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Beyond Reality : AR and VR as Game- Changer in shaping Destination Attractiveness.

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Abstract
The market is now hovering over augmented reality which has significantly transformed the definition of traditional marketing . The Tourism industry being one of the prominent industries is also not left out from the integration of augmented reality with respect to various components of the industry. Integration of augmented reality and virtual reality has resulted in innovative ways of narrating the folklore relating to the tourist destination , service realities in a virtual platform in the form of transformed content consumption , encouraging the tourist's participation , increasing destination visibility in the digital platforms' Study aims to understand how various factors of AR impacts the choice of tourists towards a destination site. It also analyses the various strategies with relation to destination branding with relation to Augmented reality.

With the changing market environment , AR and VR has enabled personalised travel experiences by analysing the digital footprint of a consumer, there by elevating tourist satisfaction and engagement. It has the ability to tourist with destination sites through virtual tours, 360-degree models and interactive platforms , resulting in an enriched pre-travel experience. The organisation dealing with travel, can use AR and VR to attract tourist by offering various offers and tourist experiences increasing revenue earning. AR technologies can make pilgrimage sites more accessible to individuals with mobility challenges or those unable to travel long distances. The travel companies can integrate virtual reality in their business models to attract tourists by showcasing customized offers and experiences as per tourists wants, by providing interactive and visually appealing content , resulting in increased booking and revenue. The study wants to understand the signifying the shits in tourist interaction pattern with destination through augmented reality.

Keyword: Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality , Destination Attractiveness, Tourist Experience, Pilgrimage Destination.

Introduction :
With the transforming landscape of various industries resulting out of Integration of augment reality and virtual reality has changed the attitude of consumer (pilgrims) towards the usage of technological platforms. In today's rapid changing environment , the technology has resulted in transmission of information with in blink of an eye, which has revised the tradition definition of tourism that is moving from one's natural habitat to a different one in search of knowledge, cultural exploration , spiritual believes etc. With the help of augmented realty now one can only fetch information but also can indulge in virtually explore the very destination site one wishes to visit in reality. Augmented Reality is often defined as real-time interactive platform that generates tech based content response enhancing the users

experience **(Bretos et al., 2023**). Even though the term augment reality and virtually reality is often used inter-changeably, there is a thin difference in their concept , VR aims to create a complete artificial environment that tends to dissolve the real word environment providing an escape from the real world.

Many studies have stated that pilgrims can now use various digital technological platforms to explore the pilgrim sector ,rather tourism sector as a whole through the lens of augmented reality and virtual reality. This integration have resulted not only in change of perspective but also the reshaped the attitude of consumer(pilgrims) towards inclusion of technology in religious travels and choice of pilgrimage sites. It has resulted in cultural amalgamation of various religious beliefs through various VR platforms. **(Guttentag, 2010; Tussyadiah et al., 2018**) in their study stated that AR has enough potential in influencing tourist decision towards a destination by providing informed travel plans , customised plans resulting in boosted confidence of tourist on these interactive platforms. It also provided real time assistance to the traveller, reshaping their attitude towards the digital guide .

Extented research has highlighted the significant impact of augmented reality in enhancing museum experiences and driving visitor intention. The marketers are now using this platform to provide the consumers (pilgrims) and 360-degree experience as with the changing generation to more tech-oriented , travellers would indulge in seamless technological guidance during their travels. In recent studies researchers have found that augmented reality (Virtual Cues) have signifyingly enhanced the level of experience of the pilgrims, influencing their decision making intentions towards and destination. (**He et al., 20**18)The study aims to understand how integration of technology in various marketing strategies result in attractiveness of a pilgrim site in terms of augmented reality and virtual reality acceptance results in overall enhancement of destination by providing virtual immersion and impact their decisions in usage of technology.

Literature Review :

(**O'Keeffe & Dowson, 2024)** stated that covid 19 resulted in new ways of pilgrimage practices through the virtual reality platform engaging a large variety of target audiences , resulting in cultural exchange. The study also urges the future researcher to focus on technological infrastructure, globalisation.

