

Comparative Examination of Destination Competitiveness using Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Matrix: A Case of Domestic Tourist in Lucknow and Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract

This research study evaluates the tourism competitiveness of two prominent destinations in Uttar Pradesh, India—Ayodhya and Lucknow—by employing the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix. The study focuses on identifying key destination attributes and tourist services that influence the overall satisfaction and competitiveness of these cities. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed among domestic tourists, who rated the importance and performance of various destination factors on a five-point Likert scale. The findings highlight significant areas for improvement, including infrastructure, accessibility, hospitality, and branding, which were found to be underperforming despite being highly important to visitors. Comparative analysis of both cities reveals specific strategic priorities for each destination. For Ayodhya, the focus should be on enhancing destination branding and expanding tourist activities, while Lucknow must emphasize cultural promotion and special events. The study offers practical recommendations for tourism management agencies, both governmental and private, to address these challenges, aiming to improve tourist satisfaction and bolster the long-term competitiveness of both cities. This analysis serves as a valuable framework for guiding future tourism development efforts in Ayodhya and Lucknow.

Key Words: Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Matrix, Ayodhya, Lucknow, Tourism Destination Competitiveness, Ritchie Crouch Model

Introduction

Tourism contribute to economy at community level as tourists spend money to avail services or to buy products at the place of visit within a country (Rasool, Maqbool, & Tarique, 2021). The volume of business at community level affected by the number of tourists visiting to that destination (Comerio & Strozzi, 2019). Tourism contribute to create employment for the people living around the tourist place (Gómez & Barrón, 2019). Higher turnout of tourists contributes in the socio-economic development of tourism destination (Armenski, Gomezelj, Djurdjev, Ćurčić, & Dragin, 2012). The degree of tourists' turnout is affected by the satisfaction experienced by the tourist (Bagri & Devkant, 2015). Most of the research work including models of destination competitiveness are inspired by the theory of competitiveness proposed by Porter (Porter, 1985). The prominent research work conducted in the area of destination competitiveness include Richie & Crouch (2000), Dwyer and Kim (2003), Hassan (2000) and Heath (2002). According to Dwyer & Kim (2003) destination competitiveness is the ability of destination to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destination on the same aspects. Richie & Crouch (2003) defined competitiveness as the ability of destination to increase tourism expenditure, to profitably draw tourists while providing them with memorable experiences, improve the quality of life for locals, and safeguard the area's natural resources for future generations. Park & Jeong (2019) stated that one of the sources of greater degree of business competitiveness as well as the growth in bottom line of business is customer satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction is the degree of the tourist's satisfaction experience derived from the experience of a product or service feature that satisfies the tourist's needs, wants, and expectations (Hossain, 2020). Tourism is more a service than a product as a result all most all the features that characterize a service are also applicable to tourism (Custódio, M, Ferreira, Costa, & Santos, 2020). For example, heterogeneity aspect of service, each tourist looks for different tourism experience at different destinations. Hence, authorities responsible for managing tourism at a destination need to listen to the tourists otherwise what authorities consider customer expectations would definitely differ from tourists' real expectations. Consequently, perception gap would develop that eventually led to frustration and greater level of satisfaction among tourist (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018).

Various studies have been conducted in the area of tourists' satisfaction wherein factors affecting tourists' satisfaction or tourists' satisfaction from specific tourist service such as transportation, accommodation, entertainment, catering (food and beverage) have been studied (Chin, Law, Lo, & Ramayah, 2018), (Hasegawa, 2010), (Heung & Cheng, 2000). Also, there are research which studied competitiveness of tourism destination by focussing on destination attributes (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017), (Dogru, Suess, & Sirakaya-Turk, 2021). Intention to revisit the destination, recommendation of destination to others, spread of positive comments etc. have been researched and found to be connected with the satisfaction among tourists (Junaedi & Harjanto, 2020), (Abdulla, S. A. M, Khalifa, Abuelhassan, & Ghosh, 2019).

There have been a smaller number of studies that included both the tourist services as well as the destination attributes to explore how competitive is a tourism destination. No research has been found that studies the competitiveness of tourism destinations in Lucknow and Ayodhya by focusing on tourists' satisfaction with destination features and services using the importance performance analysis too. This study attempts to address the gap by conducting an IPA of tourists' satisfaction toward Lucknow and Ayodhya as a tourism destination. IPA will enable to evaluate the difference in the importance placed on different aspect of tourism destination competitiveness and tourists' satisfaction experienced by tourist at Lucknow and Ayodhya in India.

This research paper considers tourists' satisfaction as an important indicator of the overall performance of services offered to tourist at a destination in addition to the destination specific attributes. This research shall contribute to the understanding of perception of destination competitiveness and its importance for domestic tourists visiting to Lucknow and Ayodhya, India. Another practical contribution of this research would be that this study explains that the concept of tourists' satisfaction at a destination can contribute in its competitiveness. Lastly, this study uses IPA (Importance-Performance Analysis) technique to evaluate the competitiveness of Lucknow and Ayodhya as a tourism destination based on level of tourists' satisfaction. The research findings shall figure out the areas that need attention of tourism administration at Lucknow and Ayodhya in order to improve perceived satisfaction and competitiveness of the tourism destination.

