

Research Article 04

Visitor Insights at Colombo National Museum: Marketing Mix Analysis Based on TripAdvisor Reviews

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Abstract

Colombo National Museum (CNM) in Sri Lanka is an ideal attraction to reflect the country's historical evidence from the prehistoric era of the contemporary society. Foreign visitors' arrivals to the CNM are considerably low compared to the total of tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka. This study bridges the empirical gap where the visitor experience at CNM has not been explored by the researchers adequately. The purpose of this study is to explore the visitors' insights on the visit experience at Colombo National Museum, based on TripAdvisor reviews regarding the marketing mix elements. This qualitative study employed secondary data from the TripAdvisor platform. TripAdvisor is one of the most widely used platforms for online reviews. Out of 1107 English reviews, the most recent, the first 100 reviews were considered in data collection. Employing thematic analysis, data were analyzed utilizing the deductive approach, utilizing the concept of 7 Ps in marketing mix, where 7 elements are applied in services i.e., Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence. The study reveals that the visitors' positive perceptions of the 'Product' element are depicted in informative galleries, rich antiquities, and exhibits. In contrast, their negative insights on 'Product' are primarily reflected in the unavailability of evidence from the colonial period. 'Price' appeared to be a considerable factor due to the price discrepancy between locals and foreigners. The study indicates limited criticisms of 'Place', 'Promotion', 'People', and 'Process'. 'Physical Element' is the most negatively emphasized aspect due to the issues in ventilation, interior illumination, seating arrangements, and exhibit arrangement. The study reveals that the reflection of visitor experience at CNM through online platforms is not at an extremely high level. The findings of the study highlight the significance of personalized visitor experience and urge the accountable authorities to determine and address the prevailing issues effectively, ensuring the visitors' satisfaction and the site's reputation.

Keywords: Colombo National Museum, marketing mix, TripAdvisor reviews, visitor experience, visitor insights

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Introduction

A museum can be considered as an educational institution that disseminates knowledge and information covering aspects such as culture, nature, heritage, history, anthropology, arts, etc., to the public. Museums play a pivotal role in any tourist destination, catering to the demands of various types of tourists. Prominently, the museums contribute to other multifaceted aspects such as preserving cultural heritage, contributing to the economic growth of the state sector, and affecting the image of the travel destination (Czerwiński, 2022). Visitors tend to visit museums with various expectations, where they expect knowledge, interaction, and enthusiasm for the visiting experience. The main objective of this study is to explore the visitors' satisfaction regarding (negative and positive perspectives) the 7 Ps in the marketing mix based on the visit experience at the Colombo National Museum (CNM) of Sri Lanka, based on TripAdvisor reviews. The specific objectives are to examine the visitors' highly satisfied aspect and least satisfied aspect during the museum visit at CNM.

CNM was established in 1877 during the British colonial period by Sir William Henry Gregory, the British Governor of Ceylon at the time, reflecting the great marvel of the country from pre-history to the modern era. The artefacts and all other exhibits showcase the social, cultural, historical, archaeological, political, and religious dimensions of the country, with precious evidence. In the tourism industry in Sri Lanka, CNM's prominent role is remarkable. Thousands of visitors arrive at the museum to witness the country's glory after travelling to many destinations on the island. Table 01 indicates the significance of CNM in revenue generation to the government sector, along with the tourist influx to the site. The table reflects significant fluctuations in the number of foreign tourists and corresponding revenue over the three years, with a particularly notable impact in 2020, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2018, the highest number of foreign tourists and the highest revenue were recorded due to the favourable tourism atmosphere that prevailed during that period. In 2018, 64,846 foreign tourists visited CNM, and they generated Rs. 65,116,300 as revenue.

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals to Colombo National Museum from 2018-2020

Year	Number of Foreign Tourists	Revenue (in Rs.)
2020	11,762	11,813,400
2019	49,736	49,800,000
2018	64,846	65,116,300

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2018, 2019, 2020)

The marketing mix refers to a combination of factors that a company controls to influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Traditionally, the marketing mix is based on the 4 Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), but for service-based industries, it often expands to include 7 Ps by adding People, Process, and Physical Evidence. A museum is a product of tourism, a physically atmospheric place where visitors have various expectations. A museum, being an experience-based place, the visitors' perspectives of the experience should be explored as per the level of application of the marketing mix elements at the site, where the visitors' firsthand experience is worth studying to determine their inner insights towards the visited place and their intention on sharing their perceptions with others. The 7 Ps of the marketing mix reveals the fundamental element that should be accomplished by any product (good, service, or place) for its all achievements in marketing strategies. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to explore the visitors' expectations and satisfaction with the marketing mix elements during the CNM visit tour, based on TripAdvisor reviews.

