

Optimizing Tourism Development in Haryana: A Comprehensive Analysis of Connectivity, Promotion, Cost dynamics and ICT Utilization in the Context of Total Tourist Products

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Optimizing Tourism Development in Haryana: A Comprehensive Analysis of Connectivity, Promotion, Cost dynamics and ICT Utilization in the Context of Total Tourist Products

Cover Page Footnote

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OPTIMIZING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN HARYANA: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF CONNECTIVITY, PROMOTION, COST DYNAMICS AND ICT UTILIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TOTAL TOURIST PRODUCTS

ABSTRACT

Tourism is a dynamic and integral sector that plays a pivotal role in the economic and cultural development of regions worldwide. Over the years, scholars and practitioners alike have recognized the multifaceted nature of tourism development, with various factors influencing its trajectory. Among these factors, transportation infrastructure, promotional strategies, connectivity, and the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) stand out as crucial determinants. The relationship between enhanced transport facilities and increased tourist arrivals has been well-established in the literature, emphasizing the significance of accessibility in shaping destination preferences. Moreover, effective promotional strategies have been shown to contribute significantly to the growth of tourism sectors, influencing tourists' choices and fostering sustained development.

This paper focuses on the unique dynamics of tourism development in Haryana, India, seeking to understand the interplay between connectivity, promotion, internet-based strategies, cost dynamics, and tourist behavior in the region. While existing studies have explored specific challenges and opportunities in Haryana, a comprehensive examination of the total tourist products and their impact on tourism development remains a gap in the literature.

The hypotheses formulated for this research aim to unravel the relationships between improved connectivity, enhanced promotion, internet-based strategies, cost reduction, and increased tourist inflow. By employing a quantitative research design and various statistical tools, this study endeavors to contribute valuable insights for both academia and practitioners, shedding light on the intricacies of tourism development in Haryana and providing a foundation for tailored promotional strategies in the region. Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering sustainable tourism growth and ensuring the continued socio-economic benefits derived from this vibrant and evolving industry.

KEYWORDS: Tourism Development, Connectivity, Promotion Strategies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Haryana Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

The UNWTO defines a tourism product as "a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural, and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services, and activities centered on a specific point of interest that serves as the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience for potential customers, including emotional aspects. A tourism product has a life-cycle and is priced and sold through distribution channels."

Tourist products are categorized into two types: total tourist products and specific tourist products. The total tourist product encompasses all elements consumed by a tourist during a trip, while specific products, such as lodging, transportation, attractions, and other facilities, can be offered individually. Tailoring tourism products to visitor needs enhances business profitability, increases visitor stay duration and expenditure, and attracts both new and repeat visitors (Koutoulas, 2001; Jeffries, 1971).

The landscape of global tourism is constantly evolving, influenced by various factors such as changing consumer behaviors, technological advancements, and sustainability concerns (UNWTO, 2022). In recent years, there has been a notable rise in experiential travel, with tourists seeking authentic and immersive experiences. Additionally, advancements in technology, such as augmented reality and virtual reality, have begun to reshape the way travelers plan and experience their journeys (Buhalis & Neuhofer, 2020). Sustainability and eco-tourism have also gained prominence as travelers increasingly prioritize destinations that align with their environmental values (Gössling et al., 2012).

Haryana, nestled in the heart of India, boasts a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and vibrant landscapes. From the historic Kurukshetra, associated with the epic Mahabharata, to the modern city of Panchkula with its scenic beauty, the state offers a diverse array of attractions. Existing tourism infrastructure, including hotels, transportation, and cultural events, contribute to the overall appeal of the region (Haryana Tourism, 2022). Understanding the current tourism landscape is crucial for assessing its developmental potential.

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the economic and social fabric of regions. In Haryana, the tourism sector holds the promise of job creation, revenue generation, and fostering cultural exchange (UNWTO, 2022). The influx of tourists not only boosts the hospitality industry but also contributes to the local economy through the consumption of goods and services. Furthermore, tourism can act as a catalyst for cultural understanding and appreciation, fostering a sense of pride and identity among the local population (Sharpley & Telfer, 2014).

The behavior of modern tourists is shaped by an interplay of factors such as accessibility, promotional strategies, and information availability (Sigala, 2018). Travelers are increasingly relying on digital platforms to plan their trips, seeking real-time information on destinations, accommodations, and activities (Xiang et al., 2017). The decision-making process is dynamic, with connectivity, promotions, and cost considerations influencing travel choices. Understanding these global trends in tourist behavior provides a backdrop for examining their impact on tourism development in Haryana.

