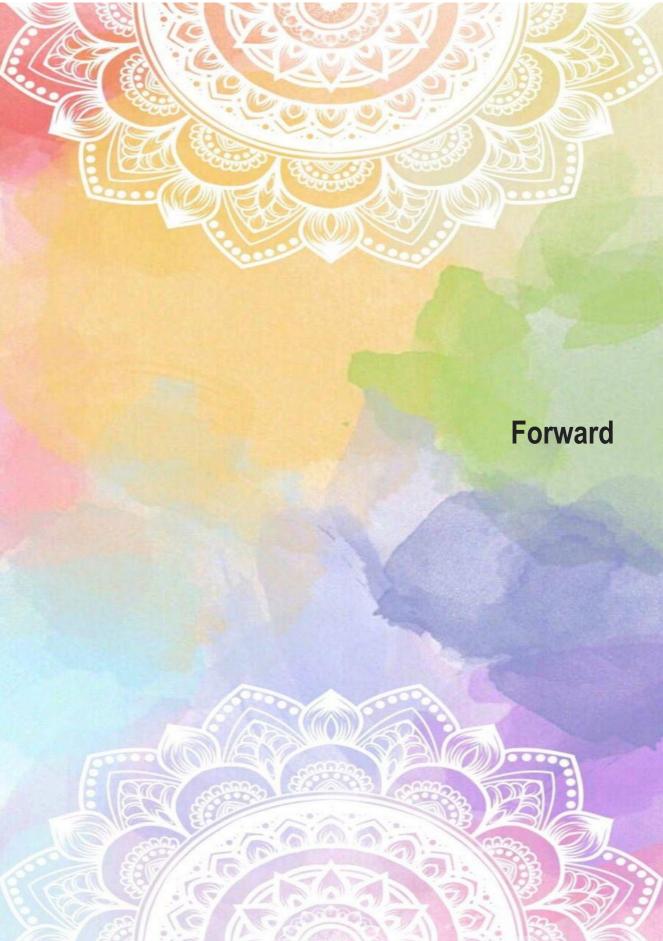
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Message from the Vice Chancellor

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to all participants of the 10th International Tourism Research Conference (ITRC 2025), organized by the Sustainable Tourism Unit, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, under the timely and thought-provoking theme "Shaping and Transforming Sustainable Tourism."

Tourism remains one of the most dynamic global industries, carrying immense potential for economic growth, cultural exchange, and community empowerment. Yet, it also faces profound challenges in the face of climate change, resource management, and the need to preserve social and cultural integrity. This conference, therefore, provides a vital platform for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to engage in meaningful dialogue and share innovative approaches to transform tourism into a truly sustainable enterprise.

The University of Colombo, as a premier higher education institution in Sri Lanka, takes great pride in fostering academic discourse that addresses pressing global concerns while contributing to national development priorities. The deliberations at ITRC 2025 will no doubt inspire forward-looking strategies, promote collaborative research, and strengthen networks among academics and professionals committed to sustainable tourism. I take this opportunity to commend the Faculty of Arts and the Sustainable Tourism Unit for their commitment to advancing research and knowledge in this critical field. I wish all presenters, participants, and organizers a most productive and enriching conference.

Professor Indika Mahesh Karunathilake

Vice Chancellor University of Colombo

Message from the Dean

It is with great pleasure that I extend my best wishes to all participants of the 10th International Tourism Research Conference (ITRC 2025), organized by the Sustainable Tourism Unit, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, under the timely theme "Shaping and Transforming Sustainable Tourism."

Tourism is a vital sector with the power to generate economic growth, foster cultural understanding, and strengthen community resilience. At the same time, it is increasingly challenged by global issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, and the need to ensure inclusivity and equity. In this context, the ITRC serves as an important academic and professional platform for exchanging ideas, advancing research, and promoting best practices that can help transform tourism into a more sustainable and future-ready industry.

The Faculty of Arts takes pride in supporting initiatives that foster interdisciplinary dialogue and contribute to addressing pressing global and local challenges. I believe that the insights shared, and networks built through ITRC 2025 will greatly enrich the field of sustainable tourism and inspire innovative pathways for the future. I warmly congratulate the organizers for their commitment and dedication in hosting this landmark 10th edition of the conference and wish all participants a productive and rewarding experience.

Senior Professor L. Manawadu

Dean
Faculty of Arts
University of Colombo

Message from the Head of the Department

It is my distinct pleasure to extend warm greetings to all participants of the 10th International Tourism Research Conference (ITRC 2025), jointly organized by the Sustainable Tourism Unit and the Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.

The theme of UN Tourism - "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation," underscores the critical importance of integrating global best practices to achieve inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Adopting these internationally recognized practices is essential for harnessing Sri Lanka's untapped tourism potential and transforming it into a resilient, prosperous sector that benefits all stakeholders.

I praise the dedication of the organizing committee in assembling an exceptional group of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from around the globe. Their collaborative engagement creates an invaluable platform for sharing innovative research and practical insights, which are vital for shaping effective policies and fostering a sustainable tourism economy.

I am confident that the knowledge exchanged and partnerships formed during this conference will drive meaningful progress in aligning Sri Lanka's tourism sector with global standards of sustainability and inclusivity. I wish all participants a successful, stimulating, and rewarding conference.

Senior Professor K. Amirthalingam

Head of the Department of Economics Faculty of Arts University of Colombo

Message from the Conference Chair

It is both a privilege and a pleasure to extend my greetings to all participants of the 10th International Tourism Research Conference (ITRC 2025), organized by the Sustainable Tourism Unit, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, under the theme "Shaping and Transforming Sustainable Tourism."

Marking a decade of scholarly dialogue, ITRC has evolved into an established academic platform that facilitates the critical examination of tourism from multidisciplinary perspectives. The 2025 conference provides an opportunity to interrogate the intersections of theory, practice, and policy in advancing sustainable tourism, especially in light of global transformations that continue to reshape the dynamics of mobility, development, and environmental stewardship.

The contributions presented at this conference are expected to foster rigorous academic debate, encourage methodological innovation, and generate empirically grounded insights that can inform both local and global tourism discourses. By convening researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, ITRC 2025 aspires to bridge knowledge gaps and promote collaborations that strengthen the academic foundations of sustainable tourism while addressing its applied dimensions.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the sustained commitment of the organizing committee and the scholarly community that continues to enrich this initiative. It is my sincere hope that the intellectual engagements during ITRC 2025 will contribute meaningfully to the expansion of knowledge and the shaping of future trajectories in sustainable tourism research.

Professor (Dr.) D.A.C Suranga Silva

Chair, ITRC 2025 Coordinator, Sustainable Tourism Unit Faculty of Arts University of Colombo

Keynote Speaker

10th International Tourism Research Conference (ITRC-2025) 1st October 2025 University of Colombo Sri Lanka



Professor. (Dr.) Noel Scott Edith Cowan University

Tourism and Sustainable Transformation

It is my great pleasure to be able to present to you today here in beautiful Colombo, as part of celebrations of World Tourism Day which took place on Saturday the 27^{th of} September. My talk is titled tourism and sustainable transformation and recognises the urgent need for more sustainable travel practices and innovation across the sector. In particular I want to focus on the blue economy. The oceans of the world have only recently been officially recognised as needing sustainable management. This is especially true in Sri Lanka due to it's strategic location as well as the important of it's marine environment for animals such as whales and

turtles, as well as its potential for sustainable wind energy production. The government of Sri Lanka is undoubtedly aware of the importance of it's oceans and has provided a number of marine protected areas. Sri Lanka has also experienced significant environmental problems caused by pollution due to shipping accidents.

I want to focus in on tourism in this marine environment. There are many opportunities for development of tourism around the coasts of Sri Lanka. The coastal areas of Sri Lanka our primary resource for tourism that has been extensively developed. However, there are another number of opportunities, from while dolphin and turtle watching, yachting, and scuba diving to Improving environmental management, operator safety practises and industry collaboration. I'll begin my talk but discussing a little bit about the marine environment in Australia from tourism perspective and then go on to discuss the results of a recent Australian awards research project on marine tourism and how its recommendations could be implemented here.

Australia, like Sri Lanka has an extensive coastline that is a resource for residents and tourists alike. The beach is part of Australian culture and a place for relaxation and recreation. Because of its use by children and families there is an active surf lifesaving movement That provides protection for swimmers. A number of marine parks have been set up around Australia to protect coral reefs and fish stocks. The most extensive is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This extends for some 2300 kilometers along the coastline of Queensland.

This marine park has experienced a number of threats including pists like the crown of thorns starfish, reduction in water quality due to agriculture and importantly the effects of climate change leading to coral bleaching as well as damage from cyclones. The Australian government through its Great Barrier Reef marine Park Authority provides oversight of the park. It has developed extensive marine zoning plans defining the activities allowable in each zone, as well as management plans a permit system responsible practise for industry and engagement with the local community. Tourism is a beneficiary of this management system, and a permit system allows tourism operators to take visitors to the reef while ensuring sustainable use.

The permit system provides a benefit for operators to adopt best practise standards in management of tourism and a productive open an adaptive partnership has developed between government and industry. This partnership has allowed the development not only of reef visits but also sailing and boating and the associated marinas, fishing, and even super yachts. Guidelines are available for whale and dolphin watching as well as viewing turtles laying eggs or hatching.

In 2025, Dr Madura Thivanka received funding from the Australia Awards Programme, to visit Australia and learn from the marine tourism industry there. Dr Thivanka was also able to invite five other Sri Lankans, with an involvement in the marine sector to also visit. As a result, he has provided a report with policy actions for improving marine tourism in Sri Lanka. Policy actions include establishing eco certification programmes strengthen thing stakeholder collaboration and improve product diversity and quality. One of the features of this programme is that each of the participants completed their own project on their return to Sri Lanka. These projects include working with tourism operators to improve their skills and knowledge and developing international training partnerships. Dr Thivanka's project has provided trained experts to support the development of the marine tourism sector.

While a good start, development of the marine tourism sector needs lots of additional work. To do this, the industry sectors involved would benefit from further collaboration. There are a number of yachting diving and lifesaving associations they could work further together. One opportunity would be to try and implement some of the policy recommendations in one area of Sri Lanka. This area could become a living laboratory for improving marine tourism. So, Sri Lanka has some direction for development of the marine tourism sector. What it needs is for implementation. I should note that universities can provide support for such initiatives, while benefiting their students true firsthand learning. I am sure that Dr Thivanka would welcome any suggestions on how to proceed.

In summary, the blue economy and marine tourism provide opportunities for Sri Lanka. I hope that tangible progress can be made for the benefit of the tourism economy and the environment and society.

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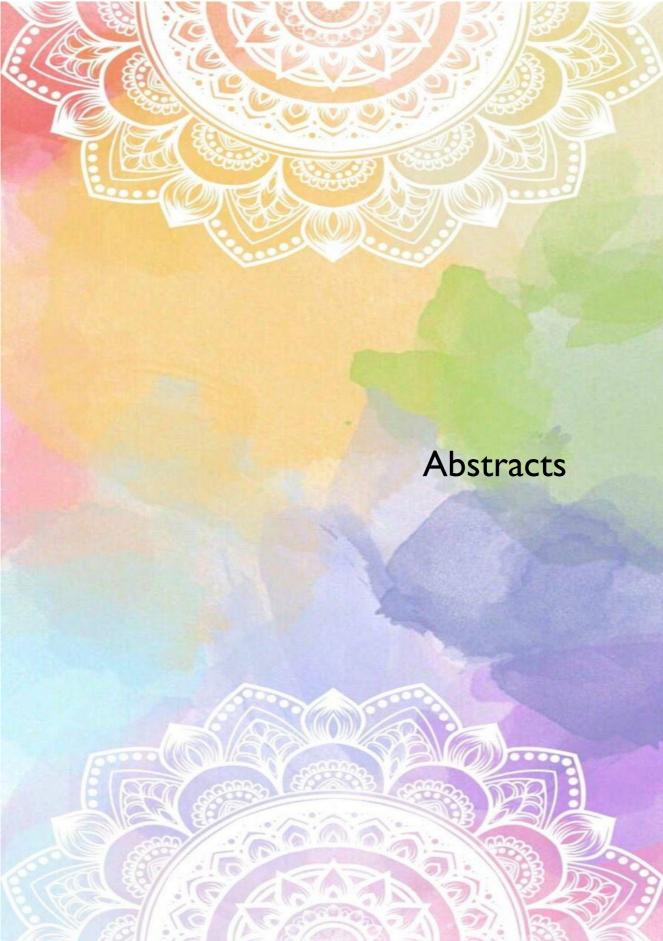
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Urban Green Spaces as Venues for Cultural and Festival Tourism in Makati Towards Influencing the City's Tourism Appeal

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Abstract

Urban Green Spaces refer to areas such as parks, gardens, woodlands, allotments, ponds, playfields, footpaths, and other open spaces within urban areas. These green areas provide advantages for both individuals and the ecosystem. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO), it is advised that every city give each resident at least nine square meters of urban green space, if it is usable, safe, and accessible. The city's lack of green areas can be attributed to inadequate urban planning, conflicting government policies such as the Build, Build, build program, a lack of park and green space data, and the absence of green spaces in urban development projects, says DENR-NCR's Arturo Calderon. While many studies have explored urban green spaces and their benefits, there are limited studies specifically addressing their role in enhancing the cultural and festival tourism in highly urbanized areas like Makati City. This gap is particularly significant given the city's ongoing environmental challenges, such as pollution and limited green spaces, which could affect its tourism potential. A quantitative research method was utilized to identify the level of effectiveness in utilizing urban green spaces as venues for cultural events and festival tourism in Makati in terms of urban green space utilization, cultural and festival programming, tourist experience and engagement, economic and social impact, and marketing and promotion. The researcher utilized longitudinal research design, it involves collecting data from the same participants over an extended period to observe changes and developments over time. It allows researchers to track trends and patterns. The participants in this study are those who visited Avala Triangle Gardens events held during ber months or month from September to December. The study's population consists of travelers in Makati City. The researcher then used the Raosoft Sample Size. The study only focused on the participants who live only within the City of Makati, Taguig, Pasig, and Mandaluyong who attended events in Ayala Triangle Gardens. The data reveals that young, female students from lower income brackets, primarily between 18 and 25 years old, are the most engaged participants in Makati's cultural and festival activities. Social media is the dominant source of information and reference for these events, underscoring its effectiveness in reaching and engaging this demographic. The results highlight that Makati's green spaces are essential cultural hubs that attract locals and tourists, strengthen community ties, and support local artistry. Enhanced marketing, outreach, and event diversity could deepen connections to Filipino heritage, boost cultural engagement, and increase tourism appeal. Social media effectively promotes these events, raising cultural awareness and fostering connections with local traditions. Urban green spaces drive social connections, economic growth, and community pride, making Makati a vibrant cultural destination with strong local and international appeal. The research concluded that Makati's urban green spaces significantly boost the city's tourism appeal by providing natural beauty and hosting diverse cultural events that attract environmentally conscious visitors. Enhancing these spaces further supports local artists and enriches the tourist experience, positioning Makati as a vibrant and welcoming destination.

Keywords: Urban Green Spaces, Cultural Tourism, Festival Tourism, Local Tradition

Sustainable Community-Based Tourism as a Model for Rural Development: A Case Study of Hiriwadunna, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as a sustainable approach to rural development, empowering local communities while preserving cultural and natural heritage. Sri Lanka has several community-based tourism areas, such as Meemure, Rekawa, Heeloya, Padavigampola, etc. Among the Hiriwadunna is one of the best community-based tourism destinations should be promoted. Hiriwadunna, located near the main tourist city of Habarana in the North Central Dry Zone, is a village that includes a wide array of rural tourist attractions and activities. The research problem of this study was how to promote community-based tourism with sustainable practices in Hiriwadunna village. The auxiliary objectives of this study were: 1. Promote the Hiriwadunna village as a community-based tourist destination among the local and foreign tourists. 2. Support the conservation of natural and cultural heritages. 3. Identifying sustainable tourism practices. This study area was a rural village with approximately 400 households, primarily comprised of farmers and artisans. Collected data for the study using qualitative methods, including interviews and field observations. In this study, we identified some community-based tourism activities, such as village tours, boat rides, experiences in traditional cuisine, etc. And we identified a lack of outbound travel to the village and less knowledge about sustainable practices in their tourism. Finally, we suggested some recommendations to fulfill the objectives. Some of them are Hiriwadunna village focuses on sustainable rural tourism through community engagement, cultural preservation, and economic development, providing entrepreneurial training, promoting eco-friendly practices, and fostering partnership, etc.

Keywords: Sustainability, Community – based tourism, Rural development,

Responsible Tourism in Kerala: A Sustainable Model for Community-Based Development

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Abstract

A responsible tourism initiative at its inception focused only on cultural and environmental aspects and was found to be successful in countries like India, Indonesia, Namibia, Nepal, Philippines Zambia, Zimbabwe etc. Considering its livelihood aspects, we can extend its practices to the urban areas also. The responsible tourism industry in Kerala is experiencing significant growth, primarily due to its sustainable model of community-based development. The main objective of this study is to investigate how responsible tourism supports environmental protection, preserves socio-cultural aspects, and empowers local communities. An ethnographic method was employed for data collection, connecting structured interviews with key stakeholders in Kerala responsible Tourism. These stakeholders comprised representatives from the Tourism Department, responsible tourism entrepreneurs, other tourism stakeholders, and local residents. The interviews were transcribed, key themes were identified, and a thematic analysis was subsequently conducted.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism, Kerala Tourism. Ethnographic

Innovative Approaches in Harnessing Tourism as a Catalyst for Sustainable Economic Growth: Emerging Global Trends and Challenges

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Abstract

Tourism industry has always been an important pillar of the economic growth both for the developed countries as well as for the developing economies. But in order to ensure the sustainability in long term economic development more innovative practices need to be employed. This study intends to identify the role of emerging trends such as digitalization, eco and community-based tourism within the framework of tourism development as a resource for sustainable economic growth. Using a qualitative research design, the study examines how economic opportunities are pursued in a way that undermines sustainability and the management of such a pursuit. A comparative case study design is employed to facilitate an understanding of tourism in Sri Lanka as a developing country with immense potential of tourism resources as well as in other parts of the world. The research shows there is a gap in knowledge of implementing such models which will not only be innovative but also contribute towards sustainable practices and inclusive growth of the economy. Mindful of the need to analyze both primary and secondary data, the findings include the effects of digital tools in marketing and management, benefits of the tourism development by the local communities, and the rise of eco-tourism as a way to minimize negative environmental effects. The research provides useful recommendations, such as providing policy frameworks that support towards sustainable developments, investing infrastructure, and engaging the community. By closing the gap between tourism invention and sustainable development, the study adds to discussions of developing tourism responsibly. Subsequent researches could explore additional strategies that are tailored to the region and ascertain the success of such strategies in dissimilar economic conditions.

Keywords: Innovative Approaches; Sustainability; Digitalization; Community–Based Tourism, Economic Growth

Mindfulness Practices in Buddhism: A New Approach for Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Mindfulness tourism, which incorporates mindfulness practices such as meditation into travel experiences, has gained significant traction as global awareness of mental health and well-being has increased. This trend raises important questions about the commodification of these practices and their implications for sustainable development and cultural authenticity in touristdependent economies. This study aimed to explore the use of mindfulness practices as a means to enhance foreign exchange through attracting international visitors to Sri Lanka. Currently, the country faces a significant challenge due to a shortage of foreign exchange, and this innovative approach could help mitigate that issue. This research employs a qualitative and deductive methodology, utilizing content analysis to investigate the topic. Data was primarily collected from written sources, oral interviews, and relevant websites. Sri Lanka, a prominent center for Theravada Buddhism, exemplifies these dynamics. With numerous meditation centers focused on genuine spiritual development, the country offers a unique environment for mindfulness practices. Despite its rich offerings, Sri Lanka has not fully capitalized on attracting foreign visitors interested in Buddhist teachings, unlike countries such as India and Thailand. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana) guide practitioners toward inner peace and understanding, making Sri Lanka an ideal destination for those seeking spiritual growth. To enhance its appeal, Sri Lanka must improve infrastructure, leverage technology, and introduce innovative mindfulness projects. By promoting its spiritual environment while maintaining the authenticity of its teachings, Sri Lanka can foster economic prosperity and sustainable growth, creating a harmonious balance between spiritual enrichment and material well-being.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Economic Growth, Foreign Exchange, Foreigners

Gastronomy Tourism, Experiential Practices and Sustainability: The Case of Türkiye

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Abstract

Gastronomy tourism, a niche within the broader travel industry, has increasingly gained global attention by allowing travelers to explore destinations through their culinary heritage. Defined as the relationship between food and culture, gastronomy covers not only the preparation and presentation of food but also its cultural, social, and economic dimensions. Gastronomy tourism has thus emerged as both a powerful tool for attracting tourists and a driver of sustainable development by creating employment, stimulating local production, and preserving culinary traditions. Experiential gastronomy tourism emphasizes authentic engagement, providing visitors with opportunities to connect with local communities through cooking classes, food festivals, farm-to-table practices, and immersive cultural exchanges. Türkiye represents a significant case with its diverse gastronomy routes that highlight regional products, culinary traditions, and cultural identity. These gastro-routes not only promote Türkiye's rich food culture—rooted in Ottoman, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern influences—but also contribute to cultural preservation, destination branding, and economic vitality. Beyond Türkiye, member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are also increasingly investing in gastronomy tourism as a medium for cultural exchange, sustainable practices, and regional cooperation. By safeguarding endangered culinary practices, organizing international festivals, and promoting sustainable food experiences, gastronomy tourism fosters cultural diversity while countering the homogenization of global cuisines. This study discusses gastronomy and related concepts, explores experiential tourism within the framework of culinary practices, and presents the case of Türkiye's gastro-routes as a model for sustainable and culturally rooted tourism development.

Keywords: Gastronomy tourism, experiential tourism, gastronomy routes (gastro-routes), Türkiye, sustainability

An Analysis on Establishment of Integrated Tourism Trade and Information Centre in Trincomalee

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Abstract

This research study focuses on the analysis of establishing an Integrated Tourism Trade and Information Centre in Trincomalee, one of Sri Lanka's most culturally rich and strategically significant regions. The study explores the role of such a center in promoting sustainable tourism, facilitating trade, and enhancing access to information for both domestic and international visitors. The report begins with an introduction to the training organization, outlining its structure, vision, mission, and management practices, including recruitment, training, welfare, and safety measures. The training experience is then presented, highlighting creative contributions, problem analysis, and practical activities carried out during the internship period. The core of the research addresses the project component, where key issues in the current tourism and trade framework are identified. The study emphasizes the need for a centralized hub that integrates tourism services, trade promotion, and information dissemination. Objectives were formulated to address identified challenges, and a proposal was prepared to provide a comprehensive solution. Finally, the report concludes by assessing the overall outcomes of the training and project. The conclusion outlines the gains and limitations experienced during the research while providing valuable suggestions and recommendations for future improvements. Establishing an Integrated Tourism Trade and Information Centre in Trincomalee is expected to contribute significantly to regional economic development, tourism growth, and cultural exchange.

