

Implicature of Smart Tourism in Enhancing the Reputation of Tourism Destinations

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Abstract : *Tourism is a significant economic factor at the global level, making direct contributions to GDP, employment, and cultural exchange. The development of smart tourism, where information and communication technology (ICT) is integrated with mainstream tourism activities, has transformed the competitive landscape of destinations, enhanced the visitor experience, and fostered a positive reputation. While smart tourism presents opportunities, it also poses threats, primarily in terms of infrastructural preparedness, digital divides, and low community awareness of utilizing technology to drive tourism development. The research will explore the implications of adopting smart tourism on enhancing the reputation of destinations and elaborate on the primary challenges of merging digital innovations with traditional practices. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed through a systematic review and analysis of the literature, including academic journals, books, reports, and relevant online sources. The findings are that smart tourism can play a greater role in enhancing destination image through easier access, convenience, and personalization by ICT, geographic information systems (GIS), and big data. The technologies also promote sustainability by tracking the environmental impacts and enhancing visitors' awareness of local cultural protection and nature conservation. Infrastructure and human capacity limitations, as well as digital divides, remain the most significant obstacles that hinder the efficacy of smart tourism efforts. Multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving local society, the private sector, and the state, is emphasized in the research to facilitate the effective integration of technology in tourism. Smart tourism is therefore ultimately both a tool of global competitiveness strategy and a path toward sustainable, technology-based destination management.*

Keywords : *Implicature; Smart Tourism; Reputation; Tourism Destination*

Abstrak : *Pariwisata memegang peran penting dalam perekonomian global, memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap PDB, lapangan kerja, dan pertukaran budaya. Munculnya konsep pariwisata cerdas (smart tourism) yang mengintegrasikan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi (TIK) dengan praktik pariwisata tradisional telah mengubah cara destinasi dikelola untuk meningkatkan daya saing, memperkuat pengalaman wisatawan, serta membangun reputasi destinasi. Namun, meskipun pariwisata cerdas menawarkan peluang strategis, terdapat pula tantangan nyata, khususnya*

terkait kesiapan infrastruktur, kesenjangan digital, dan rendahnya kesadaran masyarakat mengenai peran teknologi dalam pengembangan pariwisata. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implikasi implementasi pariwisata cerdas terhadap peningkatan reputasi destinasi serta mengidentifikasi tantangan utama dalam mengintegrasikan inovasi digital dengan praktik konvensional. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif melalui telaah sistematis terhadap literatur, termasuk jurnal akademik, buku, laporan resmi, dan sumber daring relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pariwisata cerdas dapat memperkuat reputasi destinasi melalui peningkatan aksesibilitas, kenyamanan, dan personalisasi layanan dengan dukungan TIK, sistem informasi geografis (GIS), dan big data. Teknologi juga mendukung keberlanjutan melalui pemantauan dampak lingkungan serta peningkatan kesadaran wisatawan terhadap pelestarian budaya dan alam. Namun, keterbatasan infrastruktur dan kapasitas sumber daya manusia, ditambah kesenjangan digital, tetap menjadi hambatan utama yang mengurangi efektivitas implementasi. Studi ini menegaskan pentingnya kolaborasi multipihak pemerintah, sektor swasta, dan masyarakat local dalam memastikan integrasi teknologi berjalan optimal. Pada akhirnya, pariwisata cerdas dapat dilihat sebagai instrumen strategis untuk meningkatkan daya saing global sekaligus mewujudkan pengelolaan destinasi berbasis teknologi yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci : Implikasi; Pariwisata Cerdas; Reputasi; Destinasi Pariwisata

INTRODUCTION

Tourism ranks among the most prominent sectors in the world economy. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism accounted for 10.4% of global GDP and 10.5% of employment in 2019, as evident in the enormous contribution made by the industry to the global economy (Council, 2023; Group, 2022). The figures show that the growth of the tourism industry not only generates huge revenues for host countries but also provides employment opportunities, induces infrastructure development, and enhances intercultural awareness.

Smart tourism is a relatively new phenomenon in the tourism sector that has emerged over the last few years. Smart tourism combines traditional tourism practice with information and communication technology (ICT) to improve tourist experience, operational efficiency, and conservation of the environment (Dewi, Deviv, and Munir 2023). For example, the development of applications such as Visiting Jogja (Jalaluddin and Permatasari 2021) offers convenience in searching for tourist attractions in a particular area, thereby is expected to increase the number of visiting tourists (Sumarno and Subani 2020). This is consistent with the findings of Prasetyo, H. & Rifai, (2022) today's tourists need travel application facilities to facilitate their journeys and determine tourism activities from the information provided, so they can access it when needed. This condition further clarifies that information technology is considered inseparable from the advancement of tourism in various parts of the world (Rusdi 2019).

