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Designing a smart tourism model with a hybrid approach

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most important economic and cultural sectors for any progressive society. Since tourism has become an economic force, the information and communication technologies related to it have developed and are currently becoming an important part of this industry. Smart tourism is a new tourism concept in which information and communication technologies are used to fully meet the needs of tourists and thus create essential value for them. The aim of the present study is to design a smart tourism model with a meta-composition approach. The present study, using the meta-composition method, evaluated 128 articles and sources in the field of smart tourism. During the stages, 34 sources and articles were consistent with the accepted criteria. As a result of combining the findings, 8 subcategories were extracted, including improving cost management in tourism, providing smart tourism services, smart cloud services, an online service system for tourists, quality of services and facilities, Internet of Things, recognizing customer needs in a smart way, and dynamic pricing. Finally, for the development of smart tourism in Iran, it is suggested to adopt a comprehensive perspective considering both micro and macro levels. At the macro level, more attention should be paid to raising the priority of smart tourism development in the long term, national development policies, paying more attention to planning, coordination and monitoring, and improving the infrastructure required for the development of smart tourism.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have been interested in the tourism sector since the emergence of computer reservation systems in the airline industry in the 1970s and the introduction of global distribution systems in the late 1980s. All traditional business functions (commerce, marketing, finance and accounting, human resource management, research and development, etc.) and tourism market players (airlines, hospitality, tour operators, travel agencies, etc.) have benefited from the new opportunities created by the introduction of information and communication technology tools in the tourism sector. A new set of information-based activities and tools have appeared on the market for choosing accommodation, transport, sightseeing tours, etc., which are definitely changing the rules of the game. Today, most tourism information is accessible via the Internet, and websites have evolved from pages presenting static information to complex environments in which tourists are directly involved in creating their own experience. Smart technologies have allowed travelers to become active designers, marketers, advertisers, promoters and distributors of the tourism experience through user-generated content, customer review platforms, social media, blogs, etc. (Buhalis, 2019).

Clearly, the process of change does not stop moving and every day we witness more and more innovations and the emergence of technology in different aspects of human life. Therefore, it is necessary to examine different aspects of the subject and, by emphasizing its advantages and correcting its disadvantages, benefit from this trend and not be left behind. Smart tourism is the area of study of this research, which is a very powerful area both in the tourism, and technological and smartization dimensions; and the need to explore it is clear (Perovenzano & Baggio, 2020).

Research Methodology

In this study, the meta-synthesis method has been used to present the smart tourism model. Meta-synthesis is a qualitative study and is a method in which qualitative research is combined and their similarities and differences are compared, and finally a new interpretation of their collection emerges.

Noblett and Heer introduce three main phases of selecting studies, combining translations, and presenting the synthesis for metasynthesis, and Rousseau and Sandusky introduce a seven-step method. In this study, the seven-step method with Rousseau and Sandusky has been used. The steps followed in this study are:

Step One: Formulating the research question: In the present study, the basic question "What is the smart tourism model like?" has been examined.

Second stage: Systematic review: The literature of the present study community includes all scientific research documents published between 2015 and 2024 in the field of smart tourism. Also, keywords related to the topic of tourism, smart tourism, smart tourism destination, smart city, smart tourism software, smart tourism models, smart tourism technology, etc. have been reviewed and searched in databases and search engines such as IranDoc, Normags, Mag Iran, Civilica, Science Direct, Google Scholars, Google Emerald, and Eric.

Third stage: Searching and selecting appropriate articles: In examining the subject under study, the scientific scope and scientific map of this field were first studied based on a systematic method.

In order to utilize reliable domestic and foreign sources, more than 128 articles were reviewed based on subject and title by searching in information sources such as Scopus, Elsevier, Google Scholar, etc., of which 46 documents were excluded by examining and separating documents based on the title focused on the subject because their titles and subjects were not in the field related to the subject of the present study. The remaining 82 scientific documents

were reviewed by their abstract in order to isolate studies that could provide the necessary analytical content by more detailed examination. While reviewing the abstracts of the studies, another 19 articles were also excluded from the review. Finally, by quickly studying the content and key themes of the articles, another 29 articles were rejected. At the end, 34 articles remained in the analysis and the results of their review formed the findings of the present study.

Fourth stage: Extraction of information from studies: At this stage, a detailed study of the selected studies begins; therefore, in order to answer the research question in order to develop a smart tourism model, the information extraction process was carried out and due to the qualitative nature of the data (text), open coding was used.

Step 5: Analysis and synthesis of qualitative findings: Sub-categories and central categories were used to analyze the data. Data coding begins with repeated reading of the text within lines and paragraphs, and finding a general understanding. Then, the texts are read word by word to extract the codes. Coding is done by writing the codes. Once the codes are identified and specified, the researcher forms a classification and places similar and related codes in a category that best describes it, and concepts are formed. In this step, after analyzing the findings and central coding, 8 factors related to smart tourism in terms of customer attraction were extracted, which are: improving cost management in tourism, providing smart tourism services, smart cloud services, internet service system for tourists, quality of services and facilities, Internet of Things, recognizing customer needs in a smart way, and dynamic pricing.

Step 6: Quality Control: In order to determine the reliability of the research data, the research peer review strategy is used.

Step 7: Presentation of Findings

In this study, the smart tourism model was extracted from the text of the selected studies in order to attract tourists and was considered as concepts. Their classification into similar groups also created categories that were finally combined into a comprehensive description of the research topic and formed the competency dimensions. In this way, the conceptual model of smart tourism was obtained, which is presented in Figure 1.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we seek to identify various dimensions and factors that can be effective in the field of tourism and related decision-making. Based on the findings, 8 factors related to smart tourism in terms of customer attraction were extracted, which include improving cost management in tourism, providing smart tourism services, smart cloud services, an online service system for tourists, quality of services and facilities, the Internet of Things, identifying customer needs in an intelligent way, and dynamic pricing. These factors can improve smart tourism and attract customers by using modern technologies. For example, by providing smart information services, traditional tourism services that only provide non-customized and impersonal information to tourists can be changed in general and much of the information can be personalized so that it specifically meets the needs of tourists. Also, the cloud service factor provides web browser-based access to a variety of technological tools including applications, software, and data. Smart destinations provide support for information management, analysis, and complexity in terms of automation and control, and facilitate tourist affairs. By using Internet services such as the Internet of Things, companies can provide better services to their customers and increase their revenue by creating a desirable travel experience, as well as increasing customer loyalty by improving customer satisfaction. Gajddusik (2018) and Savik and Pavlovic (2018) also reached results in line with the results of this research in their studies and emphasized the necessity of the Internet of Things and smart technologies in order to improve smart tourism.