



## Influence of Destination Attributes Importance to Tourists' Satisfaction - Gujarat Tourism

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### Abstract

The tourist destination comprises different destination attributes, which makes it distinct from other destinations. Selection of the destination depends on the relative importance that tourists give to the attributes of the destination. More the importance, higher the expectations. Tourists have certain expectations regarding various kinds of services that they are going to have at the destination. They are also concerned about the quality of offered services which plays a major role towards satisfaction & loyalty. The paper aims to examine the tourists' satisfaction in relation with the destination attributes importance. A descriptive research design & survey method was adopted for the study. For sampling, convenience & snowball techniques were used & the total sample size was 385 tourists visiting Gujarat. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument. The Research specifies that destination attributes importance has significant influence on the tourists' satisfaction. It also indicates the dimensions of destination attributes that tourists consider important while deciding their trip to Gujarat. They are: tourist attractions and benefits sought, on-site management factors, accessibility and socio-cultural factors of the destination.

**Key words:** Destination, Attributes, Tourists, Satisfaction, Gujarat Tourism

**JEL Classification:** Z3

**Paper classification:** Research Paper

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### Introduction

Destination is a bundle of different tourism products ranging from attractions, accommodation, amenities to accessibility. When it comes to tourists' satisfaction, certain questions arise such as: whether to consider overall satisfaction or satisfaction from specific destination attribute or both? Does experience of tourists from a destination matters only for their satisfaction? Do tourists have expectations before visiting the destination? Do the expectations of the tourists really influence their satisfaction? It has been researched that, before visiting a particular destination, tourists have several destination images or different expectations regarding destination attributes. When it comes to satisfaction, tourists consider the kind of services and the quality of services they are getting (Mohammad & Som, 2010).

Different states of the country are competing to lure tourists to their states. Gujarat on the western coast of India is roping tourists by offering a wide range of attractions. The Government is consistently coming up with various plans, projects & policies for development of tourism in



the state. The state's Tourism Policy (2003-2010) under "Gujarat Infrastructure Agenda - Vision 2010" prepared by Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board (GIDB) highlights diversifications of tourism products in order to attract more tourists. Various projects were undertaken for intensive development of tourism in the State & thereby increased the employment opportunities.<sup>1</sup> During 2015-20 tourism policy, the Gujarat government has focused on following strategies: augmentation of tourist infrastructure, tourist-centric approach, skill development and employment generation, promoting campaign of "Make In India" & "Digital India", thrust on environment-friendliness, sanitation and cleanliness, emphasis on innovation, participation in GOI schemes, active collaboration with the central government, simple formalities to do business & proactive role of the state government.<sup>2</sup> This study is an attempt to identify an association of significance of destination attributes with satisfaction of tourists, which helps in identifying various dimensions that tourists consider important for destination selection.

## Literature Review

Literature review consists of following parts: what is tourist' satisfaction?, destination attributes, destination attributes importance & tourists' satisfaction

### What is tourists' satisfaction?

Prayag (2008) has defined satisfaction as a comprehensive emotional reaction as a result of usage of services and conveniences at the destination. According to Pizam et al (1978), tourist satisfaction means an outcome as a result of tourists' experiences matching with their expectations. Further, when tourists are satisfied, the level of their experiences is higher than of their expectations and if not, it will result in to disappointment. According to Emir & Saracli (2011), customer satisfaction is linked with tourists' personal expectations and real purchase of services and products. As Service sector involves high level of human interactions with customers while providing intangible services, it becomes must to measure the level of customers' satisfaction. Park & Njite (2010) have defined customer satisfaction as a consequence of an appraisal amid preliminary expectations and the level of performance in reality. According to Gunderson et al (1996), customer satisfaction deals with arriving at decisions after consuming the particular goods and services. According to Oliver (1980), it is a process of evaluating the differences between expectations before purchasing and actual performance that lead to different experiences throughout and afterward consumption. According to Dmitrovic' et al (2009), the reason behind determining tourists' satisfaction is to assist business for identifying the excellence of business procedure, any loop holes to be modified and whether the modification leads to enhancement. According to Chhabra et al (2012), satisfaction construct was created by using aggregate mean values of the following variables: peaceful, enriching, enlightened, delight, relaxed, immersed, and absorbing. Karatepe & Avci (2002) have suggested using score of SERVPERF for an inclusive satisfaction of customers as it gives better estimation of it.