Keywords: Analysis, Intergrade tourism trade, Information center, Trinkomalee

Artificial Intelligence and Technological Innovations in Sustainable Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis of Emerging Trends

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Abstract

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence are rapidly emerging as key contributors to sustainable tourism, offering innovative approaches to address managerial, social, and environmental challenges. Growing interest in this field has led to an expanding body of research exploring the integration of AI and technology in advancing sustainability practices in tourism. The study aims to systematically review and analyse the research at the intersection of AI, technology, and sustainability in tourism, with a focus on thematic evolution, co-word networks, geographic contributions, and key sources of publication. The researchers applied bibliometric analysis using the Bibliometrix R-package and Biblioshiny. A total of 456 articles were extracted from the Web of Science database. The analysis included thematic mapping, co-word analysis, citation patterns, and geographical distribution of research outputs. Dominant research themes include sustainable tourism, technology, management, and CO₂ emissions. Thematic mapping highlights AI-enabled tools such as predictive analytics, intelligent energy systems, and smart tourism applications as drivers of sustainable practices. Co-word analysis shows strong links between technology adoption and improved sustainability outcomes. Geographic contributions: China leads in publications, followed by Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Prominent journals: Sustainability and the Journal of Sustainable Tourism are central to shaping academic discourse. Citation patterns reveal a surge in publications post-2010, aligning with the rise of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and global climate policy awareness. The findings underscore how technology is reshaping sustainable tourism, with emerging trends such as AI for climate risk monitoring, blockchain for transparent supply chains, smart mobility solutions, and VR/AR as low-carbon tourism alternatives. However, critical debates persist regarding ethics, data governance, and inclusivity, highlighting the complexities of integrating AI into sustainability frameworks. By mapping these developments, the study contributes to advancing knowledge on the role

of technology in sustainable tourism and identifies promising directions for future research and practice.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Sustainable Tourism; Technological Innovation; Bibliometric Analysis

Circular Economy in Sri Lankan Hospitality Sector: Advancing Sustainable Tourism through Waste Reduction and Resource Optimisation

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Abstract

Tourism is a key driver of Sri Lanka's economy, generating employment, foreign exchange, and regional development. However, the hospitality sector faces escalating environmental challenges, including excessive food and plastic waste, high energy and water consumption, and rising carbon emissions. These pressures, if unaddressed, threaten ecological integrity and the long-term competitiveness of the industry. This study examines the application of circular economy (CE) principles within Sri Lankan hospitality to minimise waste, optimise resource use, and promote sustainable tourism development. This research aims to: (i) quantify waste generation and resource consumption in hotels, (ii) assess tourist awareness and behaviours regarding sustainability, (iii) identify barriers and enablers for CE adoption, and (iv) propose a CE framework tailored to Sri Lanka's hospitality sector. A mixedmethods approach was employed, including surveys of 100 tourists, semistructured interviews with 20 hotel managers across Colombo, Galle, Kandy, Negombo, and Sigiriya, along with on-site observations. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, correlations, and regression, while qualitative data were thematically coded. The study assessed CE adoption in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector, revealing that eco-certified luxury hotels exhibited lower food waste (1.05-1.10 kg/guest/night) and carbon footprints (12.8-14.5 kg CO2e/guest/night) compared to mid-range noncertified hotels (1.15-1.22 kg; 15.5-16.3 kg CO₂e). Tourist surveys (n=100) indicated moderate CE awareness (mean = 3.2/5), positively correlated with sustainable behaviours (r = 0.42, p < 0.001), with awareness predicting behaviour ($\beta = 1.06$, $R^2 = 0.85$). Manager interviews identified financial, technological, and training barriers, while certification and tourist demand acted as enablers. Scenario modelling projected up to 38% emission reduction and 22% operational cost savings, highlighting CE's potential to advance

SDGs 12 and 13 in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector. The finding indicates the importance of integrating policy measures, such as incentives for ecocertification, regulatory guidelines for sustainable operations, and resource-efficient infrastructure standards, to enable a circular hospitality model. Adopting CE practices positions Sri Lanka to strengthen sustainable tourism competitiveness, conserve natural resources, and enhance its international reputation as a responsible travel destination.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Sustainable Tourism, Hospitality Industry, Resource Efficiency, Policy, Sri Lanka

Transforming Tourism for Sustainable Prosperity: Universities Leading the Co-Creation of Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

Higher education institutions function as active research environments which enable the development of sustainable tourism practices that generate economic success. Through higher education living-labs, Democratic Education Network (DEN) students develop circular tourism products and enhanced service quality and accessibility while using digital tools to track SDG results (4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17). DEN, established in 2016, is a student-led hub at the University of Westminster in London, collaborating with multiple universities to highlight how students have the potential to develop joint solutions with local communities, small businesses, and heritage sites in London, Hanoi, and Bangkok. The teams perform accessibility assessments and circular itinerary redesigns and community-first storytelling experiments through challenge-based learning and action research modules, which include ethical AI toolkits. The implemented interventions led to quantifiable results, which included decreased waste and carbon emissions per visitor, enhanced local economic benefits, better accessibility ratings, and higher community involvement. The research presents two main contributions, which include (1) a semester-long Co-Design → Pilot and inclusion and accessibility metrics, and cultural vitality indicators. The presentation uses multiple DEN case studies from \rightarrow Measure \rightarrow Share framework and (2) open tracking systems that measure local spend percentage and emissions intensity to demonstrate best practices which can be applied worldwide, and it also supports the development of new tourism products and circular economy through studentcreated itineraries that reduce waste and emissions while increasing local economic benefits.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, SDG Goals, DEN Case studies.

Theme Priorities of Remote Work-Focused Leisure Research in HLS&T: Evolutionary reflections with experts' consensus

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Abstract

This study aims to develop an integrative approach consisting of a semisystematic literature review and a modified Delphi survey to generate research priorities for remote work focused studies in hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism (HLS&T). Using Leximancer, 60 research articles published by SSCIand ESCI-indexed HLS&T sources from 2014 to 2024 were analyzed. A longitudinal comparison found three distinct theme-concept sets: "digital nomad," "home-based and non-home-based work," and "working tourist and entertainment" for the traditional period (2014-2019); "digital nomad," "technology and work," "localized tourist," and "COVID's impact on the hospitality industry's HR" for the COVID-impacted period (2020-2022); and "digital nomad and the development," "work-leisure interface," "travel risk management," and "workation" for the new normal period (2023-2024). Following the recent theme-concept set that represents the new normal practices, a modified Delphi survey was conducted by a 32- member panel recruited from 15 countries to converge on three research priorities. Our results demonstrated worldwide resilience in responding to the challenges of external public safety events, regarding tremendous work-leisure adjustments and research with suitable themes.

Keywords: Configuration, literature review, modified Delphi technique, remote work focused leisure, thematic analysis.

The Illusion of Sustainability: A Critical Review of Tourism Development in Ella, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Ella, located in the central highlands of Sri Lanka, has rapidly transformed into one of the country's most popular tourism destinations. The Ella destination with the rich biodiversity and the town is often promoted as a model of eco-friendly rural tourism. However, behind this image lies a complex reality in which rapid tourism growth is generating profound challenges to environmental integrity, social cohesion, and governance effectiveness. This paper critically examines the sustainability gaps in Ella by reviewing post-2020 research and assessing the ways in which tourism-driven change has altered land use patterns, increased reliance on carbon-intensive infrastructure, exposed weaknesses in planning systems, and reshaped community life. A qualitative approach was adopted to identify the current situation of the destination, guided by sustainability criteria that capture ecological, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. Findings reveal that Ella has undergone a dramatic shift in land use between 2010 and 2024, with significant vegetation loss and rapid expansion of built-up areas. This transformation has been largely driven by unregulated hotel construction and accommodation facilities, which have consumed large tracts of land once dominated by forest and agricultural cover. In parallel, the majority of the built environment lacks energy-efficient design or renewable energy integration. Instead, many properties rely on conventional building materials and mechanical systems that reinforce high carbon dependency, amplifying the area's environmental footprint. Weaknesses in governance and planning further intensify these pressures. The existing urban development plan emphasizes tourism marketing, infrastructure beautification, and visitor attraction but fails to embed robust environmental safeguards, disaster risk management measures, or enforceable regulations. As a result, development continues in a fragmented and reactive manner, with limited oversight of longterm ecological resilience. At the community level, tourism has undeniably generated new economic opportunities, particularly in the form of employment and small-scale entrepreneurship. Yet, these benefits are accompanied by social costs. Residents report a rise in materialistic values, cultural dilution, and reduced engagement with traditional practices.

Educational participation among younger generations is declining, while exposure to alcohol, drugs, and other social challenges is increasing. These patterns suggest that rapid commercialization is reshaping social structures in ways that threaten long-term community well-being. Overall, the evidence highlights that Ella's tourism model prioritizes immediate economic gains while neglecting sustainability imperatives. The absence of strong policy frameworks, weak enforcement of land-use regulations, and limited avenues for community participation have allowed environmental degradation and socio-cultural disruption to escalate. This paper argues for urgent reforms, including stricter land-use governance, mandatory sustainability standards for construction and energy use, integration of disaster risk reduction into development planning, and participatory approaches that actively involve local residents in decision-making. Without such systemic interventions, Ella risks undermining the very natural and cultural assets that underpin its attractiveness, jeopardizing both local livelihoods and Sri Lanka's broader goals for sustainable tourism development

Keywords: Ella, sustainability, sustainable tourism, land use changes, carbon footprint, socio-cultural impacts

Re-Imagining Service Quality in Sustainable Tourism: Emerging Research Themes

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Abstract

The integration of sustainability factors into traditional service quality standards offers a crucial challenge as the global tourism industry faces mounting pressure to reconcile economic expansion with environmental protection and social responsibility. Service quality remains basic for tourist happiness and loyalty, although the growth of sustainability as a core goal in contemporary tourism necessitates new frameworks that integrate environmental, social, and economic factors into the notion of quality. Although there is a rising study interest, the literature currently lacks systematic studies that blends service quality concerns with sustainable tourism. This systematic review follows the PRISMA methodology along with a comprehensive literature review in integrating service quality and sustainable tourism. Initially, 102 documents have been located using the Scopus database and thoroughly filtered relevant papers. The PRISMA protocol and PRISMA flow diagram has been devised to enhance the credibility of the study. VOS viewer software has been used to do keyword co-occurrence analysis, a quantitative analytic tool, to identify under explored topics. This review indicates that the junction of service quality and sustainable tourism is a dynamic and quickly expanding field of research with major theoretical, methodological, and practical consequences. While great progress has been made in understanding how sustainability issues can be integrated into service quality frameworks, important gaps remain in theory development, assessment methodologies, and practical implementation assistance. Future research should focus on establishing more extensive theoretical frameworks, employing innovative methodological techniques. and giving practical recommendations for tourist operators and destination managers wanting to better both service quality and sustainability outcomes. Moreover, there should be increased emphasis on longitudinal research cross-cultural comparative studies, and interdisciplinary designs, collaboration to address the complex challenges of sustainable tourism development. The integration of developing technology, consideration of climate change consequences, and attention to post-pandemic recovery needs

represent key prospects for increasing knowledge in this essential field of tourist study. The originality of this research resides in the systematic review employing the revolutionary PRISMA method.

Keywords: PRISMA Methodology, Sustainable, Tourism, Service Quality

Medical Tourism in India - Where Medicine Meets Miracles

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Abstract

India has emerged as one of the world's leading hubs for medical tourism, attracting patients worldwide with its combination of advanced healthcare services, cutting-edge medical technology, and comparatively lower treatment costs than many Western nations. The country offers a diverse spectrum of medical care, ranging from complex procedures such as cardiac surgery, orthopedics, organ transplantation, and cancer treatment, to traditional healing practices including Ayurveda and yoga, further strengthening its global appeal. This paper explores the key factors fueling India's growth in medical tourism, including cost-effectiveness, globally accredited hospitals, and a vast pool of highly skilled, English-speaking healthcare professionals. It also examines the role of government support through visa reforms, healthcare infrastructure development, and promotional initiatives aimed at facilitating medical travel. However, despite its rapid progress, the sector faces persistent challenges such as regulatory inconsistencies, inadequate post-treatment follow-up, and communication barriers. If left unaddressed, these issues could undermine patient satisfaction and the long-term sustainability of the industry. Through a multi-faceted analysis, this study highlights India's competitive advantages, identifies gaps, and suggests strategic measures to strengthen patient safety, service quality, and overall experience. It emphasizes the importance of adopting standardized practices, fostering international collaborations, and leveraging digital health platforms to ensure continuity of care and transparency. Positioned at the crossroads of affordability and excellence, India has the potential to not only sustain but also expand its leadership in global medical tourism by embracing innovation and strategic investment in healthcare delivery.

Keywords: Medical tourism, India, healthcare services, Ayurveda, yoga, healthcare infrastructure, digital health platforms

Transforming and Sustaining Tourism Policies: A 'Shot Left' for the Global South

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Abstract

The current global order offers the archaic tourism opportunities that are highly dictated by the past colonial policy architecture and infrastructure. This means that most of tourism frameworks from countries of the Global South continue to mainly target visitors from the Global North for tourism development and promotions. This conceptual paper undertakes to challenge this notion in order to transform and sustain tourism market for Global South countries. It argues that there is a need for global tourism to change and offer new opportunities for citizens of the world. This is increasingly imperative within the context of a growing multipolar global order under several multilateral arrangements including the BRICS nations. The notion of 'shot left' is a South African popular concept used for local tourism packages that are negotiated and affordable for local citizens. This concept originates from local public transport industry that ferries passengers for short distances and local trips. It is in this case that for countries from the Global South to transform and sustain their tourism sectors, they should intensify their development and promotions initiatives through initiatives such as the considered 'shot left' policies. Such an approach should consider pertinent issues such as visas and transportation in order to facilitate and sustain their national tourism strategies.

Keywords: Tourism Policies, Global South countries, local tourism packages, Sustain

Assessing Tourist Perceptions and Challenges at Sigiriya: An Online Review Analysis

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Abstract

The tourism industry plays a vital role in Sri Lanka's national economy, both as a major source of income and as a generator of employment opportunities. Among the country's key tourist destinations, Sigiriya stands out as a highly attractive location for both local and foreign visitors. It is also recognized as a major cultural tourism site in Sri Lanka (Annual Review-TDA, 2023 & 2024). This study primarily aims to conduct an online review-based analysis of the challenges and issues faced by tourists visiting Sigiriya, located within the Dambulla tourism region. Data for this research were collected through online reviews posted on platforms such as Google Reviews and TripAdvisor, focusing on the perspectives of both local and foreign tourists. A total of 1,113 online responses posted between January 2021 and May 2025 were analyzed. Out of these, 396 responses were selected for thematic analysis as they specifically addressed facilities and challenges faced by tourists. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify the main challenges and issues. The findings reveal several key issues. Notably, although both local and foreign tourists share many challenges, ticket pricing was identified as a major issue affecting foreign tourists in particular. Reviews revealed that foreign tourists are charged approximately USD 35 for entrance tickets, compared to only LKR 120 charged from local visitors a disparity nearly tenfold. This issue alone accounted for 35.4% of all review responses and represented 53.6% of negative feedback, highlighting it as the most prominent challenge. Secondly, tour guide services emerged as a shared concern among both tourist groups, particularly about language barriers and the high cost of guide services. This accounted for 7.3% of negative reviews. Thirdly, issues related to accessibility when climbing Sigiriya Rock, including inadequate steps and handrails, were highlighted, especially affecting elderly and differently-abled visitors. These issues were reflected in 5.7% of the reviews. Overall, the proportion of negative feedback 66% significantly outweighed positive feedback. Despite Sigiriya's high attraction value, this study identifies key problems that hinder visitor satisfaction.

Keywords: Online reviews, Sigiriya, Ticket price, TripAdvisor, Google Reviews

Digital Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in Southern Sri Lanka: Insights from a Campus-Led Outreach Initiative

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurs are vital drivers of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, particularly in emerging regions such as the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Despite their potential, women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) continue to face significant barriers in accessing digital tools, training, markets, and mentorship. International Women's Day 2025 programme served both as a data-gathering platform and a digital empowerment event targeting women entrepreneurs across the region. The study was designed to examine how campus-led outreach programmes can enhance the digital capacity of women-led SMEs in the region. It aimed to identify digital skill gaps and sector-specific training needs, evaluate the effectiveness of outreach events in fostering community engagement and learning, and explore how institutional partnerships can support long-term digital empowerment. By addressing these areas, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how localized academic interventions can promote sustainable entrepreneurship among women in underserved regions. A mixedmethod approach was employed during the first quarter of 2025. Questionnaires were distributed both electronically and in person, based on participants' availability and preferences. The study identified significant digital skill gaps in areas such as online marketing, financial tracking, customer engagement, and content creation. Many women had limited prior exposure to platforms like Google Business Profile, social media tools, or mobile-based financial systems. The outreach programme not only raised awareness but also acted as a springboard for future training, with new modules designed around the gaps identified. Furthermore, the event fostered peer learning and institutional collaboration, creating a foundation for sustained campus-community partnerships. The findings suggest that combining research, outreach, and empowerment into a single initiative offers a practical model for inclusive, sustainable SME development.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship, SMEs, digital empowerment, Southern Province, campus-led training

Impact of Sustainability Practices on Stakeholder and Customer Expectations in the Hospitality Industry of New Zealand

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Abstract

Sustainability becomes a defining priority in global business, and industries are under increasing pressure to align with environmental and ethical standards. Global awareness of sustainability intensifies, and New Zealand's hospitality industry witnesses growing expectations from both stakeholders and customers to adopt ethical business practices. This study explores the impact of sustainability initiatives on stakeholder engagement and customer satisfaction, focusing on the relationship between sustainable operations and the expectations of key interest groups. It identifies the most significant sustainability practices currently adopted and assesses how these practices correspond with stakeholder and customer priorities to offer practical recommendations for improving sustainable performance. The objectives of this study were to identify important sustainability practices in the hospitality industry, comprehend stakeholder and customer expectations, assess how practices and expectations interact, and offer practical suggestions for improving sustainability strategies. This study adopted a qualitative, deductive methodology grounded in a systematic literature review using secondary data. Applying the PRISMA model, a thematic synthesis of 40 journal articles (narrowed to 10 - 20 through inclusion criteria) was conducted to ensure empirical consistency. The study incorporates various theoretical frameworks, including Stakeholder Theory, Expectation Confirmation Theory, and the Triple Bottom Line model, to explore how hospitality businesses can align sustainability with profitability and social responsibility. The study reveals that key stakeholders, including investors, employees, and local communities, prioritize ethical governance, energy efficiency, and environmental responsibility. Customers increasingly prefer environmentally responsible accommodations that emphasize waste reduction, water conservation, and sustainable sourcing. The integration of sustainability policies aligned with stakeholder and customer expectations enhances brand legitimacy, improves operational efficiency, and supports long-term profitability. Accordingly, the study underscores the need for New Zealand's hospitality sector to treat

sustainability as a core strategic priority, with emphasis on renewable energy adoption, transparent environmental reporting, ethical labor practices, and active community engagement. Aligning these initiatives with stakeholder interests enhances competitive positioning and guarantees the sector's resilience in a sustainability-oriented future. Sustainability serves as a significant catalyst for stakeholder alignment and customer satisfaction, and is crucial for the future competitiveness of New Zealand's hospitality sector.

Keywords: Sustainability, Hospitality Industry, Stakeholder Expectations, Customer Satisfaction, New Zealand

Upcycling Edible Offcuts in Hospitality: Toward a Circular Food System in Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

Food waste in the hospitality industry remains a critical concern, particularly within hotel kitchens where substantial volumes of edible by-products-such as fruit peels, vegetable trimmings, seeds, and cooked food residues-are routinely discarded. These materials, though often undervalued, possess significant potential for culinary reuse. Aligning with the principles of the circular economy and the broader goals of sustainable tourism, this study aims to explore practical strategies for transforming such edible kitchen by-products into value-added food and beverage items. The primary objective of the study was to develop a range of innovative products using commonly discarded but edible kitchen materials and to evaluate their sensory acceptability as a means of integrating food waste reduction into sustainable hospitality practices. A total of ten products were formulated using selected edible offcuts generated through daily kitchen operations. These included pineapple skin juice, California orange juice, cucumber fresh water and coconut water cooler, sweet bread roll, scrap brownie, mixed meat meatballs, passion moju, chicken paste, melon dosi, crispy bite, and watermelon seed bite. Sensory evaluation was conducted by experienced chefs to assess consumer acceptability based on appearance, aroma, taste, texture, and overall impression. The results revealed a high degree of sensory acceptance across most products, with mixed meatballs, sweet bread roll, cucumber and coconut water cooler receiving particularly favorable scores. These outcomes highlight the feasibility and market potential of upcycled kitchen by-products in the hospitality sector. Beyond reducing organic waste and lowering ingredient procurement costs, the incorporation of such products can contribute meaningfully to sustainability branding and eco-conscious menu development. This study demonstrates how circular food innovations can be effectively applied within hotel operations, offering a replicable model for waste reduction while

supporting responsible consumption practices and reinforcing the environmental goals of sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Circular economy, Sustainable tourism, Food waste valorization, Product development, Edible offcuts

Impediments of Women's Participation in Surf-Tourism in Arugam Bay, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Surfing is a globally recognized sport in Sri Lanka, with several destinations offering favorable conditions. Among them, Arugam Bay stands out as a world-renowned surfing location that attracts a significant number of international tourists. While women have recently begun to participate in surfing activities in Arugam Bay, their involvement remains limited due to prevailing cultural norms that restrict their opportunities. This research was conducted to identify the key barriers affecting women's participation in surf tourism. Employing a case study design and an inductive research approach, the study involved 15 surf operators selected through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis method. The findings revealed that female surfers are primarily motivated by the desire to express their talents, relieve stress, and engage in surfing as a recreational activity. However, several impediments were identified, including patriarchal societal structures, domestic violence, and cultural marginalization. To address these challenges, the study recommends implementing strategies such as training programs, community awareness initiatives, and the organization of international-level surfing competitions to promote greater female participation in the sport.

