

Research Article 02

The Impact of Introducing a Nightlife Experience on Guest Satisfaction

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's tourism industry thrives on its natural beauty and culture, yet average tourist daily expenditure is declining due to limited value-adding experiences. This study examines how introducing nightlife experiences influences guest satisfaction. A quantitative survey design was adopted, using a structured 35-item questionnaire based on the experience economy, measured on a five-point Likert scale. Data were collected via convenience sampling from 384 foreign tourists who visited Sri Lanka in 2023 at key destinations such as Colombo, Kandy, Galle, Sigiriya, and Ella. Entertainment, aesthetic, and escape experiences were specified as independent variables, and guest satisfaction as the dependent variable. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to test three hypotheses. All three dimensions of nightlife experience showed a significant positive effect on guest satisfaction, explaining a substantial proportion of its variance. The study is limited by the use of non-probability sampling and its focus on short-term visitor responses. The findings suggest that well-designed nightlife products that blend international entertainment with Sri Lankan cultural elements can enhance guest satisfaction and contribute to increasing tourist spending and, ultimately, to the economic development of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Economic development, guest satisfaction, nightlife experience, Sri Lankan cultural value

Introduction

Sri Lanka's tourism and hospitality sectors are important and prominent in the nation's growth and economy. It generates significant foreign exchange earnings, opens doors to employment, encourages local development, and supports cultural preservation. In addition, tourism is a key component of economic diversification and expansion, fueling entrepreneurship, attracting foreign capital, and building infrastructure (Ranasinghe & Deyshappriya, 2012). Introducing new products or services in the twenty-first century has become a critical engine of development and competitiveness across many industries worldwide. Although the idea of nightlife has gained more attention in the tourism industry over the past few years, this idea has yet to become a reality in the Sri Lankan tourism experience (Jeyamugan et al., 2018; Oh et al., 2007). In the context of Sri Lanka, there is an increase in tourist arrivals. Still, the daily expenditure has faced a reduction in the tourism development authority's reports. In addition to this, Sri Lankan state minister of Tourism, Ms. Dayana Gamage, has focused on introducing the concept of the nightlife economy, which has led to some controversial opinions among some parties (The Government Official News Portal, 2024). The primary purpose of this research is to investigate how far tourists' satisfaction is affected by introducing nightlife experiences to Sri Lanka. The primary purpose of this research is to investigate how much introducing nightlife experiences to Sri Lanka affects tourists' satisfaction.

The nightlife in Sri Lanka is one of the main draws for travellers. Nightclubs, bars, restaurants, and cultural events are just a few of the entertainment choices available in the nightlife culture, which is constantly changing (Jeyamugan et al., 2018). This study aims to determine how effectively introducing a nightlife experience to visitors affects this industry. Increasing their satisfaction will encourage them to spend, and the nightlife experience in Sri Lanka can be established as a solution to the abovementioned problem. There are different views in the literature on introducing nightlife experiences. Nightlife tourism is the residents' opinion of the most suitable tourism to develop in their region. The 20-30 age group perceives nightlife tourists more than others (El Maalouf & Ghadban, 2015). The association between nighttime encounters and visitor happiness is widespread, and it is positive (Richards, 2018). According to research, "visitors' opinions of a place and their level of pleasure," their satisfaction may be strongly influenced by their nighttime experiences (Alejziak et al., 2005).

Recent reports by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority indicate that, although tourist arrivals and overnight stays have shown signs of recovery in the post-crisis period, the average expenditure per tourist per day remains relatively modest, at about USD 181.15 in 2024 (SLTDA, 2024). More recent policy statements further highlight that the Ministry of Tourism is targeting an increase in average daily expenditure to around USD 200 per tourist, while current estimates place actual spending closer to USD 171 per day. These figures suggest that Sri Lanka is not yet fully capitalising on the spending potential of its visitors, particularly in the evenings, when many destinations worldwide generate substantial revenue through organised nightlife, entertainment, and leisure activities. Sector commentators and practitioners similarly emphasise that, beyond a few coastal and urban hubs, structured nightlife and entertainment options remain comparatively limited, constraining opportunities for value-added experiential consumption after dark (Daily FT, 2024).

Strengthening nightlife offerings is therefore increasingly identified as a strategic requirement for enhancing both visitor satisfaction and total expenditure per tourist. Media analyses on Sri Lanka's tourism revival note that the country provides numerous daytime activities but relatively fewer organised options for nighttime engagement, underscoring an underutilised opportunity to curate safe, diverse, and well-managed nightlife products. At the same time,

recent discussions on the future of the sector stress the need for Sri Lanka to shift from growth “by default” to growth “by design,” moving up the value chain by attracting higher-spending visitors rather than merely increasing arrival numbers (Daily FT, 2024). In this context, empirically examining how entertainment, aesthetic, and escape dimensions of nightlife influence guest satisfaction addresses a clear gap in Sri Lankan tourism research and provides evidence that can inform strategic tourism planning and industry investment.

