

Diversified Characteristics of Tourism Product

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Abstract:

As tourism is termed as a huge industry, like other industries, it also sells its products to potential tourists. But there is a big difference in tourism products and other products. Tourism is termed as a smokeless industry and unlike other products it does not have its entity or a single item but it is the combination of different products, services, and attractions.

The paper focuses on the study of the various characteristics of tourism products in diversified manner which differentiate it from other products.

Keywords: tourism industry, tourism product, seasonality, perishability, intangibility, variability

Introduction:

A tourism product is the sum of the physical and psychological experience tourists get while traveling to the destination. It is a composite product, as the combination of different services like tourist attraction, transport, accommodation and of entertainment which provide tourist satisfaction. Each of the components of a tourist product is supplied by individual providers of services like hotel companies, airlines, travel agencies, etc. The tourist product can be analyzed in terms of its attraction, accessibility, and accommodation.

Attractions: Of the three basic components of a tourist product, attractions are very important. Unless there is an attraction, the tourist will not be motivated to go to a particular place. Attractions are those elements in a product which determine the choice made by particular tourist to visit one particular destination rather than another. The attractions could be cultural, like sites and areas of archaeological interest, historical

buildings and monuments, flora and fauna, beach resorts, mountains, national parks or events like trade fairs, exhibitions, arts and music festivals, games, etc. inventory of the various attractions which are of significance in tourism are given below:

Inventory of Tourist Attractions

Cultural: Sites and areas of archaeological interest, Historical buildings and Monuments, Places of historical significance, Museums, Modern Culture, Political and Educational institutions,

Religious Institutions Traditions: National Festivals, Arts and Handicrafts, Music, Folklore,

Native life and Customs Scenic: National Parks, Wildlife, Flora and Fauna, Beach Resorts, Mountain Resorts.

Entertainment: Participation and Viewing sports, Amusement and Recreation Parks Zones and Oceanariums, Cinemas and Theatres, Night Life and Cuisine.

Others: Climate, Health resorts or Spas, Unique characteristics not available elsewhere.

Accessibility: It is the means of transport used to reach the area where attractions are located. Tourism mode of transport may be a motor car, a coach, an airplane, a ship or a train which enables the tourist to reach his predetermined destination. Availability of transportation determines the value of the destination, easy accessibility of a place, increase the value of destination or vice versa.

Accommodation: Accommodation plays an important role and is very basic to tourist destinations. The demand for accommodation away from home is met by a variety of facilities, which is home away from home. There is a large number of varieties available in the accommodation. There has been an increasing demand for more non-traditional and informal types of accommodation. The latest trends in accommodation are holiday villages. In recent years there has been an increase in the popularity of such accommodation.

Sometimes accommodation in itself attracts a large number of tourists simply because there is a first-class luxury hotel or resort that provides excellent services and facilities., many resorts have gained a reputation for their excellent cuisine, services, and facilities

Diversified Features of Tourism Product

Tourism products have diversified characteristics, unlike other products that differentiate it from other products. Various features are explained as below:

Tourism Characteristics

- Intangibility
- Seasonality
- Variability
- Perishability

1) Intangibility:

Tourism is an intangible product means it is such kind of product that cannot be touched or seen before consumption. Moreover, there is no transfer of ownership. but the facilities are available for specified time and for a specified use.

For example, a room in the hotel cannot be touched or seen before booking or a sense of culture cannot be explored without visiting the destination.

Key Features of Intangibility:

- Tourism and hospitality industries being intangible product can be consumed at the point of sale. Customer is unable to experience the product before purchase.
- Due to lacking of demo, clients are not sure about the quality of the product, delivered at the time of consumption.
- Business needs to provide more information in the form of videos, photographs, descriptions, testimonials, branding to reduce uncertainty.
- Experience is the ultimate product consumption in case of tourism services so the main emphasis of the business is to provide quality service.
- Intangibility makes it difficult to maintain consistency in quality of service.
- Standardization, loyalty programs and guarantees are few of the strategies to maintain quality standard.
- Lack of tangibility make it difficult to pursue legal protection and compensation.
- It's harder to set the prices of the product that are intangible in nature.

