

Chapter 11

From Tourism Systems To Smart Inclusive Tourism Ecosystems

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this chapter is to investigate the intricate complexities of smart tourism ecosystems from the perspective of complex adaptive systems. By reviewing the tourism literature, this chapter will examine the evolution of theoretical concepts of tourism systems redefining traditional notions, emphasising non-linear frameworks, adaptability, and inclusivity. In addition, this chapter seeks to contribute to the emerging discourse of smart tourism analytics. It will discuss how smart tourism and partnership-based knowledge sharing contribute to data-driven decision-making and innovation in smart tourism strategic planning.

INTRODUCTION

Today's smart tourism technologies have led to significant changes in the components and its relationships within smart tourism destinations. With the progress of technology, smart tourism destinations have become more intricate, incorporating a greater number of resources, stakeholders, and feedback mechanisms to enhance their development. Consequently, smart tourism destinations are dynamic, adapting to technology, stakeholder needs, and market conditions. In this view, the emergence of smart tourism has disrupted the traditional static and linear tourism systems models associated with General Systems Theory. While they provide valuable insights into the systemic nature of tourism, fall short in capturing the complexity system behavior of smart tourism destinations.

Complexity in smart tourism destinations is a leading cause of the intricate network of relationships that define the field through the lens of smart tourism technology and system theories. The emergence of smart tourism represents a seismic shift not only in how tourists interact, but also in the development of smart tourism destinations. The implication of smart tourism destinations requires collaboration and coordination among multiple actors, including government bodies, tourism organizations, technology

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providers, local communities, and tourists themselves. However, these rapid changes are having a serious effect on the traditional tourism systems models to more complex and integrative approaches. Consequently, complexity is one of the most frequently stated problems unpacking the core elements of smart tourism ecosystems.

It is now well established from a variety of studies that apply the term ecosystem to smart tourism destinations. A wide range of technologies capitalize on integrating Information Communication Technology ICT solutions across the smart tourism destination forming an ecosystem. Smart tourism destinations has subscribed to the belief that fostering enhanced connectivity and smarter management of resources. Moreover, recent developments in smart tourism have heightened the need for investment not just technological but also cultural, pushing for a more inclusive and participatory approach to smart tourism destination development.

A new approach to understand the smart tourism destination ecosystem, based on the biological characteristics, integrating the Complex Adaptive Systems Theory (CAS) into smart tourism destinations has resulted in a major change. CAS theory recognizes that tourism systems are not simply collections of static and interconnected components, but are dynamic entities that continuously adapt and evolve. One of the main challenges faced by the traditional tourism system theory is how tourism entities interact within a complex network, adapt to changes, and develop over the time.

By applying CAS theory to smart tourism destinations ecosystems, new models of tourism systems can gain insights into the complex and dynamic nature of smart tourism destinations, leading to a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the multifaceted nature of smart tourism destination. This approach is highly facilitate in understanding how the smart tourism ecosystem reacts to both internal and external influences. Additionally, it offers a deeper insight into internal system dynamics, including feedback loops and new behaviors that can lead to unexpected changes in the smart tourism ecosystem. Along with this growth in the complexity of the smart tourism ecosystem, there is increasing concern over the exploration of the evolving landscape of smart tourism destinations.

Evolution of Tourism System Theory

Cuervo (1967) introduced the concept of tourism as a system, which paved the way for further research and analysis by subsequent scholars. Gunn (1972) expanded on Cuervo's work by examining the interrelationships between various components of the tourism system, such as tourists, destinations, and the tourism industry. Leiper (1979) focused on the spatial aspects of the tourism system, studying the flow of tourists and information between generating region and tourism destination. Murphy (1985) explored the economic and social impacts of tourism, while Mathieson and Wall (1982) delved into the planning and development of tourist destinations. Each scholar's unique perspective contributed to a comprehensive understanding of tourism as a system.

Cuervo (1967) marked the milestone in the study of tourism as a system. He defined tourism as a network of relationships among business and information sources. By integrating the theories of human movement communication, Cuervo aimed to enhance the understanding of the interrelationship and communication between the tourism components. Despite Cuervo's foundational contribution, his model has been criticized for excluding the host community from the tourism system. However, this oversight emphasizes the necessity for a more comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders diversity. It, therefore, set the stage for further exploration into the dynamics of tourism involved in the tourism system.

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