Moreover, Sri Lanka’s most visited tourist sites, such as Sigiriya, Dambulla, Ella, Badulla, and Nuwara Eliya, are predominantly rural or semi-rural regions where tourism functions as a primary engine of local economic activity. Yet, tourist engagement in these areas drops significantly after sunset, limiting opportunities for rural entrepreneurs, small-scale vendors, homestay operators, entertainers, and community-based enterprises to benefit from visitor spending. Developing structured, culturally meaningful nightlife experiences in these regions can extend tourist activity into evening hours, creating additional income streams, generating employment for rural youth, strengthening local creative industries, and increasing demand for locally sourced goods and services. Rural tourism research consistently highlights that value-added experiential offerings help reduce regional income inequalities, diversify livelihood opportunities, and foster community-driven development (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). Therefore, enhancing nightlife experiences is not only relevant for improving guest satisfaction but also for supporting sustainable rural development through broader participation in the tourism value chain.

This study helps to find out how effective introducing a nightlife experience to guests is. This study will provide a deeper understanding of nightlife experiences for hospitality businesses operating in similar contexts. No study has been conducted on the effects of introducing a nightlife experience on guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry, particularly in Sri Lanka. By examining the relationship between introducing nightlife experience and guest satisfaction. Over the years, research has highlighted the importance of tourism and hospitality. However, the literature is not forthcoming on the effect of nightlife on guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Most of the research carried out in this field views nightlife as an aspect of tourism commodities rather than a service provided by hospitality businesses. Additionally, there is hardly any research on the effect of such experiences on guest satisfaction, especially in emerging tourism markets such as Sri Lanka. This has made it difficult to ascertain the role of introducing nightlife elements such as clubs, live performances, or themed events in enhancing guests’ satisfaction and, by extension, their perception of the hospitality experience. This research study seeks to close this knowledge gap while providing important managerial and scholarly insights. This study can help to improve the tourism industry strategically, significantly boost Sri Lanka's economic growth, and establish the country as a top tourist destination, revealing how nightlife affects visitor satisfaction. Additionally, this study provides timely advice on how countries like Sri Lanka should adapt and innovate to meet shifting visitor choices and expectations as the COVID-19 epidemic has transformed the tourism sector internationally (Calibeo-Hayes et al., 2003). It expands on the ideas presented by scholars such as Maalouf and Ghadban (2015); Rajaratnam et al. (2014), who have emphasised the importance of the nightlife experience in the hospitality industry context. Organisations in the hospitality sector, especially nightlife venues in Sri Lanka, receive practical suggestions based on research findings. In addition, this research study enhances the knowledge of how the nightlife experience affects guest satisfaction and provides insights for academics and practitioners in the field. Nightlife experience businesses in the hotel industry can position themselves for long-term success in a rapidly changing new experience and products by understanding the relevance of the nightlife experience and embracing its potential.

Finally, popularising a concept such as nightlife in a culturally important South Asian country like Sri Lanka has not been easy. However, tourists visit countries like Sri Lanka because of its cultural diversity. What should be done is not to be enslaved to the traditional nightlife experiences but to incorporate Sri Lanka's cultural diversity, local medicine, and local food into these experiences. It can increase tourist satisfaction and encourage them to spend through a next-level experience.

Literature Review

Experience Economy

Experiential consumption is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors worldwide. Because consistent, high levels of product and service quality can no longer be used to influence consumer decisions, Pine and Gilmore argue that in the growing experience economy, in addition to consuming goods and services, people are looking for experience (Indrayuni et al., 2024). According to Oh et al. (2007), businesses must provide a differentiated value-added proposition to goods and services that already have a consistent, high level of functional excellence to meet this new need for unique and memorable experiences. Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated that the change from selling things to selling services would be another step toward the sales experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Businesses must provide memorable experiences to meet customers' needs for unique encounters. Pine & Gilmore offered opportunities in several businesses and sectors that utilise their experience in operations, including travel and tourism. As seen in the diagram, Pine and Gilmore (1998) classified experiences into four general categories based on two aspects (Customer involvement and relationship). These include "entertainment experiences", "educational experiences", "escape experiences", as well as "aesthetic experiences" (Joseph & Gilmore, 1998). As seen in the diagram, Pine and Gilmore (1998) categorised experiences into four general kinds based on two aspects (consumer participation and relationship). These include "entertainment experience," "educational experience," "escape experience," as well as "aesthetic experience." Watching movies is an entertainment activity that involves absorption and passivity (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

