
SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Marketing of tourist product has certain characteristics. Although general principles of marketing could be applicable to marketing the product, there are certain differences in approach. These differences are because of the peculiar character of the tourist products.

Keywords: Marketing, Tourism, Accommodation, Catering,

Transportation Some special characteristics of tourist products are as follows:

Tourism Is An Intangible Product

Tourism is related to service, facility, pleasure, leisure, etc. which is not possible to visualize. tourism is termed as a very big industry, like other industry it also sells its product to the potential tourist. But there is a big difference in the tourism product and other products. As tourism is termed as a smokeless industry and unlike other product it has not its own entity or a single item but it is the combination of different products, services and attractions [1-12].

A tourism product is the sum of the physical and psychological experience got by tourist during their traveling to the destination. It is the 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.

Characteristics of Tourism Product

Intangible: Tourism is an intangible product means tourism is such kind of product which can not be touched or seen and there is no transfer of ownership, But the facilities are available for specified time and for a specified use. For e.g. a room in the hotel is available for a specified time.

Psychological: The main motive to purchase tourism product is to satisfy the psychological need after using the product, by getting experience while interacting with a new environment. And experiences also motivate others to purchase that product.

Highly Perishable

Tourism product is highly perishable in nature means one can not 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 off season.

Composite Product: Tourist product is the combination of different products. It has not a single entity in itself. In the experience of a visit to a particular place, various service providers contributes like transportation The tourist

product cannot be provided by a single enterprise unlike a manufactured product. The tourist product covers the complete experience of a visit to a particular place. And many providers contribute to tourism experience. For instance, airline supplies seats, a hotel provides rooms and restaurants, travel agents make bookings for stay and sightseeing, etc.

Unstable Demand: Tourism demand is influenced by seasonal, economic political and others such factors. There are certain times of the year which see a greater demand than others. At these times there is a greater strain on services like hotel bookings, employment and the transport system, etc.

Ownership of Tourist Product is Non-Transferable

In tourism, buying and selling of a product does not mean buying things like other properties. It is buying or selling the service. In the process of buying and selling of the tourism product, no transfer of ownership of goods is involved as compared to tangible product.

The ownership of a tourism product is not transferable to the consumer. The consumer only owns the right to use the product because he has paid for it for a predetermined period of time or days. If a tourist pays for a hotel room, he or she has the right to use the room for the days that he or she paid for. After that he or she must vacate the room or pay for additional days if he or she wants to prolong the stay [13-25]. The hotel continues to belong to the owner even if it is booked and paid for. Ownership does not transfer to the renter because he or she has paid for the room.

Customer Participation

In the tourism industry, the customer by all means would have to partake in the delivery of the service being offered, otherwise, the service delivery would never be complete. In the industry, a product is being sold and a product is being consumed; there is no way this can happen without the customer getting involved. A tourist must be on a bus otherwise the service is not being consumed. If one pays for a hotel or a hotel is booked on a person's behalf, the person must of necessity sleep in the hotel room for the product to be consumed.

Heterogeneous

Another characteristic of tourism product is that it is heterogeneous. In tourism, tourists make use of several services, including transport, hotels, restaurants, car rentals, and many types of indoor and outdoor recreational activities. However, what a tourist experiences at one place is not similar to the one experienced at another place. Even in the same restaurant, since there are many servers, the way one customer is served may not be the same as the way another is served. The element of the human factor creates a difference between one product and the other. Two different bus companies could transport tourists to the same destination but the tourists would have different stories to tell just because the drivers are different.

Immovability

Another feature of tourist product is immovability. A tourist attraction such as a waterfall, mountain, beach, flora and fauna cannot be moved from where it is originally located to another place. Heritage sites have to remain where they are because that is how the tourist will enjoy and have value for his money. It is practically impossible to move a hotel or restaurant from where it is to another place without destroying the edifice [26-34].

Tourism is an assembled product

The tourist product cannot be provided by a single enterprise. Each of the components of a tourism product is highly specialized and all these combined together makes the final product. The tourist product is not an airline or rail seat or a visit to historical sites but rather an amalgamation of many components which together make a complete product. In tourism, each of the components of the tourist product is sold as an individual product. Airline ticket, hotels, resorts have their own sales outlets. Because of these peculiar characteristics coordinated effort is required in tourism marketing.

Tourism Product Does Not Move

The tourism product cannot be transported. It does not move to the customer but customer needs to move to the product. As attraction, hotels do not move. Transport moves but it moves to its destination only. The customer must get it to enjoy it.

One of the characteristics of tourism products is that it cannot be touched. Tourism products are intangible so after using the product there is no physical proof that one has used it. For example, a tourist books a hotel and sleeps in his room for four days. When he checks out, there is no physical or tangible proof that he was in that hotel. There are no products to show proof of purchase.

Inseparability

Another feature of tourism product is that it cannot be separated from the provider, that is, it is inseparable. If a tourist enters a restaurant and orders food or drink, the person who is bringing the food or drink cannot separate him or herself from the food or drink being brought to the customer. The service provider and the service itself are conjoined.

Tourism Products Are Perishable

Also a tourism product is perishable when it is not consumed at the time and point that it is provided. Let us say, for example, that a bus tour from Ibadan to Lagos in Nigeria has been arranged and tickets have been sold out. If a passenger is unable to be present on time to board the bus, the product perishes. That particular product cannot be consumed again. It is lost. Similarly, if a tourist books a hotel at Lekki in Lagos but for some strange reason is not able to sleep in that room on the said date, that service is lost. He has to pay again to get another room on another day.

A Luxurious Concept

Tourism product being leisure, pleasure and comfort is the most luxurious concept, so it must be marketed. In the modern world of mass tourism it has become more important to be marketed than before.

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