Keywords: Surfing, Women's participation, Marginalization, Cultural norms, Surfing activities

Exploring Astro Tourism Potential in Sri Lanka: Innovative Approaches from Yala National Park

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Abstract

The exploration of Sri Lanka's potential for Astro-Tourism, with a focus on innovation and technology, was conducted through a comprehensive study in Yala National Park. This study aimed to determine the most suitable geographical location for Astro-Tourism within Sri Lanka. A pilot test was employed to identify the optimal study area from several regions deemed suitable by experts for astronomical observation. Utilizing a dot matrix, essential factors for an Astro-Tourism site were evaluated, leading to the selection of Yala National Park. Arc GIS 10.5 software was used to conduct a security and suitability analysis within the park, pinpointing areas with high potential for Astro Tourism, particularly Detagamuwa and Kirinda. These regions possess the necessary attributes for a thriving Astro Tourism industry. such as minimal light pollution, clear skies, and accessibility. The literature review further identified critical factors required for establishing a successful Astro-Tourism industry. The findings underscore the importance of the geographic location within Yala National Park and highlight the comparative advantages of areas within the park over its outer boundaries. This research provides valuable insights into the strategic development of Astro Tourism in Sri Lanka and emphasizes the importance of conducting similar suitability analyses across the entire country. By leveraging innovation and technology, Sri Lanka can position itself as a premier destination in the global Astro-Tourism market, fostering a sustainable tourism industry. The results of this study offer a blueprint for creating an Astro-Tourism infrastructure, showcasing the significant potential of Yala National Park and setting a precedent for further exploration and development in other regions.

Keywords: Astro-Tourism Potential, Innovation, Technology, Suitability analysis, Yala National Park

Careering Through Life? Charting Digital Nomad Careers Over the Life Course

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Abstract

Background of the study: Digital nomadism location-independent, technology-enabled work is rapidly transforming global work and lifestyle patterns. With over 35 million digital nomads in 2022 and projections reaching 1 billion by 2035, this phenomenon is no longer marginal. Post-pandemic shifts have normalised remote work, enabling both entrepreneurs and employees to adopt nomadic lifestyles. While often romanticised as a pursuit of freedom and aesthetic living, emerging scholarship highlights the need to understand digital nomadism as a complex career and lifestyle phenomenon. This study aims to longitudinally explore the career trajectories of digital nomads over their life course, examining how mobility intersects with career development, institutional structures and personal transitions over time. The research adopts a qualitative, longitudinal design over 18 months, centred on Bansko, Bulgaria a well-established digital nomad hub and host of Bansko Nomad Fest. Forty participants are being interviewed biographically face-toface, followed by 'checking in' with them later to ascertain developments in their careers and working. Findings reveal that digital nomad careers are shaped by a dynamic interplay of personal values (freedom, well-being), institutional constraints (company policies, visa regimes), and community infrastructure. Many participants intentionally redesign their careers to prioritise autonomy and lifestyle, while others experience stagnation due to reduced visibility in remote roles. Community hubs like Bansko offer grounding, networking, and career support, often leading to entrepreneurial ventures or alternative fulfilment through side projects. Mobility patterns evolve over time, with nomads transitioning from constant travel to seasonal circuits and establishing fallback bases. Implications for tourism studies are significant. Digital nomadism should be understood not merely as a travel trend but as a socio-economic and career phenomenon. For destinations like Sri Lanka, this presents an opportunity to attract long-stay, economically active visitors by developing supportive visa schemes, fostering coworking and coliving spaces, and leveraging cultural and environmental assets.

Integrating digital nomadism into national tourism strategies could diversify the visitor economy, extend stays, and promote regional development through knowledge exchange and entrepreneurial activity.

Keywords: Digital nomadism, mobile work, career transitions, tourism, life course

Artificial Intelligence and Experiential Marketing as Drivers of Tourist Satisfaction in Sri Lanka's Tourism Sector

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Abstract

Tourism in Sri Lanka is globally recognized for its authentic cultural warmth, yet the sector is increasingly shaped by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into service delivery. This study explores how AI adoption and experiential marketing influence, while also examining the indirect pathway through which AI impacts satisfaction via experiential marketing. Using data collected tourist satisfaction from 384 international and domestic tourists who engaged with AI-enabled hospitality services, such as chatbots, automated booking platforms, and personalized travel recommendations. The proposed model was tested through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeding 0.80, and average variance extracted surpassing 0.50. Factor analysis confirmed sampling adequacy, while discriminant validity was established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The structural model showed good fit with the data. Path analysis revealed that AI adoption had a significant direct effect on tourist satisfaction, while experiential marketing demonstrated an even stronger direct effect. In addition, the indirect effect of AI on satisfaction via experiential marketing was significant, confirming mediation. The findings underscore that AI enhances personalization and efficiency, but its impact on satisfaction is maximized when it fosters deeper experiential engagement. For Sri Lanka's hospitality sector, the results highlight the importance of a "Human and AI" approach, where technology complements rather than replaces the traditional warmth of service. The study contributes to tourism literature in emerging markets and offers actionable insights for balancing innovation with authenticity.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Experiential Marketing, Tourist Satisfaction

Impact of Product Knowledge of Chauffeur Drivers and Professional Tour Guides on Tourist Satisfaction

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Abstract

Tour guiding plays a crucial role in shaping tourist experiences by providing interpretation, knowledge, and cultural insights. It is a central element of tourism, linking destinations with visitors through information, interpretation, and service quality. The effectiveness of guiding depends not only on product knowledge but also on broader competencies such as communication skills, the ability to remain calm in unexpected situations, and a professional attitude in handling guest emotions. Professional tour guides, supported by formal training, often demonstrate stronger competencies, while chauffeur guides balance both driving and guiding responsibilities, which can sometimes limit the depth and consistency of service delivery. This study examines the impact of guiding competencies including tourism knowledge, communication skills, crisis handling, and emotional/attitudinal management on tourist satisfaction. These competencies are considered the independent variables, while tourist satisfaction serves as the dependent variable. Data will be collected from international tourists visiting major destinations in Sri Lanka through structured questionnaires and interviews, focusing on their perceptions of service quality between chauffeur guides and professional tour guides. The findings are expected to highlight how differences in guiding practices influence satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of continuous training and professional development to enhance Sri Lanka's tourism competitiveness and sustainability.

Keywords: Tour guiding, Chauffeur drivers, Product knowledge, Professional tour guides, Tourist satisfaction, Guiding competencies, , Service quality, ,

Low-Energy Utilization and Guest Perception in Eco-Friendly Hotel Design: Insights from an Urban Wetland Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The integration of circular economy principles into hotel operations has gained increasing relevance within the sustainable tourism and the transition toward low-carbon and resource-efficient systems in the built environment has positioned the hospitality sector as a critical platform for implementing circular economy strategies. This study investigates how passive architectural design and low-energy utilization practices contribute to energy efficiency within an urban wetland hotel located in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Focusing on seven daily-operating restaurant areas, the research assesses the extent of natural lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning dependency using a mixed-method approach comprising site-based observational audits, guest and staff perception surveys, and the application of a Low-Energy Utilization Index. Results reveal that five of the seven restaurant spaces achieve LEUI scores above 80%, supported by architectural orientation that maximizes solar access and natural airflow, while the remaining two employ partial mechanical systems. Guest survey responses demonstrate a strong preference for naturally ventilated, green-integrated dining and event settings, with participants reporting heightened comfort, relaxation, and overall satisfaction in such spaces. Staff feedback corroborates these findings, indicating a high level of awareness and engagement in sustainable operational practices. These results emphasize that ecologically responsive design not only reduces energy dependence but also enhances user experience. The study advocates for the expansion of vegetative cover, optimization of passive cooling and daylighting strategies, and the promotion of nature-based guest experiences as core components of sustainable hospitality. Findings contribute to the growing body of evidence that supports the integration of circular economy principles in urban tourism infrastructure, positioning green architecture and operational

efficiency as mutually reinforcing drivers of environmental and experiential value.

Keywords: Green infrastructure, Sustainable hospitality, Nature-based innovations, Energy efficiency

A Case Study on Customs and Traditions Related to the Sacred Bo Tree in Sri Lanka: With Special Reference to 21st Century

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Abstract

The Sacred Bo Tree (Sri Maha Bodhi) in Sri Lanka is deeply revered, as it is believed to be a direct descendant of the original Bodhi tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment in Bodh Gaya, India. The customs and traditions associated with this tree are a significant part of Sri Lanka's Buddhist culture. From ancient times, several customs and traditions have been valued as high-level parts of Sri Lankan culture and society up to now. This study mainly focused on the customs and traditions which are related to the Sacred Bo Tree in Sri Lanka with special reference to the 21st century. To achieve the aforesaid objectives, a qualitative approach has been used, and secondary data is the main type of data obtained from various sources such as books, journal articles, newspapers and other relevant documents available in both printed and electronic versions. This study can be identified as a desk study. Through the study, it has been identified that there are two major separations in customs and traditions: daily and annual. Under the category of daily rituals, morning and evening thewawa. As annual rituals, the Duruthu festival, the Parana Awurudu festival, the Nanumura festival (Aluth Awurudu festival), the Karthika festival and the Aluth Sahal festival can be recognized. Also, engaging with the other special traditions related to the Sacred Bo Tree, we can highlight the God Kalu Devatha Bandara, known as the person who protected the Bo Tree during ages. Customs and traditions are practices that are part of a society's culture and identity and can also be formal ceremonies or habitual activities that are shared by a community. Under that reading we can recognize the Sacred Bo Tree in Sri Lanka as a part of a Sri Lankan identity and culture.

Keywords: Sacred Bo Tree, Sri Lanka, Customs, Traditions, 21st Century

Digital Marketing Strategies in Medical Tourism: Enhancing Destination Attractiveness

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Abstract

The Medical tourism has become a rapidly growing global industry as patients increasingly travel abroad for affordable and high-quality healthcare. In this competitive market, digital marketing has emerged as a crucial tool for hospitals, clinics, and tourism boards to attract international patients and enhance destination attractiveness. The aim of this study is to examine how online marketing strategies—including search engine optimization (SEO), paid advertising (PPC), social media campaigns, content marketing, collaborations with bloggers, influencers, patient ambassadors, and medical facilitators—contribute to visibility and trust in medical tourism. A strong online presence, supported by multilingual and culturally sensitive communication, is essential to overcome barriers of uncertainty and build credibility among diverse patient groups. Equally important is transparent information on treatment options, costs, success rates, and patient experiences, which helps reduce perceived risks. Many leading medical tourism destinations, such as Türkiye, South Korea, Croatia, and the UAE, are using digital platforms to differentiate themselves from competitors, while features such as telemedicine consultations, online booking systems, and personalized follow-up further strengthen patient satisfaction and loyalty. To study the importance of the digital Marketing in promoting destination, the method used is a qualitative approach, combining interviews with digital marketing managers in Malta and questionnaires distributed to international patients who have travelled abroad for treatment. The findings suggest that well-planned digital marketing not only improves global visibility for providers but also builds trust, supports informed decision-making, and fosters sustainable growth in the medical tourism sector.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Medical Tourism, Malta, Online Platforms, Sustainable Growth

Assessing the Socio-Cultural Sustainability in the Hospitality Sector: An Analysis of Tourist Hotels' Websites in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The concept of sustainability essentially should cover the triple bottom line of people, planet and profit. The tourism literature provides a huge contribution to analyses the environmental sustainability in broader aspects, applying to many sectors in the tourism field, albeit socio-cultural sustainability has not been considerably investigated by researchers. The objective of this study was to analyse the contribution of the hospitality industry to ensure socio-cultural sustainability, with special reference to the official websites of the tourist hotels in Sri Lanka. The study was led by two specific objectives. i.e., (i) to examine the current practices conducted by the tourist hotels for promoting socio-cultural sustainability as represented in their websites, and (ii) to explore the undervalued aspects in socio-cultural sustainability approaches in the tourist hotel sector. The study was conducted as a qualitative study, utilizing secondary data collected from the text mining strategy. A sample of 20 hotels was selected from the Booking.com online platform with the filtering option of 'sustainability certification', based on the purposive sampling technique. The official website of the property was used to gather data. Data was analysed using the deductive thematic approach in the thematic analysis method. Based on the definition provided by the UNWTO for 'sustainable tourism' in 2005, the dimensions in socio-cultural sustainability were identified, such as (i) respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, (ii) conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and (iii) contributing to intercultural understanding and tolerance. The key finding of the study revealed that the contribution of the hotels in Sri Lanka in ensuring and uplifting the socio-cultural sustainability is not considerably reflected in the content of the hotels' websites. Aligning with the first specific objective of the study, the findings revealed that many of the hotels conduct village tours and educate the guests on cultural guidelines, as the current practices in respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities. Reflecting the evidence under the element of 'conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values', a few aspects were identified, such as cultural performances, promotion of local architecture and design, traditional cuisines

and culinary promotion, and promotion of traditional arts and crafts. Under the element of 'contributing to intercultural understanding and tolerance,' it was identified that the practices of cultural exchange programs, staff training, interfaith awareness and cultural celebrations. Relating to the next specific objective of the study, a few undervalued aspects of socio-cultural sustainability were determined as excessive commodification of intangible heritage, depletion of authenticity of socio-cultural elements, and lack of ethnic and religious inclusivity, which reflect the gap between the sustainable tourism theory and the practice.

Keywords: Socio-cultural element, Sustainability, Tourist hotels, Websites

Safety and Security in the Tourism Sector of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Safety and security are fundamental prerequisites for the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry, serving as the foundation for attracting both domestic and international tourists. Bangladesh is a country bestowed with unique natural and cultural resources including the Sundarbans - the single largest mangrove forest of the world, Cox's Bazar Sea beach – the longest unbroken sea beach in the world, and the Chattogram Hill Tracts, along with many other natural, archaeological, and religious tourism destinations which have immense potential as a driver of socio-economic development. However, the sector continues to face multifaceted challenges in ensuring a safe and secured environment for travelers. This study aims to explore the dimensions, challenges, and prospects of safety and security in the tourism sector of Bangladesh. This study used content analysis by analyzing and interpreting existing content such as various published journals, books, reports, newspapers, speeches, and media outputs. Tourism safety primarily refers to preventing accidents, health risks, and environmental hazards, while security involves protection against human-induced threats such as crime, harassment, terrorism, and fraud. The need for both safety and security are critical in Bangladesh as natural disasters like cyclones and floods coexist with socio-political unrest, petty crimes, and infrastructural limitations. Although the government has taken initiatives such as the deployment of the Tourist Police, establishment of a 24/7 helpline, and formulation of a Tourism Master Plan (draft) aiming to attract 5.57 million international visitors by 2041, gaps remain in operational readiness, emergency response, and tourist confidence. Empirical evidence highlights that Bangladesh ranks among the lowest in global safety and security indicators for tourism. Remote destinations like the Chottogram Hill Tracts face political unrest, while popular coastal zones like Cox's Bazar suffer from overcrowding, poor waste management, and limited enforcement of safety standards such as lifeguards or disaster preparedness measures. These factors collectively undermine Bangladesh's tourism competitiveness and discourage repeat visitation. At the same time, safety and security are not only about protecting tourists but also safeguarding host communities and their cultural and natural heritage. Insecure tourism

environments often trigger economic losses, reputational damage, and reduced investment in conservation and infrastructure development. Conversely, ensuring robust safety and security measures can strengthen Bangladesh's global image, improve tourist satisfaction, and generate long-term benefits in employment, foreign exchange, and sustainable development. Addressing these issues requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving the government, law enforcement agencies, tourism authorities, local communities, and the private sector. Strategies include strengthening the Tourist Police with modern technology and training, establishing disaster-resilient infrastructure, improving food and health safety standards, enhancing digital security for travelers, and creating awareness campaigns among both tourists and local service providers. Furthermore, community engagement in ensuring locallevel safety can foster a sense of ownership and hospitality, contributing to both security and positive tourist experiences. While Bangladesh's tourism sector demonstrates significant promise, its future depends largely on addressing the intertwined challenges of safety and security. By embedding these principles as a non-negotiable foundation of tourism policy and practice, Bangladesh can unlock its potential as a competitive and sustainable destination in South Asia.

Keywords: Tourism, Safety, Security, Bangladesh, Sustainable Development

Cultural Sustainability in Rural Tourism: A Case of Community-Driven Heritage Preservation in Meemure

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Abstract

Meemure, a secluded village situated in the Central Hills of Sri Lanka, has recently gained popularity as a nature-based tourism destination, attracting adventure seekers and day tourists. Once a hidden gem, the village came into the spotlight after the release of a local film in the early 2000s. Since then, tourism in Meemure has expanded rapidly. This study investigates the role of the host community in the context of eco-tourism and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in Meemure. It aims to evaluate the extent of community participation in tourism- related activities, a key element in maintaining traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and local identity. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through semi- structured interviews and field observations involving 12 local participants. The data were then analyzed thematically using Nvivo software to uncover major trends and insights. The findings reveal that community engagement is vital for both sustainable tourism development and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, including oral traditions, local customs, indigenous knowledge, and traditional hospitality services. However, the research also points to several limitations faced by the local population. These include a lack of formal training in tourism & hospitality services, poor language skills, and limited awareness of cultural tourism concepts. These gaps have led to inconsistent service quality, reduced tourist satisfaction, and a decline in visitor retention. Additionally, challenges such as environmental degradation, cultural transformation, and tourism seasonality further threaten Meemure's ecological and cultural integrity. The study emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions, including community education and capacity-building programs. These efforts are essential to empower the host community and ensure that tourism serves as a tool for both ecological sustainability and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Eco-tourism, Host Community, Meemure, Intangible Cultural Heritage

Adopting Artificial Intelligence Chatbots for Ecotourism development: A Sequential Exploratory— Explanatory Mixed-Methods Study in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the global tourism industry, with AI-driven chatbots emerging as crucial tools for enhancing customer engagement, personalization, and operational efficiency. Yet, adoption within ecotourism, particularly in emerging economies, remains limited. This study investigates the drivers, barriers, and contextual enablers of AI chatbot adoption in Sri Lanka's ecotourism sector using a sequential exploratoryexplanatory mixed-methods design. Guided by pragmatism, the research integrates qualitative interviews, large-scale surveys, and explanatory followup interviews to capture both tourist and service-provider perspectives. Drawing on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, Technology Acceptance Model, Organizational Readiness for Change, and Institutional Theory, the study examines constructs including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, trust, infrastructure readiness, workforce capability, Cost consideration, Infrastructure readiness, institutional pressure and corporate social responsibility. Data were collected from international tourists (n = 384), ecotourism service providers (n = 150), and policymakers, analyzed using NVivo, SPSS, and SmartPLS. Reliability and validity were ensured through Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, member checking, and triangulation. Practical considerations, such as survey timing during peak tourism seasons, permissions from the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, and the use of tablets and OR codes, enhanced data quality and participation. Findings contribute to both theory and practice by integrating sustainability into adoption models, demonstrating how organizational readiness interacts with tourist expectations, and offering policy guidance for advancing digital transformation in sustainable tourism.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Ecotourism, Sustainable Tourism, Mixed-Methods, Organizational Readiness.

Carnivals Contributing to Grassroots Place Branding

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Abstract

Depopulation and aging in rural areas challenge communities to reshape their identity. Residents who organise community-led events such as carnivals, seen here as cultural actors, can drive this change by promoting cultural diplomacy, fostering social belonging, managing commercialization, representing cultural identity, and navigating power dynamics (Bakas et al, 2024). Beyond attracting tourists, grassroots place branding cultivates pride, ownership, and social cohesion among locals (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Despite this potential, little research has examined how residents and shape place identity and visitor connections through carnivals and more specifically what is the role of cultural actors in place branding. Since the 1980s, carnivals, especially in Europe, have regained popularity, blending heritage, conviviality, and resistance to modern placelessness (Boissevain, 2025). Festivals draw from legends and traditions, preserving intangible heritage while acting as "symbolic landscapes" where identity is enacted and contested (Nogué & De San Eugenio Vela, 2018). Shared experiences during carnivals promote cohesion, visibility for marginalized groups, local pride, and social sustainability (Monterrubio & Dashper, 2024; Bakas et al., 2019; Zenker & Braun, 2017). This study explores how cultural actors who organize smallscale, community-led carnivals foster grassroots place branding through heritage-based, inclusive practices. Building on González-Reverté's (2023) work on spatial empowerment, we shift focus to place brand empowerment. highlighting the role of carnival organizers in connecting heritage and participatory identity-building. Empirical evidence comes from a 4-year longitudinal, qualitative study of local pagan-based carnivals in Amfissa (Greece) and Gois (Portugal). Data includes in-depth interviews, video recordings, informal conversations, and the authors' lived experiences. Thematic analysis extended González-Reverté's festival typology, replacing spatial with place brand empowerment to reveal how cultural actors shape discourses of identity and community engagement. Findings show that carnival organizers synthesize heritage, community participation, and tourism into favourable conditions for place stakeholders' interaction. Inclusive, heritage-driven activities enhance symbolic landscapes, strengthen brand image, and keep place identity relevant. While limited to two European cases, this research highlights cultural actors' strategic role in grassroots place branding and offers insights for tourism, creative industries, and cultural policy. Future research should examine diverse regions and festival types to broaden understanding of cultural actors' contributions.

