

Conceptual Paper

Hot and Cool Tourism; Tourism as Media

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Abstract | Tourism is a communication system that, unlike other communication systems, not only transfers the message but the entire communication system with all its human and cultural characteristics, and the debate on the greater importance of the message or the tool, which is one of the fundamental debates in communication studies, becomes meaningless in tourism. In this system, the human being is the center of communication, and the communication is face-to-face and has simultaneous feedback. Comparative studies between the concept of media and the concept of tourism explain this issue. Now, McLuhan's theory on the thermal division of media into two spectra of hot and cool can also be applied to the field of tourism studies. This study attempts to develop the concept of hot and cool tourism, hot and cool tourists, and hot and cool destinations. It argues that development in the realm of language and concepts can lead to development in the real world and the lived experiences of individuals and communities. Is McLuhan's philosophical view of media, which classifies it into two groups of cool and hot, applicable to the field of tourism? What are the characteristics of cool and hot destinations? And what do hot and cool behaviors mean to tourists? Hot tourism is a purposeful journey in a harmonious and value-added system, without voluminous information, numerous visits, and tiring comings and goings. On the other side of the cool tourism spectrum, is characterized by a plethora of information and costly and unproductive visits that exhaust and depress the tourists. Despite the criticisms of this conceptualization, some of which are mentioned in the article, this generalization can be effective in managing individual and social tourism.

Keywords | Rural development, Rural landscape, Place-based tourism, Culture.

Introduction | Although some have described the present era as the age of the atom or space, in parallel with the remarkable human progress in the field of space sciences and nuclear experiments, the expansion of electronic communications, the rapid and unprecedented development of communication devices and technology, and their profound impact on human societies and all aspects of life on Earth, are also among the prominent features of the era in which we live. Communication has become such an integral part of modern human life that the study and precise understanding of communication media and their impact is of particular necessity for understanding issues and problems in all cultural, social, economic, political, and military spheres. Communication media in today's world, contrary to

expectations, are not neutral phenomena and mere catalysts, but rather they exert a profound influence on the communication process, create a new era, and affect all the pillars of societies. In today's world, the media plays a major role in the emergence of new habits, the formation of a global culture, and the change in people's attitudes and behaviors (Saroukhani, 2016). Essentially, it can be said that modern man lives with the media, and the media is an integral part of human life in this era. The media has the task of transmitting messages and is capable of changing the audience's mentality and perception. Media refers to products, institutions, and technologies found in various forms, such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television, cinema, and digital and internet media (Long & Robinson, 2009).

At first glance, it may seem that we are dealing with two

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completely different study subjects in the fields of tourism studies and media. However, with further reflection, it can be quickly realized that the potential for the intersection of these two domains is very high. The vast majority of research conducted with the keywords “tourism” and “media” has addressed the role of various media in tourism advertising and marketing. The media have the greatest impact on the flow of tourism and, through the images and information they disseminate about a destination, contribute to the development of tourism in that location. On the other hand, tourists themselves are now considered producers and consumers of media content, and all these studies confirm the deep and close relationship between media and tourism (Imani Khoshkhoo et al., 2021).

But regardless of this type of encounter with the relationship between media and tourism, what is more, remarkable is that in today’s world, tourism can be recognized as a media or like a media, and this phenomenon can be analyzed and evaluated from the perspective of a media. This is a novel topic and very little research and comparative studies have been done about it, so if we say that this field has been neglected by researchers, we are not exaggerating. Tourism and media both produce a particular understanding of the world and a corresponding emotional engagement for modern man through two separate processes and in fact, both are partners in promoting an emotional state accompanied by imaginative and cognitive activities (Crouch et al., 2005).