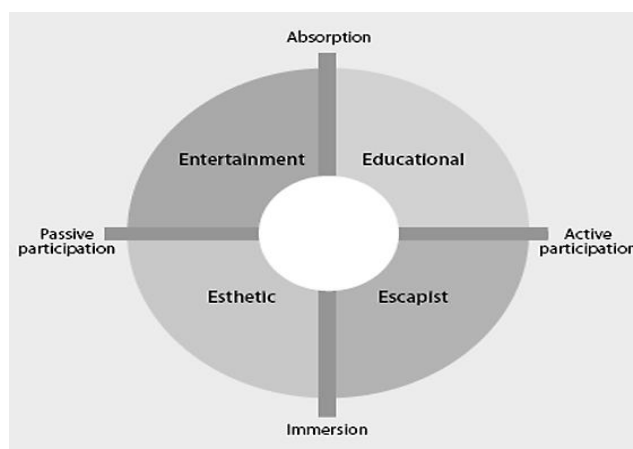


Figure 1: Experience Model
Source: Pine and Gilmore (1998)

Nightlife Experience

Nighttime tourism activities are called "nightlife tourism". It is frequently associated with nightlife venues. Literature also bears witness to the "night-time economy," a sector of the cultural economy (Chew, 2009). Excludes commercial sex industries comprising bars, dance clubs, karaoke venues, raves, live music venues, and other nightlife businesses (Garcia-Ruiz & Nofre, 2024). Availability and accessibility of commercial facilities, entertainment facilities, lighting, and public spaces influence the timing and distribution of nighttime activities (Song et al., 2016). Since the 1990s, urban planners have increasingly embraced the idea of the night economy, which has had a significant social and economic impact on Western society. Initially limited to high adults and adults, many adolescents, young adults, and even growing children adopt this lifestyle (Dolatabadi et al., 2023). In summary, nightlife tourism is a vital force pulsating the tourism industry. This concept provides visitors with enhanced cultural interaction, stimulation of economic activity, and a gateway to priceless memories.

Guest Satisfaction

Ensuring a high level of guest satisfaction is a critical priority for all companies because it is one of the most critical factors influencing customer behaviour (Aşan et al., 2020). The notion of contentment has been extensively examined in connection with several domains within the literature on hospitality and tourism (Gupta et al., 2007). Satisfaction is a measure of people's favourable thoughts and feelings about the goods or services that suppliers have to offer. When an experience exceeds expectations, customers are happy; When it falls short of their expectations, they become unhappy (Aşan et al., 2020). Furthermore, it should be noted that satisfaction is a psychological state that is created by different consuming experiences (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988). The equity theory of marketing states that customers are satisfied when they get greater value for their money, time, and effort (Berezan et al., 2013). One of the most persistent and extensively studied topics in the domains of consumer behaviour and tourism is guest satisfaction. Guest satisfaction is defined as the consumer's post-consumption assessment of a certain item or service (Yang et al., 2018). Based on a person's pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase quality evaluations, it is a vague and elusive notion (Sipe & Testa, 2018). Various perspectives have been used to approach research on customer happiness in the tourism industry, leading to many theories. Expectation-confirmation is one of the most comprehensive paradigms. This model states that happiness arises from comparing the perceived product and the consumer's expectations (Crotts et al., 2009).

Entertainment Experience

Pine and Gilmore claim that entertainment is often the first experience and usually results in a person's passive participation (Joseph & Gilmore, 1998). In more detail, Oh et al. (2007) observe that entertainment is one of the most complex and ubiquitous experiences in the modern corporate environment and one of the oldest. Some research has emphasised the importance of entertainment in enhancing or enriching the overall experience (Oh et al., 2007). Finally, entertainment is still a critical component of the tourism industry, and some tourist destinations are known for their offerings' size, variety, and extent (Hosany & Witham, 2010). Entertainment benefits satisfaction, and the results show that entertainment significantly affects satisfaction (Song et al., 2016). They also found that entertainment quality significantly impacts guests' satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020). However, some literature identified that the entertainment dimension was the second most vital determinant of the outcome variables (Aşan et al., 2020). However, they also found that introducing a mediator reduced the beneficial effect of entertainment events on satisfaction (Lai et al., 2020). Nevertheless, they identified that the entertainment dimension was the second most vital determinant of the

outcome variables (Aşan et al., 2020). Not only that, the entertainment experience was a key predictor of happiness with the event. However, they also discovered that introducing a mediator lessened the favourable impact of entertainment events on contentment (Lai et al., 2020). However, the entertainment dimension was marginally related to arousal (Dieck et al., 2018). While certain travel experiences, like religious pilgrimages, for example, might not include entertainment, in general, they enhance and add value to many places (Pearce, 2008). Additionally, travellers typically get their amusement from watching people perform or engage in other activities at a site, such as reading for pleasure or listening to music (Luo et al., 2020). In conclusion, entertainment is still a crucial component of the tourism industry, and certain travel locations are renowned for the calibre, variety, and quantity of their offerings (Pearce, 2008).

