



Self-Scooter Riders as a Tool for Remote Destination Promotion in Ella, Sri Lanka

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Article Information

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Abstract

Travelers use different modes of transport to access destinations. Generally, the choice of transportation mode is influenced by various factors such as travel time, cost, and access facilities and so on. As such traveling by scooter is one of the famous modes of transportation in rocky areas like Ella in Badulla district of Sri Lanka. Further, Ella is one of the top-ranked tourist destinations in Sri Lanka for its natural beauty. Similarly, according to the terrain of Ella, a great potential to promote self-driving scooters could be identified especially with regard to remote attraction promotion. During the remote destination vacations, travelers tend to rent out a suitable type of vehicle to make their tour itinerary more independent and worry-free. Based on the above background, this study particularly aims to examine the self-riding scooters' potentials in promoting remote destinations around Ella. Study also attempts to identify the visitor profile and the top-ranked remote destination and current challenges to promote self-riding scooters in Ella remote destinations. Current study mainly adopted quantitative method to examine the phenomenon. Further, Ella was selected as the study area and data were collected distributing questionnaires among 160 scooty travelers using purposive sampling technique. The questionnaires were included both closed-end and open-end questions to address the mentioned study objectives. According to the findings of the study it is revealed that Kithal Ella ranked as one of the top-ranked remote destinations in Ella among scooty travelers. Further, findings suggest that demand for scooty tours is growing in Ella as many tourists in Ella are thrill and leisure seekers who are having high tendency to explore exotic, remote destinations. Current study findings would be useful for the national level policy making authorities, scholars and the tourism industry stakeholders including transport and accommodation providers, tour operators and so on in designing and promoting tour itineraries and tourist services.

Introduction

Sri Lanka recently emerged as one of the must-see tourist destinations in the world (Lonely planet, 2018). The main purpose of visiting the country by tourists is to have the leisure and pleasure (Welgamage, 2015). Throughout the vacations, most of the tourists return to the country to have interaction in numerous entertaining activities. In Sri Lanka there are major or well-known destinations as well as remote destinations and remote destinations are characterized as less popular destinations among travelers (Teare, Bandara, & Jayawardena, 2013). Most little-known or remote territories embody features like a low population density, mountainous location areas, and a rural setting. Moreover, these territories have a very important heritage of tangible and intangible resources (art, food and panorama, landscape, etc.) However, do not seem to be well-known (Pavione, Pezzetti, & Gazzola, 2017).

Travelers use different methods to gain access to destinations. Most of the travelers like to travel independently, easily and within less time. Sometimes traveling (very) long distances, but spending little time on the road, rail, in the air or on the sea became dogma, the standard of the modern traveler (Scol, 2016). Therefore, they use motorbikes cycles, cars, and scooters, etc.

International tourists represent different countries and regions. Also, they are not willing to bring their luxury and other stuff or their equipment such as their personal vehicles. Therefore, they are seeking to rent a vehicle to travel within their destination. In this study, renting a suitable vehicle considered as one effort to popularize for short distances in tourism areas.

At present, traveling via the motorcycle has become much fashionable in the tourism industry. Motorcycle riders are social, travel in groups, and enjoy traveling to the destination as much as the destination itself (Mugikura, 2017). Nevertheless, recently we could identify a big boom in the motorcycle tourism industry. In this context current study mainly adopt drive tourism and Self-drive tourism concepts. At present traveling by a scooter to a destination has become an expanded market in Sri Lanka due to various factors such as time and money-saving, flexibility, ease of accessibility, convenience, independent and worry-free travel are some of the key concerns among them. Nevertheless, in Sri Lanka, scooty traveling is not a small niche segment anymore (Gunasekara, 2016). It is turning into a sizable market for some destinations like Kandy, Hikkaduwa, Ella, and Arugam Bay (tripadvisor, 2019). This study is focusing on scooty travelers in the Ella area as it ranked as a major tourist destination in the Badulla district of Sri Lanka. Further, Ella declared as a tourist zone (Zone, 2018). Ella is much famous among scooty travelers due to isolated nature, plenty of natural attractions and budgeted services.