Keywords: Community-led, carnival festivals, cultural actors, place brand

Sustainable Tourism Development (2005-2025): Indonesia's Tourism Journey in Building a Better Future Oriented

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the critical sectors in the Indonesian economy. In addition to providing state revenue, this sector also creates job opportunities and improves people's welfare. However, the rapid growth of tourism since the early 2000s has also brought various problems, such as environmental, social, and cultural pressures. Therefore, the concept of sustainable tourism has begun to be applied as the main way to maintain a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and the welfare of local communities. The role of the government, society, and the private sector is vital in developing this sustainable tourism. As tourism in Indonesia continues to grow dynamically, it is necessary to monitor to find out how much of a positive impact sustainable tourism has on the country's development. The objectives of this paper are to identify developments, challenges, and opportunities in sustainable tourism development in Indonesia. The method used in this study is a descriptive one: a literature review of several articles and research over the last twenty years on the internet that discuss various sustainable tourism programs in Indonesia as a primary data source. The results and discussion of this study show that sustainable tourism development in Indonesia has so far used the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) pattern and three main approaches, namely the tourism development approach based on local wisdom, the tourism village development approach, and the social entrepreneurship development approach. The challenges faced include uneven destination infrastructure, limited community ability to manage tourism, environmental pressures such as pollution and land-use change, the risk of global crises such as pandemics, climate change, and natural disasters, to policy coordination between the central and regional governments that have not been effective. However, several opportunities can be utilized, such as increasing public awareness of the importance of conservation-based tourism, focusing on the quality of tourism services, not just the number of visitors. This strengthens the Community Based Tourism model in the form of the tourism village program, supported by generation Z who have digital capabilities.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Village, Community-Based Tourism, Indonesia

Eco-tourism Development in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka: A Multi Stakeholder Perspective

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Abstract

The tourism sectors play a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's economy, with the government consistently implementing various initiatives to boost this industry. Jaffna district is relatively new entrant in to tourism compared with other part of the country. After the end of the war in 2009, there is a possibility of more arrivals of tourists in the study area. Priorities are given to promote tourism after the post-war development context. This study addresses research gap by focusing on ecotourism. It will give opportunities for environmental conservation, sociocultural enhancement, and economic benefit of this region. This study initiated to identify the issues on ecotourism development from multi stakeholder perspective. The research adopts stakeholder theory and ecotourism principles within a framework. Data for this study were collected through field visits, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaire surveys, and secondary sources. Fifteen face-to-face interviews were conducted with representatives from the government sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. Additionally, four focus group discussions were arranged to involve the community representatives. Tourists were also surveyed with 200 questionnaires to assess their satisfaction level using a Likert scale. Different stakeholders were involved to gather data. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods. The results of the study highlighted different issues identified under the following main themes: stakeholder awareness, Stakeholder involvement in environmental conservation, empowering the local economy and infrastructure development. Further sub-themes were included within the main themes. Critical issues identified in Jaffna include ineffective administrative mechanisms, a lack of inter-departmental coordination, and a lack of stakeholder collaboration concerning biodiversity conservation, resource utilization, low-impact practices, gaining socioeconomic benefits, and infrastructural support. In the initial phase of tourism development, it is essential to involve stakeholders in implementing sustainable tourism practices. In this regard, the relevant authorities should take the initiative to raise awareness and engage stakeholders to achieve the desired outcome of genuine ecotourism development in the region.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Stakeholder, Involvement, Development

Effects of Logistics Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction on Delivery Order Service in Fast Food Restaurants in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The fast-food delivery sector in Sri Lanka has expanded rapidly due to the growing use of online ordering platforms and increasing consumer demand for convenience. Customer satisfaction in this sector depends heavily on delivery timeliness, accuracy, reliability, and overall service quality. Despite this growth, limited research has investigated the impact of logistics service quality (LSQ) on customer satisfaction within the Sri Lankan fast-food context. The LSQ model identifies nine dimensions personnel contact quality, order release quantities, information quality, order procedures, order accuracy. order condition, order quality, order discrepancy handling, and timeliness yet these have not been comprehensively studied locally, creating an empirical gap. This study aims to examine the relationship between these nine LSO dimensions and customer satisfaction in Colombo's fast-food delivery services. A quantitative research methodology will be employed, using structured online surveys distributed to customers of major fast-food chains. The study sample size was 384 and was selected using the convenience sampling technique. Data will be analyzed using statistical techniques, including regression and correlation analyses, to evaluate the strength and significance of relationships between LSQ dimensions and overall customer satisfaction. Findings are expected to demonstrate that high performance across all nine dimensions enhances customer satisfaction. While timely delivery and order accuracy are anticipated as critical factors, responsiveness, effective communication, and discrepancy handling are also expected to significantly influence satisfaction. The results will provide actionable insights for fast-food managers to optimize delivery operations and improve customer-oriented strategies. Furthermore, improving LSQ in the fast-food sector contributes to the broader tourism and hospitality industry in Sri Lanka, as visitors increasingly value efficient, reliable, and high-quality services during their travel experiences.

Keywords: Logistics Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Fast Food Delivery, Sri Lankan Hospitality

Voices of the Community: Perceptions of Local Residents on Connectivity and Sustainable Tourism in Kalutara

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Abstract

Kalutara District, located on Sri Lanka's southwestern coast, is a region with strong tourism potential due to its beaches, cultural sites, and proximity to Colombo. The district benefits from primary transport links like the A2 highway and coastal railway. However, the majority of interior zones lack infrastructure and connectivity, and therefore tourism benefits are unequal. Local communities have varied perceptions of tourism development, often shaped by their access to connectivity and its impact on their daily lives and livelihoods. This study aims to explore how residents perceive tourism development in Kalutara district in relation to connectivity. It focuses on understanding the influence of physical infrastructure such as roads and transport and digital access such as internet and mobile network on sustainable tourism and community livelihoods. The aim is to identify challenges and opportunities for more inclusive tourism development. A qualitative research approach was used, combining focus groups, household surveys, and field observations in key areas including Kalutara, Beruwala, and Bentota. Semistructured interviews were conducted with residents from both coastal and inland communities. Field observations covered local transportation hubs, tourist areas, and infrastructure such as roads and signage systems. Residents near the A2 highway and coastal railway recognize improved connectivity as enhancing tourism and creating job opportunities. However, inland residents report poor road quality, lack of signage, and limited tourist access, leading to fewer benefits. Digital connectivity is better in urban zones but unreliable in many interior areas, which limits local businesses from tapping into online tourism markets. Inconsistent signage in tourist zones was found to hinder navigation and reduce local economic participation. Residents more engaged in tourism, such as tuk-tuk drivers or vendors, showed greater support for tourism development, while others expressed concern about environmental and cultural disruptions. The research highlights disparities in how tourism benefits are distributed across Kalutara District, largely due to uneven connectivity. Enhancing road conditions in rural zones and improving digital infrastructure could help extend tourism's positive impacts

underrepresented communities. Residents' support for tourism is closely tied to how connectivity influences their economic opportunities. Sustainable tourism in Kalutara requires addressing both physical and digital access to ensure inclusive growth that benefits all communities.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Community perception, Community-based tourism, Connectivity

A Critical Analysis of Employee Engagement Strategies and their Impact on Productivity in Sri Lanka's Cruise Tourism Sector

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Abstract

Cruise Tourism is a very identical market in the Global travel sector which is having a higher growth rate nevertheless a niche market in Tourism Industry in Sri Lanka with a significant economic impact. The purpose of this study was to investigate the employee engagement strategies and their impact on the productivity in Sri Lanka's cruise tourism sector. This research was based upon the collection of data through online questionnaire survey with Sri Lankan employees in cruise sector. This particular case was conducted with quantitative research method. Statistical information obtained from 220 respondents were analyzed was processed with MS Excel, SPSS software and data analyzed using demographic data analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis. According to the study 6 sub-factors of key determinants of the employee engagement were identified through literature surveys. As per the results; there is a strong positive correlation among the engagement constructs and communication was found to be the most significant predictor of productivity. Effective employee engagement positively affects performance outcomes thus, communication, leadership and development opportunities enhance the productivity. Further six key determinants of employee engagement were the communication, recognition and rewards, leadership and management, career development and training and, work life balance were highly impact on the employee engagement and productivity in cruise tourism sector employees which will enhance the increase of number of employees and reduction of employee turnover rate of the industry and fill the gaps in growing and shortages. Recommendations that were provided at the final part of the research concentrates on strengthen communication channels, enhancing leadership and management practices, expanding career development opportunities, improving work life balance, refining recognition and rewards systems and by tailoring engagement strategies to demographic segments, the positive significant impact on employee engagement strategies on productivity can enhance to obtain significant economic impacts.

Keywords: Cruise Tourism, Employee Engagement Strategies, Productivity, Sri Lanka

Analyzing the current practices of Ayurveda in Tourism Industry in North Western Province of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Avurveda, a traditional holistic healing approach that originates from Sri Lankan and South Asian customs, has increasingly become a fundamental aspect of health and wellness tourism. This survey examines how practices of Avurveda influence the tourism industry in Sri Lanka's North Western Province (NWP), which comprises the Kurunegala and Puttalam districts, an area recognized for its abundant cultural heritage and natural assets. The data was collected from online platforms such as Sri Lanka Tourism Official Website in the NWP mainly and booking.com, TripAdvisor, Sri Lanka Travel, Explore LANKA, and Agoda. Data was analyzed for number of hotels integrated Ayurveda into tourism services in each district, the nomenclature of the centers and reviewer's comments about the service taken by tourists. As a count, nearly 400 hotels in Northwestern province, only 34% of the hotels have wellness centers. Among them 94 hotels are situated in Puttalam district and 37 are in Kurunegala district. The nomenclature showed that the spa category is more widespread by combining tourism and Ayurveda. Based on reviewers' comments it was identified detoxification, treatments for illnesses, and therapies for maintaining the health were recorded as the main services. The study revealed that there is a high potential to integrate health and wellness to establish centers in both districts and it will open number of job opportunities for graduates in the Ayurveda field and study identified challenges such as the lack of standardization, insufficient global promotion, inappropriate maintenance by individuals who are not certified as legitimate Avurvedic physicians, and the need for sustainable practices that preserve environmental protection and cultural authenticity.

Keywords: Northwestern Province, Ayurveda, Health Tourism, Wellness, Spa, Tourism

A Case Study on Destination Promotion of Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, Sri Lanka as a Model for Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

Tourism is increasingly evolving toward sustainability, with a growing global demand for destinations that offer cultural authenticity, biodiversity, and environmental responsibility. In this context, Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, Sri Lanka's administrative capital and a city rich in historical legacy and ecological wealth, stands out as a compelling case for strategic destination promotion. This case study explores how Kotte, recognized as a Ramsar wetland City in 2018, can be positioned as a leading urban eco-cultural tourism destination. Rooted in the ancient kingdom of Kotte, the city is home to archaeological treasures such as the Kotte Rajamaha Viharaya, Gal Ambalama, the Kotu Bamma ramparts, and sacred ruins, alongside a vibrant literary and religious heritage. These are seamlessly juxtaposed with ecological assets like the Divasaru Park, Beddagana Wetland Park, and the Diyawanna Lake Wetland Complex zones that support biodiversity. At the heart of this coexistence is Waters Edge, a hospitality establishment that blends eco-luxury with conservation, offering nature trails, educational programs, and sustainable gastronomy through its award winning WE CARES initiative. This study examines how integrated branding, community engagement, and sustainability centered hospitality can catalyze destination development. Using document analysis, visual mapping, and stakeholder interviews, the study evaluates the potential for tourism offerings such as wetland walks, birdwatching, urban safaris, cultural performances, and heritage storytelling all rooted in the living landscape of Kotte. The promotion of Kotte aligns with Sri Lanka's national tourism goals and contributes to global objectives under the UN Sustainable Development Goals especially SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Moreover, the study identifies the value of digital platforms like "Kotte green tourism network" in enhancing accessibility, information sharing, and immersive visitor engagement. Ultimately, this case study presents Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte as a replicable model of how small cities can redefine their identity by harmonizing heritage conservation, wetland ecology, and community-based tourism. It argues that thoughtful destination promotion not only attracts conscious travelers but also reinforces urban resilience, ecological restoration, and cultural continuity for generations to come.

Keywords: Urban Ecotourism, Destination Promotion, Heritage Conservation, Sustainable Tourism Development

Planting Minds, Harvesting Futures: Reimaging Tourism Education as the Root System of Sustainable Development

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Abstract

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, tourism has emerged as a powerful engine of economic growth and cultural exchange. Yet, as it stretches across borders and industries, it increasingly navigates the turbulent currents of climate change, globalization, and digital transformation. As the United Nations World Tourism Organization affirms, tourism remains one of the fastest-growing global industries an accolade that now comes with a profound ethical responsibility. No longer can tourism be seen as a transient experience; it must become an intentional and sustainable act. With the adoption of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sustainability has shifted from a peripheral concern to a global imperative. However, within this transformative vision, tourism education remains a relatively untapped resource a root system still awaiting its full potential in cultivating sustainable futures. This study reimagines tourism education as the foundational root system from which sustainable tourism must grow. Centering on the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM), it explores how sustainability is embedded, represented, and interpreted within intermediate and advanced level tourism curricula. Framing education as a metaphorical root system, the study posits that the seeds of sustainable development must be planted early through pedagogy, content, and critical engagement if meaningful change is to be harvested. Three core objectives guide this research: to assess the extent of SDG integration in SLITHM's tourism curricula, to examine stakeholder perceptions including students, educators, and institutional leaders and to analyze curricular alignment with the triadic pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social. Using a qualitative comparative research design, content analysis was conducted alongside stakeholder interviews. The findings reveal that while the curricula reflect sustainability themes, their presence is inconsistent and often implicit. A deeper, more holistic curricular approach is urgently needed. Despite being context-specific, the insights offer valuable implications for tourism education across the Global South. The study advocates embedding sustainability as a central

curricular component, promoting interdisciplinary modules, and supporting educator training. It emphasizes the necessity of cross-institutional collaboration to share best practices and create globally aligned yet locally relevant education models. Future research should extend beyond curriculum content to explore pedagogical practices, student outcomes, and international comparisons. To truly transform tourism education into a driver of sustainable development, we must nourish its roots redefining what we teach, how we teach, and ultimately, why we teach.

Keywords: Curriculum, Pedagogy, SDG integration, Sustainability, Tourism education

Analyzing the Determinants Influencing the Expenditure Behavior of International Tourists in Sri Lanka: With Reference to Bentota, Galle District

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Abstract

Tourist expenditure is a vital indicator of economic contribution to a tourism destination, reflecting tourists' financial allocation across various goods and services including accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, and souvenirs revealing tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions of destination attributes. In Sri Lanka, international tourists' expenditure behavior significantly influences tourism sector development by directly contributing to economic growth, generating employment, promoting infrastructure development, and enabling product and service diversification. However, reliance on international tourism expenditure derives challenges, including economic dependency, inflation, over-tourism, environmental degradation, and revenue leakage to host communities. This study aims to analyze the determinants influencing the expenditure behavior of international tourists in Sri Lanka, with special reference to Bentota, Galle District. Determinants considered include demographic factors (age, income, education, nationality, country of origin), destination attributes (price levels, attractions, infrastructure, seasonality), individual travel behavior (travel purpose, length of stay, travel accompaniment), and psychological factors (travel motivation, perceived value, and satisfaction). However, rising administrative costs, tax changes, and declining purchasing power of tourists have developed economic fluctuations that may influence on spending behaviors. Hence the main objective of the study is to analyze the determinants of the expenditure behavior of international tourists visited to Bentota region and simultaneously identifying the most influential determinant. Bentota, a growing tourism hub, offers diverse expenditure opportunities such as accommodation, water sports, recreational activities, local crafts, and excursions, and between January-October 2024 attracted 21 percent of Indian, Chinese, and German tourists, 19.1 percent of Russians, and 10 percent of British visitors. A sample of 175 respondents was selected using convenience sampling technique among the population of international tourists visited Bentota area between the September and November in 2025. A structured

questionnaire and interview served as the primary data collection tool. Quantitative data will be analyzed using SPSS version 30, and qualitative data will be presented descriptively. The study findings will be aim to support policymakers and stakeholders in enhancing tourism strategies and revenue optimization from international tourists in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Tourist Expenditure, Demographic Factors, Destination Attributes, Individual Travel Behavior, Psychological Factors

A Study on Sustainability of Blue Economy Concept in Sri Lanka: A Case Study of Mirissa

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Abstract

This research examines the sustainability of the Blue Economy concept within the coastal tourism context of Sri Lanka, using the popular coastal town of Mirissa as a case study. As coastal cities continue to drive significant economic development through tourism-related activities, there is increasing concern over the environmental degradation and social inequality resulting from unsustainable practices. The Blue Economy defined as the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and ecosystem health provides a promising framework to reconcile these competing priorities. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, field observations, and secondary data analysis. The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework guided the assessment of sustainability across three pillars: economic viability, environmental resilience, and social equity. The findings revealed that while tourism in Mirissa, especially whale watching, generates considerable income and employment, it also leads to serious environmental challenges such as marine pollution, habitat degradation, and coastal erosion. Social issues were also prevalent, including inequitable benefit distribution, marginalization of local communities, and cultural erosion. Governance weaknesses, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate regulatory enforcement were identified as major barriers to implementing a sustainable Blue Economy. However, the study also highlighted emerging opportunities through community-based tourism, conservation initiatives, and innovative eco-tourism business models. recommendations include developing integrated management plans, enhancing community participation in tourism planning, diversifying tourism activities beyond whale watching, and investing in environmental conservation and education. This study contributes to the growing discourse on sustainable coastal development in island nations like Sri Lanka. It emphasizes the need for inclusive governance, adaptive economic strategies, and environmental stewardship to ensure long-term prosperity of coastal tourism sectors. The insights from Mirissa serve as a microcosm applications, offering for broader policy recommendations for stakeholders, policymakers, and development planners

aiming to align tourism growth with sustainability goals under the Blue Economy framework.

Keywords: Blue Economy, sustainability, coastal tourism, Mirissa, Triple Bottom Line

A Comprehensive Traditional Medical Tourism Solution to Attract Japanese Tourists

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Abstract

The medical system of Sri Lanka is a combination of Traditional Medicine (Hela Wedakama, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani) and Allopathic Medicine. It is capable of providing customized treatments for individuals who are in need. There's an opportunity for Medical and Health tourism in Japanese market due to the factors that identified. According to 2018 SLTDA report, India is the highest contributor to tourism income in Sri Lanka; China and UK are the 2nd and 3rd places respectively. Sri Lanka got 2,333,796 arrivals from all over the world in 2018. Japan is a country which has the 3rd largest economy of the world. About 68 million people are employed and travelers are around 18 million. Most overseas trips were taken by Japanese travelers to East Asia (28%), followed by Southeast Asia (22%) and Europe/Russia (14%). Though the stats show 22% to Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka was recorded only 50,000 which is 1% of their Southeast Asia tourists and 2% of Sri Lankas overall tourists. Factors hindering overseas Japanese travel market include language concerns (37%), because it costs too much (36%) and not liking foreign food (34%) according to the past research and literature. While recording the most significant aging population in the world, 28.2% of Japan's population is 65 years old or older, which equates to around 36.23 million people. 34% of those people are between 75 and 84, and 16% are over 85. According to the above data, "Medical and Health Tourism" canbe introduced to the Japanese market to attract people who are going to rejuvenate their body and mind. Sri Lanka can provide a great support for the Japanese people to improve the quality of life not only for diseases but also for defensive activities for many diseases. Sri Lankan traditional medical system is capable of providing customized solutions for the individuals which is more effective than allopathic medicine. Ayurveda works in perfect harmony with alternative medicine "Hela Wedakama" which is more effective for rejuvenation of the body and mind. Not only internal medicine but also external medical treatments, authentic food remedies, traditional physical practices (Angampora), yoga and meditation will support anyone for their wellness.

Keywords: Wellness, Traditional medicine, Authentic food, Ayurveda, Yoga, Japanese tourists

Analyzing the Climate-related Factors Determining Marine Tourism Development in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of climate-related factors on the development and sustainability of marine tourism in Sri Lanka, a sector that significantly contributes to the national economy through foreign exchange earnings, employment creation, and community development. With over 1,700 kilometers of coastline and a rich marine ecosystem, Sri Lanka has emerged as a prominent destination for activities such as snorkeling, diving, whale watching, and coastal recreation. However, climate change manifesting through rising sea temperatures, coral reef degradation, ocean acidification, unpredictable weather patterns, and coastal erosion—poses substantial threats to the ecological and economic foundations of marine tourism. Adopting a mixed-method research design, the study integrates literature reviews, case studies, stakeholder interviews, and statistical analysis to investigate how climate-driven changes affect biodiversity, disrupt seasonal tourism patterns, and challenge the operational viability of businesses, particularly in the southern and eastern coastal regions. The findings highlight both the vulnerabilities and the adaptive responses employed by local stakeholders. Drawing from global best practices, the study proposes recommendations to enhance climate resilience within Sri Lanka's marine tourism industry. The research underscores the urgency of climate-resilient tourism planning, emphasizing the balance between ecological preservation and sustainable economic growth

Keywords: Climate change, Marine tourism, Coral reef degradation, Climate resilience

Analyzing the Factors Determining the Demand for Hotel Accommodations: Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The boutique hotel sector has emerged as a rapidly expanding niche sector in Sri Lanka's hospitality industry, fueled by travelers' increasing demand for architecture, unique locations and personalized services. While international research emphasizes determinants such as service quality, price, location and reputation, limited empirical studies exist within the Sri Lankan context. This study investigates the key factors influencing demand for boutique hotels and examines their contribution to the Sri Lankan economic growth. This study employs a mixed methods approach, using quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, supplemented by secondary data from online travel platforms, to examine the factors influencing guest preferences for boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. The analysis explores the impact of location, pricing, service quality, uniqueness and design, facilities, and online reputation, revealing that online visibility, personalized services, sustainability practices, and cultural immersion strongly shape consumer choices. The findings offer actionable insights for managers, policymakers and investors to enhance service offerings, marketing strategies, competitive positioning and the sector's contribution to economic growth, regional development and sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Boutique Hotels, Consumer Behavior, Tourism Demand, Personalized Services

Analysing the Factors Influencing the Demand for Safari Tourism in Wildlife National Park: Evidence from Wilpattu National Park

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Abstract

Safari tourism has taken a critical role in nature-based tourism where it offers tourists the chance to view wildlife as well as helping in conservation and development of the region. Wilpattu National Park is the oldest and the largest conservation site in Sri Lanka and has significant potential of safari tourism because of the variety of ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural heritage. This paper explores the demand determinants of the safari tourism in Wilpattu, in terms of both push and pull factors. The study will use a systematic questionnaire survey approach to the visitors to Wilpattu National Park where a five-point Likert scale is used to evaluate perceptions in these dimensions. In order to identify the most relevant factors influencing demand among tourists, the acquired data will be processed using a range of statistical techniques. The results will be anticipated to reveal the role of attractions, amenities, environment-related and staffing-related features, as well as access, in building tourist satisfaction and revisit decision, and also uncover areas of weaknesses including information provision and access to vulnerable population segments. The research offers practical implications to the park management, policy makers and the stakeholders in the tourism industry by offering evidenced-based recommendations to improve visitor experiences, enhance sound practice of sustainable tourism as well as positioning Wilpattu as a competitive destination in the sphere of safaris in Sri Lanka and the region at large.

Keywords: Competitive Destination, Nature-Based Tourism, Push and Pull Factors, Safari Tourism, Visitor Experience, Wilpattu National Park.