Review of Literature

Destination Competitiveness

The ability of a resort to sustain its high level of favourable image among tourists in comparison to all other competing destinations is known as destination competitiveness. According to academic research, there are six 'A's' that competition between tourist locations must meet (Junaedi & Harjanto, 2020). These include "Attractions" like historic buildings, cultural or social events, religious sites, and cultural landmarks, "Amenities" like hospitality and food, "Accessibility" like transportation infrastructure, options, and related support, "Activities" like tourist-friendly activities, "Ancillary Support" like banking, health care, and telecom, etc., and "Available Packages" put together by reputable tour companies or by authorised government organisations. Each of the 'A's' mentioned above has the ability to give a particular tourist location a higher level of competitiveness. The majority of authors and researchers have used one or more of the six "A"s as criteria for defining competitiveness in tourism destinations.

One of the main goals of measuring a tourism destination's competitiveness is to see how it can improve the income and living standards of the local residents. This helps understand the potential of the destination to positively impact the community's well-being. The competitiveness of a tourist destination has been studied to related it to social, cultural, legal, technological, and political variables. Some studies have shown that the competition between tourist locations is based on the availability of attractions, infrastructure, and visitor safety (Custódio, M, Ferreira, Costa, & Santos, 2020).

Attributes of Destination Competitiveness

A couple of features that have lost their significance in determining destination competitiveness have been identified in some studies. These attributes include the promise of clean accommodations, a guarantee of high-quality tourist services, and cost-effective travel packages. One of the primary differentiators in increasing competition among destinations is the role of efficient marketing campaigns and properly planned tourism policies. The literature on tourist destinations has focused more on conceptual discussions of destination characteristics, while empirical studies about destination competitive characteristics are rather rare, particularly in the context of India. Various models of destination competitiveness have been developed by incorporating attributes of destination competitiveness. A conceptual model created by De Keyser and Vanhove was one of the first models of destination competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). This

model, which was first put forth in 1994, described the roles that "tourism policy," "supply factors," "demand factors," "macroeconomic factors," and "transport factors" play in the overall competitiveness of a destination for tourists. Hassan created a model in the year 2000 that explains four factors that affect a tourism destination's competitiveness. This model consisted of four components, with the factor titled "Environmental concern" serving as its primary point of differentiation. The tourism destination's comparative advantage, the industry structure, and demand variables made up the remaining factors. The most significant of the earliest models relating to destination competition is the Ritchie and Crouch model, which was proposed in 2003 (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). In accordance with their hypothesis, a destination's competitiveness is influenced by its comparative advantage. The comparative advantage may result from natural endowments or, in some circumstances, it has been discovered that comparative advantages can be attained by human efforts that are aided by technology. The competitiveness of the tourism destination is further boosted by the competitive advantage that results from the destination's capacity to utilise its comparative advantage. The theory of absolute advantage, theory of comparative advantage, and Porter's diamond model of competitive advantages serve as the basis for Ritchie and Crouch's model. 36 attributes relevant to the competitiveness of a tourist location were identified by Ritchie and Crouch's model, and these were divided into five components. destination-related policies, Planning & development, destination management, core resources & attractor factors, qualifiers and amplifiers, and supporting factors & resources are the five components. Dwyer and Kim established an integrated model for the competitiveness of tourism destinations in 2003, and their model has been one of the few widely used models for describing the set of four attributes of competitiveness of the tourism destination (Kim, 1998). In this model, four significant attributes were taken into account. Demand conditions, core resources, situational conditions, and destination management were these terms. This model aimed to differentiate between infrastructure for general use and infrastructure specifically created to promote tourism at the location, which was one of its primary points of differentiation.

Tourist Satisfaction

One of the most important areas of research for the tourism industry is figuring out what factors contribute to customer satisfaction because happy customers are more likely to recommend the place to others and come back again. A tourist feels the urge to travel and looks for a "product" which initially may bring the greatest enjoyment to state that need. This rational decision-making process involves taking into account several aspects associated to the destination under consideration. The tourist is 'pushed' through this process by psychological and emotional forces, as well as drawn to the location by its qualities and the availability of activities. The literature on tourism satisfaction indicated that there are many correlations between various variables that influence visitors' decisions and behaviour patterns, and that these interactions arise in three separate stages. The first step takes into account the factors that define the choice made prior to travel and that will affect the tourist's behaviour in his selected place. Variables that the visitor will encounter at the destination are included in the second step. The third phase examines factors related to the visitor's experience and its desired behaviour going forward. The happiness or discontent is determined by how the various variables that make up each of the aforementioned phases interact with one another.