(Aina et al., 2023) The authors states that after Covid 19, the integration of various digital platforms with traditional planning , has resulted in sustainable tourism solutions. The develops an model emphasizing on the importance of various factors like stakeholders, sustainable marketing strategies and adaptable technologies for urban system.

(Dieck et al., 2024) The author in this paper after a systematic literature review states that there is prominent growth in the today's world urging to propose an in depth research on technological inclusion to provide answers to research questions identified based on four major aspects like customer experience, journey and metaverse.

(Surya et al., 2024) The study highlights the tourism satisfaction is one of the important factors towards destination loyalty. The destination image and motivation positively fostering tourist perceived image towards a place.

(Dhankhar et al., 2023) The study aims to understand the impact of digital marketing techniques used by the marketer on tourist buying behaviour in the changing marketing environment. It also aims to study the effect of various digital platforms on the buying pattern of the consumer with respect to Delhi. The author urgers to expand the study to other places to understand the overall impact of the digital platforms.

(Zeng et al., 2022) The study aims to analyse the potential of virtual reality tools in tourism industry with respect to cultural dissemination through museums. It states that VR enhances the experiences by integrating the cultural elements like art, culture , festivals enhancing the emotional bonding of the tourists . The author appeals to consider tourists motivation factors and personal preferences for further understanding of VR in various dimensions.

(Mangali & Ortaleza, 2021) This research highlights the attributes that impacts the travel decision. It states that accommodation, value for money , staff service , are some of the important factors.
(Agarwal et al., 2021) The study aims explore the impact of social media on spiritual tourism.The author states that user generated content has a significance impact on the choice of spiritual destination depending in the engagement of people on social media based on reviews, likes etc.

(**Kuo et al., 2019)** Through this study the author analysis various factors that influences the consumers to use mobile tourism applications, which affects their intendent and attitude towards an destination. It also focuses on the user friendliness of this applications and feedback mechanism to provide tourist satisfaction.

(Buhalis et al., 2019) The study examines the co-creative perspective of AR, VR and various technologies with respect to the service factor in tourism and hospitality industry, It explores the possibilities how this shapes the customer experience in service ecosystem in a competitive perspective.

(De Ascaniis et al., 2016) The author through this manifesto states that religious tourism is one of the least explored area in terms of digitalisation with respect to tourist experious.The authors states that extensive use of ICT tools in modern lifestyle can provide an uniques advantage in examining the interaction of Tourism and religion in a social environment with respect to digitalisation .

Research Methodology

This research study is an analytical research paper. The paper aims to study the integration of Virtual reality in pilgrimage tourism and its impact on attitude towards the usage of technology in tourism. It also studies the usage of augmented reality and impact attitude towards the usage of technology in Tourism. The study aims to understand how this variable indicating the technology acceptance by the pilgrim result in increase of Destination attractiveness. The independent variables considered for this study are Integration of Virtual reality and Usage of Augmented Reality in Pilgrimage tourism and attitude towards usage of technology as the dependent variable. Convenience sampling technique was used resulting in 116 respondents , that was considered for the study. It includes both qualitative and quantitative feedbacks.

i. Development of Questionnaire

A structure questionnaire was prepared based on the various variable identified from the literature review based on the dependent and independent variable . The factors were designed into statement question under two independent variable (integration of virtual reality in pilgrimage tourism and usage of augmented reality in pilgrimage tourism) and dependent variable (attitude towards the usage of technology in tourism)

ii. Data Collection Method

Questionnaire is used as a method for collection of desired information from the primary source in both online (**google form**) and offline (**one to one**) method. To analysis the quantitative analysis , a total of 17 item were used from 5point Likert scale, where the 1 be sign of lowest satisfaction level and 5 is the highest-level of satisfaction.

iii. Analysis

Multivariate Analysis is used to understand the impact of the variables.

