

The Impact of Service Quality and Weather Condition on Tourists' Guest Night Stays in Coastal Area of Sri Lanka: Perspective of Tourists

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Abstract - This study aims to explore tourists' perceptions of service quality and weather condition of guest night stays in Sri Lanka and how they influence tourists' decisions regarding the duration of their guest night stays. This study employed qualitative approach, having the data collected using purposive sampling. Researchers conducted in depth interviews with 18 foreign tourists in Colombo and Galle coastal area of Sri Lanka. The study revealed that both service quality and weather condition are significantly impacting tourists' decision of duration of guest night stays. Longer stays were associated with higher levels of service quality, emphasizing the pivotal role of service delivery in attracting and retaining tourists. In addition, weather condition was identified to be a major factor in determining guest night stays in the coastal area of Sri Lanka. This research offers valuable insights into Sri Lanka's coastal tourism, emphasizing the significance of excellent customer service and environmental responsibility in attracting and retaining tourists. The study's practical implications enable industry experts and policymakers to formulate strategies for promoting eco-friendly practices, ultimately enhancing the overall traveller experience in the coastal regions of Sri Lanka. By examining tourists' perceptions of service quality and weather condition's impact on guest night stays in Colombo and Galle coastal areas, this study contributes to existing literature on tourism in Sri Lanka. The results underscore the significance of sustainable practices and exceptional service in attracting visitors and fostering longer stays. Ultimately, these insights can aid in the formulation of effective plans to strengthen eco-friendly tourism and enhance Sri Lanka's appeal as a preferred destination for international travellers.

Keywords: Coastal Tourism, Service Quality, Tourist Guest Night Stays and Weather Condition.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

“Tourism” is a crucial economic sector that contributes to global economy (Camilleri, 2018). In many nations, it has grown to be a powerful driver for economic development that creates jobs and earnings of foreign exchange (International Trade Administration U.S. Department of Commerce, 2022). Tourism includes a variety of activities and services and involves the movement of people from one location to another for various reasons. The sector continues to expand and innovate, with new opportunities and advancements appearing frequently, despite obstacles including security worries, excessive tourism, and environmental deterioration.

However, Asia is a mysterious continent with diverse customs and cultures. Since 2020, every industry has been decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences and the continuous economic catastrophe (World Tourism Organization, 2023). However,

depending on the severity of the economic slump and the continuous recovery of travel in Asia and the Pacific, World Tourism Organization (2023) forecasted international visitor arrivals could reach 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels this year. Tourism is traditionally the third largest foreign exchange earner in the country and an important income generator for Sri Lanka. In 2018, Sri Lanka saw its highest ever tourism receipts, with a total of 2.5 million visitors generating \$5.61 billion. In contrast, tourists showed a 92 percent decrease in 2021. However, as of August, government projections for 2022 show 496,400 tourist arrivals, which is more encouraging. Under the assumption of political stability, economic recovery and absence of additional significant epidemic outbreaks, this sector is expected to grow strongly in 2022-2023, (International Trade Administration U.S. Department of Commerce, 2022). Sri Lanka has grown in popularity as a travel destination in recent years thanks to its diverse cultural history, stunning scenery, and delicious cuisine. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how service quality and weather condition affect tourist guest nights stays in Colombo and Galle, Sri Lanka.

Providing the highest level of services to customers is very important to the tourism sector. The ability of tourism businesses to provide tangible, reliable, responsiveness, assurance and empathy services to customers is known as service quality in the industry. Service excellence is essential for customer loyalty and satisfaction in national and international contexts. Service excellence sets one travel company apart from another in a cutting-edge industry and affects the overall perception of a destination. To satisfy the needs and expectations of their customers and maintain the long-term viability of the tourism industry, it is very important for entrepreneurs in the sector to focus on improving the quality of service (Al-Ababneh, 2013).

The article by Nianthi and Shaw (2015) highlights that the region's vulnerability to climate change is primarily due to rising temperatures and sea levels. Temperatures around the world are steadily rising because of weather condition due to increased greenhouse gas emissions. This rise in temperature will affect Sri Lanka's coastal economy, which is heavily dependent on industries such as fishing, tourism, and agriculture. The article also highlights the consequences of sea level rise, which poses a serious threat to coastal areas by increasing the risk of flooding, erosion, and land loss. Understanding these issues is essential for taking appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures to secure Sri Lanka's coastal economy and community livelihoods.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate how service quality and weather condition aspects has impacted on the duration of tourists' guest night stays in Sri Lanka's coastal areas. The study extends the existing tourism literature in Sri Lanka, with the investigation of the role of service quality and aspects of weather condition on the duration of tourists' guest night stays in Sri Lanka's coastal areas. Moreover, the study findings will contribute to, Sri Lanka's tourism businesses, as it is essential to comprehend the elements that affect the tourists guest night stays in the country's coastal area, which has been regarded as a high revenue generation area via tourism.

