

Exploring Critical Success Factors that Influence Tourism Success: a Qualitative Study in the Context of Diverse Tourism Destinations

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Abstract: Tourism is an important industry that has a huge impact on the economy. This economic impact comes from the spending of tourists who visit a tourism destination. Therefore, tourism destinations must make the necessary arrangements to effectively receive and maximize this economic opportunity. An important step in understanding and effectively managing the tourism industry is to identify the critical aspects that contribute to its success. Examining critical success factors in various tourism destinations, taking into account geographic, cultural, and economic variations, is essential to understanding the intricacies of the tourism sector as a whole. This research utilizes a qualitative research methodology, namely content analysis, which includes conducting a literature review and using triangulation. The purpose of this study was to identify the key factors that influence the success of the tourism industry in the context of diverse tourism destinations. The research findings show that various key factors significantly influence the success of various tourism destinations. These factors are uniqueness of location, attractiveness of tourist attractions, ease of access, government support, local community involvement, availability of facilities and infrastructure, quality of human resources, effectiveness of marketing and promotion efforts, and tourist motivation. Within the realm of green tourism, these findings underscore the imperative of incorporating sustainable practices into each of these elements. This includes advocating for environmentally friendly modes of transportation, endorsing local environmentally conscious enterprises, and ensuring that tourism development amplifies rather than exploits natural and cultural resources. This integration will not only adhere to the ideals of sustainable tourism but also have the ability to boost the economic advantages of the tourism industry by attracting environmentally aware travelers.

Keywords: tourism, travelers, tourism destinations, critical success factors, literature review, triangulation

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Introduction

Tourism is the activity of people visiting different places and attractions for reasons such as leisure, business, health, or other purposes (Soteriades and Van Zyl, 2016). It refers to the action of individuals journeying to a foreign country or destination that is different from their typical surroundings, motivated by personal or business/professional objectives (United Nations. Statistical Division and World Tourism Organization., 2010). The folks in question are commonly known as visitors, encompassing tourists, travelers, and both local and non-local residents. Tourism encompasses a range of activities engaged in by individuals, including expenditures directly related to tourism (United Nations. Statistical Division and World Tourism Organization., 2010).

When categorizing tourists by their country of origin, they can be classified into two groups: international tourists and local tourists (Sihite, 2000; Yoeti, 2008). International tourism refers to the act of individuals traveling to and from a destination outside of their usual living and working environment, crossing national borders, with the purpose of leisure and enjoyment. Domestic tourism refers to the act of individuals going to and from a destination within their own country, while being outside their usual place of residence and job.

According to UN-WTO (Cooper, 2005; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2012; Gee, 1999), tourists can be classified into three distinct groups based on their reasons for visiting. The primary objective is for leisure and relaxation, with the major pursuits being strolling, seeing notable sights, and indulging in gastronomic experiences. The secondary objective pertains to corporate and professional endeavors, encompassing consulting, conventions, and inspections as the primary activities. The final objective pertains to many tourist reasons, encompassing activities such as acquiring knowledge and understanding, undergoing medical examinations, engaging in social interactions, reinforcing religious beliefs, and other related endeavors.

In order to attract visitors, a tourism site must fulfill three criteria, as stated by Yoeti (2008): it must offer something visually appealing, provide activities for tourists to engage in, and have opportunities for visitors to make purchases. An object deemed as "something to see" possesses a distinct allure that has the capacity to entice travelers to visit it. Something to do refers to activities that tourists can engage in during their visit, which offer both enjoyment and relaxation. These activities may include recreational facilities such as playgrounds, as well as a variety of dining options, particularly local specialties. By providing these opportunities, destinations aim to offer new experiences and create a sense of comfort for tourists during their stay. Something to buy refers to amenities available for tourists to engage in shopping, typically in the form of souvenirs or packaged items that represent the distinctive characteristics or symbols of the region, which can be acquired as mementos.

