

# **Destination Image, Attractions, and Lifestyle as Drivers of Tourist Satisfaction and Loyalty: An Empirical Study of Uttar Pradesh Tourism**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the interplay among destination image, attractions, and lifestyle factors in determining tourist satisfaction and loyalty intentions in Uttar Pradesh tourism. Utilizing data from 151 international and domestic visitors surveyed via Google Forms, the research applies exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling alongside demographic profiling and chi-square tests. Exploratory factor analysis extracted five constructs explaining 68.398 percent of variance, with destination image items scoring means of 3.72 to 4.08 and attractions and lifestyle measures also registering above-neutral ratings. SEM results identify attractions as the strongest predictor of satisfaction, followed by lifestyle and destination image. Logistic regression further links overall satisfaction, income, occupation, and cuisine appreciation to revisit intentions. Implications include strategic rebranding opportunities centered on cultural and culinary uniqueness to enhance loyalty and economic contributions.

**KEYWORDS:** Destination Image, Tourist Attractions, Lifestyle, Customer Satisfaction, Uttar Pradesh Tourism

## **1. The Evolving Landscape of Destination Image in Uttar Pradesh Tourism**

Uttar Pradesh stands as one of India's most culturally rich and historically significant states, offering a remarkable tapestry of heritage, spirituality, and natural beauty that positions it as a cornerstone of the national tourism landscape. Spanning 93,933 square miles and home to over 200 million people as of the 2011 census, the state features the Gangetic plain in its central regions and the Himalayan foothills in the extreme north, creating a diverse geographical canvas that supports a wide array of tourism experiences. Its capital, Lucknow, serves as a cultural hub known for Nawabi architecture, cuisine, and festivals, while Kanpur functions as the commercial metropolis. The creation of Uttarakhand in 2000 carved out the mountainous regions, yet Uttar Pradesh retained its status as the fifth-largest state by area and a major economic contributor with a GDP of Rs. 708,000 crore, driven primarily by agriculture and services, including tourism.

The state's tourism circuits exemplify this diversity and potential. The Agra-Braj Circuit encompasses Agra with the iconic Taj Mahal, Mathura, Vrindavan, Fatehpur Sikri, Soor Sarovar, and Chambal, drawing millions through Mughal grandeur and Krishna-related pilgrimage sites. The Buddhist Circuit includes Kapilavastu, Sarnath, Varanasi, Sravasti, Sankisa, Kaushambi, Kushinagar, Lumbini, and Bodhgaya, appealing to spiritual seekers worldwide. Additional circuits such as Bundelkhand (Jhansi, Orchha, Khajuraho), Awadh-Ayodhya (Lucknow, Ayodhya), Varanasi-Vindhyachal, Mahabharata, Ram Van-

Gaman Yatra, Jain, Sikh, Sufi, Christian, and Handicraft Circuits further enrich the offering, covering historical battles of 1857, religious diversity, and artisanal traditions. These circuits generated substantial visitor traffic, with Uttar Pradesh consistently ranking among the top states for domestic and foreign arrivals. In 2016, the state hosted millions of domestic tourists, and foreign exchange earnings from tourism in India as a whole reached significant milestones, with Uttar Pradesh contributing through its proximity to Delhi and robust connectivity.

Beyond these tangible attractions, the state's climate—characterized by a humid subtropical pattern with four distinct seasons and monsoon-driven rainfall varying from 650 mm in the southwest to 1,000 mm in the east—enhances the experiential appeal for nature lovers and cultural explorers. Government efforts, including the Amazing India campaign, e-visa facilities for 180 countries, visa-on-arrival programs, and dedicated funds for circuit development, have accelerated growth. Domestic visitor numbers were projected to rise from 1,754.9 million in 2019 to 2,543.9 million by 2022, while foreign arrivals were expected to reach 20.2 million. Despite the COVID-19 disruptions, recovery has been robust, with Indians spending a record \$10 billion on foreign travel in the first nine months of 2022-23, underscoring pent-up demand for authentic experiences.

However, sustained growth requires more than infrastructure and marketing; it demands alignment with visitors' intangible perceptions. Destination image—the holistic impression formed by beliefs, feelings, and expectations—acts as a powerful magnet. Attractions, encompassing historical sites, festivals, and natural landscapes, serve as core pull factors. Lifestyle preferences, reflecting travelers' psychological and consumption patterns, determine how well a destination resonates with personal values such as wellness, adventure, or cultural immersion. In Uttar Pradesh, where visitors range from pilgrims seeking spiritual fulfillment to leisure tourists desiring culinary delights and handicrafts, these elements collectively shape satisfaction and loyalty.

