

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AS A BRANDING TOOL IN MARKETING TOURISM: A STUDY OF RESORT HOTELS IN SOUTHERN COASTAL ZONE SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Landscape Architecture and hotel industry have a closer affinity considering its huge contribution for the growth, branding and attracting tourists. For a destination to be branded, it will be need more than one specification. When Architecture contributing in a one hand side Landscape Architecture is it's the other hand. Hotel industry is Sri Lanka's key driver of economic growth and the prominence. Sri Lanka gets many benefits from tourism industry because of many reasons such as its location, natural beauty, resources makes little island a paradise which nobody refuses a visit. Attracting tourists directs benefits to the destination branding and economical profits for the hotels in Sri Lanka. Selected study area is Southern coastal zone in Sri Lanka since many preferred tourism destinations has recorded in this part of the country. Nevertheless, hoteliers must go through competitive strategies to uplift their outcomes. This study will indicate strategies, theories and methods that can be applied to brand a tourism destination by attracting tourists through the applications of Landscape Architecture. This study will identify the existing constraints, indulgences regarding the resort hotels. Research problem specifies the interconnection between tourism and marketing, how does it involve with Landscape Architecture and how does current Landscaping strategies that have used in hotel industry helps with its growth will be discussed through the study. Data has collected for the research through online survey, interviews and questionnaires to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Findings shows that the tourists preferred more outdoor spaces in the hotels rather than stay in indoors. Therefore, the demand on Landscape features are higher than the other aspects. According to the analysis, as a conclusion Landscape Architecture elements and features can be considered as a main function and a branding tool in marketing tourism in hotel industry. These strategies and the outcomes can be used for any location with geographical similarities worldwide.

Keywords: Tourism, Hotel branding, Destination branding, Tourism and marketing, Landscape Architecture, Tourism and Landscape

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Introduction

Tourism industry has become one of the major income triggers in Sri Lanka after the civil war happened in 2009. Throughout these 10 years of time it has grown up in doubles. If one can identify the strategies what are Sri Lankan hotels and resorts must follow to attract tourists, it will be more sustainable in many ways.

“As the hotel industry continues to grow rapidly, authorities need to encourage sustainability practices by recognizing and promoting hotels that implement energy saving and recycling measures in their operations. Experience shows that sustainability translates into profitability. Best practices are often subsequently rewarded. With this growth, it becomes important that Sri Lanka's pristine environment does not suffer” (IFC-2013).

Pointed out by IFC overview of Sri Lanka's hotel industry. Sri Lanka as the pearl of Indian ocean it has many aspects and specialties in attracting tourists. Some of them are its natural beauty, location, culture and many other things. Attracting tourism cause destination branding also.

“The sole objective is to communicate the captivating story and give a glimpse of the unearthly experience that awaits the visitor when they visit this destination – That is the story of your brand and which needs to be broadcasted across all the marketing mediums” (Copper bridge -2017).

But, for a destination to be branded it need to have unique identities may be along with Architectural and Landscape Architectural features which can inspire different kinds of tourists. Southern coastal zone in Sri Lanka is such an area with some of those qualities stands out itself. Studying those Landscape Architectural features and elements which strives through this research will enhance the strategies, techniques and user satisfactory on the existing hotels and resorts in Sri Lanka will help to grow up them bigger. The brand is often found in the hotel business. A brand is simply defining a value of a hotel or any business. In practice, differences in meaning can affect the effective implementation of brand strategies. Bibliographic definitions of the value of a hotel brand are compared with the definitions of consultants in the hotel business. A definition of work in progress on the value of the hotel brand is proposed. This is the first step to the theory of hotel brand value.

Hotel branding can be done through many sources of predeterminations literally through many sources of studies such as Architecture, Business strategies, Technology and so on. Landscape architecture has been the new trend to go through branding. Many resources prove that nature can do effect on human mind, attraction quicker than other points. Now it's not just about designing a hotel or resort. Guests for whom life, business and entertainment intersect, perfectly look at higher expectations and are willing to pay more for the fusion of expectations, memory and pleasure. Landscape Architects are responsible for creating meaningful and memorable events to ensure that powerful brands connect with the soul of a place. So, how can a landscape offer a unique experience of luxury, a collection of organized moments that evoke emotions? Relationships are personal, and guests are taking better and better care of themselves. Seeing the higher medical and social needs of guests that can be achieved beyond what is expected in the landscape as the landscape is meditating. The most important aspect of the movement for health

and well-being in the landscape is the ability of guests and residents to "connect with nature." Developers and operators seek to go beyond aesthetics and create "working landscapes" from both an economic and an environmental point of view. While open space may be limited, design flexibility is key to using hybrid functionality to create a more generous and balanced return on investment for gardens to work in relaxing yards, dinners on the boardwalk, bars. New gardens, family meetings by the pool, corporate events and great lawn weddings define this unforgettable experience. Ultimately, a deep understanding of guest experience can only be achieved through collaborative work ethics and harmony with architects, engineers, interior designers and operations managers who work closely with the developer to offer the service. Exceptionally, it

This study will argue between 2 theories, Stanley Plog's theory of Tourists destination preferences (1972) and Butler's theory on tourists resort development – Tourists area life cycle model (TALC model) (1980) and these will help to find out how these theories proves that the tourist's perception on destinations in resort hotels is a dynamic function happens time to time by comparing with the TALC model.

Research Problem

The main problem will be raised that does the current landscaping design solutions in Sri Lankan hotels and resorts has succeeded in their branding and attracting tourists and guests? To discuss along to find out the effectiveness of landscape architecture in branding of resort hotels. And how does the visual scenarios impact on human mentality, mind relaxation can be applied through the landscaping of outdoors in the hotels to raise their commercial, economical value. And, Community responsiveness relating landscape architecture and brand identity in resort hotels and Landscape architecture as a hotel branding tool. And how does the people react under different landscaping solutions.

And, will be discussed about the innovative landscaping solutions for Sri Lankan hotel industry to uplift their value for the community. Above are the main parts that are hoping to discuss, and the main essential parts are tourism, hotel branding and landscape architecture application. To find out the answers for the research problem can use both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Aims and Objectives

Majorly this study aims to identify whether Sri Lanka's Landscape Architecture has been used its maximum as a branding tool in marketing tourism? And this study will guide through the appreciated Landscape Architectural features that has been used in hotels and resorts and will discuss about the user satisfaction on each feature and what is there to be added and to be improved more to enhance the Landscapes.

Accordingly discuss about;

- The connection between marketing and tourism
- Landscape Architecture impact on tourism
- What is the Landscape Architectural features and elements attract more tourists?
- Branding strategies using Landscape Architecture features
- Demand on the Landscape features on tourist perception

Methodology

To collect data, a comprehensive literature survey will be carried out in selected range of hotels and resorts in Southern coastal zone, which may be some 5-star hotels and 3-star hotel.

Following hotels are the selected cases for the survey,

- Amari Hotel Galle – Five star rated hotel
- Jetwing Lighthouse hotel, Galle – Five Star rated hotel
- Cloisenburg hotel, Unawatuna- Three Star rated hotel

Qualitative research and a quantitative research will be conducted to collect more sensory data. In the first place, an online questionnaire pilot survey will be conducted using travel and tourism websites such as TripAdvisor and Booking.com and via social media such as Facebook and Instagram. About 30 tourists will be selected through the official web sites of the hotels randomly. Data sampling methods will be convenience sampling and purposive sampling for the pilot survey.

Amari Hotel will be selected as the Pilot study case and the reviews were given by the tourists will be analysed and taken as subject cases for the pilot survey. Quantitative research can be proceeded through surveys, journal articles, official web sites of the hotels, brochures, newspaper articles, reviews and telephone conversations. To collect more deep details about the customer satisfaction and the hotel selection reasons Qualitative research will be conducted by interviewing management staff and customers in the premises.

Finally, a qualitative research and a questionnaire survey will be conducted in all the hotels to collect qualitative information by interviewing the staff and the tourists. Results will be analysed by graphs and pie charts to conclude.

