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Research Paper

Decoding smart tech's influence on tourist experience quality

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Abstract

Smart tourism technology has sparked a profound transformation within the tourism sector, notably enhancing the quality of the tourist experience, satisfaction levels, and the inclination to revisit among those exploring Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. This research examines the impact of smart tourism technology on these critical aspects and discusses its implications for the city's tourism landscape. A sample of 418 tourists who explored Ho Chi Minh City participated in this study, providing data through a quantitative research approach. The research findings highlight the positive impact of integrating smart tourism technology, including mobile apps, augmented reality, and personalized recommendations, on the tourist experience. These technologies enhance convenience and accessibility, leading to increased satisfaction among tourists. Moreover, smart tourism technology influences tourists' intentions to revisit Ho Chi Minh City, emphasizing the strategic importance of adopting smart tourism technology to enhance destination attractiveness, improve the visitor experience, and encourage repeat visits. Policymakers and tourism stakeholders should consider investing in and implementing these technologies to leverage their potential benefits for the tourism industry.

Keywords: Smart Tourism Technology, Quality of Experience, Satisfaction, Revisit Intention, Smart Tourism

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Introduction

Internet and digital innovations have drastically transformed consumer behaviors in recent years, and tourism is no exception (Zhang et al., 2022, Huang et al., 2017). As of the Digital 2023 report, 5.35 billion people access the internet, and 5.61 billion utilize mobile connectivity worldwide, with a global population of 8.08 billion (social, 2.2024). With the advent of mobile internet and smart devices, technology has evolved from supporting industrial growth to a driving force that propels business expansion.

STTs are a technological innovation that has gained prominence recently (Azis et al., 2020). In this light, smart technologies (STs) are crucial in shaping and enhancing smart tourism destinations. By integrating technology into various aspects of tourism, destinations can offer enhanced experiences, streamline operations, and improve sustainability. Integrating tourism and STs has become an inevitable progression where smart systems optimize resource management, heighten efficiency and sustainability, and enrich tourist experiences (Zhang et al., 2022). STs enable seamless connectivity and information access for tourists. Wi-Fi hotspots, mobile apps, and interactive kiosks provide visitors with real-time information about attractions, transportation, accommodation, and local services, enhancing their overall experience. STs like AI, cloud computing, IoT, and VR are being used in more and more tourist locations, and these technologies give tourists an experience that is combined and competitive (Lee et al., 2018).

STTs seek to improve the quality of tourists' experiences, boost their satisfaction, and heighten their likelihood of returning to a specific location by harnessing the power of digital platforms, data analytics, and interactive technologies (Bhuiyan et al., 2022). Smart tourism destinations leverage data collection and analysis to understand visitor preferences, behavior, and patterns (Boes et al., 2016). This information helps destinations tailor their offerings, optimize resource allocation, and make data-driven decisions for better management and planning. STs allow destinations to personalize and customize experiences for individual tourists (Gretzel et al., 2015a). Through location-based services, smart devices can deliver personalized recommendations, suggest tailored itineraries, and provide real-time updates based on a visitor's interests and preferences (Li et al., 2017). Technology-driven transportation systems, such as smart Paring, smart traffic management, and real-time public transport information, contribute to efficient mobility within smart tourism destinations (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2013). These systems reduce congestion, enhance accessibility, and provide seamless transportation options for tourists. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) enable immersive experiences by overlaying digital information onto real-world environments (Li et al., 2017).

Technology platforms and digital ecosystems facilitate communication, information sharing, and coordination among stakeholders, leading to better destination management and development (Gretzel et al., 2015b). STs facilitate sustainable practices within tourism destinations. Energy-efficient infrastructure, smart waste management systems, and water conservation initiatives can be implemented using sensors, automation, and data analytics to optimize resource consumption and minimize environmental impact (Huang et al., 2017). STs empower tourism destinations to provide personalized experiences, optimize operations, enhance sustainability, and improve overall visitor satisfaction (Lee et al., 2018). By leveraging the potential of STs, destinations can

differentiate themselves and remain competitive in the increasingly digitalized tourism industry (Azis et al., 2020).
Extant research has focused on the utility and advantages of STTs in case studies of tourism destinations and descriptive accounts of smart tourism practices (Jeong and Shin, 2019, Carbonell and Rodriguez Escudero, 2015). These existing studies indicated a clear link between STTs and tourism experiences; thus, tourism destinations have embraced STTs to offer tourists a seamless, user-friendly, and customized experience (Zhang et al., 2022). However, one notable gap in the existing literature is the limited exploration (Zhang et al., 2022) of behavioral outcomes or changes induced by STTs. Limited research indicated how the quality of the tourist experience mediates the relationship between STTs and tourist behavior. Moreover, existing studies acknowledge that tourist segments perceive experiences differently, yet there is a lack of research investigating how these segments adopt and interact with STTs (Cetin and Bilgihan, 2016).

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, is known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and economic dynamism and has emerged as a popular tourist destination in Southeast Asia. Recognizing the potential of smart tourism technology to enhance the city's tourism offerings, local authorities, and stakeholders have actively embraced technological advancements to create a more seamless and personalized experience for visitors (Vu and Hartley, 2018). The city has sought to provide tourists innovative ways to explore its attractions, access information, and engage with the local culture by integrating mobile applications, augmented reality, virtual tours, and personalized recommendations (Thai et al., 2021). This study aims to investigate the impact of smart tourism technology on the quality of experience, satisfaction levels, and intention to return tourists visiting Ho Chi Minh City. By understanding the influence of these technological interventions, policymakers and tourism stakeholders can make informed decisions about implementing and utilizing smart tourism technology, ultimately enhancing the city's tourism competitiveness (Jeong and Shin, 2019). A quantitative research approach will be employed through surveys among a diverse group of tourists in Ho Chi Minh City to gather data on their interactions with smart tourism technology. The analysis of this data will unveil patterns and correlations, providing insights into the influence of STs on the tourist experience (Huang et al., 2017). Quantitative survey methods enable structured data collection from a large, diverse tourist sample to facilitate statistical analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2017), STTs' impacts in this case. Applying quantitative techniques will provide generalizable insights to address these outcomes reliably through empirical measurement.