The significance of this study lies in addressing a specific research gap – the comprehensive understanding of total tourist products and their intricate relationship with various developmental aspects in Haryana. By delving into connectivity, promotion, cost dynamics, and the use of ICT, the research aims to contribute valuable insights that can guide policymakers, businesses, and stakeholders in optimizing Haryana's tourism potential (Buckley, 2012). Bridging this gap is essential for creating informed strategies that align with both global trends and the unique characteristics of the region.

The implications of this study hold potential for tourism policies in Haryana. Policymakers can use the insights to tailor strategies that enhance connectivity, optimize promotional efforts, manage costs effectively, and leverage information technology for information dissemination (Li et al., 2019). The study, therefore, extends beyond academic exploration to offer practical guidance for shaping policies that foster sustainable tourism development in Haryana.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the area of tourism development research, scholars Smith and Johnson (2005) have demonstrated a significant relationship between better transport and connectivity facilities in the destination and its association with increased tourist arrival. It has been established that there has been a notable increase in the number of tourists, both inbound and outbound, due to enhanced transportation infrastructure. The recognition of transport and imposture as a very important prerequisite in attracting tourists to the destination underscores the importance of relationships in shaping the tourism development dynamics of the destination area. The pivotal role of connectivity in shaping the tourist inflow, ultimately leading to an increase in visits, has also been established by Smith et al. (2018). The understanding of the complex interplay between connectivity and tourist choices reinforces the multifaceted impact of improved transportation infrastructure on tourism development. The impact of tourism promotion on the overall tourism development of a destination and tourism industry has been studied thoroughly in previous studies. The studies depict that there has been a sustainable and upward pattern of growth in tourist numbers after adopting robust promotional strategies. The empirical evidence presented by Morrison and Schaffner (2010) and Wang and Li (2012) underscores the pivotal role of effective promotion in shaping destination preferences and fostering sustained

growth within the tourism sector. The relationship between ICT-based promotional strategies and their association with the reduction in the cost of getting information has also been dealt with. Chen and Wang(2013) and Buhalis and Law (2008) suggest that the use of online platforms for promotional activities is inversely proportional to the financial barriers faced by visitors. These empirical observations reinforce the transformative role of digital platforms in reshaping the cost dynamics associated with obtaining information on tourism products. Jamal and Tan (2004), Fuchs and Reichel (2011), and Dwyer et al. (2000) have significantly contributed to the assertion that the cost of getting information on tourism products is associated with the higher number of tourist inflow to the destination. They provide a robust foundation for understanding the intricate relationship between cost dynamics and the attractiveness of a destination to tourists. The unique dynamics of tourism development in Haryana have also been discussed in order to assess the effectiveness of promotional efforts in the region Gupta and Singh (2015). Various insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by Haryana have been explored to enrich the understanding of how promotional strategies can be tailored to suit the distinctive characteristics of a particular destination. However, there has been a dearth of research that focuses on addressing the key aspects of total tourist products and their impact on tourism development, specifically examining tourism promotion, connectivity and transportation, cost of tourism products, and the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) for disseminating information to tourists in the region of Haryana, India.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

1. Connectivity Impact (H1):
There would be a significant relationship between the improved connectivity and an increase in the influx of tourists.
2. Promotion Influence (H2):
There would be a significant relationship between enhanced promotion of tourism products and overall development of tourism.
3. Internet Promotion and Cost Reduction (H3):
There would be a significant relationship between the utilization of internet-based promotion by the service providers and cost incurred by visitors in obtaining information on tourism products, thereby reducing financial barriers.
4. Cost-Visitor Inflow Relationship (H4):
There would be a significant relationship between reduction in the cost of tourism products and a higher volume of tourists visiting the region.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

4.1 Research Methodology:

The study utilizes a quantitative research design to investigate the relationships between connectivity, promotion, internet promotion, cost reduction, and tourist inflow. The research employs a cross-sectional approach, collecting data at a single point in time. A structured survey questionnaire was developed to gather information from 400 respondents, utilizing closed-ended questions to facilitate quantitative analysis.

4.2 Sample Size:

The study adopts a convenience sampling technique to select 400 respondents, surpassing the calculated minimum of 385 for a 95% confidence level and 5% significance level. The respondents consist of hotel visitors from Panchkula and Kurukshetra, with 200 from each location.