Methodological Framework

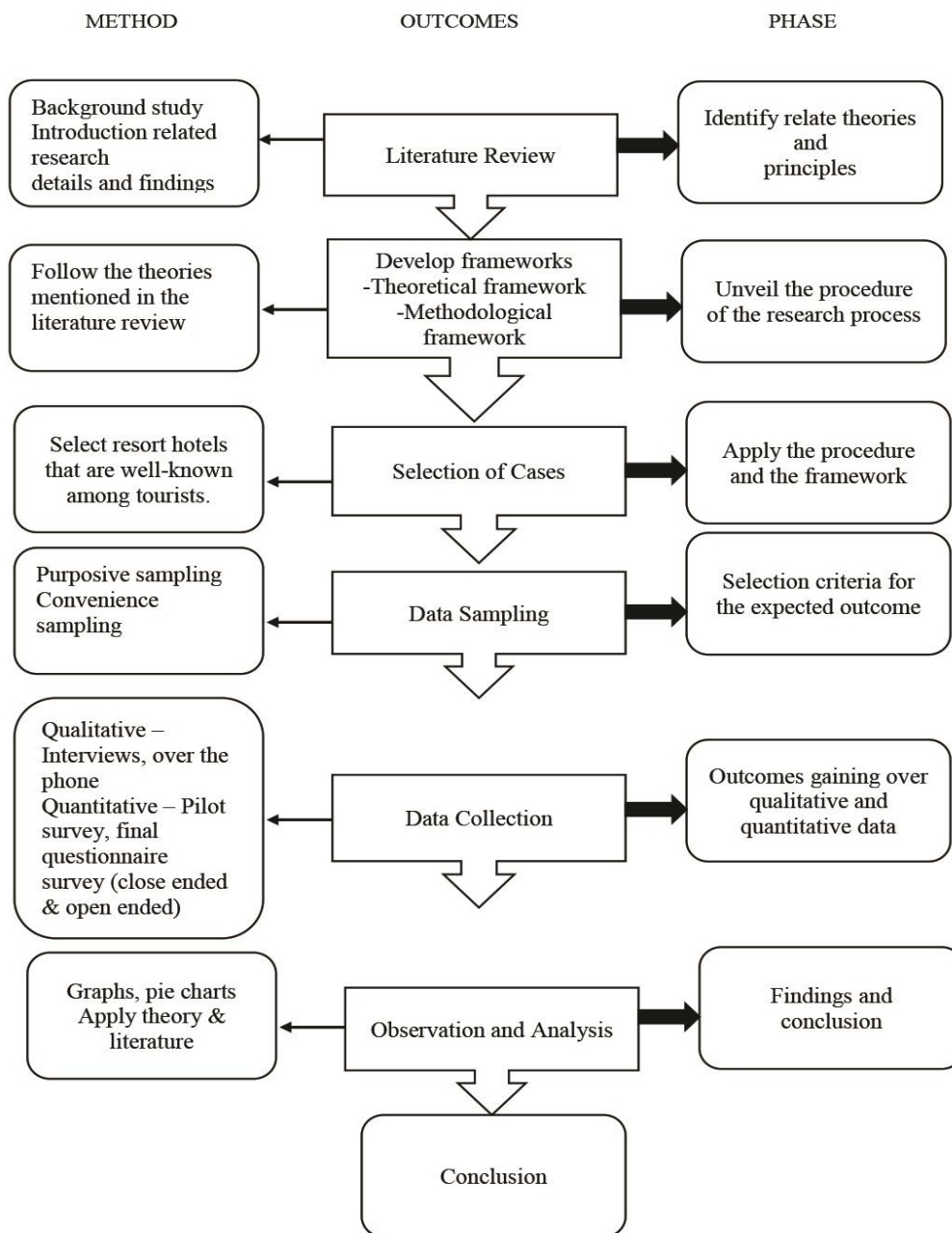


Figure. 1: Methodological Framework: Development of methodology in graphical format
 Source: author

Scope and Limitations

This research is focused on marketing tourism in resort hotels in Southern coastal zone in Sri Lanka and Landscape Architecture impact on it. This study will analyse the existing Landscape Architectural features and element contribution in tourist attraction for hotels by the perception of tourists through questionnaires and online surveys. This study will be only carried through Southern Coastal zone in Sri Lanka. Within this limited space, study will be analysed the existing Landscape applications and will product with solutions for the existing problems.

One of the main limitations and constraint that has faced during the study was unavailability of tourist because of the crisis happened in 21st April 2019. This crisis stopped tourists incoming for many weeks. Therefore, it was hard to collect necessary details in the given time period since resource availability was less. Furthermore, this study doesn't consider age or gender of the selected tourists. So, the tourist perceptions according to age and gender will not be calculated.

Literature Review (Intervention of landscape architecture with tourism and destination branding)

Tourism and Landscape has a long-foreknown interconnection between them. When discussing about resort hotel branding, Landscape Architecture and Architecture are great contributions to them. So, identifying the facts, Landscape, Tourism and Hotel branding are the best ways to figure out the process.

Landscape Architecture and Tourism

Landscape can be different components of our surrounding environment as in biological environment, physical environment and social environment and the interconnection between them creates an astounding landscape. Landscape Architecture is designing and creating these existing, natural or man-made spaces while considering and conserving its qualities.

“Landscape is the way we see it or perceive it rather than the image or the object” (Johnston et al., 2000:429-431)

According to the Wascher (1995) landscape is a system included with forms, structures and nature and it is known as a dynamic system. Landscape architecture has a huge impact on the hotel branding. For each Landscape element available in a hotel premises, tourists and visitors responds in different ways. And each of these responses can be a contribution for their marketing and expanding the value of the premises. And, Cohen (1978) pointed out that not only the landscape but also tourism density of each places causes its marketing value. Consumer or customer satisfaction also a one key point which helps in marketing in hotel tourism, according to the satisfaction level increases, value of the hotel premises increases. According to Wilson (1992); landscapes are increasingly shaped by consumer demands, recreation, tourism and even nature conservation, which all combine to model the, new aesthetics of nature.

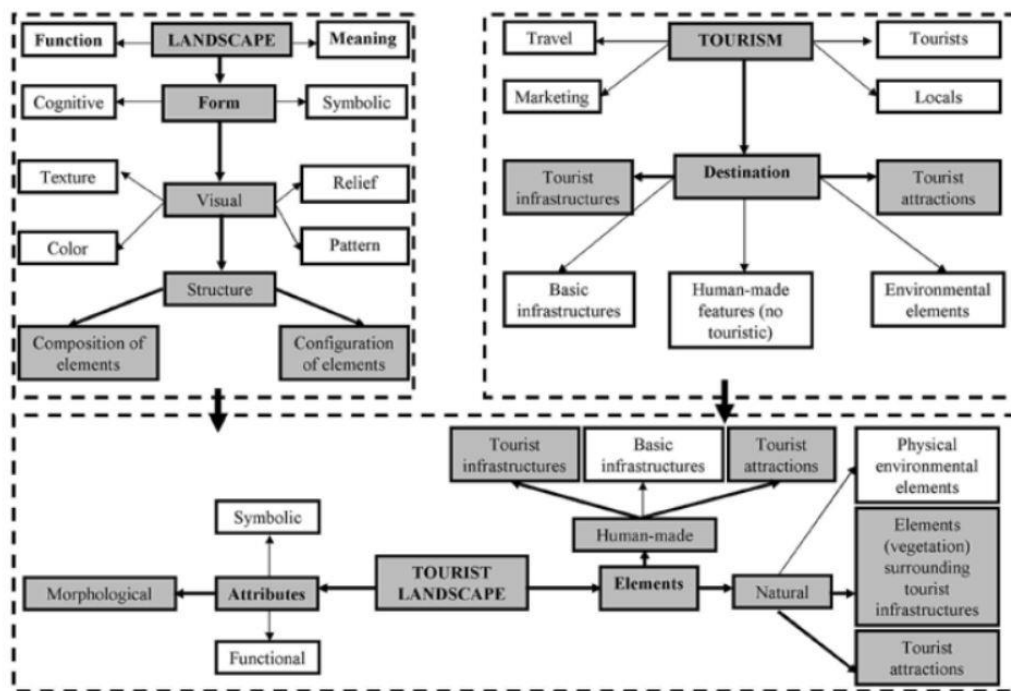


Figure. 2: Tourists Landscape Elements: Interconnection between tourism and landscapes
 Source: An international multidisciplinary journal of tourism Volume 7, Number 2, Autumn 2012, pp. 145-164

A person who travels for private purposes, business and leisure is called a tourist. Tourists most likely to find their destinations via social media, tour guides and internet. So, tourism destination branding also a branch of this big tree of hotel branding. As tourists will find more popular destinations among all the hotels in a country through its past and present achievements in the business world and considering its architecture and landscape mostly. Cohen (1972) classifies tourists into four types.

