

From Heritage to Weddings: Assessing Destination Competitiveness across Rajasthan's Tourism Circuits

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Abstract: Rajasthan has traditionally been recognised as one of India's leading heritage tourism destinations because of its forts, palaces, royal architecture, cultural traditions and distinctive hospitality. In recent years, these heritage resources have increasingly been incorporated into destination wedding experiences, transforming several Rajasthan destinations into prominent wedding tourism hubs. However, the competitiveness of a wedding destination depends not only on heritage attractions but also on accessibility, accommodation, catering, transportation, safety, technology and other supporting services. Against this background, the present study examines destination competitiveness in Rajasthan from the perspective of stakeholders involved in destination wedding tourism. The study uses a quantitative research approach and employs two stages of statistical analysis. A one-sample t-test was first conducted using responses from 422 respondents to assess perceptions of seventeen destination wedding-related indicators. Multiple regression analysis was subsequently conducted using a separate sample of 104 observations to identify the destination attributes that significantly influence stakeholder perspective toward destination weddings. The t-test results show statistically significant perceptions across all seventeen indicators, with relatively high mean scores for marriage planners, destination awareness, transport and rental services, safety and security, socio-cultural prosperity and government support. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(8, 95) = 6.358$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 34.9% of the variance in stakeholder perspective. Accessibility to the marriage destination ($\beta = .567$, $p < .001$) and marriage catering ($\beta = .738$, $p < .001$) had significant positive effects, whereas accommodation showed a significant negative coefficient ($\beta = -.816$, $p < .001$). Marriage location, amenities, decoration, entertainment and technical support were not statistically significant. The findings suggest that Rajasthan's heritage resources provide an important foundation for wedding tourism competitiveness, but accessibility and service-related factors play a crucial role in converting heritage attractiveness into a competitive wedding tourism experience.

Keywords: Destination Competitiveness, Destination Wedding Tourism, Rajasthan, Heritage Tourism, Tourism Circuits, Stakeholder Perspective

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism destinations are increasingly required to differentiate themselves by offering distinctive experiences rather than depending only on conventional sightseeing attractions. One emerging form of experiential tourism is destination wedding tourism, in which individuals and groups travel away from their usual place of residence to participate in weddings and associated celebrations. Unlike conventional tourism, destination weddings combine several tourism activities within a single event, including accommodation, transportation, food and beverage services,



entertainment, sightseeing and event management. Consequently, destination weddings can generate economic opportunities for a wide range of tourism stakeholders.

The concept of destination competitiveness provides an appropriate framework for understanding the ability of destinations to attract visitors and provide satisfactory experiences while generating economic and social benefits. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) described destination competitiveness as a multidimensional concept involving resources, supporting factors and destination management. Dwyer and Kim (2003) similarly argued that destination competitiveness depends on a combination of destination resources, infrastructure, supporting services, management and demand conditions. These perspectives indicate that attractive tourism resources alone cannot ensure destination competitiveness. Destinations must also possess the infrastructure and services necessary to convert their resources into satisfactory tourism experiences. Rajasthan provides an interesting context in which to examine this relationship. The state has a strong heritage identity based on forts, palaces, royal architecture, festivals, cuisine, handicrafts and traditional cultural practices. Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Alwar have increasingly utilized these resources for destination weddings. Royal palaces, heritage hotels and historical venues are now marketed not only as attractions but also as locations for wedding ceremonies, receptions and related celebrations. This development represents a significant shift in the use of heritage resources. Heritage that was traditionally consumed through sightseeing is increasingly being incorporated into immersive tourism experiences. A palace may provide an attractive wedding setting, but the success of the event depends on a much wider service system. Guests must be able to reach the destination conveniently, accommodation must be available, food services must meet expectations, transportation must be coordinated and safety and other supporting facilities must function effectively. The importance of these factors becomes greater because destination weddings usually involve groups of visitors rather than individual tourists. Guests may stay for several days and participate in multiple ceremonies and excursions. This creates demand for accommodation, transportation, catering, entertainment, event management and tourism services.