In the modern world, word of mouth has been aggravated, whereas electronic word of mouth is more powerful due to the extreme Internet and social media usage. The Internet of Things has modified consumer behaviour in the 21st century, which persuades customers to form different forms of consumer behaviour. Thus, the researchers have investigated the visitors' online behaviour during the post-consumption period in different contexts, highlighting its significance in the destination image, revisiting intentions, and recommendations to potential visitors (Hamid et al., 2021; Koufodontis & Gaki, 2022; Xu et al., 2023; Armutcu et al., 2023).

TripAdvisor is an online travel guide platform launched in 2000, to provide basic information on travel and hospitality with relevant information and reviews from the corporate world's professionals. TripAdvisor emerged as one of the leading online travel platforms with highly adopted user-generated content, with more features for travellers to share their experiences with photographs and rate the service or the attraction they perceived (Banerjee & Chua, 2016; Gursoy et al., 2021; Islam, 2023). TripAdvisor reviews highly affect the product image or the destination image due to its 1 billion reviews and opinions. The travellers have access to comment on any travel experience with first-hand experiences, showcasing their valuable insights (Antonio et al., 2020). A museum is a place where visitors acquire a service-based visit. Thus, the application of marketing mix elements, or the 7 Ps, is worth studying from the visitors' perspectives. Implications of visitors' genuine feedback and shared ideas (Word of Mouth) are considered one of the driving factors for potential visitors to an attraction or to a destination. The existing literature indicates poor availability in the studies where the online reviews and visitors' insights on the context of museum visit experience have not yet been examined adequately. Thus, identifying the existing knowledge gap in contemporary literature, the researcher intended to conduct this study as a case study of CNM, where the visitors' experiences and satisfactions will be explored by text mining based on the TripAdvisor reviews, aligning to the marketing mix elements.

Museums need to evaluate visitors' experiences to better understand their needs. While TripAdvisor offers a valuable source of user-generated data about visit experiences, there is limited empirical evidence on the value of using automated data analysis for museum management (Riva & Agostino, 2022). Many studies have been conducted to explore the role and significance of museums, considering different contexts. In contemporary museum literature, the educational role of museums has been studied by various scholars focusing on the different knowledge dissemination aspects (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999), educating different audiences. Yucelt (2001) indicates that museum visitors' experiences are valuable for analyzing policies and making managerial decisions. According to Sandaruwani & Gnanapala, (2021) the challenges and issues that museums face in developing museum tourism as a part of the national tourism strategy. The researchers have identified key challenges and issues as limited visitor facilities, funding barriers, structural barriers, emerging technologies, location and access barriers, limited collection, and unpublished competition in diversifying the museum tourism experience in Sri Lanka. Priyangana (2024) further emphasizes the strategies to enhance the visitor experience by updating exhibits, providing multilingual information, and promoting its unique features and collections. The existing literature does not provide adequate evidence regarding museum visitor behaviour and their perceptions in the empirical context of Sri Lanka from a touristic perspective. It is essential to regularly assess visitor satisfaction and adjust museum marketing strategies based on the preferences and needs of museum visitors. This empirical study is oriented on the research problem of "what are the touristic perspectives reflected in TripAdvisor regarding the visit experience and satisfaction at CNM based on marketing mix elements?".

Literature Review

Tourists' Satisfaction and Visit-Based Experience

Tourism is a socio-psychological experience (Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991). In the field of tourism, tourist consumption behavior has received significant attention due to its strong relevance to tourism businesses and marketing strategies (Li & Cao, 2022; Prayag, 2009). Solomon et al., (2012) define consumer behaviour as a process involving customers selecting, purchasing, using, or disposing of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires.

Visitor satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping post-consumption behavior, impacting factors such as repeat visits, word-of-mouth recommendations, positive online reviews, improved brand perception, and greater destination preference. Visitors assess their pre-visit expectations (anticipated experiences) against their actual on-site experiences (perceived experiences), with the resulting satisfaction influencing their post-visit reflections. Satisfaction, derived from both functional aspects and emotional-psychological dimensions, not only fosters loyalty but also encourages visitors to become voluntary brand advocates (Beyaz & Güngör, 2021).