The investigation into tourists' use of STs and their implications for destination experiences addresses a significant gap in the literature, thereby enriching the theoretical framework of smart tourism research (Jeong and Shin, 2019, Pai et al., 2020). Specifically, this research objective is to determine the impacts of the STTs ecosystem on the quality of tourist experience, which mediates the relationship between smart tourism technology and its effect on the quality of tourist experience and intention to revisit. Thus, the findings of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on smart tourism technology and its implications for destination management (Lee et al., 2018). By highlighting the importance of leveraging technology to enhance the attractiveness of destinations and improve visitor satisfaction, this research can guide policymakers and tourism stakeholders in making strategic decisions to foster sustainable tourism growth in Ho Chi Minh City through digitalization, thereby optimizing tourist experiences.

Literature Review

The theory of smart tourism technology encompasses various conceptual frameworks and models that aim to explain the implementation, impacts, and dynamics of technology in the context of tourism. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): Developed by Davis (1989), TAM focuses on individuals' technology acceptance and usage. It suggests that perceived usefulness and ease of use influence users' attitudes and intentions toward adopting and utilizing STTs. TAM was applied in studies investigating tourists' adoption of mobile applications, augmented reality, and other STsin tourism (Chen and Tsai, 2019, Chang et al., 2022).

The experience economy theory, proposed by Pine and Gilmore (2011), suggests that tourism experiences are transformed into memorable and immersive encounters in a digitally connected world. Technological innovation, STTs specifically, plays a pivotal role in creating and delivering these experiences by enabling personalization, interactivity, and customization (Zhang et al., 2022), whereby destinations enhance interactive platforms to engage tourists in memorable travel experiences.

The value co-creation theory emphasizes the collaborative nature of value creation between tourists, tourism providers, and other stakeholders (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, Pham et al., 2023). STTs facilitate the co-creation process by enabling interactive and participatory experiences, where tourists actively engage with technology to customize their experiences and contribute to destination development (Zhang et al., 2022). As such, experience economy theory provides the overarching logic for STTs' influence on the value creation process. Value co-creation emphasizes joint value generation through stakeholder engagement via shared resources and interfaces, which aligns with STT's capabilities for experience personalization via tourist-destination interactions.

These theories and frameworks provide conceptual lenses for understanding smart tourism technology's adoption, implementation, and impacts. They highlight the importance of user acceptance, experience creation, value co-creation, and digital transformation in shaping the dynamics of smart tourism technology within the tourism industry (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Researchers and practitioners often draw upon these theories to guide empirical studies, inform policy decisions, and develop strategies for effectively utilizing STTs.

Attributes of STTs

STTs possess several attributes that distinguish them from traditional tourism technologies (Huang et al., 2017). Traditional technologies such as physical maps, guidebooks, brochures, and printed travel itineraries are limited to static information, which is not interactive or personalized to individual preferences. In contrast, STTs incorporate sophisticated attributes that enable more advanced, tailored interactions, enhancing experiences, connectivity, efficiency, sustainability, and engagement within smart tourism destinations (Moon and Han, 2019). STTs continue to evolve and adapt, leveraging advancements in connectivity, data analytics, IoT, and immersive technologies to create innovative and immersive tourist experiences. It is essential to emphasize the unprecedented impacts of STTs on modern travel practices, particularly considering tourists' tendency towards adopting mobile and cutting-edge innovations throughout their travel journey (Huang et al., 2017).

Connectivity

Connectivity, a cornerstone highlighted by Huang (2017), Jeong and Shin (2019), and Tan (2018), is pivotal in smart tourism technology. Connectivity is a fundamental aspect of smart tourism technology. It enables seamless integration and communication between various components within the ecosystem, ensuring tourists access crucial information and services during their journeys. This network of interconnected devices and systems is the foundation of modern, efficient travel, incorporating real-time navigation, mobile apps for planning and ticketing, and smart sensors optimizing routes (Huang et al., 2017). These advancements, in line with the research of Jeong and Shin (2019) , and Tan (2018), streamline travel logistics and substantially contribute to sustainability. They enhance the intelligence of travel while promoting environmental responsibility.

Real-time Information

STTs provide access to real-time information about destinations, attractions, transportation, weather, and other relevant factors. This up-to-date information empowers tourists to make informed decisions, plan their itineraries, and adapt to changing circumstances during their visit. Real-time information in smart tourism technology enables tourists to make informed decisions, plan their activities efficiently, and adjust to travel changes. By providing up-to-date and relevant data, smart tourism technology enhances the overall travel experience, ensuring that tourists can access the most current information and optimize their journey accordingly.

Personalization

The concept of personalization, as defined by No and Kim (2015) and Park and Gretzel (2007), involves tailoring products, services, and information to meet specific needs. Personalization offers travelers access to customized information that suits their requirements (Huang et al., 2017). Scholars emphasize its positive impact on tourist satisfaction by reducing information search time (Schaupp and Bélanger, 2005). Personalization empowers STTs to provide travelers with highly relevant and precise information using individualized data (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2013). Thus, STTs tailor the travel experience to individual preferences. Modern travel technologies use data analytics, location services, and user input to provide personalized recommendations, itineraries, and suggestions tailored to each traveler's interests. This customization creates a more engaging and satisfying travel experience.

Mobility and Accessibility

Jeong and Shin (2019) posit that accessibility within the realm of STTs relates to how easily individuals can access and use information at their travel destinations through various STT platforms. Heightened accessibility significantly contributes to the perceived ease of use, enhancing tourists' overall travel experience and satisfaction (Huang et al., 2017). The pivotal role of internet access in destination promotion and attracting potential visitors underscores the critical significance of accessibility within tourism destinations. Thus, influence extends to tourists' intentions and behaviors (Mohammad Shafiee and Es-Haghi, 2017). Tourists enjoy accessing STTs on mobile devices to get information before and during travels. Mobile apps allow easy booking,

reservations, navigation, and real-time updates. The mobility and accessibility of STTs enhance flexible tourism experiences. Addressing mobility and accessibility needs allows smart tourism technology to reach more users and improve travel experiences.

