

Identifying Push and Pull Factors of Booming Chinese Tourist Arrivals to Sri Lanka: With Special Reference to the Dambulla and Nuwara — Eliya Area

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China is a potential origin of international tourists for many tourists receiving countries. In 2014, the number of Chinese tourists arrived in Sri Lanka was 128,166 and increased by 136.1 percent (SLTDA). Although Sri Lanka is receiving an increasing number of Chinese tourists' arrivals annually, it doesn't capitalize on the higher income generation opportunities of it. Most of the Chinese tourists don't stay at luxury hotels and they prefer economy and medium-priced hotels. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to analyze the push and pull factors of booming Chinese tourists' arrival to Sri Lanka and thereby to identify the strategies to gain the maximum yield of Chinese tourists' arrivals. Primary data collected by the author from 100 Chinese tourists interviewed using convenience sampling method in Dambulla and Nuawara-Eliya areas is the main data source. Both quantitative and qualitative data analytical methods were employed in analyzing the data. The study found that both push and pull factors stimulate the higher Chinese tourists' arrivals to Sri Lanka. The major push factors identified were different lifestyles, enhance communication with local communities, physical relaxation, sightseeing, mental relaxation, visit to a new place and increase knowledge about foreign destination. The major pull factors were entertainment, high environmental quality, cultural experiences, traditional foods, natural reserves, natural observation and awareness through internet. Promoting travel experiences about different lifestyles, making documentaries on attraction places and publishing those documentaries via online, enhancing relationship with Chinese film making companies, providing some brochures in basic Sinhala words and phrases, promoting Chinese literacy among shop owners, establishing more shopping opportunities directly affect on gaining a higher yield from Chinese tourists.

Keywords: Chinese tourists, Push and pull factors, Sri Lankan tourism