Type	Familiarity	Novelty	Others
The Drifter	Lowest	Highest	Highly adventurous; lives within the local community
The Explorer	Lower	Higher	Travels alone; seeks comfortable accommodations and reliable transportation
The Individual Mass Tourist	Higher	Lower	Not bound to a group; somewhat controlled time and itinerary
The Organized Mass Tourist	Highest	Lowest	Follows a tour guide; follows an itinerary fixed in advance

Figure 3: Types of tourists: Tourists types categorization
 Source: Cohen (1972)

And, Wang (2000) able to classify types of tourists into three sections as objective, constructive and existential. Objective tourism is precognition by the experience of previous tours. Constructive tourism is traveling destinations are chosen because of their culture, beliefs, prediction, expectation etc.

Tourism and Marketing

Due to the rapid growth of tourism industry, the need of marketing is necessary and specially all marketing methods should reach the target audience. So, the hotels and resorts should be market-oriented and should pay attention to the customer requirements and satisfaction. Competitive advantage is the attribute that puts any hotel or resort in superior in business position. So, marketing is a way of thinking about a situation that balances the needs of tourists with services or a variety of entertainment available in their destination. Therefore, Landscape Architecture can be used as a key point to uplift tourism in accordance with marketing. As discussed earlier, hoteliers must have strategical approaches to overcome the problems arises upon competitive advantage.

Porter (1982) has suggested that three generic strategies for marketing. Such as,

Cost Leadership: This point focuses on the economic aspects on a company. Which defines gaining competitive advantage through lowest cost in operation. This can be used in hotel industry on focusing green technology, environmentally friendly landscape application for the energy efficiency and other matters.

Differentiation: According to the needs and the requirements of the customers, branding is essential to differentiate each hotel or resort from other services.

Approach: Geographical location is one of the most important things when considering the marketing strategies. A hotel or resort must be established or located in a place where most tourists needs are to be met easily.

So, in tourism sector marketing is one of the key components that are related to gearing up its tempo of growth and improvement.

Branding and Landscape Architecture

Hotel branding or destination branding is marketing a place to attract more tourists/visitors to the benefits that can be achieved. A brand becomes one of the most important assets for the organization that intends to build and manage significant relationships with all business player presents in own value constellation (Norman, Ramirez, 1994). Clarke (2000) has discussed about importance of branding to the tourism as in six steps.

1. As tourism is typically high involvement, branding helps to reduce the choice;
2. Branding helps in reducing the impact of intangibility;
3. Branding conveys consistency across multiple outlets and through time;
4. Branding can reduce the risk factor attached to decision making about holidays;
5. Branding facilitates precise segmentation;
6. Branding helps to provide a focus for the integration of producer effort, helping people to work towards the same outcome

With destination branding got popular within the tourism industry, a model was required for more discussions. So, a branding strategy with six stages were defined by Keller (2003) & Kapferer (2004).

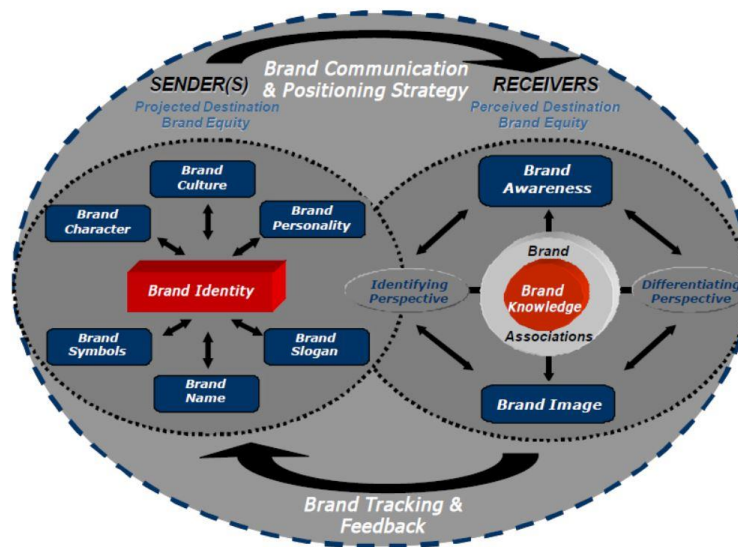


Figure. 4: Destination branding model: A comprehensive model for destination branding
 Source: Web – our elaboration

They were known as Brand culture, Brand character, Brand personality, Brand name, Brand logos and Brand slogan. Through this approach made a revolutionary impact in tourism destination branding.

Tourism in Sri Lanka

Hotel industry is Sri Lanka’s key driver of economic growth and prominence. Tourists are attracted to Sri Lanka because of its natural beauty, location, hospitality and many other reasons. Besides these well-known facts, Architecture and Landscape Architecture are hidden circumstances that have caused to attract tourists. As an example, Heritance Hotel Kandalama in Sri Lanka is a star class hotel that was built on 1994 among the rejections from the residences in Kandalama pointing out that building a hotel in a nature sensitive environment will harm its existing biodiversity and ecosystem. Notwithstanding, development of Kandalama Hotel carried out while bringing positive and negative consequences to the community.

This contemporary hotel was designed by Sri Lanka’s reputed architect Geoffrey Bawa, he named it as “*an austere jungle palace*”. Unique identity, its endeavours to embrace the feeling of a forest from indoors, environmentally friendly design abled to allure tourists to Dambulla, Sri Lanka while giving a regional identity. It’s a best example can achieve through destination branding triumphs within Sri Lanka.

Nevertheless, currently tourism industry has met with the disaster after the Easter Sunday bombing attacks happened on 21st April 2019 targeting many Churches and hotels around the country, killed more than 253 people including many tourists. SLTDA’s reports shows that until then Sri Lanka was reaching a higher amount of tourist arrivals since the beginning of the year. Even the hotels report that the bookings got cancelled after the attacks and Sri Lanka is still suffering from it.

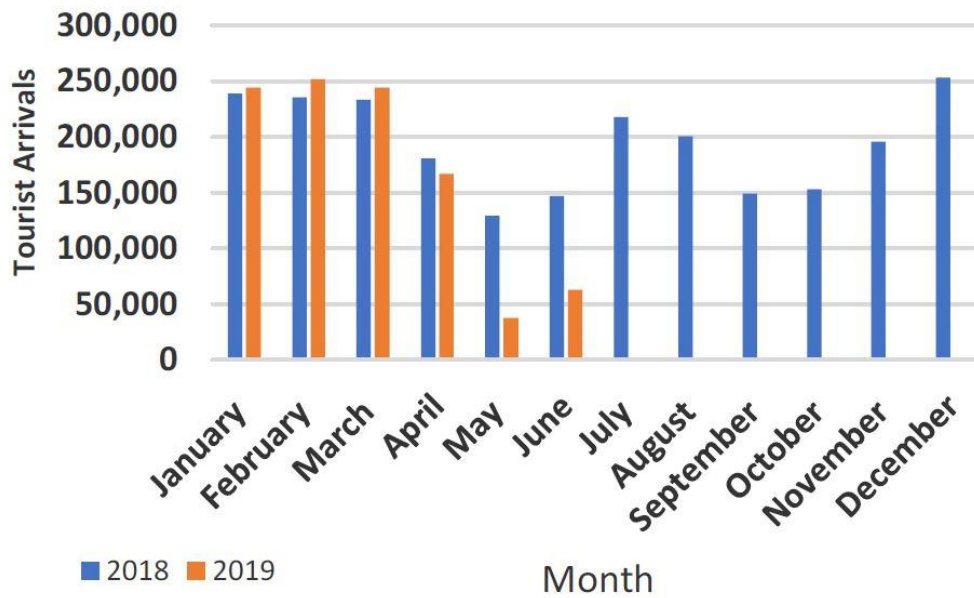


Figure 5: Tourists arrival chart 2018-2019: Graphical representation of tourism arrivals in Sri Lanka
 Source: SLTDA Annual Statistical Report 2017