According to the Ella Tourist Information Center (TIC), 12 touristic destinations have been identified. However, among those 12 destinations study

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recognized 04 locations under the classification of remote destinations. This classification was done for the convenience of the study and current tourist demand to the location was considered in separating destinations as famous and remote. According to Kariyakarawana, 2018 Ella is a place wherever no seasonality is affected compared to alternative standard tourist destinations around the country like Unawatuna, Hikkaduwa, Arugam Bay or Pasikudah. Ella has grown up to be an all-season tourist attraction that is visited by thousands of foreigners annually. Consequently, 50 or above tourist arrivals per month destinations were classified as famous and anything less than 50 were categorized as remote destinations based on available information from January to March 2019 period. As per the data 08 locations were identified as famous and only 04 locations namely, Kithal Ella, Demodara Loop, Ella spice garden, Ceylon tea factory tour was categorized as remote destinations in this study.

Table 1.1 Tourist Arrival Numbers destinations in Ella

Mini Adams peak	211	Not a remote destination
Halpewaththa tea factory tour	193	Not a remote destination
Ella rock	264	Not a remote destination
Nine arches	182	Not a remote destination
Zipline	204	Not a remote destination
Rawana waterfall	201	Not a remote destination
Little Ravana waterfalls	205	Not a remote destination
Bluewater pond	201	Not a remote destination
Kithal Ella falls	001	A remote destination
Demodara loop	002	A remote destination
Ella spice garden	001	A remote destination
Ceylon tea factory tour	009	A remote destination

Source: Ella Tourism Information Center

Tourist consider mainly travel distance (Ella town to desired remote location), time and access facilities specially in touring around Ella. Since scooty is a more accessible and independent, time-saving method, scooty travelers will be a tool to cover those remote areas. Meanwhile, scooty tourism is a novel concept it is hard to find lot of studies on this background. Therefore, it may lead to identifying a knowledge gap in the research area due to rarely published findings of riding scooters in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this study aims to provide suggestions to develop scooty tourism in Sri Lanka. Further, current study aims to find out the scooty travelers' profile, current demand for each remote destination by scooty riders, and the impact of the marketing mix on promoting self-riding scooters and current challenges and issues for scooter travelers. While recognizing the importance of the above facts, current study focuses on promoting self-riding scooters as a tool for remote tourist destination promotion in Ella.

Literature Review

Remote destinations

Most little-known or remote territories embody features like a low population density, mountainous location areas, and a rural setting. Moreover, these territories have a very important heritage of tangible and intangible resources (art, food and panorama, landscape, etc.) However, do not seem to be well-known. Remote destinations may show extreme economic vulnerability and develop more slowly and less sustainably (environmentally, culturally, and economically) than other rural destinations because conventional problems associated with the periphery seem amplified. The vulnerability of the remote destinations is greater distance, isolation of markets, greater lack of access and supply infrastructure, limited local markets or highly specialized retail trade dependency (as is typical for their tourism markets). (Schmallegger, Carson, & Tremblay, 2010). The common feature of a remote destination could be a high-quality landscape with powerful cooperation between local actors and native history and traditions that configure these areas as cultural destinations for tourists. The study link between the local community, the territory, and therefore the native businesses is that the essential part to developing a unique worth proposition, wherever innovative connections between local stakeholders and therefore the cultural roots of the territory produce a powerful local identity (Gazzola, Pavione, Grechi, & Ossola, 2018; Robinson, Heitmann, & Dieke, 2011). Still, there is a lack of provided literature on this kind of destination and why they still exist, also why they are not much popular among travelers (Schmallegger & Carson, 2010). When considering the access to remote areas, it should be offer techniques of "remoteness".

Simply it should focus on accessibility (Mugikura, 2017). Transportation of the region should more focus on how getting other resources for a particular region other than fostering within the region (Li and Lian, 2011). Most of the remote destinations are not connected with public transportation modes. Therefore, those destinations will be visited by a few people by using their own travel method (Prideaux and Carson, 2010). Ella destination is enriched with natural beauty, mountainous and the ability to attract visitors to their destination (Fernando, 2010). Remote and mountain tourism has great potential to stimulate local economic growth and social change, as they complement other economic activities, their contribution to GDP and job creation, and its ability to stimulate demand dispersion over time (the fight against seasonality) and hence the wider area (UNWTO, 2019). According to the tourist information center in Ella that has identified 4 main remote destinations and without having proper transportation method those destinations not consist of many travelers. Therefore, it is better to have proper transportation method to popularize destinations. A report in the Australian monetary Review says the booming motorcycle tourism industry is dominated by domestic intra-state bikers taking short, weekend rides into remote mountainous areas and staying in country hotels. (Hinchliffe, 2016).