Aesthetic Experience

Aesthetics is meant to represent the total immersion of visitors in a non-interactive experience (Tom Dieck et al., 2018). Consumers' interpretation of the physical environment is the aesthetic dimension (Hosany & Witham, 2010). The initial idea behind the experience of esthetics was to represent visitors' complete absorption in a non-interactive encounter (Horng & Hsu, 2021). When travelling for aesthetic pleasure, visitors enjoy their surroundings without altering or altering the nature of what is offered to them (Song et al., 2016). The concept of service, which emphasises the significant impact of environmental factors on customers' experience of a physical or service location, is further associated with an aesthetic experience (Lee et al., 2020). Furthermore, the literature defines the aesthetic experience as the participants' overall assessment of the event's physical surroundings (Aşan et al., 2020). Furthermore, as Oh et al. (2007) indicated, aesthetic experience significantly impacts education, entertainment, and escape experiences. Nonetheless, according to him, the escapist experience has no discernible impact on guest satisfaction. According to "Experience Economy in ethnic cuisine," its findings confirmed that satisfaction with the festival was significantly predicted by aesthetic experience (Lai et al., 2020). Not only that, but aesthetic results were the primary determinant of experiential satisfaction outcomes (Aşan et al., 2020). It is noted in the literature on tourism and hospitality that tourist sentiments, intentions to return, and readiness to suggest are all significantly influenced by the physical surroundings of heritage assets (Garcia-Ruiz & Nofre, 2024).

Escapist Experience

The third domain of experience is escaping experience, which is defined as the guests' active involvement in the provision of goods and services, as well as their willingness to fully immerse themselves in the experience of temporarily forgetting the events of their daily lives (Tom Dieck et al., 2018). In other words, it is a conversion to a new spirit. The degree to which a person is immersed and engaged in an activity is known as an escapist experience (Hosany & Witham, 2010). However, different results were found in specific research. The escapist and entertainment characteristics did not statistically significantly contribute to visitor satisfaction, arousal, memory, or overall quality, contrary to what one might assume from tourist literature. These findings can result from a B&B-specific circumstance in the study's sample state (Tom Dieck et al., 2018). According to Oh et al. (2007), the escapism experience does not significantly influence satisfaction. Furthermore, because the escape experience is weaker than other experiences and does not influence pleasure, no mediation impact of perceived festival value was discovered in the escape dimension, which is experienced as a solid environmental connection through immersion (Lai et al., 2020). Ultimately, when it came to recall, arousal, enjoyment, and recommendation intention, escapism was the least

significant factor. More precisely, the total perceived quality was the only thing escapism was significant in predicting (Aşan et al., 2020). Lastly, studies of tourism usually touch on the concept of escape amid the enticements. Furthermore, intense absorption and active engagement are hallmarks of the escapism experience (Indrayuni et al., 2024).

Development of the Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

Pine and Gilmore's model of experience suggested that experience can be identified in four ways (Joseph & Gilmore, 1998). It is the most influential theory of experience and one that many researchers use in their research (Aşan et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Song et al., 2016; Tom Dieck et al., 2018). Although it appears to be education, entertainment, aesthetics, and escape, the researcher researches the three variables of entertainment, aesthetics, and escape depending on the nature of the experience. Also, the research hypotheses are based on similar research results (Aşan et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Tom Dieck et al., 2018).

Literature suggests that entertainment has a beneficial effect on satisfaction, and the enjoyment and reward tendency generally supports this study (Song et al., 2015). Research has also found that entertainment quality significantly affects guest satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020a). Also, aesthetic experience, return intention, and tourism satisfaction influenced visitor satisfaction (H. Song et al., 2016). It was also emphasised that the aesthetic experience of viewers plays a prominent role in determining their level of enjoyment (Aşan et al., 2020). This aesthetic experience will satisfy the visitor, further eliciting emotional feelings (Lee et al., 2020; Song et al., 2015). Moreover, the model predicting tourists' enthusiasm, recall, overall quality, and satisfaction had the most significant variance explained by the aesthetic dimension of the B&B experience (Tom Dieck et al., 2018). Furthermore, escapism is one of the most essential experiences influencing return intention and guest satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020a). Not only that, the escape experience has a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction (Song et al., 2015).

Thus, the researcher has used this literature to create the conceptual framework and construct the hypothesis.

Research Methodology

After revising the relevant literature in the area, the following conceptual framework and hypotheses were formulated for the present study.

