

## TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN THE 3RD DECADE OF THE 3RD MILLENNIUM

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**Abstract.** This article examines the evolution of tourism management in the third decade of the third millennium, highlighting its expanding role in ensuring sustainable, efficient, and experience-oriented tourism development. Tourism management is defined as a complex process involving the planning, organization, and coordination of travel, accommodation, attractions, and customer experiences, while balancing economic growth with cultural and environmental preservation. The study emphasizes the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including businesses, government institutions, and local communities, in designing strategies that enhance tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness. Using a qualitative content analysis of recent academic literature (2021–2024), the paper identifies five major trends shaping contemporary tourism management. First, experience-based tourism focuses on immersive and authentic activities that foster meaningful connections with destinations. Second, digital and virtual tourism leverages technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality to enable remote exploration and informed decision-making. Third, eco and sustainable tourism promotes environmentally responsible practices and supports local communities while minimizing ecological impact. Fourth, healthy and safe tourism prioritizes hygiene, safety standards, and risk management to ensure secure travel experiences. Finally, smart tourism integrates advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things to deliver personalized, efficient, and accessible services. The findings reveal that technology-driven and sustainability-oriented approaches dominate modern tourism management, while experiential tourism reflects the growing psychological demand for authenticity. The study concludes that these interconnected trends are redefining the tourism industry, requiring adaptive strategies that integrate innovation, responsibility, and customer-centered practices.

**Keywords:** tourism management, experience, digital, virtual, sustainability, smart

### INTRODUCTION

**Tourism management** (Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, 2021-2024):

- ensures the smooth, sustainable and profitable operation of tourist destinations and tourism businesses and optimal experiences for travelers / tourists / visitors;
- is the practice of planning, organizing, and overseeing all aspects of the tourism industry – travel, accommodations, attractions, and customer experiences;
- involves various responsibilities such as budgeting, development, marketing, operations and customer service;
- plays a crucial role in balancing economic growth, on the one hand, and cultural and environmental conservation;

- It involves cooperating with stakeholders such as hospitality businesses, government agencies, and local communities to create strategies that attract tourists and optimize their experiences.

**Tourism Management in the 3rd Decade of the 3rd Millennium** is characterized by the following trends (Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, 2021-2024):

- it is an experience-based tourism, in the sense that travelers / tourists / visitors seek immersive cultural experiences, putting authenticity before traditional sightseeing;
- is digital and virtual tourism, in the sense that augmented reality (an interactive experience that overlays computer-generated 3D content onto a portion of the real world via a handheld device or head-mounted display) and virtual reality (computer-generated simulation of a 3D image or environment with which a person can interact in an apparently real or physical way using special electronic equipment, such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves equipped with sensors) allow travelers/tourists/visitors to explore destinations remotely, influencing accessibility and decision-making;
- it is eco-friendly and sustainable tourism, in the sense that climate change has led the tourism industry to approach "greener" practices (with environmentally friendly accommodations, with carbon-neutral transportation, with responsible tourism that is gaining ground);
- it is healthy and safe tourism, in the sense that priority is given to insurance, hygiene and flexible booking policies;
- is smart tourism, in the sense that AI (the application of computer systems capable of performing tasks or producing results that normally require human intelligence, especially by applying machine learning techniques to large collections of data), big data (extremely large data sets that can be analyzed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially related to human behavior and interactions) and the Internet of Things (devices with sensors, processing power, software, and other technologies that connect and exchange data with other devices and systems over the Internet or other communications networks) revolutionizes the way tourism businesses and tourist destinations interact with travelers/tourists/visitors, offering them personalized experiences and ongoing services.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The material used in this study consists of articles and books about tourism management in the 3rd decade of the 3rd millennium, and the research method consists of content analysis of the results presented in this research.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Experience-based tourism**

**Experience-based tourism** focuses on immersive and meaningful activities rather than pure and simple sightseeing, for the creation of lasting memories and close connections with the people and places visited (GEORGOULA, CHRISIDOU & SOUKI, 2021; SÁNCHEZ, 2021):

- **adventure trip**, i.e. activities such as exploration, scuba diving, trekking (Himalayas, India; Great Barrier Reef, Australia; rainforest, Brazil);
- **the immersion journey** for experiencing the authenticity of a tourist destination by staying with local families, learning traditional crafts, participating in cooking lessons;

- *exploring nature and culture*, meaning involvement in regional traditions, participation in cultural festivals, visiting national parks;
- *music tourism*, meaning traveling for a concert, music festival or live show (Coachella, USA; Tomorrowland, Belgium; Untold, Romania);
- *sports tourism*, i.e. participation in global events (FIFA World Cup, Formula 1 Races, Olympic Games).

