Digitalisation and the tourism system

Background of the study (150 words)

Information and communication technology (ICT) is ubiquitous in tourism. The world is changing at fast speed (Xiang 2018). Such changes entail tourist behavior, decision making, knowledge systems and potentials for collaboration, to name a few. Changes also take place in various places within the tourism system and include modifications both at home, at the destination, and in the space in between. The fast and global digitalization is paralleled by a fast and global tourism growth. Digitalisation is enabling quick procesces when much of tourist behaviour is concerned. Among them is the rapid production and consumption of tourist information. A further question is: If people's foci are shifted by means of digital devices between here and there, how can we understand their presence? Such a situation has been discribed as phygital, meaning that physical and digital realities are intermingled, the situation may be described as phygital (Gretzel, Zarezadeh, Li & Xiang, 2019).

Purpose of the study (80 words)

This presentation aims at studying the variation of knowledge on tourism and digitalisation. What do we know in sum, and what does this entireness mean for our understanding of tourism? These questions point to the importance of a holistic view on tourism and digitalisation. In sum, this project asks what digitalization does to our understanding of a destination, to what tourism and the tourist is, or how we are to understand the tourism system, once launched by Leiper in the late 1970s.

Methodology (120 words)

The method used in this study is document analysis, which aims at assembling knowledge on different perspectives that study digitalisation in relation to tourism. The perspective on this is holistic and includes the whole tourism system. Subject of the document analysis are publications both in scientific research journals and in monographs and anthologies. A central search term is *digitalisation*, and this is surrounded by search terms such as *tourist information search behaviour*, *social media*, *tourism system*, and *tourism definition*. Literature search is currently ongoing and includes an awareness of different approaches and ontoligies when it comes to the understanding of digitalisation in the different publications.

Results (250 words)

The study does not offer research results yet as this abstract is written in Mid October 2020. There are however different indications in literature search that shows that digitalisation is affecting tourism in a holistic way. Literature in this topic is studying individual aspects of digitalisation, such as the use of social media, booking processes, or the fact that tourists not only are comsumers of information, but

become producers thereof. Departing from these individual perspectives, this study aims at studying what they do to the tourism system as a whole.

Conclusions (100 words)

The argument in this study is that digitalization not only changes single behaviours related to bookings, information search, or marketing channels, to name a few. Instead, one can presume that tourist behaviour is fundamentally affected when ITC is everywhere. Tourist behvaiour is argued to be holistically affected when ICT transforms relations to humans, digital devices, and spaces. In this, one may talk of a new sociotechnical system. This implies that research needs to take a new look at systems that were thought to be stable and constant, like the tourism system, and the definition of what tourism is.

Research implications and limitations (80 words)

The major implication of a meta study like this is that a holistic view on slected perspectives on digitalisation and tourism may give new insights on the concept of tourism. The major limitation at this moment is the fact that the literature search has not been entirely completed yet. In other words, this is a work in progress.

References (200 words)

Gretzel, Zarezadeh, Li & Xiang (2019). The evolution of travel information search research: a perspective article. *Tourism Review 75* (1).

Leiper, N. (2979). The framework of tourism: Towards a definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. *Annals of Tourism Research 6*(4), 390-407.

Xiang, Z. (2018). From digitization to the age of acceleration: On information technology and tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives 25*(1), 147-150.