In tourism literature, consumer behavior has been examined from various perspectives and within diverse contexts. Notably, tourist behavior analyzed through User Generated Content (UGC) data is particularly valuable for understanding the nature of tourist actions, identifying consumption preferences across market segments, enhancing the quality of tourism products and services, and meeting the demands of different visitor groups ((Li & Cao, 2022). Further, Li and Cao (2022) emphasize the requirements of in-depth studies in tourism academics focusing on phenomena such as “tourism + new media,” “tourism + UGC,” and other marketing methods, adopting the electronic word-of-mouth effect.

The satisfaction does not end the satisfied tourists' behaviour, but results in post-purchase behaviour (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Ali, 2015; Moore, et al., 2015, Gursoy et al., 2021). The extent of evaluation is reflected in different modes of reactions in the tourism field, such as revisiting intentions, WOM referrals, E-WOM referrals, seeking alternative destinations or tourism services, direct complaints, online reviews, or even stopping visiting the destination or consuming the service (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Armutcu et al., 2023). In this context, tourists' online behaviour during the post-visit stage is a worthy phenomenon to be considered in the digital era (Baka, 2016; Antonio et al., 2020; Lin & Rasoolimanesh, 2023).

Tourist's Visit Experience at Museums

Customer satisfaction is a key determinant factor in the success of any business. In the travel and tourism industry, the perceptions of the visitors or tourists regarding their experiences in consuming a product or a service dynamically affect visitor satisfaction, recommendations, and revisit intention (Hui et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Museums are unique non-profit organizations in the service sector, and their marketing perspective may require a different approach than traditional service marketing (Czerwiński, 2022). In the empirical studies in museums, the context of visitor satisfaction has been explored by a few researchers (Yucelt, 2001; Riva & Agostino, 2022)

Yucelt (2001) conducted an empirical investigation among the museum visitors, identified that the service quality, needs and wants, interest, and satisfaction level of the visitors are

predominant in marketing museums as an attraction in tourism. He further emphasizes that museum experiences of visitors are great assets for policy analysis and managerial implications. The researcher recommends that the visitor's satisfaction must be periodically checked, and marketing plans of museums should be revised according to the requirements of the museum visitors.

Riva and Agostino (2022) point out that museums must assess the visitors' experience to understand their needs. The results of their study indicate that all visitors share three cross-cultural dimensions of experience (museum cultural heritage, personal experience, and museum services), specific latent dimensions are emphasized by local (i.e.: 'wow effect' and hospitality) and non-local visitors (i.e. Time management and unfavourable experience)

Batat (2020) tries to bring a broader view of what constitutes the daily environment of younger visitors and how museums could use this knowledge to develop a service delivery without sacrificing the museums' integrity and authenticity. The study reveals that the adolescents' perception of arts and exhibitions does not correspond to museum art criteria held by cultural tourism professionals.

With the purpose of examining museum visitors' experience Brida et al., (2016) explore the museum visitors' preferences and behaviour overall. Considering two regional museums, they have found that two museums need to be reinterpreted and reorganized with the provision of supplementary services, able to satisfy a broader audience and enrich their traditional mission, which is to collect, preserve and exhibit the archaeological heritage. Nevertheless, the post-visit behaviour of the visitors, especially in online reviewing platforms such as TripAdvisor has not been investigated so far.

Application of the Marketing Mix Model in Tourism Studies and Museum Studies

Various researchers have tested the marketing mix model due to its excessive relevance for the success of a business. The effects of the marketing mix elements and the brand equity (Rajh, 2005), impact of tourism marketing mix elements on the satisfaction of inbound tourists (Magatef, 2015), culture's influence on the design and delivery of the marketing mix elements in tourism and hospitality (Koc & Ayyildiz, 2021) relationship between the marketing mix and loyalty through tourist satisfaction (Muala & Ayed, 2012), conceptualizing a contemporary marketing mix for sustainable tourism marketing (Pomering et al., 2011; Karim et al., 2021) marketing mix and tourism destination image (Binter et al., 2016) are some of the study areas examined and explored by the researchers covering tourism marketing.