Destination promotion

Basically, a tourism destination is a geographic area that attracts visitors, but more needs to be added to this definition. Accordingly, how can it be determined if a tourism destination is successful or not? (Morrison, Gunasekara, & Kozak, 2013). Answer to the question is that the successful destinations are the ones with the most tourists. One answer to the first question is that the successful destinations are those with the foremost tourists. Thus, you'll usually see the 'world's top destinations' because of the ones with the foremost tourist arrivals according to UNWTO. These would come with countries like France, the USA, China, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom. However, several can argue that this can be an alternative of 'quantity' over 'quality' which smaller destinations do not seem to be essentially inferior because they have fewer visitors. It is identifiable the little known or remote destinations are having low popularity and a low number of visitor arrivals. Therefore, there is a possibility to popularize the remote destination as the other world's top destinations to attract more visitors. Destination promotion provides the scope and strategic vision supporting a wide array of individual businesses and makes it a major destination among travelers one day. (Zhou, 2014). The promotional mix can be identified as a one good tool to evaluate the promotions as it contains advertising, public relations, personal selling, and sales promotion. Further, it is used as tools to communicate with the target market and produce organizational sales goals and profits (Frances & Stephen, 2000). Promotion strategy is the direct way in which an organization communicates the product or service to its target audiences (Kanina, 2013). Therefore, current study uses the promotional mix to measure the remote destination promotions.

Motorcycle Tourism

There are few studies that have examined motorcycle tourism specifically (Scol, 2016): Frash Jr and Blose, 2019). Most of the researches focused on safety traveling via motorcycles (Elliot et al., 2003). Some literature is focusing on the environmental aspects of motorcycle tourism (Leong, Muttamara, & Laortanakul, 2002). It can be identified that some of them are ethnography studies. Also noted within the literature is that motorcycle riders are social, travel in reasons and enjoying the travel destination the maximum amount as the destination itself (M. Sykes & G. Kelly, 2014). This concept is recognizing as a tourism perspective motorcycling remains a niche segment. (Aung, 2019). An operative definition of motorbike tourists required to differentiate them from general interest tourists. This study originates the subsequent definition of motorcycle tourism to incorporate these 3 elements: The first one is Bike tourism involves visiting aloof from home whose main purpose is a vacation, leisure, entertainment, or recreation. Further, the trip include participation in sporting events or attending events organized for commercial gain and/or charity, or severally organized motorcycling. Adapted from Lamont, (2009) definition of bicycle tourism in Australia. Next is the traveler and traveler can be either the passive or active (e.g. a bike traveler or the driver), and the trip will be a daily trip or involve overnight stay. Traveling via a bike that is trailer from place to place also qualifies. Daily transportation does not qualify. Finally, Motorcycles defined for bike tourism include the 3 main types namely, cruisers, touring, and sport-tourer motorcycles. Further, cross-country motorcycles are specifically excluded from motorcycle tourism (Eime, 2013) Motorcycle tourism is widely

accepted as the activity of visiting area and/or destination, using motorbikes because of the primary type of transportation (Eime, 2013). It is noticeable that according to motor traffic department act no: 08 in Sri Lanka is defined as under category of A and A1 is consider as a motor bicycle and it includes scooters also. (Motor Traffic Act amended by Act no.08 of 2009).

Self-Riding Scooties

Self-drive tourism has shown exponential growth in rising markets in recent years (Mugikura, 2017). Tourism and Events Queensland describes the drive tourism market as “visitors who travel for leisure and use a vehicle to reach their destination. This includes both day trips and overnight trips to one or more destinations” (Wayfound, 2017). Self-drive travelers always expecting freedom and independent and self-drive travelers tend to have a flexible itinerary (Olsen, 2003). Therefore, it is very useful to have a separate vehicle for travelers to travel as their willingness. Also, they expect to travel to new remote destinations (Prideaux and Carson, 2010). According to Philip Kotler, service is an action or an activity that can be offered by a party to another party, which is basically intangible and cannot affect any ownership. Service may be related to a tangible product or intangible product. Services Marketing is a subfield of marketing, which can be categorized into the two main areas of goods marketing and services marketing. It includes seven components like product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence. Providing a scooty to foreign travelers is a kind of service. The overall marketing mix in tourism internationally recognized as the (8 P’s) factors (product, price, place, promotion, programs, packaging, partnership, person) (Özgür, 2012).