Conceptual Framework

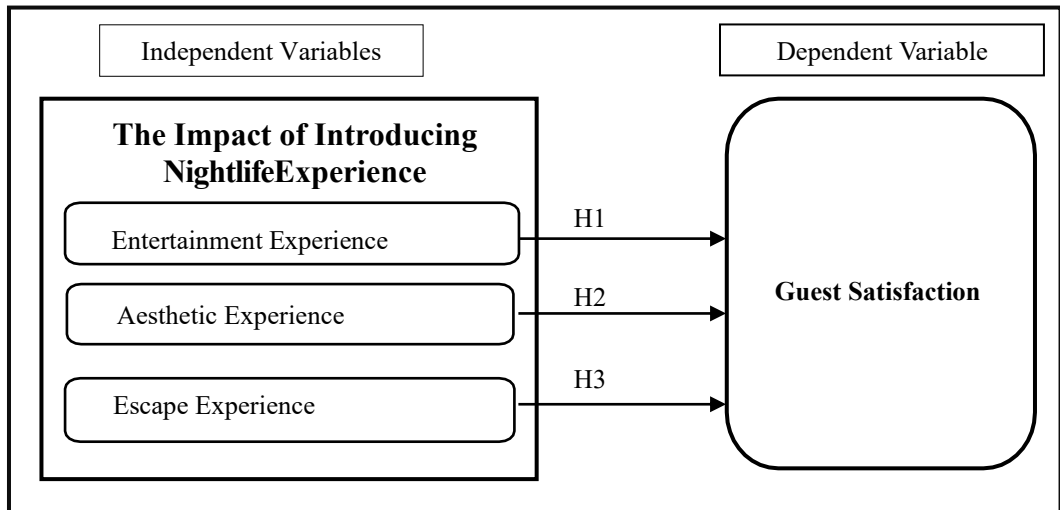


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the researcher based on previous literature

H1: The entertainment experience has a positive impact on guest satisfaction.

H2: The aesthetic experience has a positive impact on guest satisfaction.

H3: The escape experience has a positive impact on guest satisfaction.

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of introducing nightlife experience on guest satisfaction, focusing on entertainment experience, aesthetic experience, and escape experience.

Design of Survey Instruments

A multi-section internet survey was designed for data collection, distributed online and by contacting the respondents directly. The first section captured the demographic profile of the respondents (gender, age, marital status). Singleness, nationality, and monthly income). The rest of the sections captured the information about the previous three variables: entertainment experience, aesthetic experience, and escape experience. The final section explores guest satisfaction as a taste variable. Entertainment experience is measured by the fun, enjoyable, entertaining, interesting, amusing, and captivating dimensions. Also, aesthetic experience is measured by harmony, pleasantness, a pretty blend of setting, attractiveness, attention to design details, and pleasurable senses. Furthermore, the escape experience variable is measured by the dimensions of pretending to be someone else, living in another time, living as someone else, escaping from reality, and completely forgetting routine. Finally, pleasant, correct decisions, overall experience status, eligibility for experience, and overall satisfaction were used to measure guest satisfaction. The questionnaire consists of 35 items, and the items used in previous studies were adapted for this study to ensure the validity of the survey measures. A five-point Likert scale was adopted for data collection. The questionnaire was developed based on past literature. For the convenience of the respondents, the survey was written in English.

Population, Sample, Data Collection

For this study, the population consisted of 1,276,951 foreign tourists who visited Sri Lanka up to November 2023. A minimum sample size of 384 respondents was determined using the Morgan sample size table for large populations. However, given that foreign tourists represent a highly mobile and transient population, and that a complete sampling frame of all visitors was not available at specific points in time and space, it was not practically feasible to employ probability-based random sampling. Therefore, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted, which is commonly used in tourism and hospitality research when surveying international tourists at destinations.

Before the main survey, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a sample of 30 foreign tourists to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity. Data collection was then carried out at key tourist destinations, including Colombo (81 respondents), Negombo (64), Sigiriya (38), Dambulla (32), Galle (28), Kandy (37), Badulla (33), Nuwara Eliya (42), and Ella (29). The researcher gathered data through direct, face-to-face interactions with tourists at these locations, and additional responses were obtained with the assistance of tour guides who facilitated access to foreign visitors. While convenience sampling limits the statistical generalizability of the findings, it enabled the collection of a sufficiently large and diverse sample within the practical constraints of the field setting. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority served as the primary source for the population data.

Data Analysis Techniques

In data analysis, factor analysis was employed to establish the construct validity of the instruments. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the instrument's internal consistency and reliability. Person correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Multiple regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses of the study. In addition, descriptive statistics were used to analyse and interpret the statistical properties of the sample. SPSS 21.0 statistical analysis software was used for data analysis.

Results and Interpretations

This research provides evidence to support suggestions for further research from other studies (Dolatabadi et al., 2023; Indrayuni et al., 2024b). However, it indicates that even though specific past research related to the authenticity of the nightlife experience may be limited, traditional local experiences, along with internationally recognised entertainment, like international music shows, are also highly favoured by Sri Lankan international tourists interested in more diverse experiences. This trend may be indicative of post-pandemic tourism. These results, therefore, imply that hospitality models need to evolve in light of the growing importance of immersive, diverse experiences proposed in the "experience economy" framework. This would mean diversification of nightlife offerings to appeal to different guest segments for a hospitality business. Other future research could be done on how different types of nightlife experiences affect different demographics and long-term guest loyalty, comparing these trends across other cultural contexts. Considering the demographic factors of the sample, an equal number of male and female respondents responded, and the majority were married (56.3%). Most of them are between 19 to 39 years of age (38.3%). Also, they came from England (22.7%), India (18.5%), Germany (12.5%), France (12%), and Russia (11.2%), respectively, and others are coming from Australia, Canada, China, Italy, Japan, and Myanmar. Also, regarding their income status, most respondents had an annual income below \$300 (28.4%). Factor analysis was used to evaluate the data-collecting construct's validity.