The application of the marketing mix model in tourism products and services has been studied by many researchers in the contemporary literature where they found an inevitable relationship between the 7 marketing elements and the success of the tourism business (Pomering et al., 2010; Muala & Ayed, 2012; Magatef, 2015; Koc & Ayyildiz, 2021; Kennedy et al., 2022). The empirical literature in marketing reveals the gaps in applying the marketing mix model to museum tourism products.

In tourism literature, it is evident that the application of marketing mix elements into the tourism products of museums is extremely limited, and a limited number of studies have been undertaken to explore that context. Czerwiński (2022) examines the quantifying factors influencing the interest in museums using marketing mix modelling utilizing the factors of weather, holidays, events, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Albeit there is a considerable gap in the tourism literature where the application of the marketing mix model for cultural tourism products is limited. Few studies (Potjanajaruwit, 2015) have revealed that cultural tourism products can be strengthened by the effective and strategic application of the marketing mix elements. Marketing mix factors affect a tourist's decision-making regarding cultural tourism destinations (Potjanajaruwit, 2015).

Research Methodology

The study used qualitative research, where the tourists' genuine experiences and perceptions were collected through the text-mining technique. The studies have indicated that in qualitative studies, the tourists' perceptions with deeper insights can be explored through online reviews, which are considered user-generated content (Amaral et al., 2014; Banerjee & Chua, 2016; Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019). The studies have further strengthened the application of online reviews analysis on tourists' behaviour at cultural sites and destinations (Munar & Ooi, 2012; Lei & Law, 2015; Simeon et al., 2017; Gursoy et al., 2021; Islam, 2023). Thus, the study employed secondary data, UGC referring specifically to reviews on the TripAdvisor online travel platform. Considering the empirical context of the study, the TripAdvisor reviews available under the keyword 'Colombo National Museum' were included in the study's data collection. In the search for CNM, TripAdvisor indicated 1342 reviews in total, with 1107 reviews in English ("Tripadvisor," 2025). The TripAdvisor reviews with short comments and reviews written in languages other than English were omitted, considering the limitations of the study.

In collecting data for the study, only the first 100 most recent reviews were considered based on the convenience-based sampling technique. The 100 reviews covered the period from April 2019 to May 2024. The data were analyzed utilizing thematic analysis, in which the deductive approach was employed specifically, where each quotation was inserted separately into each of the 7 charts. The themes of the study, the 7 Ps of the marketing mix, including Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence, were abducted from the model of 'marketing mix' introduced by Borden (1964) and which was further improved by Booms and Bitner (1981).

Utilizing the deductive thematic analysis, each element was explored, underpinning the insights reflected by the reviewers. In data analysis, coding the qualitative data initiates the familiarization of the data by reading collected reviews multiple times to get a sense of the content. The 100 reviews were entered into Microsoft Word and carefully referred to by the researcher several times with a deeper understanding. Based on the reviews' applicability/relevancy to each marketing mix element, the most prominent phrases were highlighted. In the next stage of initial (open) coding, the reviews were broken down into meaningful units and assigned preliminary codes to online reviews that represented significant ideas or experiences shared by the visitors. The reviews were separated into 7 labels as per the meaningful application to the 7 Ps of the marketing mix.

In the next stage of axial coding, the reviews were categorized into broader specific themes, such as positive reviews and negative reviews, where the patterns and the emphasized perspectives were identified. Finally, the coding process was refined, focusing on the suitability of each review to the core theme. This stage ensures the final capturing of each review as per the essence of the visitor experience at CNM. The table below depicts the operational definition of the 7 Ps or elements of the marketing mix, which were considered for the thematic analysis of this study.

Table 2: Operationalization Definitions of the 7 Ps in Marketing Mix Elements

Element	Definition
Product	The item or service being marketed, through its features, quality, benefits, and quantities, can help the company make high-quality products (Khan, 2014).
Price	The price of the item and product assortments and lines, price changes, and payment methods, the company can make competitive prices (Khan, 2014).
Place	The location where the product or service is available to the customer, including distribution channels, also means that it is easy for consumers to get the product (Khan, 2014).
Promotion	Market communication is achieved by personal selling, advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotion, and sponsorship. Promotion also means that companies can communicate with consumers about their products (Khan, 2014).
People	Service employees who produce and deliver the service
Process	Implementing action and function increases the value of products with low cost and high advantage to customers and is more important for service than for goods (Muala & Ayed, 2012).
Physical Evidence	The environment in which the service and any tangible goods that facilitate the performance and communication of the service are delivered (Muala & Ayed, 2012).