Tourism Marketing mix Components (8 P’s)

A marketing mix is a common tool that uses in markets and dealers. The marketing mix is often important when creating products or brands, and mainly deals with four P: prices, products, promotions, and locations. In marketing services, four P’s extended to eight P or 8 P’s of marketing to address the diverse nature of the service. The 8Ps of Marketing raised from the original 4P. It provides a magnificent checklist or starting point for the proposed marketing plan, to confirm one’s consumer profile for the product and to purchase its knowledge in the best possible light (Team, 2016).

Study area

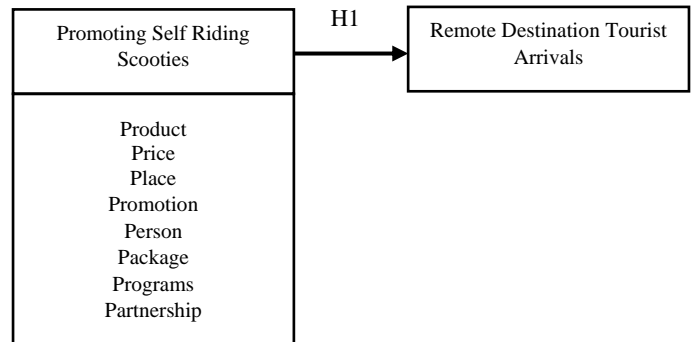
People are away from home for various reasons. Some tourists get away from home because of having a good time, playing vacation with friends, relaxing, enjoying nature, etc. (Wang, 2016). When concerning the transport in tourism, since tourism involves the movement of individuals from their places of residence to the places of tourist attractions, each tourist needs to travel to reach the places of interest. Transport is, thus, one of the major components of the tourism industry. According to Tourism Transportation 2019, to develop a tourist destination it is essential to have efficient, and safe modes of transportation. Considering the overseas travel and your trip abroad, 2019 tourists traveling to long-distance outside places, they are not willing to bring all their personal belongings including vehicles to the destination. Since tourists are not bringing their vehicles to overseas or any outside places, most tourists rent or hire some vehicles for their traveling purposes during their vacation period. Thus, presently tourists are seeking to fulfill their needs by renting a vehicle from the place they visited (Lane & Waitt, 2007). Self-riding bike rentals offer the freedom to go anywhere a traveler would like to visit. Further, Mountain tourism is a kind of "tourist activity that takes place in our finite and limited geographical area, such as the mountains or in the mountains with special features and qualities which are the specific world, topography, air, biodiversity (flora and fauna) and the local city. It covers a wide range of sporting activities in the open ' (UNWTO, 2019). Ella area is a mountainous area that we can identify in Sri Lanka. Ella is nestled in a valley at about 1000m elevation, surrounded by even higher mountains (Hauglann, 2018). Therefore, it is much suitable to use a scooter to travel in the hill country area and it is much more convenient for renting a vehicle for each tourist traveling behavior during their travel period (TripAdvisor, 2019).

Methodology

Since, Ella has many mountainous areas and Ella has grown up to be the all-season tourist attraction that is visited by thousands of foreigners annually. (Kariyakarawana, 2018) current study selected Ella area as the study location. Moreover, as there is a huge congestion in major tourism destinations, these type of remote destination promotions would helpful in reducing the congestion among major destinations and it would be much sustained for Ella

in the future. Ella Sri Lanka was selected as the study area. Further, the study collected data from 160 scooty travelers in Ella while distributing questionnaires that include both closed-ended and open-ended questions to address the aforementioned study objectives. According to Kariyakarawana, 2018 that is visited by thousands of foreigners annually. Therefore, January to March Period selected for collecting data. Moreover, the purposive sampling method was used to select respondents for the current study. Thus, unit of analysis of the current study was at the individual level.