## 2. Digital and virtual tourism

This type of tourism allows travelers/tourists/visitors to explore remote tourist destinations or promote tourist experiences with the help of technology through (DRAGANOV, 2021; GEORGOULA, CHRISIDOU & SOUKI, 2021; GUO ET AL., 2021; SONG & WEN, 2021; WANG ET AL., 2022):

- *virtual reality travel agencies*, which offers personalized virtual travel experiences that help users preview destinations before booking a trip (companies like Ascape, YouVisit);
- *travel with the help of virtual reality* with the help of platforms like Google Earth VR that allow users to visit famous destinations through immersive 360-degree images (Grand Canyon, USA; Eiffel Tower, France);
- *experiences with wildlife and nature*, which allow users to go on virtual safaris and observe wildlife in their natural habitats without disturbing ecosystems (National Geographic's VR app);
- *augmented reality guided tours*, which offers interactive experiences where users can see additional information about a tourist destination or historical reconstructions of tourist destinations;
- *virtual tours of museums and art galleries*, which allow visitors to explore exhibitions from anywhere in the world (British Museum, UK; Louvre Museum, France).

## 3. Eco and sustainable tourism

**Eco and sustainable tourism** focuses on minimizing environmental impact and practicing enjoyable and responsible tourism, while creating benefits for local communities through (CONSTANTOGLOU & THOMAI, 2021; DRAGANOV, 2021; FERNANDES ET AL., 2021; GEORGOULA, CHRISIDOU & SOUKI, 2021; KAPKOV, URNOVA & LUKASHINA, 2021; KNAAP & VANNESTE, 2021; LIU ET AL., 2021; NAGHIZADEH, 2021; NAKPHIN ET AL., 2021; BOŽANIĆ, 2022; ZHANG & YU, 2022; GUO, HU & ZHANG, 2023; KHELASHVILI, 2023; MBISE & ISHIKA, 2023):

- *eco-friendly cabins powered by solar panels*, which offers travelers/tourists/visitors an immersive experience while conserving nature and supporting local Bedouin communities (Feynan Ecolodge, Dana Biosphere Reserve, Jordan);
- *eco-lodges, wildlife conservation programs, and community-based tourism initiatives* (Costa Rica);
- *payment of a daily fee by travelers / tourists / visitors* (according to the “high value, low impact” principle), which finances environmental conservation and local infrastructure (Bhutan);

- *strict visiting rules* that protects the fragile ecosystem and promotes responsible tourism (Galapagos Islands, Ecuador);
- *luxury resorts powered entirely by solar panels*, which use rainwater harvesting systems and eliminate single-use plastic items (Six Senses Fiji, Japan).

#### 4. Healthy and safe tourism

This type of tourism provides travelers/tourists/visitors with safe and well-managed experiences through (CHATZILIADOU & CONSTANTOGLU, 2021; KAKOSKI, 2021; MAGALHÃES, 2021; RAMLI & ZAWAWI, 2021; SOUSA, PARDAL MONTEIRO & MACHADO, 2021; DRAGANOV & HARALAMPIEV, 2022):

- *travel insurance and emergency medical coverage*;
- *strict food and water safety regulations* in countries with high tourism rates to prevent health risks for travelers/tourists/visitors;
- *emergency response systems*, i.e. disaster preparedness plans, including multilingual emergency alerts (Switzerland, Japan);
- *improved hygiene standards*, meaning rigorous hygiene protocols in hotels and on airlines, including ultraviolet disinfection and "contactless" services;
- *safe adventure tourism* through strict safety measures (e.g., certified guides and mandatory equipment checks) (for scuba diving, trekking, etc.).

#### 5. Smart tourism

**Smart tourism** continuously evolves, integrates innovation and technology to improve sustainability, optimize tourism management and promote travel experiences, and makes travel more efficient and enjoyable by (BEEDIE, 2021; DRAGANOV, 2021; JEONG & WEN, 2022; BARCOE, HANRAHAN & WHELAN, 2024):

- *AI-based communication* to help travelers/tourists/visitors with recommendations and customer service (Kaunas, Lithuania; Turin, Italy);
- *smart accessibility initiatives* focused on inclusive tourism by implementing digital accessibility tools and improving infrastructure (Brussels, Belgium; Lviv, Ukraine);
- *digital platforms for travelers / tourists / visitors*, which provides information about attractions, events and transport in real time, making travel more convenient (Brussels, Belgium; Porto, Portugal);
- *sustainable mobility solutions* through environmentally friendly transport options (e.g., bike lanes, digital solutions for public transport accessibility) (Genoa, Italy; Lahti, Finland);
- *Augmented Reality guided tours and Virtual Reality experiences*, which allows travelers/tourists/visitors to explore historical sites located at great distances.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the studied materials allows the following conclusions to be drawn:

- Tourism management in the 3rd decade of the 3rd millennium targets five major types of tourism – experience-based tourism, digital and virtual tourism, eco and sustainable tourism, healthy and safe tourism and smart tourism;
- two of these types of tourism are deeply marked by technology – digital and virtual tourism and smart tourism;

- two of these types of tourism are deeply marked by ecology – eco and sustainable tourism and healthy tourism;
- Only one type of tourism is marked by psychology – experiential tourism.

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