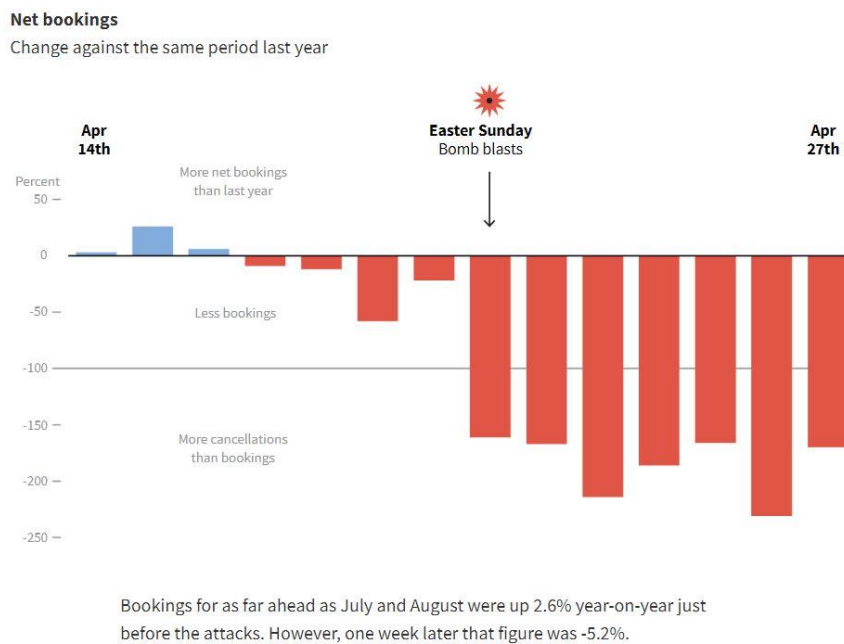
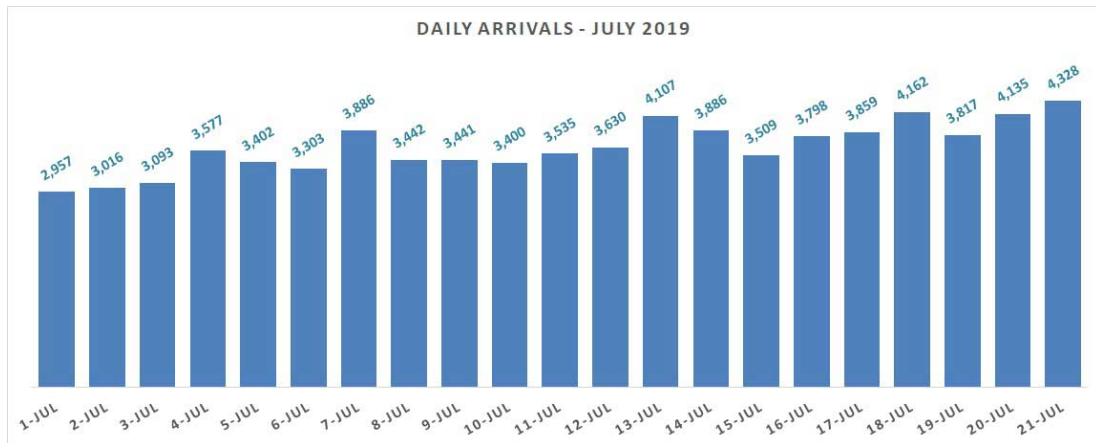


Figure 6: Decrease of hotel bookings: Hotel bookings compared with Easter bombing attacks
 Source: SLTDA Annual Statistical Report 2017

But, after the June tourist arrivals show an increase sufficiently than past 2 months. By the July daily tourist arrivals are in good shape now.



Not only in Sri Lanka, but also Paris-France, Bali-Indonesia and Egypt also has been gone through hard times- a toll on tourism like this and they recovered faster through the improvements. Tourists need new adventures, viewpoints to explore Sri Lanka in a different perspective.

Considering the given facts in tourism comparison report 2017 by SLTDA, Sri Lanka is currently having a low tourism arrival rate comparing with the other South Asian countries.

After the Tsunami hits the island in 2004, again Sri Lanka's tourism industry faced a huge recession. Due to the loss and the destruction of coastal belt hotels and resorts SLTDA has introduced tourism development projects to upraise tourism island wide.

Figure 7: Tourists daily arrival of month July: Graphical representation of tourism arrivals in Sri Lanka
Source: SLTDA Annual Statistical Report 2017

Kuchchaweli Beach Resort – Trincomalee (Eastern Province), Dedduwa Lake Resort – Bentota (Southern Province), Kalpitiya Dutch Bay Resort – Puttalam (North Western Province), Passikudah Resort – Batticaloa (Eastern Province) and Yala Wild Resort – Hambantota (Southern Province) are the proposed under construction projects introduced by SLTDA to uplift tourism in Sri Lanka.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter discuss about the theories will be followed to build up the main theoretical frameworks. These theories will help to conquer the main objectives of the research. This study will be discussed here about Stanley Plog's theory of *Tourists destination preferences* (1972) and Butler's theory on *tourists resort development – tourist's area evolution model* (1980).

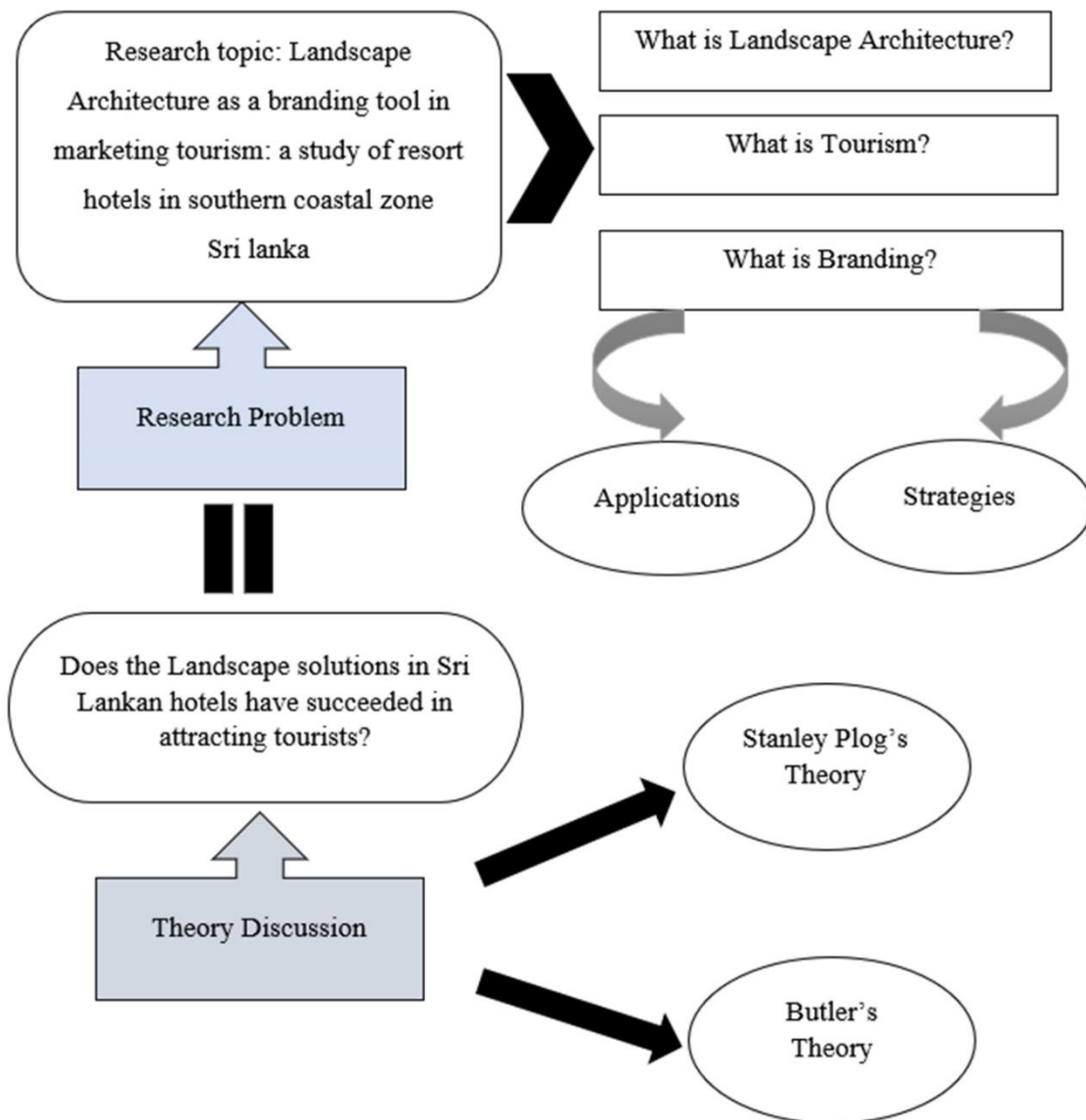


Figure 8: Theoretical Framework: Development of theory in graphical format
 Source: author

Stanley Plog's theory of Tourists Destination Preferences (1972)

Stanley Plog who was born on 1930, was a travel research specialist, consultant and an author who has provided theories on tourism through his traveling life experiences. He pointed out tourist destination preferences through his seminal work on, "*why destination rise and fall in popularity*" (Plog ,1974). Which says that when popularity of each tourist's destination changes, it can be vary between high and low. Also, he introduced his tourists' preferences model of Allocentricity and Psychocentricity. It was the tourism's first psychographic model. So, he had pointed out that tourists' destination can be varied according to their personalities and personal preferences on the environment. So, he classified tourists into three categories such as Psychocentric, Allocentric and Midcentrics.

