

Enhancing Destination Competitiveness through Technology & Innovations

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A Tourism country's competitiveness is important especially when countries strive for bigger market share

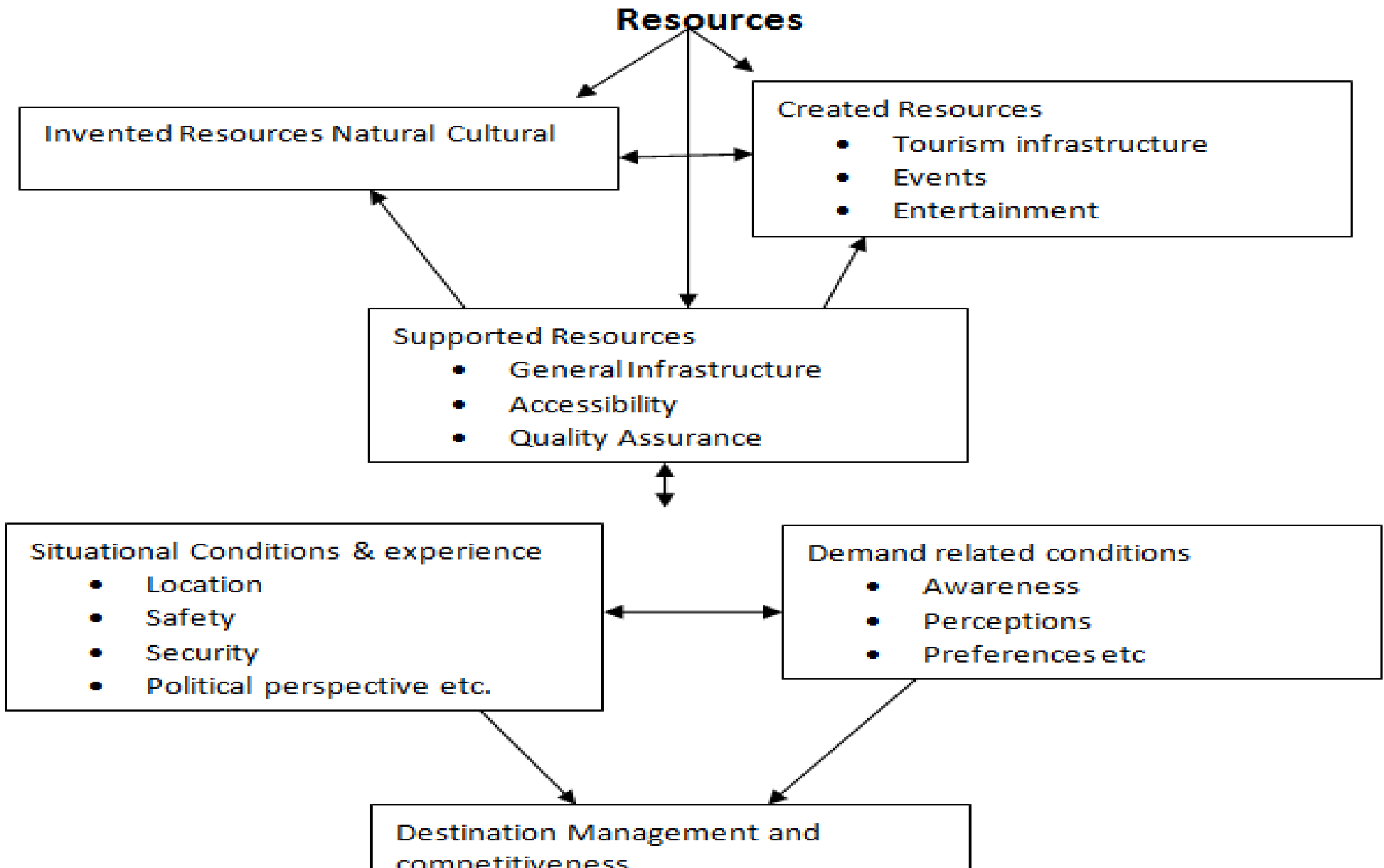
It is important for managers to identify destination's competitive advantage and analyze the destination's competitive position in international tourist market.

The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 Ranking

Country/Economy	Rank
Spain	1
France	2
Germany	3
Japan	4
United Kingdom	5
United States	6
Australia	7
Italy	8

Canada	9
Switzerland	10
Hong Kong SAR	11
Austria	12
Singapore	13
Portugal	14
China	15
New Zealand	16
Netherlands	17
Norway	18
Korea, Rep.	19
Sweden	20

Following model may help managers to do the analysis through various destination's resources:



- The examination through this model may reveal that one destination is more competitive in its natural & cultural resources, other may be good at created resources but both may be less competitive in the management of destination etc..
- Therefore, Destination's competitive advantage is not by accident.

➤ To Quote Steven D Pike “the battle gaining competitive advantage is no longer a battle of products & services but a battle of tourist’s perceptions; therefore it is a battle that takes place inside the tourists mind”

- Tourist destination can be seen as an amalgam of products, services and experiences with many different stakeholders within a defined geographical region involved in its planning, operating and making it a sustainable and a unique entity
- Each of these components have to remain highly competitive as tourists are now more than ever involved in co-creation process than ever.
- taking advantage of intranets, extranets & the internet to support reservation/ confirmations/ purchase of a wide range of tourism products

➤ Here lies the opportunity for destinations to evolve through technology & innovative ICT solutions to support tourism enterprises popularly called **e Tourism or Digitalization of Tourism**

➤ **e Tourism** reflects the digitalization of all processes and value chains in the tourism, travel, hospitality & catering industries to maximize their efficiency & effectiveness with facilities to search, compare & book tourism products and services.



