BLEISURE TOURISM: HOW TECHNOLOGY BLENDS BUSINESS AND LEISURE

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In a world where innovation has a life cycle that is faster that giving birth to a child, going to railroad, electricity, telephone, automobile, to the internet has been the most Prominent innovation in our century(Hoffman, 2000). Bleisure tourism, the phenomenon used to describe travel which combines elements of business as well as leisure activities, is a growing trend transforming the tourism industry. In bleisure tourism, Business trips are turned into vacations. As technology continues to evolve, the travel industry will undoubtedly see further transformations, making travel more accessible and enjoyable for people around the world. This paper explores the impact of technology on bleisure travel, examining how tools and platforms facilitate, enhance, and even drive this phenomenon.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of exploring new innovations as well as technology inherence in tourism industry, bleisure tourism is the best suited for those travelers who want to handle their routine work as well as explore niche tourist activities at nearby location from their venue to enjoy their quality time with their families too. Bleisure travel is a term used to describe business travel mixed with leisure travel. It typically involves business travelers extending their trip to include leisure activities. The traditional boundaries between business and leisure travel are blurring. Consumer behavior towards traveling has radically evolved, and technology is here to make it all happen. Galvanized by factors like flexible work arrangements, remote work capabilities, and a desire for work-life balance, travelers increasingly combine business with leisure, extending trips or incorporating family and friends. This trend, known as Bleisure tourism, showcases unique opportunities and challenges for both travelers and the tourism industry. [1-4]

II. THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN BLEISURE TRAVEL

Technology plays a significant role in enabling and influencing bleisure experiences. The integration of technology in every aspect of travel, from planning and booking to the actual travel experience, has made our journeys more convenient and revolutionized the industry itself. As technology continues to evolve, the travel industry will undoubtedly see further transformations, making travel more accessible and enjoyable for people around the world. Travellers can look forward to more immersive experiences, enhanced sustainability, and greater convenience as technology continues to shape the future of travel.

Additionally there are reasons beyond marketing of bleisure tourism is that firstly, it can reduce carbon emission, travellers who are concerned about carbon emission, integrate business with leisure prevents additional air travel to their selected locale. Secondly, Business trips often take people to cities they may not have otherwise visited. Adding a few extra days to a trip allows for time to explore the surrounding area and not be stuck in one area of the city in addition business travel can often be stressful.[5] An extra couple of days tacked on to the end of a trip to help employees relax so they can be more productive when returning to the office moreover many travellers are bringing their families and friends on business trips, letting them spend time and enjoy a trip together after the work is done. Additionally if we look in to the report of Grand View research report on global leisure tourism forecast in upcoming year we found that this particular type of tourism is itself has worth of $933.3B in 2022 and its further expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.1% from 2023 to 2030. In this report its clearly mentioned countries with major potential of bleisure tourism activities. The growth potential of U.S. bleisure travel market is shown in Fig. 1.

Another research report from Expedia group elaborates in their research that bleisure tourism is booming

globally. The findings, from multinational study commissioned by Expedia Group Media Solutions and conducted by Luth Research, spotlight the behaviors, influences, resources and preferences of American, British, Chinese, German and Indian bleisure travelers or business travelers who extend their trip for leisure. Approximately 80% of bleisure travellers spend 1-5 hours on research during both the inspiration and planning phases, which is more condensed than more traditional leisure booking windows. Before deciding to bleisure, 68% of travellers conduct research using a search engine, 47% use travel-related websites—including OTAs, airline and hotel sites, and review sites—and 44% use destination websites. Most bleisure travellers personally research and book accommodations (61%), airfare (42%) and dining (38%) for the leisure portion of their trip. [6-7]
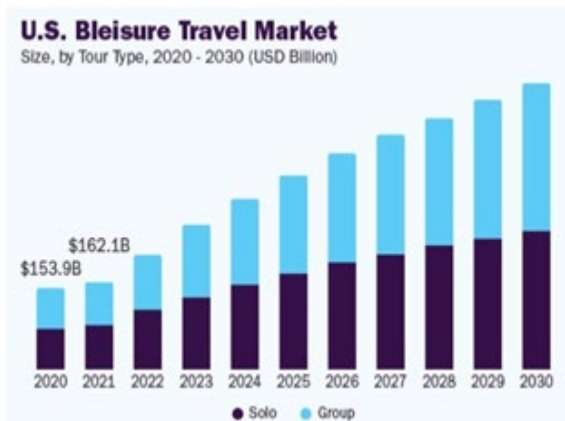