Analysis And Interpretation

4.1 Integration of virtual reality in pilgrimage tourism and Impact attitude towards the usage of technology in Tourism

Table 4.1.1- Integration Of Virtual Reality In Pilgrimage Toursim – List of Items

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Description
1	Item 1	VR technology useful for enhancing the travel experiences and planning
2	Item 2	Likely to employ VR technology to schedule and arrange travel plans
3	Item 3	Inclusion of VR for Tourism services and destination is highly appreciated
4	Item 4	It easy to use virtual reality (VR) technology for travel planning and booking
5	Item 5	The current VR experiences provided by tourism services, and destinations are satisfactory

Source: Literature review

Table 4.1.2 - Impact attitude towards the usage of technology in Tourism – List of Items

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Description
1	Item11	Usage of digital platforms makes planning pilgrimage Trips more convenient
2	Item12	The decision relating to travel decision and destination choices are greatly influenced by social media platform
3	Item13	Digital platforms enable me to discover new and unique travel destinations

4	Item14	Using digital maps and navigation tools over traditional methods while traveling
5	Item 15	Virtual tours and digital content enhance the understanding of a destination before visiting
6	Item16	Online booking systems simplify the process of organizing my trips
7	Item 17	Digital tools and resources enhance the overall satisfaction with my travel experiences

Source: Literature review

Table 4.1.3 Multivariate Output for integration of virtual reality in pilgrimage tourism and impact attitude towards the usage of technology in Tourism

Multivariate Tests[c]						
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	0.947	2.328E2[a]	7	92	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.053	2.328E2[a]	7	92	0
	Hotelling's Trace	17.709	2.328E2[a]	7	92	0
	Roy'sLargest Root	17.709	2.328E2[a]	7	92	0
Item1	Pillai's Trace	0.462	3.992	14	186	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.572	4.232[a]	14	184	0
	Hotelling's Trace	0.688	4.47	14	182	0
	Roy'sLargest Root	0.585	7.775[b]	7	93	0
Item2	Pillai's Trace	0.801	4.89	21	282	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.341	5.727	21	264.72	0
	Hotelling's Trace	1.538	6.638	21	272	0
	Roy'sLargest Root	1.257	16.875[b]	7	94	0
Item3	Pillai's Trace	0.41	3.431	14	186	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.628	3.441[a]	14	184	0

	Hotelling's Trace	0.531	3.449	14	182	0
	Roy'sLargest Root	0.36	4.781[b]	7	93	0
Item4	Pillai's Trace	0.793	3.358	28	380	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.368	3.801	28	333.13	0
	Hotelling's Trace	1.309	4.23	28	362	0
	Roy'sLargest Root	0.937	12.717[b]	7	95	0
Item5	Pillai's Trace	0.857	3.701	28	380	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.354	3.973	28	333.13	0
	Hotelling's Trace	1.292	4.175	28	362	0
	Roy's Largest Root	0.764	10.372[b]	7	95	0
a. Exact statistic						
b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.						
c. Design: Intercept + Item1 + Item2 + Item3 + Item4 + Item5						

Source : SPSS output

Interpretation of Multivariate Test Result

Intercept

- The intercept is significant across all multivariate tests (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000):
  - **Pillai's Trace** = 0.9470.9470.947
  - **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.0530.0530.053
  - **Hotelling's Trace** = 17.70917.70917.709
  - **Roy's Largest Root** = 17.70917.70917.709

This confirms the model's ability to explain a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variables.

Table 4.5 Interpretation of Individual Variables

Individual Variable	Interpretation
Item1	Moderate effect size and statistically significant (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): ·**Pillai's Trace** = 0.4620.4620.462, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.5720.5720.572

	·**Hotelling's Trace** = 0.6880.6880.688, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.5850.5850.585
Item2	Stronger effect size compared to V1, with all tests significant (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): ·**Pillai's Trace** = 0.8010.8010.801, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.3410.3410.341 · **Hotelling's Trace** = 1.5381.5381.538, **Roy's Largest Root** = 1.2571.2571.257.
Item3	Moderate effect size with significant results (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): ·**Pillai's Trace** = 0.4100.4100.410, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.6280.6280.628 ·**Hotelling's Trace** = 0.5310.5310.531, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.3600.3600.360
Item4	Strong effect size with significant results (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): ·**Pillai's Trace** = 0.7930.7930.793, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.3680.3680.368 ·**Hotelling's Trace** = 1.3091.3091.309, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.9370.9370.937.
Item5	Highest effect size among all variables, indicating it is the most impactful: · **Pillai's Trace** = 0.8570.8570.857, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.3540.3540.354 ·**Hotelling's Trace** = 1.2921.2921.292, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.7640.7640.764.