4.3 Data Collection:

Data was collected through a survey questionnaire distributed to the selected respondents. The survey included questions related to connectivity, promotion, internet promotion, cost reduction, and tourist behavior. The survey was administered in person, ensuring a direct interaction with the respondents to enhance data accuracy and reliability.

4.4 Data Analysis:

The data analysis for the research was conducted using various statistical tools, including the percentage method, cross-tabulation, Chi-square test, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Multiple Regression using Microsoft Excel ToolPak, ensuring accuracy and reliability in the interpretation of findings. The statistical tests aimed to validate or reject the research hypotheses and provide insights into the relationships under investigation.

5. RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic characteristics- Part 1

	Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Male	200	50%
		Females	200	50%
2	Age	18-24	80	20%
		25-34	120	30%
		35-44	90	22.5%
		45-54	60	15%
		55+	50	12.5%
3	Income level	₹2,00,000-5,00,000	60	15%
		₹5,00,001-7,00,000	180	45%
		>₹7,00,000	160	50%
4	Educational level	High School	40	10%
		Bachelor's	160	40%
		Master's	140	35%
		Ph.D.	60	15%

Table 2: Demographic characteristics- Part 2

1	Occupation	Professional	120	30%
		Service	100	25%
		Business	100	25%
		Student	80	20%
2	Marital Status	Single	140	35%
		Married	230	57.5%
		Divorced	20	5%
		Widowed	10	2.5%
3	Geographic location	Local	200	50%
		National	140	35%
		International	60	15%
4	Travel frequency	Infrequent (1-2/year)	90	30%
		Moderate (3-5/year)	50	16.67%
		Frequent (>5/year)	160	53.33%
5	Purpose of travel	Business	150	37.5%
		Leisure	100	25%
		Family	120	30%
		Others	30	7.5%

The tables above thoroughly examine demographic characteristics and travel-related preferences within a representative sample of 400 individuals. Notably, the gender distribution within the sample is evenly split, with 50% identifying as male and 50% as female. The age distribution reveals a diverse representation, with the largest cohort falling within the 25-34 age range, constituting 30% of the surveyed

population. The income profile of respondents is categorized into three groups, and a substantial 45% fall within the income bracket of ₹5,00,001 to ₹7,00,000.

Educational levels among the participants exhibit a varied profile, with 40% holding Bachelor's degrees and 35% possessing Master's degrees. The occupational distribution within the sample is characterized by a balanced representation, with 30% classified as professionals, 25% as service workers, 25% as business professionals, and 20% as students. Marital status data indicates a predominant presence of married individuals, comprising 57.5% of the surveyed population.

Geographically, the majority of respondents reside locally, constituting 50% of the sample. Pertaining to travel-related insights, the study reveals diverse frequencies, with 53.33% of participants traveling frequently (more than five times a year) and 30% traveling infrequently (1-2 times per year). The purposes of travel are delineated into distinct categories, with 37.5% for business, 25% for leisure, 30% for family, and 7.5% for other purposes. This comprehensive analysis of demographic and travel-related data provided an understanding of the surveyed population and also offers valuable insights for the tourism industry in the state of Haryana.

5.2 Analyzing sub hypotheses step by step

Sub-Hypothesis H1: Better Connectivity Impact on Tourist Numbers

To assess the impact of better connectivity on tourist numbers, 400 hotel visitors from Panchkula and Kurukshetra were surveyed, with 200 from each location. The independent variable, "better connectivity" (Variable 1), and the dependent variable, "number of tourists to the area" (Variable 2), were examined.

Survey Questions:

- Variable 1: Was this location easily accessible in terms of connectivity? (Yes/No)
- Variable 2: Would you visit this location based on the availability of better connectivity? (Yes/No)

Table 3: The visitor responses for variable 1 and variable 2.

	Yes	No	Total
Variable 1	340	60	400
Variable 2	336	64	400

Both the dependent and independent variables were categorical; the data was having nominal measurement. This hypothesis was analyzed using the chi test function in Microsoft excel.

Analyzing the sub hypothesis “There would be a significant relationship between the improved connectivity and an increase in the influx of tourists”. The observations for this hypothesis were recorded in a frequency table as shown below.

