

Chapter 19

Smart Tourism: An Analytical Journey Through Bibliometric Insights

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ABSTRACT

Smart tourism encapsulates the integration of technology and innovative solutions to enhance the overall travel experience for tourists and to improve the efficiency and sustainability of tourism destinations. Smart tourism represents a paradigm shift in the travel industry, leveraging artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics, augmented reality, virtual reality, mobile applications, and cloud computing to improve the overall travel experience, foster sustainability, and drive economic growth. Interpretation of scholarly landscape of smart tourism offers valuable insights into research activity, trends, impact, and knowledge structure. The current study is based on the data extracted from Scopus Database (N=756) to understand various bibliometric patterns. The findings such as trends in publication output over time, geographical distribution of research, most cited authors and articles, and emerging themes or keywords have been discussed. Future directions in the field of smart tourism have been discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Tourist experiences are now leveraged with technology innovation and smart tourism applications. These innovations are benefitting all stakeholders. Smart tourism involves the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile apps (Rubporndee & Lappanitchyakul, 2021), data analytics (Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2017), artificial intelligence (Ferràs et al., 2019), Internet of Things (W. Wang et al., 2020), and smart devices (Gretzel, Sigala, et al., 2015) to optimize various aspects of the industry. Tourism plays a pivotal role in driving economic development, fostering cultural exchange,

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-3715-8.ch019

and promoting global connectivity. Recently, the landscape of tourism has seen a major change fuelled by information and communication technologies advancements (Li et al., 2017), coining the term of smart tourism. Smart tourism has introduced a paradigm shift in how tourist areas are managed (Boes et al., 2016), experiences are curated (J. Wang et al., 2020), and travelers interact with their surroundings (Casado-Aranda et al., 2021). This introduction provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution, significance, and key dimensions of smart tourism, setting the stage for an analytical journey through bibliometric insights into this dynamic field.

The emergence of smart tourism can be traced back to the convergence of several transformative trends reshaping the tourism industry (Gretzel, Sigala, et al., 2015). The introduction of smart devices has motivated travellers to access large amount of information, communication, and digital services while on the move (Buhalis, 2020). This ubiquitous connectivity has not only revolutionized the way tourists plan and experience their trips but has also enabled destination managers to engage with visitors in real-time, offering personalized recommendations, and enhancing overall satisfaction (Shin et al., 2023).

The data generated by the tourists, destinations and intermediaries has started offering the insights of consumer preferences, market trends, and destination preferences (Zhong et al., 2020). With the use of such big data, tourism stakeholders can anticipate demand patterns, optimize resource allocation, and tailor marketing efforts for targeting particular market segments more effectively (Hu & Li, 2023a).

The rise of the sharing economy has disrupted traditional tourism practices, giving rise to innovative business models such as peer-to-peer accommodation, ridesharing, and experience-sharing platforms (Kuhzady et al., 2021). These platforms facilitate direct interaction between travelers and local hosts, fostering authentic and immersive experiences while also enabling travelers to access a wider range of accommodation options at competitive prices.

Conceptualizing Smart Tourism

While the term “smart tourism” lacks a universally agreed-upon definition, it encompasses a broad array of technological innovations, strategies, and practices aimed at enhancing the efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness of tourism (Chuang, 2023; Ferràs et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2023). At its core, smart tourism is characterized by the integration of ICTs, data analytics, and user-centric approaches to create seamless and personalized travel experiences (Abdelmoaty & Soliman, 2020; Ferràs et al., 2020).

From a conceptual standpoint, smart tourism can be understood as a multifaceted phenomenon that transcends traditional boundaries between physical and digital spaces. It encompasses various dimensions, including smart destination management, smart tourism experiences, smart mobility solutions, and smart marketing strategies, all aimed at optimizing the overall tourism ecosystem (Anand et al., 2023; Chuang, 2023; Ferràs et al., 2020).

Key Dimensions of Smart Tourism

One of the key dimensions within the concept of smart tourism is the notion of destination management, which entails the strategic planning, development, and governance of tourism destinations (Kachniewska, 2020). Smart destination management involves leveraging technology to enhance destination competitiveness, improve visitor experiences (Moreno-Melgarejo et al., 2019), and foster sustainable development (Duvnjak et al., 2020). Another dimension includes the experiences associated with smart tourism. Smart tourism seeks to create immersive and memorable experiences for travelers by leveraging technology to

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