Fig 1. An estimation of the growth potential of U.S. Bleisure Travel Market

III. KEY ASPECTS OF TRAVELTECH REVOLUTION

From digital booking platforms that simplify trip planning to AI-powered chatbots that provide 24/7 assistance and immersive experiences through AR and VR technologies, each and every country is now at the forefront of traveltech revolution. Let's explore some key aspects:[8-10]

• **Convenient Booking Platforms**
Gone are the days of stacks of brochures, numerous calls to travel agents, and considerable guesswork as digital booking platforms came into play. Online travel platforms allow seamless booking of flights, hotels, and activities, facilitating trip planning and customization Alongside major global companies like Agoda, Booking.com, TripAdvisor, Thomas Cook (India) Limited, and Expedia that have become household names, various local players like RedDoorz (headquarter: Singapore), Wego (headquarter: Singapore), Vntrip

(headquarter: Vietnam) are gradually disrupting the market. These new-age start-ups harness the power of advanced technologies. For instance, Travala (headquartered in Vietnam) provides a blockchain-based marketplace for travel bookings. The company leverages block chain technology & smart contracts to offer a global marketplace for travel bookings, by directly connecting travel service providers & consumers.

• **Helpful Apps in Abundance**
Mobile apps and websites cater specifically to bleisure travelers, offering curated itineraries and recommendations. Regionally headquartered travel apps appropriately sense tourists' pain points. For instance, ride booking apps like GrabTaxi (headquarter: Singapore), Discovering local eateries and cuisines is a breeze with restaurant reservation platforms like Eatigo (headquarter: Thailand). Alongside popular translation apps like Google Translate, Duolingo, several apps like Papago and Waygo specialize in Asian language translation and thereby streamline communication for global travelers.

• **Remote Work Tools**
Remote work tools like video conferencing platforms and cloud-based software enable travelers to seamlessly blend work and leisure, staying productive while experiencing new destinations Looking at the wider tourism industry, it has been seen how travel restrictions have led to a 'new normal'. This can best be seen with conferences and exhibitions.
According to data from Statistic, respondents from the US (52%) and Japan (65%) are seemingly open to embracing the hybrid approach in the future by attending events both in- person and via video conferencing. Video conferencing allows individuals or groups to connect in real-time through an audio and video interface, simulating face-to-face interactions regardless of location. This technology enables businesses to collaborate, present, and negotiate with stakeholders without the need for physical travel. Video conferencing breaks down geographical barriers, allowing businesses to connect with partners, clients, and employees across different time zones and continents.

• **Interactive Travel Apps**
There are numerous number of travel apps available worldwide which play a pivotal role in enhancing travel experience of bleisure tourism. According to stistica report, as shown in Fig 2, location-based services, such as Google Maps service, Uber, Booking .com, Airbnb, Google Earth, Where my train and Indrive etc. is, are augmented reality applications, and personalized recommendations enhance the leisure aspect of bleisure trips. Technology empowers travelers to discover hidden

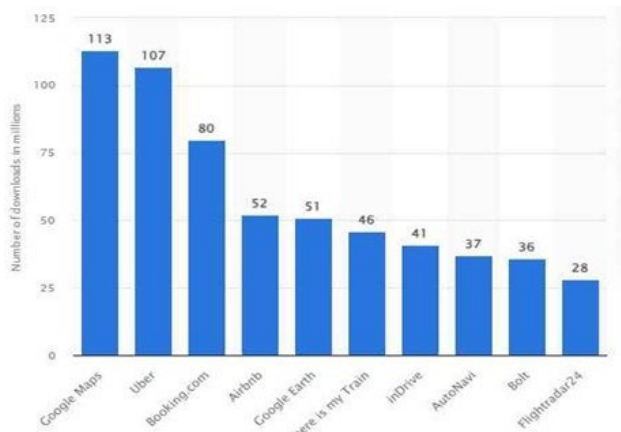gems, navigate unfamiliar cities, and optimize their free time.