When examining tourist behaviour, satisfaction is without a doubt one of the most important factors because it affects the choice of location, the consumption of goods and services, and the desire to go back (Abdulla, S. A. M, Khalifa, Abuelhassan, & Ghosh, 2019). The satisfaction of tourists has thus been a top study topic in recent years. One of the most crucial variables that guarantees future business growth is visitor satisfaction. Today, a lot of businesses use visitor satisfaction as a key metric for gauging the effectiveness of their operations. By creating proper processes that ensure given services fulfil the expectations of the visitors, the satisfaction of the visitor is accomplished. According to research into tourism literature, a destination's ability to satisfy visitors is a key consideration when choosing a location. If visitors are happy with their trip to a location, they are likely to recommend it to others or return themselves. For most service sectors, visitor happiness has evolved into a significant topic. According to certain studies, it is important to define satisfaction levels according to the context of the evaluation. They list three fundamental context components: (i) reaction to an emotional judgement; (ii) a particular feature of the service; and (iii) a particular period of time. Nevertheless, despite the widespread acceptance that our work involves a sequential process, researchers frequently prioritise service perception when assessing satisfaction goals.

Since measuring visitor satisfaction in India is crucial for effective destination marketing and because it affects travellers' decisions about where to go and what to buy, items and services, as well as the choice to go back to the places. Repeat

travel is dependent on prior satisfaction and reception capabilities. India's tourism business is expanding quickly, thus it is important to prepare all the necessary services and infrastructure well in advance. Making sure that the tourism sector experiences sustained growth and that visitors are happy with the services offered by travel companies and other tourism-related businesses is crucial.

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA)

IPA was initially put up as a method to construct organisations' management strategies by Martilla and James in 1977 (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018). To simplify data interpretation and generate useful recommendations, IPA essentially integrates measures of attribute relevance and performance into a two-dimensional grid. In accordance with their recommendations, a list of a target product's essential characteristics is created, and participants then score each characteristic's significance in influencing a purchase choice.

The IPA comprises of two coordinate axes where the 'importance' and 'performance' of the various service components are contrasted. The original point of the IPA matrix is the mean of the self-stated raw importance and attribute performance data for each of the quadrants, which combine the importance and performance ratings given by the customers or users for each element of the service. Each quadrant has a different value in terms of management. Different approaches are suggested in each quadrant. Following are the four quadrants in importance-performance analysis:

Quadrant Concentrate here: Pay close attention to this quadrant because it is of utmost importance and demands rapid attention for improvement. It denotes the attributes of high importance, low performance.

Quadrant Keep up with the good work: This quadrant indicates the high importance and high-performance attributes and these shows the significant strengths that can be used to gain or retain a competitive edge.

Quadrant Low priority: This Quadrant indicates low importance and low performance attributes and it signify the small flaws that don't call for more work.

Quadrant Possible overkill: It includes the attributes of low importance and high performance. It suggests that the allocated resources would be excessive and these should be used elsewhere.

In study on hospitality and tourism, importance-performance analysis (IPA) has been employed for many years. The IPA framework has gained appeal among academics in service quality, travel and tourism, education, and health care since the ground-breaking work by Martilla and James (J & Martilla, 1977). As Martilla and James emphasised, the technique appears to be widely accepted due to its simplicity of use and the appealing ways in which data and tactical ideas are presented. Few researches have examined the conceptual validity of IPA critically to this point. The majority of IPA studies have made an effort to use the same methodology across various subject matters. Despite the fact that many studies have attempted to improve the IPA approach. Their efforts were concentrated on improving the analysis processes by supplementing the initial IPA framework with additional data. There has been a claim made in the tourism industry that "for tourist locations with fairly limited market research experience, Importance-Performance. A very effective instrument for marketing planning is analysis in the most basic way.

Research Methodology

Population and Sampling Method

According to a study conducted by the Union ministry of tourism, domestic tourism increased by 27% in Uttar Pradesh in the fiscal year 2021–2022 compared to the prior fiscal. UP came in as the second-largest contributor to the nation's overall domestic tourism activities, behind Tamil Nadu. In terms of foreign tourist visitors in 2021, Uttar Pradesh was among the top 10 states. UP came in sixth place in the category and accounted for nearly 4% of the foreign visitors. To conduct this, self-administered questionnaires were given to domestic tourists at tourists' locations in Lucknow and Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India. The tourist sample was selected from various tourist locations in both cities. The convenient sampling technique of non-probability sampling method was used to select the domestic tourist in the sample.