The competitiveness of a wedding destination therefore depends upon the performance of an interconnected tourism ecosystem. Stakeholders are central to this ecosystem. Wedding planners, hotels, travel partners, caterers, venue operators and other service providers contribute directly to the delivery of destination wedding experiences. Their perceptions can therefore provide valuable evidence regarding the strengths and weaknesses of a destination. Although Rajasthan has become an important destination for wedding tourism, empirical research linking its heritage resources with destination competitiveness and stakeholder perspectives remains relatively limited. Much of the existing destination competitiveness literature examines destinations from a general tourism perspective, while wedding tourism research often focuses on event experiences, visitor motivations and economic impacts. There is consequently a need to examine destination competitiveness specifically within the context of wedding tourism. The present study addresses this gap by examining stakeholder perceptions of destination wedding attributes across selected tourism destinations in Rajasthan. The study first assesses stakeholder perceptions of seventeen indicators using a one-sample t-test and subsequently applies multiple regression to determine which specific destination attributes significantly influence stakeholder perspective toward destination weddings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Destination Competitiveness

Destination competitiveness has become an important concept in tourism research because destinations compete for visitors, investment, events and tourism expenditure. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) proposed that destination competitiveness depends upon core resources and attractors, supporting factors, destination management and qualifying determinants. Their framework established that competitiveness cannot be understood simply through the attractiveness of a destination. Dwyer and Kim (2003) further developed this approach by identifying resources, infrastructure, supporting factors, destination management, demand conditions and situational factors as major determinants of competitiveness. Their framework is particularly useful for destination wedding tourism because wedding destinations require both attractive resources and effective supporting services. Enright and Newton (2005) demonstrated that destination competitiveness is influenced by tourism-specific and broader business-related factors.

Their work highlighted the importance of infrastructure, accessibility and supporting facilities in determining destination competitiveness. Crouch (2011) subsequently emphasized the multidimensional nature of destination competitiveness and the importance of considering the relative contribution of different destination attributes. These studies provide the theoretical foundation for examining Rajasthan's competitiveness as a destination wedding market. Rajasthan possesses considerable heritage resources, but the ability to utilize these resources effectively depends upon supporting infrastructure and services.

2.2 Heritage Tourism and Rajasthan

Heritage tourism represents an important component of destination attractiveness because historical buildings, architecture, traditions and cultural practices provide destinations with distinctive identities. Heritage resources can act as powerful differentiation mechanisms because they are often closely associated with the history and identity of destinations. Rajasthan has a particularly strong heritage tourism identity. Its forts, palaces, royal residences, cultural traditions and cuisine provide a distinctive basis for destination branding. The transformation of heritage properties into wedding venues demonstrates how traditional tourism resources can be converted into contemporary tourism experiences. However, heritage resources alone cannot guarantee destination competitiveness. The destination must also provide accommodation, accessibility, food services, transportation, safety and professional event management. Therefore, heritage can be considered an important source of destination attractiveness, while supporting services contributes to the practical competitiveness of the destination.

2.3 Destination Wedding Tourism

Destination weddings combine tourism and event activities and require the movement of couples, families and guests to destinations outside their normal place of residence. Getz (2008) noted the growing importance of planned events in destination development and tourism marketing. Destination weddings can generate benefits across several sectors because visitors require accommodation, transportation, food, entertainment, shopping and sightseeing in addition to wedding-related services. This makes destination weddings particularly relevant for destinations seeking to increase tourism expenditure and extend visitor stays. In Rajasthan, wedding tourism has developed around the state's heritage identity. The combination of palaces, forts, cultural performances, traditional cuisine and hospitality provides an environment that can differentiate Rajasthan from competing destinations. Accessibility is a major component of tourism competitiveness because tourists must be able to reach and move around a destination efficiently. Enright and Newton (2005) identified infrastructure and accessibility as important elements of destination competitiveness. Accessibility is particularly important in destination weddings because large groups need coordinated transportation between airports, hotels, wedding venues and tourist attractions. Poor connectivity or complicated local transportation can increase costs and reduce the attractiveness of a destination.

Accommodation represents a basic requirement of tourism and becomes particularly important when weddings destination involves large groups staying for several days. Availability, quality, location and price can influence the overall attractiveness of wedding destinations. The relationship between accommodation and stakeholder perspective can nevertheless be complex. High accommodation costs, limited room availability or difficulties in group bookings may reduce perceptions of destination suitability. Therefore, accommodation should be examined not merely as an indicator of hotel quality but as part of the wider destination wedding service system. Food plays a particularly important role in Indian weddings. Catering involves more than the provision of meals and includes menu design, regional cuisine, presentation, service and customization. Rajasthan's culinary traditions provide opportunities to integrate local culture into wedding experiences. High-quality catering can therefore contribute simultaneously to hospitality, cultural representation and destination differentiation. Destination image influences how visitors and stakeholders perceive a destination. A destination with a strong and distinctive image may have an advantage in attracting specific tourism segments. Rajasthan's association with royalty, heritage, palaces and cultural traditions has created a strong image that can be extended to destination weddings. The present study's relatively high destination awareness score supports the view that Rajasthan possesses considerable recognition as a wedding destination.

