


Chapter 14

Exploring the Role of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality in Digital Marketing for Developing Cultural–Educational Tourism in India

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ABSTRACT

Since technology is rapidly growing, new opportunities are emerging for enhancing cultural and educational tourism. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are some examples of immersive technologies that have the potential to revolutionize tourists' experiences with cultural heritage, especially in terms of more

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interaction and personalization. As India is a country rich in history, culture, and diversity, the introduction of AR and VR into tourism will provide an opportunity to preserve and promote extensive cultural heritage. This chapter investigates how cultural-educational tourism in India can incorporate AR and VR technologies. In this light, the chapter will start by examining AR and VR through an overview, including definitions and key concepts, and following their global applications. The chapter then delves into the benefits and challenges accruing to the implication of these technologies within the tourism sector; especially on how it will go on to help further the cultural-educational experiences of tourists in India.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of technology, integrated with tourism, has opened the doors for several transformative experiences in which the boundaries between reality and imagination are becoming indistinct. While seeking more deep and engaging encounters, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) have become instrumental tools that are now at the forefront of reimagining cultural and educational tourism. These technologies open new and unprecedented avenues for the exploration, preservation, and presentation of cultural heritage, especially in a country like India, where history and culture are woven into every thread of everyday life (Ghorpade & Pandey, 2023). This technological integration is not only reshaping the visitor experience but also providing significant practical managerial insights. For instance, AR and VR can be utilized by tourism managers to create more engaging marketing campaigns, attract a larger audience, and tailor experiences to individual preferences, thus enhancing overall visitor satisfaction and boosting revenue (Dimitrios Buhalis, Daniel Leung, Michael Lin, 2023).

AR and VR applications in tourism are closely linked with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explores how perceived usefulness and ease of use influence user acceptance and engagement with new technologies. In the context of tourism, AR and VR's immersive qualities can be analyzed through the TAM framework to understand how these technologies contribute to creating memorable and engaging tourism experiences. For example, AR provides additional information about historical sites, artifacts, and cultural landmarks via smartphones or AR glasses, which users find useful and easy to access, enhancing their overall experience. Similarly, VR's ability to create fully immersive digital realms that replicate actual or fantastical environments, such as historical epochs or cultural celebrations, aligns with TAM's emphasis on perceived ease of use and usefulness, ultimately shaping tourists' attitudes and intentions (Weng Marc Lim, K. Mohamed Jasim, Madhumita Das, 2024).

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