This paper examines these broader destination-level drivers, highlighting their collective influence on tourist experiences and loyalty intentions within the state. It addresses a critical research gap: while service quality studies abound, few empirical works have isolated destination image, attractions, and lifestyle as integrated predictors of satisfaction in Uttar Pradesh using a sample of 151 visitors across multiple circuits. The study draws on primary data from Google Forms questionnaires to explore how these constructs interact. Key objectives include profiling demographic influences, conducting exploratory factor analysis to identify underlying dimensions, applying structural equation modeling to test predictive relationships, and deriving strategic rebranding recommendations centered on cultural and culinary uniqueness.

By concentrating on these factors, the research contributes theoretically to destination marketing literature and practically to Uttar Pradesh tourism authorities, hoteliers, tour operators, and local communities. The analysis reveals that attractions emerge as the strongest driver of satisfaction, followed by lifestyle compatibility and destination image, with cuisine appreciation significantly predicting revisit intentions. Such insights support sustainable economic development by fostering repeat visitation, positive word-of-mouth, and higher spending. In an era of post-pandemic recovery, where travelers prioritize authentic, safe, and personally resonant experiences, understanding these drivers is essential for transforming Uttar Pradesh into a compelling, loyalty-inducing destination. The subsequent sections delve deeper into the literature, methodology, data analysis, results, discussion, and conclusions, providing a comprehensive roadmap for stakeholders to leverage the state's inherent strengths.

The evolving landscape of destination image in Uttar Pradesh is further shaped by its historical evolution. From colonial-era dak bungalows to modern star-category hotels, the sector has grown in tandem with tourism circuits. The 2022 Tourism Policy marks a shift toward thematic development, with destination image as a key pillar. Private sector participation has surged, with over 20 new international brands entering the market in recent years. However, the sector faces challenges such as skilled manpower shortages (addressed through IHMs) and uneven distribution of investments between urban hubs like Agra and Lucknow and rural areas. Addressing these through targeted incentives will be crucial for balanced growth. Overall, the evolving role of destination image, attractions, and lifestyle positions Uttar Pradesh to achieve its ambitious tourism targets while contributing to broader socio-economic objectives.

**2. Conceptual Framework and Contemporary Literature on Destination Drivers** Destination image is understood as the sum of perceptions, beliefs, and expectations tourists hold toward a place. It functions as a mental construct that influences destination choice, satisfaction, and post-visit behaviors. Gunn (1989) distinguished between organic images—formed through everyday non-tourism sources such as media, education, and personal networks—and induced images shaped by deliberate marketing efforts like advertisements and promotions. This duality highlights how organic familiarity with Uttar Pradesh's historical and spiritual heritage can be amplified through induced campaigns to create a cohesive, appealing brand.

Crompton (1978) further conceptualized destination image as the culmination of cognitive (beliefs), affective (feelings), and conative (behavioral intentions) components. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that a favorable image correlates positively with satisfaction and loyalty. In heritage and cultural tourism contexts, attractions—tangible elements such as monuments, festivals, and natural landscapes—serve as primary pull factors. Ritchie and Crouch (2000) emphasized that competitive destinations excel by aligning core resources (attractions) with supporting factors (infrastructure, accessibility) to deliver superior visitor experiences.

Lifestyle constructs capture psychological and consumption patterns that influence travel choices. Lawson et al. (1999) described lifestyle segmentation as a data-reduction strategy that categorizes tourists according to values, attitudes, and behaviors, revealing how preferences for road travel in hilly areas or high-service accommodations reflect broader consumption trends. In tourism and hospitality, lifestyle alignment enhances emotional connection and perceived value. Gonzalez and Bello (2002) illustrated this through Spanish visitor studies, identifying nodes of mood, needs, and viewpoints that shape destination selection.

Empirical studies in heritage and cultural tourism contexts demonstrate that attractions and lifestyle alignment enhance satisfaction and word-of-mouth promotion. Yoon and Uysal (2005) developed a structural model showing that motivation and satisfaction directly influence destination loyalty, with image acting as a mediator. In developing-country settings, research on India reveals that cultural diversity, historical landmarks, and festivals strongly influence perceived appeal. D'Silva et al. (2008) found that outdoor activities, natural beauty, cultural aspects, and places of worship significantly shape tourists' impressions of India, with Uttar Pradesh benefiting from its concentration of such assets.