The essence of tourism is a rapid alignment with contemporary changes. In an era where communication technology has brought about significant lifestyle changes, it is the tourism media that has quickly benefited from these new changes and has been able to improve the quality of new travels, lifestyle, and consequently the quality of individual development. In such a way it can be said that the elevation of tourism has practically entered a field characterized by purposeful system-building with the characteristics of intelligence and the nature of today’s communications, in line with the concepts of sustainable development.

Accordingly, this research intends to show whether this philosophical conceptualization of hot and cool in the world of media proposed by McLuhan’s can also be extended to the world of tourism. What is the capacity of cool and hot destinations? And what do hot and cool behaviors mean to tourists?

Research Background

By searching the two keywords “media” and “tourism” in the available search engines, a considerable amount of past research has addressed the “role of various media in advertising and marketing” in various

destinations. Very few cases have also studied “media tourism.” Media tourists have a fickle pattern that suddenly appears and disappears just as quickly. These tourists try to step into the scene of a fictional story when people get involved in a popular film or bestselling book. In other words, these individuals need a physical reference point for their imagination (Reijnders, 2011). The most relevant research done on this topic is the study by Imani Khoshkhoo et al. (2021), which conducted a comparative study between media and tourism and showed that tourism and media both provide their audience with a “place of spectacle”, a concept that Rinders calls a “place of imagination”. “Creating an entertainment environment and modeling for leisure”, “creating educational contexts”, “a cultural tool for transmitting cultural messages”, “symbolic and symbolic nature”, and “extensive systematic performance” are other commonalities between these two domains. They are also both considered “tools for sustainable development”, so the media covers global concerns about environmental, economic, cultural, social, and political problems, and tourism is also a powerful force in creating sustainable development with goals such as poverty reduction, empowerment of women, participation of the local community, reduction of economic leakage, improvement of cultural interactions, and increased peace and philanthropy. This study states that tourism creates the ground for cultural interactions, convergence, and synergy between the host community culture and the guest community, and the tourist acts as a message transmitter in the tourism system (ibid.).

•Hot and cool media from mcluhan’s perspective

The terms “hot” and “cool” are borrowed from American colloquial language and refer to the distinction between cool jokes, which require the power of imagination to understand and enjoy, and hot jokes, which do not require imagination due to their clarity (Cazeneuve, 1985, 45–46). In this framework, McLuhan’s focus on technology led him to distinguish between hot and cool media in the common language of the 1960s (Williams, 2003). He stated that cool media is a medium that demands a lot of participation from the audience, and understanding its messages requires their imagination power, requiring more energy expenditure but less achievement. Hot media does not demand much participation from the audience and, due to its clarity, does not require imagination, and the audience receives more results with less energy expenditure, and purposeful changes are created in them (Cazeneuve, 1985, 45–46).

In his philosophical view of the media, McLuhan introduces multi-sensory media as cool and single-

sensory media that fully and powerfully use only one of the audience's senses as hot (Rashid-pour, 1973, 113). Hot media is accompanied by a useful amount of data and is complete in terms of expressing the purpose; it is so clear and bright that it leaves nothing unsaid, so it does not need the audience's intervention to fill the forgotten gaps and minimize their cooperation (McLuhan, 1998, 33-37). Contrary to hot media, according to McLuhan, cool media is inclusive and brings a kind of drowning for the audience that, if not used in a managed way, will waste time and energy. Cool media is often known as low-quality media that, if overused, can cause depression in addition to wasting resources.

In any case, after the printing industry, most technologies have been hot. But in the age of television, a kind of return to cool values is observed, and the individual plays an active role in confronting technologies. This is one of the reasons that shows that the media is not just content but the message itself (Rogaway, 1969).

Therefore, based on the criteria mentioned for hot and cool media, it can be said that television, telephone, caricature, seminar, illustrated stories, ideographic writings, and human speech are among the cool media, and radio, books, photos, press, cinema, film, and audio recorders are among the hot media (ibid.).