Valentina & Passiante (2009) have argued that tourists are less bothered about the providers of the services; rather they consider an all-inclusive experience from the destinations. Hassan (2013) has found that destinations are expected to retain their appeal to the visitors both in appearance and in displays. This in turn creates strong pressures on the places of interests where resources and capacities have limitations and forces the management to put extra

<sup>1</sup>Analysis of Plans for Tourism Development, <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/128932/10/10-chapterPer cent 205.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Tourism Policy for the State of Gujarat (2015-2020) Industries & Mines Department Government of Gujarat September 2015, [http://www.indextb.com/documents/2015-9-28\\_210.pdf](http://www.indextb.com/documents/2015-9-28_210.pdf)

emphasis on visitor satisfaction. He has further explained that the levels of visitor satisfaction are mostly non-fixed and require proper attention from the concerned management. Chiappa et al (2013) enclosed that there are more chances of recommending or revisiting a destination, if the visitors are acquainted with the destinations and are satisfied extremely. Rimmington & Yüksel (1998) also believed that to identify tourists' level of satisfaction, their persistence to recommend or revisit the destination, an assessment of perceptions of amenities and experiences should be done.

According to Mohammad & Som (2010), in general tourists have expectations regarding various services and their quality at a specific destination and hence the level of tourists' satisfaction depends on the degree to which expectations of tourists are met. Rahman & Shil (2012) have also believed that it is important to determine consumer satisfaction in service sector as to be efficacious. Bernini & Cagnone (2014), found out that whether there is any change in overall tourists' satisfaction from destinations' elements as a change in types of tourists over a period of time. Cengiz (2010), has identified that to measure tourists' satisfaction, one needs to identify the satisfaction level with different enterprises in particular.

## Destination Attributes

Different authors have identified a list of destination attributes over a period of time, they are as follow:

**Table A1: Different destination attributes**

Destination attributes	Authors
Safety, ease of getting there	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Reisinger et al 2009; Li 2012; Ball and Giakoumis 2003
Opportunity to socialize with locals	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Reisinger et al 2009; Ball and Giakoumis 2003
Friendliness of people, local food, language differences, shopping, nightlife	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Li 2012; Ball and Giakoumis 2003
Rest and relaxation, sport activities, foreign exchange rate	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Ball and Giakoumis 2003
Natural scenery, historical sites, climate, recreational opportunities	Reisinger et al 2009; Li 2012, Ball and Giakoumis 2003
Eases of local transportation, quality of accommodation, availability of tourist information, entertainment, service quality	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Reisinger et al 2009; Li 2012
Popular image of the destination, the cost of airfare, local prices	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Reisinger et al 2009
Cleanliness, unpolluted or unspoiled environment	Turner and Reisinger 1999; Li 2012
Architecture/buildings, exotic environment, opportunity for adventure, attractions, experience a different culture and customs, and the exchange rate	Turner and Reisinger 1999
Activities, security	Reisinger et al 2009
Value for money, cultural sites, , convention or exhibition facilities	Li 2012
Security	Reisinger et al 2009, Li 2012
Knowing destination, romantic setting, high standards of hygiene, experiencing foreign cultures, foreign exchange rate, low overall price, sightseeing tours, inexpensive meals, taking photographs, a place never visited before, a place less frequented, package deal, familiarity to home, ample cultural activities, activities for entire family, urban setting, socializing with other tourists, writing postcards, proximity to home, meeting other nationalities, buying souvenirs, cruises, opportunity for adventure, visiting friends / relatives, campgrounds, casino, golf course	Ball and Giakoumis 2003

## Destination attributes importance & tourists' satisfaction

Reisinger et al (2009) found out that it is very important to identify the factors influencing tourists' priority while selecting a destination. Turner & Reisinger (1999) also believed to compare destinations from their competitors on the basis of their attributes and hence they suggest to be acquainted with unique destination features and to promote the destination on its basis. Kim & Brown (2012) suggested that the planner of a destination could get more benefits by having a better and deep knowledge of destination features that generates positive experiences to the tourists and influence them to revisit the destination.