Psychocentric – These tourists like to visit familiar environment and cultures and they prefer “safe” destinations. These tourists don’t like new experimental features with accommodations, entertainment or food. They like everything as it was same.

Allocentric – These types of tourists like to experience adventures and variety of experienced destinations and goals. And, they would like to interact with whole different cultures and environments and try new foods and entertainment.

Midcentrics – These types of tourists are most of the tourists or the mass market. They have personalities both psychocentric and the allocentric. They are not mostly adventurous, but they are not afraid to try new experiences if these are not too challenging. Popular destinations nowadays are visited by midcentrics.

Plog’s theory on tourist’s destination preferences can be simplified as follows;

- Each type of tourists has different tastes on choosing their destinations.
- Most tourists like to travel for short distances for holidays.
- Major population areas in developed countries are chosen as tourists’ destinations mostly than in remote areas.

So as a summary he discusses about the psychological characteristics of tourists and the effects of it of it on their choices of destination and travel patterns.

Butler’s theory on tourists resort development – tourist’s area evolution model (1980).

Prof. Richard W. Butler in 1980 started a study on tourism carrying capacity and sustainability. He pointed out that tourism should be well managed, or it will be the destruction of itself by time to time. So, he introduced a model based on six different categories call TALC - Tourism Area Life Cycle model.

This theory and the model argue together with Christaller, Plog, Cohen and Doxey’s theories. This theory is mostly based on their theories on tourism.

Tourism Area Life Cycle has pointed out the flow of a resort hotel tourism attractions. It’s like when tourists identified such a resort hotel as a brand, it grows its popularity slowly then it comes to its peak and stabilized for a little while and it will be declined by time. Moreover, he pointed out that this is a common process that can be happened to any resort hotel or a tourism destination regardless its location or the popularity. So, that’s why he says this process should be well managed before it reaches to the declining stage. This declining stage will be a cause of its existing features or elements. Six phases of TALC model are Exploration, Involvement, Development, Consolidation, stagnation and Decline.

- Exploration: Adventurous tourists will attract to the natural physical environment, culture and the places with low public facilities.
- Involvement: Marketing stage with advertising according to seasons and increase the tourists in numbers.
- Development: In this stage tourists’ numbers rapidly increase and outsiders starts tourists trading.
- Consolidation: Now tourism has become a major part in local economy, tourist’s arrival increases, and local people try to extend the seasonal activities.
- Stagnation: Peak number of tourist’s arrivals has reached, and the resort hotel is no longer trending, it stays still.

- Decline: Tourism marketing has lost, tourists' attraction also has stop.

According to Maria Christina W. Azucena –Galvez (2013) in 1998, Butler reconsidered his model. So, he presented follow key points with regarding to his model.

1. Destinations can be changed over time, so it is called as "Dynamism".
2. Tourists destination development process is common.
3. Branding of each resort hotel or a tourist destination has its limit, when it has reached the limit tourists number will decrease apart from its capacity. There are triggers or factors that bring about change in a destination.
4. Good management is required to avoid the failures of the model.
5. Also, he suggests a long-term view that plans are to be made for another 50 years not just for 5 years.
6. Tourists will choose a different destination when the decline stage comes which is called as Spatial component
7. This model can be applied to any resort hotel regardless its location or popularity called as Universal applicability.

Introduction to Cases

This study is about Landscape Architectural impact on tourism and hotel branding in Southern coastal zone Sri Lanka. Therefore, the cases will be selected from the Southern coastal belt, from where the Sri Lanka's tourist most attracted destinations. Totally three hotels and resorts were selected considering its star ratings, reviews, location, budget, climate and the accessibility as the delimitations for the selection. Star ratings differ from five star to three stars so that the hoteliers would get the understanding on the success of each hotels according to the tourist perceptions and preferences. Nevertheless, the star ratings differ from each other these hotels and resort are considered as foremost hotels in Southern coastal belt and have reported with highest annual tourist arrivals. Three hotels are situated in Galle-Colombo road and Galle-Matara road, so that they are easily accessible. All the hotels are in beach side with same natural soft landscape architectural features for not to confuse with each other.

According to the mentioned criteria, selected hotels are described as follows,

- Amari Hotel Galle: Five star

Amari hotel is a recently built (2017) hotel which is situated in Galle-Colombo road. This new beach front hotel is five-star category hotel with 172 rooms, and it is the third hotel in Sri Lanka established by ONYX hospitality group, one of the largest Asia's leading hotel management company in Thailand. The other Amari hotel branches are situated in Malaysia and China. ONYX hospitality group indicates that the reason behind locating a hotel in Southern coastal belt Sri Lanka is its natural beauty, panoramic ocean view, coastline and the gentle sea breeze. Amari hotel follows a concept of respecting traditions of each Asian country along with its culture through the Architecture, materials and designs. Amari celebrates colours and rhythms of Asia while highlighting textures and piquancy.



Figure 9: Amari logo
 Source: Amari Hotel official website



Figure 10: Amari hotel location
 Source: Google maps



Figure 11: Amari hotel Galle views: Landscape views of Amari hotel Galle
 Source: Author

- Lighthouse Hotel Galle: Five star

Light House hotel is a renowned five star rated resort hotel which is situated in Galle-Colombo road and was commissioned by Herbert Cooray in 1995 for the Jetwing and it was designed by reputed architect Geoffrey Bawa. Hotel includes 85 rooms, two restaurants, two swimming pools and recreational facilities. Light house hotel was built on a rock promontory which reflects the Dutch period architecture styles. Sculptured spiral staircase at the lobby entrance is one of the featured remarkable collections in the hotel. Courtyards and the gardens are concreted with the natural landscapes and green lawn, boulders and stairs. Light house hotel can be considered as a landmark for the city Galle because of its popularity among the worldwide tourists that attracts to Sri Lanka.



Figure 12: Light house hotel logo
 Source: Light house Hotel official website



Figure 13: Light house hotel location
 Source: Google maps



Figure 14: Light house hotel Galle views: Landscape views of Light house hotel Galle
 Source: Author

- Cloisenburg Hotel Galle: Three star

Cloisenburg Hotel is an old Dutch three star rated hotel famous for its ancient iconic architectural features. In 1719, the Dutch built a small fortress on the island's cape, on the southern side of the Galle Bay. They called the island of Cloisenburg (or Klossenburg), which means "Fortalis or the citadel, in which the sea roars." In Klossenburg there was a battery of two weapons, and the Sinhalese called it "Aluth Kotuwa" or a new fort.



Figure 15: Cloisenburg hotel logo
 Source: Cloisenburg hotel official website



Figure 16: Cloisenburg hotel location
 Source: Google maps



Figure 17: Cloisenburg hotel Galle views: Landscape views of Cloisenburg hotel Galle
 Source: Author

First, a pilot study will be conducted through an online survey and then a final survey will be conducted to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Tourist preferences may be differed according to the budget, star rate and it will not be considered as a matter of fact. Also, their age, nationality is considered as limitations of the research. Participants for the survey was selected through purposive sampling and convenience sampling methods. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that intends to select a people specially out of random. This sampling method was used in Pilot survey to filter the target group of people with positive online feedbacks about the hotels.

Amari Hotel Galle was selected as the case study for the Pilot survey. Pilot survey has been carried out with the participation of 30 tourists who visited hotel. Online questionnaire distributed within 30 selected tourists via www.tripadvisor.com, www.booking.com and Amari hotel official Facebook page. Participants for the survey were selected according to convenience sampling method and with the variables of age, country, guest category and gender. Participants were sorted out through the positive feedbacks given on the Amari hotel official website and the Facebook page.