Within the Uttar Pradesh context, literature underscores the role of circuits in reinforcing image. The state's circuits integrate religious, historical, and artisanal elements, yet gaps persist in perceived infrastructure and hygiene. Prior works on Kerala (Edward, 2006) and national image (Chaudhary, 2000)

highlight that service-related attributes mediate the image-satisfaction link, but few studies isolate destination image, attractions, and lifestyle as a unified framework. Recent post-2020 research reinforces these relationships. Lohia and Sharma (2024) examined perceived service quality and satisfaction in Indian tourism, confirming that destination image mediates loyalty. Saxena et al. (2024) assessed e-service quality on the UP tourism website, linking digital image to overall perceptions. Puri (2020) explored sustainable tourism development and customer satisfaction, emphasizing lifestyle compatibility.

The present investigation builds upon such foundations by integrating these factors within the Uttar Pradesh context through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). EFA in the study extracted five constructs explaining 68.398 percent of variance, with high loadings on destination image items (DI1–DI8) reflecting historical pilgrimage, festivals, cultural attractiveness, and natural beauty. Attractions (infrastructure quality and safety) and lifestyle (road travel preferences and high-service accommodations) loaded strongly, confirming their salience. SEM results identified attractions as the strongest predictor of satisfaction (standardized weight 0.213), followed by lifestyle (0.081) and destination image (0.059), validating theoretical pathways. Logistic regression further linked overall satisfaction, income, occupation, and cuisine appreciation to revisit intentions.

This synthesis confirms that destination image, attractions, and lifestyle collectively drive satisfaction and loyalty. The review identifies a gap in state-specific empirical integration, which this study addresses by focusing on Uttar Pradesh's unique circuits and visitor profiles. By extending classic models with contemporary Indian evidence, the research provides nuanced insights for rebranding the state as a culturally immersive, lifestyle-aligned destination. Additional literature from 2024 emphasizes the sector's resilience post-pandemic, with studies showing a 14–15% growth in foreign exchange earnings and increased focus on eco-friendly attractions and lifestyle-aligned wellness tourism. Government reports from 2024 highlight successful PPP models in heritage attraction development, which have revitalized traditional sites while generating local income. Overall, the literature establishes destination image, attractions, and lifestyle as strategic levers for Uttar Pradesh's tourism transformation, providing a strong foundation for the empirical and policy analysis that follows.

**3. Research Design and Data Collection Approach** A descriptive conclusive research design was employed to provide detailed insights into tourist perceptions and test hypothesized relationships among destination image, attractions, lifestyle, satisfaction, and loyalty. This design is ideal for tourism studies requiring precise profiling and inference from primary data. Primary data originated from a structured online questionnaire administered through Google Forms, ensuring efficient distribution and real-time collection across diverse visitor groups. The instrument included sections on demographics, destination image (eight items covering historical pilgrimage, festivals, cultural attractiveness, natural beauty, security, and adventurous activities), attractions (infrastructure quality and safety), lifestyle (road travel preferences and high-service accommodations), and satisfaction measures. All perceptual items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), with clear instructions and pilot testing to enhance clarity and reduce bias.

Secondary data were sourced from government reports (Ministry of Tourism statistics, WTTC economic impact studies), RBI foreign exchange records, and academic literature on destination marketing. Sampling employed a non-probability convenience technique, targeting visitors at prominent sites within nine key cities—Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Varanasi, Mathura, Allahabad, Aligarh, Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Lucknow—spanning major tourism circuits. This approach facilitated access to a heterogeneous sample

of domestic and international tourists during varied travel seasons, yielding 151 valid responses after screening for completeness. Although convenience sampling limits strict generalizability, the sample size and distribution across circuits provided sufficient statistical power for the exploratory and confirmatory analyses undertaken.

Data encoding and cleaning were performed prior to analysis. SPSS version 20.0 handled descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, demographic profiling, and inferential tests including chi-square for improvement areas and reasons for not visiting. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal component analysis with varimax rotation identified underlying constructs, with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.834 and Bartlett's test of sphericity significant at  $p=0.000$  confirming factorability. Five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 explained 68.398 percent of variance, and all items loaded above 0.5 with no problematic cross-loadings. Communalities and anti-image correlations guided iterative item refinement.

Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were conducted in AMOS to validate the measurement model and test structural paths. Model fit was assessed using multiple indices:  $\chi^2/df = 1.972$  ( $<5$ ), CFI = 0.991 ( $>0.95$ ), GFI = 0.976 ( $>0.95$ ), NFI = 0.981 ( $>0.95$ ), AGFI = 0.969 ( $>0.80$ ), and RMSEA = 0.028 ( $<0.05$ ), indicating excellent fit. Composite reliability and average variance extracted exceeded recommended thresholds (CR  $>0.70$ , AVE  $>0.50$ ), confirming convergent and discriminant validity. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.795 to 0.968 across constructs. Logistic regression examined predictors of revisit intentions (coded as binary), with overall satisfaction, income, occupation, and cuisine emerging as significant. Ethical considerations included voluntary participation, informed consent, data anonymity, and confidentiality to encourage honest responses. The study spanned three years and six months, with logistical challenges in multi-city data collection addressed through targeted scheduling and researcher travel. Financial and collaboration constraints were managed by focusing on representative circuits, ensuring the methodology balances practicality with analytical rigor for robust insights into Uttar Pradesh tourism dynamics.

**4. Empirical Insights from Exploratory and Confirmatory Analyses** Respondent demographics show a predominance of unmarried (57.7 percent) and student or self-employed (65.4 percent combined) participants, with the 18-28 age cohort most represented at 40.5 percent. Gender distribution was 55 percent male and 45 percent female. Current status indicated students (33.4 percent), self-employed (32 percent), and employed (20.8 percent), reflecting a youthful, flexible traveler profile. Sources of awareness included prior knowledge (33.6 percent) and internet (29.5 percent), underscoring digital influence.

Destination image measures recorded consistently positive means: people pleased upon arrival (DI1: 3.75), adventurous activities (DI2: 3.74), historical pilgrimage (DI3: 3.72), festivals and folklore (DI4: 3.75), historical and cultural attractiveness (DI5: 3.76), interesting customs (DI6: 3.78), natural attractiveness (DI7: 3.78), and security (DI8: 4.08). Standard deviations ranged from 0.958 to 1.105, indicating moderate variability yet overall favorable perceptions. Attractions measures showed infrastructure quality (A1: 3.43) and safety for shopping/traveling (A2: 3.52). Lifestyle items registered high means: preference for road travel to hilly areas (L1: 4.07) and destination choice based on high hotel/resort services (L2: 4.09).

Exploratory factor analysis confirmed a five-factor solution with high loadings and KMO value of 0.834. The rotated component matrix grouped items cleanly: Factor 1 (destination image, eight items, loadings 0.733–0.912), Factor 2 (customer satisfaction, seven items, 0.638–0.813), Factor 3 (service quality, four items, 0.804–0.909—though secondary here), Factor 4 (attractions, two items, 0.909–0.912), and Factor 5 (lifestyle, two items, 0.923–0.927). Total variance explained reached 68.398 percent, with eigenvalues supporting retention.

Structural equation modeling produced excellent fit indices as noted earlier. Standardized regression weights showed attractions as the strongest predictor of satisfaction (0.213), lifestyle (0.081), and destination image (0.059). Path from destination image to service quality was also positive (0.061). Logistic regression on revisit intentions (Tables 5.22–5.26) highlighted overall satisfaction (Exp(B) up to 9.133), income, occupation, and variable 8 (cuisine) as significant contributors. Chi-square tests (Tables 5.20–5.21) revealed demographic influences on improvement areas: logistics and health/hygiene were prioritized, with age and gender differences (e.g., younger groups emphasizing logistics, females highlighting health).

Reasons for not visiting (Tables 5.16–5.19) included poor safety, expensive perception, and lack of scenic beauty as age- and gender-sensitive factors, though infrastructure and transport were less prominent. These interpretations align with the dataset's structure, revealing that destination image, attractions, and lifestyle are not uniform but vary systematically by demographics, offering precise insights for targeted interventions in Uttar Pradesh tourism.

**5. Strategic Analysis and Practical Implications for Loyalty** Destination image, attractions, and lifestyle emerged as salient drivers, with attractions demonstrating the highest standardized regression weight in predicting satisfaction (0.213). Destination image items consistently scored above 3.7, with security (DI8: 4.08) highest, reflecting strong positive perceptions of historical pilgrimage, festivals, cultural attractions, natural beauty, and adventurous activities. Attractions measures (infrastructure and safety) exceeded neutral benchmarks, while lifestyle preferences for road travel and high-service accommodations scored above 4.0, indicating alignment with visitor values.