To analyze the collected data MS Excel, SMART PLS 3.2.8 and SPSS version 22 employed. Further, to identify the impact of self-riding scooters to promote remote destinations, the Structural Equation Model was used with SMART PLS. In addition, the Fried man test used to identify the current awareness of each remote destination and to find out the most preferred destination of the study.



3.1. Conceptual framework

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Modified by the author based on existing literature Al-Debi and Ashraf, (2014) and Özgür, (2012)

Providing a scooty to foreign travelers is a kind of service. The overall marketing mix in tourism internationally recognized as the (8P’s) factors (product, price, place. Promotion, programs, packaging, partnership, person) (Özgür, 2012). Therefore, providing self-riding scooty to tourists can be promoted under 8p’s. Since the scooty is much flexible and independent method, many tourists are willing to have a scooty. this study focuses on how to promote remote tourist destinations by scooty travelers.

Results and Discussion

Visitor Profile of Scooty Travelers.

Current study findings reveal that male scooty travelers are higher than female scooty travelers; as a percentage, the male category represents 57.86 % and only 40.25 % were among the female category. Further, it was noticed most of the Males were young and they represent the age category of 21 – 39 age. In the meantime, open-ended questionnaires find out being energetic, having strong mental and physical strength than the aged people are some of the main reasons for the large representation of young scooty travelers in the market. Further, it was discovered young aged people are thrill-seekers and therefore they are keen on exploring, visiting, remote and lesser-known destinations than aged people. According to the scooty travelers’ arrival, details of the regions by country of residence Europe ranked as the highest rate as a region while claiming 60% and among the European regional countries Germany, France, and Belgium were identified as the top - three leading countries. Moreover, study findings discovered that the majority of the scooty travelers were having a good educational background and the highest category was represented by the graduates with (36.48%) percentage. Further, the majority of the respondents were belonging to the private sector employee category and as a percentage it was (38.99%). However, according to the findings from the field survey scooty travelers are somewhat budgeted traveler groups. The majority of the tourists were in more than Rs.25000 level. Further, out of 160 respondents, 156 respondents recommended traveling by scooter and 4 travelers rejected. Because they mentioned that they are not at a satisfactory level with scooty travels, as it is not a safe and secure mode of transport in Sri Lanka. When considering the behavior of scooty travelers it mainly complies

with the culture in Ella and most tourists fulfill their accommodation requirements from the local community. Most of the motor bicycle tourists considered as budgeted travelers (Mugikura, 2017). According to the received results, graduates formed the largest group with 36.48% of the total sample. Annual statistical report 2017 stated that 82.4% of the tourists who visited the island in 2017 had come for pleasure – i.e. for holiday, recreation, touring, etc. This study also consists of scooty travelers and they also had come for pleasure with the highest rate of 60.38%. According to the current study findings, it can conclude that majority of the scooty-travelers are males touring with a low budget and seeking thrill/ adventurous experiences in remote and lesser-known destinations. Literature also evidence that Scooty travelers are budget independent tourists and leisure seekers with flexibility in their itineraries (Frash Jr, Blose, Smith, & Scherhag, 2018).

Exploring self-riding scooty travelers' current demand for each remote tourist destination.

To identify the current demand for selected remote destinations in Ella, the Fried man test was employed as it implemented with a rating-scale. Fried man test involves ranking each row together, then considering the values of ranks by columns. Therefore, the Fried man test is an ideal analysis method to identify the most, least visited remote destinations in Ella. According to the SPSS output of the current study (table 5.1) it was discovered Kitha Ella, Demodara Loop, Ella spice garden locations are having a high potential to promote as popular tourist destinations in Sri Lanka.

Table 5.1: Ranks

Ranks	Mean Rank
Kithal_Ella	1.93
Demodara_loop	2.14
Ella_spice_garden	2.91
ceylon_tea_factory_tour	3.01

Table 5.2: Test Stat

Test Statistics	
N	159
Chi-Square	98.156
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

Source: SPSS output from field survey (2019)

According to table number 5.2, a non- parametric Friedman test of differences among repeated measures conducted and rendered a Chi-square vale 98.15 which was significant (p < .01). According to the previous literature least mean rank value is the most preferred destination and it is the highest demanded destination. In order to improve the above destinations as popular destinations, it is vital to identify the current awareness level for each remote destination. Further, identifying the most preferred destinations among remote areas would be beneficial for future destination promotion (Mugikura, 2017). According to the Fried man test, Kithal Ella is the highest-ranked destination among scooty travelers. Therefore, there is a potential to popularize it as a main destination through scooty travelers because of the easy access by the scooties. In addition, promoting the Ceylon tea factory tour also another alternative strategy to increase the current demand for Kithal Ella. Based on the current findings it can conclude that there is a high potential to promote Kithal Ella, Demodara Loop, and Ella spice garden as popular tourist destinations among scooty travelers in Sri Lanka.