Instrument

There are number of theoretical models related to destination competitiveness but there is no standard scale for the measurement of competitiveness of all kind of destinations. Therefore, a structured close ended questionnaire was

developed by using 15 variables of the Ritchie and Crouch Model (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Following is the details of the variables and their association with the category of determinants as per Ritchie and Crouch Model:

Table1: Details of Variables used in Questionnaire

S.No	Variable of Ritchie and Crouch Model used in the questionnaire	Association with category of determinants as per Ritchie and Crouch Model
1	Location of Destination, Safety, Cost of Touring., Awareness	Qualifying & Amplifying Determinants
2	Destination as Brand, Destination Development	Destination Policy, Planning & Development
3	Marketing Efforts, Service Quality, Information search, Tourist Management, Crisis Management	Destination Management
4	Climate Conditions, Cultural Aspect, Mix of Tourist Activities, Special Events, Entertainment Level, Monuments Structure	Core Resources & Attractors
5	Infrastructure, Accessibility, Facilitation, Hospitality	Supporting Factors & Resources

Source: Author generated

The goal of this paper is to study how well the destination competes for tourists. Tourists were asked to rate each factor on a five-point Likert scale to share their opinion about how important the factor is for the destination's competitiveness. In separate question, they were also asked to rate how well they think the destination has performed in terms of competitiveness for the same factor. The first section of the questionnaire recorded the demographic details of the respondents. The second section of the questionnaire look into how tourists perceive the importance of the attributes mentioned in the question for the competitiveness of a destination, visitors were asked to rate the importance of each attribute when deciding whether to travel to Ayodhya and Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The importance of the attributes was determined using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 being the highly unimportant and 5 being the highly important. The third section of the questionnaire look into how tourists perceive the performance of the attributes mentioned in the question to build competitiveness of a destination. The performance of the attributes was determined using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 being the highly Non-performing and 5 being the highly performing.

Data Collection

The survey was carried out in Ayodhya in July and Lucknow in January,2024. A copy of the self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the willing participants after the visitors were confirmed as domestic tourists and they show their willingness to take part in the study. 400 copies of the questionnaires were given out to the domestic travellers present at various locations. However, 286 finished copies were chosen for data analysis at the end of the data collection process. Hence, the response rate was 71.5%. Out of 286 sample size 150 domestic tourists were surveyed at Lucknow and 136 were surveyed at Ayodhya.

Data Analysis and Findings

The findings of analysis provide important information about the demographics and preferences of tourists that visit Lucknow and Ayodhya. It has been found that both destinations have appeal across a wide range of age groups, marital statuses, and educational levels that make them appealing to a diverse spectrum of tourists seeking a variety of experiences

Table 2: Destination wise frequency analysis of demographic variable

Demographic Variable		Tourism Destination	
		Lucknow (n= 150)	Ayodhya (n= 136)
Gender	Male	64.0%	51.5%
	Female	36.0%	48.5%
Age	18-25	20.0%	12.5%
	26-35	33.3%	26.5%
	36-45	20.0%	23.5%
	46-55	16.7%	19.1%
	Above 55	10.0%	18.4%
Marital Status	Married	72.0%	77.2%
	Unmarried	21.3%	14.7%
	Others	6.7%	8.1%
Education	Up to School	10.0%	5.1%
	UG	50.7%	45.6%
	PG	32.7%	30.1%
	Others	6.7%	19.1%

A comparison of the demographic data between the two tourist destinations reveals some noteworthy differences (Table-2). In terms of gender distribution, there were more male tourists in Lucknow (64.0%) than there were in Ayodhya (51.5%). In contrast, there were more female tourists in Ayodhya (48.5%) than in Lucknow (36.0%). When the age distribution was examined, it was clear that tourists to both locations tended to be in the 26 to 35-year-old age range. However, Ayodhya showed a larger percentage of tourists over the age of 55 and those between the ages of 46 and 55, indicating a preference for older tourists. In comparison, there was a more even distribution of ages in Lucknow. It can also be interpreted that in comparison to Lucknow, Ayodhya may have sights and experiences that appeal more to older tourists. The majority of visitors to both locations were married, which is a common pattern when it comes to marital status. Compared to Lucknow (72.0%), Ayodhya had a marginally greater proportion of married tourists (77.2%).

It's interesting to note that compared to Ayodhya's 14.7%, Lucknow had a higher rate of single tourists (21.3%). Both locations have a "Others" category, but Ayodhya has a little greater percentage, indicating that there are less visitors with varied marital statuses. The majority of the tourists who came to Lucknow (50.7%) were undergraduate. Following closely after were 32.7% of tourists who were postgraduates (PG), 10.0% of tourists had only completed high school education and 6.7% of the tourists have some other form of education. While just 30.1% of tourists to Ayodhya had postgraduate degrees, 45.6% of visitors there had undergraduate degrees. An impressive 19.1% of the population, as opposed to Lucknow's 6.7%, had various educational backgrounds, demonstrating a wider diversity. The lower percentage of Ayodhya tourists (5.1%) who have completed at least their secondary education suggests a different educational profile from Lucknow. The differences between the tourists in Lucknow and Ayodhya may be seen when comparing information on education, age, and marital status. The kinds of experiences and attractions that appeal to tourists in each location may be influenced by these differences. In order to properly respond to the various preferences and demographics of tourists at each of the destination, it can be highly helpful to consider these distinctions when planning marketing tactics, customised experiences, and infrastructure development.