According to Baloglu & McCleary (1999), Beerli & Martín (2004), Tasci & Gartner (2007), one of the most important precursors of tourists' travel actions before, during or after purchase judgements depends on the image of the destination. Hunt (1983) argued that the experience of the tourists is beyond the pleasure that they are getting at the destinations, but it should be in the level of their expectations at least. According to Yüksel & Yüksel (2001), the satisfaction is conjured when the consumers are making comparisons of their expectations with their perceptions and when the perceived experience precede the expectations, the customers have the feeling of satisfaction. According to Chen & Phou (2013), Chi & Qu (2008), Prayag (2009), Prayag & Ryan (2012) & Tasci & Gartner (2007), image of the destination was a straight precursor of satisfaction in the past and the destinations having more complimentary image would get more satisfied tourists. Cooper et al (1993) and Lee et al (2002) also found out that the satisfaction of tourists is affected by the image of the destination.

According to Zhang et al (2014), the destination image is a psychological depiction of features, returns and specific influences about the destination as the result of accumulation of opinions and imprints which is derived from different sources over a period of time. According to Lawson & Baud Bovy (1977), destination image is related with expression of information, imprints, preconceptions, thoughts and emotive opinions by an individual for a particular place. According to Assael (1984), the destination image is the moulded image as a result of processing information from different sources from time to time. Tapachai & Waryszak (2000) defined it as perceptions of expected returns from a destination by the tourists. Kim & Richardson (2003) defined destination image as an accumulation of imprints, opinions, thoughts, prospects and feelings by an individual or by a group over a period of time. Tasci et al. (2007) defined destination image as "an interactive arrangement of feelings, sentiments, judgements, imaginings, and purposes for a destination". Hosany et al (2006), Usakli et al (2011) & Qi et al (2012) have implemented the conception of image of a destination. Bigné et al.(2001), Chen & Tsai (2007), Li et al. (2010) & Tasci & Gartner (2007) found out that the perception of tourists regarding the destination image is very essential so as to influence their behaviour for loyalty. Cengiz (2010) identified that the measurement of satisfaction needs to have a comprehensive aspect so as to identify both the reasons behind travelling to a particular destination and the attributes to measure the satisfaction. He further suggested that the knowledge of tourists' requirements and their expectations from the destinations leads to more options for improving business strategies and decisions. It also helps to identify whether the destination is able to fulfil these requirements or expectations or not. He stressed upon to pay more attention to the customers so as to gain their loyalty.

Swan & Combs (1976) identified that satisfaction can be categorized in to two different dimensions, namely first: physical performance of manufactured goods or services and second: performance at psychological level. According to Tse & Wilton (1988), consumer satisfaction is the buyers' reaction to the assessment of the perceived inconsistency between former expectations and the actual performance of the goods or services after making the consumption. Kotler (2000)

defined satisfaction as an individual's outlook for pleasure or dissatisfaction as a result of making comparison of actual outcome with expectations. Kim et al. (2003) defined customer satisfaction as a post-purchase matter, that occurs when a customer compare the quality of a product or service with his or her expectations.

## Research Objectives

The study aims to:

- Inspect whether the destination attributes importance has a significant influence on the tourists' satisfaction or not.
- Identify the dimensions of destination attributes importance that tourists' consider while selecting a destination.

## Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub>: Destination attributes importance does not have any significant influence on tourists' satisfaction.

H<sub>1</sub>: Destination attributes performance does have significant influence on tourists' satisfaction.