McLuhan also divided the host communities of the media into two hot and cool categories, meaning that he also considered the importance of the audience's culture. He considered underdeveloped and illiterate countries like cool media and developed countries like hot media. Then he raises the question: "Does a hot or a cool medium act differently in a hot or a cool culture?" In response, he says, "The technology of hot media tends to disrupt traditional social relations and establish new patterns of behavior and relationships in the tribal culture" (McLuhan, 1998, 29).

• Hot and cool tourism

Given that we have studied tourism as a medium and a powerful medium, we will continue to define hot and cool tourism, the consumer (tourist) behavior in these two types of tourism, and the characteristics of hot and cool destinations, following the concept of hot and cool media (Babakhani, 2022, 2023).

• Hot tourism

Hot tourism can be considered a type of tourism that involves a tourist with a specific goal. For example, health tourism or business tourism is considered a type of hot tourism where the purpose of the trip and the achievements of the trip are clear to the tourist. This type of tourism does not tire the audience and does not waste their energy, but rather follows the travel programs purposefully to achieve the desired result.

Hot tourism does not give the tourist a lot of useless information. Rather, it only provides the information he needs to achieve his goal (high-quality information). In hot tourism, efforts are made toward the goal, and unnecessary and additional efforts during the trip are reduced, but the result is high.

In hot tourism, the tolerance of cultures increases, and it can be used to achieve sustainable and peaceful intercultural communication management. Tourism management is looking to develop this type of tourism so that more outputs are obtained with fewer inputs. As a result, a high conversion rate occurs in hot tourism, which brings sustainable happiness and mental and physical health. Hot tourism never ends, and after the end of the trip, the achievements of the trip are analyzed both virtually and mentally and are related to the next trip in a continuum.

Hot tourism is filtered and brings specialized tourists to the tourism industry, which has high economic returns and is moving toward the post-postmodern world. The ultimate goal of hot tourism is to give meaning to life.

• Cool tourism

In cool tourism, the traveler has no specific goal; a lot of information is transmitted to him, and he is tired. In this tourism, instead of showing the realities of the destination, only its tourist attractions are shown. The tourist spends a lot of money through shopping and extra purchases, but the achievements of the trip are negligible. From the point of view of tourism management science, a low conversion rate occurs, which brings fleeting and momentary happiness. The tourist goes on a trip in search of peace, but what he has gained less is the same peace and mental health. This type of tourism does not cultivate the real tourist, and most ordinary travelers also fall into this spectrum.

• Examination of the behavior of the hot tourist

In hot tourism, the tourist has the opportunity to benefit from the opportunities created for personal development and identity formation. He can identify the authenticity of the destination and its attractions. The hot tourist does not cause the outflow of dollars from the country by traveling. Perhaps with the resulting empowerment, he can return several times the dollar that was taken out. It is not tourism that causes the outflow of foreign exchange from the country, but according to the authors, it is the travel of underdeveloped people that creates this problem. Personal development creates a personality in the tourist who can recognize the value of his own culture, share it with people from other countries, and engage in constructive cultural interaction. The hot tourist is the guardian of culture and the messenger of peace.

Just as McLuhan states about hot media that it focuses

on one of the senses, it can be said that hot tourism and the hot tourist also focus on a specific subject and purpose of the trip and experience its results.

• Examination of the behavior of the cool tourist

In contrast, in cool tourism, only a physical displacement has occurred. After the trip, the tourist does not feel a sense of change or transcendence. This type of tourist only takes money out of the country and does not know how to benefit from his national assets and capital (lack of tourism literacy). In smart tourism, not only the power of the media is mentioned, but the power of the people who use the media is much more important. In other words, in the fourth generation of tourism, not only the change of tools is mentioned, but the personal development of the tourist is important. In cool tourism, the traveler has no focus and therefore drowns in the flow of the trip and the events and incidents that happen. He wants to have fun, shop, and visit more attractions, spending a lot of money and energy, but he does not feel an achievement that he can even explain to himself and others. In some cases, the emotional decisions of the cool tourist also cause him to allocate several times more time, energy, and money compared to the hot tourist, with additional purchases and additional visits, but less than a hot tourist to gain special and exclusive experiences from the trip, and even fall into depression and discouragement after the trip.