According to a report published by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the tourism industry is a significant source of employment, attracting a substantial workforce. The number of employees in the Tourism Industry can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Employees in the Tourism Industry (in 1,000)

No	Country	Employees	Year
1	India	34,826	2019
2	Japan	5,889	2019
3	Philippines	4,895	2021
4	Thailand	4,258	2016
5	United States	3,887	2020
6	Malaysia	3,520	2021
7	United Kingdom	2,743	2016
8	Indonesia	2,565	2020
9	Spain	2,368	2021
10	Brazil	2,192	2019

Source: United Nations World Tourism Organization (2023)

Tourism is a multifaceted sector due to the multitude of activities required for its organization. Table 2 below displays the categorization of enterprises associated with tourism.

Table 2. Classification of Businesses in the Tourism Industry

Classification	Business
Accommodation	Hotel, Motel, Tourist Courts, Tourist Home
	Camping Ground and travel Trailer park
	Clothing sales
	Recreation area business
Travel business	Travel agencies, tour bureaus and guides
Food Service	Food Service
Culture and Entertainment	Museum
	Botanical and Zoological Parks
	Theater and Entertainment
	Amusement Park
Vehicle Business	Vehicle service, vehicle storage
Others	Camera and Photography Shop
	Gift and Souvenir Shop
	Laundries and Opticians
Transportation	Air Transportation
	Intercity and Rural Transit
	Buses and Charter Vehicles
	Car Rental
	Water Transportation

Source: Goeldner and Ritchie (1987)

From the given statistics, it can be inferred that tourism plays a significant role in the economy since it serves as a revenue-generating sector. An economic impact arises from the expenditures made by tourists or visitors who visit a tourism site. Hence, tourism locations must equip themselves to efficiently embrace and maximize these economic prospects. A significant obstacle in the tourism industry is the rising intensity of competition, as many tourism locations strive to entice travelers through the provision of diverse and distinctive experiences. In order to surmount these obstacles, the tourism sector must engage in innovation, formulate sustainable approaches, and carefully assess the ecological and social ramifications of tourism endeavors.

An essential step in comprehending and efficiently managing the tourism industry is to identify the pivotal aspects that contribute to its success. Critical Effectiveness Factors (CSFs) are essential elements that significantly impact the effectiveness of a strategy and can either enhance or hinder performance (Raravi et al., 2013; Yew Wong, 2005). CSFs refer to a small number of specific areas that, when achieved successfully, will guarantee competitive success for a person, department, or organization (Bullen and Rockart, 1981). Ward and Peppard (2002) define CSFs as crucial areas that must be executed successfully in order to achieve corporate success. By acquiring a profound comprehension of the pivotal elements that impact performance in the tourist sector, stakeholders such as the government, corporations, and local communities can devise more focused initiatives. Through the development of an appropriate strategic plan, stakeholders have the ability to transform the tourist industry into a sustainable catalyst for economic advancement, enhance the competitiveness of their destinations, and mitigate adverse effects on the environment and local populations. Based on the existing background, the research question of this

study is what are the key factors that influence the success of the tourism industry in the context of diverse tourism destinations?

Methodology

The research commences with a thorough examination of existing literature. Researchers will conduct a comprehensive investigation, gather, and scrutinize literature that is pertinent to the research subject. During the preliminary phase of the literature review, a total of 40 journal articles were acquired from Scopus. The overarching stage is characterized by the following keywords: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (tourism) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (critical AND success AND factors) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (key AND success AND factors)) AND PUBYEAR > 2012 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Tourism") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Critical Success Factors") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Tourist Destination") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Key Success Factors")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , "all")). Figure 1 illustrates this. Keywords used in Scopus.