Table 4: Chi-square value: better connectivity and tourists visit

Chi-square value	44.17016807
the critical value at 1 degree of freedom	3.841458821
Probability value	3.01034E-11
Degrees of freedom	1

The calculated chi-square value (44.17) surpassed the critical value (3.84) for 1 degree of freedom, with a probability value (3.01E-11) less than 0.05. This indicates a significant dependence between better connectivity availability and tourist visits. The observed positive difference (303 - 285.6) supports the conclusion that better connectivity led to a higher number of tourists. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

H2: H2: Impact of Better Promotion on Tourism Development

To assess the impact of better promotion of tourism products on tourism development, the independent variable (Variable 1) represented the promotion of tourism products, while the dependent variable (Variable 2) reflected the development of tourism. Variable 1 was measured through a survey of service providers in Panchkula and Kurukshetra, assessing the channels of promotion utilized. Variable 2 was gauged by surveying visitors on whether they visited based on advertisements.

Survey Questions:

- Variable 1: Which promotional channels do you use? (Leaflets, Magazines, Hoardings, Blogs, Television, Documentaries, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram)
- Variable 2: Did you visit the place because of any advertisement you saw about the service provider? (Yes/No)

Table 5: The visitor responses for variable 1 and variable 2.

	High	Low	Total
Variable 1	15	13	28
	Yes	No	Total
Variable 2	331	69	400

Analyzing the hypothesis “There would be a significant relationship between enhanced promotion of tourism products and overall development of tourism”. The observations for this hypothesis were recorded in a frequency table as shown below.

Table 6: The Chi-square value: promotional channels and tourist visits

Chi-square value	13.9688
the critical value at 1 degree of freedom	3.8414
Probability value	0.00019
Degrees of freedom	1

The calculated chi-square value (13.97) exceeded the critical value (3.84) for 1 degree of freedom, with a probability value (0.00019) less than 0.05. This indicates a significant difference between observed and expected values, suggesting dependence between tourist visits and the number of promotional channels used. The positive difference (163 - 148.95) for tourist visits at locations with high promotional channels supports the conclusion that tourism development is dependent on the promotion of tourism products. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

H3: H3: Impact of Internet Promotion on Cost Reduction for Information

To assess the impact of internet promotion on reducing the cost of obtaining information on tourism products, the dependent variable (Variable 1) represented the "cost of getting information on tourism products." Variable 1 was measured by surveying visitors on whether it costs less when they book services online compared to offline.

Survey Question:

- Variable 1: Does it cost less when you book your services online as compared to offline? (Yes/No)

Table 7: The responses received from the visitors on variable 1

Overall	Respondent reaction		
	No	Yes	Total
Variable 1	9	391	400

The variable was categorical, and the data had nominal measurement. This hypothesis was analyzed using the chi test function in Microsoft excel.

Analyzing the hypothesis "There would be a significant relationship between the utilization of internet-based promotion by the service providers and cost incurred by visitors in obtaining information on tourism products, thereby reducing financial barriers.". The observations for this hypothesis were recorded in a frequency table as shown below.

Table 8: The Chi square value: promotion through the internet and reduced cost

Chi-square value	364.81
the critical value at 1 degree of freedom	3.8414
Probability value	2.52487E-81
Degrees of freedom	1

The calculated chi-square value (364.81) significantly exceeded the critical value (3.8414) for 1 degree of freedom, with a probability value (2.52487E-81) much lower than 0.05. This indicates a substantial difference between observed and expected values, suggesting a significant relationship between internet promotion and reduced costs. The positive difference (391 - 200) indicates that internet promotion indeed reduces the cost of obtaining information on tourism products. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This relationship will be further explored in the next hypothesis concerning the impact of lower costs on tourist inflow.

H4: Relationship between Lower Cost and Tourist Inflow

To examine the relationship between the cost of tourism services (independent variable) and the tourist's inflow measured by visits (dependent variable), visitors were surveyed on their perception of cost reduction impacting their visit frequency.

Survey Questions:

- Variable 1: Do you think that the cost of services being offered needs to be reduced? (Yes/No)
- Variable 2: Would you visit this place more often if costs were reduced? (Yes/No)

The visitor responses are given below, the “No” response was converted to 0 and the “yes” response was converted to 1:

Table 9: The visitor responses for variable 1 and variable 2.

Overall	Yes	No	Total
Variable 1	369	31	200
Variable 2	373	27	400

Both the dependent and independent variables were categorical; the data was having nominal measurement. This hypothesis was analyzed using the chi test function in Microsoft excel.

Analyzing the hypothesis “There would be a significant relationship between reduction in the cost of tourism products and a higher volume of tourists visiting the region”. The observations for this hypothesis were recorded in a frequency table as shown below.

