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## DIGITAL TOURISM AS AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACTOR

## **Abstract**

Background. Digital tourism avows "travelers" to recreate all of the stories and emotions

of actual global inspections, with the small distinction that every epic voyage takes region in a virtual dimension. This is the crossover among tourism as we comprehend it – or have regarded it – and gaming. Because over time, the as soon as clean limitations among what is "actual" and what isn't were step by step eroded via way of means of improvements in technology. These tendencies have given upturn to a courageous new global – one this is free of the legal guidelines we're comparable and is described via way of means of regular possibilities. The thrill we get whilst we step off a aircraft or the excitement of exploring someplace absolutely new are not the particular preserve of well-heeled holidaymakers. Instead, virtual tourism bids a groundbreaking and exciting new manner to tour.

**Methods.** In this study, Scopus Web and Web of Science were searched and filtered to collect databases and apply hybrid methods. The authors compared the trends in the penetration of the digital economy into the tourism industry, in particular the development of a digital tourism platform. During the development, the digraph method of interpretative structural modeling was used.

**Results and discussions.** The development of a digital travel platform begins with in-depth research. Companies need to set goals and clearly understand the reasons for development and the expected results. In addition, the company needs to identify, classify, and analyze the requirements for the platform, as well as identify problems that the platform needs to help overcome.

Conclusion. If the digital divide is overcome, many developing countries would be able to distribute their products, increase their client base and form trade partnerships. E-tourism would allow interested parties in the field of tourism worldwide to access information. This can increase sales and revenues in local economies.

**Keywords: digital tourism platform,** information and communication technology (ICT), tourism industry.

**Introduction.** Digital tourism avows "travelers" to recreate all of the stories and emotions of actual global inspections, with the small distinction that every epic voyage takes region in a virtual dimension. This is the crossover among tourism as we comprehend it – or have regarded it – and gaming. Because over time, the as soon as clean limitations among what is "actual" and what isn't were step by step eroded via way of means of improvements in technology. These tendencies have given upturn to a courageous new global – one this is free of the legal guidelines we're comparable and is described via way of means of regular possibilities. The thrill we get whilst we step off a aircraft or the excitement of exploring someplace absolutely new are not the particular preserve of well-heeled holidaymakers. Instead, virtual tourism bids a groundbreaking and exciting new manner to tour.

Truly as we comprehend it takes place in a flash – and a massive a part of what makes an enjoy seem "actual" is how we feel, bear in mind and enjoy it. Until now. Virtual lifestyles and different ground-breaking technology are controlling pressure at the back of this change. Nowadays that game enthusiasts are beginning to enjoy comparable emotions withinside the digital fact to ones we go through withinside the "actual" global.

The major a part of the enchantment of virtual tourism is its geared up opportunity. Games, granted and consoles aren't reasonably-priced nowadays, however neither are accommodations and flights. You are capable of have interaction in virtual tourism from the posh of your very own dwelling room, you don't take break day work, take any visas or vaccination, or handing over some other stupid tour-associated admin and it's environmentally friendly.

There's additionally the communal factor. Okay, so we don't meet the humans we're gaming with face-to-face, however we're capin a position to speak to game enthusiasts from all around the globe even as searching out a far off new global together. Technology quarter has come an extended manner for the reason that days and days of dial-up painfully and modem gradual net community connections.

But virtual tourism isn't always all approximately price and convenience. Due to the exclusive form of video games and the vastness of the worlds within, virtual tourism occupies

game enthusiasts with a completely unique hazard to have a without a doubt bespoke tour enjoy and imagination. Create being capable of tour the global – and in a few instances completely new planets – while not having to depart our very own dwelling room. This is what virtual tourism is all approximately and why it's so famous. With such a lot of worlds to select from, virtual tourism tries the consumer greater desire than the actual global does, in which fantasies run without a doubt, without a doubt wild too.