Furthermore, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value and Bartlett's test value are considered for the evaluation. The KMO values and Bartlett's test value for all variables related to the test are given in the table below.

Table 1: Results of Factor Analysis

Variable	KMO Value	Bartlett's Test Value
Guest satisfaction	0.876	0.000
Entertainment experience	0.862	0.000
Aesthetic experience	0.860	0.000
Escape experience	0.824	0.000

Source: SPSS output (2023)

A statistic called the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy gives you an idea about the validity of the variables. The test should have a KMO value greater than 0.5. According to Table 2, the KMO values of all variables exceeded 0.5, so it is clear that there is good validity. To determine whether the sample variances are equal, apply Bartlett's test. Bartlett's test value should be less than 0.5. Table 2 shows that all Bartlett's values of the variables are less than 0.05, indicating strong validity. To assess the study's premise, this part calculates the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The independent and dependent Cronbach variables' values are as follows.

Table 2: Result of Correlation Analysis

		GS	EN	EST	ESC
GS	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	384			
EN	Pearson Correlation	0.831**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	384	384		
EST	Pearson Correlation	0.834**	0.866**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	384	384	384	
ESC	Pearson Correlation	0.835**	0.818**	0.854**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	1
	N	384	384	384	384

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output (2023)

According to the data in the table above, the Pearson correlation coefficient between entertainment experience, aesthetic experience, escape experience, and guest satisfaction is shown as 0.831, 0.834, and 0.835, respectively. Also, the P value is less than 0.001 for all three independent variables.

The effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable of the study is determined by regression analysis. To characterise the study's findings, the researcher used several tables, including model summary, ANOVA, and coefficient tables. This multiple regression analysis is performed to evaluate the hypothesis created and measure the model fit and variability among the variables used in the study.

Table 3: Result of Regression Analysis

R= 0.880	R^2 = 0.775		Adjusted R^2= 0.773	Sig.=0.000	Dorbin Watson = 2.086
Model	Unstandardized		Standard	t	Sig.
	Coefficient		Coefficient		
	B	St. Error	Beta		
Constant	0.459	0.109		4.207	0.000
ENT	0.315	0.050	0.324	6.343	0.000
EST	0.251	0.058	0.246	4.359	0.000
ESC	0.341	0.046	0.360	7.337	0.000

Source: SPSS output (2023)

The dependent variable's variation in a regression model explained by independent variables shows an R² value of 0.775 in the table. The research's independent variables explained guest satisfaction in 77.5% of cases. Adjusted R² can be used to compare the goodness-of-fit of regression models with numerous independent variables. The corrected R² score for this investigation was 0.773. The Dorbin-Watson test is used to ascertain if autocorrelation exists in a sample. The Durban-Watson value range is 0 to 3. A value of 2 indicates no autocorrelation in the sample, and the study's tested value was 2.086.

The regression equation is:

$$Y = 0.459 + 0.315 \text{ EN} + 0.251 \text{ EST} + 0.341 \text{ ESC}$$

The significant value of the study is 0.000, which indicates a significant correlation between independent and dependent variables ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$). All the independent variables were significant at the 0.05 level in the table.

The statistical results hold important implications for Sri Lanka's tourism sector. The significant positive relationships identified between entertainment, aesthetic, and escape experiences and overall guest satisfaction demonstrate that nightlife activities are not merely supplementary attractions but essential components of the visitor experience. These findings are particularly important for Sri Lanka, where average tourist daily expenditure remains below regional benchmarks and visitor engagement tends to decline after sunset. By highlighting which dimensions of nightlife most strongly predict satisfaction, the results offer clear direction for tourism planners, hospitality providers, and local entrepreneurs seeking to enhance value-added experiences and stimulate evening economic activity. Ultimately, the

findings underscore that strengthening nightlife experiences can play a strategic role in improving visitor perceptions, encouraging higher spending, and supporting broader tourism-driven development.

Discussion

This study's main goal is to find out how, in the Sri Lankan setting, introducing a vibrant nighttime experience on guest satisfaction. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to examine the data and assess the study's hypotheses.

