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PRIVACY AND VALUES: THE FUTURE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES

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An assessment of 92 articles from 24 different journals (2002-2017) on mobile technology use in hospitality and tourism literature by Law, Chan & Wang (2018) showed how articles were categorized between suppliers' (27%) and consumers' (73%) perspectives either revealed the use of mobile technologies to enhance travel, or trip experience (39%) and hotel (33%) industry applications. However, while Law and colleagues' overall review provided comprehensive results, their study lacked the emphasis on how external environments such as worldwide politics play a definitive role in altering the way tourism is distributed and consumed. In particular, Law et al. fails to address the battle of 5G (Fifth Generation) networks and cyber security threats towards data privacy concerns.

Without a doubt, the proliferation of the Internet coupled with mobile technologies have transformed how the world works, particularly in how consumers behave, how businesses reach out to end consumers and how governments function and operate. The role of e-Commerce, for instance, has changed many finance-related sectors such as banking, commerce, retail and management including the marketing industries to utilise technological advancements. In the rapid increase of Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to 'Smart Destinations' and 'Smart Cities', mobile technologies have made a profound impact on consumers' usage behaviours, for instance, day-to-day payments via mobile technologies (e.g. in Mainland China). With the debut of foldable/flexible smartphones and 5G networks, convenience and instant access to information will be highly sought after by both consumers and suppliers in the tourism and hospitality industry, and the need for instant gratification therefore builds on the growth of mobile technologies.

The escalation of trade-war since 31st March 2017 between the world's economic powerhouses, the U.S. and China, had both resulted in retaliation by raising tariffs for export goods since the former accused Chinese-owned, Huawei, of trade secret theft and corporate espionage (Reuters, 2019). Additionally, the U.S.

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government now bans the sharing of technology of semiconductor chips to Huawei to further their 5G wireless initiatives. Despite being downplayed by the U.S. and some countries, China's continuing effort to maximize her relationship with countries within the 'Belt and Road' Initiative will push the Chinese to change their travel destinations simply because their cultural belief system encompasses a sense of patriotism to their motherland. Chinese outbound tourists will thus benefit other countries with 'Approved Destination Status' specifically those along the 'Belt and Road' route.

The 5G wireless networks will undeniably be a game-changer for many industries within tourism and hospitality, as the application of 5G networks will transform tourism and hospitality as a whole to allow fast and unlimited access to information. Given the power at their very fingertips, different sets of tourists will reap 5G benefits to meet their own needs: imagine a world where a business tourist will carry out activities in a more efficient manner to obtain integrated support on access for transport, accommodation, entertainment through translation and localisation – all on his/her own. Further, as tourism businesses can use 5G to gain knowledge of customers based on their segments, profiles and their characteristics such as preferences, and interests, this new mobile technology will provide leisure tourists with a new travel experience through high-immersion at destination while providing options of interaction with tourists and locals alike. In the meantime, with 5G in the market, speed and convenience will prevail through IoT applications as they become more responsive and efficient with the 5G networks. As a forecast in Statista states IoT connected devices via smart devices if installed worldwide by 2025 will exceed 75 billion devices (IHS, n.d.).

Mobile technology as a tourism megatrend will further penetrate markets to cover less populated and remote areas of the world (Buckley et al., 2015). This widespread connectivity not only encourages service providers to connect with potential and existing customers within a contemporary setting, it will have little to do with socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. education, income and marital status). As studied among three groups of vacationers (i.e., high, medium and low), Vallespín, Molinillo & Ramos (2018) found that social factors were not relevant with mobile commerce, as there were no changes in trust towards mobile payment systems during travel. Given that smartphone users are expected to be more than one third of the global population by 2020 (Law et al., 2018), future travellers will be tech-savvy and use their mobile devices for all activities related to travel (pre-, in- and post-trip) and the tourism and travel industry will have to reshape to accommodate travellers' needs.

Furthermore, the 'smart hospitality' concept will continuously reengineer the hospitality ecosystem (Buhalis & Leung, 2018) where AI and IoT will continue to play a prevalent role in meeting guests' needs on a real-time basis. The use of chatbots and emoji/emoticons in text-messaging services can also be provided by the hospitality industry. With continuous access and usage of mobile technologies, future research can focus on examining how mobile technologies impact the ways in which tourists experience destinations (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014), hotels and trips in general (Law et al., 2018), although Law et al. (2018) have also stated that the over-dependence on mobile technology (mobile payment) usage among travellers (i.e., specifically the Chinese) may pose a problem when destinations do not offer such facilities. In the very least, it is expected that many hotels now would have guest service officers fluent in Mandarin, as to cater to the world's largest market source by far.

Yet, research on cultural sensitivities in consideration of guests' diverse cultural backgrounds and psychographic values remain lacking despite them being of utmost importance when marketing destinations. The central role of socio-cultural values and how they are portrayed to the world in which Law et al. (2018) appealed for an investigation on the effect of mobile technologies usage on destination image. Hence, while the ubiquity of mobile technologies will change how society works and operates on a daily basis with a prediction that mobile devices (with NFC technology) including wearable will keep their users constantly connected and informed, one way to leap forward from world politics and cultural insensitivities is for destination stakeholders to stop working in silos but collaborate in finding solutions to manage data privacy concerns and other challenges surrounding the tourism and hospitality arena.

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