

## **The Influence of Virtual Tour Experience on Domestic Tourists' Decision-Making in the Kandy District, Sri Lanka**

*Amarasekara G.P.M.P., and Jude Leon, S. A..*

*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya.*

### **Abstract**

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the tourism industry, particularly through the emergence of virtual tours that allow potential tourists to explore destinations remotely. This study examines the impact of virtual tours and virtual experiences on the decision-making processes of domestic tourists in the Kandy district of Sri Lanka. The aim of this research is to identify how factors such as ease of use, perceived realism, information quality, and interactivity of virtual tours influence tourists' intentions to visit physical destinations. A quantitative research approach is used using a structured questionnaire distributed among 200 domestic tourists who have engaged with virtual tourism content related to Kandy District. Sample were chosen using convenient sampling combined with purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, reliability, correlation, and multiple regression analyses. The findings showed that virtual tours significantly affect domestic tourists' decisions. Moreover, interactivity and ease of use have been found as the more significant factors in influencing tourists' decision making. The study highlights the growing importance of virtual tourism as a marketing and decision-making support tool for the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. It provides practical implications for tourism stakeholders in the Kandy district to integrate virtual experiences into their promotional strategies to attract domestic tourists. The research also contributes to a broader understanding of technology-driven consumer behavior in the tourism context.

**Keywords:** *Virtual Tour Experience, Domestic Tourists, Decision-making, Tourism Industry.*