EXAMPLE APPLICATIONS IN EUROPE FOR TRAVELLERS

[Onfinestay](#) lodging app curates posh apartments and homes in [London](#), [Paris](#), and [Rome](#)

[Pretty Streets](#)

This app serves up detailed walking itineraries through [Dublin](#), London, and Paris's most captivating streets, boulevards, and avenues. Easy-to-follow maps

[Fly Europe](#) comparing ticket prices for major airlines and smaller carriers,

[GoEuro](#) allows you to search and book flights, trains, and buses in 12 different countries across Europe

Spotted by Locals This app is loaded with guides to more than two dozen European cities.

TheFork TheFork has more than 30,000 restaurants in 10 European countries with user reviews, photos, and sample menu items

Michelin Travel The Michelin Guide is revered as the Holy Bible of hospitality in Europe. The company's app curates the best restaurants, hotels, and attractions

Citymapper

This navigation tool displays **public-transit info**, such as cost and live departure times of buses and trains

Monument Tracker

Learn about well-known monuments and hidden historic gems in 60 cities.

Triplingo is the instant voice translator.

ICT supported e Tourism Management operations

- **e Airlines** Software applications are involved at all stages of Airlines and Airport Management
- **e Tour operations & e Travel Agencies**
- ICT offers a wide range of tools for travel agencies to effectively achieve information exchange & tourism product distribution
- It also provides agencies access to suppliers database to verify availability & prices & to confirm reservations/bookings instantly .
- **E Hospitality –PMS/GDS/CRS**

- As a result ICT Enabled Tourism has proved to be a revolution but with limited capacity & space over time.
- It is important to understand that for improvement in position of Travel and Tourism competitive index every destinations need to focus on the issues of provision of Network infrastructure, Cyber Security. ICT literacy, Domestic Productions of ICT & Business Environment

Let us look at the European experience:

➤ The earliest example for the application of ICT in Tourism comes from Europe when in 2006 a web platform “**Visit Europe**” was created to promote European destination, further improved in 2009 & 2011 when “**Virtual Tourism Observatory**” website as well as **Calypso Web Platform** became functional (platform for **Systems consolidation, simplification and growth**)

- Additional improvement in the form of **TOURISMLink** platform was developed
- A perfect example to demonstrate how business intelligence & innovation can be used to offer real support to tourist destinations & businesses in order to enhance their competitive advantage.

- Following the success of TOURISMLink Europe launched Decision Information Support System (DISS) & Destination Intelligent Management for Sustainable Tourism (DIMAST-2014)
- to combine the concepts of competitiveness and ICT.
- to create tools for the benchmarking of European destination to help them to improve the quality of tourism
- to conceive & disseminate authentic tools & assessment methods for monitoring & benchmarking competitiveness of European destinations.

➤ It is important for decision makers to understand the ICT aspects of Tourism for its effective & efficient use.

ICT applications & Important Aspects of Tourism

1. Selecting , Developing ,Managing and Monitoring tourism sites	Geospatial Information Technologies (GPS/GIS)
2. Marketing	Inbound (market research) Outbound (advertising, promotion etc)
3. Customer Relationship Management	Home-Destination-Home Converting Prospects in to Customer Book-Travel, lodging, tours & more Trip Management –pre-during-post
4. Operations	Buying, managing services and supplies

- Within this context it is suggested that ICT based innovative tools can be developed in order to provide support for tourists who want to make responsible choices for their vacations as well as to offer a new experience to their customers
- For Instance “Web based support applications are excellent aids for tourists who want real support for tourist planning problems called **“touristic trip planning problem”** which can only be addressed by proposing the creation of **web based and mobile based** decision support systems for tourists, generally called **“trip planners”**”

But it is important to note that implementing innovations in tourism destination is not so easy because of the presence & involvement of a large number of stakeholders in tourism development in case of any tourism destination

It is also to be understood that tourist destinations are specific entities with specific needs which are not very easy to manage.

In order to manage these specific needs it is important that all responsible stakeholders understand these specific needs of the destinations and prioritize them to achieve sustainable results & thereby a plan to achieve competitive advantage.

All Stakeholders need to work together to achieve competitiveness for tourist destinations rather than leaving it for Destination Management Organizations (DMO) at local level.

Travel & tourism industry shall take fullest advantage of technology whether it is related to the application of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) or of Smart Tourism Tools like Mobile Application, Augmented Reality and Near Field Communication (NFC)

- Success of these SMART Tourism tools depend upon application of ICT Technologies i.e. IoT, Mobile Communication, Cloud Computing & Artificial Intelligent Communication.

- These technologies aim to connect the physical information, social and commercial infrastructure of tourism to provide maximized value to multiple stakeholders of a destination, best example is access to real time information on public transportation.

- In short destination's competitiveness can be enhanced through technology by providing technology embedded environment (IoT, sensors etc.);
- intelligent services to offer responsive processes both at macro & micro levels;
- end user smart devices;
- training and engagement of stakeholders to actively use the platforms to achieve destination's competitive advantage .

➤ Finally on the basis of application of SMART Tourism tool, a destination can be referred to as a SMART Tourism destination having both :

➤ **Soft SMARTNESS** (collaborations partnerships, innovations & leadership) and

➤ **Hard SMARTNESS** (Technology embedded infrastructure)

- To conclude best way in which tourist destination can enhance their competitiveness is not only through the innovation & application of ICT Tools but also by implementing the right SMART Tourism tools to deliver enhanced tourist experience.
- Technology alone cannot enhance the destination's competitiveness and sustainability rather managers responsible for planning and implementation need to use these technological tools innovatively and effectively.