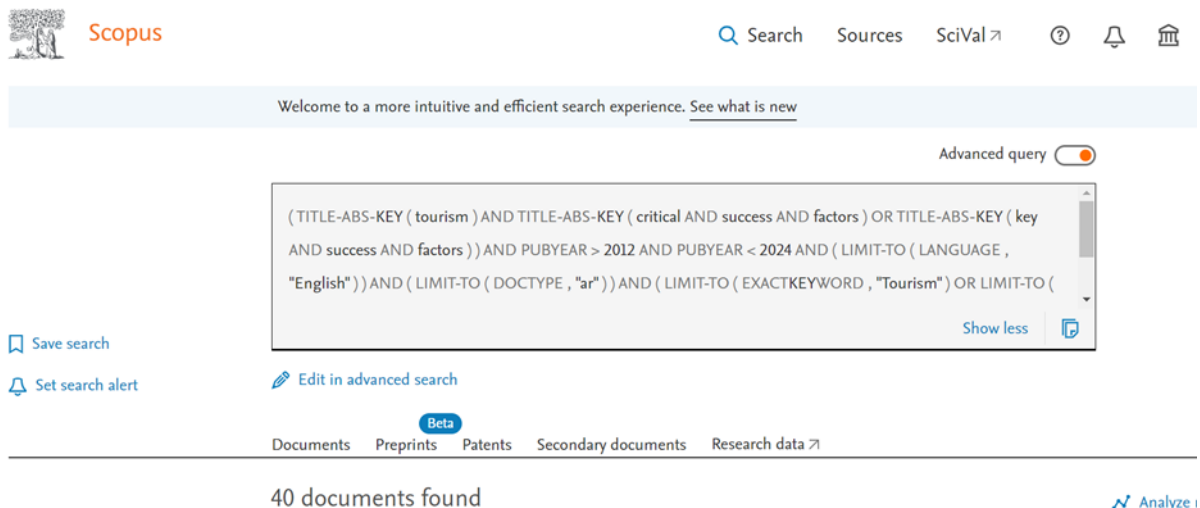


Figure 1. Keywords Used in Scopus

The subsequent step involves doing data processing by filtering out scientific papers that have abstracts that align with the research topic. The dataset acquired in this procedure consists of 19 scholarly papers, which are listed in table 3 of the referenced literature review database.

Table 3. Literature Review Database

No	Title	Authors	Source	Year
1	Revitalizing Urban Heritage for Tourism Development: A Case Study of Baghdad's Old City Center	Al-Arab, N.K.I., Abbawi, R.F.N.	International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning, 18(9), pp. 2747–2755	2023
2	Community Perceptions on the Critical Success Factors of Hotels' Community-Based Corporate Social Responsibility	Kasim et al	Sustainability (Switzerland), 15(12), 9842	2023
3	The Influence of Key Success	Thaothampitak	Tourism and Hospitality	2023

	Factors on Business Growth for Tourism Business Along Thailand's Andaman Coast: Moderating Role of Location	et al	Management, 29(2), pp. 195–206	
4	Community-based Conservation in Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot-a Case Study	Dutta, M., Dutta, P.K.	Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge, 22(1), pp. 220–229	2023
5	A framework for Sustainable Agritourism Development in Zimbabwe	Baipai	Cogent Social Sciences, 9(1), 2201025	2023
6	The Effect of Identity Salience on Residents' Engagement with Place Branding during and Post COVID-19 Pandemic	Han, W., Tang, Y., Wang, J.	Sustainability (Switzerland), 15(1), 357	2023
7	Factors Determining Cultural City Tourists' Length of Stay	Gemar et al	Cities, 130, 103938	2022
8	Residents' Perceptions of Tourism: A Decisive Variable in Stimulating Entrepreneurial Intentions and Activities in Tourism in the Mountainous Rural Area of the North-East Region of Romania	Saghin et al	Sustainability (Switzerland), 14(16), 10282	2022
9	Multi-Stakeholder Involvement Mechanism in Tourism Management for Maintaining Terraced Landscape In Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (Iahs) Sites: A Case Study Of Dazhai Village In Longji Terraces, China	Zhu, G., Li, X., Zhang, Y.	Land, 10(11), 1146	2021
10	Economic Sustainability of Touristic Offer Funded By Public Initiatives In Spanish Rural Areas	Moriche et al	Sustainability (Switzerland), 13(9), 4922	2021
11	Integrating a Local Asset/Resource into Tourism and Leisure Offering: The Case of Tea Resources in Longwu Town, Zhejiang Province, China	Yan, Z., Sotiriadis, M., Shen, S.	Sustainability (Switzerland), 13(4), pp. 1–27, 1920	2021
12	Identifying Business Practices Promoting Sustainability in Aboriginal Tourism Enterprises in Remote Australia	Akbar, S., Hallak, R.	Sustainability (Switzerland), 11(17), 4589	2019
13	Residents' Perception of Destination Quality: Key Factors for Sustainable Rural Development	Muresan et al	Sustainability (Switzerland), 11(9), 2594	2019
14	Exploring The Determinants of Hot Spring Tourism Customer Satisfaction: Causal Relationships Analysis Using ISM	Mi et al	Sustainability (Switzerland), 11(9), 2613	2019
15	Making Community-Based Tourism Sustainable: Evidence from The Free State Province, South Africa	Strydom et al	Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites, 24(1), pp. 7–18	2019