Safety and security are essential to tourism competitiveness because tourists expect destinations to provide a secure environment. This becomes particularly important for weddings involving large numbers of domestic and international visitors. Government support also plays an important role through infrastructure development, tourism promotion, destination management, heritage conservation and policy support. Stakeholder coordination between public agencies and private businesses can therefore strengthen destination competitiveness.

2.4 Research Gap

Although destination competitiveness has been widely studied, comparatively less attention has been given to the specific requirements of destination wedding tourism. Existing frameworks explain the importance of resources, accessibility, infrastructure and destination management, but wedding tourism introduces additional requirements related to catering, venues, decoration, entertainment and technical support. The present study addresses this gap by examining destination competitiveness from the stakeholder perspective and by distinguishing between general perceptions of destination wedding attributes and their independent influence on stakeholder perspective.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine stakeholder perceptions of destination wedding attributes in Rajasthan.
2. To assess the statistical significance of stakeholder perceptions regarding selected destination wedding indicators.
3. To examine the combined influence of selected destination wedding attributes on stakeholder perspective.
4. To identify the individual destination wedding attributes that significantly influence stakeholder perspective.
5. To provide implications for strengthening Rajasthan's competitiveness as a heritage-based destination wedding destination.

4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the assumption that Rajasthan's heritage resources create the initial attractiveness of the destination, while destination infrastructure and wedding-related services determine the quality and competitiveness of the final wedding experience. The present empirical model considers eight destination wedding attributes: Marriage Location, Accessibility to Marriage Destination, Accommodation, Marriage Amenities, Marriage Catering, Marriage Decoration, Entertainment and Technical Support. These variables are expected to influence stakeholder perspective toward destination weddings. At the operational level, the model proposes that the eight destination wedding attributes collectively influence stakeholder perspective.

The conceptual relationship can be represented as follows:

Heritage Resources → Destination Wedding Attributes → Stakeholder Perspective → Destination Competitiveness

5. Research Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research design to examine destination competitiveness in the context of wedding tourism. The research focused on selected tourism and wedding destinations of Rajasthan, particularly Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Alwar. A structured questionnaire was used to collect stakeholder perceptions regarding destination wedding attributes and the wider competitiveness of Rajasthan as a wedding destination. Rajasthan was selected because of its strong heritage tourism identity and growing role in destination weddings. Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Alwar represent important tourism circuits characterized by historical architecture, heritage properties, cultural attractions and wedding venues. The selected destinations provide different combinations of heritage resources and tourism services, making Rajasthan an appropriate setting for examining how heritage resources are

incorporated into wedding tourism. Primary data was collected from stakeholders associated with tourism and destination wedding activities. The stakeholder group included individuals connected with wedding planning, travel services, accommodation, venues, catering and related tourism services. Two analytical samples were used in the study. The first consisted of 422 respondents, whose responses were used for the one-sample t-test analysis. The second consisted of 104 observations, which were used for the multiple regression analysis. The distinction between the two samples is important because the regression degrees of freedom indicate a total sample of 104 observations. The collected data were analyzed using statistical procedures including descriptive analysis, one-sample t-tests, multicollinearity diagnostics and multiple regression analysis. The one-sample t-test was used to determine whether the mean scores for selected destination wedding indicators were significantly different from zero. Multiple regression was subsequently used to determine the extent to which eight destination wedding attributes explain stakeholder perspective.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 One-Sample T-Test

A one-sample t-test was conducted using 422 responses. The test value was set at zero. All seventeen indicators produced statistically significant results at $p < .001$. The results indicate that respondents expressed statistically significant perceptions across all the examined dimensions. The highest mean score was recorded for Marriage Planners ($M = 4.0119$) and Marriage Destination Awareness ($M = 4.0119$). Transport and Rental Services also recorded a high mean score of 4.0071. Safety and Security had a mean of 3.9645, while Contribution to Socio-Cultural Prosperity had a mean of 3.9692. The relatively high scores for destination awareness and marriage planners indicate that respondents recognize Rajasthan's established wedding tourism ecosystem. Similarly, the high score for transport and rental services suggests a relatively favorable perception of the transportation infrastructure supporting wedding tourism. The lowest mean score was recorded for Contribution to Economic Prosperity ($M = 3.2156$). Although this result remains statistically significant, it indicates comparatively lower stakeholder perception of the economic contribution of destination weddings. Marriage Venue, Honeymoon Proximity, Marriage Travel Partners and Medical Care Facilities also recorded comparatively lower mean values.