B. Statement of the Problem

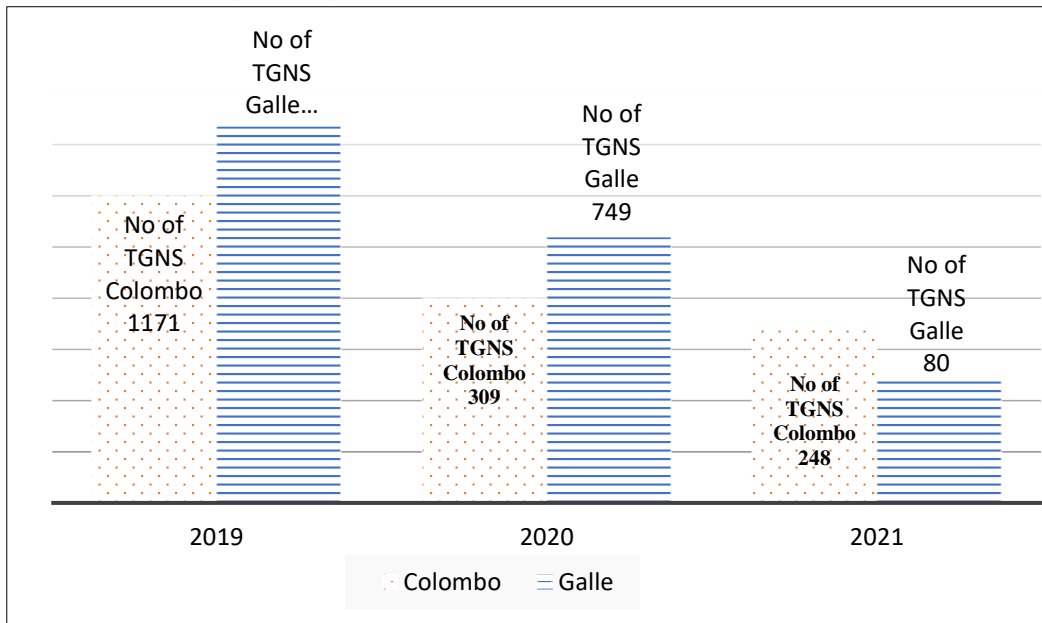
According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2021), it has been noticed a significant decrease in tourists guest night stays in Sri Lanka. Therefore, authors are investigates what factors has impacted the decrease in guest night stays of tourists with special reference to service quality and weather condition aspects. The selection of particularly these two aspects were identified for further investigation based on the literature review conducted

focusing “factors affecting tourists guest nights” by (Marton et al., 2021), (Koiwanit & Filimonau, 2021) and (Hon & Fung, 2019). Compared to other provinces, the Central Bank Annual Report 2021 states that more foreign tourists have come to Colombo and Galle.

Clemes, Gan, and Ren (2011), state how customer satisfaction and service quality relate to tourists' guest night stays in the hotel or motel industry. Literature includes a high degree of service quality, which includes elements like room cleanliness, staff efficiency, and staff friendliness, was found to be associated with greater customer satisfaction and longer guest night stays. Hotels may enhance tourist experiences and establish a solid reputation that draws repeat business from pleased tourists by prioritizing service quality and addressing the critical elements that influence customer happiness. As a result, enhancing service quality is a crucial strategy for hotels wanting to boost revenue and guest night stays in the fiercely cutthroat hospitality sector.

Sri Lanka's tourism industry has made significant progress in recent years. Service quality is an essential factor in attracting and retaining tourists, and authors investigate whether service quality affects the decline of tourists' guest night stays in coastal areas of Sri Lanka (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Tourist guest night stays of the year 2019, 2020 and 2021



Source: Central bank of Sri Lanka - Annual report 2021.

The association between temperature and vacation destination preference, as well as any potential implications for the tourism sector, are examined in the paper by (Bigano et al., 2006). According to this study, warmer weather makes coastal locations attractive, but colder weather makes mountain and ski resorts attractive. The tourism sector may also be impacted by changes in the time and length of the tourist season as well as a decline in the attractiveness of some locations due to changes in temperature patterns brought on by weather condition. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the connection between

temperature and tourism to foresee how weather condition would affect the travel and tourism sector.

However, the impact of weather condition is another factor affecting Sri Lanka's coastal tourism. The natural resources of coastal areas, which serve as a major attraction for tourists, are seriously threatened by the effects of weather condition, including rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. The authors monitored whether the effects of weather condition would affect guest night stays by tourists.

This kind of observation has not been examined in the context of Sri Lanka, and after a critical evaluation of literature, authors have identified that there is lack of literature on whether there is an impact of the global on the tourist guest night stays in coastal area of Sri Lanka. To better understand the relationship between service quality, weather condition, and the tourists guest night stays in Sri Lanka's coastal locations.

C. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate how tourists perceive about service quality and weather condition aspects in coastal areas, and how these factors shape their decisions regarding the duration of their guest night stays. The research will concentrate on creating an in-depth understanding of the elements that greatly affect tourist night stays in Sri Lanka's coastal regions. To address the research objectives, the following research questions were developed.

1. How do service quality indicators impact on tourist guest night stay in coastal area?
2. How does weather condition impact on tourist guest night stay in coastal area?

