

Chapter 7

Smart Tourism Destinations: A Literature Review on Applications in Turkey's Touristic Destinations

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ABSTRACT

Tourism businesses and touristic destinations that want to reach a highly competitive position in the world should fulfill the required infrastructure investments and acquire a service concept that is consistent with the smart tourism strategy in order to turn into smart tourism. In order to compete with rival destinations, it has become a prerequisite for Turkey's world-famous destinations such as Istanbul, Antalya, Izmir, and Cappadocia to embrace digital transformation and smart tourism concepts. Accordingly, the concepts of smart tourism, smart city, and smart tourism destinations will be explained, and smart tourism applications in Turkey's touristic destinations will be explored in this chapter within the framework of current academic studies. It is aimed to ascertain how well these specified destinations adhere to the concept of smart tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Destinations should constantly adapt and enhance their touristic goods and services to today's conditions in order to deliver a great experience to its tourists in the tourism sector, where competition is becoming increasingly fierce. On the other hand, technology can be argued to have a substantial impact on the tourism experience. As a result, encouraging the use of technology in tourism will hasten the evolution of the tourism experience (Liberato et al., 2018, p. 19). Service innovation, strategy, management, marketing, and competitiveness are all under tremendous stress in today's smart settings, forcing industry structures, processes, and practices to alter and transform (Buhalis, 2020, p. 270). The tourism industry is one of the sectors under pressure from smart environments' mandated change and transformation. The concept and application of smart tourism arose from the need to adapt the tourism industry to this change and transformation. The concept of smart tourism is one of the tourism-based concepts and practices used for making tourism activities much more effective, making cities and destinations smart, and

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increasing tourist satisfaction, and has emerged with the need to ensure the adaptation and integration of internet and mobile technologies, which are among the technological developments of today, to tourism activities. In the tourism industry, smart tourism is mostly used for the tourism businesses, cities, and touristic destinations. The adaptation of touristic destinations to information technologies is significantly more challenging than that of tourism businesses due to the complex structure of touristic destinations, which is one of the most fundamental parts of the tourism system. However, in order to remain up with the fierce competition in the market, many touristic locations have recognized the need to turning into smart tourism destinations and have begun to take steps to do so, albeit slowly.

In terms of operational and economic elements, the tourism industry is one of the industries where information technologies are heavily exploited. As a result, it is no surprise that the concept of smart tourism destinations is swiftly gaining traction in the tourism sector. It is feasible to argue that smart tourism destination apps are crucial for destinations where one attraction is clearly dominant or where there are many attractions and where linking and marketing activities between these attractions are arduous (Koo et al., 2016).

Within the context of existing academic study on these destinations, the potential of Istanbul, Ankara, Antalya, and other popular or unpopular destinations in Turkey to be smart touristic destinations and their smart tourism applications will be studied in this chapter. Existing smart tourism applications in these destinations will be assessed for their level of success and flaws. Taking into account the diverse implementations of smart tourism destinations around the world, recommendations for popular and less popular tourist attractions in Turkey that have the potential to become smart tourism destinations will be made.

BACKGROUND

Smart Tourism Concept

It is vital to be smart to keep alive in the tourism sector especially in today's environment. From the creation of information to its dissemination, it is critical to be as smart as possible. Smartness enables stakeholders with disparate interests to collaborate to improve overall performance and competitiveness, as well as develop solutions and value for all. As a result, it enables real-time shaping of products, actions, processes, and services. Smartness is frequently associated with speed or the ability to produce swift outcomes. As a consequence, researchers have been working on the topic in order for smartness to find a place in tourism sector applications (Jasrotia & Gangotia, 2018, p. 48). The word smart is often brought as a prefix to technological terms to denote intelligence and/or connectivity, as is expressed in a smart phone or smart card (Gretzel et al., 2015c, p. 559). It can be said that the effectiveness of technological and other tools on tourism activities is tried to be emphasized with the title of smart used in the concept of smart tourism.

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