Table 1. One-Sample T-Test Results

Indicator	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Marriage planners	4.0119	89.504	421	<.001
Marriage Travel Partners	3.3010	57.438	421	<.001
Government support to marriage destination	3.9526	89.430	421	<.001
Marriage venue	3.2844	58.195	421	<.001
ICT for marriage venue	3.9100	86.550	421	<.001
Transport and Rental Services	4.0071	89.144	421	<.001
Medical care facilities	3.3081	57.800	421	<.001
Safety and Security	3.9645	90.034	421	<.001
Proximity to other destinations for honeymoon	3.2986	58.013	421	<.001
Marriage Destination perception	3.9242	87.471	421	<.001
Marriage Destination awareness	4.0119	89.504	421	<.001
Marriage Destination preferences	3.3531	61.836	421	<.001
Marriage statistics – numbers & expenditure	3.9550	89.861	421	<.001

Contribution to economic prosperity	3.2156	55.736	421	<.001
Contribution to socio-cultural prosperity	3.9692	91.461	421	<.001
Price competitiveness	3.4479	62.174	421	<.001
Government support to marriage stakeholders	3.9597	89.173	421	<.001

6.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Before conducting multiple regression, multicollinearity among the independent variables was examined using tolerance and VIF statistics. The VIF values ranged from 1.34 to 1.67, while tolerance values ranged from .60 to .74.

All VIF values were substantially below the commonly used threshold of 5, and all tolerance values were above .10. The results therefore indicate that multicollinearity was not a serious concern in the model.

Table 2. Multicollinearity Statistics

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Marriage Location	.72	1.38
Accessibility to Marriage Destination	.65	1.54
Accommodation	.63	1.58
Marriage Amenities	.70	1.42
Marriage Catering	.60	1.67
Marriage Decoration	.74	1.34
Entertainment	.69	1.45
Technical Support	.73	1.37

6.3 Model Summary

The multiple regression model was estimated to be using 104 observations. The model produced an R value of .591, indicating a moderate overall association between the predictors and stakeholder perspective. The R² value was .349, indicating that approximately 34.9% of the variance in stakeholder perspective was explained by the eight destination wedding attributes. The adjusted R² was .294, showing that the model retained approximately 29.4% explanatory power after adjustment for the number of predictors and sample size.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.591	.349	.294	.915

6.4 ANOVA

The ANOVA results demonstrate that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(8,95) = 6.358$, $p < .001$. This indicates that the eight destination wedding attributes collectively explain a statistically significant proportion of variation in stakeholder perspective. Therefore, the overall regression hypothesis is supported.

Table 4. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Regression	42.595	8	5.324	6.358	<.001
Residual	79.559	95	.837		
Total	122.154	103			

6.5 Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients show that three variables significantly influence stakeholder perspective: accessibility, accommodation and marriage catering.

Accessibility has a positive and statistically significant coefficient ($\beta = .567, p < .001$). This suggests that greater accessibility to the destination is associated with more favorable stakeholder perspectives. Since destination weddings involve the movement of large groups between airports, hotels, venues and tourist attractions, transportation connectivity represents an important component of destination performance.

Marriage catering also has a strong positive effect ($\beta = .738, p < .001$). The result indicates that catering services make an important contribution to stakeholder perspective. In the context of Indian destination weddings, food is closely associated with hospitality, cultural identity and the overall wedding experience.

Accommodation shows a statistically significant negative coefficient ($\beta = -.816, p < .001$). This finding requires careful interpretation. The result indicates a negative statistical relationship after controlling the other variables, but it does not necessarily mean that better accommodation reduces stakeholder satisfaction. The exact interpretation depends on the coding and wording of the accommodation items. The questionnaire should therefore be checked to determine whether any reverse-coded items were involved.

Marriage location, marriage amenities, marriage decoration, entertainment and technical support did not demonstrate statistically significant independent effects.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.123	.388	—	8.047	<.001
Marriage Location	-.238	.148	-.221	-1.615	.110
Accessibility	.568	.148	.567	3.844	<.001
Accommodation	-.771	.137	-.816	-5.607	<.001
Marriage Amenities	-.057	.140	-.053	-.409	.684
Marriage Catering	.835	.163	.738	5.115	<.001
Marriage Decoration	-.178	.222	-.153	-.801	.425
Entertainment	-.234	.146	-.214	-1.611	.111
Technical Support	.062	.127	.062	.491	.625

7. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Rajasthan's destination wedding competitiveness is based on a combination of heritage attractiveness and supporting tourism services. The one-sample t-test results show that respondents perceive all seventeen examined indicators significantly, suggesting a generally favorable perception of Rajasthan's wedding tourism environment. The high score for destination awareness indicates that Rajasthan already possesses a strong market identity as a wedding destination. Its association with royalty, palaces, forts and cultural traditions provides an important basis for destination differentiation.