Impact of 8P's on promoting remote tourist destinations

The second objective of the study is to identify the impact of 8p's for promoting remote tourist destinations by scooty travelers. Providing a scooty is a kind of service. To identify the impact of rent scooters to promote remote destination easily can be identified by the Structural Equation Model

(Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Thus, the current study also employed the Structural Equation Model to achieve the specified second objective of the study.

Structural Equation Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural equation model illustrated by the coefficient of determinants (R²) of the variables. A statistical method explaining how much the variability of one factor can be caused or explained by its relation to another factor (BusinessDictionary.com,2019). According to (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013) R2 values 0.25, 0.50 and 0.75 represent weak, moderate and substantial predictive power of endogenous latent variables respectively. According to that current study obtained R² =0.477. It implies that the independent variable explained by the dependent variable in 47 %. On the other hand, 52.3 % of the total variance unexplained by the model. Therefore, it appears that the model was fitted in an unfair manner. Because of the unexplained variation is higher than the explained variation. Further, the adjusted R² value implies that how data deviated from the fitted line of regression. According to the study, the adjusted R² value was 0.473. According to (Malik, Ashraf, Qureshi, & Ghafoor, 2007) which conducted research gain low R² value and it is stated on a significant level. Therefore, the R² value represents a moderate level and it can be a good level. The following figure exhibits outcomes of the PLS bootstrapping procedure in evaluating proposes structural model relationships.

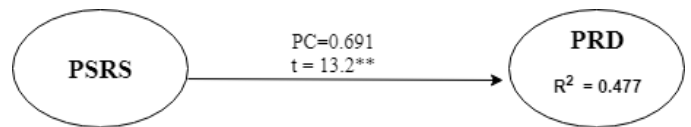


Figure 5.1: Estimated Structural Equation Model

Source: developed by the researcher based on literature

Note: PC= Path Coefficient or Predictive Relevance, t= t-statistic, *** = Significant at p<0.01 level, R2= Coefficient of Determination, PSRS= Promoting self-riding scooters, PRD = Promoting remote destination

Figure 5.1 illustrates the standardized path coefficient (predictive relevance) and the related t statistic which is gained by the PLS bootstrapping performance. Hypothesis 1 is supported with a significant path coefficient (β = 0.691, t = 13.269, p < 0.01). Further, H1 is supported with a significant path coefficient (B=0.691) which has a positive and strong relationship. Considering the t-value (t=13.269), this hypothesis significant at the 0.01 level (P<0.01) of the p-value. It has a 99 percent confidence level. It means promoting self-riding scooters has a positive impact on Promoting self-riding scooters and therefore, H1 accepted.

The coefficient of determination or R² value measures the goodness of fit of the model to the set of data. It measures the proportion or percentage of the total variation independent variable, which is explained by the independent variables. According to the model summary, the R² value was 0.477. It can be concluded as 47.7% of the total variation of the promoting self-riding scooters is explained by the remote destination promotion.

On the other hand, 52.3% of the total variance is unexplained by the model. Those past literature has supported the findings of the study. The fact that R² is small does not mean that the model is bad or meaningless for interpretation. Even a small R2 can be a unique investment in your field of study. In social science, it is not possible to include all relevant predictors to explain the outcome variable. This may cause R2 to decrease. The model has only one predictor variable (Niaki, 2019)

Further, the R² of the study depends on the model and the number of exogenous constructs. Whether R² is good or not also depends on the discipline/field of research. Whereas in some areas R² of 0.25 is considered weak, also may find it quite good if it a novel research field. When in SEM it is can be used different indicators for assessing the quality of the model. According to F. Hair Jr *et al.*, (2014) researcher can draw in Stone – Geisser’s Q² value to describe the model’s predictive relevance and it will describe below.