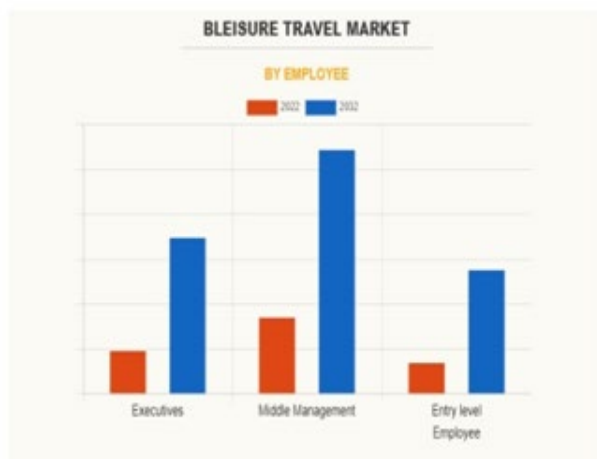Fig 2. Statistic record of number of travel apps used by number of downloads globally in 2022

Fig 3. Segmentation of Bleisure Travel Market by Employee Type

• **Dominance of Social Media**

In addition, social media has created a new level of authenticity and trust in travel recommendations for bleisure tourism too. User-generated content, such as photos, videos, and reviews, have become a significant influence on travel decisions. One of the most notable impacts of social media on bleisure travel is the way it has influenced destination choices for different stakeholders to promote new unveiled destination for plan their meeting or conferences. Through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest, travelers can easily discover new destinations and get a glimpse of what they have to offer. Stunning photos and videos shared by other travelers have inspired many to visit places they may not have known about otherwise.

In response to this trend, travel companies and destinations have begun to focus more on their social media presence. They create visually appealing content and share it across multiple platforms to attract new visitors. Many destinations have even hired social media influencers to promote their location to a broader audience. Bleisure Travelers can now see real-life experiences and feedback from other travelers, allowing them to make more informed decisions about their trip. Social media platforms and travel blogs encourage the sharing of bleisure experiences, inspiring others and contributing to the growing popularity of the trend.

• **Impact of Big Data and Analytics**

The travel industry leverages data from various sources to understand bleisure traveler preferences and personalize offerings. It allows travel companies to delve into vast oceans of data, from booking trends to bleisure traveler preferences, to optimize various aspects of their operations and services. With big data in tourism, travel businesses can not only predict and meet customer demands effectively but also identify opportunities for improvement and innovation. Data analytics enables companies to analyze patterns and trends in real-time, offering dynamic pricing, improving customer support, and even anticipating disruptions or potential issues. Furthermore, it allows travel businesses to offer personalized services and marketing strategies, enhancing customer loyalty and satisfaction. Overall, the utilization of big data analytics in the travel industry brings about an opportunity to transition from a reactive approach to a proactive strategy, enabling businesses to predict and shape the future of their operations. With the increasing demand for personalized and efficient services, the importance of data analytics in the bleisure tourism industry is more pronounced than ever before, this can include airline booking data, hotel behavior patterns, and social media activity.

IV. ECONOMIC GROWTH IN BLEISURE TOURISM

Digitalization has played a significant role in present days tourism activities. All existing technological means have been exploited and have even evolved favorably for enhancing bleisure tourism. Technology eliminates barriers to travel by providing information, tools, and resources readily available at fingertips. This democratizes bleisure experiences, making them accessible to a wider range of travelers. Bleisure travel can provide a range of benefits for busy professionals, from reducing stress and improving productivity to allowing professionals to explore new destinations and cultures. The segmentation of bleisure travel market by employee type and its growth forecast for 2032 is shown in Fig 3.

By planning ahead, using technology to your advantage, and getting creative with your leisure time, you can make the most of your bleisure travel experience. Technology personalizes experiences, provides real-time information, and fosters connections, leading to more fulfilling and memorable bleisure trips. According to the GBTA's report, two in three companies (64%) feel their employees are "willing" or "very willing" to travel for business, and 72% of GBTA members and stakeholders say they would definitely or probably travel for business. [11-14]

CEO of the GBTA Suzanne Neufang describe in his report that "There's a real drive toward that by global corporations

— so, trips may be fewer, but they may be longer," , which claims more than 9,000 members. "So, they're able to get that quarter's meetings with fewer trips overall."The GBTA refers bleisure tourism as "blended travel," but the meaning is the same: business travelers add days onto the front or back end of their business plans to relax. In a survey conducted by the GBTA late last year 2022, corporate travel managers were asked whether they think employees are more or less interested in extending work trips for leisure compared to before the pandemic.[15-17] The survey found that 82% believe their workers were equally or more interested in "blended travel" than they used to be.

