

Future Trends for Smart Tourism Destinations: Case of Antalya

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1. Extended Abstract

Smart Tourism Destinations (STD) concept has taken serious attention as a result of the developments in Smart Cities. Technology connects all organizations, entities, activities, and elements. Tourism is a multidimensional service system covering different actors and organizations. When a tourism destination gets smarter, the tourists' needs and demands are expected to be fulfilled more efficiently to create a better tourist experience. This paper aims at examining the content of Future Trends for Smart Tourism Destinations considering Antalya as a case.

Introduction:

Today's world is remarkable with an incredibly rapid and revolutionary change in technology. Technology has been reshaping the operation and structure of many sectors and industries globally. The tourism industry is one of the first service industries to adapt and use information and communication technologies (ICT) for promoting its services (Sadr, 2013). However, tourism is not a clear-cut sector but an all-embracing and pervasive domain of service and industrial activities (Wahab and Cooper, 2001, p.5). Tourism services are mostly interconnected and include a wide range of inputs and outputs in tourism destinations.

Emerging technologies influence tourism destinations and cause new challenges arising from changes in both consumers and the environment. The use of technology in a destination can enrich tourist experiences and enhance destination competitiveness as well as enable new distribution channels and create a new business environment (Buhalis and Amaranggana 2014; Sadr, 2013). Technology provides interconnection of services as well as supplying information for planning, organizing and evaluating data. Therefore, technology has emerged as the driving and fundamental force for tourism destinations.

Aim:

This paper aims to propose future trends for Smart Tourism Destinations and focus on Antalya as a case. The study aims to make suggestions for a roadmap for Antalya given the present conditions and future trends.

Literature:

Tourism destinations have to recognize the kind of changes that occurred and proactively respond to the changes in order to be a smart tourism destination (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2014). Implementing technological tools within tourism destinations has become critical since the connected, better informed and engaged tourists is dynamically interacting with the destination (Boes, Buhalis, & Inversini, 2016). UNESCO and WTO have certainly indicated that countries need to respond to new tourists' demands and this response can be achieved by using innovative techniques offered by digitalization or new technology (Da Costa Liberato et al., 2018).

Lopez de Avila (2015) defines Smart Tourism Destination as an innovative tourist destination, built on an infrastructure of state-of-the-art technology guaranteeing the sustainable development of tourist areas, accessible to everyone, which facilitates the visitor's interaction with and integration into his or her surroundings, increasing the quality of the experience at the destination and improves residents' quality of life. The key aspect of smart destinations is the integration of ICTs into physical infrastructure (Gretzel, Sigala, et al., 2015).

Method:

The model of the study is a case study. The case study approach is regarded to be appropriate since it includes the analysis of reports, studies, news, articles and other text sensitive documentation and provides a comprehensive coverage of information.

Findings:

Findings of the study indicate that:

- Antalya has neither a tourism portal or a website. Belek, one of the districts of Antalya, has a website (www.visitbelek.com) which is the official booking website of the hotels registered under the Belek Tourism Investors Joint Venture (BETUYAP).
- The hotel enterprises, operating in Antalya, have their own social media account. However, it can be said that they cannot use the social media very effectively. The results of a study which was conducted with 148 five-star hotels' Facebook account demonstrated that the informing level of the hotels is at a moderate level and the hotels are effective in sharing their contact details. Results also showed that the sharing of video and audio for existing/potential guests in their own language is limited and inadequate (Cevik et al., 2016). There is no official social media account of the destination.
- The hotel enterprises' the usage level of e-mail is considerably low. The results of a study which examined 324 hotels' usage level of e-mail showed that 154 of replied to the e-mails sent in Turkish and 92 of replied to the e-mails sent in English (Karasakal and Dogan, 2017).
- Wi-Fi service is provided free of charge citywide of Antalya, except a few districts. 52 Wi-Fi hotspots were located at 8 different locations of the city such as Yavuz Özcan Park, Konyaaltı beach, and Sarısu. Thus, the secure internet access is afforded for tourists and locals at public spaces, museums and archeological sites, buses and bus stations. Additionally, Wi-Fi hotspots will be located at 38 locations (Antalya Metropolitan Municipality, 2017).
- The city information kiosks were established in 5 locations for informing visitors and locals. Moreover, 20 city information kiosks with air-conditioner will be

located in more tourism-oriented regions in different centers of the city (Antalya Metropolitan Municipality, 2017).

- MyAntalya, official mobile application of the city, was launched by Antalya Metropolitan Municipality at May 2012. The app serves in four languages, namely, Turkish, English, German and Russian. With the mobile application, local and foreign tourists can easily find the nearest need points of the city and can be informed about events, opportunities, and services. However, the app is out of date and it cannot be downloaded from Google Play and App Store. Nevertheless, there are several city guide apps about the destination but they are not for free.
- Antalyakart app, used in public transportation, was launched in February 2016. The app serves in two languages, Turkish and English. Locals and tourist can see the buses, approaching related stations, bus routes and times (Çelik and Topsakal, 2017).
- ICF Airport mobile app, the official app of Fraport TAV Antalya Airport, was launched in June 2012. The all flight information, duty-free shops, restaurants, parking information, CIP services, terminal maps can be accessed by the app (Çelik and Topsakal, 2017).

Results And Suggestions:

Becoming a smart tourism destination requires leadership, vision, patience, strategic management and continuous evaluation and change. Perceiving the smart tourism destination as an ecosystem is essential and a vision and a clear set of goals for innovation are key facilitators for developing smart tourism destinations as a collective whole (Boes et al, 2016, p.119).

To take full advantage of the current possibilities provided by smartness, destination managers have to integrate the entire range of smartness components and ensure interoperability and interconnectivity of both soft and hard smartness (Boes et al, 2016, p.120). Whilst the focus of smart cities is on its residents, smart tourism destinations need to emphasize ways to enhance the tourist experience, whilst simultaneously improving the quality of life for residents. The linkage between one tourism product and another at destination level is vital because of the nature of tourism industry which are combinations of multiple components served in several touch points that perceived by the customer prior, during and after their trip (Soteriades 2012).

Public-private partnership (PPP) is essential when running a Smart Tourism Destination initiative. It is recommended that destinations not only focusing on exploiting the use of new technology but also educate the citizens and visitors on how to best use this new technology. To survive, traditional tourism firms have to redefine their business model and the way they propose to create customer value (Gretzel et al. 2015, p.183). Smart Tourism Destinations should also perform smartness by implementing appropriate tourism applications within Smart Cities' components as defined by Cohen (2012).

Practical Implications :

The study includes suggestions for future considering Antalya to be a smart tourism destination. Some of these suggestions may be implemented by local and national authorities.

Originality:

The study is original by its concept and suggestions.

Keywords: *Smart tourism destination, smart city, future trends, Antalya*

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