

A STUDY IN TOURISTS' PERCEIVED VALUES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ITS IMPACTS ON DESTINATION LOYALTY

K.Shanmuganathan^{1*}, N.Abeyssekera², L.P.S.Gamini³, P.Tharsiga⁴

University College of Jaffna, Sri Lanka¹

The Open University of Sri Lanka^{2, 3}

University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka⁴

*k.shan77911@yahoo.com**

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that determine the perceived values of Social Harmless Capital (SHC) and Destination Loyalty (DL). This study contributes to fill the research gap in SHC on DL. The quantitative research method and a Likert scale questionnaire were used for data collection. Using convenience sampling, 290 respondents were selected, and SPSS and AMOS were used for data analysis. Item-total correlation, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and Path Model were used for data interpretation. The study found that SHC is constructed based on three main harmless attributes: ethical contact between people at the destination, the destination being free from violence, and implementation of rules and regulations at the destination of tourists. Additionally, revisiting intention, prioritising destination for the next vacation, and willingness to receive free publicity of the visited destinations are important determinants of DL. Furthermore, DL is affected by SHC. In addition, domestic and foreign tourists significantly mediate the relationship between SHC and DL. Consequently, the present study has argued that the positive perceived image in SHC can be one of the crucial tourism marketing tools that can foster competitive advantages among the countries that promote tourism. Therefore, this study emphasizes that tourism policy makers and tourism development agencies must simultaneously address the basic issues of SHC at the destinations. The present study is also a good reference for the destination community for rethinking and improving the Social Harmless Capital that strengthen Destination Loyalty.

Keywords: *Social Harmless Capital, Destination Loyalty, Tourism Marketing.*