The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) and tourism is important for the development of the tourism industry, and the impact of ICT on the tourism sector has been extensively studied (Shanker, 2008). The benefits of ICT related to tourism departments include rapid dissemination of data, reduction of distances between countries and improved transparency. Hojeghan and Esfangare (2011) examined the impact of the digital economy on the tourism industry. The study showed the introduction of technology in areas such as airlines, car rental, hotels, travel agencies and, consequently, changes in their working methods. Studies have shown that in order to effectively use digitalization in infrastructure, it is necessary to develop standards. Milovich (2012) noted the development of relationships with IT clients through digitalization in the hospitality department. Research has shown that websites, social media and other email marketing tools are being used to promote hotels and businesses. Aramendia-Muneta and Ollo-Lopez (2013) identified the impact of ICT on the competitiveness of the tourism business. Egger (2013) explored the potential prospects, benefits and challenges of closer ties in the tourism sectors. The study proposed the use of sustainable business models to ensure the diffusion of technology in the industry. Evidence has shown that price levels, similar benefits and complexity have a significant impact on smartphone bookings. Tsokota, Solms and Greunen (2014) examined the current implementation of communications technology in the Zimbabwe tourism department. According to the study, the decline of government policy, ICT legislation, delays in the supply of networks, guarantees of organizations hinder the adaptation of technologies in the tourism sector. The study proposed the introduction of a national technology distribution point in the tourism department. Bilgan and Nejad (2015) noted that the service industry has played an important role in the development of various industrialized countries. The study demonstrated trends such as the concept of a postal economy emerging from the hospitality department and a culture of innovation towards digitalization. Research shows that consumers themselves are now more interested in digitization. Jaremen (2016) discussed the use of ICT in the hospitality department, especially in hotel infrastructure. Research has shown that ICT is being used to improve the quality of service and the market in hotels. The demand for capital has also become a major barrier to ICT adoption in the hospitality sector. A study by Marákova and Medved'ova (2016) found that the decline in travellers, length of stay and shrinking sales are forcing market participants in the European tourism sector to make a point of service for their products and customers. The thesis concludes that more research is needed on innovation in the hospitality industry. In addition, the focus of the developed policy should be on medium and small enterprises in the tourism sector.

**Methodology.** The implementation of digital solutions in line with new big ways in the tourism section permits us to increase a differentiated, personalized and protect tourism product that is more focused on behavior arrangements and the management of spaces that will indeed contribute to the recovery of a key moving for the economy in general. Tourism could be one of the best sectors to digitalize business processes on a global rate, bringing flight and hotel booking online to become a digital pioneer. As communication and information technology (ICT) came like a global phenomenon, tourism industry was a consistent early adopter of platforms and new technologies.

Nowadays, IT are one of the main company assets. However, technology implementation is not the easiest procedure. When technology is gotten from the outside, this process includes several stages which generally are acquisition, development, deployment. The acquisition is the first phrase and is discussed in this subchapter.

The acquisition of technology from foreign sources is now a rising trend. Getting proper technology can help to support business and improve company competitiveness. In order to make this process successful, it is significant to understand business requirements and the strategic position of the technology. In terms of digital platform acquisition, this process involves a responsible approach and constant diligence. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

In general, the acquisition of digital tourism platform begins with deep investigation and study. Firstly, the company needs to set objectives and clearly understand its motives for acquisition and what results are expected. Also, the company should elicit, classify and analyze platform requirements as well as define problems and challenges which platform should help to overcome. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

Then possible variants of digital platforms need to be qualified and identified. The company estimates if a probable acquisition is likely to meet all requirements. It evaluates the match between technical abilities and market potential. The company should understand if it can effectively implement and utilize provided digital technologies. Moreover, the assessment of potential vendors needs to be made in order to realize the level of compatibility between the company and them. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

The next step of digital tourism platform acquisition is the selection of the most promising match of preferred seller and platform. It should be done in accordance with attention to thorough terms and regulations of the acquisition. Parameters for regulating and handling the acquisition include, for example, future technical development, ownership of intellectual property, rights to use the technology, protection strategies and the type of relationship contract. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

After that terms of digital platform acquisition obligate to be agreed between the company and vendor. In the case of successful results of negotiation, transition documents should be properly prepared. Finally, the contract must be signed. As a result, technology should be transferred to the acquirer for future adaptation and development. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

In conclusion, all four steps of digital tourism platform acquisition, which were discussed above, are represented in Figure 1.

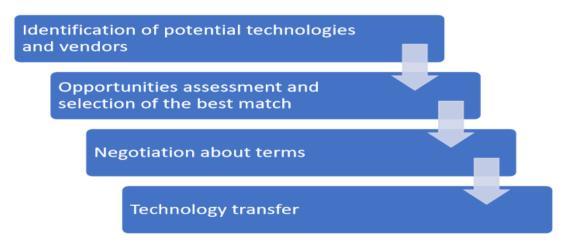


Figure 1. Digital platform acquisition process

The next step in digital tourism way implementation is development. It is a process of platform improvement, modifying and becoming more advanced. The company should adopt and customized acquired technology to its business needs, goals and processes in order to get planned results. Already in the near future successfully developed digital platform can attract more customers, boost profitable growth and increase the reputation of the business.