D. Knowledge Gap

The absence of empirical research on the impact of service quality and weather condition aspects on tourist guest night stays in coastal areas of Sri Lanka has been noted by the authors based on the literature review. The authors' findings indicate that there is no proof that a study has been done in the impact of service quality and weather condition on tourist guest nights stays in Sri Lanka's Colombo and Galle coastal areas. Through this research study, the authors aim to bridge the empirical gap identified, after critically going through the literature.

E. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to certain limitations. Authors collected data through interview from a sample of 18 tourists who visited the area during the specified period from January 1st to March 31st, 2023. Data is collected only from the tourists and not from other stakeholders like tour guides or hotel managers. Further the study is limited to only the coastal areas of Galle and Colombo, the problems of quality of service and the general satisfaction of tourists with their stay due to the impact of weather condition.

Furthermore, the findings cannot be generalized to other periods or regions outside of these two coastal regions. Further, the study's limitation lies in its confined time frame, as it might not capture the full extent of long-term impacts of service quality and weather condition on tourist guest night stays in Galle and Colombo coastal areas.

II. METHODOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative approach, with the use of a series of in-depth interviews with foreign tourists in Colombo and Galle coastal areas in Sri Lanka. Selection of sample was based on purposive sampling technique and, a total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted for more than 20 minutes.

The primary objective of the study was to explore how tourists perceive service quality and weather condition aspects in coastal areas and how these factors influence their decisions about the length of their stays. To achieve this objective, the authors crafted questions based on previously developed questionnaires by esteemed scholars, Kim-Soon, *et al.* (2014), Ren *et al.* (2018), and Tam (2019) focusing on service quality factors and weather conditions.

The research conducted by Walters (2016), emphasizes that thematic analysis, also known as thematic network analysis, has gained considerable popularity in the realm of tourism and hospitality studies in recent times. This qualitative technique is highly adaptable, serving as a valuable tool for discerning, analysing, and presenting patterns (themes) within empirical data, such as interviews, media articles, and even visual content.

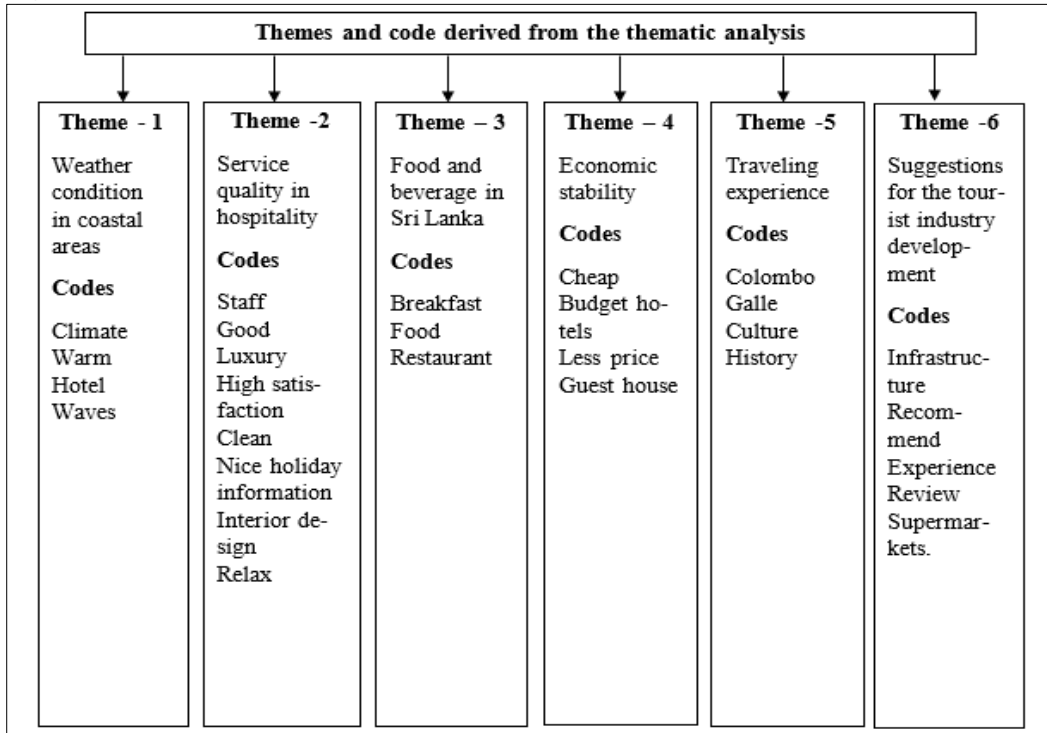
The analysis conducted in this study serves a crucial purpose in gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences and genuine perspectives of the foreign visitors to Sri Lanka. To achieve this, the researchers employed a six-phase iterative analysis process, enabling them to identify the primary themes and establish a network of interconnected themes. This approach facilitates the organization and interpretation of the collected data, as outlined by (Clarke & Braun, 2013). By employing this methodological framework, the researchers could extract meaningful insights and valuable information from the data, shedding light on the visitors' authentic viewpoints and experiences.