According to the results of the multiple regression analysis, to achieve these objectives, the independent variables are well-suited to the data at the level of 77.5%. Stated differently, the study's independent variables (Entertainment, Aesthetics, and Escapism) that depended on guest satisfaction accounted for 77.5% of the variance. All independent variables are significant at the 0.05 level, according to the multiple regression analysis results. The dependent variable (guest satisfaction) is strongly positively impacted by each of the three independent factors. Thus, the tourists who travelled to Sri Lanka in 2023 (from January to November) helped to achieve the main objective of the evaluation research study, which was to ascertain how adding a nightlife experience on guest satisfaction.

According to the results of the correlation analysis findings, there is a significant and positive relationship between entertainment experience, Aesthetic experience, and escape experience on guest satisfaction. The Pearson correlation values for entertainment experience, esthetic experience, and escape experience were 0.831, 0.834, and 0.835, respectively, demonstrating strong positive relationships with guest satisfaction. Moreover, the regression coefficient values further supported these findings: entertainment experience at 0.315, esthetic experience at 0.251, and escape experience at 0.341. Additionally, all three hypotheses showed a P-value of 0.000, confirming statistical significance. Consequently, the comprehensive data analysis yielded the following outcomes: Both correlation and regression analysis demonstrated a significant connection between the entertainment experience and guest satisfaction. As a result, it suggests a strong positive correlation between those two variables. The researcher then examined how the aesthetic experience affected guest satisfaction. The correlation analysis accepted the hypothesis, and both methods confirmed a significant relationship between those two variables. As a result, it suggests a strong positive correlation between aesthetic experience and guest satisfaction. Finally, the researcher investigated the effect of the escape experience on guest satisfaction. Both correlation and regression analysis demonstrated a significant connection between the entertainment experience and guest satisfaction. As a result, it suggests a strong positive correlation between those two variables.

Similar to this finding, the literature suggests that entertainment has a major impact on satisfaction (H. J. Song et al., 2015). According to the research of Lee et al. (2020b) on the topic of 'Exploring Theme Park Visitors' Satisfaction and Revisit Intention: Using an Experience Economics Model', it was found that the quality of entertainment had a significant impact on how satisfied visitors were (Lee et al., 2011). However, according to Indrayuni et al. (2024b), they identified that the entertainment dimension was the second strongest determinant of the outcome variables. Similar to this finding, the study "Determining visitor engagement through augmented reality at science festivals" found that arousal was highly influenced by aesthetic experiences and that arousal, memory, overall quality, and guest satisfaction were all significantly impacted by the aesthetic component (Lee et al., 2011). According to "Experience Economy in ethnic cuisine", its findings confirmed that satisfaction with the festival was significantly predicted by aesthetic experience (Chen et al., 2020). Escape experiences are important predictors of both functional and emotional values, and they also

have a positive effect on satisfaction (Sipe & Testa, 2018). The experience economy model, which characterises each encounter as distinct and a predictor of visitors' happiness and return intention, generally (Lee et al., 2011) supports the study, with escapism being the only significant element that directly predicts future revisit intention. However, different results were found in certain research. The escapist and entertainment characteristics did not statistically significantly contribute to visitor satisfaction, arousal, memory, or overall quality, contrary to what one might assume from tourist literature. These findings can be the outcome of a B&B-specific circumstance in the study's sample state (Lee et al., 2020).

While the findings of this study align with several past studies that emphasise the positive influence of entertainment, aesthetic, and escape elements on visitor satisfaction, it is important to acknowledge that the literature also presents contrasting viewpoints. Some scholars argue that increased nightlife development may contribute to noise pollution, congestion, and cultural disruption, particularly in destinations with strong traditional and religious values. These concerns suggest that nightlife, although beneficial for enhancing guest satisfaction, may simultaneously generate pressures on local communities if not properly regulated or culturally aligned. Such contradictory perspectives highlight the need for a balanced approach to nightlife development, one that prioritises visitor experience while safeguarding community well-being.

Furthermore, although the current results indicate strong positive relationships between nightlife experiences and guest satisfaction, these associations may vary depending on tourist motivations, length of stay, age group, and cultural background. For instance, some visitors may prefer quiet, nature-focused experiences and may not perceive nightlife as contributing positively to their evaluation of the destination. Therefore, the positive effects found in this study should not be interpreted as universally applicable across all tourist segments.

The discussion also benefits from recognising contextual and methodological limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling, although practical for accessing international tourists, may have introduced a degree of sampling bias. Visitors who participate in nighttime activities might be more inclined to respond to the survey, potentially inflating positive associations. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits the ability to infer long-term behavioural outcomes, such as repeat visitation or destination loyalty. Third, nightlife experiences may be influenced by seasonal variations, local regulations, or temporary socio-political conditions, factors not captured within the study timeframe.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study set out to examine how the introduction of nightlife experiences influences guest satisfaction within the Sri Lankan tourism context. Drawing on data from 384 foreign tourists surveyed across several key destinations, the analysis focused on three core dimensions of nightlife experience: entertainment, aesthetic, and escape, and their relationship with overall guest satisfaction. The findings demonstrate that all three experience dimensions exert a significant and positive effect on guest satisfaction, indicating that well-designed nightlife experiences meaningfully enhance how visitors evaluate their stay in Sri Lanka.