Table 3: Destination wise frequency analysis of Tourist' native place

Tourist's Native Place	Visit to Tourism Destination	
	Lucknow (n= 150)	Ayodhya (n= 136)
Haryana	12.7%	11.8%
Uttar Pradesh	17.3%	20.6%
Uttarakhand	12.7%	15.4%
Tamil Nadu	6.7%	0.0%
Delhi	10.7%	28.7%
Rajasthan	10.0%	23.5%

Maharashtra	10.0%	0.0%
Bihar	20.0%	0.0%

The table-3 provides information on the travel destinations of tourists who came to Lucknow and Ayodhya as well as the dispersion of tourists' native place. The goal of this analysis is to learn more about the places from which visitors come, the places they choose to visit, and any differences in the patterns of travel between the two areas. Based on the proportion analysis of visitors from various Indian states that each of the two tourist locations, Lucknow and Ayodhya, respectively, draw, the analysis makes some intriguing comparisons between them. Haryana visitors are split equally between Lucknow and Ayodhya, with Lucknow (12.7%) slightly outpacing Ayodhya (11.8%). However, Ayodhya beats Lucknow in drawing visitors from Uttar Pradesh, with 20.6% as opposed to 17.3%. Ayodhya receives 15.4% tourists from Uttarakhand which is 2.7% more than Lucknow, which receives 12.7% more. While Ayodhya does not receive any visitors from Tamil Nadu, Lucknow receives 6.7% of its visitors from that state. With 28.7% visitors from Delhi to Ayodhya, it outpaces Lucknow in this regard. Ayodhya draws 23.5% of visitors to Rajasthan, compared to Lucknow's 10.0%, continuing the trend. Notably, Lucknow draws visitors from Maharashtra (10.0%), Bihar (20.0%), and other regions of Uttar Pradesh, but Ayodhya does not record any visitors from Maharashtra or Bihar. These proportions highlight the distinctive attractiveness of each city, shaped by its historical, cultural, and religious significance, affecting tourists' preferences from all the places of India included in this study.

Table 4: Destination wise frequency analysis of past visit and purpose of visit

Tourists' Frequency and Purpose of Visit		Visit to Tourism Destination	
		Lucknow (n= 150)	Ayodhya (n= 136)
Number of Past Visit	First Time	13.3%	29.4%
	Once Visited Earlier	53.3%	51.5%
	Twice Visited Earlier	23.3%	12.5%
	More than twice	10.0%	6.6%
Purpose of Visit	Religious/Cultural	13.3%	50.0%
	Vacations	29.3%	25.0%
	Business/Official Tour	37.3%	14.7%
	Educational Purpose	6.7%	3.7%
	Other	13.3%	6.6%
Overall Satisfaction (Calculated as average of ratings)		3.52	2.63

The data analysis reveals differences in tourists' visit frequency and purpose of travel and sheds light on the unique tourism patterns of Lucknow and Ayodhya (Table-4). For religious or cultural reasons, 13.3% of visitors to Lucknow travel there, compared to 50.0% of visitors to Ayodhya. Compared to Ayodhya's 14.7%, Lucknow attracts a higher percentage of tourists traveling for work or business, at 37.3%. At 29.4 percent, Ayodhya appears to draw a higher percentage of first-time visitors compared to Lucknow's 13.3 percent of repeat visitors. Only 51% of tourists in Ayodhya have visited the location before, compared to 53% of visitors in Lucknow. In addition, Lucknow sees a higher proportion of repeat visitors than Ayodhya, with a 23.3 percent versus 12.5 percent difference. The overall satisfaction of tourists at Lucknow is (average rating is 3.52) far better than Ayodhya (average rating is 2.63). According to the data, Lucknow draws a wider variety of tourists, including those traveling for work or official reasons, whereas Ayodhya caters primarily to religious and cultural tourists. Ayodhya also appears to be growing in popularity among first-time visitors, perhaps as a result of its religious significance.

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Grid of Ayodhya and Lucknow

The tourism industry is among the most extremely competitive industries, where tourism destinations compete against each other for an increasing number of tourists who are seeking distinctive and memorable experiences. The 'Importance and

Performance Analysis (IPA)' approach appears in this context as a useful instrument that may significantly enhance the competitiveness of tourism destinations. The Importance and Performance Analysis (IPA) technique has been known for its seemingly easy nature and straightforwardness. However, its use in tourism research is not so common.