## Research Methodology

### Research Plan

Quantitative research approach was adopted for the study and descriptive research design was used. Both primary and secondary data sources were used. For primary data, response of tourists visiting Gujarat was considered. To collect tourists' responses structured, questionnaires were used as an instrument and a survey was conducted. Convenience and snow ball techniques were used for sampling. Total population size is 25409000.<sup>3</sup> Tourists from Gujarat- 19536000, Tourists from other Indian state -5356000, NRIs or Foreigners-517000; 0.001Per cent of 25409000= 385 (sample size). 385 sample size is considered for the study (58% convenience and 42% snow ball). The sample size is calculated by using Sample size calculator<sup>4</sup>. For the secondary data Government reports, journals, magazines, newspapers & websites, books were scanned. Tourists' satisfaction was measured by 38 items. To determine destination attributes importance, a five-point Likert type scale was used. Destination attributes importance was measured by 14 items out of 19 items.

### Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was done and factor analysis technique was used in this research paper: Reliability analysis was also conducted so as to know reliability of the instrument. To determine sample competence, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was used. To determine level of significance for checking null hypothesis, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was used. Through factor analysis, tourists' response about destination attributes importance was derived.

## Discussion

Before beginning the factor analysis, reliability analysis for measuring consistency or reliability of the data instrument was done and to measure the adequacy of sampling Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

<sup>3</sup>Statistical abstract of Gujarat state 2013, Directorate of economics & statistics, Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar; <http://gujecostat.gujarat.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2014/Abstract-2013-final.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>[www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html](http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html)

test was done. The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity with measuring approx. chi-square value, relevant degree of freedom and the significance level was done to test the hypothesis.

**Reliability analysis & factor analysis of destination attributes importance**

**Table B2: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
.842	14

To check the reliability of the instrument, reliability analysis was done, for which Cronbach’s Alpha value was (0.842), i.e. good. In General KMO should lie between 0 and 1 and sample is considered to be adequate or competent if the KMO is greater than 0.05. In this study, the sample has KMO with value higher than 0.05 which is 0.679, that shows there is an adequacy in sample and hence we can continue towards the factor analysis. Here the p-value (Sig.) is of .000 which is less than 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypothesis & agree for the alternate hypothesis (H1) that destination attributes importance does have significant influence on tourists’ satisfaction.

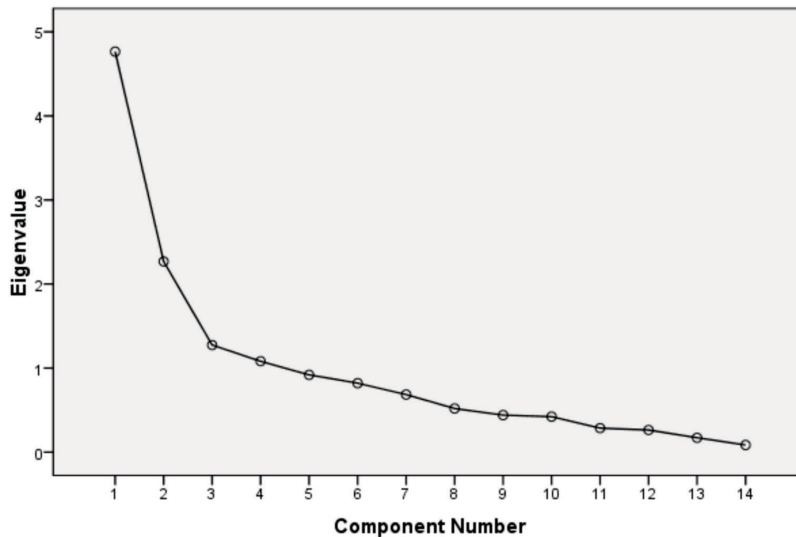
**Table C3: KMO and Bartlett’s Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.679
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2.694E3
	Df	91
	Sig.	.000

The value of Chi-square is 2.694 with 91 df at 0.05 significance level. The value of KMO is 0.679 is more than 0.05. Therefore it is concluded that factor analysis is proper method for the data analysis.

**Graph A1: Scree Plot of dimensions of destination attributes importance**

**Scree Plot**



## Scree plot:

Eigenvalues of all factors are graphed as a scree plot, which is helpful to identify the number of necessary factors. From the scree plot it can be seen that the total number of factors having eigenvalue more than one is four. That means they are considered as major factors contributing in the analysis. While from component number five, the eigenvalue of remaining components i.e from the component number five to the component number eleven, is less than one and the curve becomes flatten.