Interactivity

Interactivity in the context of STTs refers to the degree to which these technologies enable immediate actions, such as real-time feedback and active communication with travelers (Huang et al., 2017). This facet fosters timely and dynamic stakeholder communication when individuals utilize STTs (Jeong and Shin, 2019). Significantly, heightened interactivity streamlines information retrieval, leading to favorable perceptions of STTs and motivating travelers to engage and provide feedback actively (Tan et al., 2018). STTs utilize cutting-edge digital systems, connectivity, and data resources to offer interactive functionalities and empower tourists to make informed decisions during their journeys.

Quality of Tourism Experience (QTE*)*

The quality of tourism experience (QTE) focuses on understanding and evaluating the subjective perception of users' experiences with digital technologies, services, and systems (Jennings et al., 2009). QTE theory seeks to capture the holistic and multidimensional nature of user experiences and goes beyond traditional measures of performance and usability (Cole and Scott, 2004). QTE theory recognizes that user experiences are subjective and individual. It emphasizes the importance of considering users' perceptions, emotions, and subjective judgments when evaluating the quality of their experiences (Suhartanto et al., 2020). QTE is a multidimensional construct that encompasses various aspects of user experiences. It considers not only the technical performance of a system but also factors such as usability, engagement, enjoyment, aesthetics, and social aspects (Neuhofer and Buhalis, 2012). The context in which the user interacts with a system influences QTE. The user's goals, expectations, cultural background, and environmental conditions can impact their perception of quality (Tussyadiah et al., 2017). QTE evolves as users interact with a system over time. It distinguishes hedonic (emotional responses and well-being) and pragmatic (usefulness and achieving) aspects.

QTE theory emphasizes the need for user-centric evaluation methodologies that capture users' subjective experiences (Cole and Scott, 2004). It advocates for surveys, interviews, diaries, physiological measures, and behavioral data analysis to assess users' perceptions and satisfaction. QTE theory proposes three main dimensions of user experience: usefulness, usability, and enjoyment (Jennings, 2006). Usefulness refers to the extent to which the system meets users' needs and goals; usability focuses on ease of use and efficiency, and enjoyment captures the emotional and affective aspects of the experience (Nickerson, 2006). The theory of quality of experience provides a framework for understanding and evaluating users' subjective experiences with digital technologies (Yoo and Gretzel, 2016). By considering the multidimensionality, context dependency, and subjective perception of experiences, QTE theory helps researchers and practitioners assess and enhance the quality of user experiences, leading to the development of more user-centric and satisfying digital products and services.

Behavioral Intention After a Smart Tourism Technology Experience

Behavioral intention after a smart tourism technology experience refers to the inclination or likelihood of individuals to engage in certain behaviors or actions after interacting with STTs during their travel experiences (Suhartanto et al., 2020). Analyzing post-experience behavioral intention in the context of smart tourism technology can provide insights into the effectiveness and impact of these technologies on tourists' intentions to engage in future behaviors (Chang et al., 2014).

Evaluate tourists' satisfaction levels regarding the smart tourism technology they have encountered, including their perceptions of its usefulness, ease of use, and overall satisfaction (Jeong and Shin, 2019). Users with higher satisfaction levels are more likely to engage in positive behaviors related to the technology. Assessing tourists' intentions to continue using STTs, including their likelihood to utilize similar technologies, applications, or services on subsequent trips, can provide insights into the extent to which tourists perceive value in the technology and their willingness to incorporate it into their future travel experiences (Neuhofer and Buhalis, 2012). Additionally, tourists' intentions to recommend STTs to others are examined, covering their likelihood to share positive experiences, reviews, or recommendations about the technology with family, friends, or online platforms (Chung et al., 2021). Positive intentions to recommend indicate the potential for positive word-of-mouth marketing and the perceived value of the technology.

The assessment of tourists' intentions to partake in technology-facilitated smart destination activities encompasses various aspects (Azis et al., 2020). It involves participation in augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) experiences, utilization of location-based services for receiving personalized recommendations, and access to real-time information through mobile applications (Huang et al., 2017). Positive intentions to engage in such activities indicate the value tourists attribute to the technology-enabled experiences. Orden-Mejía and Huertas (2022) highlighted that it is crucial to appraise the perceived value and convenience that tourists connect with their incidents involving smart tourism technology. This evaluation should also analyze whether the technology has enhanced travel experiences, furnished personalized recommendations, increased efficiency, or facilitated unique and engaging interactions (Suhartanto et al., 2020). Positive perceptions of value and convenience will likely lead to increased intentions for future engagement.

Jeong and Shin (2019) examined the impact of trust and perceived security on the post-experience behavioral intention with smart tourism technology, whereas Pai (2020) studied if tourists feel confident in using the technology, trust the accuracy and reliability of the information provided, and perceive their data to be secure. Trustworthy and safe technology experiences are more likely to lead to positive intentions for future engagement. Zhang (2022) analyzed smart tourism technology's user experience and interface design to assess if the technology was user-friendly, intuitive, and aesthetically pleasing. Pai (2020) evaluated the intentions of tourists to adopt and integrate STTs into their overall travel behavior. This previous research concluded that positive user experiences with the technology interface would likely contribute to increased intentions for future engagement. If tourists desire to seek out destinations or services that offer similar technology-enabled experiences in the future, they would have positive connotations for continuous adoption and integration, indicating the potential for long-term engagement with STTs

(Huang et al., 2017). By analyzing post-experience intentions, tourism stakeholders gain insights into the effectiveness, satisfaction, and adoption of STTs (Lee et al., 2011), which can guide decision-making on implementing, improving, and marketing smart tourism technologies to enhance travel experiences (Yoo and Gretzel, 2016).

Research Model and Hypotheses

Smart tourism technology has significantly transformed the travel and tourism industry, offering new opportunities to enhance the quality of experience for travelers. Recent studies have shown smart tourism platforms enhance visitor satisfaction by allowing personalized recommendations and efficient trip planning (Jeong and Shin, 2019, Buhalis, 2020). Analyses of user reviews indicate travelers perceive value from location-based apps, virtual assistants, and integrated data that streamline tourism activities (Huang et al., 2017). Measuring the impact of smart tourism technology on the quality of experience involves assessing various aspects before, during, and after the travel experience. With increasing numbers of travelers utilizing smartphones throughout trips (social, 2.2024), leveraging technology is increasingly necessary for tourism competitiveness.