These results highlight that nightlife is not a peripheral add-on but a strategically important component of the tourism value proposition. By investing in entertainment offerings, visually appealing and culturally resonant environments, and opportunities for tourists to “escape” from routine through engaging nighttime activities, destination managers and hospitality providers can both elevate guest satisfaction and create conditions for higher daily expenditure. At the same time, the study acknowledges limitations related to the use of

convenience sampling and the focus on selected destinations, suggesting caution in generalising the findings. Future research could build on this work by employing probability sampling, incorporating longitudinal or comparative designs, and exploring additional experiential and behavioural variables to deepen understanding of how nightlife contributes to sustained destination competitiveness and economic development.

Implications for Practice and Recommendation

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of guest satisfaction in the tourism sector. Specifically, increasing guest satisfaction should prioritise the entertainment, aesthetic, and escape experiences within nightlife offerings. This research significantly contributes to the development of the tourism sector, a vital element in bolstering Sri Lanka's economy, given that the country is an attractive destination for travellers. This study may inspire further research into enhancing the tourism sector in Sri Lanka and beyond, with a focus on improving guest satisfaction.

Additionally, the study provides evidence that entertainment, aesthetic, and escape experiences are positively correlated with guest satisfaction, suggesting the potential for targeted interventions aimed at enhancing these aspects. The findings also highlight the need to consider guest satisfaction in tourism development, suggesting that nightlife experiences have a cognitive impact on guest satisfaction. However, this relationship warrants further exploration to fully understand its implications. To improve guest satisfaction, a primary focus should be placed on enhancing the entertainment, aesthetic, and escape elements of nightlife. The insights from this study are valuable for government departments, such as the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), as well as current business owners, prospective investors, and all stakeholders involved in the tourism sector. The study emphasises the importance of nightlife experiences for tourism development and highlights the significant role of guest satisfaction. By addressing the needs of tourists and satisfying them, issues like the low minimum daily tourism expenditure can be mitigated, helping to avoid challenges like travel safety concerns and illicit drug use. The findings can guide the design of interventions tailored to boost satisfaction through diverse experiences that cater to travellers from various cultural backgrounds.

The theoretical implications suggest that future research should delve deeper into the psychological and sociocultural factors influencing visitor satisfaction in nightlife tourism. This could involve the development of models integrating entertainment, aesthetics, and escape experiences into broader frameworks of destination attractiveness. Cross-cultural comparisons would also enhance the theoretical understanding of tourism satisfaction and decision-making processes. The findings offer a foundation for expanding our comprehension of the influence of nightlife experiences on visitor satisfaction, particularly in Sri Lanka. To expand our understanding of guest satisfaction, future research should build upon the findings of this study, as the concept of nightlife experiences in Sri Lankan tourism is still relatively new. Further investigations are needed to explore the different dimensions of guest satisfaction, its relationship with other relevant variables, and its significance across diverse cultural and economic contexts. Future studies should also consider other external factors and mediators, such as service quality, perceived value, prices, and security issues, which can further explain the factors contributing to guest satisfaction. Additionally, the long-term effects of introducing nightlife experiences should be explored. While this study primarily focused on guest satisfaction during the initial visit, understanding the lasting impact of nightlife experiences beyond the short-term period is essential. This long-term perspective is crucial for comprehending how nightlife offerings influence visitor decisions and the future

sustainability of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. By examining these long-term effects, future research can better inform strategies for improving the tourism sector and its economic contribution to the country. It is also recommended to diversify the sample in future research to enhance the generalizability of the findings. While the current study focused on foreign tourists in Sri Lanka, including local tourists would offer a more comprehensive view of the attitudes toward nightlife experiences in the country. This will help capture a broader perspective on tourists' willingness to engage with such offerings. A diversified sample will also provide valuable insights into the differences and similarities across various types of travellers. For tourism operators, focusing on diversifying nightlife experiences is key to improving guest satisfaction. Offering a variety of entertainment, aesthetic, and escape experiences that cater to diverse tourist preferences is essential. Ensuring safety, addressing security concerns, and monitoring illicit activities will help build trust with visitors. Improving service quality and perceived value will also enhance overall satisfaction. Finally, collaboration between government bodies and private businesses is crucial for creating sustainable, high-quality nightlife experiences that contribute to both tourist satisfaction and the economic growth of Sri Lanka.

Finally, these recommendations will guide future researchers to advance our understanding of the impact of introducing nightlife experiences in Sri Lanka on visitor satisfaction. By addressing these recommendations, researchers can further explore and refine the existing model and contribute to the development of effective interventions and strategies to increase the satisfaction of travellers to Sri Lanka and increase their daily expenditure.

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