

## Destination Image and Loyalty: Comparison between Asia Pacific and European Tourists in Sri Lanka

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### Article Information

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### Abstract

Destination Image (DI) and tourists' Destination Loyalty (DL) have been attractive topics in tourism discourse though comparisons of different tourist groups are dearth. It is questionable whether DI and behavioral intentions remain same within different groups from different regions. Tourism is a booming industry and plays a crucial role in Sri Lankan economic growth. Western Europe has been the traditional source market for the post-colonial Sri Lankan tourism industry. The emerging trends display that tourists from Asia Pacific region overtake the traditional markets. Amidst this background, this study attempts to explore the difference between Sri Lankan Destination Loyalty among Asia Pacific and European tourists. It is expected to clarify the knowledge and empirical gaps in the destination loyalty discourse while providing recommendations to direct destination marketing efforts of post-war growing tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Study is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire using convenience sampling of 286 tourists; 143 from each region. Data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling in Smart PLS3. Tourists were highly satisfied with the existing level of cognitive destination image and affective destination image though significant differences are observed in specific features between two regions. The study argues that the destination marketers have to customize their plans and approaches to be more effective in different tourist markets.

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Keywords: Destination Image, Destination Loyalty, Asia Pacific Tourists, European Tourists, Sri Lankan Tourism

### Introduction

Destination image is important for all types of destinations since; tourists are attracted to the destination image. Similarly, when tourists' expectations are fulfilled they are satisfied. (Ranasinghe, 2014) According to Stepchenkova and Mills, (2010) destination image is one of the main areas of tourism researches

for more than four decades. The researches done by different scholars suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction. Murphy and Giller (2000), have recognized a positive relationship of surrounding, infrastructure, attribute, worth and object to revise with tourist experience and perceptions. Furthermore, Bigne et al., 2001, discover that destination image had straight relationship with distinguish nature, remuneration and aim to respond and willingness to recommend others.

Loyalty can explain as a persons' faith about the utility suffers lead to their overall attitude toward a product or service, such as the intent to repurchase. It is attitudinal. According to the (Jones & Taylor, 2007) Destination loyalty is Customer's object to continue a relationship with a specific service provider and force his or her next buying in the group from this benefit caterer. Perceived value is rate that a product or service has in the judgment of the consumer. According to (Zeithaml, 1988), perceived value defined as overall valuation made by consumers through weighing their benefaction and convenient with mind to the performance. Today destinations face the throat cutting competition in decades and it may become tougher still in years to come so marketing managers need to understand why tourists are faithful to destinations and what determines their loyalty (Chen & Gursoy, 2001). Therefore, there is a relationship between destination image and destination loyalty. But there are few researches relevant to destination image and destination loyalty in the Sri Lankan context. It is well known that tourist destination loyalty and behavioral intentions are primary considerations in tourist destination marketing. Equally, according to the Annual Statistical Report Western Europe emerged as the as the primary source of region for Sri Lanka tourist arrivals and south East Asia is the second place (SLTDA, 2010). But (SLTDA, 2016) reported tourist arrivals from Asia continued to be the main source of Tourism to Sri Lanka in the year 2016 accounting for 45.1 percent of the total share and the number of arrivals from Western Europe continued to be the second source of tourism with a share of 31.4 per cent.

There is a dearth of research done on destination image and destination loyalty by comparing tourists of two regions. Therefore, there is an empirical gap. Based on this background the present study explores the key questions namely, what is the role of destination image on the destination loyalty among the Asia Pacific tourist and European tourist? And what is the difference between destination loyalty among the Asia Pacific tourist and European tourist?

The study expects to evaluate the destination loyalty of the foreign tourists and identified role of destination image in Sri Lanka regarding tourists who visits Colombo district. It will help to Government organizations and professional associations to promote Sri Lanka as a tourist destination and take effective decisions. Further, this study will be a complement to lack of literature regarding destination image and destination loyalty in Sri Lanka and may give guidelines for another future researcher who are interested about this field. Finally the study will help to identify what European and Asia Pacific tourist seek at tourist destination and will help tourism marketers better understand their customers.

## Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

### Destination Image

Country, city town or an area can be identified as a destination and cruise ship also accepted as a destination. Simply it could be recognized that destination is place which is created or intended. (Harris & Leiper, 1995) defines destination as “places towards which people travel and where they choose to stay for while in order to experience certain features or characteristics a perceived attraction of some sort”. Hence, any kind of destination should consist with certain facilities, characteristic, significant environment the specific service for satisfy the tourist. Image is defined as “the people feelings of anything that they aware”(Boulding, 1956) According to the (Barich & Kotler, 1991) Image is the completion of beliefs, attitudes, sense that a person or group has of an aim and sense may be exact or dishonest, actual or imaginary.

Generally, tourist when select the place as their travel destination, they may have any overall image of certain place in their mind. When reviewing the literature, (Milman & Pizam, 1995) have testified that destination image has a strong linkage with tourists, destination choice. For successful in comparative tourism market tourism planners need to clearly identified what are the features of tourist attraction in destination, and how important they are. Creating a positive destination image can help a destination to gain competitive power relative to other destinations(Crompton et al., 1992). Destination image plays an important role in tourists' decision making and subsequent travel behavior e.g.:(Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).; consequently, they have been examined extensively in the tourism literature (Pike, 2002).

Destination Image is a statement of wisdom, impressions, damage, imaginations and sensational thoughts an individual has of a particular place (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977). According to (Assael, 1984), Destination image is “the overall perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time”. Furthermore, (Hu & Ritchie, 1993) stated that a tourism destination is a package of tourism facilities and services, which, like any other consumer product or service, is composed of a number of multidimensional attributes that together determine its attractiveness to a particular individual in a given choice situation. When it come to the idea of(Murphy et al., 2000), A sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perception. Best of authors knowledge, (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a)stated that destination image concept as an attitudinal construct consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about a destination. Despite the different definitions (Gartner, 1993), stated that destination image is a compilation of beliefs and impressions based on information processing from various sources over time that result in a mental representation of the attributes and benefits sought of a destination. Additionally, “Destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination”(Tasci & Gartner, 2007).

According to the reviewed literature there are two major approaches in conceptualizing destination image: three-dimensional continuum approach and three-component approach (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) , suggests attribute-holistic, Functional-psychological, and common-unique as the three-dimensional continuums of image. Three-component approach consists with cognitive, affective, and conative components. According to (Gartner, 1993) Destination image is comprised by three distinctly different but hierarchically

interrelated components called cognitive, affective, and conative. Further, (Dann, 1996), also suggested that destination image created by three components consisting cognitive, affective and conative. Hence, this study focus on the main two dimensions only.

### Cognitive Destination Image

The measurements of cognitive image usually solicit tourists' perception on multiple attributes of the destination, such as attractions, infrastructure, environment, and service quality(Beerli & Martín, 2004). In addition to cognitive destination image should be composed of perceptions of individual attributes (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). According to the (Beerli & Martín, 2004) cognitive destination image is measured with several attributes and dimensions. When reviewing the literature, can identify (Calantone et al., 1989) 13 attributes, (Fakeye & Crompton, 1999) 23 items and (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001) used 14 items for measure the cognitive destination image. Furthermore, (Beerli & Martin, 2004a) revealed 21 items under 5 dimensions and (Assaker, 2014), revealed it six first order factors consisting 18 destination attributes.

According to (Dibb & Simkin, 1996) product theory, cognitive destination image has been split across images of natural environment, built environment, socially responsible environment, plus local people to thread the ring. However, this study base on the 29 items under 6 factors Natural attractions, Cultural attractions, Social setting and environment, Infrastructure and facilities, Accessibility, Price and value by following (Basaran, 2016b). According to (Gartner, 1993), from a theoretical and empirical point of view, cognitive destination image analyzed as an antecedent of the affective destination image and also empirical studies show that there is a positive and significant relation between the cognitive and affective destination image. Further, (Walmsley & Young, 1998) idea is when comparing cognitive destination image and affective destination image, cognitive destination image is directly observable, descriptive and measurable.

### Affective Destination Image

Affective image is how a consumer feel about product or service. According to the (Gartner, 1993) affective image refers to feelings about a destination. Affective destination image is defined as individuals' feelings toward a destination or as an emotional response of individuals to a place (Russel & Pratt, 1980). Affective destination image has 4 items and (Russel and Pratt, 1980), identified the affect four bipolar scales (unpleasant-pleasant; gloomy-exciting; sleepy-arousing; distressing-relaxing). This study also use above four bipolar scales for measure the affective destination image by reviewing the literature e.g.:(Basaran, 2016b).