The concept of Smart Tourism is an application of the Smart City concept in the tourism sector through tourism platforms (Trinanda et al., 2020; Rahmat et al., 2021). In the context of smart tourism, the development of a tourism destination image relies not only on traditional aspects such as local community hospitality and service quality, but also on the utilisation of technology to enhance information accessibility, interaction between tourists and hosts, and unique tourism

experiences. There is empirical support that new technology has a beneficial correlation with tourism experiences, and the most impactful qualities are informativeness and interactivity (Sustacha, Baños-Pino, and Del Valle 2023). In addition to the direct economic benefits for tourists, smart tourism policies can also drive local economic growth and environmental sustainability. Through the use of technology to support business efficiency, tourist destinations can avoid adverse environmental effects as well as protect natural resources (Daulay et al. 2022). Tourism promotion through technology adoption may also enhance the destinations' competitiveness, attract more tourists, and stimulate local economic growth through additional tourist expenditures (Jaelani and Hanim 2021). Smart tourism can also improve destination promotion through integrating aspects of informativeness, accessibility, interactivity, and personalisation for Muslim travelers (Nisa 2022).

Smart tourism is a policy that combines digital technology and conventional tourism activities to enhance the efficiency, quality, and competitiveness of tourist destinations. Smart tourism, according to (Buhalis and Amaranggana 2015) entails the application of digital technology and information systems to improve efficiency, excellence, competitiveness, and the tourist experience at tourist destinations, destination management, and travel businesses. This concept encompasses several aspects, including tourism promotion, destination management, visitor experience, and tourism sustainability. Use of technology in smart tourism has far-reaching implications for the tourist process (Xiang and Gretzel 2010) assert that technology, including mobile apps, booking sites, and social media, has significantly changed how tourists search for information, plan their trips, and interact with tourist destinations.

With continuous study by (Purba and Irwansyah 2022) User Generated Content (UGC) has also been viewed as a positive development, with a significant impact on the formation of destination image and affecting tourist loyalty through social media, interactive visual content, and powerful captions that engage the audience. It assists destinations in offering more personalised and interactive services, improving tourist satisfaction, and reinforcing the destination's image. The use of technology in creating a destination image cannot be disregarded. Technology is a core component and support for stakeholders in the tourism sector to promote tourist products (Irawan 2023). Technologies like mobile tourist applications, online booking platforms, and artificial intelligence technology can be used to deliver helpful information and customise travel experiences and assist tourists in communicating with the locals (Firdausi & Hardiana, 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2022). By using these technologies effectively, tourist destinations can create a more tourist-oriented environment and increase the satisfaction of travelers.

Table 1. Smart tourism vs e-tourism

	e-Tourism	Smart Tourism
Sphere	digital	bridging digital & physical
Core technology	websites	sensors & smartphones
Travel phase	pre- & post-travel	during trip
Lifblood	information	big data
Paradigm	interactivity	technology-mediated co-creation
Structure	value chain/intermediaries	ecosystem

Exchange	B2B, B2C, C2C	public-private-consumer collaboration
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Source: (Gretzel et al. 2015)

With the emerging paradigm of tourism, differences between e-Tourism and Smart Tourism become more relevant. E-Tourism largely resides in the virtual space with websites as its technology core and pre- and post-trip. It flourishes on information sharing and is constructed on a value chain structure with intermediaries, facilitating transactions between companies (B2B), companies and people (B2C), and people to each other (C2C). Smart Tourism, by contrast, is an interface between the virtual and real world that is dependent heavily on smartphones and sensors. It is designed to enhance the travel experience during the trip itself. Smart Tourism's blood corpuscle is big data, and it sustains a technology-enabled co-creation paradigm. The paradigm welcomes a co-operative setting that surpasses conventional value chains, making public-private-consumer partnership enable more integrated and interactive holiday experiences (Gretzel et al. 2015).

In addition, the image of a destination is not only created through direct interaction between tourists and residents, but also through tourists' perceptions and experiences communicated via the media. In social media times, tourist views and online commentary significantly help in creating the image of a destination (Purba and Irwansyah 2022). Thus, this idea needs to be embraced by hoteliers in the context of online hotel room booking websites like Traveloka, Agoda, Trivago, Airbnb, Booking.com, Tripadvisor, RedDoorz, and many more in order to unlock the potential behind smart tourism (Hananto 2023). A smart tourism strategy must consider digital reputation management as a key element in strengthening the image of tourism destinations. Based on the background presented, this research is formulated through two main questions: what are the implications of implementing smart tourism for enhancing the reputation of tourism destinations, and what challenges destinations face in integrating smart technology with traditional tourism practices to strengthen destination image. This research focuses on understanding the contribution of smart technology not only as an instrument for enhancing the tourist experience, but also as a strategy for building and strengthening destination reputation in the digital era.