**Table D4: Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.765	34.036	34.036	4.765	34.036	34.036	2.656	18.972	18.972
2	2.269	16.204	50.239	2.269	16.204	50.239	2.586	18.474	37.447
3	1.274	9.102	59.342	1.274	9.102	59.342	2.103	15.020	52.467
4	1.081	7.724	67.065	1.081	7.724	67.065	2.044	14.599	67.065
5	.919	6.567	73.633						
6	.820	5.859	79.491						
7	.685	4.890	84.382						
8	.519	3.705	88.087						
9	.440	3.146	91.233						
10	.422	3.015	94.248						
11	.286	2.043	96.291						

## Total variance explained

Eigenvalue shows how many factors to be removed. The following column indicates list of all the factors to be removed with respective eigenvalues. The table indicates the factors to be removed in actual. There were four components having eigenvalues more than 1. Factor 1 is accountable for 18.972 Per cent, Factor 2 accounts for 18.474 Per cent of the variability, Factor 3 accounts for 15.020 Per cent of the variability & Factor 4 accounts for 14.599 Per cent of the variability in all 11 variables. The remaining components are having eigenvalue less than one.

**Table E5: Rotated component matrix**  
**Rotated Component Matrixa**

Constructs	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Availability of various tourist attractions	.753	.086	-.050	.060
Good night life	.617	-.220	.396	.113
Adequate provision of entertainment activities	.671	-.175	.140	.249
Friendly people	.185	.189	.228	.667
Value for money	.762	.352	.157	-.106
Multi-cultural experience	.115	.252	.030	.801
Adequate personal safety and security	.590	.018	-.135	.456
Ample cultural activities	.010	.195	.499	.661
Convenience to local transportation within destination	.036	.047	.731	.230
Ease of connectivity with nearby places	.454	.479	.604	-.008
Uniqueness of destination	-.130	.824	.171	.210
Ease of access(air, rail, road) to other major destinations	.102	.404	.660	.053
Less traffic and crowd preferred	-.069	.759	.463	.201
Adequate provision of entertainment facilities	.203	.768	.011	.288

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.*  
*Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.*  
*a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.*

Rotated component matrix: to derive the factors having variables with high loadings, rotated component matrix was used, which doesn't modify anything but it becomes simple to make analysis interpretation. With the help of the rotated component matrix, it can be seen that there are four factors with higher loading values.

**Table F6: Dimensions of destinations attribute importance**

Components	Items	Score	Dimensions
1	Value for money	.762	Tourist attractions and benefits sought
	Variety of tourists attractions	.753	
	Adequate provision of entertainment activities	.671	
	Good night life	.617	
	Adequate personal safety and security	.590	
2	Uniqueness of destination	.824	On- site management
	Adequate provision of entertainment facilities	.768	
	Less traffic and crowd preferred	.759	
3	Convenience to local transportation within destination	.731	Accessibility
	Ease of access(air, rail, road) to other major destinations	.660	
	Ease of connectivity with nearby places	.604	
4	Different culture	.801	Socio- cultural
	Friendly people	.667	
	Cultural activities	.661	

To identify the influence of the factor on the variable, the respective loadings were checked. Generally, loadings with value near -1 or 1 suggest that the factor has great influence on variable. On the contrary, the loadings with value close to 0 suggest that the factor is influencing less the particular variable. First factor includes variables: variety of tourist attractions, value for money, adequate provision of entertainment, good night life and adequate personal safety and security. Loading of variable "value for money" is the closest to one (0.762), in the first Factor i.e. tourist attractions and benefits sought, which indicates that the factor strongly influences this variable. After that, it influences "variety of tourists attractions" (0.753), "adequate provision of entertainment activities" (0.671), "good night life" (0.617) respectively and adequate personal safety and security (0.590) respectively. Factor two includes variables: uniqueness of destination, adequate provision of entertainment, less traffic and crowd preferred. Factor 2 on-site management strongly influences variable "uniqueness of destination" (0.824), then the variable "adequate provision of entertainment facilities" (0.768) and "less traffic and crowd preferred"(0.759). The third factor includes variables: convenience to local transportation within destination, ease of access (air, rail and road) to other major destinations, ease of connectivity with nearby places. The third factor accessibility strongly influences the variable "convenience to local transportation within destination" (0.731), then the variable "ease of access (air, rail, road) to other major destinations" (0.660) and "ease of connectivity with nearby places" (0.604). The fourth factor includes variables: different culture, friendly people and cultural activities. The fourth factor socio cultural strongly influences the variable "different culture" (0.801), then the variable "friendly people" (0.667) and at last the variable "cultural activities" (0.661).

