

Chapter 11

A Comprehensive Systematic Literature Review About Smartness in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

With the rapidly developing technology, the tourism experience has started to enrich and innovative/ personalized services and competitive advantage in tourism have started to gain importance. Smartness in tourism refers to tourism activities supported by technology. This study aims to classify the current literature on the subject of smartness in tourism. First of all, a qualitative research was carried out by explaining the concepts of smart tourism and smart tourism destination in the literature. Within the scope of the research, a qualitative research was conducted using systematic literature review method. In the research, 264 academic publications related to smartness in tourism were analyzed in terms of the destinations where they were applied, the scope of the journals they were published, the language of the publication, the methods and approaches, and suggestions were made for further studies.

INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of smartphones, numerous apps and other mobile devices, most notably in recent times, points to an unprecedented connection and an era in which the internet is accessible from anywhere (Gretzel et al., 2015a: p.182). The rapid advancement of technology, this significant increase in technology use, rising population density and consumption, pose a threat to cities and especially the tourism sector where the resource consumption is very intense, the environment and the people living in this environment. Increasing population density causes infrastructure insufficiency, blockage of transportation system, environmental pollution, lack of housing, reduction of agricultural areas, water

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pollution, increase of carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and unemployment. On the other hand, there are problems brought by technology. The fact that the information is easily accessible also leads to abuse of this information, and dependence on technology restricts social shares and relationships. The tourism sector, however, is a sector where consumption is very intense and may cause some negativities due to the environmental damage in the construction of physical elements. With these growing problems, the need for researching new methods has emerged in order to obtain competitive advantage by producing solutions for these problems and the increasing demand of cities and tourism destinations. These developments bring on the agenda the concept of “smart”, which refers to sustainability and technology.

The word smart was first recorded in 1968 as “mental, intelligence”. When the concept was referred to as adjective, it was declared in 1972 as “acting smartly guided” (www.etymonline.com). According to Jasrotia and Gangotia (2018), smartness makes it easy to shape products, actions, processes and services in real time by uniting different stakeholders at the same time to optimize collective performance and competitiveness and create solutions and value for everyone. In the context of markets / economies, smartness refers to new forms of cooperation and technologies that support value creation, leading to innovation, entrepreneurship and competitiveness (Gretzel et al., 2015a: p.179). Based on these definitions, issues such as providing the fastest and easiest access to services for the well-being of all stakeholders and the society at these points where technology and consumption have come, creating a common experience involving all stakeholders, minimizing resource consumption and optimizing competitiveness open the way for smartness.

The smart concept required to integrate systems and processes to find solutions can be extended from micro-level goods and services to macro-level cities and nations (Khan et al., 2017: p.1). The concept of “smart city” emerges due to the complexity and management difficulties of the authorities in dealing with the rapid growth of the city population (Cacho et al., 2016: p.817). The term “smart” has been added to cities to define “efforts to use technology in an innovative way to achieve resource optimization, effective and fair governance, sustainability and quality of life (Gretzel et al., 2015a: p.179). In recent years, this concept and the concept of “smart tourism destination” (STD) arising from this concept continue to be increasingly popular in scientific literature and country politics. In order to understand these concepts, it is very important to reveal what is their strategic importance and reasons in planning tourism destinations with cities.

The main issue underlying the importance of these concepts is the need to make cities more efficient through innovative technologies (ICT) that can support the management, monitoring and functioning of cities in terms of better urban quality of service, reduction of environmental impacts and control of energy consumption (La Rocca, 2014: pp.272-273). In terms of tourism destination, in line with the development of the era, it is the integration of personalization (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2015: p.381) into the said destination through ICT, which is the way to meet the demands of personalized goods and services in order to increase the quality of life of the tourists and improve their tourism experiences (Lamsfus et al., 2013: p.16).

Bringing smartness to tourism destinations means dynamically connecting their stakeholders through a technological platform where they can exchange real-time information about tourism activities (Buonincontri and Micera, 2016: p.288). When the literature is analyzed, it is understood that the concept of smart tourism destination is actually based on smart cities. For example; La Rocca (2014) states that while there are some difficulties in data sharing to manage the tourism phenomenon in urban areas, the smart city phenomenon promotes the smart tourism destination, while Cacho et al. (2016) states that the concept of smart tourism destination arises from the development of smart cities.

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