According to the survey results most tourists came to the Amari hotel as solo travellers. According to the Cohen (1972) classification, this type of tourists can be taken as “The Explorer” type, who travels alone and seeks comfortable accommodations and reliable transportations. Which conveys the message that satisfying these types of tourists’ requirements can be a great advantage to the hotel. Age groups were varied between 20-70 years old. Most of the tourists were among 22 to 32 can be considered as those mentioned solo tourists. Twelve questions were included in the pilot survey questionnaire. First question was inquiring about the visits of the hotel. Most of tourists had come for the first time as it was a recently built hotel. Guest reviews shows that people who visited for the first time has mentioned that they would come to Amari hotel again pleasingly.

Second question was asked to know the indicators of choosing Amari hotel as their preferred destination. Most people have responded that sea and beach as their reason to choose Galle as the preferred destination. Also, tourists admire Sri Lankan culture, specially down south culture to explore and experience. The people who like the beach most can be considered as psychocentric travellers who doesn’t like to face challenging environments. According to Plog (1972) tourists who like new experience, new cultures and try food items are considered as Allocentric tourists. So, the tourists who visits this type of hotels are mostly psychocentric than allocentric.

Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Final questionnaire survey was done accordingly with interviews were held to collect qualitative and quantitative information out of 30 tourists visited hotels, Amari, Lighthouse and Cloisburg on a single day time between 9.00am to 5.00pm. Ten tourists from each hotel were selected for the survey.

Summary Sheet – Question 01: Hotel selected through,

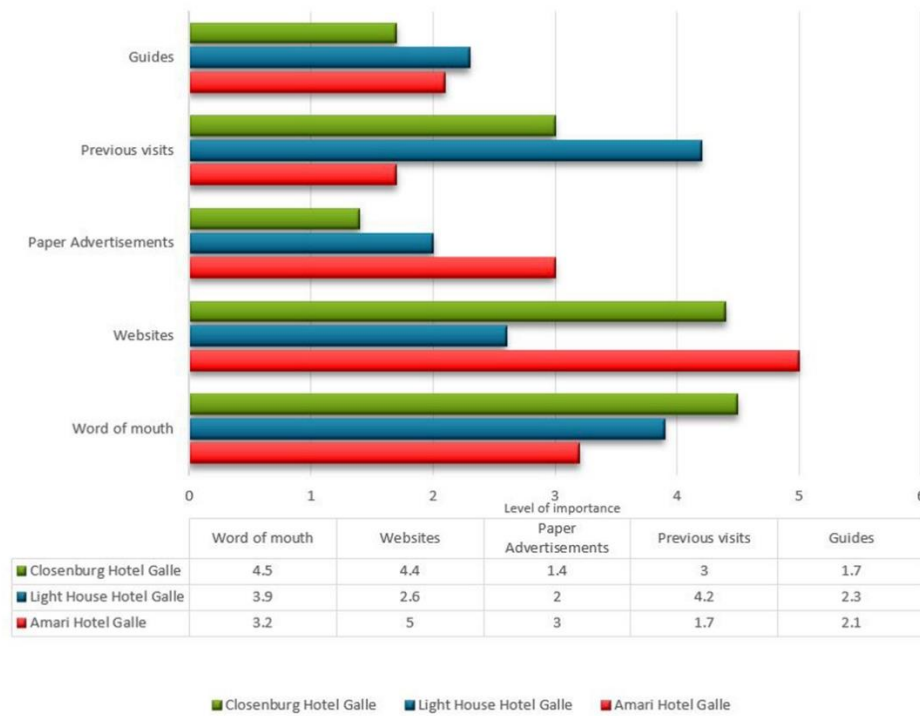


Figure 18: Summary sheet for Question 01: Survey results for most comfortable places in the hotel Vs Level of importance; Source: Author

As mentioned in Cohen (1972) tourists’ classification of four types accordingly the drifter, the explorer, the individual mass tourists as shown in the pilot survey sole travellers are higher than the others. So, each tourists preference is rapidly changing according to the environment.

Figure 2 shows the most comfortable place to spend time in the hotel. According to the graph, most tourists prefer garden and lawn area and the pool, those are Landscape architectural features. So that we can conclude that improving landscape architectural features will be a great help for hotel tourism branding.

As pointed out in Clarke (2000) has mentioned the importance of tourism branding in six steps. He says, tourism involvement in branding helps to reduce the choice and differentiate the decisions of tourists. So, these features that they see as comfortable places might be the key points to uplift the branding strategies.

Summary Sheet – Question 04: Aesthetic value of the hotel

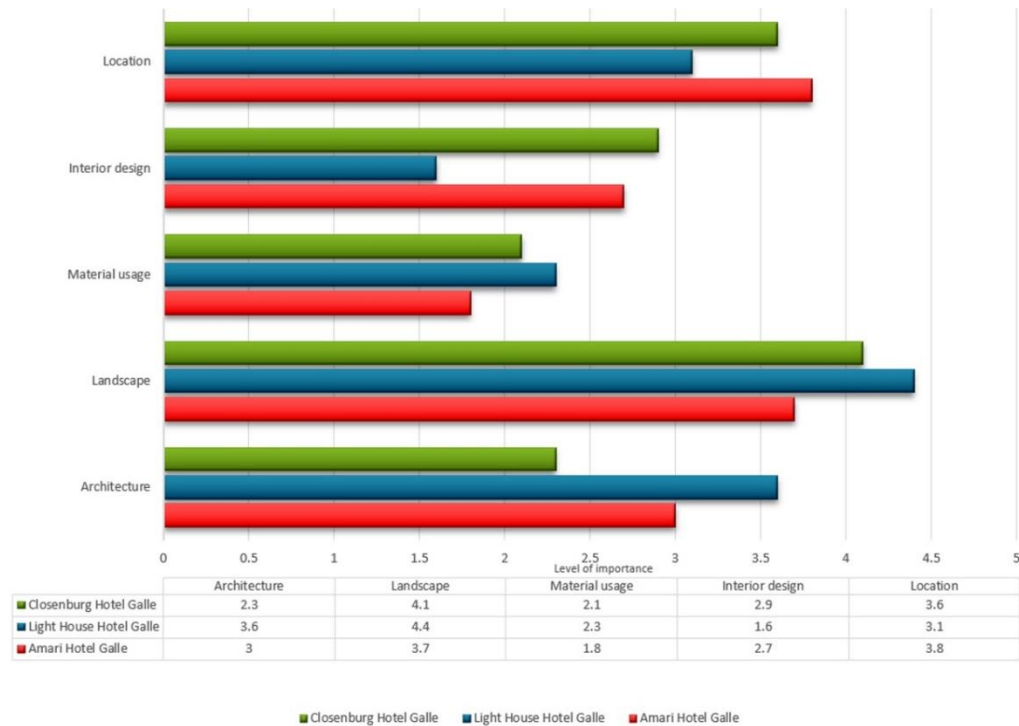


Figure 19: Summary sheet for Question 04: Survey results for aesthetic value of the hotel Vs Level of importance; Source: Author

Above graph shows the aesthetic value enhancement from the tourist perspective. As they have margined out, Landscape, Architecture and the location have caused to enhance the aesthetic value of the hotel. Few of them have considered the indoor features such as interior and material selection, which conveys that indoor improvements don't have a much impact on branding hotels. They are inspired with Landscape Architectural features like pool, lawn, seating areas, paving etc.

According to Stanley Plog's theory of Tourists destination preferences (1972) have mentioned about 3 types of tourists such as Psychocentric, Allocentric and Midcentrics. This theory emphasizes the tourist's destination preferences. Most tourists like to travel short distances and some of them doesn't like for much changes from their native country, so they seek branded places with comfortable features. Some like to enjoy different cultures. And, he says most tourist is likely to select populated areas in developed countries than remote areas. So, refer the graphs and conclude thoroughly that location also has been a caused for their selection criteria.