Therefore, the authors adopted a structured qualitative analysis process involving six distinct phases. These phases included getting to know the data, creating the initial set of codes, identifying common patterns, examining thematic connections, recognizing and labelling themes, and ultimately presenting the results (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

III. RESULTS

A. Thematic Analysis

The research study carried out by the authors involved a comprehensive thematic analysis aimed at exploring the perspectives of foreign visitors to Sri Lanka. This analysis helped authors to investigate how tourists perceive about service quality and weather condition in coastal areas, and how these factors shape their decisions regarding the length of their guest night stays. The summary of the themes derived is given in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Themes and codes derived from the thematic analysis.

Source: Authors' compilation.

1) Theme 1 - Weather Condition in Coastal Areas: Tourists say the weather played a significant role in their decision to visit Sri Lanka. They preferred Sri Lanka's humid and warm climate over the cooler conditions in their native countries. Tourists' positive perception of Sri Lanka's climate adds to a more enjoyable trip experience. *"I like it, but today is too hot for me. But I prefer a warm climate. Yeah. Because I'm from Russia and there is winter now and it's cold, I'm curious. Yes. Thank you so much"* (Respondent #17). *"I think probably the climate. Yeah, probably just the breeze"* (Respondent #12). Tourists appreciate Sri Lanka's mild weather as they seek to escape the colder climates of their home nations. The warmth of the destination contributes to its overall appeal to travellers.

"We planned our holiday in Sri Lanka because of the warm weather. In Germany, it's still cold and there's snow on the ground, so we wanted to go somewhere warm. That is why we came to Sri Lanka" (Respondent #4). *"For us, it's very good because it's very warm and, in the evening, sometimes rainy, and it's not very hot. So, now I think it's very good for us"* (Respondent #7). Tourists love the hot temperature in Sri Lanka, connecting hot weather with a nice experience. Their preference for such conditions contributes to their overall enjoyment and contentment with the place. Because of our hot weather, many prefer to stay in Sri Lanka. *"Yeah, it's nice. It's different from where I'm from in Ireland, where it's 15 degrees Celsius, so it's very hot here"* (Respondent #12). While not explicitly mentioned, the presence of waves is suggested in the context of beachfront preferences and discussions about breezes and beachside services. Waves enhance the feel and attractiveness of the coastal areas, contributing to the overall experience of

visiting Sri Lanka's coastal districts. *"Yes, because there is a nice beach and there are fewer waves than in other places. It's very popular among big families with children because the waves are small"* (Respondent #2).

Thematic analysis of tourists' perceptions of weather conditions in Sri Lanka demonstrates their predilection for warm and hot environments, as well as coastal regions. These decisions are motivated by a desire to relocate to colder climes, seek warmth, and enjoy seaside amenities such as breezes and beachfront services. Understanding these points of view helps to understand what attracts tourists to Sri Lanka and influences tourism industry decision-making, such as advertising campaigns, infrastructure development, and resource allocation to improve the visitor experience.

2) Theme 2 - Service Quality in Hospitality: Tourists consistently recognize the importance of hotel staff in their overall hotel experience. They describe the staff as helpful, pleasant, polite, and attentive to their needs. The friendly greetings and individual attention from the staff make tourists feel welcomed and respected. The staff's ability to communicate effectively in English further enhances the tourists' comfort and satisfaction. *"Our staff is marvelous. They are very friendly, like a big family. They dress well, and we are totally happy with them. They keep everything clean, and we even celebrated the birthday with the hotel boss and his family, and he invited us to his party. And we celebrated the Christmas part of the new year party and the Russian new year party another year, so we love our hotel. And there is one more good moment that visa So in October, when we came, we took a visa only for one month, then for two months, and then for three months, and it's expensive. Now, from December to January, your government gives a visa to foreigners for half a year, and it's not expensive; it's about \$50 for half a year. Yes, it's good"* (Respondent #2).

"Good" appears frequently as a descriptor for several characteristics of service excellence. Tourists are pleased with the overall quality of the hotel and its services. They note that their cleanliness, comfort, and facility expectations have been met. The rooms are routinely described as clean, and the hotel grounds are kept in good condition. The food's quality, particularly at breakfast, is widely praised. This positive assessment of service quality indicates that tourists believe the hotel and its offerings to be of satisfactory quality. *"Yes, I do. A lot of the hotels we stayed at didn't have a little shop or anything, and I think it would be good to have a shop that sells items like sarongs and other souvenirs that guests might want to buy as gifts. This hotel has a shop, but the smaller ones don't"* (Respondent #1).

Tourists consistently express a high level of satisfaction with the service quality they have experienced. They express their happiness and indicate that their experience was completely fulfilling or fantastic. The staff's friendliness and attentiveness, as well as their commitment to immediately addressing any problems or issues, contribute to the tourists' overall satisfaction. The high level of satisfaction demonstrates the favorable impact of service quality on tourists' perceptions of their hotel stay. *"They are highly satisfied with our staff and all". Cleanliness is an essential aspect of the quality of tourist services. Tourists frequently highlight cleanliness as a significant factor during their stay. They appreciate the efforts of the hotel's housekeeping staff to keep the rooms clean and well-maintained, adding to their overall comfort and satisfaction. The room is very clean. Sometimes there are a few minor issues, but overall, we're very satisfied. It's hard to compare with other countries, but we're very happy with the cleanliness"* (Respondent #4).

