

Chapter 12

Importance–Performance Analysis of Tourism Destination Attractiveness: Technology and Other Influencing Factors

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an importance-performance analysis to evaluate the ability of a destination's attributes to attract tourists through tourism stakeholder perceptions. In this case, one of Europe's larger destination cities, Lisbon, was considered. It departs from the proposition that tourists are not the most knowledgeable about a destination while the evaluation of a destination's competitiveness from the supply side perspective is scarce. This stakeholder feedback approach to identifying a destination's attributes to attract tourists showed that only 7 of the 40 attributes (five of them related to accessibility and technological infrastructures as municipality responsibility) fall in the IPA grid Concentrate Here quadrant, results that are consistent with the recently received Best City Destination and Best City Break World Travel Awards. This research shows the relevance of multiple stakeholders' feedback to evaluate a city's attributes, including the feedback about the city's need to improve its technological offer through an integrated digital strategy.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-8306-7.ch012

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector, with its increasing economic importance, has gained relevance in academic research (Leask, 2016), with substantial gains in terms of scientific knowledge and decision-making support tools. With the growth of world tourism and the growing rivalry amongst destinations, achieving destination competitiveness is a central feature of tourism policy and academic debate. The knowledge about a destination's competitive position, including its weaker and stronger attributes, is vital to governments and market players (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Rao, 2000) since it is critical for its success (Dwyer & Kim, 2003) and (Mangion, Durbarry, & Sinclair, 2005).

According to Ritchie & Crouch (2003), destination competitiveness refers to 'its ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors, while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences, and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations.' A pitfall is that competitiveness is hard to measure (Gooroochurn & Sugiyarto, 2005) and few models have been created to evaluate the competitiveness of a destination (Lee, Choi, & Breiter, 2013). There are some examples of these efforts, such as the case of Hassan (2000) competitiveness model considering sustainable tourism, Kozak (2002) benchmarking approach to tourism competitiveness, and Dwyer & Kim (2003) model to allow comparison between countries and tourism industries. It is also the case of Ritchie & Crouch (2003) model with a sustainable tourism perspective, and Gomezelj & Mihalič (2008) study of the De Keyser-Vanhove model and the Integrated Model of Destination Competitiveness, as applied to Korea and Australia. However, this kind of analysis can present problems (Dwyer, Cvelbar, Edwards, & Mihalic, 2012), such as the combination of very different attributes in a single index; the difficulty of obtaining a multi-destination assessment by tourists through a questionnaire, which may also bias the response based on the degree of sympathy for the country; and the evaluation of different destinations based on the same attributes (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS MODEL

The importance-performance analysis (IPA) model was created by Martilla & James (1977) as a business research methodology to help management decisions, based on the concepts of choice models of multiple attributes. It helps investment allocation decisions to maintain and improve consumer satisfaction, with a first application in the vehicle industry marketing. The objective of the IPA model is to make data interpretation accessible and to suggest relevant measures to improve competitiveness, based on the optimization of the allocation of resources among the various attributes analyzed (Abalo, Varela, & Manzano, 2007).

In the traditional IPA technique, data from customer satisfaction surveys or service quality surveys (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) are utilized to construct a two-dimensional grid. In this grid, the x-axis depicts the attribute importance, and the y-axis the attribute performance (satisfaction or service quality). The mean of performance and importance divides the grid into four quadrants, identifying areas of high or low attribute performance combined with high or low attribute importance. The grid (Table 1) provides managers with information on the aspects that (I) require additional investment as they are underperforming; aspects that (II) are performing well but need continued investment, aspects that (III) are of

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