Summary Sheet – Question 05: Prefer to spend maximum time in the hotel

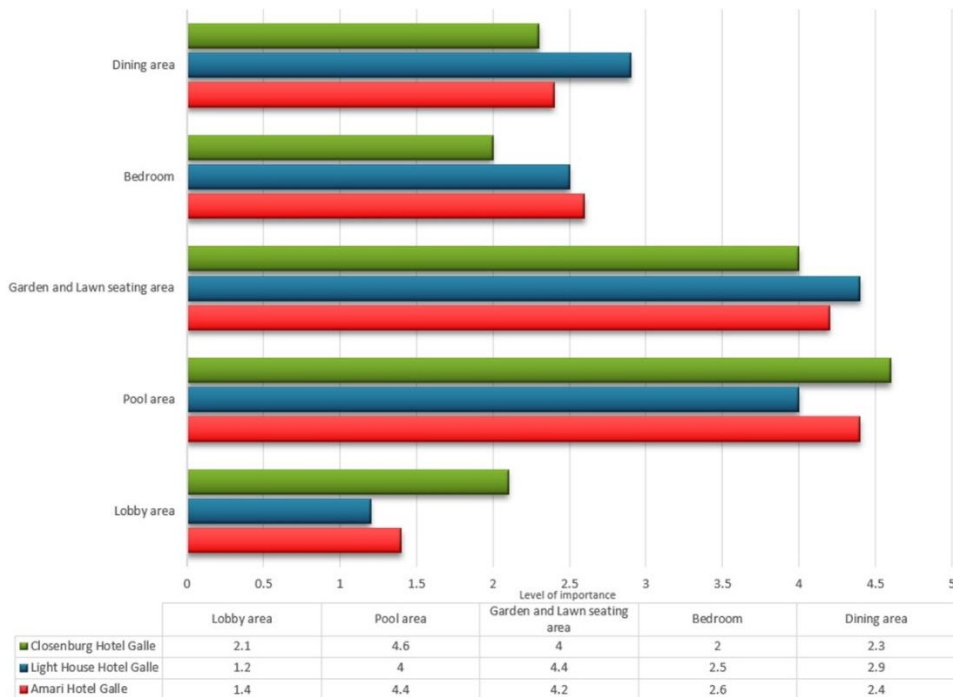


Figure 20: Summary sheet for Question 05: Survey results for aesthetic value of the hotel Vs Level of importance.; Source: Author

Above graph shows the tourists preferences on the places in the hotel where they like to spend maximum time. Most tourists like to spend time in the Pool, garden and lawn seating area. This points out that tourists like to spend maximum time in outdoor spaces more than indoors again. In the past people landscaped them indoors with decorations, trees, monuments etc. By the present with increase heat island effect, global warming people are most likely to spend time in outdoors than indoors. That is why currently people are engaged in Landscape Architecture now than the past. So, it is an increasing trend. This can be a great strategy for marketing and branding tourism in Sri Lanka as we have one of the best climate facts in the world with much natural resources.

Summary Sheet – Question 06: Places prefer in hotels

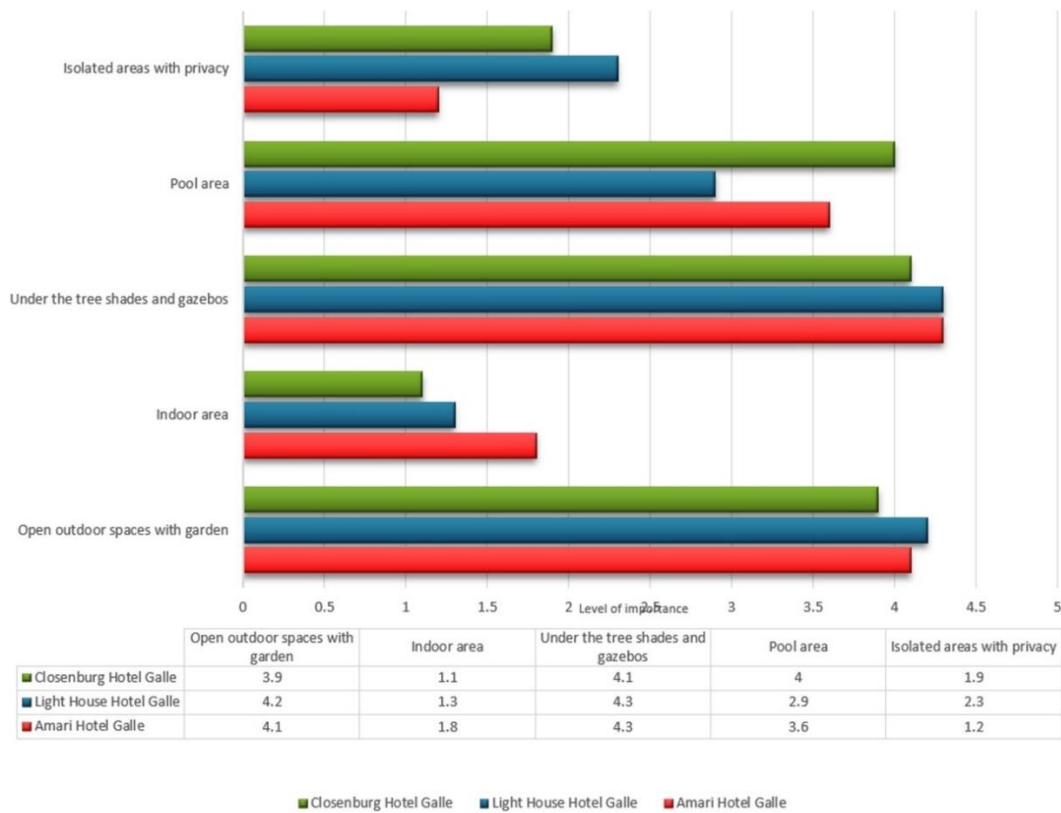


Figure 20: Summary sheet for Question 06: Survey results for the places prefer in the hotels Vs Level of importance.
 Source: Author

This analysis question has done without targeting a hotel. It has targeted any hotel in Southern coastal zone in Sri Lanka. Which can be a great point of finding what else there should be along with the existing features to attract more tourists. They had responded with about details. They expressed that tourists would like if there are much more tree shady areas, gazebos, outdoor spaces and developed pool areas in hotels. This is a key factor on comparing the outcome of this survey with Butler’s theory on tourist’s development – tourists area development model (1980) the TALC model. This model contains with six stages which shows that, when a tourist identified a place as a brand it grows rapidly and then it comes to a peak with its popularity and branding and then it declines by the time. It shows that there are many ways to identify the failures in tourism development through this model. So, identifying key features with a survey like this, the management staff can take necessary steps to keep marketing at the peak not letting it down. This survey points out which features can be developed with the time to keep business at peak.

Summary Sheet – Question 10: Southern coastal zone hotels in Sri Lanka should be improved with,

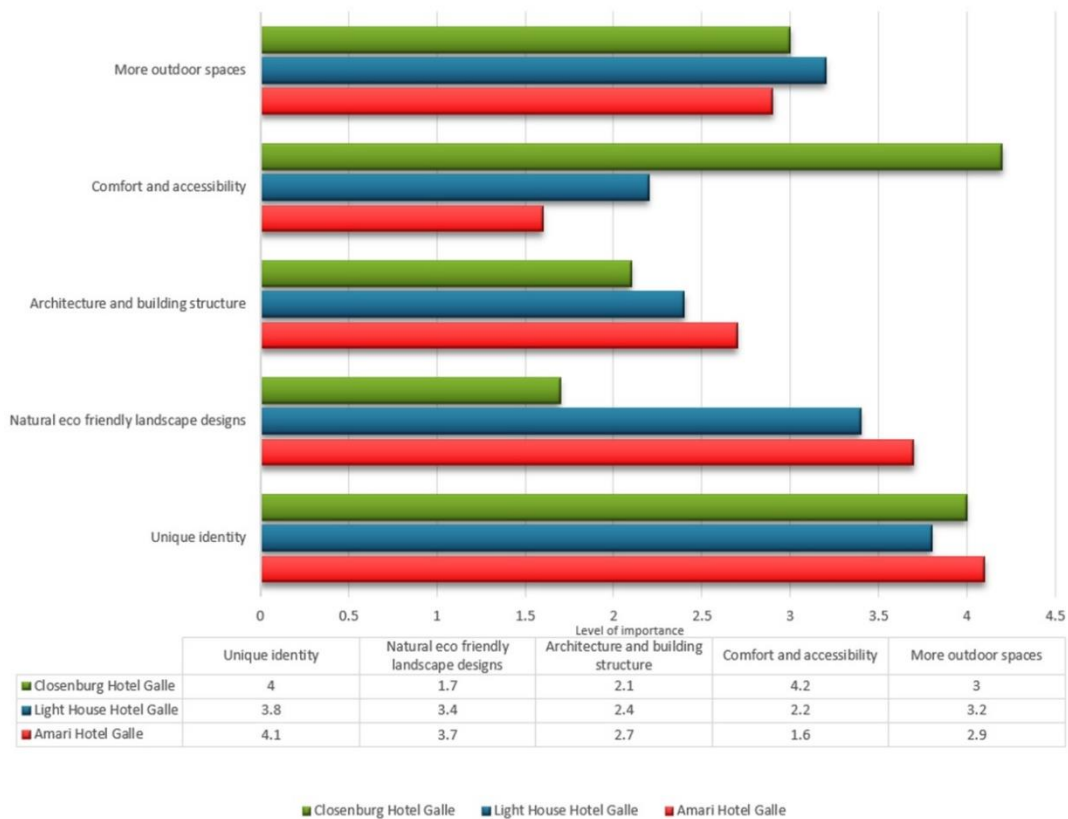


Figure 21: Summary sheet for Question 10: Survey results for the suggested improvements for the hotels Vs Level of importance.; Source: Author