Examples of tangibility and Intangibility in Tourism:

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Tangibility	Intangibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flight bookings• Logo of the company• Color and design of aircraft• Comfort and cleanliness of seat• Baggage retrieval• On-board reading material• On-board entertainment• On-board catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pricing of the tickets/services• Availability of the ticket• Courtesy of the Crew• Responsiveness of Crew• Efficiency of Crew• Language skill of Crew• Cabin safety procedure• Accident rate

WATER TRANSPORTATION (Cruise Ship)

Tangibility	Intangibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cruise bookings• Logo of the company• Color and design of ship• On-board Comfort and cleanliness• On-board catering• On-board entertainment• Type of meals available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pricing of the tickets/services• Availability of the ticket• Accommodation facilities• Shore excursion/ destinations covered• Efficiency of crew• Courtesy of crew• Responsiveness of crew

RAIL TRANSPORTATION (Tourist Trains)

Tangibility	Intangibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ticket bookings• Logo• Color and interior design of the coaches• Comfort and cleanliness of seats• On-board catering• On-board reading material• Dress style of staff attendant• On-board snacks and meals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pricing of the tickets/services• Availability of cuisines• Availability of package tours• Availability of comfort and facilities.• Frequency of the train• Responsiveness and language skills of Attendant• Duration of the tour• Speed of the train.

ROAD TRANSPORTATION (Tourist Buses and Coaches)

Tangibility	Intangibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ticket bookings• Logo of the company• Color and design of the coaches• Comfort and cleanliness of seats• On-board audio and video facilities.• On-board reading material• Dress style of staff attendant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pricing of the tickets/services• Routes covered.• Destinations covered• Availability of comfort and facilities.• Frequency and flexibility of the coaches• Responsiveness and language and destination skills of Attendant• Duration of the tour

• **Tangibility and Intangibility services in Accommodation (Hotel) Sector:**

ACCOMMODATION

Tangibility	Intangibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentation Procedure• Logo of the company• Aesthetic value (Interior)• In room comfort and facility• In –room catering• Entertainment• Type of meals available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pricing of the services• Availability of the services• Accommodation facilities• Physical Representation of Staff Members• Efficiency of staff members• Courtesy of staff members• Responsiveness of staff members

2) Perishability:

Tourism product is highly perishable in nature means one cannot store the product for a long time. Production and consumption take place while tourist is available. If the product remains unused, the chances are lost i.e., if tourists do not purchase it. A travel agent or tourism operator who sells a tourism product cannot store it. Production can only take place if the customer is actually present. And once consumption begins, it cannot be stopped, interrupted, or modified. If the product remains unused, the chances are lost i.e., if tourists do not visit a particular place, the opportunity at that time is lost. It is due to tourism reason that heavy discount is offered by hotels and transport-generating organizations during the off-season as the unsold hotel room cannot be added in the next day inventory.

Key Features of perishability

- The services in the hospitality industry are highly time-sensitive and cannot be stored for a long time.
- If a service is not sold on time, as it is supposed to be consumed, it may lead to loss of potential revenue. The situation may be worsened during the lean season.
- It is difficult to synchronize the demand and supply of services. Supply is always constant and cannot be changed as per the demand of the potential client.
- Mass production is not possible in case of high demand, as supply is the constant factor.
- Travel services cannot be returned or resold, as per client feedback.
- Flexible pricing, overbooking, and booking through intermediaries are a few of the strategies to manage this nature of the product.
- During the lean season, when the demand is low, the travel products can be offered at discounted prices and vice versa.
- Working with intermediaries such as travel agents and online booking platforms is the common strategy to reach a wider customer base and sell more perishable travel inventories.

Examples of Perishability:

Travel agency/ Tour operator`s inventory as:

- Fixed departure tours
- Bulk purchased Event tickets
- Bulk booking/purchase of hotel inventories
- Leased hotel property rooms

Hotel inventory as:

- Hotel rooms
- Kitchen inventories
 - Prepared food items
 - Vegetables and fruits
 - Bakery food items
 - Meats and fish
 - Milk and milk products
 - Spices
 - Other short life span products

- Conference halls
- Banquet halls
- Dining area

Transport Inventory as:

- Seats (airline seats, bus seats, train seats)
- Prepared food items available for sale
- Food items available in the pantry like bakery items, milk, and milk products.