Source: Muala & Ayed,(2012); Khan (2014)

Results and Interpretations

The study's data reveal many tourist perspectives published on TripAdvisor based on the marketing mix elements currently existing at CNM. Visitors generally appreciate the product (exhibits), but there are significant concerns regarding the price, staff interactions, and physical evidence (the museum's environment). The place, promotion, and process elements also need attention, as they received mostly negative feedback. Focusing on improving customer service, enhancing the physical environment, and aligning the price with the perceived value would likely lead to better visitor satisfaction. Table 03 below highlights the number of positive and negative online reviews appearing under each marketing mix element.

Table 3: Summary table of the online reviews

Marketing Mix Element	Number of Positive Comments	Number of Negative Comments
Product	27	14
Price	01	12
Place	00	04
Promotion	00	03
People	01	08
Process	00	03
Physical Evidence	05	35

Source: Current study (2024)

Product

Considering the visitors' reviews on the CNM-based visit experience, the museum's product encompasses its exhibits, displays, and overall content. Altogether, 27 positive reviews highlight various aspects of the museum's product (offerings), including its collections' richness, presentation quality, and educational value. Visitors appreciate the wide range of exhibits that offer extensive learning opportunities. Comments such as "...there are many things to learn. In some places, there are many religious monuments", "Very informative and classified very nicely", and "Some magnificent displays of Sri Lanka's history, culture and environment" highlight the museum's strength in providing a broad educational experience.

14 negative reviews were identified, highlighting the products' attributes, covering the aspects of the presentation and organization of displays, gaps in historical coverage, and accessibility issues. It is revealed through the reviews that the initial displays capture interest, but the subsequent sections are less engaging, suggesting a need for a more balanced distribution of exhibits. The review "...artefacts they are poorly displayed with little information. The whole place is dreary and dim" highlights dissatisfaction with the presentation quality. Visitors expect a comprehensive history, including detailed accounts of the colonial era, which appears to be underrepresented. The review "Some of the artefacts recently returned from the Netherlands were particularly interesting" suggests that crucial exhibits should receive appropriate attention and promotion when they are being exhibited. Poor lighting, lack of information, and a dreary atmosphere detract from the visitor experience. The absence of elevators in a multi-story building limits access to exhibits on upper floors, highlighting the need for better accessibility features. These issues suggest that enhancing the exhibit displays, lighting, and informational signage could significantly improve visitor satisfaction.

Price

Visitors' reviews related to the pricing strategies of CNM are concerned; only one reviewer has mentioned positively that "*The Museum is good value for money*", which indicates that there might be an issue with the 'price' at CNM. 12 negative reviews have been reported addressing the issues such as disparity in pricing between locals and foreigners, and the fairness of ticket pricing. Multiple reviews express dissatisfaction with the significant price difference between tickets for locals and foreigners. Comments such as "*It is only 40 rupiahs for locals, but foreigners pay more than ten times as much at 469 rupiahs,*" and "*...100 rupees for locals, and 1200 for foreigners*" highlight a typical grievance. Visitors perceive this pricing strategy as unfair and discriminatory, which can lead to feelings of resentment and a negative overall experience. The review "...*Was very sad to see the tourist ticket price and local ticket prices and was so embarrassed*" indicates that such pricing discrepancies can cause emotional discomfort for tourists, particularly when they feel singled out or unfairly charged compared to locals. Another visitor points out an issue with ticket pricing relative to access. Charging the total price for limited access, such as only being allowed to visit particular floors close to closing time, is perceived as unfair and diminishes the perceived value of the experience.

Place

The location where the product or service is available to the customer, including distribution channels, also means that it is easy for consumers to get the product (Khan, 2014). Visitors' feedback on the 'place' element at CNM explicitly addresses the availability and convenience of facilities such as restrooms and parking. Only 04 negative reviews were published on TripAdvisor, highlighting the dissatisfaction with the lack of indoor restrooms and the challenges associated with parking, which negatively impact the overall visitor experience.