The regression results, however, reveal a more specific picture. Not every positively perceived attribute independently explains stakeholder perspective. Accessibility and catering emerge as significant positive predictors, demonstrating that the practical delivery of wedding tourism experiences is as important as the visual appeal of heritage venues. The strong positive coefficient for accessibility indicates that connectivity is an important consideration for stakeholders. Wedding tourism involves group travel and multiple movements within a destination. Rajasthan's ability to provide convenient access can therefore strengthen its competitiveness.

Catering represents another major factor. The strong positive coefficient suggests that wedding tourism competitiveness extends beyond venues and architecture. Food and hospitality are important components of the wedding experience and provide opportunities to integrate Rajasthan's culinary heritage into destination branding. The accommodation result requires particular caution. Its strong negative coefficient is statistically significant but may reflect the manner in which the variable was measured. Further examination of the questionnaire is necessary before concluding that accommodation has an inherently negative influence on destination wedding competitiveness.

The insignificant results for decoration, entertainment, amenities and technical support suggest that these factors may not provide substantial independent explanatory power within the present model. They may still be important components of wedding operations, but their influence may overlap with other service dimensions or may not be sufficiently strong to predict stakeholder perspective independently. Overall, the findings suggest that Rajasthan should not rely solely on its heritage image when developing destination wedding tourism. The state's competitive advantage will depend on its ability to connect heritage attractions with efficient transportation, accommodation, catering and other tourism services.

8. Implications for Rajasthan's Tourism Circuits

The results have implications for developing Rajasthan's tourism circuits as integrated wedding destinations. Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Alwar should not be promoted only as individual wedding venues. Instead, they can be positioned as interconnected heritage wedding circuits that combine wedding events with cultural tourism, sightseeing, culinary experiences and local activities. Accessibility should remain a priority in circuit development. Efficient transfers between airports, hotels, venues and attractions can reduce logistical difficulties for wedding groups. The importance of catering also suggests that destination wedding packages should integrate authentic Rajasthani cuisine with customized wedding menus. Local culinary experiences can provide both economic opportunities and cultural differentiation. Accommodation providers should focus on group booking arrangements, pricing transparency, room availability and coordination with wedding venues. Since accommodation produced a negative coefficient in the current model, additional research should determine whether this reflects actual service problems or measurement/coding characteristics. The relatively high scores for safety, destination awareness and socio-cultural contribution suggest that these existing strengths can be incorporated into destination branding strategies.

The study contributes to destination competitiveness research by applying established competitiveness concepts to destination wedding tourism. Traditional destination competitiveness frameworks emphasize resources, infrastructure, management and supporting factors. The present findings suggest that these dimensions remain relevant when the tourism product is a wedding. The study also demonstrates the distinction between destination attractiveness and destination service capability. Rajasthan's heritage resources provide attractiveness, but accessibility and catering help determine whether that attractiveness can be translated into a successful wedding tourism experience. The findings further suggest that stakeholder perspective can serve as an intermediate outcome between destination attributes and broader destination competitiveness. This provides a basis for future research using more advanced structural equation modelling.

9. Conclusion

The present study examined Rajasthan's destination competitiveness in the context of wedding tourism by combining stakeholder perception analysis with multiple regression. The results demonstrate that Rajasthan possesses a strong foundation for destination wedding tourism based on heritage resources, destination awareness, safety,

cultural identity and supporting tourism services. The one-sample t-test conducted on 422 respondents showed statistically significant perceptions across all seventeen indicators. The highest mean scores were observed for marriage planners, destination awareness and transport and rental services, while economic prosperity received the lowest mean score among the examined indicators. The multiple regression analysis based on 104 observations provided further insight into the determinants of stakeholder perspective. The overall model was statistically significant and explained 34.9% of the variance in stakeholder perspective. Accessibility and marriage catering emerged as significant positive predictors, while accommodation demonstrated a statistically significant negative coefficient. The remaining variables did not show significant independent effects. The findings therefore support the argument that Rajasthan's transition from heritage tourism to wedding tourism requires more than attractive palaces and cultural landscapes. Heritage provides the destination with its identity, but accessibility, hospitality and service delivery determine how effectively this identity can be converted into a competitive tourism experience. Rajasthan's future competitiveness in wedding tourism may consequently depend on developing integrated heritage wedding circuits in which heritage attractions, transportation, accommodation, catering, cultural experiences and professional event services are strategically connected. Such an approach can strengthen the state's position not only as a venue for weddings but as a complete destination wedding experience.

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