In accordance with that when promoting self-riding scooters usage is increasing, thus there is a great potential to explore new destinations in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the study developed the below hypothesis.

H1- There is a positive impact between promoting self-riding scooters as a tool for remote destination promotion.

Table 5.3: Measurement Model Evolution

Dimension	Composite reliability	AVE
Product	0.744	0.597
Price	0.663	0.533
Place	0.739	0.591
Promotion	0.873	0.682
Program	0.806	0.682
Partnership	0.646	0.561
Package	0.722	0.592
People	0.614	0.582

Composite reliability value should be equal or more than 6 and it has been criticized as being a lower valued. All the values comply with the 0.60 standards. According to Hair et al., 2013 Convergent validity of measures was established through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and this value should be greater than 0.50. All the AVE loadings are conformed with the 0.50 standards.

Table 5.3: Results of Proposed Model (using PLS-SEM)

Hypothesis	Variables	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	Status
H1	Promoting Self Riding Scooties -> Remote Dest.Promotion(+)	0.691	13.269	Supported

4.4. Exploring the tourist perception on challenges and opportunities for promoting self-riding scooters to remote destination promotion

Promoting self-riding scooters is a successful way to access for remote destinations (Sykes and Kelly, 2016). While riding a scooter there can be many issues. Thus, while employing the open-ended questionnaire current study makes an effort to find out the travelers' view on challenges and opportunities for promoting scooty travels in Ella Sri Lanka.

Data on tourist perception on challenges and opportunities for promoting self-riding scooters to remote destination promotion were gathered by the open-ended- questionnaires and later response was classified into groups and presented the final results. Only 105 completed questionnaires were considered at this stage out of the total 160 questionnaires. Based on the respondent's opinions data were grouped into 5 main clusters as listed below. Safety & security, infrastructure facilities, process-related issues, product-related issues, and the environment.

Safety and security

According to the field survey, 15 respondents have faced plenty of challenges about the safety and security process. According to (Scol, 2016), there are many dogmas that face by motorbike travelers. Most of the travelers mentioned that they have been faced many problems with their languages, obtain a license to travel, other vehicles that drive in danger, traffic police and age limit to drive a vehicle. 7 respondents out of 15 have faced difficulties with their luggage. Further, 3 respondents mentioned age was a barrier for them to ride a motor-vehicle in Sri Lanka. Specially the respondents who arrived from the USA and Europe mentioned the age limit. According to the motor traffic act In the Sri Lankan context, it states that to drive a vehicle the age limit should be 18 or above. In addition, the majority of the respondents mentioned they have faced different kinds of unpleasant experiences with the traffic

police in Sri Lanka. Further, travelers mentioned that these types of incidents are not frequent in their countries. Another 3 stated that it was harder to obtain a scooter without an international license. According to the responses of scooty travelers, they have serious concerns about their safety and security. And, the unethical behaviors mostly affected the tourists' overall destination image.

Infrastructure facilities

Out of 160 respondents, 36 have faced challenges in infrastructure facilities. All most all the respondents have mentioned these destinations are lack of infrastructure facilities. Specially lack filling stations, not having enough guiding services, lack of internet facilities and information centers were among the main shortcomings.

Further, it has been identified particularly due to the geographical location and positioning of the Ella mountain area, there are some accessibility and infrastructure development difficulties. However, since motorbike travelers are always independent and they are exploring new destinations by themselves (Hardy,2003) while using google maps and other Apps it is essential to develop tele-communication-based infrastructure facilities in the area.

One the other hand lack of filling stations and repair centers is another difficulty faced by scooty travelers. The nearest filling station to Ella is, Kumbalwela and also respondents mentioned that most of the time there is a big queue and they have to wait a lot of time. Thus, upgrading those services would be beneficial to attract and to promote Ella among scooty-travelers.

Process related issues

Scooty-travelers mentioned that getting a scooty as a rental vehicle is not an easy process. Due to the time-consuming documentation process, lack of technical support, and knowledge were among the main difficulties. Further, they mentioned since it is essential to keep their passport with the renters until they return this process could be accelerated and it is essential to provide a smooth, satisfactory service to make a WIN-WIN situation for both parties. Hence, providing a support service is essential for customers (Chan et al., 2002).