The review *"...only wish that there were toilets inside the building, and not only in the exterior,"* highlights a significant inconvenience for visitors, detracting from the comfort and convenience of the museum experience, potentially discouraging extended visits. The phrase *"If you go on a busy day"* implies that parking issues are exacerbated during peak visiting times. Parking outside the location is only available around the perimeter, making it difficult to access, especially during peak times. Visitors may need to walk a significant distance from their vehicles. This can lead to frustration and a negative first impression, as visitors may struggle to find convenient parking and experience delays in beginning their museum visit.

Promotion

In the study's context of promotion, no positive reviews were found, while 03 negative reviews were reported, highlighting a potential shortfall in effective promotional strategies. The review *"I could not get any information about where the gift shop was"* implies the ineffective promotional efforts at CNM, where even the basic directions have not been provided for the visitors. Providing free basic information is a standard practice in many cultural institutions to enhance the visitor experience and promote further engagement with exhibits. The absence of complimentary information materials, such as a free guide or brochure, is a significant shortfall. Even if nominal, charging for basic informational materials can be perceived negatively by visitors. This suggests that the pricing strategy for informational resources should be reconsidered to improve accessibility and visitor satisfaction.

People

One comment has been published regarding the satisfactory level of the staff at CNM, while 8 comments negatively criticize the service of the staff for not providing adequate support or explanations regarding specific areas or services. The unattended nature of the staff is potentially leading to visitor confusion and dissatisfaction. The reviews *"...staff is talking..."* and *"...the staff in the place needs to be more proactive than this"* emphasize that staff members were observed engaging in personal conversations rather than focusing on customer needs, creating a perception of unprofessionalism and neglect. Visitors expressed dissatisfaction with the staff's demeanour, noting a lack of enthusiasm and politeness in their interactions, which could negatively impact the overall customer experience and satisfaction.

Process

The process is defined as the implemented action and function that increase the value of products with low cost and high customer advantage and is more critical for service than for goods (Muala & Ayed, 2012). The TripAdvisor reviews on 'process' elements at CNM reflect a few (03) negative experiences navigating through the establishment. The review *"We walked and walked (quickly to get upstairs before the 4pm closing time for upper floors) and were stuck behind a large tour group part of the time, which was very..."* implies the inefficient visitor management at the site. The reviewer criticizes the lack of adequate seating areas, particularly considering the needs of visitors who may require breaks or extended viewing periods. This deficiency can negatively impact visitors' comfort and overall experience.

Physical Evidence

The environment in which the service and any tangible goods that facilitate the performance and communication of the service are delivered (Muala and Ayed, 2012). Visitors' feedback focused on the physical evidence of the museum, encompassing the building's architecture, the layout of exhibits, and the quality of informational signage. The reviews highlight only

limited positive aspects (05) of the physical environment, emphasizing the architectural grandeur of the building, the thoughtful layout of exhibits, and the comprehensive labelling, which enhances the overall visitor experience in a few visitors. Few visitors declare that the museum's exhibits are well-organized, making it easy to follow the historical narratives. Historical narratives in each room suggest a deliberate effort to provide context and background information for the exhibits. This approach ensures that visitors can understand and appreciate the significance of the artefacts on display. The review "...all labelled" emphasizes the importance of clear and comprehensive exhibit labelling.

A considerable number of negative reviews (35 reviews) highlight dissatisfaction with physical evidence at CNM that impacts the overall visitor experience, such as poor lighting, lack of air conditioning, outdated exhibit presentation, and inadequate facilities. Reviews such as *"...poor lighting and patchy display information"* and *"...the descriptions are hard to read and keep up with cause of poor illumination"* highlight significant issues with the lighting in the museum. Poor lighting makes it difficult for visitors to read descriptions and engage with exhibits and detracts from the overall aesthetic and educational experience.

Multiple reviews (10) express dissatisfaction with the lack of air conditioning, which negatively impacts the visitor experience, especially on hot and humid days. Visitors highlight that poor ventilation exacerbates the discomfort caused by the lack of air conditioning. Comments like *"...one should be ready to bear heat as it is not air-conditioned"* and *"No air-conditioning is available, only fans"* highlight the discomfort caused by inadequate cooling, which is a critical issue that affects the comfort and duration of visits. The suggestion to *"Bring some water"* underscores the need for better hydration options within the museum, especially considering the heat and lack of air conditioning.