### Destination Loyalty

According to marketing literature, customer loyalty defined in several ways. Loyalty can define as a “Loyal customers are those who re-buy a brand, consider only that brand, and do no brand-related information seeking (Newman & Werbel, 1973). According to (Tellis, 1988), recognized behavioral conditions as repeat buying frequency or relevant convolution of same-brand buying”. According to (Oliver, 1999) states that loyalty is a construct that can be conceptualized by several perspectives. At the same time, he defines loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts have the potential to cause switching behavior”. Further, (Oppermann, 2000), states that “tourist loyalty should be reflected in positive word-of-mouth publicity, recommending behavior and other aspects. In addition to, “it is feasible to indicate loyalty by the behavioral tendency to revisit”,(Jang & Feng, 2007).

Best of authors knowledge, “Consumers' intentions or actual behavior to repeatedly purchase certain products or services”;(Hawkins et al., 1995). Furthermore, “Customer's aim to maintain a relationship with a particular service provider and make his or her next purchase in the category from this service provider.”(Jones & Taylor, 2000). According to (Chen & Gursoy, 2001) determined “destination loyalty as the level of tourists' perception of a destination as a good place, one that they would recommend to others, noting that studies which only consider repeat visits as an indicator of loyalty to the destination are deficient”.

Specifically, tourist loyalty has been conceptualized in one of the following approaches: behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty, and composite loyalty (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Behavioral loyalty focuses on the behavioral

outcome such as repeat visits. It has measured by the actual behavior; such as visit times. This approach usually fails to disclose the antecedent factors that affect customer loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Attitudinal loyalty is suggesting to intention to revisit or recommend to other tourists about destination. Tourist having with positive image about destination he or she would recommend it to other potential tourists such as friends and relatives. It defined as "Customers' beliefs about the value received lead to their overall attitude toward a product or service, such as the intention to repurchase" (Hawkins et al., 1989). The composite or combined approach of loyalty suggests the integration of both attitude and behavior (Backman & Crompton, 1991). Repeat visitors represent a much desired market segment for many tourism products and destinations (Lau & Mc Kercher, 2004).

When reviewing the literature, many of ideas can capture regarding the "behavioral intention" as a part of destination loyalty in this study. Word-of-mouth communication is one of the multidimensional indicators of behavioral intentions (Zeithaml, 1988). Many researchers revealed that word-of-mouth have a fast effect on consumers' communication with others and on consumer behaviors. According to (Gursoy & Chen, 2000), Word-of-mouth communication plays a vital role in as an information source and it is one of the most important factor in persons' holiday preferences and decisions.

### Perceived Value

Value" is a variable that is built by a buyer's perceptions of acquisition and cost. Many researches regard products have emphasized that perceived value is realized before purchase (Dodds et al., 1991). When consider the definitions of value in the literature, they determined perceived value is perceived by consumers, it is related to the use of a particular product and service and its value perception is based on a comparison between the convenience made to either get or consume the products and services and the gain from the product. Although, it is not possible to admire perceived value before purchase, because of the features of the tourism sector, especially for destinations. perceived value in the field of tourism includes the purchase process (Sanchez et al., 2006).

Perceived value can define as "the overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on perception of what is received and what is given", (Zeithaml, 1988). Further, it can have presented in relation to pricing as the distance between customer perceptions of what is received (utility derived from quality) and what is sacrificed (price and other costs) (Leszinski & Marn, 1997). Normally, tourist perceived value can be measured by the gap between the amount of customers' benefits and the total cost for taking the journey. (Bolton & Drew, 1991) also suggested that viewing value as a trade-off between only quality and price is too simplistic.

### Hypotheses Development

Destination image straightway or sideways influence satisfaction through excursionist expectations and perceived value. According to (Chen & Tsai, 2007a), "destination image composed of destination brand; entertainment; nature and culture; and sun and sand has a significantly positive effect on behavioural intentions comprised of likeliness to revisit and willingness to recommend". On the other word, tourists' revisits of destinations and recommendations to others play important roles in the successful development of a destination. According to (Beerli & Martín, 2004), Tourist behaviors can change according to their perceived image of a destination. When consider the idea of (Chen & Tsai, 2007b, Chen & Tsai, 2007a), destination image affects tourist behaviors during their experience of the destination. That revealed destination image is not important only for the destination selection process.