The model accounted for substantial variance in loyalty intentions, particularly through cuisine appreciation and income levels. Logistic regression confirmed that overall satisfaction, combined with income brackets and occupation, significantly predicts revisit coded intentions (overall percentage correct up to 91.6 percent in final steps). Chi-square results illuminated demographic influences: younger visitors prioritized logistics, while gender differences showed females emphasizing health and hygiene. Reasons for non-visitation highlighted safety and cost perceptions varying by age, yet the sample's positive means suggest that current visitors view the destination favorably.

These patterns extend previous destination-image research by underscoring lifestyle compatibility and culinary distinctiveness as levers for differentiation in competitive tourism markets. Gunn's organic-induced framework and Crompton's multi-component model are empirically supported, as high loadings on cultural and natural items confirm image strength. Yoon and Uysal's loyalty model is validated through significant paths to satisfaction and revisit. In the Uttar Pradesh context, cuisine (variable 8) emerges as a unique selling proposition, aligning with rebranding recommendations as "Food Capital." Comparisons with Kerala studies (Edward, 2006) and national image research (Chaudhary, 2000) reveal that while

image is strong, attractions and lifestyle require targeted enhancement to close gaps in infrastructure and safety perceptions.

Recent 2020–2024 literature reinforces these findings. Lohia and Sharma (2024) confirm image and satisfaction drive purchase intentions in Indian tourism. Saxena et al. (2024) link e-service quality on the UP website to overall perceptions. Puri (2020) emphasizes sustainable alignment of lifestyle with satisfaction. Talukder (2024) and Luo (2024) highlight eco-tourism and theme-park service quality parallels. Olawuyi’s bibliometric review (2024) and Harmalkar (2024) underscore post-pandemic focus on hygiene and loyalty.

The discussion emphasizes practical implications: enhanced signage, ecotourism zoning, culinary festivals, and public-private partnerships can amplify strengths. Limitations include convenience sampling and cross-sectional design, suggesting future longitudinal or comparative studies. Overall, the results position Uttar Pradesh’s destination image, attractions, and lifestyle as powerful, interconnected drivers capable of fostering loyalty and economic growth when strategically leveraged.

**6. Synthesis, Recommendations, and Future Directions for Destination Loyalty** Destination image, attractions, and lifestyle collectively exert substantial influence on tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions in Uttar Pradesh. The empirical evidence from 151 respondents across multiple circuits demonstrates that attractions emerge as the dominant predictor, followed by lifestyle compatibility and destination image, with cuisine appreciation playing a pivotal role in loyalty. EFA and SEM results, explaining 68.398 percent variance and producing excellent model fit, provide robust validation of these relationships. Demographic patterns—youthful, unmarried, student/self-employed visitors—further highlight opportunities to tailor experiences to modern traveler preferences.

Strategic initiatives including culinary festivals, enhanced signage, ecotourism promotion, and public-private partnerships can transform these strengths into a compelling brand identity. Recommendations from the analysis advocate for wayside amenities every 50 km, heritage hotel development, tourism police deployment, power subsidies for monuments, and rationalized taxation to extend stays. Rebranding Uttar Pradesh as the nation’s “Food Capital” or “Food Paradise,” coupled with large-scale cuisine events, leverages cuisine’s predictive power for revisit intentions. Sustainable tourism criteria for accommodation and tour operators, monument conservation, forest preservation, and twin-city concepts with international partners (e.g., Thailand-Ayodhya) offer additional pathways.

The study contributes theoretically by integrating classic destination image models with lifestyle segmentation and empirically by offering Uttar Pradesh-specific insights absent in prior national or Kerala-focused works. Practically, it equips stakeholders with evidence-based levers to elevate satisfaction, boost foreign exchange (record \$10 billion in 2022-23), generate employment, and support rural development. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to track post-intervention changes, incorporate cultural distance moderators, or compare circuits quantitatively.

Ultimately, by prioritizing destination image enhancement, attraction development, and lifestyle alignment, Uttar Pradesh can realize its full potential as a premier, loyalty-inducing tourism destination. These efforts will ensure sustainable economic development, cultural preservation, and global competitiveness, transforming visitor satisfaction into enduring brand advocacy and national economic

resilience. The research thus serves as both academic contribution and actionable blueprint for stakeholders committed to elevating Uttar Pradesh tourism.

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