Forecasting International Tourist Arrivals In Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tourism is valued for its economic contributions to the nation, as employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and socio-cultural development depend on it. The sector is more sensitive to external factors such as the pandemics, war, political instability, and economic downturns. Therefore, there is a need for a reliable forecast that facilitates strategic planning for development policies. This study focuses on forecasting monthly international tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka from 2025 to 2030 using the Seasonal Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (SARIMA) model. Secondary monthly time series data from January 2010 to December 2024 were collected from the SLTDA. The Box-Jenkins methodology was employed, consisting of model identification, parameter estimation, diagnostic checking, and forecasting. Stationarity was assessed using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test. The best model selected, with the lowest Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and acceptable residual diagnostics, was SARIMA (1,1,1) (1,1,1)₁₂ and ACF and PACF plots along with formal testing reveal the best model selected. The data preparation stage was crucial for enhancing the accuracy of the model. During the COVID-19, monthly tourist arrivals dropped to nearly zero due to social distancing measures. Instead of removing or imputing these values, this study pre-forecasted these periods based on pre-pandemic data using the SARIMA model. This approach ensured the preservation of the time series structure and smoothing of extreme disruptions, thereby allowing for more accurate parameter estimation and stable long-term forecasts. The findings showed that the predicted international tourist arrivals were approximately equal to but slightly lower than the actual. These forecasts are vital for stakeholders such as SLTDA, businesses, and policymakers, as seasonal demand patterns can be predicted, resources can be better allocated, and service satisfaction optimization can be achieved. The study recommends that forecasting models based on SARIMA be adopted institutionally for tourism planning in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: International Tourist Arrivals, Seasonal ARIMA models, SLTDA, Time Series Forecasting

Effect of Sustainable Practices on Tourist Experience and Loyalty in Marine and Coastal Tourism: A Study on Gulf of Mannar

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Abstract

Coastal tourism facilities are essential for promoting sustainable management in marine and coastal tourism areas. Recent studies highlight that marine and coastal tourism significantly impacts both the environment and local economies. Sustainable practices, including waste management, ecocertification, and community engagement, are crucial for maintaining ecosystem health while enhancing the tourist experience. Tourist perceptions of environmental initiatives strongly influence satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness to revisit destinations. The study aims to examine the existing sustainable tourism practices adopted in the Gulf of Mannar, to assess the effect of these practices on tourist satisfaction and to investigate the relationship between tourist satisfaction and their loyalty toward the destination. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 350 tourists visiting the Gulf of Mannar. Qualitative insights were gathered via interviews with local stakeholders, including tour operators and community leaders. Preliminary findings indicate that tourists perceive sustainable practices, such as waste management, conservation efforts, and community involvement, positively impact their overall experience. These practices enhance the authenticity of the destination and foster a sense of responsibility among visitors. Consequently, there is a significant correlation between high satisfaction levels and increased tourist loyalty, manifested in repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth promotion. Implementing sustainable tourism practices in the Gulf of Mannar not only preserves its unique marine and coastal ecosystems but also enhances tourist satisfaction and fosters loyalty. For sustainable tourism to thrive, it is essential to integrate environmental conservation with community engagement and responsible tourism practices. This approach will ensure the long-term viability of the tourism sector in the region.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourist Loyalty, Gulf of Mannar, Marine Ecosystem Conservation

Review of Tourists and Vagabonds: Poverty, Sustainability and Tourism Future - A Voice from the Global South

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Abstract

Critical Sociology has devoted considerable efforts in deciphering how global capitalism engendered new material asymmetries (Greider, 2003; Cook & Frank 2010). Among these critical voices, Zygmunt Bauman has left a rich legacy that gravitated further on the fields of cultural philosophy, Post Marxism, postmodern sociology, ethics, surveillance technology, migration, as well as modern history (Blackshaw 2005; Davis 2016; 2017). Having said this, Bauman has much to say in the constellations of mobility theory. His critical position against the discourse of the status-quo and the anti-migrant campaigns in the US and part of Europe makes his texts pertinent and mustread reference material. The Global North seems to be experiencing the rise of new xenophobic discourses directed against foreign migrants but not only limited too. Some ethnic minorities as well as displaced families (like homeless families) are being targets of discrimination and violence. From his rich academic legacy, I shall limit my analysis to part of his books such as Liquid Modernity, Liquid love: On the frailty of human bonds, Liquid Love, Consuming Life and Tourists and Vagabonds: heroes and Victims of Postmodernity. These literary projects keep a common-thread argumentation. Global capitalism acts as a socio-political enterprise that shifted not only economic production but also human relationships as never before. Far from being reversible, capitalism revolves around the fields of labour division, production, consumption as well as the resulted inter-class inequalities (Korstanje 2024a; 2024b). In his seminal paperwork *Tourists and vagabonds:* Heroes and victims of postmodernity, Bauman eloquently argues that tourists and vagabonds represent idealised archetypes (categories) embodied in two opposite classes. Whereas tourists are legally encouraged to travel in the liquid world, vagabonds dream of a home they will never reach. The latter lives in the past, the former dwells the future. To put this bluntly, it is not the same as closing the door from the inside or being outside once the door is closed. As the previous backdrop is given, I examine in this proceeding the case of Buenos Aires city, a global South city traversed by violence and poverty (Bauman 1996; 2017). My work is inserted in the fields of critical sociology.

Today thousands of homeless people (vagabonds) are sleeping at airports, transport hubs, stations, or nearby hotels. This tendency was aggravated after the pandemic. In doing so, Bauman can be put in dialogue with another social scientist, Marc Augé. The goal of the present chapter is twofold. While offering a critique viewpoint of Bauman's argumentation, it puts the question of non-places (a theory originally developed by Augé (2020) under the lens of realism. The non-place is defined as a space of anonymity –created by Super modernity where people do not identify with places or at least emotionally in an intimate way. Augé holds that the Super modernity eradicates human solidarity through the creation of non-places, spaces of anonymity where identity is simply suspended. Non-places are something else than spaces of consumerism and distinction, they are spaces where the classic line of time is cancelled (Augé 2020). Examples of non-places are transport hubs, airports, hotels, or shopping malls. After the pandemic, many homeless families have selected the so-called *non-places* as their preferred homes (Augé 2020). After the pandemic, thousands of families sleep at the airports or nearby of shopping malls in the city. These so-called *non-places* are being dwelled (occupied) by people marginalised from the classic labour market. This has ignited unresolved tensions between homeless groups and security forces. What seems to be more important, homeless communities are becoming tourist attractions in the Global South. In developed economies (countries) homeless tours are highly demanded by high-purchasing power tourists and consumers. The conceptual reflections emanated in the present chapter are engulfed in auto-ethnographies that discuss the figure of poverty as a condition and as a commodity. I sustain a polemic thesis -underlying in Bauman's studies-; the question whether of poverty is commoditised leads us to think that the vulnerable conditions of poor communities will be systematically replicated.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Global South, sociology

Analyzing Training and Educational Strategies for Human Resource Development in Star Category Hotels in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the training and educational initiatives currently adopted within Sri Lanka's star-category hotels, examining their effectiveness in enhancing employee performance, service quality, and overall organizational competitiveness. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative insights from interviews with managers, trainers, and employees, as well as quantitative data collected through structured surveys. Findings reveal that while hotels prioritize employee training through induction programs, on the-job learning, and periodic workshops, significant gaps remain in terms of aligning these initiatives with international benchmarks, technological advancements, and the diverse skill sets required by modern hospitality operations. Notably, the study identifies challenges such as limited investment in advanced training technologies, insufficient focus on soft skills and cross-cultural competencies, and a lack of systematic evaluation mechanisms to measure training outcomes. At the same time, several best practices were observed, including mentorship programs, industry-academic partnerships, and performance-linked learning incentives, which contribute positively to employee engagement and retention. Based on these insights, the study proposes a framework for strengthening HRD strategies by integrating global service standards, fostering a culture of continuous professional development, and utilizing digital platforms for more interactive and scalable training delivery. The recommendations further emphasize the need for policy-level support to enhance industry-wide collaboration in HRD, ensuring a consistent talent pipeline that meets both local and international demands. Ultimately, this research contributes to the discourse on sustainable human capital development in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector, highlighting the strategic role of training and education in shaping service excellence and long-term organizational success in a dynamic global market.

Keywords: Employee performance, service quality, organizational competitiveness, induction programs, on the-job learning

Low-Carbon Transport and Sustainable Tourism Transformation

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of escalating global climate change, the tourism industry, while fostering economic development and cultural exchange, remains a significant contributor to carbon emissions, with transport identified as a critical source. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO, 2024), the global concentration of carbon dioxide exceeded430ppm, underscoring the urgency of decarbonization. Directorate General of Highways, Ministry of Transportation Communications in Taiwan, has advanced three major strategies Avoid, Shift, and Improve while preparing for the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM, 2026) through the establishment of carbon inventory systems, carbon pricing and trading frameworks, carbon footprint labeling, and the promotion of new-energy vehicles to strengthen international alignment. In parallel, China Engineering Consultants, Inc. (CECI) has developed an ESG talent cultivation program for the transport sector, integrating cross-disciplinary curricula and practical training to foster professionals with global perspectives. Taiwan's experience demonstrates that the combined advancement of policy, technology, and human capital is essential to effectively drive sustainable tourism transformation, achieve the 2050 net-zero goal, and enhance the international competitiveness of the industry.

Keywords: Low-Carbon Transport Sustainable Tourism, Decarbonization Strategies, ESG Talent Development

Analyzing the Impact of Tangible and Intangible Factors on Service Quality in Food and Beverage Operations at Five-Star Hotels in Nuwara Eliya Destination, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tourism is one of Sri Lanka's most significant industries, contributing heavily to foreign exchange earnings and regional development. Nuwaraeliya, known for its colonial heritage, tea plantations, cool climate, and scenic beauty, has become a key destination for both international and domestic tourists, attracting high- and middle-spending visitors. In this context, in five-star hotels food and beverage operations playing a important role in shaping guest experiences and influencing the overall image of a hotel. The problem addressed in this study is that food and beverage service quality is often compromised by staff who either lack awareness of service standards or focus primarily on tangible elements while neglecting intangible aspects. While tangible factors such as facilities, ambience, and menu presentation influence first impressions, intangible factors including courtesy, attentiveness, and personalized service are equally critical to achieving guest delight and loyalty. The research seeks to answer key questions such as; what are the demographic characteristics of guests using food and beverage outlets in Nuwaraeliya's five-star hotels? How important are tangible and intangible factors in maintaining service standards and guest satisfaction? Do both dimensions jointly influence perceptions of service quality? The overall objective of the study is to assess the impact of tangible and intangible elements on service quality in food and beverage operations. Specifically, it aims to identify guest demographics, evaluate the significance of tangible and intangible factors separately, and determine their combined influence on satisfaction. A mixedmethod approach was adopted, using structured questionnaires with guests and interviews with managers and staff, with data analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation, and thematic analysis. The study faced limitations in data collection due to guests' limited availability and willingness to participate. Nevertheless, the research provides practical insights for hotel managers to enhance staff training, strengthen service standards, and balance

tangible and intangible aspects to improve guest satisfaction and sustain Nuwaraeliya's position as a premier luxury destination.

Keywords: Service quality, Tangible factors, Intangible factors, Food and beverage, Luxury hotels

Analysis of Destination Lifecycle with Special Reference to Ella

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Abstract

This research study investigates the current phase of tourism development in Ella, Sri Lanka, within the framework of the Destination Development Life Cycle (DDLC) model. Each of these phases in the cycle presents unique opportunities and challenges, requiring the adoption of context-specific policies and development strategies to ensure sustainable growth. Therefore, identifying the precise stage of Ella's tourism development is essential to address the emerging issues effectively and to formulate appropriate strategies for long-term sustainability. The study specifically concentrates on three critical factors that strongly influence the current stage of Ella within the DDLC framework: (i) the extent of conflicts between the tourism industry and the local community, (ii) the degree of environmental degradation resulting from increasing tourist activity, and (iii) the level of overcrowding and congestion in key attractions and facilities. These factors are considered pivotal in assessing both the present conditions and the potential trajectory of tourism development in the destination. By systematically analyzing their impact, the research aims to establish Ella's precise position within the life cycle and to highlight the strategies necessary to address existing challenges while ensuring that future development remains both sustainable and community-inclusive. A quantitative research methodology will be adopted for this study, with data collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture the perceptions and experiences of relevant tourism stakeholders. The target population comprises 350 establishments, with a representative sample size of 200 selected from businesses registered on online booking platforms and with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). The collected data will be statistically analyzed using SPSS version 30, ensuring methodological rigor and providing evidence-based insights. The findings are expected to contribute not only to academic discourse on destination life cycles but also to practical policy recommendations for tourism planning and management in Ella, thereby offering a roadmap for addressing pressing issues of community relations, environmental sustainability, and overcrowding.

Keywords: Destination Lifecycle, sustainable growth, environmental degradation, overcrowding, congestion

A Feasibility Study of Domestic Budget Airline Operation in Sri Lanka Tourism

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Abstract

This study conducts a comprehensive investigation into the operational feasibility and market suitability of establishing a domestic budget airline. The primary objective is to determine if a domestic budget airline can be operationally viable and if a suitable market exists for such services within Sri Lanka's tourism sector. To achieve these objectives, the research employs an onion ring model approach, systematically analyzing various layers of data. The methodology draws information from authoritative sources like the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and historical records from Domestic Airline Operators, primarily from secondary data. An in-depth examination of key factors influencing the viability of a low-cost airline is made possible by this data-driven strategy. The study specifically sought to identify the types of tourists visiting Sri Lanka, understand their habits, such as length of stay and frequently visited destinations, evaluate the suitability of airfield facilities in relation to these destinations, discover tourists' purchasing power, and examine previous records of tourists using domestic airlines. In conclusion, based on the research findings, it is anticipated that Sri Lanka's tourism industry and overall economy will benefit from the future launch of a domestic budget airline. Such a program is expected to enhance internal connectivity, reduce travel time to key destinations, and stimulate regional development, particularly in less accessible areas. In the future, it is expected that the government will establish supportive policy frameworks to encourage private sector investment, potentially offering financial incentives. It is also expected that the infrastructure of airfields in major tourist destinations will be upgraded and maintained with modern amenities, aligned with international safety standards. Furthermore, future initiatives are likely to include collaborative marketing efforts and the creation of integrated travel packages in partnership with the tourism sector, including hotels and travel agencies. Initial operations are envisioned to focus on high-demand routes, with competitive pricing and simplified booking systems. To ensure long-term success and sustainable economic contributions, it is anticipated that sustainability principles will be integrated into operations, with continuous monitoring of passenger demand, route profitability, and service quality.

Keywords: Domestic Budget Airline, Operational Feasibility, Airfield Fac

Digital Transformation and Smart Tourism Adoption in Sri Lankan SMEs

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Abstract

Worldwide, tourism is experiencing a radical digital transformation, which is triggered by technological advancement, changing consumer behaviour, and the need to offer personalized services to customers. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the core of the tourism economy in Sri Lanka, yet they have not been embracing smart tourism practices evenly. Online booking platforms, mobile apps, virtual tours, digital marketing, and contactless services are digital tools that offer a great opportunity to compete more effectively, but structural and resource-based constraints commonly hinder SMEs from embracing them. These dynamics are critical to understand and devise strategies to help to build resilience and achieve sustainable growth amidst the post-pandemic period. This research will be grounded in secondary data and will be used to explore the factors, obstacles, and effects of digital transformation on tourism SMEs in Sri Lanka. The targeted aim is to develop a conceptual framework that explains adoption trends and educates on the upcoming broad integration of smart tourism technologies. The study used the secondary data analysis method, based on scholarly literature, government publications, industry surveys, and international best practices. The major themes were generalized to find out the adoption drivers, limitations, and performance outcomes. A comparative analysis was also conducted to position Sri Lankan SMEs within the broader context of global trends in digital tourism. The review highlights that, while international practices emphasize the rapid adoption of digital platforms and smart services, the pace of integration among Sri Lankan SMEs remains comparatively slower. The drivers are increasing tourist demand for convenience, government ICT programs, internet penetration and sustainability issues. Some of the barriers are mainly associated with the high cost of implementation, absence of knowledge, ineffective infrastructure and cybersecurity threats. It has been evidenced that with digital technologies, SMEs can grow their revenues, their customer interactions, and their efficiency. The observations derived from the study informed the development of a conceptual framework that identifies the

key enablers, constraints, and anticipated outcomes of digital transformation within tourism SMEs. The research concludes that a systematic and well-structured approach is essential for guiding SMEs, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in advancing digital adoption. Recommended strategies include implementing capacity-building initiatives, introducing financial support mechanisms, and strengthening investment in digital infrastructure. Collectively, these measures will enable Sri Lankan tourism SMEs to harness digital opportunities, achieve sustainable competitiveness, and align more effectively with global smart tourism trends.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Smart Tourism, SMEs, Sri Lanka, Conceptual Framework

Urban Tourism Development in Colombo: Challenges and Strategies for Enhancing Cultural, Heritage, and Experiential Tourism in Rapidly Urbanizing City

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Abstract

This study examines the transformation of Colombo from transit hub to standalone urban tourism destination, addressing key challenges in identity development, heritage preservation and infrastructure accessibility. As Colombo undergoes rapid commercialization and urbanization, the research investigates the strategic interventions needed to position Colombo as vibrant and unique destinations that balance modernization with cultural authenticity. Colombo being the island's main urban center, faces multiple challenges including deterioration of colonial architecture and traditional neighborhoods due to the rapid commercialization, lack of distinctive branding and signature attractions, limited activities and attractiveness, fragmented tourism products with poor storytelling and infrastructure deficits in transportation connectivity and digital systems. This research aims for three primary objectives. Accessing Colombo's current tourism positioning and market perception among industry professionals and visitors. Secondly identifying strategic development priorities enhancing opportunities through comprehensive stakeholder analysis and finally developing a framework for sustainable urban tourism growth that balance economic benefits with environmental protection and socio culture preservation. Mixed method approach will be used, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative components involve structured questionnaires will be distributed to 200 travel agencies specializing in urban, cultural tourism examining their current itinerary segmentation strategies, client preferences and recommendations for enhancing Colombo. The qualitative components include in depth interviews with 100 international and domestic tourists from diverse demographic profiles and travel motivations, explore current visitor experiences and unmet needs, desired improvements and perceptions for Colombo's unique value proposition. From this dual stakeholder approaches will ensure comprehensive understanding by integrating industry expertise with consumer insights through analysis. The research will generate actionable recommendations for policymakers, urban planners and tourism operators to enhance Colombo's competitiveness while preserving cultural authenticity. Expected outcomes

include comprehensive sustainable tourism development framework addressing for carrying capacity, community impact and environmental protection. This will further provide insights for establishing Colombo as an economically viable urban tourism hub comparing to other destinations moving beyond traditional beaches and cultural triangle to create significant economic impact to the national economy through extended visitor stays and increase visitor expenditure in diversified tourism products. Colombo Port city to and Marine Drive will be hotspots for creating memorable experience along brilliant nightlife experience to the guest. The research will provide evidence-based strategies for integrating tourism development with broader urban planning initiatives, ensuring tourism enhancement contributes positively to overall city development and resident quality of life while preserving environmental and socio-cultural sustainability for long-term regional competitiveness.

Keywords: *Urban Tourism Development, commercialization, urbanization, sustainability, value proposition, socio culture preservation*

An Exploration of Sri Lanka's Buddhist Heritage for Spiritual Tourism: Opportunities to Attract Thai Visitors

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Abstract

Sri Lanka and Thailand share centuries-old cultural, diplomatic, and religious ties deeply rooted in Theravada Buddhism. In recent years, spiritual and wellness tourism have gained prominence as major travel motivations, positioning Sri Lanka's Buddhist heritage, sacred sites, and traditional healing practices as strategic assets to attract Thai travelers seeking authentic religious and cultural experiences. This study investigates Thai tourists' perceptions of Sri Lanka as a spiritual tourism destination by integrating both historical context and contemporary travel behavior. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative surveys of 173 Thai tourists with qualitative insights from conference proceedings, expert panels, and case studies to identify motivators, preferences, and challenges in attracting Thai spiritual visitors. Findings indicate that the majority of visitors are working-age Thai tourists (20–40 years, 51.4%) with middle-income levels (\$296-\$444/month, 35.8%). Their top motivations include spiritual activities (60.7%), meditation (56.6%), and pilgrimages (37%), with preferred destinations being Kandy (37%), Anuradhapura (30.1%), and Sigiriya (20.2%). Behaviorally, most travel with friends or family (60.1%) and favor nature-based (28.3%) and cultural sites (22.5%). The majority stay 1–3 nights (52.6%) and choose hotels (71.1%) as their main accommodation. Key success factors include the shared Theravada Buddhist heritage-highlighted through "Lankawong" Buddhism in Thailand-along with improved infrastructure, Thai-language services, and authentic experiences such as meditation retreats and Ayurveda-based wellness programs. However, the sector faces challenges of limited promotion, underdeveloped spiritual tourism products, and post-pandemic recovery constraints. The study concludes that Sri Lanka holds significant potential to become a leading spiritual tourism hub for Thai travelers. Strategic policy measures, including targeted marketing campaigns in Thailand, the development of tailored products such as temple stays, sustainable destination management, and a phased 2025-2030 policy

framework, are recommended to enhance Buddhist diplomacy, strengthen infrastructure, and diversity Sri Lanka's tourism Portfolio.

Keywords: Spiritual Tourism, Buddhist Heritage, Thai Tourists, Wellness Travel

Sustaining Paradise: Climate Change Risk and Adaptive Pathways for Tourism in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Being a tropical island nation, Sri Lanka is an attractive destination for tourists. Among the country's attractions are scenic and sunny beaches, cultural heritage, ecological endowments of rich biodiversity, opportunities for nature recreation as well as comfortable climate zones. Climate change impacts ranging from weather patterns and extreme events to sea level rise and ecosystem degradation. can affect desirable characteristics associated with each of those attractions, simultaneously creating problems for operational undertaking of travelling and leisure activities. Adaptation to climate change is necessary in order to minimize the uncertain but undesired impacts and the risks that the alteration of climate conditions could create in various vulnerable tourism destinations. The objective of the study is to increase the awareness of tour industry operators on climate change and its impacts and identify tourism facilities in vulnerable areas and make arrangements to increase the climate resilience of them. The impacts of climate change on tourism industry in Sri Lanka has been examined and several adaptation policies and measures have been proposed. Through a mixed-methods approach including stakeholder interviews, and field observations, the research explores the perceptions, strategies, and barriers related to climate change adaptation in the tourism sector. The findings indicate that, while many tourism operators recognize the need for adaptation, implementing concrete measures remains limited. Factors such as lack of resources, knowledge gaps, and uncertain future projections hinder the adoption of adaptation actions. The study also identifies examples of proactive adaptation, including diversification of tourism products, infrastructure upgrades, and collaborative initiatives between the public and private sectors. The research provides insights into the complex and context-specific nature of climate adaptation in the tourism industry. The conclusions highlight the importance of multilevel governance, capacity building, and iterative learning to foster resilient and sustainable tourism systems in the face of a changing climate

Keywords: Climate Change, Adaptation, Diversification, Sustainable Tourism, Resilience, Stakeholder Engagement

Factors Influencing Dental Tourism in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The opportunity to combine dental care with leisure travel and cultural experiences involves patients traveling from countries with high dental care costs to destinations offering affordable, high-quality services, often bundled with accommodation and tourism packages. Sri Lanka emerges as a notable destination in this context owing to its competitive pricing, skilled dental professionals, modern facilities, and synergistic tourism infrastructure. The interplay between dental services and tourism in Sri Lanka presents a unique opportunity to enhance foreign exchange earnings while simultaneously elevating local healthcare standards and improving access to quality dental care for residents. This study examines the significance of dental tourism in Sri Lanka, highlighting both its benefits and challenges. Sri Lanka's dental tourism sector benefits from a pool of highly qualified, English-speaking dentists operating state-of-the-art clinics, providing treatments at a fraction of the cost encountered in Western countries. Additionally, the island's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and well-developed hospitality sector create an attractive environment for dental tourists seeking to combine healthcare with vacationing. These factors collectively contribute to the growth of a mutually beneficial industry that supports economic development and public health improvements. Despite these advantages, dental tourism poses certain risks, including complications associated with advanced procedures, potential communication barriers where language differences exist, inconsistent regulatory oversight, and difficulties in obtaining follow-up care upon returning to the patient's home country. The presence of unqualified practitioners and variability in treatment quality emphasizes the necessity for prospective dental tourists to conduct thorough research and select reputable providers. This investigation employs structured surveys and in-depth interviews with international dental tourists visiting Sri Lanka. Data analysis explores key determinants influencing dental tourism decisions such as costeffectiveness, availability of specialized treatments, perceived quality of care, ease of travel, and cultural affinity. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics shaping dental tourism and inform strategies to optimize its benefits while minimizing associated risks.