Firstly, the company need to estimate the digital user market coverage and size. It is important to be prepared for gaining market share and entering much bigger markets than now. The company needs to show its competitiveness and stand out from other businesses that use the

same platform. A modified digital tourism platform should facilitate and organizes online travel. (Morvan, Hintermann and Vazirani 2016)

Secondly, appropriate content for the platform should be carefully created, integrated and verified. It is extremely important to put effort and spend enough time on effective promotional content creation. Good point is original and could generate interest. It fosters and stimulates digital users' behavior. Therefore, content helps exceed expectations of Identification of potential technologies and vendors Opportunities assessment and selection of the best match Negotiation about terms Technology transfer potential clients and attract more of them. It is especially essential in the marketplaces with a low level of online involvement. (Morvan, Hintermann and Vazirani 2016)

Thirdly, when customization of the platform is finished, the ending of the development process should be properly verified. Subsequently, the platform must go through all final acceptance assessments. It needs to be previewed, tested, evaluated and accepted according to the company's standards or rules. After that platform is fully ready for further integration and deployment process. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

The final step of digital tourism way implementation is deployment. Technology deployment is a colossal process that involves the majority of the company's functional parts. The successful introduction of new technology is significant as it profits for the company, its processes and customers.

Firstly, a customized platform need to be exactly ready for deployment. Only when the digital tourism platform completed all activities of development and verification, it can go live and be established in action. The company needs to install and deliver the digital platform in order to make it accessible for use. Thus, a new platform should be distributed within the organization and become available for customers. (Mortara and Ford 2012)

Also, the deployment process has to be counterparted across the company. Affected or possibly affected company employees should be well-informed and provided with general information about the new platform. They need to clearly understand how new technology affects present business processes and how the company benefits from it. Special training or consultations should be provided if necessary. (Fried 2015)

So develop ways for a concept, knowledge about how that concept practices is imperative. ISM can help in providing a brain insight to the trend. By answering to the questions as what are the several factors effecting or getting impacted by the subject and how these points are interrelated, ISM helps in understanding the approach as a whole, simultaneously affording the related details. Since long time ISM access has been increasingly utilized in strategic decision-making by researchers. Jharkaria and Shankar (2005) applied ISM to learn the different kind of barriers in IT-enablement of stock chain and their collective interrelation. Katiyar and Badola (2018) applied ISM to explore the interrelationships among the barriers to banking. Formulating hierarchical belongs via ISM includes following steps:

- Step 1— This step includes describing the factors that either push tourism sector towards digitalization or get affected by digitalization in the tourism section.
  - Step 2— this includes advancement of self-structural interaction matrix (SSIM).
- Step 3— SSIM is then followed into the matrix of zeroes and ones to mode Initial Reachability Matrix.

Developing Interpretive Structural Modelling (ISM) di-Graph To increase a hierarchical rapport among the points, the first point is to identify and hand over code to the factors. Following factors were identified:

| S.No. | Factor Name                        | Code |  |  |
|-------|------------------------------------|------|--|--|
| 1     | Number of tourists                 | 01   |  |  |
| 2     | Classical Booking                  | 02   |  |  |
| 3     | Sharing economy                    | 03   |  |  |
| 4     | Process Cost                       | 04   |  |  |
| 5     | Personalized offers                | 05   |  |  |
| 6     | Presence of Social Media           | 06   |  |  |
| 7     | Customer Demand for digitalization | 07   |  |  |
| 8     | Use of Virtual Reality             | 08   |  |  |

Source: Authors Calculation.

Table 1. List of Factors Affecting or Getting Affected by Digitalization in Tourism Industry

- Number of tourists—Tourism sector blooms on several tourists. Digitalization helps in developing the many tourists by upturning the effectiveness of marketing programm.
- Classical booking—good way of making reservations maximum the use of digitalization by travelers. With boom in online hotel bookings, transportation bookings and flight check-ins, good way of booking tickets has taken a hit.
- Sharing economy—The profits occupied by the experting economy has caught the attention of people. The more the people are willing to delivery the resources, the higher is the use of digitalization for the point.
- Process cost—Digitalization cutes the cost of operations in tourism section. Those costs are involved with information exchange and search of information and services among different stakeholders.
- Personalized offers—Personalized overtures are allowed to be an effective marketing gimmick. Digitalization has upturned the use of personalized offers to gain the attention of tourists.
- Presence of social media—Social media moves as a catalyst in digitalization in tourism sector. Using of media by every stakeholder for maintaining customer relationships and grievance handling has developed the efficiency of marketing programme.
- Customer demand for digitalization—Travelers are the king of the tourism section. Their suggestion is to be met by the other stakeholders to survival
- Use of virtual reality—Virtual reality has made its existence mood in tourism industry as well.