Based on the classification of STTs' attributes, this research explores the value resulting from five attributes: connectivity, real-time information, personalization, mobility and accessibility, and interactivity as perceived by tourists. Based on this argument, this research proposes the following hypotheses in the context of tourist attractions:

H1a The connectivity of STTs significantly impacts the quality of tourist experience in smart destinations.

H1b The real-time information of STTs significantly impacts the quality of tourist experience in smart destinations.

H1c The personalization of STTs significantly impacts the quality of tourist experience in smart destinations.

H1d The mobility and accessibility of STTs significantly impact the quality of tourist experience in smart destinations.

H1e The interactivity of STTs significantly impacts the quality of tourist experience in smart destinations.

Smart tourism technology can collect data about tourists' preferences, behaviors, and interests to personalize and customize the travel experience for returning tourists (Jeong and Shin, 2019). By offering tailored recommendations, personalized itineraries, and customized offers, STs create a sense of exclusivity and relevance, making tourists feel valued and increasing their desire to return (Pai et al., 2020). By leveraging STTs, destinations can enhance the travel experience, cater to tourists' preferences, and create positive memories. These factors increase the likelihood of attracting returning tourists who have enjoyed the benefits of STs and are eager to re-engage with the destination's offerings.

The quality of experience provided by STTs plays a vital role in tourists' satisfaction. Accurate and reliable performance, language support, real-time capabilities, adaptability, user-friendly interfaces, and overall reliability are key factors that can significantly impact tourists' perception of the technology and, subsequently, their satisfaction levels (Pai et al., 2020). Considering these key factors and prioritizing the quality of experience provided by STTs can be measured to enhance tourists' satisfaction levels and create positive and memorable experiences in smart destinations. Based on this argument, this research proposes the following hypotheses in the context of tourist attractions:

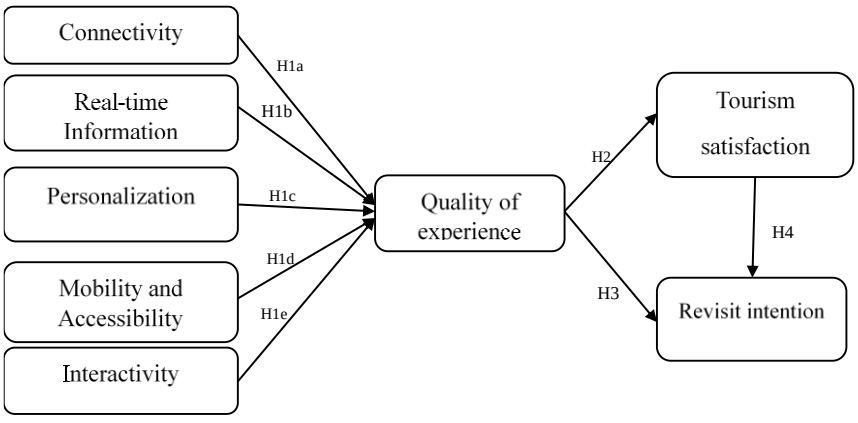
H2 The quality of experience of STTs significantly impacts tourists' satisfaction in smart destinations.

H3 The quality of experience of STTs significantly impacts tourists' revisit intention in smart destinations.

H4 QTE's tourism satisfaction significantly impacts tourists' revisit intention in smart destinations.

Based on research hypotheses, the author constructs a proposed research model on the impact of smart tourism technology on the quality of experience through the perception of tourist satisfaction and intention to return (Zhang et al., 2022). The proposed research model suggests that smart tourism technology directly impacts the quality of experience, mediating tourist satisfaction and intention to return (Pai et al., 2020). The model posits that smart tourism technology positively influences tourist satisfaction, affecting their intention to return. Additionally, tourist satisfaction mediates the relationship between smart tourism technology and quality of experience impact revisit intention. The model also incorporates potential moderating variables, such as demographic factors and prior travel experience, that may influence the relationships among the variables.

Figure 1. Research model



Data Analysis and Results

In studying the impact of smart tourism technology on the quality of experience, satisfaction, and intention to revisit among tourists in Ho Chi Minh City, the tourism recovery in this city is robust, and the role of smart tourism technology is particularly prominent (Akbari and Hopkins, 2019). The city government leads nationwide in developing initiatives and making decisions to promote smart tourism development (Pham, 2023). The survey was conducted using QR codes at hotels and travel agencies organizing tours for international and domestic city visitors from January to May 2023. Additionally, an online survey targets tourists visiting the city within the past 12 months. This study received four hundred fifty responses, and 418 valid responses were collected for analysis using Smart PLS 4.0 software.

Descriptive Analysis

The survey results obtained 418 responses from tourists visiting Ho Chi Minh City, with 390 individuals holding a bachelor's degree (accounting for 93.3%). These results indicate a high proportion of educated tourists with favorable conditions to access smart tourism applications, a fundamental demand for enhancing the travel experience. 145 tourists (34.7%) visited Ho Chi Minh City 2-3 times, and 133 tourists (31.8%) visited the city 4-5 times. These findings demonstrate a relatively high rate of tourist visits and returns. Table 1 clearly illustrates the level of interest and usage of smart tourism technology applications in Ho Chi Minh City, as evidenced by the frequency of spending less than 2 hours accessing the application, accounting for 77.0%. The sample description results in Table 1 provide a solid foundation for analyzing and testing the hypotheses and research models below.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (n = 418)

Variables	Characteristics	N (%)	Variables	Characteristics	N (%)
Coming from			**Frequency of using smart travel apps**		
	Asia	243 (58.1)		Less than 2 hours/day	322 (77.0)
	Europe	85 (20.3)		2-4 hour/day	53 (12.7)
	North America	13 (3.1)		More than 4 hour/day	43 (10.3)
	Latin America	26 (6.2)	**Age**		
	Australia	40 (9.6)		Under 20 years old	71 (17.0)
	Other	11 (2.6)		20–29-year-old	7 (1.7)
Gender				30–39-year-old	188 (45.0)
	Male	281 (67.2)		40–49-year-old	82 (19.6)
	Female	132 (31.6)		Over 50-year-old	70 (16.7)
	Other	5 (1.2)	**Education**		