Originality in this research comes from an attempt to categorically determine the consequences of adopting smart tourism technology on destination reputation. While there have been some earlier studies documenting the application of technology in the tourism industry, direct studies connecting smart tourism technology with destination reputation are few. This study emphasises the contribution of factors such as informativeness, interactivity, and personalisation to constructing a destination image, especially in the context of digital and social media, which have been comparatively seldom discussed in a holistic manner in the existing literature. The literature gap that this study seeks to address is the reality that existing literature primarily operates at operational levels, focusing on improving tourists' experiences, without directly defining the dimensions of destination reputation constructed through digital technology and social media. This way, this study not only contributes to theoretical thinking on the use of smart technology in the tourism industry but also to the identification of its implementation problems, which discourage the development of a destination's world image.

Overall, this study promises to make a meaningful contribution to designing digital reputation management practices and technology-driven tourism destination management practices. Findings will illuminate new ways in which smart tourism can be leveraged to its most whole benefit, not only for tourists but also as a strategic tool in raising destination competitiveness in an era of heightened global competition and digitalisation.

METHODOLOGY

This research technique utilises qualitative descriptive data analysis methods outlined by (Wardiyanta 2017). It was used since it offers a detailed and comprehensive understanding of data collected from the field and literature materials. The analysis process was conducted through a meticulous review of diverse references, including scientific journals, books, official publications, academic articles, newspapers, magazines, and relevant online resources. The collected data were then analyzed and interpreted logically, consistently, and structured, with arguments based on valid evidence. Each claim made in this article is supported by empirical and conceptual literature, thus strengthening the validity of the presented findings. Through meticulous analysis, this research enables readers to follow the logic effortlessly and supports a balanced understanding of the issues studied.

Besides, the use of the qualitative descriptive method is considered appropriate to identify the depth and richness of the phenomena being studied (Fadli, 2021; Abdussamad & Sik, 2021). Through their descriptive and rich accounts, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions, experiences, and expertise. Through this type of analysis, researchers can identify patterns, relationships, and dynamics that emerge within the data, yielding contextual and meaningful insights.

The choice of method is based on epistemological considerations and research objectives. Quantitative approaches, while capable of producing measurable numerical data, tend to be less effective in capturing qualitative dimensions such as the perceptions, experiences, and meanings inherent in the research subjects. Meanwhile, mixed methods, while offering a broad perspective, often require more resources, time, and a more complex research design. Therefore, qualitative descriptive research is considered the most appropriate choice because it aligns with research objectives that emphasise the exploration of meaning, contextual understanding, and in-depth interpretation of the phenomena under study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Challenges Destinations Face in Integrating Smart Technology with Traditional Tourism Practices

While the implementation of smart tourism offers numerous benefits, destinations face various challenges in embracing both technology and traditional tourism practices. Infrastructure readiness, both physical and digital, is one of the central challenges. The majority of tourist destinations, especially in the third world, lack essential infrastructure to support the implementation of smart technology. For instance, in some Indonesian tourist villages, foundational facilities like transportation, accommodation, and information infrastructure are lacking, which complicates the establishment of smart tourism (Sulistiowati et al. 2023).

For instance, while some Indonesian tourist villages have been willing to adopt the concept of smart tourism, poor infrastructure remains a significant obstacle. There are still some villages that lack high-speed and stable internet, as well as other supportive services that would facilitate the use of technology in tourism. This creates a negative tourist experience due to the introduction of new technology, which ultimately affects the destination's reputation.

Furthermore, the digital divide, or digital gap, between underdeveloped and technologically developed areas is also a core issue. Most of the tourist spots that are far from reach continue to grapple with technology that can support intelligent tourism. Not only does this limit the destination to be capable of attracting tourists, but it also the power to compete with technologically advanced destinations (Novianti and Wulung 2020).

Another concern is the issue of awareness and appreciation among local communities regarding the role technology plays in tourism development. Technology, as helpful as it is, needs the direct involvement of the local communities, especially in capacity building and empowerment. Most residents in some tourist destinations have yet to realise the potential of technology in enhancing the management and marketing of their destinations. Therefore, human resource development by giving technological training is necessary so that technology can be utilised to its full extent, so that tourism destinations can improve their image (Wibowo, Endroyono, and Pratomo 2019).