Table 5 Destination wise descriptive analysis of determinants of destination competitiveness

S.No	Determinants of Competitiveness of Tourism Destination	Tourism Destination: Ayodhya		Tourism Destination: Lucknow	
		Average of Performance Rating	Average of Importance Rating	Average of Performance Rating	Average of Importance Rating
1.	Climate Conditions	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5
2.	Awareness	2.4	3.8	3.8	4.0
3.	Information search	3.0	2.8	3.5	3.8
4.	Entertainment Level	2.4	2.0	2.2	3.0
5.	Special Events	1.5	3.0	3.0	4.0
6.	Facilitation	3.1	2.2	3.5	2.0
7.	Destination Development	1.6	3.2	1.5	4.0
8.	Crisis Management	2.5	3.0	2.0	3.5
9.	Marketing Efforts	2.1	2.8	3.5	3.0
10.	Infrastructure	2.8	3.5	3.0	3.0
11.	Safety	2.3	3.0	3.0	4.5
12.	Hospitality Tourist	2.6	3.0	2.0	3.0
13.	Monuments Structure	2.7	2.3	1.8	3.5
14.	Tourist Management	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.0
15.	Location of Destination	1.5	2.4	2.0	2.0
16.	Mix Activities Tourist	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.0
17.	Service Quality	2.3	3.6	2.0	4.0
18.	Accessibility	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.0
19.	Destination as Brand	2.7	3.0	2.0	3.7
20.	Cost of Touring	3.3	3.5	2.4	4.5
21.	Cultural Aspect	4.0	2.0	1.5	2.1

In Table 5, the descriptive data analysis of performance and importance ratings is presented. The performance and importance scores of the various components related to a destination's competitiveness as a tourist destination were determined by averaging the ratings of each item given by tourists. The 21 items were independently plotted on the IPA matrix for Ayodhya (Figure 2) and Lucknow (Figure 3) by using the average of importance and the satisfaction performance scores of all 21 criteria related to tourism destination competitiveness.