16	Human Aspect as A Critical Factor for Organization Sustainability in The Tourism Industry	Ulus, M., Hatipoglu, B.	Sustainability (Switzerland), 8(3), 232	2016
17	Consumer value dimensions of rural tourism in Hungary	Kulcsár, N.	Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, 64(2), pp. 127–141	2015
18	Leeds and the Northern Arts Prize	Jones, B., Beresford, S.	Journal of Place Management and Development, 7(3), pp. 247– 258	2014
19	Critical Success Factors for Crisis Recovery Management: A Case Study of Phuket Hotels	Campiranon, K., Scott, N.	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 31(3), pp. 313–326	2014

Following the collection of the literature, the subsequent action involved triangulation. The triangulation in this analysis is derived from previously published academic publications. Subsequently, the acquired literature underwent content analysis, wherein patterns, trends, and correlations among the findings were identified. This will facilitate comprehension of the topics that consistently emerge in the relevant literature. Subsequently, the researcher will analyze and make sense of the discoveries obtained from the examination of the literature and the outcomes of the triangulation. This entails amalgamating data from diverse sources and offering a more profound comprehension of the fundamental determinants of success in the tourism sector. Subsequently, a study was undertaken by disseminating questionnaires to participants in order to ascertain the ranking of CSFs. The respondents were chosen through random selection, with the condition that they are persons who have a preference for traveling and have participated in tourism-related activities.

Results and discussions

Results

Through the process of collecting, processing, and analyzing data, we managed to identify nine critical factors that determine the success of tourism destinations. Based on the ranking analysis of the results of the questionnaires filled out by respondents, the order of these factors from the most important is as follows: local community participation, quality of human resources, availability of facilities and infrastructure, destination accessibility, attractiveness of tourist attractions, uniqueness of location, tourist motivation, effectiveness of marketing and promotion strategies, and government support.

Discussions

The participation of the local community

The success of tourism is contingent upon the active engagement of local communities in fostering and advancing tourism villages (Kasim et al., 2023; Strydom et al., 2019; Akbar and Hallak, 2019; Dutta and Dutta, 2023; Yan et al., 2021; Al-arab et al., 2023). Active participation of the local community has a significant role in shaping the image of a destination (Han et al., 2023; Moriche et al., 2021). It also influences the management of tourist destinations, which in turn affects the overall experience of tourists and the length of their stays (Gemar et al., 2022). The local populace's view of the local authorities' role also impacts their assessment of the worth of tourism attractions in their vicinity (Saghin et al., 2022). Furthermore, the amicability of the local populace is a significant aspect that implies that favorable

engagements with them can impact tourists' evaluations of the quality of the destination (Muresan et al., 2019). The level of local residents' engagement and endorsement in rural tourism development is indicative of the significance of their participation and perception (Zhu et al., 2021; Saghin et al., 2022; Muresan et al., 2019). This underscores the significance of cooperation among the government, community, and other stakeholders in guiding the advancement of the tourism industry (Baipai et al., 2023).