3) **Seasonality:**

Seasonality is a major concern in the tourism sector. Various challenges are faced by destinations in the form of overcrowding, high prices, inadequate infrastructure during peak season, lack of services, and loss of jobs during the lean season. Seasonality is a consistent and regular occurrence and can be predictable and anticipated.

Seasonality can be measured through specific indicators ranging from tourist arrivals to occupancy rates. Seasonality sometimes depends upon the climatic and weather pattern of the destination as well as source markets (cold, rain, storms, humidity, excessive heat). For example, warmer summers in Northern Europe can lead to choosing a destination closer to home.

Key features of Seasonality:

- Seasonality means the flow of tourists is concentrated over a short period of a year.
- According to “Bar On” (1975), seasonality, is the effects occurring every year due to climate status, constraints of public holidays, special attractions (e.g., festivals), or personal lifestyle.
- Most of the tourism destinations are affected by seasonality fluctuations.
- It is assumed that the flow of tourists is large during peak season and low during lean season.
- Seasonality as a factor affects the stability of employment. As during lean season loss of employment is a major threat.
- During peak season, tourism activities may affect the resources of the destination, local infrastructure, civic amenities, culture, and environment of the area.
- Consequences of the seasonality can be seen in the form of variabilities in the income, employment rate. It also

Examples of seasonality:

- **Climatic Seasonality:**

- Travel to the destination having different weather condition of home area. During summer season people tend to visit to hilly areas and to warm areas while in winter season.
- Avoid to visit to beach areas during monsoon season.
- Snow fall may attract a large flow of tourist in the area.

- **Non-climatic seasonality:**

- Festival celebrations
- Pilgrimage and fairs
- Public holidays
- School Vacations

- **Social status and Pressure**

- Current trends in travel habits
- Travelling abroad
- Honeymooners
- Business meetings
- Conference and seminars

- **Sporting events**

- Winter Sports
- Olympics
- FIFA world cup
- ICC cricket world cup
- Asian Games
- Commonwealth Games etc.

- **Tradition and culture**

- Travelling of Bengalis across India during Durga Pooja to seek blessings of Durga Mata.
- Visit Haridwar (Uttarakhand, India) after death of relatives for bone immersion.
- Char Dham Yatra, India
- Kailash Mansarover Yatra
- Amarnath Yatra, India
- Hajj Yatra, Saudi Arabia

4) **Variability:**

Tourism as a service industry has variability in nature, as it depends upon the service being offered by whom, when, and how. The standard and quality of the service may vary with the change of service provider and on different occasions too. This term is also called heterogeneity.

Key features of Variability:

- The product is not always the same.
- The tourism service is highly variable.
- The quality of service depends upon the situations like when, where and by whom it is provided.
- The production and consumption of the products take place simultaneously, sometimes it is difficult to maintain consistency, especially during peak season.
- Clients might feel dissatisfied due to a lack of consistency in service production.
- Guest expectations may vary from time to time.
- Quality cannot be controlled due to human involvement.

Examples of variability in tourism

- **Arrival Variability**

There may be an issue of variability due to tourist arrival. For example:

- Mass Tourism
- Increased tourism arrival during Peak season
- Decreased tourism arrival during the Lean season
- Long weekend
- Blackout days (event or festival days)

- **Request Variability**

Clients may request a range of services, and the travel company may have to be flexible while providing the services. For example:

- At the tourist resort customers might want to avail of different services at a time.

- **Capability Variability**

This variability is important when clients actively participate in the production and delivery of services. For example:

- Self-service at restaurant
- Time Share establishments

- **Climate Variability**

The availability of the services sometimes depends upon the climate.

For example:

- Lack of transportation or closed roads during winter in hilly areas.
- Natural hazards during monsoon season like land sliding, flood etc.
- Issue of carrying capacity during the summer season in hilly areas.

Conclusion:

Tourism is the amalgamation of different products viz. transportation, accommodation, sight attraction, amenities and facilities and other ancillary services. That leads to having diversified nature of the product in itself. The distinguished nature of the product creates the satisfaction as well as disappointment among the end consumers sometimes. But with the intent to provide acceptable services will definitely give the positive outcome and so the tourist behavior after consuming the product.