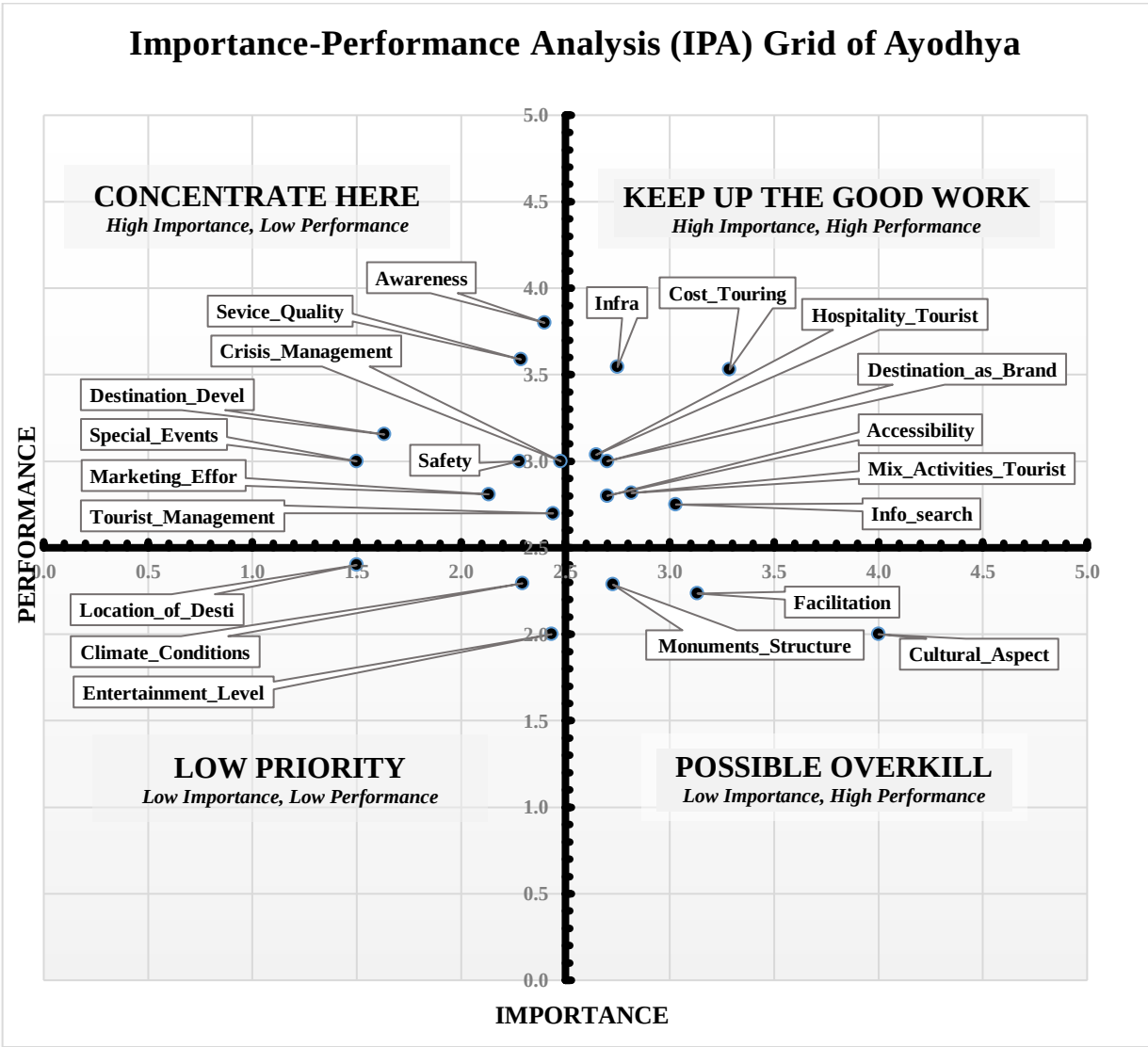


Figure 2 Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix of Ayodhya

The comparative analysis of the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) grids for Ayodhya and Lucknow provides valuable insights into the areas that require focus from both private and government tourism management agencies. By examining how tourists perceive the importance and performance of various destination attributes, we can strategize improvements that will enhance tourist satisfaction and the overall competitiveness of these destinations.

Quadrant I: High Importance, High Performance (Strengths to Maintain)

For Ayodhya, Awareness, Service Quality, and Crisis Management are strengths. Tourists perceive these aspects as crucial, and the destination is performing well in these areas. Maintaining high standards here is vital. In case of Lucknow the Safety, Service Quality, and Crisis Management are also the strengths. Lucknow is performing well, especially in safety, which is a key consideration for tourists. Both destinations excel in Service Quality and Crisis Management, indicating that the existing management strategies in these areas are effective. Maintaining these standards will continue to provide a competitive edge for both cities. Safety in Lucknow is perceived very highly and could serve as a model for Ayodhya, where safety is rated lower.

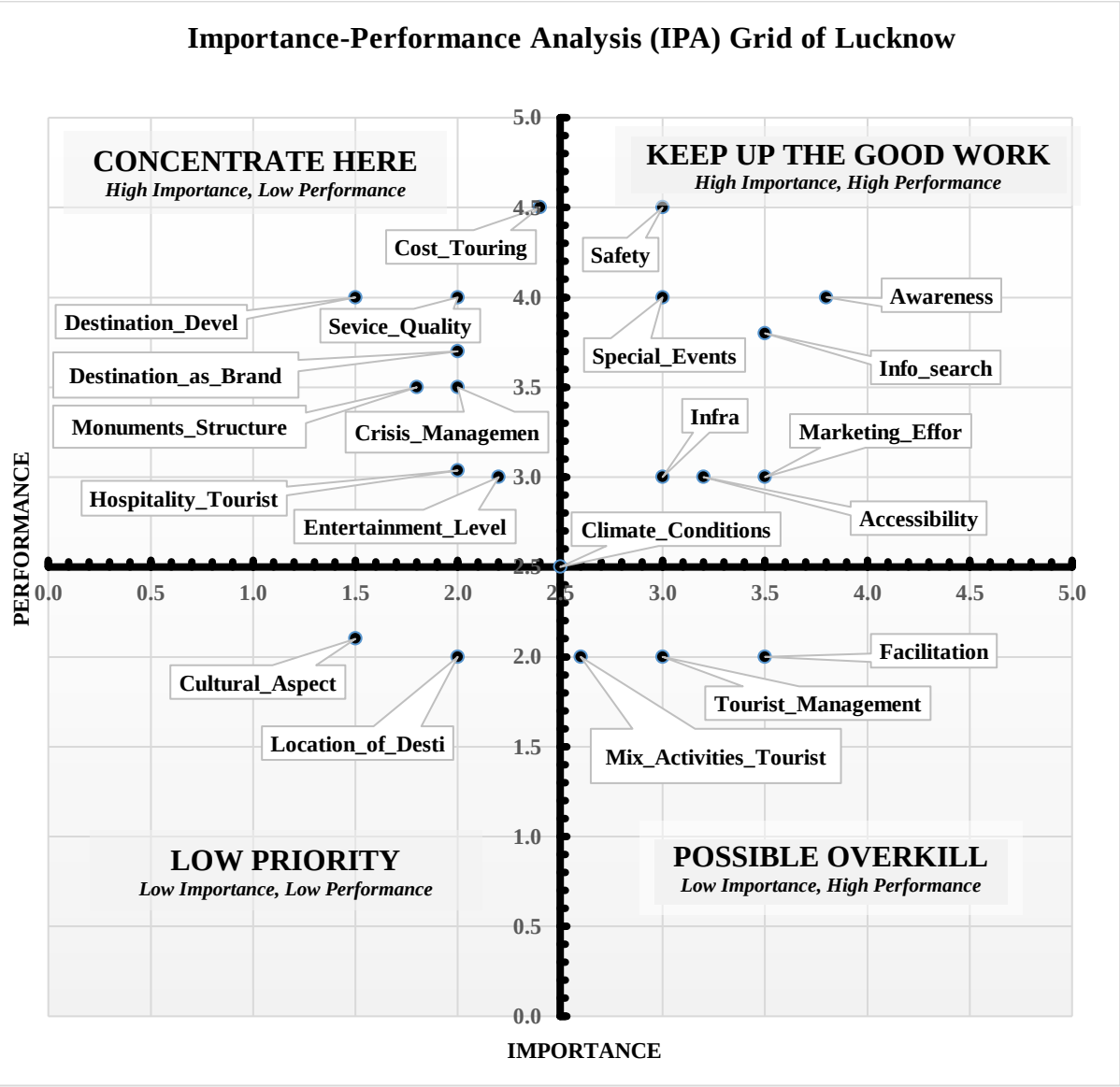


Figure 3 Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix of Lucknow

Quadrant II: High Importance, Low Performance (Areas Needing Immediate Focus)