Destination image affects tourists' revisiting of a destination but has no effect on their intention to recommend the destination to others (Phillips et al., 2011). In the same time, they determined that destination image positively affects perceived value. Further, (Özturk & Qu, 2008), revealed that destination image positively affects perceived value and intentions to recommend the destination to others. When reviewing the literature, many of studies prove that perceived value positively influence on behavioural intention the part of consumer loyalty. Furthermore, (Javier & Bigné, 2001), discovered that destination image had direct relationship with perceived quality, satisfaction and intention to return and willingness recommend others. According to (Alcañiz et al., 2009), the functional component of cognitive destination image, based on more tangible or measurable perceptions, such as scenery, accommodation or price levels, significantly affects the revisit intention. On the other hand, (Moon et al., 2013), determined that destination image, included both cognitive (opportunity for

adventure, ease of communication, hospitality/ friendliness/ receptiveness, tourist sites/ activities, and nightlife/ entertainment) and affective components (relaxing-distressing, friendly-unfriendly, arousing-sleepy, interesting-boring, pleasant-unpleasant, and exciting-gloomy) have positive influences on behavioral intention.

Further, (Song et al., 2013), revealed that destination image consists of cognitive (people, life and customs; infrastructure and superstructure; indoor and outdoor resources) and affective dimensions have statistically significant and positive influence on destination loyalty intention. Further, current studies recognized destination image as important in terms of its effects on tourist behavior such as destination choice, decision making and satisfaction (Chen & Hsu, 2000). When considering the idea of (del Bosque & San Martín, 2008), they stated that Positive evaluation of the destination image would lead to higher level composite loyalty demonstrated by the tourists.

Tourists holding a positive destination image tend to demonstrate a higher level of satisfaction and perceived value, and then more likely to revisit the destination in the future and recommend it to others (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). According to (Murphy & Giller, 2000), perceived value is an important forecaster and the major component of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Some researchers found that destination image significantly affects visit and revisit intention (Choi et al., 2011). According to the reviewed literature, determining the destination image has positive influence on tourists' decision making regarding revisiting a destination and their intentions to recommending a destination to others. Further, they discover destination image have both direct and indirect relationship with destination loyalty and perceived value.

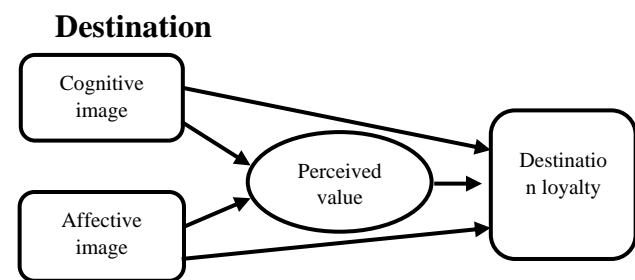


Figure: 01: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adopted from different sources

According to the proposed model above the following hypotheses are proposed to test during the course of this study.

*H1: There is a positive relationship between cognitive image and destination loyalty.*

*H2: There is a positive relationship between affective image and destination loyalty.*

*H3: There is a positive relationship between cognitive image and perceived value.*

*H4: There is a positive relationship between affective image and perceived value.*

*H5: There is a positive relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty.*

## Methodology

### Scale Development

After reviewing the relevant literature critically the scales to measure the variables were formulated. Cognitive image was measured using six indicators namely; natural attractions, cultural attractions, social setting and environment, infrastructure and facilities, accessibility and price and value. Equally, affective image was quantified using four indicators namely; unpleasant – pleasant, gloomy – exciting, sleepy – arousing and distressing – relaxing (Basaran, 2016a). The destination Loyalty was measured in terms of tourists' behavioral intentions in two major concerns. The attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty were adopted from Zhang et. al (2014). The mediator variable was measured

through three indicators namely emotional value, social value and functional (price) value and was adopted from Sweeny and Soutar (2001). The questionnaire included four major parts. The first part of the questionnaire was information on respondents' profile. It was consisted with closed ended questions about personal characteristics of the tourists such as region of origin, gender, age, income level, and profession and so on. Other three parts consisted questions to measure key variables namely destination image, destination loyalty and perceived value. All questions were designed based on 5 point Likert scale.

**Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis**

The population for the study being the entire tourists visits Sri Lanka from Europe and Asia Pacific regions a sample of 286 tourists (143 from each region) was drawn using purposive sampling technique. Primary data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire fielded in Mount Lavinia, Greater Colombo and Colombo North tourist regions in November and December 2018. SmartPLS is the software specialized for item-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the partial least squares (PLS) path modeling method. According to (Monecke and Leisch, 2012), special feature of SmartPLS is the finite mixture routine (FIMIX), a method to deal with unobserved heterogeneity. PLS-SEM is a multivariate analysis method to estimate path models with latent variables. Further, it calculates path models with latent variables using the PLS-SEM algorithm the software calculate standard results assessment criteria and it assist other statistical analyses also. That model consists of two elements; they are, structural model or inner model (displays the relationships/ paths between the constructs) and measurement model or outer model (display the relationships between the constructs and the indicator variables). On the other hand, PLS-SEM is employed to prediction and explanation of target constructs. It is complex model works with ordinal and binary scaled questions. That is suitable for analyze small sample sizes. In this study, PLS-SEM was used to compare and contrast destination loyalty between Asia Pacific and European tourists using the primary data collected.

**Results and Discussion**

**Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

The table 01 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the sample used for the analysis of this study. Accordingly male tourists were the majority from both Asia Pacific and European regions representing 57 percent and 53 percent respectively. Majority of the Asia Pacific tourists were belong to the age group of 20 to 29 and 30 to 39 together with 40 to 49 groups were equally represented as illustrated in the table. However, European tourists were mainly belong to the age category of 20 to 29 which was 44 percent. Tourists from both the regions were mainly traveling for pleasure representing the highest numbers for this purpose. 87 percent of tourists from Asia and pacific and 92 percent of the European tourists were first time visitors as per the figures in the below table.

**Table 01:** Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Tourists' Characteristic	Demographic	% of Asia Pacific Tourists		% of European Tourists	
		Numbe r	%	Numbe r	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	5	5	5	5
		7	3	3	3
		4	4	4	4
Female		3	7	7	7
<b>Age Years</b>	Below 20	6	7	7	7
	20-29	2	4	4	4
	30-39	8	4	4	4
		2	2	2	2
	40-49	6	1	1	1
		2	1	1	1
	50-59	6	8	8	8
		1	1	1	1
60 or more	3	0	0	0	
	2	0	0	0	
<b>Profession</b>					

Business	1	1
	3	8
	2	7
	1	1
	8	2
Educationist	4	7
	5	5
Retired	9	7
<b>Purpose of Travel</b>		
Pleasure	5	6
	7	4
Religious and Cultural	1	1
	1	2
Business	8	4
Study	8	8
MICE	4	5
Other	2	5
<b>Repeat Visit</b>		
First time	8	9
	7	2
Repeat Visit	1	8
	3	

Source: Survey 2018, N=286

**Smart PLS Model Assessment Procedure**

The study has tested the conceptual model by using the Smart PLS software. The results of the Smart PLS software are presented in two parts. It tests the validity and reliability of the measures (outer model), and the tests of hypotheses (inner model). The outer model evaluates the relationship between indicators and the latent variables while the inner model evaluates the relationship among the latent variables. The structural model (inner model) results are examined after the evaluation of measurement model (outer model). If only the outer model evaluation results emphasis the reliability and validity of the constructs, the inner model is evaluated. When evaluating the outer model and the inner model, the bootstrapping and blindfolding results also considered. As the first step, the researcher has evaluated the outer model and it is as follows.

**Reliability of Reflective Constructs:**

First, the individual reliability of each indicator is given by loadings between the indicator and the variables. Most of the researchers assume that a latent variable should explain a substantial part of each indicator's variance (usually at least 50 percent). Accordingly, the standardized outer loadings should be higher than 0.60 (Evanschitzky et al., 2006). Second, the scale reliability allows measuring internal coherency of all indicators in relation with the latent variables. The composite reliability is a preferred alternative to alpha as a measure of internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha assumes that all indicators are equally reliable but the Smart PLS prioritizes indicators according to their reliability, resulting in a more reliable composite (Henseler et al., 2009) The acceptable cutoff value for composite reliability would be the same as the researcher sets for Cronbach's alpha. The composite reliability and the Cronbach's alpha were used to measure internal consistency and reliability of the model. According to the past research findings the value should be above 0.70, whereas a value below 0.60 indicates a lack of reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

**Comparison of Asia Pacific and European Tourists DI and DL in Sri Lanka**

In this study, demonstrate the standardized path coefficients through PLS Algorithm and relevant t-statistic of relationships obtained through PLS bootstrapping procedure. According to (Hair et al., 2013), R2 values 0.25, 0.50 and 0.75 represent weak, moderate and substantial predictive power of endogenous latent variables respectively. When data analyse using the PLS Algorithm consider about all the factor loadings are positive and in the range of 0.6.

