

Chapter 14

Experience Toward Smart Tour Guide Apps in Travelling: An Analysis of Users' Reviews on Audio Odigos and Trip My Way

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ABSTRACT

The integration of navigation systems and smart tour guide apps has gained popularity among travellers with the rapid development of the internet, mobile technology, and the wide acceptance of smartphones. The purpose of the study is twofold: (1) to assess the growth of smart tour guide apps in India and (2) to examine the tourists' experiences in using smart tour guide apps. To achieve the purpose of the study, a content analysis method was employed to analyse the users' reviews on the "Audio Odigos" and the "Trip My Way," which are very popular tour guide apps in India. The results reveal that smart tour guide apps are more preferred than the human tour guide. An app-based tour guide facilitates exceptional experiences for accurate and useful information on historical monument tours, city tours, and destination tours. Thus, the findings can be used to improve the existing apps and develop more sophisticated apps in the future that can ensure sustainable smart tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Technology is transforming the tourism industry and introducing new facilities for visitors. With the assistance of smart technology and smart tour guide applications (apps), tourists can enjoy their vaca-

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tion and have a better experience. The revolutionary positive impact of technology has been foresighted significantly in the travel and hospitality industries (Leung, 2020; Osei et al., 2020; Sigala & Gretzel, 2017). In the hospitality and tourism industry, tourists use new technologies and smartphone apps which mediate travel experiences (Dickinson et al., 2014). The invention and adoption of smart tour guides apps have been increasing gradually over the last few years. Tourist guide apps are handy for tourists who want to use a self-guided tour for a cultural heritage site during a walking tour (Kang et al., 2017). Mr. Iyer created the first smart travel guide app after being unable to locate a government-approved human guide during a visit to a cultural heritage site in 2014. He devised a solution to the issue, and the outcome was the “Pinakin App,” a Smart Travel Guide app for the Indian states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (Sarumathi, 2018). However, this is a paid app; a one-year subscription is available in 49 and 99 Indian Rs only. This is a very affordable rate offered by the app provider in April 2021. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, announced the Audio Guide facility App “Audio Odigos” for 12 sites in India, including iconic destinations, in October 2019 (Press Information Bureau, 2019). This app will be available at 100 locations in India soon. The Audio Odigos app helps tourists learn more about India’s cultural heritage places. It is accessible in seven different languages, both national and international. The app includes a summary, extensive history, and podcasts, all of which assist visitors to save time while on tour. According to Google Play, the app has excellent quality, with over 5000 users having downloaded it as of April 2021.

The adoption of smart tourism technology enriches the tourist experience at the destination (Gretzel et al., 2015). Informative, interactivity and personalisation are essential factors affecting tourist experience; intention to revisit the smart tourism destination depends on overall tourist experience and satisfaction (Jeong & Shin, 2020). The adoption of m-tourism in India is influenced by technology-specific, country-specific, and perceived effects (Vinodan & Meera, 2020). Concerning a statistical report of Internet users by Sundhya Keelery, India is the second-largest Internet user market after China, with 560 million Indian users (Sundhya, 2020). India is a developing country and the fastest-growing mobile internet market in the world. Tourists use new technology to find out route, tour planning, tickets or hotel booking, find out tour guide, city information, weather report information, online payment method and operate the various electrical devices in hotel by using a mobile phone.

Tourists use travel apps and websites to replace the traditional manual services, enhancing a sense of participation and saving labour costs (Pai et al., 2021). App-based mobile tour guide performance depends on the smartphone and performance of the app to attract travellers. App providers should focus on efforts required to enhance travel app performance, and travellers can use their app-based mobile tour guide more effectively and comprehensively to fulfil their information need by using the app (Lai, 2013). User experience has been performed by assessing the app’s quality and usability, its graphic unit interface, and user experience (Tarantino et al., 2019). self-efficacy indirectly influences the use of travel apps (Lu et al., 2015). Trust in smart technology and enjoyment of technology enrich tourist experience. However, some issues need to be studied in the tourist context (Gretzel et al., 2015). Travel app user experience needs to explore (Choi et al., 2018). App users’ experience is an important area for future research (Palos et al., 2020).

Decisions regarding acceptance or rejection of technology have remained an open question in the last few decades (Marangunić & Granić, 2015). Not much research was done on technology acceptance with travel app quality and features, but less research on tourist’s point of view. To fulfil the research gap, research questions were prepared, what are the user’s expectations from the smart guide app, and which natural exclamation words do users use to share their experience? This research examines the

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