|    | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 01 | -  | Α  | 0  | 0  | X  | Α  | 0  | Α  |
| 02 |    | -  | Α  | ٧  | ٧  | 0  | Α  | 0  |
| 03 |    |    | -  | ٧  | ٧  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 04 |    |    |    | -  | Α  | Α  | Α  | Α  |
| 05 |    |    |    |    | -  | Α  | 0  | 0  |
| 06 |    |    |    |    |    | -  | 0  | 0  |
| 07 |    |    |    |    |    |    | -  | ٧  |
| 08 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | -  |

Source: Authors Calculation.

Table 2. Structural-Self Interaction Matrix

The next step is to develop the SSIM. It is the imagination of pairwise relationship between the factors. This matrix is admitted as V-A-X-O matrix because of the kinds representing the relationship. If a point controles another point, then their relationship is coded as V; if a point is

directed by other point, then it is coded as A; if the points have collective dependence then the contact is coded as X; No relationship between factors is coded as O.

After the summarizing has been done, Initial Reachability matrix is achieved. The last reachability matrix is shown from the basic reachability matrix by casting the transitive links in the model and drawing out the confidence level and controlling power of the points involved. Those would help in classifying the points into controlling, dependent, autonomous and linkage categories.

|    | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 01 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02 | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 03 | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 04 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 05 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 06 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| 07 | 0  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| 08 | 1  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Source: Authors Calculation.

Table 3. Initial Reachability Matrix

|            | 01 | 02         | 03 | 04 | 05         | 06 | 07 | 08 | Driving |
|------------|----|------------|----|----|------------|----|----|----|---------|
| 01         | I  | 0          | 0  | I* | ı          | 0  | 0  | 0  | 03      |
| 02         | 1  | 1          | 0  | 1  | 1          | 0  | 0  | 0  | 04      |
| 03         | 1* | I          | 1  | 1  | 1          | 0  | 0  | 0  | 05      |
| 04         | 0  | 0          | 0  | 1  | 0          | 0  | 0  | 0  | 01      |
| 05         | 1  | 0          | 0  | 1  | 1          | 0  | 0  | 0  | 03      |
| 06         | 1  | <b>I</b> * | 0  | 1  | 1          | 1  | 0  | 0  | 05      |
| 07         | 1* | I          | 0  | 1  | <b>I</b> * | 0  | I  | I  | 06      |
| 08         | 1  | <b>I</b> * | 0  | 1  | 0          | 0  | 0  | I  | 04      |
| Dependence | 07 | 05         | 01 | 08 | 06         | 01 | 01 | 02 |         |

Source: Authors Calculation.

(\* Shows Transitivity)

Table 4. Final Reachability Matrix

**Discussion and results.** The digital revolution isn't behind us; it lies ahead of us. As web3.0 gets further empowered and sluggishly transfigure into web.4.0, and digital technologies similar as Internet of effects, Prophetic Big Data Analysis, the robotization of Knowledge Work, Autonomous Vehicles, mixed reality, virtual reality trip and increased mobility in wearables, we will see a drastic metamorphosis of the tourism assiduity. This puts strong forces on any tourism business and organisation to keep up with the digital development to stay in tract in the everadding competition within the assiduity. The tourism assiduity must also acclimatize to the paradigm shift from having been a service provider and staging gests (tourism1.0) to be completely immerged in the experience frugality with its experience product, stonerco-production or indeed usergenerated product and stoner- generated content, as well as the demands of gamification and designification of the gests. Mixed Reality gests with varying degree of stoked and Virtual Reality or their admixture, will presumably be important tools to enter tourism3.0 in the abstract society, where ShyTech, Artificial Intelligence, automatization and automation will guide the rubberneck through itsmicro-moment opinions in the pre-during and after trip phases. To deal and acclimatize to these new digital technologies and service openings will be one of the topmost challenges the tourism

assiduity has faced, and set hard pressure on small and micro companies, as well as on DMO 's to gain the knowledge and coffers for this digital business metamorphosis. presently, the assiduity is trying to deal with the disruptive rise of mobile, which has created an omnichannel terrain. In this terrain, the walls to entry are lower but the costs of getting noticed are spiralling high. This has created a crowded ecosystem, with consumers preferring to largely entrust their precious and cherished leaves to a sprinkle of important online players, who can give them dependable and good quality gests . It's delicate to say exactly where digital trip shoppers will be in coming five to ten times, but it seems likely that we can anticipate the digital side of the assiduity to remain largely with a sprinkle of major players, with potentially an indeed lower number holding further request share. The most likely change is to who these players are and how they're primarily penetrated.