Keywords: Cost effectiveness, Perceived Quality, Easy of travel, Cultural Affinity

Case Based Model Design for Green Yoga Destination in Sri Lankan Wellness Tourism

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Abstract

With the increasing global shift towards sustainable tourism, Sri Lanka holds immense potential to emerge as a destination that harmonizes nature, culture. and healing traditions. The objective is to create an Eco-conscious, healthoriented tourism space that integrates traditional yoga practices with environmental sustainability. This research focuses on establishing a Green Yoga Destination Model in the southern coastal region of Sri Lanka, with a focused site selection based on ecological and biological assessment. To determine the most suitable location several potential sites in the Galle district were analyzed using specific biological indicators such as greenery, air quality, biodiversity, noise levels, and accessibility. After assessment of indicators, Jungle Beach scored high, for the study site. The model proposes the construction of a nature-integrated yoga shala to align with core concept of harmonizing nature, culture, and healing tradition. It includes several Ecosensitive features mainly, open circular yoga platform, water pond with fish therapy, meditation zone in stone paved forest clearing with stony walkways, traditional herbal therapy huts, and Eco-craft center by using cinnamon bark fibers. Each facility is designed to reflect traditional Sri Lankan architecture and Ayurvedic healing values, using sustainable materials and eco-friendly construction practices. The model also incorporates waste management system, water conservation, and locally guided wellness experiences that honor both environmental preservation and cultural heritage. This proposed model can serve as a blueprint for other potential sites across the country. This initiative not only supports the physical and mental well-being of participants but also protects the environment and empowers local communities, and advocates for a mindful tourism approach, positioning Sri Lanka as a global hub for sustainable wellness travel.

Keywords: Yoga, Galle, Green Destination, Jungle Beach, Traditional Sri Lankan architecture

Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction among Employees of Five-Star Hotels in Nuwara Eliya

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Abstract

Work-life balance refers to the ability of employees to manage professional responsibilities alongside personal commitments in a manner that supports both well-being and productivity. In the hospitality industry, particularly within five-star hotels, achieving this balance is a persistent challenge due to long working hours, irregular schedules, and the constant pressure of maintaining exceptional service standards. A healthy work-life balance offers advantages such as higher job satisfaction, improved employee engagement, and reduced staff turnover. However, disadvantages include stress caused by extended working hours, limited time for family and personal life, and the potential for burnout. These negatives highlight the central problem: many employees in five-star hotels struggle to harmonize their work and personal lives, directly impacting job satisfaction. This study identifies four key components that affect work-life balance: family, self, job tasks, and career. Family commitments play a vital role in shaping employees' emotional stability and time management. Self-care, including rest, health, and personal development, determines resilience against stress. Job tasks, such as workload and unpredictable shifts, directly influence employee satisfaction. Career aspirations, including growth opportunities and recognition, affect long-term motivation and loyalty. Collectively, these components provide a framework for understanding how hotel employees experience and manage work-life balance. The research focuses on Nuwara Eliya, a leading tourist destination in Sri Lanka that hosts several five-star hotels employing diverse staff across various departments. The study population consists of employees working in these hotels, with data collected through a structured survey questionnaire designed to measure perceptions of work-life balance and its influence on job satisfaction. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS version 30 to examine relationships and trends. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for hotel management in designing strategies to enhance work-life balance, improve job satisfaction, and ensure service quality in the competitive luxury hospitality sector.

Keywords: Work—life balance, Job satisfaction, Hospitality workforce, Employee well-being, Organizational support

Promoting Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Practices in Kiriella, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is emerging as one of the most promising models of sustainable rural development in developing countries. Still, its practical potential value for rural Sri Lankan settings remains limited and understudied. This paper examined the viability of establishing communitybased sustainable tourism practices in Kiriella village, located in the Ratnapura District in Sri Lanka, a rural community with significant untapped tourism potential but lacking any formal development models. The study answered four critical questions: How will CBT be reasonably applied in Kiriella? What are the obstacles to the active involvement of the community in the development of sustainable tourism? What will be the possible effects on the environment, economy, and culture? What are some of the insights available in the successful CBT model elsewhere? The study was based on a approach that employs interpretive philosophy, methodological triangulation. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews of 23 participants, four focus group discussions with 24 people living in the community, participant observation, and secondary analysis of data sources. Various stakeholders, such as residents of the community, small business owners, government officials, cultural leaders, and NGO representatives, were involved to provide a range of views. The theoretical framework embedded the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, Participatory Development Theory, and Empowerment Theory to examine the impact that CBT may have on community capital assets and development outcomes. Data was also analysed using the six-step framework identified in thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke, and included inductive and deductive code methods. This study fills an existing literature gap in CBT regarding rural destinations in Sri Lanka that are not already established tourist destinations. The significance of the study is not limited only to scholarly contribution, as the study will have evidence-based suggestions, which local stakeholders, policymakers, and development agencies can take into consideration. The research has provided implementation guidelines, institutional designs, and capacity-building agendas that are crucial to the effective development of CBTs. This study proves how qualitative case study methodology has the

potential to interpret the realities of multifaceted rural development phenomena and how the voices of communities and local bodies of knowledge should be prioritised in tourism development planning.

Keywords: Community-based tourism, rural development, Sri Lanka, sustainable tourism, participatory development

From Heritage to Bollywood: Film Tourism as a Catalyst for Sustainable Destination Promotion

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Abstract

Since the early 20th century, Bollywood, the Mumbai-based Hindi-language film industry, has had a major impact on how people perceive other cultures and how they travel. From the snowy peaks of Himachal Pradesh in Jab We Met, to the majestic forts and palaces of Rajasthan in Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, the rural charm of Swades, and the spiritual heritage of Ram Setu connecting India and Sri Lanka, every time, there is a surge in film because it excites travellers to visit actual places that have been highlighted in the media. At a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.2%, the worldwide film tourism market is projected to reach USD 145.9 billion by 2035 from USD 66.2 billion in 2025. India, one of the world's biggest film makers, releases over 1,000 high- and low-budget films each year in more than 20 languages, reflecting its many narrative traditions in its abundance of cinematic entertainers. The review, thorough search, and analysis of research and publications about Bollywood's influence on tourism that have been published in books, scholarly journals, and other academic sources form the basis of this work. To find important themes and trends, data were retrieved, examined, and combined. The analysis concluded that Bollywood has been a successful instrument for promoting tourism and sustainable destination marketing in all areas, whether they are desert, mountain, or beachside, where popular Bollywood films have significantly increased national as well as international visitor numbers. The study also emphasised Bollywood's ability to promote lesser-known locations, including as tiny villages, and promote cross-cultural interactions. The results highlight how crucial it is to incorporate Bollywood into destination marketing plans in order to increase the exposure of travel destinations and promote sustained expansion in the travel sector. The study recommends that in order to fully utilise Bollywood's potential for promoting travel destinations and sustainable economic development, tourism boards should work with the film industry.

Keywords: Bollywood, Film Tourism, Heritage, Sustainability, Destination

Examining Digital Marketing Literacy among SMEs in Tourism Industry on Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka: A Case Study of the Sinharaja World Heritage

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Abstract

The travel and tourism sector in Sri Lanka is mainly driven by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The role of SMEs is vital to Sri Lanka's tourism economy, particularly in ecologically sensitive destinations such as the Sinharaja World Heritage Site. With rising global demand for sustainable tourism, SMEs must adopt effective digital marketing strategies to communicate environmental responsibility and attract eco-conscious travellers. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with tourism SMEs operating in and around the Sinharaja rainforest region. A quantitative survey was administered to a purposive sample of accommodation providers, tour operators, and related businesses, examining key dimensions of digital marketing literacy, including social media engagement, content creation capabilities, online booking system management, digital customer relationship management, and sustainable tourism messaging strategies. Special attention is given to how these enterprises leverage digital platforms to promote ecofriendly tourism practices while preserving the biodiversity and cultural significance of the UNESCO World Heritage site. Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and regression modelling. Findings are expected to inform targeted training and policy support, enabling SMEs to influence digital tools more effectively in promoting sustainable tourism while safeguarding heritage and biodiversity in Sri Lanka. The study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between digital marketing literacy and sustainable tourism promotion in heritage destinations. It offers practical recommendations for capacity building programs, policy interventions, and collaborative frameworks between government agencies, tourism boards, and private sector stakeholders.

Keywords: Digital marketing literacy, SMEs, Sustainable Tourism, UNESCO, Sinharaja

Innovating Sustainable Experiences: Integrating Circular Economy Principles in the Development of New Tourism Products

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Abstract

Tourism plays a vital role in Sri Lanka's economy, yet its rapid growth poses significant environmental and socio-cultural challenges. This study explores how Circular Economy (CE) principles can be effectively integrated into the development of sustainable tourism products in Sri Lanka, with the aim of reducing environmental impact, enhancing community engagement, and promoting long-term economic resilience. The main objectives of the study are: (1) to examine current tourism practices in Sri Lanka and their sustainability challenges; (2) to identify opportunities for applying CE principles such as resource efficiency, waste minimization, and product lifecycle extension; and (3) to develop a framework for innovating tourism products that align with CE values. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative case studies of selected eco-tourism ventures across Sri Lanka with quantitative surveys targeting tourists, local communities, and tourism operators. Interviews with key stakeholders were conducted to understand perceptions, barriers, and drivers related to CE adoption. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis and statistical tools to identify patterns and correlations. Key findings reveal a growing interest among tourism entrepreneurs and travelers in sustainability, yet a significant gap exists between awareness and implementation. Successful examples of CE integration include upcycled accommodation infrastructure, zero-waste culinary experiences, and community-based heritage tourism where waste is transformed into artisanal products. However, barriers such as lack of technical knowledge, limited access to sustainable materials, and insufficient policy support impede broader adoption. The discussion highlights the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration, capacity-building programs, and policy incentives to facilitate CE integration. The findings suggest that embedding CE principles not only contributes to environmental conservation but also enhances tourist satisfaction and provides economic benefits to host communities. In conclusion, the study recommends a strategic roadmap for Sri Lanka's tourism sector to transition toward circularity through innovation,

education, and policy reform. It argues that integrating circular economy principles in tourism product development can serve as a catalyst for sustainable transformation in Sri Lanka's tourism industry, making it more resilient, inclusive, and future-ready.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Sustainable Tourism, Innovation, Sri Lanka, Tourism Product Development

Accommodation Requirements by Homestay Tourists in Sri Lanka: Evidence from Ella Tourism Destination

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Abstract

Homestay tourism has become a significant niche market in Sri Lanka, driven by increasing tourist arrivals and the growing demand for unique accommodation options. A homestay allows tourists to stay in the homes of residents, offering an immersive experience of the local culture, cuisine, and lifestyle. This study aims to identify the gap between the expected service quality standards of homestay tourists and the actual service quality provided at homestays in Sri Lanka. The research also explores the challenges faced by homestay operators in meeting tourists' expectations and provides insights from both a tourist and entrepreneurial perspective. A mixed methodology was used, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, with primary data collected through questionnaires 50 international visitors using a convenient sampling technique. In addition, direct observations, field visits and discussion with 25 stakeholders, 10 tour guides also used to collect primary data and written reports, previous studies were used to collect secondary data and descriptive method used to present the result of the study. The findings reveal that tourists have specific expectations when choosing a homestay, such as affordable pricing, relaxing vacations, comfortable accommodations, and a chance to experience local culture and cuisine. However, there is a noticeable gap between these expectations and the services currently offered by homestay operators, especially in areas like service quality, facilities, and hospitality. The study emphasizes that while homestay tourism in Sri Lanka has potential, addressing these service gaps through proper planning, training, and support for entrepreneurs can help improve service quality and enhance tourist satisfaction. Collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and relevant organizations is essential for the growth and promotion of homestay tourism in the country.

Keywords: Homestay, Service quality, Service gap, Sri Lanka, Entrepreneurs, Ella

Exploration on whether Sri Lanka is Perceived as a Seasonal Travel Destination by the German Tourists

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Abstract

Tourism from Germany represents one of the most significant long-haul source markets for Sri Lanka. However, available arrival statistics indicate strong seasonal fluctuations, with peak arrivals occurring primarily during the European winter months. This raises a critical question of whether Sri Lanka is largely perceived as a seasonal destination by German travelers, thereby limiting its potential for year-round tourism growth. The main objective of this research is to explore whether German tourists perceive Sri Lanka as a seasonal travel destination. Specific objectives include, to examine arrival patterns of German tourists to Sri Lanka over the past decade, to identify the factors influencing German tourists' seasonal travel behavior, to assess perceptions of German travelers and tour operators on Sri Lanka's potential as an all-year-round destination. The study employed a mixed-method approach. Secondary data on monthly German arrivals to Sri Lanka from 2015 to 2025 was analyzed to identify seasonality trends. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed among German tourists and interviews conducted with German tour operators during international travel fairs. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to evaluate perceptions, preferences, and constraints affecting travel seasonality. Findings reveal that German tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka are highly concentrated between November and March, coinciding with winter in Europe. Factors contributing to this seasonality include climate preferences, long-haul travel costs, vacation patterns, and limited product diversification in off-peak months. While a majority of German tourists perceive Sri Lanka as a wintersun destination, the study also highlights opportunities for year-round positioning by promoting wellness, nature, culture, and senior citizen longstay programmers. Addressing seasonality through diversified product offerings and targeted marketing strategies could enhance Sri Lanka's competitiveness and ensure a more stable flow of arrivals across the year.

Keywords: Seasonality, German tourists, Sri Lanka tourism, behavior, Long-haul destination

Factors Causing Job Stress Among Operational Level Employees of DMC

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors causing job stress among operational-level employees of Destination Management Company (DMC) in Sri Lanka by taking a case of a leading company. As a central player in the tourism supply chain, a DMC connects international tour operators with local suppliers, ensuring seamless travel experiences for visitors. This vital role, while valueadding, naturally exposes employees to high stress levels due to workload intensity, customer demands, supplier coordination, and last-minute changes. The research examines both the positive and negative impacts of stress: eustress, which enhances motivation, adaptability, and problem-solving; and distress, which leads to burnout, absenteeism, and turnover. The research will adopt a mixed-method approach, collecting primary data through a structured questionnaire distributed to 20 respondents and structured interviews with 5 respondents, including two managers. Six variables will be identified as potential stressors: working uncertain hours, working long hours, work overload, lack of contribution from colleagues, weak organizational communication, and individual differences. It is expected that all independent variables will be significant, with work overload and long working hours likely to emerge as the most influential stress factors. As the organization grows, employee workload will also increase, heightening stress levels. Findings reveal that peak season workload, time pressures, communication gaps with suppliers are primary causes of stress, while supportive supervision, adequate training, and clear role definitions help mitigate negative outcomes. The study concludes that stress is inherent in the DMC environment, but when managed effectively, it can act as a performance driver rather than a barrier. Practical recommendations are provided to help DMCs strike a balance between operational demands and employee wellbeing, thereby enhancing competitiveness within the tourism supply chain.

Keywords: Job Stress, operational level employees, Exotic Holidays International (PVT) Ltd., Factors

Assessing the Impact of Eco-Friendly Accommodation Practices on Revenue Generation of Hotel Operations

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Abstract

As the demand for responsible tourism continues to grow, hotel operators are increasingly adopting eco-friendly initiatives to balance environmental responsibility with financial performance. This study investigates the impact of selected sustainable accommodation practices on the revenue generation of eco-hotels, offering insights into how sustainability can serve as both an ethical commitment and a strategic business advantage. The independent variables examined in this research include sustainable water management, energy conservation, solid waste management, air quality management, and contributions to the local community. A purposive sample of 10 eco-hotels was selected, and primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The data analysis was conducted through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviations were employed for univariate analysis, while Pearson correlation coefficients were used for bivariate analysis to identify significant relationships. The findings reveal that sustainable water management, energy conservation, and solid waste management have a strong positive influence on revenue generation. Hotels effectively implementing these practices reported higher revenue streams, emphasizing their financial as well as environmental benefits. In contrast, air quality management and community contributions showed a comparatively weaker relationship with revenue, suggesting that these practices, while valuable for sustainability, may not directly enhance financial outcomes in the short term. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of integrating specific eco-friendly practices into hotel operations to improve both sustainability and profitability. By prioritizing water, energy, and waste management, eco-hotels can strengthen their competitive advantage and contribute to a greener hospitality sector. Future research may expand the scope by including larger samples and examining long-term profitability impacts of sustainable tourism practices.

Keywords: Eco-friendly Hotels, Sustainability, Revenue Generation, Hospitality Industry

Analysis of Occupational Health and Safety Hazards of Food & Beverage and Kitchen Departments in the Hotels

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Abstract

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) play a critical role in promoting and maintaining the optimal physical, mental, and social well-being of workers. This study focuses on assessing health and safety hazards within Sri Lanka's hotel industry with special reference to Food and Beverage and Kitchen Department, a sector where protecting employees from workplace risks is vital due to the direct and indirect consequences for workers, their families, the community, and the environment. Despite the importance of OHS, there is a notable gap in research addressing these issues specifically within the hotel context in Sri Lanka. The primary aim of this research was to identify key health and safety hazards faced by hotel employees, investigate the causes of these hazards, and analyze existing preventive measures, all in an effort to enhance the safety framework within the sector. Both primary data collected through surveys and interviews, and secondary data from existing literature and reports were utilized for comprehensive analysis. Results revealed that the predominant health and safety hazards in Sri Lankan hotels are cuts, burns, and electrical hazards. These injuries commonly arise from open flames used in kitchens and contact with electric machinery, reflecting high-risk operational areas. Furthermore, the study identified "inadequate instructions" and "insufficient safety education" as significant factors contributing to these hazards, underlining deficiencies in training and communication regarding safety protocols. Regarding preventive measures, the research showed that many hotels implement personal protective equipment (PPE), fire safety procedures, and maintain good housekeeping practices as the main methods of mitigating risks. Nonetheless, these steps alone are not sufficient to comprehensively address the hazards present. The findings suggest an urgent need for more extensive safety training programs, enforcement of rigorous safety standards, and regular safety audits to better protect hotel workers. In conclusion, this study highlights the critical health and safety challenges in Sri Lanka's hotel industry and underscores the importance of developing a proactive safety culture. Implementing enhanced education, clearer instructions, and improved preventive frameworks can significantly reduce

workplace accidents and contribute to a safer, healthier working environment. Such improvements will not only benefit employees but also bolster operational efficiency and the reputation of the Sri Lankan hotel sector.

Keywords: Occupational Health and Safety, Hotel Industry, Workplace Hazards, Safety Education, Personal Protective Equipment

Human Resource Challenges in the Sri Lankan Hotel Sector: Evidence from Kalutara Hotels

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Abstract

This study examines the primary human resource challenges encountered by hotels in the Kalutara district. The study aims to identify and analyze major HR challenges such as high employee turnover, skills shortages, lack of training and development opportunities, employee dissatisfaction, and difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff. Particular attention is given to the post-pandemic landscape, where the hotel industry has faced intensified HR issues due to economic downturns, health concerns, and shifting workforce expectations. The research also examines how sociocultural perceptions, wage structures, and working conditions influence the recruitment and retention of skilled personnel in the region. Data for the study were collected through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. including structured interviews with hotel managers, surveys distributed to employees, and a review of secondary sources such as industry reports and academic literature. The findings reveal that while some hotels have implemented strategies such as internal training programs and employee incentive schemes, these efforts are often limited by budget constraints, managerial inefficiencies, and a lack of government support. Moreover, the essay highlights the gap between hospitality education and industry needs, emphasizing the importance of aligning vocational training with the practical skill requirements of the industry. Another critical issue identified is the lack of career progression and job security within the sector, which demotivates young professionals from pursuing long-term careers in the hospitality industry. The essay concludes by offering recommendations to address these HR challenges, including enhanced collaboration between hotel associations and educational institutions, the implementation of government-backed skill development initiatives, and the promotion of tourism as a viable and respected career path. Strengthening HR management in the Kalutara hotel sector is essential not only for improving service standards but also for ensuring sustainable growth in Sri Lanka's broader tourism industry.