The last point is that the cool tourist, instead of gaining control of the media, is under the dominance of the media. Therefore, his goal from the trip is either to self-display and show off luxurious and luxury trips or to destroy the cultural assets of his own culture. It is important to note that hot and cool tourists are on two sides of the same spectrum. This means that one cannot have a zero-to-one-hundred percent opinion of tourists. But this model can be used to state that with personal development, the negative effects of cool tourism can be reduced and the positive effects of hot tourism can be increased.

• Hot tourism destinations

A destination that can focus on its strengths and try to turn its weaknesses into strengths and opportunities is a hot tourism destination and can host hot tourists by developing itself. Such a destination can create a process of transcendence for the tourist. This destination has organized all its micro and macro processes in an omnichannel so that it can attract its target tourists again and again. In such destinations, the attractions are integrated and observed in a unifying system, so that the tourist's mind and thoughts are engaged with the destination for a long time after returning from it, and being present in that place has been able to give him new ideas for personal development.

• Cool tourism destinations

A destination that is content with its current assets and does not have a plan for its development is cool. The goal of this destination is to earn income from tourism products without engaging the tourists. Such destinations do not stimulate tourist loyalty and do not have the attraction to attract tourists again and again, and can hardly witness the re-attraction of travelers.

• Criticisms of McLuhan

McLuhan's conceptualization of hot and cool media has been the subject of serious discussion and criticism over the years. We will refer to the main of these criticisms:

- Excessive simplification: This binary and dualistic categorization has oversimplified the complex and extensive nature of communication and media to the extent that many media cannot be included in it and fall in between the spectrum, or even some of them may simultaneously have the characteristics of both categories (Postman, 2005, Meyrowitz, 1986).

- Lack of empirical support: Communication scholars believe that this classification of McLuhan as mental is not supported by empirical research and is somehow lacking clear and objective foundations (Meyrowitz, 1986, Innis, 1999).

- Lack of practical applications: Although this idea has been influential in scientific and intellectual circles, it has not had practical application in the real world (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, Levinson, 2003).

- Ignoring cultural and historical context: Some critics have stated that in different cultural and historical contexts and different societies and at different times, the perception of the hotness and coolness of the media will be different and will not necessarily cause a uniform understanding (Moore, 1993, Carey, 1989).

- Ignoring individual and group differences in humans: Individual and group differences affect the way media is perceived and used, which can also affect its hotness and coolness (Morley, 1980, Hall, 1980).

It should be stated that despite these serious criticisms, the concepts of hot and cool that McLuhan added to the world of media are still widely considered in the field of communication sciences and his conceptualization has led to a better understanding of human interactions with communication technologies. The criticism of the critics has enriched this perspective and shows the complexity of the world of communication and media. Although some of McLuhan's views on the impact of communication media on human societies and cultures are not consistent with historical and scientific realities and cannot be proven, and his theories about the future also seem more imaginative

than anything else, it should be noted that he does not want us to consider his interpretations as definite and certain conclusions, but prefers to consider them as a starting point for our thoughts. Therefore, even if we do not accept all the mosaics that make up McLuhan's thinking, we must still admit that parts of his ideas have shed new light on the world of communications and paved the way for the presentation of more comprehensive and complete theories. Finally, it must be admitted that the modern human understanding of communication media has undergone a fundamental transformation after the publication of McLuhan's books, and familiarity with his thoughts opens a new window for all those who make human communication and communication media the subject of their serious studies (McLuhan, 1998, 43).