The positive feedback from tourists indicates they are enjoying their vacation. Staff's friendliness, responsiveness, cleanliness, and overall good service quality all contribute to their impression of a pleasant vacation. This implies the service quality provided by Sri Lanka's coastal hotels has a beneficial impact on tourists' overall holiday experience.

They appreciate the staff's openness in responding to their questions and providing relevant information to tourists. They emphasize the importance of staff members providing them with essential information and direction. The knowledge of the employees regarding area attractions, transportation alternatives, and cultural insights enhances the stay of guests. Accurate and helpful information makes tourists' experiences more enjoyable and smoother, as well as improving their perception of service quality. Although details about the interior designs are not revealed, the positive impression contributes to their overall satisfaction. *"We have stayed in a few expensive hotels with great design and service. However, we can't give any opinion about cheaper hotels because we haven't stayed in any. We have been to Pinnawala, which is a cheaper hotel, but we didn't think it needed improvement. The reason for going there is to see elephants, and it's not expensive. We consider comfort when choosing hotels"* (Respondent #8). As a result of the hotel's warm greetings, cleanliness, and quality service, tourists report that their stay was relaxing and comfortable. The staff's attentiveness, cleanliness, and overall good service contribute to tourists' relaxed experiences. Feeling at ease and unwinding in a comfortable setting is crucial to quality tourism services. *"I prefer the beachside because it's really relaxing, and we can see a good sea and have a very good time here"* (Respondent #11).

Overall, the thematic analysis indicates that tourists have a positive opinion of Sri Lanka's coastal area hotels' service quality. Staff friendliness, helpfulness, and attentiveness play a crucial role in developing their sense of good service. All these factors contribute to their high level of satisfaction, including cleanliness, meal quality, information availability, and overall atmosphere. It is these positive service quality experiences that boost tourists' perceptions that they are having an enjoyable vacation and contribute to their satisfaction with Sri Lankan tourism. In the study, service quality is highlighted as an important factor in shaping tourists' perceptions and experiences, emphasizing the benefits it can have for Sri Lanka's tourism industry's success and reputation.

3) Theme 3 - Food and Beverage in Sri Lanka: As visitors reported in their feedback, breakfast, food, and restaurants enhanced their experience in Sri Lanka. *"Every person is super friendly and attentive to our needs. The food is delicious, and everyone asks if there are any problems or anything they can do to make our stay more comfortable. The staff are very polite and always greet us with a smile, whether they're serving breakfast, lunch, or any other time"* (Respondent #4). *"Yeah, breakfast was good as well. They've accommodated what we wanted, which is nice. Lunch, dinner, just breakfast, really"* (Respondent #5). *"Breakfast is very good, but we have lunch and dinner out of the hotel"* (Respondent #9). Researchers have made a notable observation considering the tourists' insightful remarks. The travellers share their delight and gratitude for the breakfasts they had while traveling at local eateries. Their glowing reviews speak eloquently about the delicious culinary encounters they had, leaving a long-lasting and positive influence on their entire vacation experience. *"The staff is nice. It's a clean place, has good food, and there are two big, beautiful pools"* (Respondent #6). *"I think food is good for us, even for*

a child any age. My daughter is 12 years old, and she doesn't like fish, only French fries, some chicken, or everyday ice cream. Ice cream. So, the food is good” (Respondent #7). *“Yeah, it's nice. The staff are friendly and nice, and the food is good. Maybe it's a little bit different from a European hotel, but it's good. Good staff, good food, a clean swimming pool, I suppose would be nice”* (Respondent #12). According to the information provided, the travellers thoroughly adored Sri Lanka's mouth-watering cuisine and stressed that it had a significant impact on their entire vacation experience. They were forever changed by the wonderful tastes and gastronomic delights of Sri Lanka's cuisine, making it one of their most treasured and important travel memories. They also have a priceless and enduring impression of the restaurants. They treasured and enjoyed their dining experiences, which added to the overall joy of their journey. *“So first, I think, is location. So, you want it to be somewhere that's close to the beach and somewhere that's close to maybe nice restaurants and things like that. Especially if it's not all inclusive. Oh, here's my husband. I'm doing a questionnaire. You could come. Yeah, nice restaurants, maybe some shops, and things to do. Maybe some attractions are nearby. Nice rooms. Nice rooms with a nice view”* (Respondent #16). *“I think probably the climate. Yeah, probably just the breeze. And, facilities, like restaurants. Because when you go to the mountains, sometimes you might have the same level of facilities”* (Respondent #12).