2. Collaboration between the Government, Private Sector, and Community in Smart Tourism Development

Conquering such challenges would require close synergy among the government, the private sector, and local societies. The government needs to provide support for smart tourism development policies, including the installation of proper digital infrastructure and citizen education programs. The private sector, especially technology firms, meanwhile, has an important role to offer in providing technological solutions that tourist sites need, such as creating information technology-based programs that aid tourists in trip planning, or internet websites that allow destination managers to track and control tourist visits in real-time.

Additionally, local communities should be integrated into smart tourism development. They have to be taught about the advantages of technology and engaged in destination planning. Technology-facilitated community empowerment will speed up the embracement of cutting-edge technology in tourist destinations and optimise its usage to develop tourists' experience (Hakim, Hanif, and Prasetyo 2023).

3. Implications of Smart Tourism Implementation in Improving the Reputation of Tourism Destinations

With the rapid pace of technological progress, the tourism industry is no longer based solely on physical experiences and existing infrastructures, but also starts incorporating technology to maximise the quality of services and attract more tourists. In this regard, the application of smart tourism is a strategic step in maximising the reputation of tourist attractions. Intelligent tourism combines the application of digital technology, geospatial data, and vast data to create a more interactive, efficient, and customised tourism experience for tourists (Gretzel et al. 2015).

One of the greatest implications of technology implementation in smart tourism is the ease of access and convenience it provides to tourists. Information and communication technology (ICT) used in tourist destination management provides ease of access to relevant and timely information about the destination areas visited by tourists. For instance, an Android application created for Taka Bonerate National Park allows tourists to easily gain access to information about the destination directly through their own devices (Dewi et al. 2023). This creates a more enjoyable tourism experience that enhances the destination's image and reputation.

In addition to this, the application of geographic information systems (GIS) for the development of tourism destinations is increasingly important for achieving more effective and data-driven destination management. GIS has made effective contributions to decision-making for destination development and promotion. For instance, in the case of Gunung Nona, the application of GIS to develop spatial maps for tourist destinations enhances management and facilitates it for tourists to plan visits more conveniently (Jasman, Ridwan, and Guntara 2021). The more accurate and precise mapping enables tourist destination managers to guide tourists to visit sites more efficiently, which clearly has a positive impact on the destination's image.

Big data technology is also important in building the credibility of tourist destinations. Big data enables tourist destinations to tailor their services to meet the preferences of tourists. For

instance, through data analysis from social media and mobile apps, tourist destinations can better understand the behavior and preference of tourists. This enables them to provide more personalised and relevant experiences for every visitor. Big data use for smart tourism can improve destination promotion and create tourist loyalty, which will result in enhancing the destination's reputation (Vecchio et al. 2018).

Additionally, the use of technology in smart tourism facilitates sustainability in managing tourist destinations. For example, technologies employed to counterbalance the adverse environmental effects of tourism is that tourist destinations apply technology management systems for monitoring and regulating the volume of tourists to a destination, thereby avoiding crowding that adversely affects the environment. Additionally, the use of technology in tourism destination management will enhance tourists' sensitivity towards preserving culture and the environment. In line with this, smart tourism, as well as enhancing tourist experience, can also improve more responsible and sustainable tourist behavior (Gretzel et al. 2015).

CONCLUSION

Drawing from evidence and discussion, it is apparent that the use of smart technology in tourism not only creates strategic options to enhance competitiveness and destination image, but also brings real challenges in physical and virtual infrastructure readiness, provincial inequality in technology access, and low local community awareness and capability of using technology to manage and market destinations. These challenges are directly affecting the quality of tourist experience and may jeopardise the appeal of destinations, particularly in the wake of competition with destinations that are more technologically advanced. To accomplish this, synergistic coordination among multi-stakeholders must occur, where the government takes the lead in crafting effective regulations and digital infrastructure, the private sector takes the lead in innovation and adaptive technological solutions, and local populations, empowered through education and training, take an active role in adopting technology. This synergy would not only enable better management of smart tourism in the destination but also enhance the tourist experience through ICT, GIS, and big data analytics technology, thereby increasing accessibility, convenience, and customisation of services based on tourist preferences. In addition, technology use in tourism also supports sustainability by ensuring that environmental impacts remain within sustainable levels, while building awareness among visitors about the preservation of nature and native culture. Hence, the adoption of smart tourism can be termed as a strategic tool that not only enhances the international competitiveness and image of destinations, but also incorporates technology in conventional tourism operations in a sustainable way, with the observation that its achievement will continue to depend on infrastructural readiness, human capacity building, and continuous collaboration among the government, private sector, and community.

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