ITC has drastically changed the marketing terrain of the tourism assiduity. What we see moment is a paradigm shift from drive- marketing, where like a megaphone, companies try to reach as multitudinous as possible by buying announcements, and attract attention to homepages, all under fierce competition, towards pull marketing, also information is delivered only to those who ask for it on a particular position, by creating interesting material to those interested, and by talking and interacting to people, and being in analogous customer relations by earning it on the customer's terms. Website marketing and quest machine marketing have until present time come essential factors of contemporary tourism marketing. Until recently, indeed lower trip businesses could anticipate to do okay on the "free" business freeheartedly supplied by Google. With a numerous meta labels, introductory content and a ton of links and up the rankings the webpage went. A numerous times agone an Internet query analogous as Lapland recesses" would yield a mixed result of independent motorists and specialist companies. Now, you will among the top- 10 results get a monoculture of aggregators and top-league OTAs, analogous as TripAdvisor, Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, trip wizard, and trip dragon occasionally refocused by some larger motorists, analogousasfinland-holiday.com, and any suppliers will appear far down on the table, bypasses indeed by blogs and social media analogous as YouTube, pictigar, etc. thus, suppliers having only a homepage moment will not reach far on the Internet. New quest algorithms that prioritize aggregators and OTAs, forces lower suppliers in their marketing to use paid webannouncements analogous as Google Adword or Facebook announcements, paying per klick to their homepages. But as the competition increases in analogous paid business advertisementchannels, providers face ever adding cost per click. Marketing on social media is the fastest growing sector in digital marketing. In B2C marketing Instagram was the most accustomed channel to buy social announcements (53 used among 500 marketers), followed by Facebook patronized posts (49) and Facebook announcements (43). In B2B marketing, LinkedIn announcements (63) was the most popular followed by patronized Tweets (54), but search machine announcements were still the most common used channels in digital advertising. Swedishecommerce companies regard Facebook more important than Google as the most important marketing channel. In 2016 Swedishe- commerce used Facebook (93), quest optimization (73), Newsletter (66), announcements in social media (60), Instagram (56), quest word advertising (53), traditional paper announcements (35), Banners (34), Blogs (32), Backing (28), canons (22), PR 21 and YouTube (21) 196. At the same time, only 6 of consumers regard social media as the swish advertising channel for ecommerce. They prefer business homepages (81), Google (76) and pricecomparison spots (63).

World Travel Market reveals that websites and mobile operations are no longer enough and agents must join up their physical and digital presence. Agents are at least four times behind if they suppose they 're meeting a sightseer's conditions with a website and app. The study addresses about the "physital" economy. The physital "approach goes beyond the now- anticipated online presence or mobile app, blending of the physical with the digital, using the bottommost technologies. Vide films have up to moment been the most immersive fabricator medium. But indeed with the swish, highestresolution TVs, you're still just passively watching. You aren't there and you are not acting or interacting. The pledge of virtual reality, VR, is its" presence" — the feeling that you're really nearly else, as well as its interactivity. Using the VR the sightseers can

tromp in the most extraordinary places on earth. It's the closest thing we must teleportation, enabling deeper engagement than has ever been possible with a place. It will also come a time machine, as we moment are recording all interesting goods passing, that can be endured in VR in the future. Mobile apps for VR are appearing across multitudinous platforms analogous as Google Play, Google Charts, YouTube and others making the technology available to everyone.

Conclusion. To sum up If the digital divide is overcome, many developing countries would be able to distribute their products, increase their client base and form trade partnerships. E-tourism would allow interested parties in the field of tourism worldwide to access information. This can increase sales and revenues in local economies. The imbalance between competing destinations in global markets can also fall within the framework of tourism. Developing countries should be more aggressive in understanding the implications of ICT development in the tourism industry. Policy makers should participate in this process so that planning and implementation become more effective and strategic in nature. It is believed that, at present, development strategies should be an integral part of all policy planning, which also includes policy planning related to the tourism industry.

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