Bleisure tourism contributes significantly to the travel and hospitality industry, driving demand for flights, hotels, tours, and local businesses Technology enhancement such as high speed internet access and mobile applications enables traveler or working professionals to stay connected and manage work responsibilities while enjoying leisure activities, this will lead to increase in revenue for travel service provider including hotels, airlines, and local business at the destination.

Fig 4. Characteristics of Bleisure Travelers

Bleisure travelers tend to remain in-destination for a

longer period of time, given the need to make time for both work and leisure activities. The blended characteristics of bleisure travelers are shown in Fig 4. Travelers who remain in- destination longer naturally spend more per trip. Technology disrupts traditional travel models, requiring industry players to adapt their offerings and cater to the evolving needs of bleisure travelers. [18-24]

Fig 5. Market Forecast for Growth of Travel Booking Platform

V. AI: SHAPING A SEAMLESS BLEISURE JOURNEY

1. Personalized Trip Planning

AI personalizes booking options through a series of operations. First, it collects, stores, and cleanses copious amounts of employee data using various data collections and pre- processing techniques like data mining. Then, with the help of predictive analytics and machine learning algorithms, it processes the employee data to detect preference patterns and suggest booking options accordingly AI-powered platforms can analyze individual preferences, travel history, and real- time data to curate personalized itineraries and recommendations, optimizing the leisure component of bleisure trips.

2. Dynamic Work-Life Balance

AI can be a 24/7/365 available helping hand for bleisure tourist. Over the years, AI-based services have evolved to handle a variety of travel contingencies and customer queries. Additionally, AI-enabled chatbots can respond promptly to routine bleisure traveler questions and handle non-critical emergencies like misrouting, vehicle breakdowns, etc. Intelligent assistants can manage schedules, prioritize tasks, and even suggest micro-leisure activities during downtime, ensuring a healthy balance between work productivity and leisure enjoyment. Hence, AI can help make bleisure travel seamless.

3. Eliminating Language Barriers

Real-time translation tools powered by AI can break down language barriers, facilitating authentic interactions with locals and enriching cultural experiences. Leisure travelers may not always be able to use it for communication when visiting such places. Lack of verbal communication can complicate simple tasks such as taking a cab and cause unnecessary stress. Therefore, language barriers can be a massive hurdle for professionals traveling abroad. However, with the help of AI- based translation apps like Google Translate, travelers can overcome the language barrier. Such apps use Neural Machine Translation to translate

VI. VR: IMMERSING TRAVELERS IN BLEISURE DESTINATIONS

1. Virtual Pre Tours

Before the trip, VR experiences can showcase destinations, hotels, and activities, allowing travelers to virtually explore options and plan their leisure itinerary even more effectively. Earlier, bleisure travelers who used to research places they wished to travel. Through photos, videos, and movies, they used to make their itinerary to visit the places that attract them the most. However, it is disappointing for them when the places did not turn out as they looked in photos and videos. Virtual Reality in tourism is the resolution to all such issues. It lets the enthusiasts bleisure travelers explore the destinations before actually buying a package.

2. Guided VR Tours

Virtual Reality has brought many beneficial applications into tourism industry. Nowadays, parallel with the ICTs development, VR has been used in many areas such as planning, management, marketing and operation. With VR applications tourists can walk around and discover museums in virtual environment. Through virtual travel agencies customers can now participate in virtual tours and use travel guiding service. On-site, VR headsets can offer immersive guided tours of historical sites, natural wonders, or local attractions, enhancing understanding and appreciation of the destination.

3. Remote Exploration

Virtual Reality enables exploring a place without moving and highlights the importance of realism because it makes it possible to create a convincing and irresistible experience through the accurate and fine description of the real world. Virtual Reality experiences can also extend beyond the immediate physical location, allowing travelers to virtually explore nearby regions or attractions not included in their actual itinerary, maximizing cultural exposure and experience.