Number of travels to Ho Chi Minh City		Up to high school	18 (4.3)
Once	78 (18.7)	College/university	390 (93.3)
2-3 times	145 (34.7)	Graduate	10 (2.4)
4-5 times	133 (31.8)		
Six or more times	62 (14.8)		

Reliability and validity analysis

Smart PLS 4.0 was used to compute the quality of observed variables and Cronbach's alpha and CR in this study (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). The relative quality of observation is achieved when it reaches 0.7 or higher. The author analyzed the PLS-SEM algorithm, and the results met the requirement with the outer loadings of all observed variables greater than 0.7. The results show that the Cronbach's alpha values of the eight variables in this study range from 0.824 to 0.905 >0.7, while the CR values range from 0.878 to 0.929, meeting the required standard values. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures the average variance shared between the indicators of a latent variable. Sarstedt and Ringle (2021) state that a measurement scale is convergent if the AVE value is 0.5 or higher. This threshold of 0.5 (50%) implies that, on average, the underlying latent variable explains at least 50% of the variance in each observed indicator.

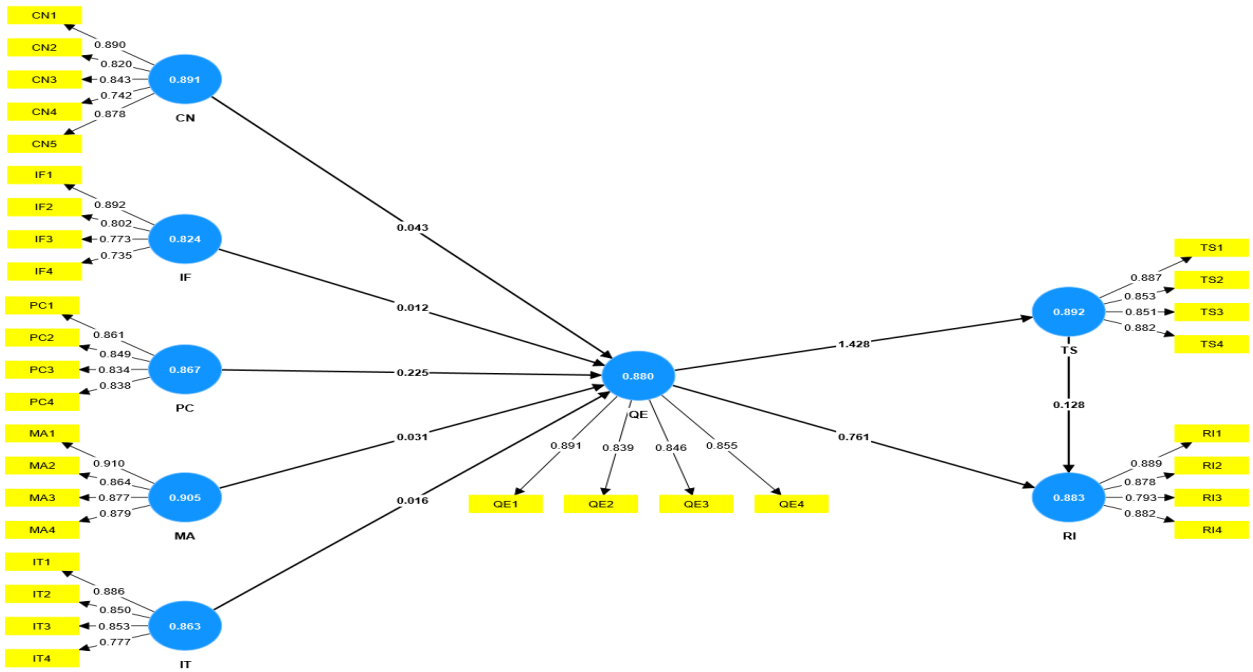
Table 2. Reliability and validity analysis.

Items	Mean	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Connectivity	**CN**		0.891	0.920	0.699
The connectivity of STTs enables seamless integration and communication between various components within the ecosystem.	CN1	0.890			
The connectivity of STTs ensures that tourists have access to relevant information, services	CN2	0.820			
The connectivity of STTs enables interaction throughout their travel journey.	CN3	0.843			
The connectivity of STTs enables seamless data exchange and collaboration between different stakeholders	CN4	0.742			
The connectivity of STTs enhances the overall travel experience for tourists.	CN5	0.878			
Real-time Information	**IF**		0.824	0.878	0.644
Real-time Information on STTs applications provides diverse and complete information	IF1	0.892			

Real-time Information on STTs applications meets the needs of my trip	IF2	0.802			
Real-time Information from STTs apps helps me choose the best way for my trip	IF3	0.773			
Real-time information from the STTs application helps me optimize the cost of my trip	IF4	0.735			
Personalization	**PC**		0.867	0.929	0.765
The applications of STTs provide me with relevant information.	PC1	0.861			
The applications of STTs provide me with links and easy-to-follow guidance on destination information.	PC2	0.849			
I can receive personalized information through interactions with STTs applications.	PC3	0.834			
STTs applications ensure the security of personal information.	PC4	0.838			
Mobility and Accessibility	**MA**		0.905	0.916	0.731
STTs applications are easily accessible during my trips.	MA1	0.910			
It is easy to search for STTs applications without the need for complicated travel arrangements.	MA2	0.864			
I can use STTs applications on my smartphone anytime, anywhere.	MA3	0.877			
The speed of accessing and searching for information through STTs applications is efficient.	MA4	0.879			
Interactivity	**IT**		0.863	0.907	0.710
STTs applications have a high level of interactivity when I use them at the destination.	IT1	0.886			
I receive prompt feedback from STTs applications.	IT2	0.850			
Interacting with STTs applications is engaging and enjoyable.	IT3	0.853			
STTs applications at hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions are interactive and effective.	IT4	0.777			
Quality of experience	**QE**		0.880	0.918	0.736
Using STTs applications has enhanced the attractiveness of the destination's imagery.	QE1	0.891			
Using STTs applications helps me save money on my trip.	QE2	0.839			
The experience of using STTs applications feels safe and reliable.	QE3	0.846			