Source: SPSS output

Interpretation :

The above analysis states that VR experiences provided by tourism services and destination are The above analysis states that VR experiences provided by tourism services and destination are satisfactory (Item 5) having the strongest impact on the attitude of pilgrims towards the usage of digital platforms to understand the destination before visiting. Integration of VR technology for travel schedule and planning (Item 2) and booking (Item 4) has a moderate impact on the tourist attitude for ease of travel decisions over the traditional ways of planning. These items are very critical for the model.

However, the usage of VR for enhancement of travel experience and planning (Item1) and inclusion of VR in services and destination (Item 3) have their contribution in tourst attitude but have a comparatively smaller effect on attitude towards the usage of technology in providing unique travel experience. The consistent significance (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000) across all tests confirms the importance of all variables in explaining the dependent variables.

Thus , we can say that Items 5,Item 2 and Item 4 plays a critical role in providing valuable insights in designing marketing strategies to enhance technology adoption in customized travel plans , technology enabled tourist services.

4.2 Usage of Augmented reality and Impact attitude towards the usage of technology in Tourism

Table 4.2.1 - integration of augmented reality in pilgrimage toursim – list of items

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Description
1	Item 6	Usage of AR application during pilgrimage tourism depends on pre-idea of digital platforms
2	Item 7	AR application needed intellectual effort to interact with the digital platforms
3	Item 8	Information is displayed in AR platforms are easy to understand
4	Item9	AR application provides adequate data privacy and security
5	Item10	AR Application was inclusive of usage by different walks of life

Source: Literature review

Table 4.2.2 - impact attitude towards the usage of technology in tourism – list of variables

Sl. No.	Name of the Variable	Description
1	Item11	Usage of digital platforms makes planning pilgrimage Trips more convenient
2	Item 12	The decision relating to travel decision and destination choices are greatly influenced by social media platform
3	Item 13	Digital platforms enable me to discover new and unique travel destinations
4	Item14	Using digital maps and navigation tools over traditional methods while traveling
5	Item15	Virtual tours and digital content enhance the understanding of a destination before visiting
6	Item 16	Online booking systems simplify the process of organizing my trips
7	Item 17	Digital tools and resources enhance the overall satisfaction with my travel experiences

Source: Literature review

Table 4.2.3 Multivariate Output for Usage of Augmented reality and Impact attitude towards the usage of technology in Tourism

Multivariate Tests[c]

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	0.899	1.178E2[a]	7	93	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.101	1.178E2[a]	7	93	0
	Hotelling's Trace	8.868	1.178E2[a]	7	93	0
	Roy's Largest Root	8.868	1.178E2[a]	7	93	0
Item 6	Pillai's Trace	0.527	2.893	21	285	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.557	2.88	21	267	0
	Hotelling's Trace	0.652	2.848	21	275	0
	Roy's Largest Root	0.296	4.019[b]	7	95	0.001
Item 7	Pillai's Trace	0.491	4.364	14	188	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.555	4.553[a]	14	186	0
	Hotelling's Trace	0.721	4.741	14	184	0
	Roy's Largest Root	0.581	7.805[b]	7	94	0
Item 8	Pillai's Trace	1.057	4.925	28	384	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.187	7.125	28	336	0
	Hotelling's Trace	3.129	10.224	28	366	0
	Roy's Largest Root	2.718	37.275[b]	7	96	0
Item 9	Pillai's Trace	0.59	5.618	14	188	0
	Wilks' Lambda	0.494	5.619[a]	14	186	0
	Hotelling's Trace	0.855	5.619	14	184	0
	Roy's Largest Root	0.542	7.280[b]	7	94	0
Item 10	Pillai's Trace	0.544	5.021	14	188	0
	Wilks'	0.524	5.071[a]	14	186	0