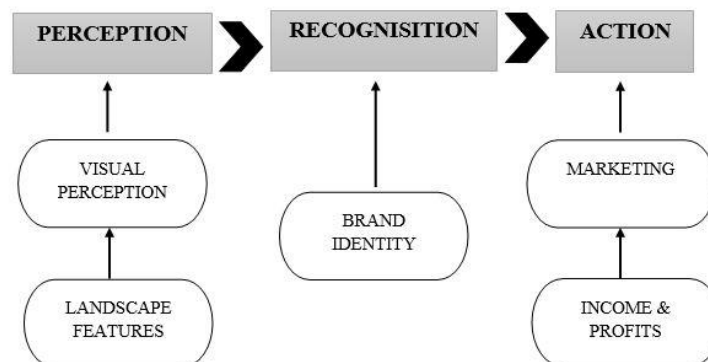
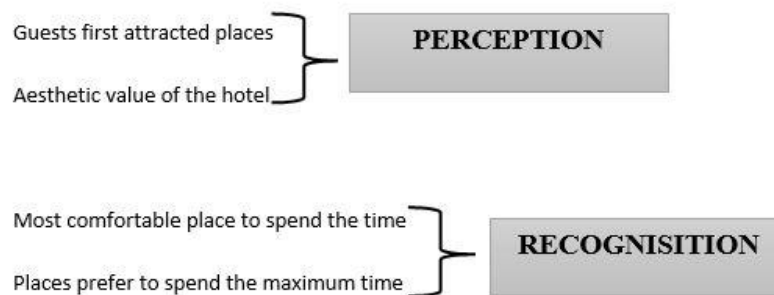
Survey results for the suggested improvements for the hotels Vs Level of importance
This graph answered the question what the things are to consider when improving the qualities of hotels in Southern coastal Zone Sri Lanka. Tourists have replied with the features like unique identity, natural eco-friendly designs and more outdoor places shall be improved for more tourist’s attraction to be happened. They define unique identity as the regional identity in Sri Lanka as in culture and ethics in our country. That type of tourists can be categorized to the Allocentric tourists in Stanley Plog’s theory of tourist’s destination preferences (1972).

Discussion

Completed pilot survey and final survey divulges that tourist are mostly like to stay in outdoors rather than indoors because their preferences on the Landscape Architectural features are higher than the others. Therefore, hotel branding can be guided to a better path with more Landscape Architectural applications. This study intends to measure tourist's perception in different levels through the graphs and pie charts.

Human perception can be monitored through visual perception by using human memory as an input. Perception simply defines the organization, identification and interpretation in order to represent, understand and interact with our environment. Consequently, measuring tourist's perception through a questionnaire survey provides their identification on an existing feature on the premises and evoking the sensory memory as in iconic, echoic and haptic memory. Iconic memory will evoke the visual stimuli combined with the place that should be transferred to the long-time memory. So, tourists perception provides the direction to march to the recognition.

Recognition is placing the identified objects into a meaningful category. As an example, if a tourist captures the gaze of a fountain in the hotel premises, he or she might be able to categorize it into a landscape architectural feature. Which in the same way brain helps to identify the best brands. Recognition guides to gain action. When a tourist gets the visual perception, then recognize it and wanting to go there again, use that again can be taken as an action towards it. As in human perception, the conscious sensory experience will be the best indicator to measure human preferences.



Conclusion

Sri Lanka as an island nation strategically located in the Indian Ocean, with a rich culture and history, natural beauty and spectacular coasts, offers a unique combination of hidden adventures and luxurious holidays; This is the ideal escape for every traveller. Sri Lanka was at its pinnacle of the tourism industry before the recent events of Easter bombing attacks happened. Sri Lanka was recovering the destructions happened from the civil war (2009) and Tsunami (2004).

At present, tourism industry has faced a deteriorate because of the tourists are turning back on. This is the best time that a research study like this will be needed mostly to observe the constraints and exhilarate the tourism industry again to the peak.

Existing branding techniques are not enough and doesn't merge well with the modern trends. For Sri Lanka to be branded as a tourist destination, there will be needed more creative ideas and provide new adventures to the tourists. To provide better experience to the tourists, it is necessary to understand their requirements.

Landscape Architecture can be considered as the modern trend and the best solution for a place to be branded. According to the results from the study, most tourists preferred to merge with nature even though they are on a vacation in a hotel or a resort. People seek more outdoor experience than indoor items. Dine in has bored comparing with the outdoor activities. Nowadays, people are willing to pay more for pleasure and memory. People have higher expectations than the past. So, improving Landscape Architectural features and applying more environmentally friendly materials and designs would do a better task in attracting tourists for the hotels and resorts. Furthermore, nature does more effect on human mind quicker than other things. Study has shown that attractive spacious facades, gardens with relaxation, calm outdoor shady areas provide more benefits in collecting memories of a place, which can be considered as the first and foremost thing required in branding a destination.

The study that has conducted on the hotels and resorts has pointed out some recommendations that can be carried out for improving the productivity. As suggestions, Sri Lanka's existing landscapes in hotels can be compared with the hotels in other tropical countries and find out what features are lacking. Landscape architecture is a modern trend that has not been identified within the society as a component that must be followed. Even in Sri Lanka, construction field doesn't pay much attention about the landscape architectural segment. This obsolete construction processes have used to consider the landscape architectural part after built up the whole building and landscape will be added to the rest to fill up the void. But, improving landscape architectural elements and features while providing the same priority as well as architecture will result better in branding a destination. Current landscape architectural applications in the hotel are mostly not conceptual. They are gardening at the peak. But using conceptual landscaping for a hotel or a resort will be a better recommendation for improving the existing situation.

As an example, Bali airport in Indonesia has an interior landscaping with their tropical and endemic plants which provides the message to the tourists that they are entering a country that respects nature. Accordingly, Sri Lanka's Southern coastal zone landscaping could be improved with identical landscaping features and vegetation.

As new directions for future research, hoteliers can be acknowledged about landscape architecture as an emerging trend and educate them about how to apply landscape architecture and its value for branding. Also, landscape architecture elements and features from other tropical countries can be applied to Sri Lanka's coastal zone hotels and collect tourist perception about it.

This provides a good starting point for a discussion and further research on tourism industry against global warming and Landscape Architecture. This study has shown strategies like using green roofs, water/energy efficient design and sustainable materials for the hotels and resorts can be a key aspect in attracting tourists and branding the destination. This may be considered as a promising aspect of delivering the concept of Landscape Architecture worldwide as a tool for hotel branding. Brand can give birth to the soul of a place and make that place remarkable. Study has shown how perception recognition and action contributed in branding a destination.

Not only that, but also this study has accomplished in realizing how much Southern coastal belt hotels and resorts have succeeded with the branding tools like cost leadership, differentiation and approach (Client approach). Study concludes that location and climate factors do a larger contribution on the preferences and the branding of a destination.

Moreover, global warming has become a huge threat to the world by considering the facts on current situations like Glaziers melting in Greenland, droughts in India, flood in Japan and unusual temperature rises in Europe. Greenhouse gasses like Co₂ is more responsible for the global warming meanwhile forests and green patches helps in reducing Co₂ percentage. Amazon forest which is like the lungs of the world has been burning for weeks limiting the Oxygen level in the atmosphere. As future Landscape Architects, sustainable strategies can be used to improve resilience and adaptation against global warming while meeting the requirements of the tourists. Hotels and the resorts can be developed as prominent precedents with the use of sustainable Landscape Architectural strategies.

Grabbing tourist attraction through landscape architecture as the first impression can be advantageous for branding tourism through hotel industry. Also, this study has pointed out branding tools that can be productive for the hotel industry. If tourism is a coin, Landscape Architecture and Architecture are its head and tail.

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