The experience of using STTs applications at my destination is truly unforgettable.	QE4	0.855			
Tourism satisfaction	**TS**		0.892	0.925	0.755
I am delighted with my trip to the destination with STE	TS1	0.887			
The positive interaction among entities in STE made my trip enjoyable and effective.	TS2	0.853			
The experience of STTs at the destination has enhanced my satisfaction.	TS3	0.851			
I feel happy to experience the development at the destination with STE	TS4	0.882			
Revisit intention	**RI**		0.883	0.920	0.742
I will revisit the city I have explored using STTs.	RI1	0.889			
I want to introduce the city I have chosen for travel to my friends and family.	RI2	0.878			
I will monitor and update information about the downloaded STTs applications on my mobile phone.	RI3	0.793			
I will share destination information with STTs on social media.	RI4	0.882			

Figure 2. Research model on SMARTPLS 4



Evaluate the discrimination of the scale using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) index. According to Henseler et al., (2015), if the HTMT index of a pair of factors is more significant than 0.9, the distinctiveness of the factor is violated. If the HTMT index is below 0.85, good discrimination is guaranteed. Thus, the results in Table 3, ranging from 0.85 to 0.9 will be the acceptable threshold.

Table 3. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

	CN	IF	IT	MA	PC	QE	RI	TS
CN: Connectivity								
IF: Real-time Information	0.126							
IT: Personalization	0.824	0.099						
MA: Mobility and Accessibility	0.821	0.094	0.827					
PC: Interactivity	0.845	0.132	0.839	0.764				
QE: Quality of experience	0.830	0.165	0.822	0.708	0.804			
RI: Revisit intention	0.809	0.144	0.818	0.843	0.774	0.872		
TS: Tourism satisfaction	0.772	0.085	0.791	0.781	0.825	0.837	0.821	

Structural Model and Hypotheses Test

The author conducted two analyses to evaluate the structural model on SMARTPLS 4: PLS-SEM algorithm and bootstrapping with subsamples equal to 5000.

In Table 4, only QE, TS, and RI have values because only these three variables have a dependent role. Corresponding to QE, the VIF value appears in the rows of variables CN, IF, IT, MA, and PC, which are independent variables affecting QE. Corresponding to RI, VIF appears in rows QE and TS, TS are independent variables affecting RI. As a result, VIF value < 3: the model does not experience collinearity.

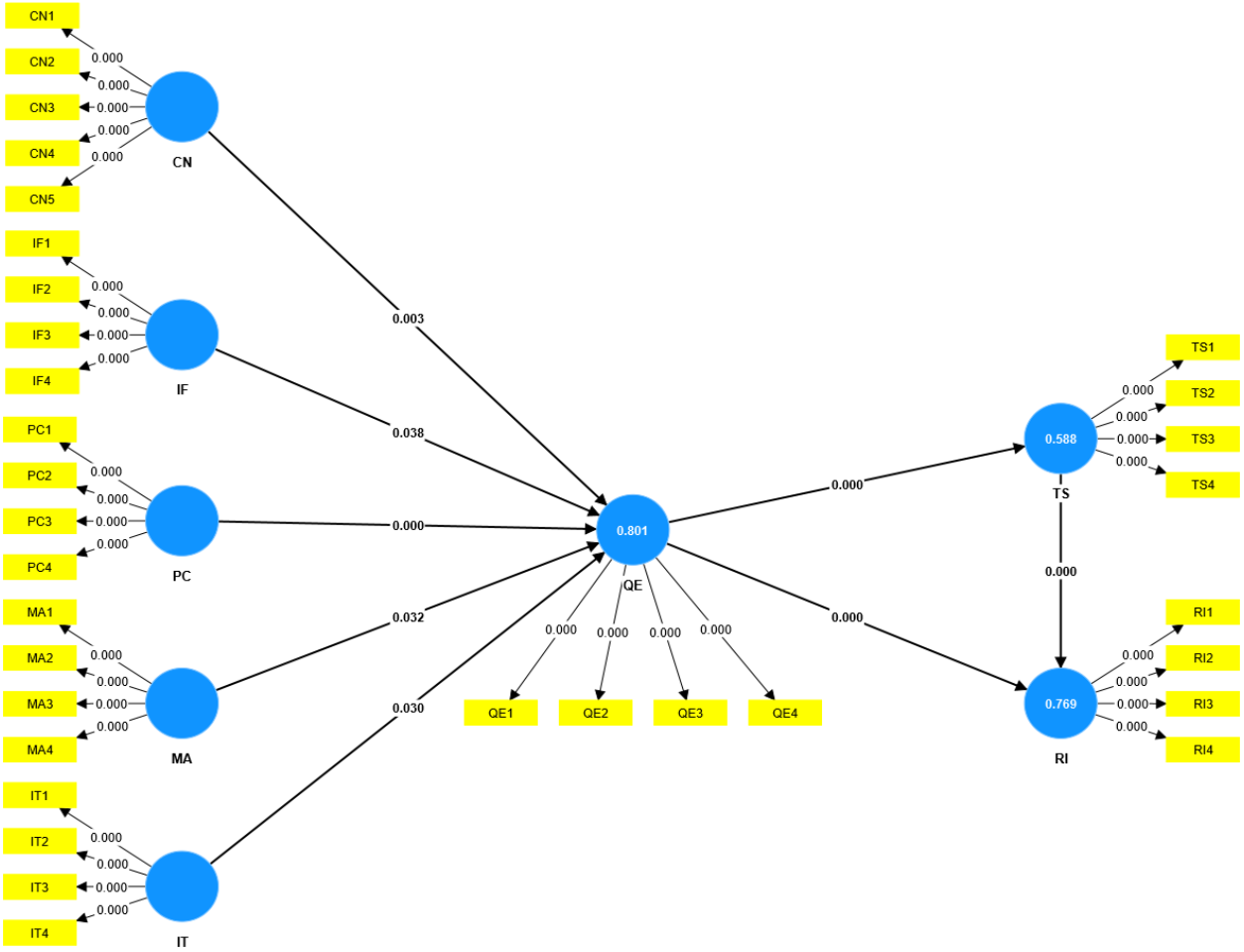
Table 4. VIF, Path coefficients – Sample mean, STDEV, T statistics, P value