The quality of human resources

It is crucial to prioritize the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists in tourism destinations (Gemar et al., 2022). Thus, the tourism business necessitates proficient human resources to deliver high-quality services to travelers. The impact of human resource management on the sustainability progress of tourism businesses is good (Ulus and Hatipoglu, 2016). In their study, Baipai et al. (2023) emphasized the significance of enhancing capacity, providing training, and fostering skills development in the context of tourist development.

Kulcsár's (2015) research determined that service quality and host personality are the primary elements influencing tourists. The amiable and hospitable demeanor of the host, together with their exceptional service standards, ensures a delightful experience for tourists. Furthermore, the caliber of cuisine and service staff is an influential element that can enhance the overall visitor experience and the excellence of tourism locations (Muresan et al., 2019). Skilled and competent human resources in the tourism business are crucial for the development of tourism destinations. They provide high-quality services that enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

The availability of facilities and infrastructure

For the ease of tourists, it is crucial to provide supporting services and infrastructure, like lodging, dining establishments, and public restrooms. The success of sustainable tourism development relies heavily on the extent of infrastructure development, encompassing both tourism-related and technical aspects. Effective infrastructure plays a crucial role in the achievement of tourism destinations by effectively attracting and accommodating visitors (Saghin et al., 2022; Moriche et al., 2021). For instance, natural tourism areas necessitate a year-round accessible road network (Dutta and Dutta, 2023). High-quality infrastructure, encompassing well-maintained and well-illuminated roadways, would bolster the expansion of tourism and enhance its appeal to visitors. The study conducted by Strydom et al. (2019) determined that enhancing infrastructure, such as roads and lighting, is necessary to enhance accessibility and enhance the overall tourist experience in tourism sites.

The accessibility of the destination

Tourist locations must to be readily reachable by public or private transportation. The viability of the tourism industry is influenced by the strategic location and easy accessibility (Moriche et al., 2021). Enhancing accessibility and improving the visitor experience necessitates the improvement of infrastructure, such as roads and lighting (Strydom et al., 2019). Within this framework, the prosperity of a tourist location hinges not alone on its tourist allure, but also on the accessibility it offers to visitors. Hence, allocating funds towards enhancing infrastructure and transportation systems might substantially bolster the appeal and triumph of tourist places.

The attractiveness of tourist attractions

Tourism destinations necessitate captivating tourist attractions, encompassing exquisite natural landscapes, captivating events, historical landmarks, and other enticements. Tourism offerings centered around cultural heritage have the potential to

enhance the appeal of the city to tourists (Al-arab et al., 2023). Factors such as biodiversity, appealing coastal areas, and the vibrant culture of local residents are acknowledged to contribute to the attractiveness of tourism (Dutta and Dutta, 2023). According to Saghin et al. (2022), the presence of well-developed infrastructure will enhance the appeal of a tourism destination. Furthermore, the duration of tourists' stays is influenced by the caliber of lodging and the effectiveness of destination marketing (Gemar et al., 2022). Hence, an effective strategy for developing a tourism destination should acknowledge the crucial role of tourist attractions in providing an immersive experience for tourists and in facilitating the sustainable expansion of the tourism industry.

The uniqueness of the location

An exceptional and captivating setting might serve as a significant lure for travelers to visit a tourism site. Research in this context emphasizes the significance of the distinct features and allure of a location in attracting tourists. For instance, the implementation of distinctive heritage-focused tourism offerings that highlight historical aspects has proven to be successful in enhancing visitor appeal (Al-arab et al., 2023). The uniqueness of a location encompasses its natural beauty, air quality, and exclusive resources that may only be found in specific areas, such as distinctive hot springs or other natural attractions. These factors play a significant role in enhancing the appeal of a tourism destination and promoting the development of sustainable tourism (Akbar and Hallak, 2019; Mi et al., 2019). The analysis has also discovered that the geographical position has a crucial role in the growth of tourism (Thaothampitak et al., 2023; Moriche et al., 2021; Dutta and Dutta, 2023).