Product-related issues

There were 12 respondents who had issues with their scooters. Their main concerns were the price, alternative choices, and the quality of the scooters. Further, 8 respondents stated that the price of the rented scooters is too high. Thus, being more flexible and negotiable is another strategy to attract more scooty customers. However, 2 people mentioned that scooty traveling is not a better way to travel due to safety and security concerns. Since self-drive travelers always expecting freedom, independent and self-drive travelers tend to have a flexible itinerary (Oslen,2002). Considering the above factors, we could conclude that it is vital to have a better understanding of prices, customer choices and their flexibility to sell the final product to the customer.

Environment

Traveling by scooter is a different kind of experience for tourists. Further, scooty tours have identified as one of the best methods to engage with nature while driving. The attractiveness of the road as part of tourism and its full enjoyment is regularly can experience while driving a bike and it mentioned by Scol, (2016). Out of 160 respondents, 4 respondents had to face different types of difficulties while driving over the hill, rocky mountainous environment.

Finally, according to the current study findings, it can conclude there are both challenges and opportunities. Specially it is important to pay attention to improve the existing infrastructure facilities, including filling stations, repair centers, telecommunication facilities and so on. Thus, it is essential to address the prevailing difficulties and resolve them while increasing tourist satisfaction. The responsible stakeholders' groups could bring different types of solutions to minimize the current issues and to establish a favorable environment for scooty travelers to visit these beautiful unspoiled lesser-known remote destination in the vaccinating of Ella SriLanka.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Having a better understanding of the profile of the scooty travelers in Ella Sri Lanka is an important element in product designing, development, and promotion. Thus, it is important to consider some of the significant profile details of the scooty travelers in Ella. Based on the current study findings, it

was revealing that most of the Scooty travelers are budget, independent, nature-loving thrill-seekers who are eager to explore the unspoiled, lesser-known / remote destinations. Further, they prioritized tour flexibility, safety, and worry-free travel. Hence, when designing touristic activities, services, amenities, etc. it is important to have a thorough understating of these elements. Thus, it believed respondents' profile details would be beneficial for the tourism service providers including accommodation, food service providers, scooty renters, etc.

According to the current study demand analysis on each selected remote destination, Kithal Ella, Demodra Loop, Ella spice garden, Ceylon tea factory tour was identified as the most famous remote destination among scooty travelers in Ella Sri Lanka. Thus, there is great potential to develop the most and least demand tourist destinations. Particularly by networking with the travel agents and promoting these sites is one kind of initiative to attract more tourists to the destination. Apart from that upgrading services and facilities required for tourists' is another strategy to increase the demand such as providing quality tourist guiding services, establishing information centers are some of the crucial factors to accelerate current demand.

Current study hypothesis *H1*, there is an impact of 8P's on promoting remote tourist destinations by scooty travelers was accepted by the results of path coefficient analysis and it proved that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Promotion is the most affecting mix among the overall marketing mix. Because it has ha high composite reliability value.

Finally, the thematic analysis results show that there are different types of challenges for scooty travelers. However, it was revealed that scooty travelers do not demand sophisticated service and facilities, but for the basic tourism facilities in a destination such as guiding services, filling station facilities, internet facilities, and other support services. Despite those, some scooty travelers mentioned they have faced some difficulties will obtaining the license and so on documentation things. The high price for a scooty per day and Sri Lanka traffic police rules/culture was another concern of the majority of the tourists. Thus, national-level policymakers such as Sri Lanka Tourist Board, Tourist Police and scooty business owners should implement guidelines, rules and regulations and standards to overcome such unpleasant situations.

Since the findings of the study discovered there is a great potential to promote self-riding scooters and it could be utilized as tool to promote remote destination in Sri Lanka it is recommended to the national level, regional level policy-making staff and to the other tourism industry-related stakeholder groups to provide training and development opportunities on this emerging concept of scooty tourism to raise awareness levels of the locals and the tourists. Further, implementing a set of effective marketing and promoting campaigns while adopting modern technology such as introducing Apps, Google location maps, social media marketing, blogs, etc. are playing a vital role in popularizing these remote and lesser-known attractions. Therefore, in the process of promotion of these lesser-known attractions, it is essential to develop basic infrastructure and other touristic services, human resource and so on aspects while creating a positive destination image.

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