Keywords: HR Challenges, Employee Turnover, Employee Dissatisfaction, Lack of Training & Development

Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Strategies in Promoting Small Scale Travel Agencies in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Digitalization is crucial for any industrial firms' performance and in a small travel agency, the role of digital marketing is crucial for driving business growth and reaching a wider audience in the digital age. Despite the potential advantages of digital channels, there are also obstacles to their adoption. This research focuses on the efforts of small-scale travel agency to enhance online visibility and attract customers while identifying and analyze their challenges in the effective implementation of these marketing strategies and aim to formulate some strategies to overcome these identified challengers. Researcher conducted cross-qualitative, cross-sectional research, using inductive research approach. The data gathered using semi structured questionnaire, from 10 managers on the usage of digital marketing tool and discuss about challenges they faced when implementing these. And the collected data were analyzed by thematic analysis. The findings reveal persistent obstacles, including fierce competition, rapid technological advancements, and financial constraints. Semi-structured interviews with ten managers emphasize the impact of firm size, target markets, and available resources on digital marketing perspectives. The study underscores the increasing adoption of digital marketing by small travel agencies and emphasizes the need for continuous efforts. It provides actionable recommendations, including internal training, partnerships, and fundamental capability development to overcome challenges. The outcomes offer valuable insights into the state of digital marketing for small travel firms in Sri Lanka, addressing their experiences, challenges, and strategies in navigating the dynamic digital landscape. This research extends benefits not only to small travel agencies but also serves as crucial information for scholars, decisionmakers, and industry participants aiming to understand and support the evolving dynamics of digital marketing in the tourism industry.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Challenges, Small Travel Agency, Tourism Industry

Assessing the Influence of Circular Economy Practices on the Performance of Innovative Tourism Products: Evidence from Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study analyzes the impact of circular economy practices on new tourism product success in Sri Lanka's Central Province, which is a region that is particularly known for possessing environmentally friendly accommodation and nature-based tourism. Focusing on 150 tourism businesses (hotels, ecolodges, and tour operators) in Kandy, Nuwara Eliva, Ella, and the Knuckles Range, the research takes these four drivers into account: resource efficiency activity, stakeholder interaction, consumer education campaigns, and circular product design innovation. The vardstick for business success is customer satisfaction and repeat visitation. Confining itself to a mono-methods approach, primary data were collected through structured interviews with managers and entrepreneurs. Quantitative testing used multiple regression to contrast circular economy activities with business success, while qualitative findings were used to put the results into context. Statistical analysis was by SPSS, and reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Results indicate that circular product innovation such as zero-waste trekking sets and upcycled souvenirs has the greatest positive impact on business success, with both customer satisfaction and loyalty enhanced. Stakeholder interaction, particularly with waste management cooperatives and local farmers, plays a crucial role in identifying regional closed-loop systems as well. While resource efficiency practices limit operating costs, their influence on customers' perception is weaker. Consumer awareness campaigns provide low influence, suggesting a shortfall in communicating circular economy benefits to tourists. The study highlights the Central Province as a circular tourist destination where businesses involving closed-loop systems and community collaboration are more lucrative. The remedies are to develop circular tourism certification programs and leverage digital platforms for educating tourists. The study is part of growing discussions on uses of circular economy in developing tourism economies and has practical recommendations for

policymakers and business actors. The future study must confront scaling the circular models throughout the diverse tourism regions of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Circular economy practices, sustainable tourism development, tourism product innovation, stakeholder collaboration, Sri Lanka tourism industry.

Examining the Relationship between Key Determinants and Visit Intention of International Tourists in Sri Lanka's Wellness Tourism Sector

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Abstract

Wellness tourism creating several opportunities to grow as an industry. This study examined the relationship between key determinants and visit intention of international tourists to Sri Lanka. The specific objectives were to investigate the impact of Perceived Wellness Destination Image, Wellness Service Quality, Destination Satisfaction, Perceived Health Benefits, and Destination Safety and Security on the visit intention of international tourists. For the study, the Ayurvie wellness center in Sigiriya. A structured questionnaire was distributed among 150 tourists who visited Ayurvie wellness center, and 100 of them responded it. Therefore, the sample size of 100 by using a purposive sampling technique. The reliability test results demonstrate good internal consistency for the measurement scales used in assessing perceptions related to wellness tourism in Sri Lanka. Employing quantitative research methods, including correlation analyses through SPSS software, the research investigates various dimensions crucial to wellness tourism. The findings of the study reveal strong, positive correlations among the key variables, emphasizing their interconnected nature within the wellness tourism. It's considered that perceived wellness destination image, perceived health benefits, and destination satisfaction emerged as significant positive predictors, alongside the contributions of wellness service quality and destination safety and security. The study concludes that participants' favourable perceptions and intentions towards wellness tourism in Sri Lanka, supported by reliable measurement instruments. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping wellness tourism, offering valuable guidance for researchers and practitioners to enhance the visitor experience and promote wellness tourism in the region. This study serves as a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to optimise the wellness tourism sector in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, Impact, Destination image, Service Quality, Visit Intention

An Investigation of Eco-Tourism Potentials in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This research examines the impact of digital narrative and collective authorship in developing Sri Lanka's Ocean tourism industry. Sri Lanka's tourism industry has to adapt to the growing international competition and evolving tourist preferences by expanding its offerings past the beach-centric marketing. This study looks at best practices of tourism in Queensland, Australia to recommend the use of immersive technologies, including AR and VR, for the development of sustainable tourism. This research explains the role and importance of co-creation in tourism, in which tourists and community members actively participate in developing the experiences and share emotional bonds to the places visited. Findings indicate that digital storytelling would not only promote Sri Lanka's rich cultural and maritime heritage but also position the country as a frontrunner in sustainable tourism. This paper proposes a set of strategies which aims to increase the interaction between tourists and the nature and culture of the visited places while minimizing the ecological footprint tourism has on those places. This research illustrates ways in which Sri Lanka could adapt its tourism to the expectations of contemporary tourists and help in the restoration of ecological and cultural balance.

Keywords: Digital storytelling, Co-creation, Immersive technologies, Sustainable tourism, Sri Lanka.

From Fragmentation to Collaboration: Strengthening Tourism Waste Management through Stakeholder Leadership in Indonesia and Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of tourism in Indonesia and Sri Lanka has created significant waste management challenges that threaten environmental sustainability and destination appeal. A key factor behind these issues is the fragmented and uncoordinated efforts of various stakeholders, including local governments, tourism providers, communities, NGOs, and academic institutions. This lack of a unified approach leads to inefficient waste handling, inconsistent policy enforcement, and localized successes that fail to achieve systemic impact. The study is grounded in the observation that addressing this fragmentation requires a shift towards a collaborative leadership model. Objectives of this paper is to: 1. Analyze the extent and impact of stakeholder fragmentation on waste management systems in key tourist destinations in Indonesia (Bali and Jakarta) and Sri Lanka (Colombo and Kandy). 2. Identify the specific roles and effectiveness of different stakeholders in promoting waste management activities. 3. Examine existing collaborative initiatives and leadership models that have successfully addressed waste handling challenges. 4. Propose a framework of recommendations for fostering collaborative leadership to enhance waste management and sustainable tourism development in both countries. Methodology this study employs a qualitative, comparative case study approach. Data was gathered through a desk review of peer-reviewed journals, government reports, white papers, and credible online news sources. The analysis focuses on specific projects and policies related to waste management in Bali, Jakarta, Colombo, and Kandy, with a particular emphasis on the interactions and roles of different stakeholders. The paper uses a stakeholder analysis framework to assess leadership dynamics and identify success factors and limitations within each context. The findings indicate that fragmentation is a primary obstacle to effective waste management in both Indonesia and Sri Lanka. In Indonesia, despite initiatives like plastic bags and "Waste Banks," a lack of interagency collaboration and inconsistent enforcement hinder progress. Similarly, Sri Lanka's efforts in Colombo and Kandy are undermined by a lack of coordination among tourism providers and government agencies, despite strong involvement from NGOs

and universities like the University of Peradeniya. Success stories, such as Bali's "Waste Warrior" campaigns and pilot projects in Colombo by NGOs like Clean Green Lanka, demonstrate that collaborative leadership is essential for overcoming this fragmentation. These initiatives succeed by formalizing partnerships and promoting shared responsibility, mobilizing youth, tourists, and academics. The study reveals that while Indonesia's successes are often driven by grassroots and NGO-government collaborations, Sri Lanka's are more reliant on academic and community-led initiatives. However, in both contexts, these successes remain localized and lack broader policy integration. The analysis underscores that to achieve sustainable impact, a more active role from government leadership and greater involvement from tourism providers is crucial.

Keywords: Stakeholder Leadership, Tourism Waste Management, Collaborative Governance, Sustainable Tourism

Analyzing the Shortfall in Russian Tourists to Sri Lanka Compared to other Competitive Destinations

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Abstract

Sri Lanka has historically been a leading destination for Russian tourists, who are attracted to its beaches, cultural heritage, and hospitality. Russian travelers have consistently represented the second-largest tourist source market, contributing significantly to hotel revenues, transport services, guiding, and local community livelihoods. However, a recent trend shows a diversion of Russian tourists toward alternative destinations such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia, each offering comparable attractions with stronger competitive advantages. This study aims to examine the factors contributing to the decline of Russian tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka, while assessing the broader implications for the tourism industry. It seeks to identify both the opportunities and drawbacks of the Russian market, and to propose strategies to regain competitiveness against regional alternatives. The research will utilize a mixed-method approach combining secondary data analysis of tourist arrivals with primary data collection through a questionnaire survey. Approximately 15 Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and tour operators handling Russian tourists in Sri Lanka will be surveyed to gather insights on market dynamics, tourist expectations, and operational challenges. Preliminary analysis indicates that Russian tourists are increasingly attracted to alternative destinations due to three primary reasons: (1) price competitiveness, with rival destinations offering better value-for-money packages; (2) flight connectivity, where more frequent and affordable routes are available to Southeast Asia; and (3) service quality, as competitors provide higher consistency in hospitality standards. While Russian tourists remain high spenders and valuable contributors to Sri Lanka's economy, the market also poses challenges such as hotel price reductions that discourage other nationalities, unauthorized business establishments by Russian nationals, and social issues including drug abuse among youth engaged in tourism. The decline in Russian arrivals underscores the urgency for Sri Lanka to enhance competitiveness through pricing strategies, improved connectivity, and service quality upgrades. Insights from DMCs and tour operators will be crucial in shaping policies and industry practices to restore Russian tourist flows while balancing the needs of other key markets. This study ultimately aims to provide actionable recommendations for sustaining Sri Lanka's position as a premier destination for Russian travelers

Keywords: Russian tourists, alternative destinations, Destination Management Companies, unauthorized business

Diversifying Tourism in Colombo: Analyzing Tourist Experiences and Expectations for Sustainable Urban Destination Development

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Abstract

Tourism has become one of Sri Lanka's key economic drivers. But the sector remains heavily concentrated on heritage, culture, and beach-based attractions. Colombo, as the country's commercial capital and main entry point, is often perceived as a short-stay destination or a transit hub for travelers heading to other regions. This Study aims to investigate the potential for diversifying tourism in Colombo by exploring tourists' current experiences, identifying gaps, and assessing expectations across various tourism segments. The study focuses on examining few potential diversification avenues in the Colombo area: heritage and cultural tourism, culinary tourism, shopping and urban tourism, meetings and events (MICE) tourism, wellness and Ayurveda, sports tourism, eco and river-based tourism, community-based experiences, cruise tourism, and nightlife and entertainment. By assessing the demand and interest for these segments, the research seeks to determine how Colombo can be positioned as a multi-dimensional tourism destination rather than a short stay. A mixed-method approach will be adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Structured surveys will be administered to a sample of 100–150 international and local tourists visiting Colombo, focusing on their travel purpose, satisfaction levels, activities undertaken, and expectations for new experiences. The surveys will utilize a Likert-scale and multiple-choice format to quantify tourist perceptions. In addition, 10-15 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected tourists to capture deeper insights into their impressions of Colombo, preferred tourism activities, and suggestions for improvement. Data analysis will involve descriptive statistics to evaluate survey responses and pattern analysis to interpret interview findings. This combination will allow for the identification of key patterns in tourist preferences and gaps in Colombo's current tourism offerings. The results are expected to highlight whether Colombo has the potential to retain tourists longer, increase spending, and attract new market segments through diversified tourism strategies. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for policymakers, tourism authorities, and private

stakeholders seeking to enhance Colombo's competitiveness in the global tourism market. Diversification not only offers opportunities for sustainable growth but also addresses challenges of seasonality, overdependence on limited attractions, and uneven economic benefits. Ultimately, this Study aims to demonstrate how Colombo can evolve into a vibrant, diversified tourism hub that contributes more inclusively and sustainably to Sri Lanka's tourism development.

Keywords: tourism diversification, tourist experience, urban tourism & the gap

Investigation into the Environmental Concerns of Kalpitiya: The Way Forward for Tourism Development

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Abstract

Kalpitiya is an organically developed tourism destination in Sri Lanka. Welcoming 15,500 visitors in 2017, the destination projects almost 30,000 tourists for 2030. The accommodation sector also experienced similar organic growth, with just 03 establishments in 2010, while 2023 recorded 46 registered establishments. The local engagement in tourism activities has also increased due to the industry's ability to offer socio-economic benefits. The area continues to gain popularity due to its historical and cultural structures, its capacity to offer both sea and lagoon conditions, and optimum climatic conditions for kitesurfing, which has even attracted international pioneering kitesurfers to the area. The locality boasts a high degree of environmental diversity of both fauna and flora in the sea, lagoon, and island environmental networks. Maintenance of the environmental quality and wellbeing of such environmental networks are imperative as environmental soundness is a proven decisive factor that affects the tourist decision making process in destination selection. Additionally, safeguarding the environmental quality lays the foundation for long-term sustainability and enjoyment of tourism induced socio-economic benefits. In that context, this study aimed to investigate the current environmental concerns that may hinder the tourism operation and growth in the Kalpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha. To do so, 20 accommodation providers of the Kalpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha, selected through a convenience sampling method, were personally interviewed using a semistructured questionnaire. Data analysed through the thematic content analysis method revealed ocean erosion, lagoon pollution, improper waste management and severe fly infestation as urgent issues that required immediate attention. Further scrutiny showed that a lack of awareness of the importance of environmental well-being for local livelihoods and the extensive use of chicken manure for cultivation are obstacles that impede the current tourism operations and growth. This paradoxical situation of the locality is concerning as the main development plan for the destination highlights making Kalpitiva the most attractive tourism destination as its first goal, and envisions making Kalpitiya an environmentally driven resort centre.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Kalpitiya Pradeshiya Sabha and the provincial tourism authorities develop initiatives to increase local awareness of environmental protection for tourism activities. Further, law enforcement as per the Coast Conservation Act, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, and the National Aquatic Life Development Authority Act must be carried out diligently.

Keywords: Kalpitiya, Sustainable tourism development, Environmental degradation, Awareness, Law enforcement.

Geographical Distribution of Tourism Typologies in Sri Lanka on Regional Accessibility and Visitor Experience

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Abstract

Sri Lanka, with its remarkable diversity of natural, cultural, and historical assets, offers rich tourism experiences across multiple typologies. Despite this potential, there exists a notable absence of an integrated geospatial framework to systematically classify and represent these diverse tourism forms. This study constitutes the first scholarly effort to develop a comprehensive typological and spatial mapping of Sri Lanka's tourism landscape, with the overarching aim of enhancing regional accessibility, visitor experience, and evidence-based tourism planning. The research was structured around two core objectives. The first objective involved the identification and classification of 13 tourism typologies prevalent in Sri Lanka namely Cultural, Heritage, Wildlife, Eco, Beach and Marine, Hill Country, Adventure, Religious, Urban, Rural, Agro, Medical, Wellness and Ayurveda, and Astrotourism. A comprehensive listing of key destinations aligned to each typology was compiled through extensive secondary research supported by expert validation. The second objective employed a quantitative geospatial methodology implemented in three sequential phases: (1) data collection, typological classification, and geocoding of over 250 tourism sites using Google Earth Pro and government basemaps; (2) construction of a structured geospatial database in Excel; and (3) advanced spatial analysis and modeling using QGIS. The spatial analysis yielded three key visual outputs: (i) a series of Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) heatmaps to reveal tourism concentration zones by typology; (ii) a composite district-level map identifying the dominant tourism type in each administrative district; and (iii) a multi-typology site map incorporating pie-chart symbology to depict sites associated with multiple tourism types. This preliminary research provides a foundational framework for understanding the spatial distribution of tourism resources in Sri Lanka and offers valuable insights for destination planners, policymakers, and tourism marketers. As a pioneering step, the study underscores the necessity for continued interdisciplinary research, including real-time visitor flow analysis, integration of infrastructure and environmental sensitivity layers, and

participatory planning with local stakeholders. Such future advancements are essential for guiding Sri Lanka towards a more diversified, sustainable, and strategically managed tourism sector.

Keywords: Tourism Typologies, GIS-Based Spatial Analysis, Mapping, Regional Tourism Planning, Sri Lanka

Analyzing Guest Perceptions and Branding Strategies for Repositioning Heritance Ahungalla

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Abstract

Destination branding is essential in shaping tourist behavior, perceptions, and overall competitiveness in the global tourism industry. The new hotspots, along with established tourist hubs such as Bentota and Hikkaduwa, have started to overshadow lesser-known locations like Ahungalla. However, the hotel situated are now faces challenges in maintaining visibility and competitiveness due to factors such as limited beach accessibility, a lack of surrounding tourist activities, and weak brand association with the Ahungalla destination itself. Positioned between two highly popular destinations, the property struggles to align itself with a clear and appealing destination identity. This study investigates the key factors influencing destination branding and guest perceptions of Heritance Ahungalla, with the goal of identifying strategies to reposition the property within Sri Lanka's competitive southern coastal tourism market. The research examines demographic variables (age, nationality, travel origin), travel motivations (relaxation, cultural interest, wellness), perceptions of the destination (safety, beach quality, nearby attractions), and satisfaction with hotel services and experiences. Despite its challenges, Ahungalla's geographic location and architectural significance offer opportunities for unique brand positioning, particularly in wellness, cultural, and architectural tourism niches. The study involved purposive sampling of 100 international and domestic guests who stay at Heritance Ahungalla between August and November 2025. Data collection was carried out using structured questionnaires and informal interviews with hotel guests, travel agents, and travel agent representatives. Quantitative data will be analyzed using SPSS version 30, while qualitative data will be evaluated thematically. Findings are expected to provide valuable insights into how guest perceptions influence destination branding and competitiveness. The study aims to support sustainable tourism marketing and deliver practical recommendations for hotel managers, marketers, and policymakers seeking to reposition under-recognized destinations like Ahungalla in Sri Lanka's evolving coastal tourism landscape.

Keywords: Heritance Ahungalla, Destination Branding, Coastal Tourism, Guest Perceptions, Geoffrey Bawa

Ensuring Compliance Through Modern Technology: Addressing Evolving Tourism Demands in SME Hotels in Sri Lanka – A Review

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Abstract

The hospitality sector in Sri Lanka, particularly Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) hotels, faces increasing pressure to comply with evolving regulatory frameworks in areas such as health and safety, taxation, data privacy, and sustainability. Simultaneously, modern tourists demand transparency, hygiene assurance, and digital convenience. Bridging these compliance requirements with rising guest expectations has become a critical challenge for SME hoteliers. This review aims to examine how modern technologies specifically cloud-based systems, digital auditing tools, and mobile platforms enable SME hotels in Sri Lanka to meet compliance standards while responding to evolving tourism demands. It also seeks to identify the barriers limiting effective tech adoption in this sector. The study adopts a narrative literature review approach, synthesizing peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, and regional case studies related to compliance, technology adoption, and SME hospitality operations. Findings indicate that technology can significantly support compliance through automation, real-time reporting, and audit trail generation, enhancing operational accuracy and guest trust. However, challenges such as limited financial capacity, lack of digital skills, and low awareness hinder adoption. The review highlights the need for strategic policy interventions, industry training, and affordable tech solutions tailored to the SME hotel segment in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: SME Hotels, Regulatory Compliance, Modern Technology, Tourism Demands, Sri Lanka

Memory as Product: Exploring Personalized Post-Tourism Keepsakes within Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In the context of modern tourism, the experience of travelling is often valued not just during the trip itself, but beyond the trip together with an emotional tie of personalisation and memory. This research explores customised and personalised keepsakes, as a category of products emerging within the sustainability landscape. Two key objectives of this study are: to evaluate the interest made by tourists along with their connection emotionally with personalised souvenirs, and to gain understanding on their perspectives in terms of sustainability appeal. The approach used here was in mixed-method, which consisted of a short survey with international tourists visiting Colombo, alongside semi-structured interviews conducted among sellers of tourism souvenirs based in Colombo. A simple case study of an upcoming start-up which offers fully customised and personalised products promoting travel memories provided an inside-view of trends in demand and designs, as well as economics, along with practical challenges faced on. The findings indicated that there is indeed a strong interest in personalised souvenirs that reflect on personal travel experiences, ideally when the product is emotionally relatable, appealing aesthetically, and even if the tourist themself was a part of the process of creating it, with minimal effort. Responded tourists expressed a better preference for sustainability from being locally produced, materials used and complete packaging. The research could be a stepping stone on the importance of directing personalised post-trip keepsakes as a promising addition to sustainable innovation in tourism. This segment indeed brings authenticity, emotional engagement, and an experience-based low-waste alternative to mass-produced traditional souvenirs. With Sri Lanka's identity evolving to a more experiential offering, memory-based products have the potential to contribute significantly leading to complete satisfaction of tourists, and an expanded sustainable economic participation.

Keywords – Exploring, Personalized Post-Tourism Keepsakes, Sustainable Tourism, Sri Lanka

Sustainable Tourism, Employment, and Skills Development: An Academic Perspective on Capacity Building in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study analyzes the interaction of sustainable tourism, employment, and skills development in Sri Lanka. The focus is placed on understanding how targeted capacity-building efforts can overcome systemic challenges in workforce readiness and regional inequities in tourism involvement. The main objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the relationship between sustainable tourism and employment generation; (2) to evaluate the impact of skills development programs on local community participation in tourism; and (3) to assess the effectiveness of inclusive training models in empowering marginalized groups in Sri Lanka's tourism sector. Methodology of This qualitative study relies on a case study approach with an emphasis on the Skills for Inclusive Growth (S4IG) program administered in four districts-Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Matale, and Batticaloa. Data were acquired through document analysis, field observations, and secondary evaluations of project outcomes. Key program documentation and reports were extensively evaluated to extract pertinent insights. Key Findings and discussion of the study reveals that the S4IG program contributed significantly to bridging the gap between tourist possibilities and local capacity by developing contextspecific tourist Sector Skills Action Plans (SSAPs). These interventions improved training relevance, promoted digital literacy, and enhanced access to employment opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Inclusive business concepts, such as customized hospitality practices in Polonnaruwa, emphasized the viability of integrating accessibility norms. The study also outlines ongoing issues in national training infrastructure, coordination, and policy alignment. Academic involvement, policy reforms, and persistent multi-stakeholder collaboration are advocated to ensure longterm impact.