• A critique of hot and cool tourism

In the first encounter, one can extend the criticisms leveled at McLuhan's conceptualization of hot and cool media to the classification of tourism into two categories: hot tourism and cool tourism. But another critique can be added to it, and that is that to reach the deeper layers of tourism (hot tourism), we will inevitably have to pass through the shell of tourism (cool tourism). As mentioned, hot tourism is the tourism of the developed human, and one of the best paths to human development is travel. A lack of understanding of this cycle disables individuals from cool tourism. In the long run, it might disable them from hot tourism. In other words, the types of tourism cannot necessarily be placed on a spectrum where the two poles are hot tourism and cool tourism; rather, this thermal classification of tourism is like an onion with layers, and to understand and perceive hot tourism, tourists, tourism service providers, and destination managers have no choice but to pass through the more superficial layers of cool tourism.

In this regard, one point worth mentioning is that the state of being free and immersed that is condemned in cool tourism can also occur in hot tourism, with the difference that it is conscious, intelligent, and specific to cultured tourists, and is significantly different from the immersion in cool tourism that is due to the lack of wisdom and poverty of the tourist.

Conclusion

Tourism is a powerful communication system, and the comparative study of tourism and media shows the multiple common dimensions of these two phenomena. The media help us to better understand the world around us through the transmission of values, attitudes, and perspectives. Tourism also

leads to the expansion and deepening of views and ideas by establishing interaction between the host and guest communities in the form of a medium, and both provide opportunities for experience, recreation, education, and modeling.

Among the many theorists in the field of communication, Marshall McLuhan is known as the founder of the theory of hot and cool media. A theory that, although it has faced serious criticism, has still managed to be presented as a noteworthy concept despite the passage of more than six decades. He believes that when a medium can extend and deeply engage one of the human senses, it is called a hot medium, like radio or cinema, which can clearly convey its semantic content to the audience. In contrast, a cool medium is one in which the audience must use other senses to perceive it and add a large amount of information to the information provided by the medium to gain a complete understanding of the message, such as speech, television, and seminars.

In this study, the authors have tried to bring the concepts of hot and cool from the world of media to the study of tourism, since tourism can appear in the form of a medium, to gain a new conceptualization and provide an opportunity for greater recognition and depth in the types of tourism. So hot tourism is purposeful tourism and lacks a lot of useless and tiring information, and the whole trip is manifested as a harmonious and value-adding system. The exact opposite of this is cool tourism, which exhausts the traveler with a multitude of information, visits, and costly and unproductive comings and goings.

However, it should be noted that just as members of society are not necessarily consumers of only one of the hot or cool media and manage the use of a combination of media in their lives according to their level of development, the same is true in the field of tourism. For example, watching television or spending time on Instagram as a cool medium is not harmful, but excess of either makes the individual exhausted and depressed. In contrast, someone who reads books, goes to the cinema, or replaces them with relatively long and deep YouTube videos, while experiencing purposeful and effective changes, also creates a lasting pleasant feeling for themselves. In tourism too, cool tourism is not condemned in itself, but excess in it and not passing through this superficial layer to reach the deeper layers of tourism (hot tourism) in the long run leads to the waste of the tourists and the destination community's time, money, energy, and talents.

Here, tourism management in the individual and

social spheres means recognizing hot and cool tourism and benefiting from each one according to the circumstances and with the motivation of creating balance and development in life. In other words, sustainable tourism depends on laying the groundwork for the development of hot tourism.

It is noteworthy that the development of hot and cool concepts from the world of media to the world of tourism, just as it faced serious criticism in the field of communication itself, is also subject to criticism in the field of tourism studies, some of which have

been mentioned in this article, including excessive simplification and a lack of attention to cultural, historical, individual and social differences of societies that cause different effects of the media on the audience. However, the authors believe that language and action are always in a two-way interaction, and the expansion of concepts in the linguistic domain directly affects our understanding of reality and our thinking and attitude and leads to changes and developments in our behavior. This two-way interaction can also pave the way for richer and more practical theories.

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