	VIF	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Result
CN -> QE	2.718	0.153	0.153	0.052	2.931	0.003	Supported
IF -> QE	1.017	0.105	0.105	0.024	2.072	0.038	Supported
IT -> QE	2.182	0.115	0.116	0.053	2.173	0.030	Supported
MA -> QE	2.093	0.158	0.155	0.074	2.146	0.032	Supported
PC -> QE	2.051	0.520	0.522	0.073	7.151	0.000	Supported
QE -> RI	2.428	0.654	0.652	0.055	11.800	0.000	Supported
QE -> TS	1.000	0.767	0.767	0.037	20.590	0.000	Supported
TS -> RI	2.428	0.568	0.270	0.057	4.709	0.000	Supported

The impact factor of a relationship (path coefficient) is statistically significant or not depends on its standard error obtained through the bootstrapping method in SMART PLS 4. The bootstrap standard error allows for the calculation of the t-value and p-value for all path coefficients in the structural model (Wong, 2013). The standardized average impact coefficients from all samples obtained through Bootstrap are positive, indicating that the relationships in the model are all positive. The order of the impacts from strongest to weakest on variable QE is PC (0.520) > MA (0.158) > CN (0.153) > IT (0.115). The impact of variable QE on RI is (0.654), and QE also impacts TS (0.767). The impact of variable TS on RE is (0.568).

The results of Path coefficients from Table 4 indicate that the hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, H1e, H2, H3, and H4, which represent the relationships between variables, have p-values less than 0.05. Therefore, these effects are statistically significant. As a result, all the initial hypotheses are accepted and have statistical significance.

Figure 3. Evaluation of the structural model on SMARTPLS 4



The model has three variables that play a dependent role: QE, TS, and RI, so there will also be three adjusted R-squared values for the three variables. The adjusted R squared of QE is 0.799, so

the independent variables CN, IF, PC, MA, and IT explain 79.9% of the variation of the QE variable. The adjusted R squared of TS is 0.587, so the QE variable explains 58.7% of the variation of the TS variable. The adjusted R square of RI is 0.767, so the TS variable explains 76.7% of the variation in the RI variable.

Table 5. Coefficient of determination R squared and impact coefficient f squared

	R-square	R-square adjusted	f-square
QE	0.801	0.799	0.761
RI	0.769	0.767	1.428
TS	0.588	0.587	0.158

The f-square index in Table 5 shows that the level of impact of the QE variable on RI is 0.761 > 0.35, which is a strong level of impact. The impact of the QE variable on assets is 1.428 > 0.35, which is a strong level of impact. The impact of the TS variable on RI is 0.158 > 0.15, which is an average level of impact.

Table 6: Q^2 Predictive accuracy of the route model

	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
QE	0.791	0.460	0.332
RI	0.750	0.504	0.355
TS	0.640	0.604	0.402

Q^2 is greater than or equal to 0.35, it indicates a significant predictive capability (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, the predictive accuracy of the route model can be deemed adequate, as advanced technologies used in smart tourism have a high level of accuracy in predicting QE (0.791), RI(0.750), and TS (0.640).

Discussion

This study explored the impact of STTs on the quality of experience, tourist satisfaction, and intention to revisit Ho Chi Minh City. Through a comprehensive analysis of the data, the path coefficients were found to have p-values of less than 0.05, indicating vital statistical significance. As a result, all the tested hypotheses, including H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, H1e, H2, H3, and H4, were accepted. The study's findings demonstrate that the various components of STTs, namely connectivity, real-time information, personalization, mobility, accessibility, and interactivity, have a positive impact on the overall quality of experience for tourists. STTs enable travelers to make

informed decisions and enhance their interactions with the destination by providing seamless connectivity and access to real-time information.

Personalization has the most substantial impact on QTE (beta 0.225) as the personalized experiences enabled by STTs cater to individual tourists' unique preferences and needs, leading to increased satisfaction. Mobility and accessibility have a major impact on tourism experiences, ranked second. Thus, it highlights the importance of easy access to tourism apps and information throughout trips, as this accessibility enhances tourists' satisfaction. The heightened satisfaction, in turn, positively influences tourists' intention to revisit Ho Chi Minh City, emphasizing the long-term benefits of implementing smart tourism solutions. These results highlight the importance of embracing technology in tourism to create a more enjoyable and fulfilling experience for visitors. As destinations like Ho Chi Minh City continue to invest in smart tourism initiatives, they can expect to attract more repeat visitors, foster positive word-of-mouth, and ultimately enhance their overall reputation in the global tourism market.

Implications

This study underscores the significant role that STTs play in shaping tourists' experiences, satisfaction levels, and intentions to revisit Ho Chi Minh City. By harnessing the power of technology, destinations can create a more captivating and personalized travel environment, which will undoubtedly contribute to their overall growth and success in the competitive tourism industry.

The findings of this article contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge in the field of smart tourism technology. By demonstrating the positive impact of STTs components, including Connectivity, Real-time Information, Personalization, Mobility, Accessibility, and Interactivity, on the quality of experience, tourist satisfaction, and intention to revisit, this study provides a solid theoretical foundation for future research in the domain of smart tourism. Scholars and researchers can build upon these results to explore more specific aspects of STTs and their influence on tourist destinations and cultures, thereby deepening our understanding of the intricate relationship between technology and tourism experiences.

This study's outcomes enrich theories related to tourist experiences by affirming that STTs significantly positively affect the overall quality of tourist experience. STTs enable tourists to actively co-create value by engaging collaboratively with destinations via shared platforms and resources, aligning with the emphasis in value co-creation theory on stakeholders collectively generating value. Thus, it highlights the transformative potential of technology in shaping travel experiences. It opens opportunities for researchers to develop and refine models that incorporate technology-driven variables in the context of tourist behavior, such as the experience economy theory or the emotional journey framework. Understanding how STTs impact tourists' emotions, perceptions, and decision-making processes can lead to more comprehensive and nuanced theories for the modern tourist's multifaceted experience.