The rich tapestry of themes coming from the experts' meticulous investigation reveals an intriguing story. Visitors to Sri Lanka clearly liked their culinary experiences, with a focus on the excellent tastes of Sri Lankan cuisine and the delightful breakfast selections provided by neighborhood restaurants. Through careful examination of their responses and experiences, the researchers conclude that these culinary delicacies hold a special place in the hearts of travelers, leaving a lasting and pleasant impression on their overall stay to this alluring island nation. The tourists' excitement and appreciation for Sri Lanka's scrumptious food and delightful breakfasts underlines the country's culinary offerings' relevance in generating an unforgettable and valued vacation memory.

4) Theme 4 - Economic Stability: The researchers wanted to shed light on the powerful allure that Sri Lanka possesses for tourists, as evidenced by the statements they offered, within the sphere of the economic subject. The results revealed the country's desirability as a desirable location in the eyes of vacationers. Notably, the availability of affordable and budget-friendly lodgings, such as low-cost hotels and guest homes, played an important part in facilitating a happy and cost-effective travel experience during their vacation. By emphasizing this point, the researchers demonstrated how Sri Lanka's hospitality business caters to the different demands of travellers, making it an appealing and accessible option for those looking for a satisfying and cost-effective trip.

“A lot of English people like to see the sea from the room with a balcony. They like that. A lot of English people do like to be all-inclusive. They like everything to be included because then they think it's cheap, even if they already paid for it before. And they like that. And a nice bathroom with a nice shower. That's just something for me. I really like that” (Respondent #16). *“No, it's bright sunshine, so it's a guest house. So yeah, we have a room. There is a little restaurant behind, but we prefer to be in those kinds of places because cheaper is cheaper. Yeah, luxury hotel means money, so it's still cheaper, and it's still a good place and still good people as well”* (Respondent #3). *“So, we have stayed in a few expensive hotels with great design and service. However, we can't give any opinion about cheaper hotels because we haven't stayed in any. We have been*

to Pinnawala, which is a cheaper hotel, but we didn't think it needed improvement. The reason for going there is to see elephants, and it's not expensive. We consider comfort when choosing hotels” (Respondent #8) “So first, I think, is location. So, you want it to be somewhere that's close to the beach and somewhere that's close to maybe nice restaurants and things like that. Especially if it's not all-inclusive. Oh, here's my husband. I'm doing a questionnaire. You could come. Yeah, nice restaurants, maybe some shops, and things to do. Maybe some attractions are nearby. Nice rooms. Nice rooms with a nice view. A lot of English people like to see the sea from a room with a balcony. They like that. A lot of English people do like to be all-inclusive. They like everything to be included because then they think it's cheap, even if they already paid for it before. And they like that. And a nice bathroom with a nice shower. That's just something for me. I really like that” (Respondent #16).

Furthermore, throughout their vacation to Sri Lanka, travellers expressed appreciation for the cleanliness and quality facilities available in budget hotels and guest houses. These accommodations not only provided them with a comfortable and pleasant stay, but they also contributed to their overall excellent image of their trip. The emphasis on cleanliness and thoughtful facilities provided by these places significantly contributed to the tourists' lovely experience, emphasizing the importance of outstanding hospitality in making their vacation memorable and enjoyable. *“We prefer budget hotels. We stay at this hotel because it has four stars. Our friends stayed at the hotel with three stars, and they said that's breakfast was not enough. So, there are not many varieties. Yeah” (Respondent #18). “No, it's bright sunshine, so it's a guest house. So yeah, we got a room” (Respondent #3). “In Sri Lanka, I prefer to stay in a guest house”, “Yes, they are very good people. They ask if you want free breakfast in the morning and can propose a lot of transport with tuk-tuks, or they can organize some activities, which is good. The guest house rooms are also very clean” (Respondent #11).*

In this instructive investigation, the researchers were fortunate to get insightful input from the tourists, who highlighted the several benefits they enjoyed throughout their journey to Sri Lanka by choosing budget hotels and guest homes over deluxe lodgings. This critical component is critical to the growth of Sri Lanka's tourism economy. The positive experiences of the visitors underscored the critical role that affordable lodgings play in drawing and satisfying travelers, thereby aiding the expansion and enhancement of the nation's tourism industry. Tourists can have a happy and enjoyable experience while also contributing to the growth of Sri Lanka's burgeoning tourism industry by selecting cost-effective solutions that do not compromise quality.

5) Theme 5 - Traveling Experience: From the insightful information obtained during the interviews, the researchers were able to identify a striking tendency among the tourists: a preference for traveling and exploring the island rather than staying in one place. Among the destinations they visited, Colombo, Galle, and various cultural attractions stood out as being particularly alluring. Due to its captivating surroundings, Sri Lanka's rich history, diverse culture, and stunning landscape have drawn a sizable number of tourists. Travellers' inclination for exploration reflects their curiosity and sense of adventure, which drives them to make the most of their journey by taking in the diversity of beauty that adorn the island's scenic and cultural tapestry. *“Well, we have been in the hills as well, so we've been on a tour from Colombo to the north and then down through the hilly part, through Kandy and Nuwara Eliya, and then through Yala Nature Reserve” (Respondent #13). “Very good in Colombo. Yeah, but we stayed at home. It was pretty good. It was*

very close to the beach. Very good” (Respondent #15). While touring the island, the visitors gushed about Galle as one of the most picturesque locations they would love to visit. Their affection for this enthralling location reflects the attraction it has for tourists. Their willingness to travel and see other picturesque areas of the island also demonstrates their eagerness to set off on an exciting and enriching adventure in search of the many beauties that Sri Lanka has to offer.