The motivation of tourists

The perception of existing tourism products, including both tourist attractions and supporting factors, will influence the motivation of tourists to visit a tourist destination. The identification of tourist motivation is crucial, as there exists a substantial correlation between motivation and the length of a visit. Tourists who experience a strong emotional connection to a particular destination are more likely to prolong their visit in that destination (Gemar et al., 2022). Comprehending the underlying incentives of tourists can aid in designing programs or products that are pertinent and appealing to them (Gemar et al., 2022). Furthermore, the pleasant emotions and experiences of tourists can serve as a catalyst for their future visits to the location and their inclination to endorse it to others (Mi et al., 2019).

For instance, travelers in Hungary who explore the rural areas are typically driven by a desire to encounter a secure and picturesque countryside ambiance. They desire to expose their offspring to the splendor of the natural world, wildlife, and countryside living (Kulcsár, 2015). Therefore, comprehending the motives of tourists plays a crucial role in the triumph of tourism locations as it shapes their perceptions of tourism offerings and impacts their duration of visit and level of involvement with the destination.

Effective marketing and promotion strategies

Efficient marketing and promotion are crucial in heightening tourists' awareness and fostering their interest in tourism locations. Research indicates that tourist organizations that prioritize important success criteria, such as financing, marketing activities, and business partners, are more likely to have significant business growth (Thaothampitak et al., 2023). Marketing and promotion tactics have a crucial role in identifying target visitors, determining the factors that facilitate different lengths of stay, and impacting the duration of tourist visits (Gemar et al., 2022). Research

conducted by Jones and Beresford (2014) found that effectively promoting regional culture events and attracting cultural tourists relies on cultural marketing strategies that involve understanding the messages to be communicated to different stakeholders.

The importance of integrated marketing in attracting tourists to tourism locations is highlighted, which involves implementing marketing planning techniques that promote local community products within the tourism context (Yan et al., 2021; Strydom et al., 2019). When creating a successful promotional strategy, it is essential to work together with different stakeholders from both the public and commercial sectors (Campiranon and Scott, 2014). Therefore, proficient marketing and promotion are crucial factors in the triumph of tourism locations as they enhance travelers' awareness and interest in visiting the destination.

The support from the government

The prosperity of tourism destinations is significantly impacted by governmental assistance and collaboration in the sustainable management, regulation, and advancement of the tourism industry (Strydom et al., 2019; Al-arab et al., 2023; Jones and Beresford, 2014; Dutta and Dutta, 2023). The efficacy of tourism relies heavily on the implementation of strategic management by governments and destination management organizations. In order to foster collaboration between the public and private sectors, safeguard the environment and cultural heritage, and develop policies that promote sustainable tourism, it is imperative that they collaborate and construct a comprehensive framework (Baipai et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2021). This encompasses the government's responsibility in formulating policies that promote the preservation of cultural heritage, effective environmental management, and encouraging local stakeholders to actively participate in the development of sustainable tourism. By receiving robust governmental backing, tourism locations can attain sustainability in their developmental endeavors.

Conclusions

Policy and strategy recommendations are crucial for stakeholders in the tourist industry to effectively guide the sustainable and competitive development of the sector. By possessing a comprehensive comprehension of the crucial elements that impact triumph in the tourist sector, entities such as the government, enterprises, and local communities may devise more focused initiatives. Through the collection, processing, and analysis of data, we have identified 9 CSFs that impact the success of different tourism destinations. These factors include the participation of the local community, the quality of human resources, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, the accessibility of the destination, the attractiveness of tourist attractions, the uniqueness of the location, the motivation of tourists, effective marketing and promotion strategies, and the support from the government. Through the development of an appropriate strategic plan, stakeholders have the ability to transform the tourist industry into a sustainable catalyst for economic expansion, enhance the competitiveness of their destinations, and mitigate adverse effects on the environment and local populations.

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