According to this study, when Asian Pacific respondents' data analysis using the PLS Algorithm all the factor loadings are positive. The means of Accessibility and Price and value under Cognitive Destination Image factors loadings

removed because of their loadings values are lower than 0.6. At the same time two factor loadings under Behavioural Loyalty and Functional value under Destination Loyalty also removed because of their loadings values are lower than 0.6. When the factor removed from the scales, some R2 values and other loadings values were increased.

In the case of European tourists, all the factor loadings are also positive. The means of Natural attractions and Price and value under Cognitive Destination Image factors loadings removed because of their loadings values are lower than 0.6. At the same time two factor loadings under Behavioural Loyalty, one factor under Affective Destination Image and Behavioural loyalty under Destination Loyalty also removed because of their loadings values are lower than 0.6. Then some R2 values and other loadings values were increased.

Hypothesis1 proposed a positive relationship between Cognitive Destination Image and Destination Loyalty values. According to the Figure 4.5.1, the path coefficient is 0.065 and  $t = 0.452$ ,  $p < 0.1$  indicate there was a weak positive relationship and no significant effect and therefore H1 was rejected. Positive relationship proposed between Affective Destination Image and Destination Loyalty (H2) path coefficient is 0.360 and  $t = 2.695$ ,  $p < 0.01$  indicate a weak positive effect. When consider about the proposed positive relationship between Cognitive Destination Image and Perceived Value (H3) path coefficient is 0.489 and  $t = 3.284$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . It determine that there was a weak positive effect. Hypothesis 4 proposed positive relationship between Affective Destination Image and Destination Loyalty values. The path coefficient is 0.182 and  $t = 1.247$   $p < 0.1$ , indicate that there was a weak positive support and no significant effect and therefore H4 was rejected. The proposed positive relationship between Perceived Value and Destination Loyalty values path coefficient is 0.176 and it indicates weak positive relationship. Although,  $t = 1.641$ ,  $p < 0.1$  indicates that there was no significant effect and therefore H5 was also rejected.

In addition to, three bodies of cognitive destination image, affective destination image and perceived value combine were determined 40.7% of variance of destination loyalty and combination of cognitive destination image and affective destination image were determined 28.4% of variance of perceived value.

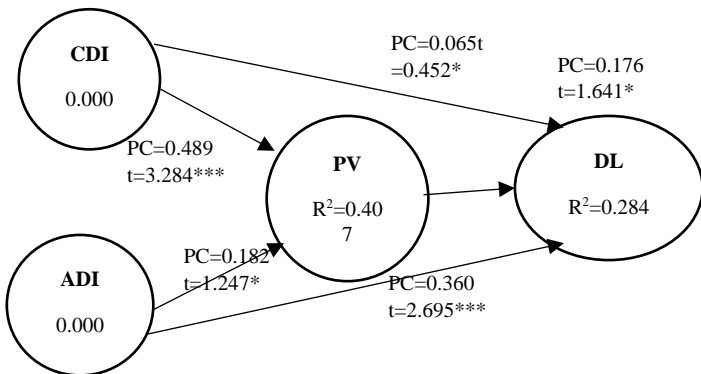


Figure 2: PLS SEM Model for DI and DL of Asia Pacific Tourists in Sri Lanka  
Source: Survey, 2018.

At the same time according to the below (Figure 4.5.2) Hypothesis1 proposed a positive relationship between Cognitive Destination Image and Destination Loyalty values the path coefficient is 0.381 and  $t = 4.305$ ,  $p < 0.01$  indicate there was supported indicating a weak positive effect. Proposed positive relationship between Affective Destination Image and Destination Loyalty (H2) path coefficient is -0.212 and  $t = 1.778$   $p < 0.1$ , indicate a negative significant effect and it was also rejected. When consider the positive relationship between Cognitive Destination Image and Perceived Value (H3) path coefficient is 0.265 and  $t = 2.321$ ,  $p < 0.01$  It determine that there is a weak positive effect. Hypothesis 4 proposed a positive relationship between Affective Destination Image and Destination Loyalty values the path coefficient is 0.365 and  $t = 3.427$ ,  $p < 0.01$  indicate there was a weak positive effect. The proposed positive relationship between Perceived Value and Destination Loyalty (H5), path coefficient is 0.526 and  $t = 5.890$ ,  $p < 0.01$  indicates that there was supported with robust effect.