Keywords: Employment, Inclusive growth, Skills development, Sri Lanka, Sustainable tourism

Empowering Remote Communities through Connectivity: Community-Based Tourism Solutions in Meemure, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Meemure, a remote village nestled in the central highlands of Sri Lanka, is home to a vibrant cultural heritage and a pristine natural environment. However, due to its geographical isolation and limited infrastructure, the community remains largely disconnected from national development frameworks and sustainable economic opportunities. This study explores how improving physical and digital connectivity can support the growth of community-based tourism (CBT) as a means of empowering local residents and fostering inclusive rural development. The research is particularly significant within the broader discourse on rural transformation, where tourism is increasingly viewed as a catalyst for community resilience and cultural preservation. The primary objective of the study is to examine how enhanced connectivity both infrastructural and digital can strengthen community-based tourism initiatives in Meemure and contribute to socioeconomic empowerment, cultural sustainability, and environmental stewardship. A qualitative case study methodology was employed, combining semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations. Participants included local community members, small-scale tourism operators, and regional development officials, selected through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data, revealing key opportunities and constraints in leveraging tourism for local development. Findings indicate that improved access to roads, communication technologies, and digital platforms plays a critical role in enabling tourism in remote areas. Enhanced connectivity facilitates information exchange, visitor engagement, and market access, while also promoting community participation in decision making processes. Nonetheless, challenges such as insufficient infrastructure, limited training, and the risk of cultural commodification must be addressed through careful planning and long-term support. The study concludes that empowering remote communities like Meemure through community-based tourism and improved connectivity represents a viable and sustainable model

for rural development. Strategic policy support, investment in capacity building, and collaborative partnerships are recommended to ensure equitable and culturally sensitive outcomes.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism, Connectivity, Cultural Sustainability, Remote Communities, Rural Development

Exploring the Untapped Tourism Potential of the Negombo Coastal Belt: A Spatial and SWOT-Based Assessment

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Abstract

Negombo is a major coastal tourism destination in Sri Lanka, yet many visitors use it mainly as a transit point due to its proximity to Bandaranaike International Airport, rather than fully engaging with local attractions. This underutilization reflects a critical gap in tourism development despite the region's rich environmental and cultural assets. This study assesses the tourism potential of 15 coastal Grama Niladhari divisions within the Negombo Divisional Secretariat, focusing on resources, infrastructure, and development gaps. A mixed-methods approach was employed, using semi-structured interviews with 25 tourists, 20 service providers, and 5 experts, alongside spatial mapping through Google Earth Pro. The analysis followed the UNWTO Manual of Sustainable Tourism Destination Management, incorporating inventory creation, SWOT analysis, and Nearest Neighbor spatial analysis. Findings highlight strengths such as natural diversity, cultural heritage, and accessibility, alongside weaknesses including poor waste management, limited nightlife, and low community involvement. Opportunities exist for eco-tourism, homestays, and cultural festivals, while threats include coastal erosion, climate change, and uneven development. Spatial analysis revealed that tourism infrastructure is clustered around Browns Beach, leaving other scenic areas underdeveloped. The study concludes that balanced, community-based, and sustainable planning is required to diversify tourism, reduce infrastructure imbalances, and enhance Negombo's role as a complete destination rather than a short-stay stopover.

Keywords: Community-based tourism, Eco-tourism, Negombo coastal tourism, Spatial analysis, SWOT analysis

Advancing Bicycle Tourism in Polonnaruwa for a Sustainable and Low-Carbon Travel Experience

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Abstract

The sustainable tourism concept is widely disseminated and increasingly recognized as an essential strategy for long-term economic development, which also focuses on preserving natural and cultural heritage. Within this broader context, low-carbon travel options, such as bicycle tourism, hold a significant position in heritage-rich destinations like Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, offering a unique opportunity to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts of the tourism industry. The growth scenario of bicycle tourism in Polonnaruwa, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a key site in Sri Lanka's cultural triangle, lacks adequate dedicated infrastructure, supporting services, and a clear strategic vision. This study aims to investigate the key barriers and opportunities for bicycle tourism within the rich archaeological landscapes in Polonnaruwa. It aims to propose a comprehensive strategy to promote this region as a destination for sustainable heritage travel. This proposed framework focuses on integrating three major pillars: first, addressing deficiencies in organizing bicycle tours to enhance quality service; second, fostering community engagement by involving local community in the supply chain; third, implementing a target marketing strategy to position Polonnaruwa as a premier destination for bicycle tourism. This study will follow an exploratory case study in Polonnaruwa. The planned methodology is designed to conduct direct observations, intercept interviews with international tourists, and semi-structured interviews with local tourism stakeholders at key archaeological tourist attractions. It is expected that the findings will reveal the considerable deficiencies in the current organization of bicycle tourism in Polonnaruwa. The study is anticipated to identify several opportunities to increase community engagement in the local supply chain and will underscore the need for a proper marketing strategy focused on authenticity and sustainability. The discussion will focus on how the given three-pillar framework addresses these specific challenges.

Keywords: Bicycle Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Polonnaruwa

Women Career Advancement in the Hospitality Industry in Sri Lanka: Special Reference to Five-Star Hotels in Galle District

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Abstract

The hospitality industry in Sri Lanka is becoming important, although its development is hindered by numerous constraints, notably a critical deficiency of skilled people resources. The continuing underrepresentation of women in management positions poses a significant challenge to the global hospitality and tourism industry, with women representing less than twenty percent of managerial roles. The challenges to women's career advancement in hospitality are documented; however, their influence varies between different hotels and economic and socio-cultural environments. Using quantitative research approaches, this study intended to investigate the impact of potential challenges to women's career advancement in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka, with reference to the Galle district's five-star hotels. Primary data were collected from fifty-one female executives in five-star hotels in Sri Lanka's Galle district using a structured questionnaire. The sample was selected through convenience sampling, and data were analyzed using SPSS. The findings emphasise the prevalence of professionals in the executive and above level of their careers, underscoring the importance of advanced educational qualifications and pertinent experience as crucial elements for career advancement and indicate that work-life balance is the most significant challenge impacting women's career advancement in the hospitality industry, whereas economic benefits represent the least impactful component. Social and cultural norms and working conditions were identified as factors influencing women's career advancement in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka. Notably, the study found that the traditional perceived masculinity currently exerts minimal influence on women's career advancement in the hospitality industry. The study advocates for equitable employment practices, the establishment of childcare and family support services, including onsite

childcare and enhanced parental leave policies, can significantly improve work-life balance and increase female representation in strategic leadership roles. Finally, setting measurable gender diversity goals and regularly evaluating progress ensures accountability and continuous improvement across all organizational levels. It also recommends future research using qualitative methods in different national contexts to deepen understanding of the identified challenges in women career advancement in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Women Employment, Work-life Balance, Women Career Advancement, Women in Hospitality

Wellness and Health Tourism: Healing People and Planet

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Abstract

With the rising realization of the interconnectedness between human health and planetary health, this study analyzes how wellness and health tourism might serve as a dual healing mechanism-for individuals seeking revitalization and for communities aiming for sustainable development. This study aims to examine the evolving definitions and dimensions of wellness and health tourism; explore the potential of this sector to support ecological sustainability and regional development; and analyze the policy and legal frameworks required to promote wellness tourism in Sri Lanka. The methodology of the study utilizes a qualitative research technique, integrating a literature review, policy analysis, and selected case studies from global and local contexts. Particular attention is placed on exploring Sri Lanka's potential as a wellness destination by analyzing existing legal frameworks, tourism initiatives, and stakeholder involvement. The data indicate that wellness and health tourism, when deliberately promoted, can contribute significantly to both personal healing and sustained regional growth. Globally, wellness destinations have blended nature-based therapies, traditional medicine, and organic techniques that reduce environmental impact. In the Sri Lankan setting, Ayurveda-based health offerings, eco-spiritual retreats, and meditation centers emphasize the use of endemic medicinal plants, locally obtained herbal treatments, and activities placed together with nature. Many wellness properties in Sri Lanka include low-impact designs, eco-certifications, and biodiversity conservation, thereby helping to fixing the environment alongside healing guests. Furthermore, traditional ecological knowledge integrated in community health practices encourages care for indigenous fauna and flora, particularly in rural places where nature-friendly lifestyles stay preserved. However, gaps persist in the legal and policy framework, particularly in standardizing service quality, assuring ethical conduct, and integrating wellness tourism into national development goals. A coordinated approach combining government agencies, private partners, and local communities is necessary to fulfill the entire potential of wellness tourism as a driver of holistic health and sustainability.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, Biodiversity, Sustainability, Policy

framework, Sri Lanka

Tourist Satisfaction and Authenticity in Agro Tourism: A Sustainable Approach to Rural Development in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between tourist satisfaction and authentic agricultural experiences in the context of sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka. Focusing on the village of Wellawaya a rural farming community with increasing tourism potential, the research explores how immersive farm-based experiences can contribute to both visitor satisfaction and sustainable livelihoods for local residents. Using a qualitative research design, the study collected data through semi-structured interviews with 15 participants, including domestic and international tourists, farm owners, and local tourism operators. In addition, participant observations were conducted during farm tours, harvesting activities, and farm-to-table meals to better understand the dynamics between authenticity and satisfaction. Findings indicate that tourists place high value on authenticity, particularly when agricultural experiences are hands-on, educational, and socially interactive. Activities such as traditional rice harvesting, learning organic farming techniques, and sharing meals prepared with home grown produce significantly enhanced satisfaction levels. Moreover, the presence of local hosts and storytelling elements further enriched the perceived authenticity of the experience. From a sustainability perspective, the study reveals that agrotourism promotes environmental awareness, strengthens local economies, and supports cultural preservation, especially when tourism initiatives are smallscale and community-led. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of training in guest handling, and concerns over over-commercialization were also identified. The study concludes that authentic agro-tourism, when managed responsibly, serves as a sustainable tourism model that enhances visitor satisfaction while empowering rural communities. Policy-level support, training programs, and marketing strategies that emphasize authenticity and sustainability are essential for scaling such initiatives in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Agro-tourism, Tourist Satisfaction, Authenticity, Sustainable Tourism, Wellawaya

Reviving Traditional Handicrafts through Community-Based Craft Tourism and Circular Product Design: A Sustainable Model for the Galle Fort Area in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Traditional handicrafts of Sri Lanka carry a rich cultural legacy, more so in heritage sites like the Galle Fort area. This legacy is being slowly eroded by factors such as modernization, crystallization of interest among younger generations, and narrow access to sustainable markets. The study takes on the pressing task of reinstating traditional crafts through an examination of community-based craft tourism in combination with the practice of circular product design as a sustainable development model for the region. The significance of the study lies in not only preserving intangible cultural heritage but also to nurture the local economy inclusively and to embody environmental responsibility. The study aimed to design and test a sustainable intervention model that local communities could work with to empower their artisans through community-based tourism and promote the production of appropriate eco-friendly circular craft items. The study further looked into how such an integrated approach can sustain livelihoods for artisans, ensure cultural exchange, and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns. For this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted with many stakeholders, including local artisans, tourism entrepreneurs, and community representatives in the Galle Fort area. Additionally, there were multiple field observations and visual documentations made concerning existing practices. Participants were selected through purposive sampling methods, and data were subjected to thematic analysis, which allowed recognition of recurring themes, opportunities, and challenges inhabiting the existing system. Preliminary study outcomes attest that a community-oriented craft tourism, enhanced through sustainable design and ethical marketing training, may indeed exist to invigorate traditional crafts and attract tourists with a conscience. In addition, circular design-aspects bring economic and ecological value to craft products by way of reuse of materials, co-creation with tourists, and eco-friendly production. This research concluded that another well-formulated model

featuring craft tourism and circular product design can act as an alternate route to sustaining traditional handicrafts of Galle Fort. It thereby seeks to underline the necessity of policy assistance, community participation, and collaborative platforms for promoting this across other heritage sites in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Cultural, Handicrafts, Heritage, Traditional

Climate Change and Cultural Heritage: Mitigating Risks to Sigiriya's Archaeological and Natural Assets in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The study investigates the impacts of climate change on the Sigiriya UNESCO World Heritage site in central Sri Lanka, focusing on the vulnerabilities of its archaeological monuments and natural ecosystems and exploring adaptation strategies to mitigate these effects. Sri Lanka, as a small island developing nation highly vulnerable to climate change, relies heavily on tourism, making the preservation of Sigiriya crucial for economic and cultural sustainability. Using a comprehensive review of secondary data, comparative analysis with similar heritage sites such as Angkor Wat, and interviews with stakeholders, the study assesses current conservation practices and projects future climate scenarios affecting the site. Findings indicate that rising temperatures, increased humidity, erratic rainfall, and extreme weather pose significant risks to Sigiriya's frescoes, stone carvings, and wildlife sanctuary. Proposed adaptation strategies include advanced structural monitoring technologies, innovative water management systems, ecological restoration, tourist education programs, and enhanced stakeholder collaboration. The study underscores the importance of integrating sustainable tourism with heritage conservation to safeguard Sigiriya's legacy for future generations while maintaining its tourism appeal. These insights inform recommendations for policy, community engagement, and public-private partnerships aimed at increasing the site's resilience to climate change.

Keywords: Climate Change, Sigiriya, Adaptation strategies, Public Private partnership

Sustainable Tourism and MSMEs: Enhancing Visitor Experiences in Hanguranketha

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Abstract

Hanguranketha, located in Sri Lanka's central highlands, possesses rich natural beauty, distinctive traditions and a welcoming local community. Despite these strengths, the contribution of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to sustainable tourism in the area remains underexplored. This study examines how tourism-related MSMEs in Hanguranketha enhance the visitor experience while adopting or struggling to adopt sustainable practices. It further investigates the barriers, opportunities and strategic interventions required to integrate MSMEs into the sustainable tourism value chain. Drawing on a mixed-method approach, primary data will be collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with MSME owners, local community members and tourism stakeholders. The study's framework is informed by sustainable tourism principles, environmental protection, socio-cultural preservation and local economic participation. Preliminary analysis indicates key opportunities in growing demand for eco-tourism, partnerships with tour operators and expansion through digital marketing channels. However, MSMEs face significant challenges, including limited marketing capabilities, inadequate infrastructure, lack of professional hospitality training, insufficient access to finance and weak integration of eco-friendly products and services into tourism offerings. Seasonal fluctuations, environmental degradation risks and competition from larger tourism operators further constrain their growth potential. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for strengthening the role of MSMEs in sustainable tourism through targeted policy support, improved infrastructure, skills development programs and the creation of organized tourism - MSME linkages. This research contributes to the rural tourism development by demonstrating how local entrepreneurship, if strategically supported, can simultaneously enhance visitor satisfaction, preserve cultural heritage, and promote environmental sustainability in emerging destinations such as Hanguranketha.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Development, Eco-Tourism, Community -base tourism

Green and Growing: Insights from Slovenia's Sustainable Tourism Model for Sri Lanka's Future

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Abstract

With an ever-growing globe that is highly vulnerable to the environmental consequences of mass tourism, sustainable destination models have become imperative for finding a balance between protecting the environment and socioeconomic development. This study examines about Slovenia's turnaround success as a small Central European country renowned globally as a model green destination and examines its relevance to emerging tourism economies such as Sri Lanka. Following its Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (GSST), Slovenia takes an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach in which national policies, local governance, community participatory capacities, and private-sector responsibility come together to promote natural and cultural heritage conservation and to provide distributive economic benefits. The study analyzes Slovenia's measurable markers of sustainability. from integrating renewable energy and low-emission transport to schemes of responsible visitor behavior and promotion of off-the-beaten-track sites, which collectively facilitate long-term tourism sustainability. Based on secondary data from international reports, theses, and policy papers, the study brings high-priority transferable practices such as certification schemes, digital visitor management platforms, and authenticity- and preservationbased marketing to Sri Lanka's context. Sri Lanka, with its high biodiversity and cultural significance but beset by concerns of over-tourism and enforcement, stands to gain from Slovenia's scalable, community-based model. The paper proposes a contextualized roadmap with an emphasis on localized policy reforms, deepened cross-sectoral cooperation, and education to foster sustainable tourism values and thereby improve resilience and inclusivity in Sri Lankan tourism. By analyzing Slovenia's pioneering model of sustainable tourism and its potential for the Global South, this research moves the broader debate on how best practices from elsewhere could be locally adapted to make sustainable, resilient, and community-beneficial tourism futures possible.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Slovenia Green scheme, Sri Lanka tourism development, Policy Transfer

Women's Participation in Rural Tourism for Socio-Economic Development: A Case Study of Ella, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The study investigates the potential of rural tourism in Ella, Sri Lanka, to improve the socio-economic conditions of rural women. It uses the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) to identify barriers to women's participation in rural tourism and analyse the socio-economic development potential of rural tourism with increased female participation. The research used a mixed-method design, collecting data from women working in, not working in, and out of employment in the tourism sector. The findings revealed significant skills gaps in leadership, planning, and market need analysis, as well as language, education, family limitations, and childcare responsibilities. Rural tourismthemed economic opportunities include culinary tours, spice garden walks, wellness tourism, cultural events, visits to tea plantations, and tour guiding. The study concludes that reducing these barriers through capacity-building exercises, vocational training, campaigns, and entrepreneur development programs can enable women to actively engage in rural tourism enterprises. This not only contributes to individual economic independence but also contributes to the overall socio-economic development of the community. Higher female labor force participation has implications at the national level, as Sri Lanka's female workforce participation has been low and plateaued at 30-35% over the past two decades. The study also highlights the potential of rural tourism as a tool for inclusive development, removing structural and social barriers and increasing women's economic contribution while providing incentives for sustainable community development. Future research should explore changing and multiple tourism in Ella to create long-term, inclusive planning strategies for empowering rural women.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Women's Empowerment, Entrepreneurial Skills, Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), Inclusive development

A Study on Strategies for Promoting Tourism Activities – Based on Galle Area, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Galle is a famous tourist destination in Sri Lanka. This is a world heritage site, and it is located southwest of Sri Lanka. Galle City has 5 main components. Such as accessibilities, activities, attractions, amenities, and accommodations. Galle has a tourism and hospitality industry. Galle has tourist activities at its major beach destinations. As well as those areas are, Unawatuna, Pitiwella, Baddegama, Bentota, Ahangama, and Hikkaduwa. The research problem of this study is why we promote tourist activities in the Galle area. The main objective of this study was to identify tourism activities in the major sea destinations in the Galle District. This research was qualitative. The method by which the primary data were used for this research was field observations and unstructured interviews. Secondary data were collected from reliable ebooks, websites, research, journal articles, and other literature that were previously published. The collected data were analyzed by content analysis. The results of this research were to develop tourism activities in the area; several new strategies and activities were introduced through this research. That is, enhancing infrastructures, establishing information centres, establishing training centres like that, and activities are Museum Exploration, Mountaineering, Fishing, Riding Activities, Sunset, and Swimming with Dolphins. Most of the activities are located in the Unawatuna and Bentota beach destinations. So many visitors come to Galle, and they get new travel experiences and knowledge. Galle has a lot of tourism activities and major beach destinations. Due to this, many foreign tourists and local visitors come to the Galle area. Therefore, further development of this tourism industry will be able to attract more tourists to Galle.

Keywords: Tourist Activities, Galle, 5 As, Tourism Industry

Impact of Tiktok in Promoting Boutique Hotels in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The emergence of social media has transformed hospitality marketing, with TikTok rapidly becoming a key platform for customer engagement. This study investigates the impact of TikTok in promoting boutique hotels in Sri Lanka. focusing on how short-form video content and user driven trends shape brand visibility and consumer decision-making. The research begins by outlining the competitive positioning of boutique hotels and the growing dependence on digital marketing channels. A review of existing literature highlights the unique characteristics of TikTok visual storytelling, viral challenges, and influencer reach that distinguish it from other platforms. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed approach, drawing on secondary sources and content analysis of TikTok campaigns connected to Sri Lankan boutique hotels. Findings indicate that TikTok provides boutique hotels with cost-effective opportunities to enhance awareness, connect with younger demographics, and compete with larger hospitality chains. The analysis also reveals that authenticity, creativity, and consistency in content are critical success factors. The study concludes that TikTok can play a strategic role in sustainable growth for boutique hotels if integrated within broader marketing plans. Recommendations include staff training on digital content, influencer partnerships, and performance measurement frameworks. These insights contribute to understanding the evolving role of social media in tourism promotion.

Keywords: *TikTok*, boutique hotels, tourism promotion, digital branding, influencer marketing.

Revitalizing the Hamilton Canal: A Sustainable Tourism Development Approach for Negombo

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Abstract

The Hamilton Canal, constructed during the Dutch colonial period and later enhanced by the British, is a 14-kilometer waterway connecting the Negombo Lagoon to the Kelani River. Historically, it served as a vital trade and transport route for commodities such as cinnamon and spices, and it continues to hold substantial historical, cultural, and ecological significance. However, despite Negombo being a major tourist hub in Sri Lanka renowned for its beaches, fishing heritage, and colonial landmarks the canal remains underutilized as a tourism resource. The focus of tourism in the region is largely coastal, leaving inland and heritage assets like the Hamilton Canal underdeveloped. Furthermore, urbanization, pollution, and poor maintenance have led to environmental degradation and hindered navigability, placing the canal at risk of losing its heritage value without structured intervention. This study investigates the potential of revitalizing the Hamilton Canal as a sustainable tourism attraction that aligns with Sri Lanka's national strategies for heritage preservation and eco-tourism development. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data will be collected through field surveys, stakeholder interviews, and secondary sources from tourism and environmental authorities. The research will evaluate the canal's existing conditions, identify infrastructural and ecological challenges, and explore opportunities for tourism enhancement. Proposed interventions include heritage boat tours, cycling and walking trails, floating cafés, birdwatching platforms, and community-based tourism initiatives designed to foster local participation. The research emphasizes the integration of eco-friendly tourism practices that promote socio-economic benefits for nearby communities while preserving the canal's natural and cultural landscapes. By implementing a structured development plan, the Hamilton Canal can emerge as a distinctive and sustainable tourism corridor complementing Negombo's broader tourism circuit. The anticipated outcomes will provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, local authorities, and tourism planners to support employment generation, small business growth, and heritage conservation. Revitalizing the Hamilton Canal offers an opportunity to diversify Negombo's tourism offerings, enhance its cultural and environmental appeal, and reinforce Sri Lanka's image as a sustainable

tourism destination. This research contributes to the academic discourse on the adaptive reuse of historical waterways by illustrating how neglected heritage assets can be transformed into dynamic tourism resources that balance preservation, ecological integrity, and community well-being.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, ecology, Hamilton canal Sri Lanka

Perception Analysis of Stakeholders and Tourists on the Prospects and Challenges of Developing Kadugannawa as a Niche Tourism Attraction

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Abstract

Product development in tourism is crucial for survival in the market competition. Sustainability is the base of contemporary product development in tourism and ensures the product does not compromise the environment, culture or local community while generating economic benefits. There a range of new tourism products being developed with the sustainable concept in Sri Lanka recently. But the potential there is, it is still abundant. Still, there is lack of alteration of developing niche tourism attractions as a part of major tourist attractions. If it is developing niche tourism attractions as a part or separately from the major attraction, it will lead the profits and reduce the negative impact on major attractions. Considering the factors, the study focused to develop Kadugannawa as a niche tourist attraction in the Kandy area. Carrying out a perception analysis to seek the prospect and challenges to develop Kadugannawa as a niche tourism attraction. Structured questionnaires were distributed among tourism stakeholders to identify the challenges and prospects. Pilot survey also employed to identify the prospect and challenges aspect of tourists.

Keywords: Niche Tourism, Stakeholder perception, Sustainable tourism development, Kadugannawa

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