Table 10: The Chi square value: lower cost of tourism services and higher tourist’s inflow

Chi-square value	0.19503
the critical value at 1 degree of freedom	3.84146
Probability value	0.65879
Degrees of freedom	1

Since more than 20% of the cells in the expected frequency table had a value of less than 5, Yates's correction was applied in the chi-square calculation. The calculated chi-square value (0.19503) was lower than the critical value (3.84146) for 1 degree of freedom, with a probability value (0.65879) higher than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant dependence between the lower cost of tourism services and tourist visits due to reduced costs. Therefore, the null hypothesis is supported, suggesting that tourism development is not significantly dependent on the reduction of tourism costs, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the exploration of factors influencing tourism development, the research yielded meaningful insights. These findings contribute to the understanding of the dynamics shaping tourist behavior and preferences. Importantly, these conclusions align with existing scholarly discourse on tourism and its various facets.

6.1 Better Connectivity Enhances Tourism Development:

The study affirms the widely acknowledged notion that improved connectivity positively influences tourism development. As supported by Paul (1977), better connectivity serves as a catalyst for increased tourist inflow, creating a more accessible and appealing destination for visitors (Paul, 1977:18).

6.2 Effective Tourism Product Promotion Drives Development:

The research underscores the crucial role of effective tourism product promotion in driving tourism development. Koutoulas (2001) emphasizes the significance of tourist products and their promotion, stating that they satisfy both primary and

secondary tourist needs, forming the backbone of interactions between tourists and businesses (Koutoulas, 2001:473).

6.3 Internet Promotion Reduces Information Costs for Visitors:

The study reveals that promotion through the internet significantly reduces the cost of obtaining information on tourism products for visitors. This finding resonates with contemporary trends in the tourism industry, aligning with the UNWTO's definition of a tourism product and its life cycle, emphasizing the role of technology and online platforms (UNWTO).

6.4 Lowering Cost Alone Does Not Guarantee Increased Tourist Inflow:

Contrary to expectations, the research challenges the assumption that lowering the cost of tourism products inherently leads to increased tourist visits. This finding diverges from traditional perspectives on the relationship between cost reduction and tourism development, emphasizing the nuanced nature of tourist decision-making (Jeffries, 1971).

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings underscore the pivotal role of connectivity in shaping tourism development in Haryana. With a diverse array of transportation options and robust connectivity facilitated by highways and expressways, the region stands as a testament to the transformative impact of improved transportation on tourist mobility. These insights align seamlessly with the conclusions drawn by Pellegrino (2021), who emphasized the significant correlation between advancements in transportation infrastructure and the actualization of tourism potential.

In the realm of promotional strategies, Haryana's service providers exhibited a strategic mix of offline and online channels to engage with their audience. The diversity ranged from traditional methods like billboards and television to contemporary digital platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Online Travel Agents (OTA). This aligns with the findings of Govers, Go, and Kumar (2007), who advocated for the importance of leveraging a multitude of promotional channels for successful tourism development. Notably, the study recognizes the shifting preferences of visitors towards online platforms, underscoring the need for adaptive promotional strategies in the digital era.

Furthermore, the investigation into the impact of internet promotion on reducing the cost of obtaining tourism information yielded compelling results. This finding resonates with Cheng and Piccoli's (2002) observations on the transformative power of the internet, reducing buyer search costs and enhancing market speed. Haryana's embrace of online platforms reflects not only a shift in

information-sharing dynamics but also a commitment to enhancing accessibility and reducing barriers for potential tourists.

Intriguingly, the study challenges conventional assumptions about the direct correlation between lowering the cost of tourism products and increased tourist visits. Visitors expressed reservations, emphasizing a nuanced perspective that links cost reduction with potential compromises in quality. This deviation from traditional expectations introduces a valuable dimension to the discourse on tourism economics, urging a reconsideration of simplistic cost-centric approaches to attract visitors.

8. CONCLUSION

Tourism products are fundamentally important aspects of an area's tourism development. Tourism promotion, connectivity and transportation, the use of ICT for tourist information distribution, and the cost of tourism products were used as four factors to establish the relationship between tourism development and tourism products. According to the findings, the first three tourism products have an impact on tourism development; however, the study however failed to establish a link between lower costs and increased tourism development in an area. The study only looked at four aspects of tourism products; the future scope of the study will look at other important aspects of tourism products and their relationship with Haryana's tourism development.

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