“The time duration is one week in Hikkaduwa, and we go to camp after going down to Galle. Yeah, we spent three days next week in this area, and after, we came back home for the holidays” (Respondent #3). “We are not people to sit on a beach, so we wanted to see the culture and see how people live. So, when you come to the beach resort, it's very different from out in the countryside, where the women are picking the tea. So, we've been to two tea factories, and we've recognized the difficulties for a lot of Sri Lankans in the country” (Respondent #13) “Oh, suggestions, suggestions. I would say that Sri Lanka needs to be advertised more as a destination, because before I met my husband, I probably wouldn't have considered coming here just because I don't really know a lot about Sri Lankan culture. And I don't know if English people really separate out different South Asian cultures and don't see the uniqueness of each one. So maybe English people would group in Sri Lanka with India and things like that when it's so different. It is obviously so different. Some similarities, but very, very different. And there's so much to see here. There is such a rich culture and rich history, and I think that needs to be celebrated more. But honestly, I wouldn't want to come here if it were full of English people, because I come here to get away from, I think, just kind of spreading the word a bit more. And if you do want more tourism, I can only speak for England, but just consider maybe the things that I've said, like beach, all-inclusive, and they like a pool as well. They love a pool with sun lounges. And so, when I looked at hotels online, a lot of pools didn't have those areas where a lot of people could kind of lay out in the sun, which I think is a big part of the holidaying culture for English people. So that's probably my suggestion” (Respondent #15).

Thanks to this thorough thematic analysis, the researchers have gained a great lot of insight into how tourists perceive the standard of service, general accommodations, and amenities they use when visiting Sri Lanka. The comprehensive data acquired from the tourists' testimony unequivocally demonstrates the excellent level of service rendered by Sri Lanka's tourism industry. This positive comment highlights the country's commitment to providing guests with an amazing and memorable experience.

The thorough information discovered through this investigation has enormous potential for influencing and developing Sri Lanka's tourism sector. Armed with this wealth of knowledge, future research projects can build on these insights to improve and further hone the services, guaranteeing that customers continue to receive excellent service and depart feeling completely satisfied. The ongoing growth of the tourism sector is essential for presenting Sri Lanka's special appeal to the world and reaffirming the country's status as a spectacular and beloved travel destination.

6) Theme 6 - Suggestions for the tourist industry development:

Based on the provided interviews and the given theme and codes, it is evident that the focus is on gathering feedback and suggestions to improve various aspects of the tourism industry, including service quality, accommodations, experiences, and environmental conditions. The interviewees have shared their opinions and made recommendations based on their personal experiences during their stay in Sri Lanka. Here is an appropriate

answer that summarizes the thematic analysis. The interviews reveal a generally positive recommendations with the service quality provided by hotels and accommodations in Sri Lanka. When interviewing the respondents, researchers identified that the guests have expressed satisfaction with the friendly and helpful staff, who have been attentive to their needs and made them feel welcome. In the below, researchers have mentioned some thoughts of the foreigners. *“Our staff is marvellous. They are very friendly, like a big family. They dress well, and we are totally happy with them”* (Respondent # 02). *“It's different because when you meet people there, they are simple, very grateful. So, if we were lost, they would ask, “Can I help you?” or something like that. Yeah, it's good”* (Respondent # 03). The interviewees have praised the cleanliness of the hotels and the promptness in fulfilling their requests for services like housekeeping. *“The room is very clean. Sometimes there are a few minor issues, but overall, we're very satisfied. It's hard to compare with other countries, but we're very happy with the cleanliness”* (Respondent # 04) and *“Housekeeping and the cleanliness of the hotel is superb, and I really appreciate with that, because I highly expect the cleanliness of the hotel”* (Respondent #06). And *“The hotel is a luxury one with very nice interior designs. The staff was friendly and attentive, anticipating our needs. The rooms were clean, and we had high satisfaction with the service”* (Respondent # 13).

However, tourists share their experiences in Sri Lanka, highlighting aspects they enjoyed and suggesting improvements in certain areas. One recurring suggestion is the need for hotels, especially smaller ones, to have shops or outlets that offer local souvenirs and items that guests may want to purchase. *“A lot of the hotels we stayed at didn't have a little shop or anything, and I think it would be good to have a shop that sells items like sarongs and other souvenirs that guests might want to buy as gifts. This hotel has a shop, but the smaller ones don't”* (Respondent # 01). This would enhance the overall guest experience and provide an opportunity for them to support local artisans and businesses. Another suggestion focuses on the behaviour of individuals approaching tourists on the beach, urging them to be less aggressive in their sales approach. The interviewees have expressed that such interactions can be annoying and uncomfortable, affecting the overall impression of the destination.

