

Potential of Tea Tourism in Sri Lanka: A Review of Managerial Implications and Research Directions

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Tea tourism is increasingly recognized as an important scope as per the trade value and integrated contribution marked for the sustainable development in tourism industry. At present, most of the tea growing countries are practicing tea tourism as a diversified concept alongside its main stream of revenue generations as bulk tea and value added tea. Since Sri Lanka has a prominent Ceylon tea brand image embedded with quality value proposition to worldwide consumer segments, tea could also be turned as multiple channel of revenue generation to tourism sector. Thus, the main aim of this concept paper is to study the possible managerial applications in tea tourism in the Sri Lankan context and to postulate research insights for future studies to investigate the proposition of how Sri Lanka as a tea destination could influence consumer behavioral responses.

Further, this paper has highlighted the future directions for the industry practitioners to penetrate tea tourism as a concept-based tourism option to skim the potential revenue models. According to the empirical findings the tea tourism concept could have ability to build and strengthen different theoretical basements such as Destination Branding, Designation of Origin and willing to pay aspects in order to attract potential customers towards the destination and enhance the revisiting choice of customer towards the destination with the influence of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Further findings have emphasized the necessity of destination profiling to be alongside customer profiling when branding a destination. Conclusively the study demonstrates how empirical research propositions could provide knowledge inputs to tea tourism related business models.

Keywords: *Tea Tourism, Tourism Industry, Destination Brand, Brand Equity, Sri Lanka*

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