VII. IMPACT AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS

1. Enhanced Traveler Empowerment

AI and VR equip travelers with personalized information, real- time guidance, and immersive experiences, leading to more fulfilling and efficient bleisure trips. AI and VR technologies have found applications in the travel industry, offering travelers immersive experiences and previews of their destinations. For example, tourists can use VR headsets to take virtual tours of hotels and attractions before they make a booking. AI apps can provide real-time information about points of interest, and historical sites, and even translate foreign languages on the fly, making travel more accessible and engaging.

2. Industry Transformation

These technologies can drive innovation in the travel sector, encouraging businesses to cater to bleisure travelers by offering AI-powered services and VR experiences. The bleisure travel industry has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, primarily due to the rapid advancement of technology such as AI and VR. The integration of these technologies in every aspect of travel, from planning and booking to the actual travel experience, has made our journeys more convenient and revolutionized the industry itself. One of the most visible and transformative changes technology brings is the rise of online booking and reservation systems. Travelers can now plan and book their entire trips from the comfort of their homes or on the go, thanks to user-friendly websites, AI as well as VR assistance and mobile apps. This convenience has empowered bleisure travelers to compare prices, read reviews, and make informed decisions, leading to increased competition among service providers.

3. Economic Growth

Increased bleisure tourism, facilitated by AI and VR, can stimulate local economies and boost revenue for destinations and related businesses.

AI and VR hold immense potential to revolutionize bleisure travel. By empowering travelers, personalizing experiences, and driving innovation, these technologies can unlock the next chapter in this evolving travel trend. However, ethical considerations, addressing the digital divide, and maintaining a focus on genuine human connections are crucial for ensuring a sustainable and rewarding future for bleisure tourism.

VIII. CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Unequal access to technology can create barriers to bleisure travel for certain demographics. It can be realized that technology has created several challenges for the bleisure tourism industry irrespective of having

several benefits. It becomes challenging for travel organizations to create different identities, prevent cyber fraud and gain customer trust. Further, the challenges are enhanced by financial issues and the demand for multichannel marketing in the market. The challenges are enhanced by the demand of implementing advanced technology after the pandemic for ensuring the safety of customers. Technology can blur the lines between work and leisure, leading to burnout and compromising the intended benefits of bleisure trips. Travelers need to be mindful of data security and privacy concerns associated with using technology while traveling. Risk of Cyber fraud has increased with the increasing application of digital technology in bleisure tourism. The Real Economic report has indicated that 27% of middle market businesses of the travel industry in the UK experienced cyber-attacks in 2021 (RSM UK, 2021). The study has also identified that there is a 120% increase in travel and holiday-related fraud from consumers. The risk of cyber fraud is higher for travel organisations because they do multichannel marketing and a high amount of sensitive data like passport details, credit cards and driving license details are used. Hence Technology-driven marketing and personalization should be implemented responsibly to avoid manipulation and exploitation of traveler data. [25-26]

Technological advancement will play crucial role in facilitating seamless coordination of work and leisure activities, making it easier for professionals to manage their responsibilities while enjoying their local destination. Meanwhile, industry participant s should remain cautious and to adaptable to changing travel trend, consumer preferences, and economic condition as well as technology is a powerful force shaping the landscape of bleisure tourism. By understanding its impact, stakeholders can harness its potential to create enriched travel experiences, boost economic growth, and foster a more connected and personalized travel ecosystem. However, addressing challenges related to work- life balance, digital equity, and responsible data practices is crucial for sustainable and ethical development of bleisure tourism.

These case studies demonstrate the diverse applications of AI in shaping public policies across different domains. While showcasing the benefits, they also highlight the importance of addressing ethical considerations, transparency, and inclusivity in the deployment of AI for policymaking.

AI and big data have the potential to revolutionize public policymaking, offering opportunities for more evidence-based, efficient, and personalized solutions. However, it is crucial to address the ethical challenges associated with these technologies to ensure they are used responsibly and equitably. Continued research, dialogue, and collaboration are needed to develop effective governance frameworks that harness the potential of AI and big data for the benefit of society.

IX. FURTHER RESEARCH:

This paper provides a starting point for further research. Specific areas for exploration include:

- ☐ The impact of bleisure tourism on specific destinations and sectors within the travel industry.
- ☐ The role of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality in shaping future bleisure experiences.
- ☐ The development of ethical frameworks for data collection and utilization in the bleisure tourism context.

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