The theoretical implications of this article extend to destination management and tourism planning. Experience economy theory establishes the framework that experiences are economic offerings, with the value tourists derive being integral for decision-making. By facilitating tourist-destination

interactions, STTs crucially customize and enhance tourism experiences. As smart tourism technology emerges as a crucial factor in shaping tourists' satisfaction and revisiting intentions, destination managers and policymakers should recognize its significance and invest in its development and implementation. Integrating STT components can enhance destinations' competitiveness, attract more visitors, and foster loyalty among tourists. Understanding how these technological features positively affect tourists' perceptions and satisfaction can guide destination managers in creating targeted and personalized experiences, ensuring travelers a more enjoyable and memorable visit. This research holds implications for the broader context of technology adoption and sustainability in the tourism industry. As STT components are associated with enhanced tourist experiences and satisfaction, destinations may be incentivized to adopt more sustainable practices to ensure long-term success. Technology can optimize resource management, minimize environmental impacts, and improve overall operational efficiency in the tourism sector. Therefore, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to strike a balance between technological advancements and sustainable tourism practices.

The study's focus on Ho Chi Minh City provides a unique insight into the relationship between smart tourism technology and tourist experiences in a specific cultural context. However, the theoretical implications extend beyond this specific destination. Future research could explore how STTs influence tourist experiences and satisfaction in diverse cultural settings and tourist destinations. Understanding how culture and context interact with technology adoption can lead to more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to implementing STTs in the global tourism landscape.

The theoretical implications of the article offer valuable insights into the role of technology in shaping tourist experiences, enhancing destination management practices, and promoting sustainable tourism. By enriching existing theories and guiding future research, these implications contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between smart tourism technology and the modern tourism landscape.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The sample's representativeness limits the study's findings, focusing solely on tourists visiting Ho Chi Minh City. The study may not fully capture the diverse range of tourists with varying travel preferences and motivations. Future research could expand the scope to include tourists from different demographics, nationalities, and travel purposes, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of how STTS impacts various travelers. Although the study accounted for various STT components, other external factors may influence tourists' experiences and intentions to revisit. Variables like weather conditions, local events, or sudden changes in tourism infrastructure could confound the results. Future research could conduct more comprehensive analyses by controlling for additional factors affecting tourist perceptions.

Future studies could explore how STTs influence tourist experiences, satisfaction, and revisit intentions. Mediation analyses could shed light on how technology impacts these outcomes. Additionally, investigating the potential moderation effects of cultural backgrounds, travel

motivations, or age groups on the relationship between STTs and tourist outcomes could provide a more nuanced understanding.

In conclusion, while the article highlights the positive impact of STTs on tourist experiences, satisfaction, and revisit intentions in Ho Chi Minh City, it also identifies limitations that present opportunities for future research. By addressing these limitations and exploring new research directions, scholars can build upon this study's foundation and advance our understanding of the dynamic interplay between technology and tourism experiences in diverse content.

Practical Implication for Asian Business

In light of the empirical evidence presented, discussing the study's practical impact on business practices in Asia, especially tourism, is crucial. The research highlights how STTs significantly improve tourist experiences in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, offering salient insights for stakeholders in Asian businesses engaged in tourism.

Firstly, Asia's hospitality and tourism sectors have rapidly adopted technological innovations, fostering connections among various entities and individuals from diverse geographical locations and cultural backgrounds. Prominent Asian tech companies like Alibaba and Oyo have embraced technology, using facial recognition, IoT, and chatbots in hotels. The incorporation of STTs, including mobile applications, augmented reality, and personalized recommendations, as hotel metasearch engines, online travel agencies (OTAs), in-room mobile tech, chatbots, and online review platforms have been seamlessly integrated as a competitive differentiator for tourism entities in Asia, not only elevate the tourist experience but also enhance satisfaction metrics, thereby facilitating customer retention and loyalty.

The adoption of technology is a common practice in various sectors, including the tourism industry, but it comes with associated costs and requires expertise from both suppliers and users. In Asia, the management of many tourism organizations has been somewhat reluctant to embrace technology due to several factors, such as the financial burden, legal complexities, perceived risks, smaller business sizes, and a lack of technological knowledge among management and tourists (Heung, 2003). Countries such as Japan, Singapore, South Korea, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Taiwan have embraced technology in tourism-related activities (Gek-Siang et al., 2021). Conversely, nations like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal have exhibited a palpable lag in this arena, primarily due to deficits in technological infrastructure and inadequate investment (Meo et al., 2022). It is imperative to acknowledge the heterogeneity within the Asian context. Thus, this research underscores the necessity for Asian tourism policymakers, as evidenced by successes in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to invest in advanced technologies for heightened competitiveness and tourist satisfaction. Accordingly, budget allocations for such technologies should be prioritized due to their proven impact on encouraging repeat visits.

Utilizing STTs is not merely an operational enhancement but a strategic imperative. Real-time information and connectivity can be pivotal touchpoints in shaping tourists' initial perceptions and overall satisfaction (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2013). Businesses must invest in technological infrastructure that aligns with the experiential demands of modern tourists, thereby not only

meeting but exceeding expectations. Notably, the empirical data indicates Mobility and Accessibility as paramount attributes, accounting for a 90% impact, thereby necessitating targeted investments. Connectivity emerges as a salient factor, accounting for an 80% impact, thereby necessitating businesses' strategic augmentation of technological infrastructures. Equally significant is the role of Personalization, which mandates the incorporation of customized services to elevate the qualitative dimensions of tourist experiences and foster revisitation intent

Furthermore, the research elucidates that STs directly affect tourists' inclination to revisit. It is particularly germane for the Asian business context, where tourist retention is a primary KPI for the sustainability and growth of the sector. Marketing campaigns must shift from generic, one-size-fits-all strategies to more customized, interactive, and targeted approaches. Given Asia's cultural diversity, destination marketing should incorporate local flavors and traditions to create a resonant and memorable brand image.

Lastly, given that the research focused on Ho Chi Minh City, its implications can be extrapolated to other burgeoning tourist destinations in Asia. By adapting the lessons from this study, other cities can tailor their tourism strategies to align more with the emerging trends in smart tourism technology. For instance, locales with analogous cultural and historical landscapes could adopt technology solutions that have proven efficacious in Ho Chi Minh City, thus obviating the initial phases of experimental iteration.

In conclusion, STTs have created a substantial positive shift in the tourism industry, as exemplified in Ho Chi Minh City. The research emphasizes that tourism destinations should prioritize integrating innovative mobile applications, augmented reality, personalized recommendations, and other smart platforms. By improving the quality of tourist experiences regarding convenience, accessibility, and engagement, these smart tourism advancements yield higher visitor satisfaction and revisit intention.

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