	Lambda					
	Hotelling's Trace	0.779	5.119	14	184	0
	Roy's Largest Root	0.537	7.208[b]	7	94	0
a. Exact statistic						
b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.						
c. Design: Intercept + Item 6 + Item 7 + Item 8 + Item 9 + Item 10						

Interpretation of Multivariate Test Result

Intercept

- The intercept is highly significant (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000) across all tests:
  - **Pillai's Trace** = 0.8990.8990.899
  - **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.1010.1010.101
  - **Hotelling's Trace** = 8.8688.8688.868
  - **Roy's Largest Root** = 8.8688.8688.868

This indicates the model effectively captures the relationships between the variables.

Table 4.2.4 Interpretation of Individual Variables

Individual Variable	Interpretation
Item 6	Moderate effect size with significant results (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): **Pillai's Trace** = 0.5270.5270.527, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.5570.5570.557 · **Hotelling's Trace** = 0.6520.6520.652, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.2960.2960.296 (lower compared to other variables).
Item 7	Moderate to strong effect size, with all tests significant (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): · **Pillai's Trace** = 0.4910.4910.491, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.5550.5550.555 · **Hotelling's Trace** = 0.7210.7210.721, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.5810.5810.581.
Item 8	Strongest effect size among all variables: · **Pillai's Trace** = 1.0571.0571.057, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.1870.1870.187 · **Hotelling's Trace** = 3.1293.1293.129, **Roy's Largest Root** = 2.7182.7182.718 (highest impact).

Item 9	Moderate to strong effect size with significant results (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): · **Pillai's Trace** = 0.5900.5900.590, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.4940.4940.494 · **Hotelling's Trace** = 0.8550.8550.855, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.5420.5420.542
Item 10	Moderate effect size and consistent significance (p=0.000p = 0.000p=0.000): · **Pillai's Trace** = 0.5440.5440.544, **Wilks' Lambda** = 0.5240.5240.524 · **Hotelling's Trace** = 0.7790.7790.779, **Roy's Largest Root** = 0.5370.5370.537.

Source: SPSS output

Interpretation

From the above analysis, item 8 stated that augmented reality has the strongest effect size across all tests. It shows a significant influence in the attitude of the pilgrims towards AR usage in tourism as it provide ease of interpretation of information provide in the technologically enabled platforms. The Items 9 and 7 are the most impactful factors, that contribute meaning fully to the model. They shape the perception of ease of use towards technology acceptance by providing data privacy and on the go or real time interaction with the help of various AR tools to the pilgrims while they visit or making decision towards a destination selection cratering to their needs. The tourist(consumer) often have pre-notions towards the digital platforms which impact their usage of immersive technology .Item 6 and 10 analysis this digital literacy that shapes their acceptability of technology usage which have a moderate impact but still remains statistically significant. These findings emphasize the importance of focusing on these key items 8,9 and 7 are critical to understand and influence technology adoption in the tourism sector offering a more enhanced and profound tourism experience towards decided or chosen pilgrim destinations.

Conclusion :

Pilgrimage tourism, a significant aspect of people's spiritual pursuits, is undergoing a paradigm shift with the integration of advanced technological interventions. The growing diversity of pilgrim destinations worldwide has intensified competition among destination marketers, compelling them to adopt innovative strategies to boost footfall.

The integration of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) has emerged as a transformative tool in enhancing the appeal of pilgrimage destinations. These technologies not only promise a more satisfying spiritual experience but also improve ease of use and digital engagement for pilgrims. By offering personalized, one-on-one experiences while ensuring data privacy, AR and VR help bridge the gap between traditional pilgrimage and modern convenience.

Additionally, virtual reality allows users to explore various destinations from the comfort of their homes through immersive 3D models. This feature offers a respite from the hustle and bustle of daily life, making the spiritual journey more accessible. Destination marketers can

leverage these tools to create a stronger pull in the minds of potential pilgrims, significantly increasing reach and engagement.

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