The review *"...If you are expecting technology and interactivity do not bother."* points to the absence of modern interactive features that many contemporary museums offer. Integrating interactive and technological elements could make the exhibits more engaging and appealing to a broader audience. Another comment highlights the lack of seating options for visitors with mobility issues. Providing adequate seating throughout the museum can make the visit more comfortable and inclusive. Several reviews implied potential accessibility issues for visitors with mobility impairments.

Conclusion and Recommendation

A marketing strategy is a company's overall plan to achieve long-term marketing goals, including product development, identifying target markets, and building the brand. On the other hand, the marketing mix focuses on the specific elements of a product, price, promotion, and distribution that a company uses to market its products or services (Kennedy et al., 2022). In the service industry, in addition to the 4 Ps, the people, process and physical evidence are applied. Travellers can comment on any travel experience with first-hand experiences, showcasing valuable insights (Antonio et al., 2020).

The primary objective which was to explore the visitors' satisfaction regarding (negative and positive perspectives) the 7 Ps in the marketing mix based on the visit experience at CNM of Sri Lanka based on TripAdvisor reviews was achieved from the study with the findings of visitors' distinctive perspectives on the frame of marketing mix elements. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the visitors' highly satisfied aspect and least satisfied aspect during the museum visit at CNM where the most satisfying aspect of the museum is the products, which are referred to the exhibits of the museum galleries, while the most

dissatisfying aspect of the museum visit was determined as the physical atmosphere of the location.

The findings of this study contribute to expanding the existing knowledge in service marketing and consumer behaviour and refining the knowledge in tourist perceptions and tourists' online behaviour during the post-purchasing phase in the cultural tourism context. The museums should focus on the utilitarian values and hedonic (emotional) values derived from the museum visit by the visitors while reinforcing the components such as physical evidence, people (the staff members' service), and price.

Tourism consists of a product/service mix of tangible (e.g., meals, accommodation, transportation carriers, and physical sites) and intangible components (e.g., service personnel, events, and experiences), thus, a holistic approach is required in marketing the tourism products (Pomeroy et al., 2010). Mudzanani (2017) introduces four 'C's of museum marketing such as customer value, cost, convenience and communication, where the researcher highlights empowering museums to achieve greater visibility. Mudzanani (2017) further highlights that museums should develop product offerings that match the ever-changing needs of all the segments of their target audience in creating customer value. Proving these insights from the context of museum visits, the research findings of the current study imply that the products or the visit experience provided by the CNM should be aligned with the expectations of the visitors.

Potjanaruwit (2015) examining the approaches in applying marketing mix elements for Chonburi, a cultural destination in Thailand, reveals that physical evidence, price, people, and place are at high significance for the Thai respondents, while physical evidence, price, people, and process were highly considerable for foreign visitors. The current study reveals that visitors are highly concerned about the physical evidence of the CNM, with the highest number (35) of negative online reviews regarding the poor lighting, lack of air conditioning, outdated exhibit presentation, and inadequate facilities.

Conducting an empirical investigation of the museum visitors, from 24 museums located in Pennsylvania, Yucelt (2001) reveals that museum visitors are highly satisfied with collections and exhibits, labels, educational and entertainment values of exhibits, audio-visual facilities, and directional signs. Justifying these insights, the current study also reveals that the visitors at CNM do not have a considerable level of issues with the product component, where the visitors have appreciated the collections' richness, presentation quality, and educational value. Yucelt (2001) further reveals that museum visitors are highly satisfied with staff's attributes such as courtesy, friendliness, interpretive skills, and availability. Contradictory, the current study indicates that the visitor perception regarding the component of 'people' or the staff service offered during the museum visit is at a low level due to unprofessional behaviour. In a tourist site/attraction where the experience is dominant, the staff members' passive involvement might lead to the museum visitors' negative impression.

Theoretically, the seven elements of the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical Evidence) deal with goods and services. The last three elements are unique for the services, which are associated with the people (service providers), service process and physical atmosphere of the service station. Empirical literature barely explores the appeal of the marketing mix elements to the visit attractions, specifically in the heritage context. The findings of this study contribute to expanding the understanding regarding the application of marketing mix theory within the context of museum visits. The analysis of the TripAdvisor reviews implies that physical evidence is the most influencing factor for visitor satisfaction at the museum, where the visitors expect to spend considerable hours during the

visit in a pleasant, comfort and relaxing atmosphere. The museum management is required to determine the visitors' requirements along with a proper set of marketing strategies to address the prevailing issues with physical evidence.

