

ARTICLE

DIVERSIFIED CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISM PRODUCT

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Tourism product is a composite product, as the combination of different services like tourist attraction, accessibility and accommodation to have physical and psychological experience as end product. 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 tourist to visit one particular destination rather than another. The attractions could be cultural, historical, traditional, natural and activity based. Accessibility used to reach the area where attractions are located. Availability of transportation and, easy accessibility of a place determines the value of the destination. Accommodation termed as home away from home. 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.

Tourism product's diversified characteristics, differentiate it from other products as mentioned below:

1. Intangibility: tourism product cannot be touched or seen in advance and consumption are available for specified time and use. As a room in the hotel cannot be touched or seen before booking or a sense of culture cannot be explored without visiting the destination.

Features:

Tourism and hospitality industry being intangible product can be consumed at the point of sale. Customer is unable to experience the product before purchase due to lack of demo and hence unsure about the quality of the product. Moreover, it is harder to set the prices of the product. To overcome the challenges the information may be provided in the form of videos, photographs, descriptions, testimonials, branding, standardization and offering loyalty programs.

Examples of tangibility and Intangibility:

Some common examples of tangibility in tourism are logo of the service provider, color, interior designing, comfort, cleanliness of the premises. Baggage retrieval, comfort on seats, on board reading material, on board entertainment in case of air lines and cruises.

While intangibility can be seen in the pricing, availability of the services offered. Courtesy, responsiveness, language skills of the staff.

2. Perishability: Tourism product is highly perishable in nature means one cannot store the product for a long time. Production and consumption take place simultaneously. If the product remains unused, the chances are lost to store it for further sale. Production can only take place if the customer is actually present. and once consumption begins, it cannot be stopped, interrupted, or modified. Due to these reasons heavy discount is offered by service providers during the off-season as the unsold hotel room cannot be added in the next day inventory.

Features:

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, 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. And travel services cannot be returned or resold,

as per client feedback. To overcome these challenges working with the intermediaries, flexible pricing as per the requirement of season, overbookings, are some of the strategies to manage this nature of the product.

Examples of Perishability:

Fixed departure tours, bulk purchased Event tickets and hotel inventories, hotel rooms, Kitchen inventories, Conference halls. Seats, prepared food items available for sale in transportation.

3. Seasonality: Seasonality is a major concern in the tourism sector. It occurs in the form of overcrowding, high prices, inadequate infrastructure during peak season and loss of jobs during the lean season. Seasonality can be measured through specific indicators ranging from tourist arrivals to occupancy rates.

Features:

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. 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.

Examples of seasonality:

Climatic Seasonality like 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 like Festival celebrations, Pilgrimage and fairs, public holidays, School Vacations, travel trends, sporting events, traditional and cultural events like Hajj Yatra, Char Dham Yatra etc.,

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.

Features:

The tourism service is highly variable due to human involvement. The product is not always the same. The production and consumption of the products take place simultaneously, sometimes it is difficult to maintain consistency, especially during peak season. Standardization and automated services may be the strategies to



tackle the problems.

Examples of variability in tourism:

Arrival Variability: Mass tourism, seasonality, long weekend and blackout days.

Request Variability: it arises when expectations are more than the services paid.

Capability Variability: self-service concept

Climate Variability: natural calamities, issue of carrying capacity.

Tourism is the amalgamation of different products. 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.