In case of Ayodhya the Infrastructure, Cost of Touring, Hospitality, Destination as Brand, Accessibility, and Tourist Activity Mix are critical areas with underperformance. These factors significantly impact the overall tourist experience and require immediate intervention. For Lucknow the Infrastructure, Marketing Effort, Accessibility, and Special Events are high-priority areas where performance is lagging. The notable emphasis on Marketing Effort and Special Events in Lucknow shows that while tourists find these aspects important, they are not satisfied with the current efforts. For both the tourism destinations Ayodhya and Lucknow, Infrastructure and Accessibility emerge as common areas where tourists see significant room for improvement. Enhancing transportation facilities, road networks, and basic infrastructure at tourist sites will likely lead to higher tourist satisfaction. In Ayodhya, Destination Branding and Tourist Activity Mix need more attention, as they are crucial for long-term competitiveness. In Lucknow, a stronger Marketing Effort and better organization of Special Events could improve tourist engagement and help elevate the city’s cultural offerings.

Quadrant III: Low Importance, Low Performance (Low Priority for Immediate Action)

The IPA matrix of Ayodhya shows that the factors like Location of Destination, Climate Conditions, and Entertainment Level are not seen as highly important by tourists and are also underperforming. While the IPA matrix of Lucknow depicted that the factors such as Cultural Aspect and Location of Destination fall into this category, indicating that tourists do not view these as critical for their experience. Although, these areas are currently lower in priority, they should not be ignored entirely. Entertainment Level in Ayodhya and Cultural Aspect in Lucknow could be enhanced to attract specific tourist segments in the future. However, these factors should receive fewer resources compared to more pressing issues in Quadrant II.

Quadrant IV: Low Importance, High Performance (Areas with Excess Focus)

Monuments Structure and Cultural Aspects are performing well for Ayodhya, but tourists do not view them as highly important. However, for Lucknow the factor Facilitation and Tourist Management are performing well without being considered of great importance. Even though, Monuments Structure and Cultural Aspects are performing well in Ayodhya, resources could be reallocated to more urgent areas, such as Infrastructure and Cost of Touring. In Lucknow, Tourist Management and Facilitation are doing well but may not need further significant investment compared to more critical areas like Accessibility and Marketing Effort.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The significant strategic recommendations for Ayodhya and Lucknow focus on enhancing their tourism competitiveness by addressing the most demanding issues identified in the IPA grids. Firstly, both cities should prioritize improvements in infrastructure and accessibility. Enhancing transportation services, upgrading facilities at tourist sites, and making travel more convenient will significantly improve the overall experience for visitors. A second critical area is branding and marketing. For Ayodhya, establishing a stronger destination brand and offering a wider range of tourist activities will be crucial in making the destination more attractive to diverse groups of travellers. In Lucknow, more targeted marketing efforts and the organization of engaging special events will help promote the city as a vibrant and culturally rich destination. Another area of focus should be on improving hospitality services and managing the cost of touring. Both destinations show underperformance in these areas, which are viewed as highly important by tourists. Affordable services, coupled with quality hospitality, will attract repeat visitors and enhance the overall perception of the destinations. In terms of long-term development, while the entertainment level in Ayodhya and the cultural aspects in Lucknow are currently seen as lower priorities, enhancing these areas can create more immersive and engaging experiences for visitors. Investments in cultural events, entertainment programs, and heritage-based activities can offer greater depth to the tourism experience over time. By focusing on these key areas, tourism management agencies in both cities can take practical and meaningful steps toward improving visitor satisfaction and long-term competitiveness.

In conclusion, the Importance-Performance Analysis of Ayodhya and Lucknow reveals crucial insights into areas that require immediate attention to enhance tourism competitiveness. Both destinations need to focus on improving infrastructure, accessibility, and hospitality services to meet tourist expectations. Strengthening branding and offering a diverse range of activities will be key to attracting and retaining visitors, especially in Ayodhya. Lucknow, on the other hand, must emphasize its cultural heritage and market special events more effectively. Addressing these issues with practical strategies will not only improve tourist satisfaction but also boost the overall appeal and long-term viability of these destinations. By investing in these critical areas, tourism management agencies can ensure sustainable growth and a competitive edge for both cities in the tourism sector.

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