Furthermore, three bodies of cognitive destination image, affective destination image and perceived value combine were determined 46.1% of variance of

destination loyalty and combination of cognitive destination image and affective destination image were determined 27.5% of variance of perceived value.

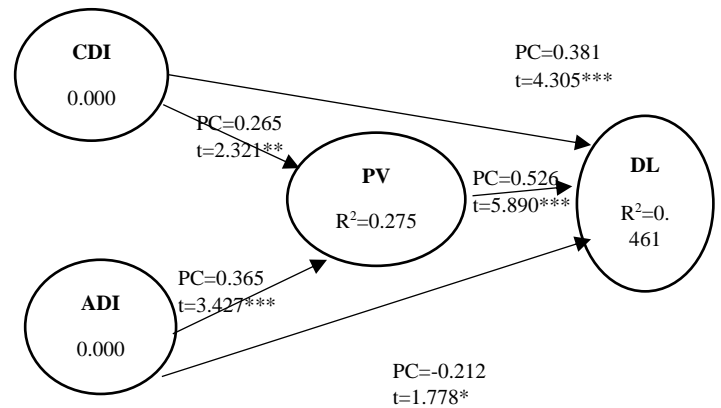


Figure 3: PLS SEM Model for DI and DL of European Tourists in Sri Lanka

Source: Survey 2018

Table 02: Results of Proposed Model

Hypothesis	variables	Path Coefficient		t- statistics		Supported	
		Asia Pacific	Euro pe	Asia Pacific	Europe	Asia Pacific	Euro pe
H1	CDI-DL	0.065	0.381	0.452*	4.305**	No	Yes
H2	ADI-DL	0.360	-0.212	2.695**	1.778*	Yes	No
H3	CDI-PV	0.489	0.265	3.284**	2.321*	Yes	Yes
H4	ADI-PV	0.182	0.365	1.247*	3.427**	No	Yes
H5	PV-DL	0.176	0.526	1.641*	5.890**	No	Yes

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Cognitive Destination Image- CDI, Affective Destination Image- ADI, Perceived Value- PV, Destination Loyalty- DL

Discussion

Quality of infrastructure facilities and variety of entertainment facilities and good nightlife under the infrastructure and facilities dimension were moderately satisfied by European respondents. Variety of entertainment facilities and good nightlife from Asia Pacific respondents also were moderately satisfied. At the same time, well organized traffic flow and parking information under accessibility dimension from Europe respondents were moderately satisfied. Further, the dependent variable (DL) also concludes that the tourists from both regions were almost agreed with the existing level of destination image. At the same time when consider about the behavioral loyalty dimension under destination loyalty, it indicate moderately agreed situation from Europe respondents regarding the destination image. As main reason for the moderate satisfaction was the both regions majority of tourists are 1<sup>st</sup> time visitors to Sri Lanka. When consider about the Perceived Value variable, which was also play almost satisfied role among both regions respondents.

Creating a positive destination image can help a destination to gain competitive power relative to other destinations (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011). Khuong and Phuong (2012), stated that both cognitive and affective destination image had positive relationship with overall tourist satisfaction. The empirical finding of this study was revealed the relationship between Cognitive DI and DL values (H<sub>1</sub>), have weak positive effect under European tourists and no significant effects under Asia Pacific tourists. At the same time based on this research, the proposed positive relationship between Affective DI and DL values (H<sub>2</sub>),

supported with weak positive effect from Asia Pacific tourists and it indicate negative relationship from European tourists.

As hypothesized, the proposed a positive relationship between Cognitive DI and Perceived Values (H<sub>3</sub>), supported with weak positive effects from both Asia Pacific and European tourists also. Further, the proposed positive relationship between Affective DI and Perceived Values (H<sub>4</sub>), supported with weak positive effects from European tourists and indicate weak positive relationship with no effect from Asia Pacific tourists. According to the (Gong et al., 2009), stated that a positive relationship between destination image and perceived value. Further, (Phillips et al., 2013), stated that destination image positively affects perceived value. Moreover, DI has a positive and significant effect on total perceived value and word-of-mouth communication (Lban et al., 2015). The proposed positive relationship between perceived value and DL values (H<sub>5</sub>), supported with positive robust effects from European tourists and found weak positive relationship with no effect from Asia Pacific tourists. Based on the literature, predicts that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived value and DL (Wang and Leou, 2015). Further, Total perceived value positively and significantly affects the intention to revisit and word-of-mouth communication (Lban et al., 2015).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

This research has two independent, one mediator and one dependent variable. 5 point Likert scale questionnaire was employed to measure these three variables. There were two major objectives for this research and those were identify the role of destination image on the destination loyalty among the Asia Pacific and European tourist and identify the difference between destination loyalty among Asia Pacific and European tourists. The findings of this research can be indicated under different topics.