Through factor analysis, it can be derived that tourists consider many factors while deciding their trip to Gujarat like: tourist attractions and benefits sought, on-site management factors, accessibility and socio-cultural factors of the destination.

## Important Dimensions

### 1) Tourist attractions & benefits sought

Tourists consider the attractions of the tourist destinations as the most important factor while selecting the destination. They look for the different options available for attractions such as beaches, mountains, hill stations, religious places, adventure, historical places, monuments, heritage sites, art galleries and so on. Apart from the basic attractions, tourists also look for whether there is good night life or more entertainment options such as theme parks, amusement parks, clubs, disco and so on. After considering the attractions availability, tourists look for the benefits they will get at the destinations. They think of overall value for money during their whole journey and their personal safety and security. Thus the first factor which tourists consider the most important while visiting Gujarat includes variables: attractions and benefits sought include variables variety of attractions, good night life, more entertainment options; value for money, personal safety & security.

### 2) On-site management factors

The second factor that tourists consider important while selecting the tourist destination is the on-site management factor. Whether the destination is well managed to create a unique destination image, whether there is crowding management system or the destination is overcrowded, whether the destination comprises amenities for entertainment activities. In general

the tourists' attractions and benefits are important, but tourists give weightage to the on-site management factors also, as poorly managed on-site facilities will lead to dissatisfaction to the tourists. The on-site management factor includes variables: Uniqueness of destination, less traffic and crowd, more entertainment facilities.

### 3) Accessibility

Everything is in place whether attractions, benefits or on-site management facilities, but the accessibility factor is also important for tourists while selecting a destination. The tourists consider whether the place is accessible very well in terms of accessibility by air, rail or road. They think of availability of convenient local transportation options within the destination such as: local public transport, auto rickshaw or rented car. As many a time, tourists opt to visit nearby places which are not included in the main package, they will also look for the ease of connectivity with nearby places. Sometimes they ask the hotel owners to arrange such facilities or they themselves will make an arrangement for it. The accessibility factor includes variables convenience to local transportation, ease of connectivity with other place and ease of access to the destination.

### 4) Socio- cultural factors of destination

Sometimes people look for the socio- cultural aspects of the destination. Gujarat is famous for its rich culture and cultural activities, festival celebrations. Tourists do consider the nature of local people whether it is polite and friendly enough, whether the destination is providing multi-cultural experience and whether cultural activities are well organized and are celebrated. The fourth factor includes variables: friendly people-image, different culture-attractions and cultural activities-attractions.

## Conclusion

Since tourists consider many elements before selecting a particular destination for their journey or holiday, it becomes essential for the destination manager to be aware of the different destination attributes and which destination attribute tourists consider the most important for selecting the destination. After recognizing such factors, it will become easy for destination manager to build the strategies for destination planning, development or promotion and branding. The strategies built upon such information will lead to great footfall of tourists at the destination and will lead to their satisfaction, because the importance that tourists give to a specific destination attribute and their expectations from it becomes very clear. Hence Gujarat as a tourist destination should focus on following destination attributes that tourists consider important, namely: tourist attractions and benefits sought, on-site management factors, accessibility and socio cultural factors of destination for attracting more tourists to the destination and to satisfy them.

### Note:

1. Entertainment facilities: entertainment facilities include amenities that facilitate individuals in entertainment activities, such as airlines, hotels, resorts, camps
2. Entertainment: entertainment refers to different types of activities which grab attention of consumers and their interest. Further, it includes activities that deliver a kind of change and allow persons to be pleased during their holiday period and offer enjoyment and happiness<sup>5</sup>.

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