“One thing that could be improved is the behaviour of some of the locals who approach tourists on the beach and try to sell tours or other services. It can be annoying and make tourists feel uncomfortable, so it would be better if they were less aggressive in their sales approach” (Respondent # 04). And *“I have one recommendation and experience. I don't want to be rude, but I think that people here, I mean on the street, they shouldn't be a little fussy and they shouldn't be loud. For example, when we go out of our hotel, there are many people who want to sell us something, and sometimes it can be annoying, because we are not used to being close to strangers. So, my only recommendation is that Sri Lankan people should try less to annoy tourists, because sometimes it doesn't work. If I want something I go and buy it and most of the time I don't need anything so it's better to just be alone”* (Respondent # 06). *“The main problem for Sri Lankan tourists is that when you come across the beach side, you will meet many people trying to sell you a tuktuk ride or some kind of souvenir. And it looks like a must buy. Everyone asks multiple times”* (Respondent # 08). By fostering a more relaxed and respectful environment, tourists may feel more at ease and enjoy their time in Sri Lanka.

Additionally, tourists make recommendations and suggest improvements in the infrastructure to enhance their experience during their stay. Some interviewees have emphasized the importance of improving cleanliness, waste management, and the control

of stray animals in certain areas. They have suggested providing more rubbish bins, especially on beaches, to discourage littering and promote a cleaner environment. Furthermore, they have highlighted the need for better care and vaccination of animals to avoid overpopulation and related issues. *"Please take care about your dogs, cats, and other animals. Please give them some vaccines and sterilize them to avoid their puppies. Also, please provide more rubbish bins. Otherwise, we must go to the hotel to throw our trash, but it would be nice if there were more bins on the beach"* (Respondent # 02).

Regarding the infrastructure, there were comments about the safety and convenience of transportation options, particularly the behaviour of bus drivers. The interviewees mentioned a preference for safer alternatives such as tuk-tuks or bikes, while expressing some dissatisfaction with tuk-tuk drivers' attitude. *"The service quality is really good in Sri Lanka and there are plenty of transportation options like buses, trains, and tuk-tuks"* (Respondent # 11). *"Yes, it would be nice to be able to walk safely. Some of the roads here are very dangerous. Tuk-tuks are everywhere and they can be annoying. Apart from that, other modes of transport are very good, but there are no footpaths"* (Respondent # 12). *"Sri Lanka should promote itself more as a tourist destination and address issues like garbage and pricing"* (Respondent # 13). Finally, they mentioned that *"Out of Colombo, some hospitals are not cleaned, and they have less equipment"* (Respondent # 14), *"And there is a lot of beach plastic. A lot of garbage is your main problem. Chemicals end up in the ocean. Therefore, the environment is damaged. That is the main problem you have. There are many things you can do to keep Sri Lanka clean. Because Sri Lanka is a very beautiful country"* (Respondent # 15) and *"Maybe we would wish to have more supermarkets"* (Respondent # 18).

Overall, tourists give feedback and reviews on their experiences, which can influence the decisions of other potential travellers. The interviewees have shown a positive attitude towards Sri Lanka and its tourism industry. They have appreciated the friendliness of the Sri Lankan people, the natural beauty of the country, and the affordability of accommodations. *"We like the beach area and our hotel very much"* (Respondent # 01). *"When selecting accommodation, we looked at reviews and preferred high-end hotels. Coastal areas are nice for relaxation"* (Respondent # 13). However, they have also provided valuable feedback and suggestions to uplift the industry further.

In conclusion, the feedback gathered from the interviews highlights the importance of enhancing the overall guest experience, improving environmental conditions, and maintaining a high standard of service quality. By implementing these suggestions, Sri Lanka can continue to attract and satisfy tourists, fostering a positive reputation as a desirable travel destination.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Qualitative analysis conducted in the study concluded that there was an impact of service quality and weather condition on the tourist guest night stays in the coastal area of Sri Lanka. This was since tourists are largely drawn to the favourable weather conditions and the rise in sea level (associated with weather condition) has had a limited impact on their behaviour. Notably, tourist arrivals are predominantly observed during the winter season in their respective countries. Based on the presented results, the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between service quality, weather condition and guest night stay of tourists in Sri Lanka's coastal area. This suggests that service quality and weather condition are important factors in attracting tourists to the coastal region.

However, the study confirms that there is a relationship between service quality and weather condition factors in the tourist guest night stays.

Considering these findings, authors recommend that further research can be conducted to examine the impact of other factors on tourist guest night stays in the coastal areas of Sri Lanka. Specifically, authors suggest that future studies should be explored the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crises in Sri Lanka on the tourism industry in this region. Also, future researchers can carry out the research to other districts or to the whole of Sri Lanka in general and can also compare with previous years. Finally, the tour guides and hotel managers can be contacted to get other information needed to carry out the research in the most efficient manner. Such research could provide valuable insights to the factors that influence tourist behaviour and inform policies aimed at promoting sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka.

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