PLS-SEM analysis approach was employed to measure and identifies the differences of Cognitive DI, Affective DI, Perceived Value and DL among Asia Pacific and European tourists. Hypothesis1 (H<sub>1</sub>) proposed a positive relationship between Cognitive DI and DL values. There was a weak positive relationship and no significant effect from Asia Pacific respondents and there was supported indicating a weak positive effect from Europe respondents. Therefore, this study revealed Cognitive DI on DL has an effect only from European tourists in Sri Lanka. Further, there was proposed positive relationship between Affective DI and DL values (H<sub>2</sub>), supported with a weak positive effect from Asia Pacific tourists and indicate a negative significant effect from European tourists. Hence, that described Asia Pacific tourists have an effects on Affective DI through DL in Sri Lanka.

The proposed positive relationship between Cognitive DI and Perceived Value (H<sub>3</sub>), there was a weak positive effect from both region tourists. That concludes that both region tourists have effect on Sri Lanka's Cognitive DI through Perceived Value. Moreover, Hypothesis 4 (H<sub>4</sub>) proposed a positive relationship between Affective DI and DL. There was a weak positive support and no significant effect from Asia Pacific tourists and indicate there was a weak positive effect from European tourists. That revealed when Asia Pacific tourist have not effect Sri Lanka's Affective DI through DL, European tourists have an effects. The proposed positive relationship between Perceived Value and DL values (H<sub>5</sub>), confirmed a there was supported with robust effect from European tourists, although, there were no effects on Asia Pacific tourists. Thus, it is clear that there is a significant difference between the two regions tourists in the case of DI and DL in Sri Lanka.

### Recommendations

Based on the theoretical implications observed the following empirical insinuations can be introduced to post war booming tourism context of Sri Lanka to enhance its tourism marketing effectiveness. According to the above findings the role of destination image and the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty are can be different in tourists from different regions. Therefore, when consider the Sri Lankan DL through DL on Asia Pacific and European tourists, there were some factors to be identified and that are needed to be develop to achieve high level of tourists satisfaction among the destination. In the case of accessibility in Sri Lanka, there were no well-organized traffic flow and parking information regarding destination and adequate and convenient local transportation systems through the destination. Therefore, required to manage the traffic flows and parking information effectively and increased

effective and adequate transport systems. The entertainment facilities available were of less significant and this may have been due to the lack of awareness and an effective promotional mechanism to promote them is a prerequisite. Many of Asia Pacific tourists (especially Chinese tourists) have not much skill to speak and understand English language. Hence, needed to more interpreters who can gathered three or more languages (especially Chinese language). Another problem is the price level of tourist products due to local peoples' efforts of earning unfair profits from the tourist. This can be minimized by giving the fixed and fair price level for the tourist products.

Sri Lankan has many of food and beverage supply places operating under different themes. If the local food and beverages are available for the tourist instead of the selling fast food and beverages tourist will expect to buy those food items and it should be a focus of tourism development bodies. Another weak area shown in the model was bad behavior of local sellers and beggars. They cause to make uncomfortable the tourists' journey in Sri Lanka. This problem can be solved if the responsible parties take actions for such groups that have an impact on DL and DL in Sri Lanka. There should be a fixed rate for the taxi, Tuk Tuk riders and other vehicles to minimize the different unfair price rates of the transport modes.

### Limitations and Future Research Directions

The research approach was quantitative and tracing real feelings may be limited through structured questionnaires from people who experience them. Therefore, answers from respondents are limited as they really feel. Thus, it is recommended for future researchers to trace such emotional issues using qualitative approaches to compare and further validate the findings of this study. This research data were collected only from some places in Sri Lanka because of the time limitation. Furthermore, the result cannot be generalized to an entire population since other tourists from regions such as Africa, South and North America may have different perceptions. Thus, a wider approach in terms of tourists to Sri Lanka from all the regions from the world will have the robustness of future findings. Thus it is recommended to study the tourists from other regions to have a comparison. When collecting the data there were language problems with the some tourists which reflect some problems of the scope. Expanding data collection tools from mother tongue of the respondents may contribute effectively for better data collection.

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