In the existing literature, the implications of user-generated content (UGC) in cultural tourism, specifically in the context of museums, have not been explored adequately. In the digital era, the role of the UGC is dominant in shaping the potential tourist's perceptions, which affects their destination choice and other travel decisions. Furthermore, the study provides implications for the advancement of the stimuli-response model in consumer behaviour. In the consumer behaviour model introduced by Philip Kotler, the marketing mix stimuli have been limited to the four elements of product, price, place and promotion, whereas the consumer in the service sector is essentially stimulated by the other three elements (people, process, physical evidence) which are unique for the services. The findings of the study emphasize that a museum as a tourist attraction highly requires the application of service elements in the marketing mix and should focus on digital reputation management.

Museum visitors' experiences are great assets for policy analysis and managerial implications (Yucelt, 2001). Yucelt (2001) emphasizes that visitor satisfaction at the museum must be periodically monitored, and marketing plans should be revised according to the requirements of the museum visitors. The positive reviews about the museum's product reflect its success in delivering educational, well-organized, and engaging exhibits that cover a wide range of historical and cultural topics. The interpretation of negative reviews about the museum's product reveals several areas for improvement, such as enhancing the presentation and organization of displays, improving physical accessibility, and filling gaps in historical coverage, which are crucial steps to improve visitor satisfaction. The analysis of pricing-related reviews reveals that many visitors are discontented with the pricing structure, particularly the disparities between local and tourist rates. Addressing these concerns by implementing fair and transparent pricing strategies could enhance visitor satisfaction and ensure equitable access. Considering the 'place', two critical areas can be recognized: the availability of indoor restrooms and the convenience of parking.

Related to promotion, it reveals vital areas for improvement in the museum's marketing and information dissemination strategies. Effective promotion involves advertising and pricing and ensuring that visitors have easy access to essential information and feel valued through thoughtful customer service practices. Addressing these issues by offering free informational materials, ensuring operational efficiency in transactions, and effectively highlighting the value of store items can significantly enhance visitor perceptions and engagement with the museum. The study reveals critical areas for improvement in visitor service where issues such as communication gaps, unprofessional behaviour, lack of enthusiasm, and proactive engagement can significantly affect visitor satisfaction and loyalty. These insights are invaluable for the organization aiming to improve staff performance and optimize visitor experience by providing the staff with professional training programs and a code of ethics for better employee performance.

The visitors have highlighted the museum's physical evidence positively from the aspects of the building's architecture, exhibit layout, and labelling. In contrast, most visitors have broadly criticized the museum's physical evidence, emphasizing its lighting issues, improving air conditioning and ventilation, modernizing exhibit presentation, and enhancing general facilities can significantly improve the visitor experience. Ensuring better accessibility and comfort for all visitors, including those with disabilities, is crucial. Since physical evidence is the mostly criticized feature of the museum, it is recommended for the museum management to initiate a museum promotion campaign, identifying the dire necessity of providing a

pleasant, comfortable and effective atmosphere within the museum premises, the museum management should initiate a museum promotion campaign including all the aspects of renovation, a new model of museum galleries, application of technology for exhibiting the exhibits etc. By addressing the practical concerns identified in the study, the museum can create a more welcoming and accessible environment and can cater to the visitors' expectations with a more strategic, comfortable, engaging, and enjoyable experience increasing visitor satisfaction and potentially increasing the number of repeats.

This study was limited to the visitors' shared experiences on the TripAdvisor website, where the reviews posted in the other languages were not considered. This causes linguistic limitations in the study, where the diverse perspectives of non-considered nationalities have not been considered in the study. Further, the study relies solely on TripAdvisor reviews, which will not represent a full spectrum of the experiences of the museum visitors. TripAdvisor reviews often indicate poor in providing the reviewers' demographic information, causing incompleteness in analyzing insights across different visitor segments. The study focuses on the post visit experience of the visitors, and it has not been compared with the visitor's visit expectations prior to the visit. In future, this study can be further developed as a comparative study of visitor insights across multiple museums in Sri Lanka or other countries to identify the best practices and the unique challenges. The study context can be further examined by referring to the user-generated content or online reviews on multiple social media platforms and travel-related websites. The study can be conducted as a longitudinal study to track the variances of the visitors' perspectives on the museum visit experience prior to the visit, at the site, and post-visit.

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